

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias

Graham Joseph Pruss

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2019

Reading Committee:

Sven Haakanson, Chair

Jason De León

Holly Barker

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Anthropology

©Copyright 2019

Graham Joseph Pruss

University of Washington

Abstract

A Home without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias

Graham Joseph Pruss

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Sven Haakanson

Department of Anthropology

In 2018, over half of the people who slept in public space across Seattle/King County (Washington, USA) inhabited an automobile. However, the disaffiliation and criminalization of vehicle-homes in efforts to end homelessness has caused vulnerable people to fall between the cracks of social service provision and legal representation. Based on nine years of four-field anthropological research in Seattle, this doctoral dissertation shows how a behavioral strategy of mobile sheltering tends to be adaptive within a social, economic and biological environment of constrained options. Considering vehicle residency through an analogy of mobile sheltering reveals a cross-cultural pattern of similar displacement and social isolation based on mobility. Settled societies have historically produced private resources and spaces by unsettling otherwise emplaced people and maintaining their unsettlement through an anti-“nomadic” stigma. This study details a “settled bias” that labels perceived “nomadic” behaviors as aberrant to reinforce an implicit hierarchy of authorized settlement. Correlating this and past research with “nomadic” communities reveals a “weaponized mobility” that has disconnected and obscured the social responsibility of settled groups from their unsettlement of displaced people. This applied anthropological dissertation closes with a set of conclusions and recommendations for communities, service providers and policy makers to include vehicle residents in social support.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

*Table of Contents*

Abstract .....	3
Table of Contents .....	4
Acknowledgements and Gratitude .....	6
1.0 An Introduction to Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias in Seattle .....	7
1.1 Ethics, Methodology and Positionality of this Research .....	13
Image 1 .....	15
Image 2 .....	15
Image 3 .....	16
Image 4 .....	24
Image 5 .....	27
Image 6 .....	31
Image 7 .....	32
Image 8 .....	32
Image 9 .....	34
2.0 A History of Vehicle Residency and Unsettlement .....	40
Image 10 .....	46
Image 11 .....	47
Image 12 .....	54
2.1 Literature Review: Vehicle Residency, “Homelessness” and Mobile Sheltering .....	56
2.2 Bobby with the Bus .....	69
Image 13 .....	71
Image 14 .....	78
2.3 Theoretical Aberration: Sedentarism, Nomadic Threats and Settled Bias .....	79
3.0 Junior & Star (Part 1) .....	97
Image 15 .....	98
Image 16 .....	99
Image 17 .....	99
Image 18 .....	106
4.0 Ethnoarchaeological Analogy: Bernie & Settlement Mapping .....	118
Image 20 .....	121
4.1 Material Culture Analysis of Vehicle Residency in Urban Parking of Seattle.....	124
Image 21 .....	125
Image 22 .....	126
Image 23 .....	128
Image 24 .....	129
Image 25 .....	133
Image 26 .....	141
4.2 Archaeological Mapping of Vehicle Residency in Urban Parking of Seattle .....	144
Image 27 .....	147
Image 28 .....	148
Image 29 .....	150
Image 30 .....	153
Image 31 .....	155
Image 32 .....	156
Image 33 .....	162
4.3 Archaeological Mapping of Tinkers in Rural and Urban Parking of Dublin .....	163
5.0 Inference: Vehicle Residency in Public Parking as Personal-in-Corporative Property.....	172
Image 34 .....	173
Image 35 .....	173
5.1 Bangarang! .....	182

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Image 36 .....	182
Image 37 .....	182
Image 38 .....	184
Image 39 .....	189
Image 40 .....	191
Image 41 .....	194
Image 42 .....	194
Image 43 .....	201
Image 44 .....	204
6.0 Mac .....	205
Image 45 .....	207
Image 46 .....	207
Image 47 .....	209
7.0 (No) Conclusion: Junior & Star (Part 2).....	217
Image 48 .....	218
Image 49 .....	228
7.1 Conclusions .....	229
Image 50 .....	231
Image 51 .....	238
8.0 Recommendations .....	256
8.1.0 Grounded Recommendations .....	256
Image 52 .....	260
8.2.0 Systemic Recommendations .....	263
8.3.0 Theoretical Recommendations.....	267
9.0 Coda: Bobby (Part 2) & Mark.....	270
Image 53 .....	272
Image 54 .....	275
Image 55 .....	280
Addendum: Interdisciplinary Collaborations .....	286
Relational Comparison of a Vehicle Residence in Public Parking .....	286
Image 56 .....	286
Collaborative work by UW School of Art + Art History + Design students .....	287
Image 57 .....	287
Image 58 .....	293
Image 59 .....	295
Image 59 .....	296
Image 60 .....	297
Image 60 .....	298
Safe Parking Program Analysis by UW Evans School of Public Policy .....	299
V. References .....	319

*Acknowledgements and Gratitude*

The following dissertation was developed from an undergraduate honors thesis at the University of Washington (UW) Department of Anthropology, where I was grateful for the supervision of Sven Haakanson, Daniel Hoffman, Holly Barker, Jason De León, Steve Herbert, Rachel Chapman and Miriam Kahn. This work would have been impossible without the support of my family: my partner Jennie, children Emma and Donovan, parents Cheryl and Joe, and grandmothers Ruth and Thelma.

I am proud that this study was funded by the United States National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program as well as Seattle University (SU) alumnus Donna Franklin. It was a privilege to continue this research at the SU Department of Arts and Sciences Center for Strategic Communications between undergraduate and graduate coursework through the advocacy of the UW Civic Engagement Project Director, Nancy Amidei. I deeply appreciated the support from everyone at the UW and SU, in particular Diane Guerra, Catherine Zeigler, Department Chair Patricia Kramer, as well as Catherine Hinrichsen, Barry Mitzman and Dean David Powers. Further, I am indebted to innumerable friends and colleagues for reviewing my writing, specifically Ulil Amri, Jennifer Carol, Evelyn Drake, Oscar Fossum, Jennifer Huff, Ilmari Käihkö, Curt Loper, Leah Nelson and Alexis Rinck.

I graciously acknowledge the vital work of Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness Director Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett, Ballard Homes For All Chair Jean Darsie, Director of Facing Homelessness Rex Hohlbein, as well as my colleagues Jennifer Adams, Alex Ebrahimi and Jenni Lovell. I also want to thank the Seattle Police Department Parking Enforcement Department, Seattle Department of Transportation, as well as the staff at the City of Seattle and King County's Continuum of Care coordinating agency, All Home. It has been a pleasure to work with you all.

Ultimately, I want to thank all of the research participants who gave a piece of their lives to tell this story, from people experienced in vehicle residency, to local neighbors or business owners, to law enforcement officers and social service providers. Many of our researchers were intimately experienced with homelessness or vehicle residency. Their informed contributions were essential to performing this research ethically, compassionately and candidly. These stories were told and written for you, the reader, to take with you in your everyday life.

The following ethnography is heavy in mass and affect. I hope this helps you better know a small piece of our shared universe. Thank you for giving your time, effort and attention.

Sincerely,

Graham Pruss

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

*‘Wanderlust’ – the medical mysteries of dromomania and drapetomania – offered a more comfortable vagueness to the burgher than the realities of starvation and despair.<sup>1</sup>*

*1.0 An Introduction to Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias in Seattle*

“Home is where the heart is.”<sup>2</sup> The familiar proverb rings particularly true for those who create homes on the edges of societies. There are nearly as many historical, personal and environmental forces that unsettle otherwise settled communities as there are ways to inhabit public spaces. Among these, living in a “car or truck” is included in United States Federal definitions of “homelessness” with “sleeping on the streets ... in abandoned buildings, or in another location not meant for human habitation.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, Americans who rely on vehicles as homes have specific needs, including a legal parking space for their property, and may deny an externally enforced label of “the homeless” for many reasons. Vehicle residents inhabit a diverse array of shelters, and may self-identify differently based on their occupation of a sedan, camper van, or recreational vehicle that is located in public parking or, on the other hand, within an RV park depending on the vehicle’s age and appearance. The externally, socially constructed identity of the itinerant tends to be stigmatized *and* fetishized,<sup>4</sup> such as with the “nomad,” “the Tramp,” “the G\*psy,”<sup>5</sup> “the Traveller” or “the home-less.” These itinerant identities show a socio-linguistic pattern. In these terms, we can see how settled people write cultural narratives of ‘wanderlust’ that obscure larger social, economic and often violent forces of unsettlement.

---

<sup>1</sup> Allsop 1967

<sup>2</sup> Attributed to Roman Philosopher Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE)

<sup>3</sup> Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHARC) 2010

<sup>4</sup> Goffman 1986

<sup>5</sup> The word “Gypsy” is considered by many to be a racial epithet. Hereafter, I refer to this word only when necessary, self-censored as “G\*psy.” This term likely derives from an (incorrect) assumption by Medieval Europeans that immigrating Roma people had come from Egypt, possibly as Christian Coptic (Egyptian) Pilgrims. An exonym, the word “G\*psy” is not present in the root Northern Indian languages of the Romani, Domari, or Lom people. Like other racial epithets, it has been externally-constructed by dominant groups to reinforce (racialized) social stereotypes and inequity. Similarly, some communities assert a cultural identity based on a “G\*psy” heritage, as well as co-opted by others who claim it is as a benign term for stereotypical behavior of “nomads.”

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

This study uses ethnographic and archaeological methods to holistically represent vehicle residency – the habitation of a vehicle for primary shelter – within public parking of Seattle, WA (USA); typically, in a recreational vehicle (RV), van, car, truck or school bus. Contrary to a federal definition that determines vehicles as unfit for human habitation, many vehicle residents own and occupy a long-term shelter which is commercially sold for temporary homemaking such as an RV. There is a wide variety in the type, style and composition of vehicles used for homemaking; for this reason, I use the generic noun “vehicle residence” in reference to any object that has been designed for transportation and used for primary habitation. Such an open definition intentionally includes the primary habitation of a car, boat, airplane, *vardo*, *rickshaw*, or any other potential mobile shelter. I refer to the many people who inhabit a vehicle for primary shelter as vehicle residents, not as a master identity but a descriptor similar to “homeowner” or “shelter occupant.” In her archaeological studies on “the homeless,” what I discuss here as *unhoused* or *unsettled* communities, Rachel Kiddey reaffirms an inclusionary anthropological perspective on home and homemaking based on a commonality of ‘homesickness’ (citing David Benjamin): “It has been shown that people from transient and non-text-based populations exhibit socio-psychic characteristics of ‘homesickness’ when absent from home, which suggests that the experience of loss of home is felt worldwide, and applicable across time, even if the words ‘home’ or ‘homesickness’ are perhaps not present in all languages.”<sup>6</sup> The majority of the one thousand and five hundred people I met during this study who live in a vehicle contested a stigmatized identity of “the home-less” – confirming previous research on contemporary US vehicle residency that shows these as often (repeatedly) unsettled people who see their long-term shelter as a “home” and are seeking a space to establish stability.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Kiddey 2017:38; Benjamin 1995:296

<sup>7</sup> Mendoza 1997; Wakin 2005, 2014

Vehicle residents described intense social stigma and legal constraints throughout this study. Decades of social science research demonstrates a pattern of housed communities presuming that unsettled people “choose” to live as they do, avoid their socioeconomic responsibilities and harm settled communities.<sup>8</sup> These cultural narratives tend to overlook how alternative forms of settlement are chosen as the subjectively best strategy for individuals or families among constrained-options and forces of unsettlement. Over the preceding decades in Seattle, local and international property developers and landlords had taken advantage of a labor market shift that attracted a higher-income workforce. Increasing rents uprooted many lower-income workers and families who still relied on the City. These local, otherwise settled neighbors were displaced from their familiar communities, or driven to find new alternative forms of affordable housing linked to resources of the City: such as potential employment, social welfare systems, healthcare, and well-known networks of social support. Through the early 2000s, as available affordable housing connected to the urban resources of the City was enclosed for capitalization into more expensive, smaller apartments and condominiums, neighbors were driven from Seattle or into itinerance.<sup>9</sup> Some turned to mobile shelters for survival. The individuals and families who were documented in this research and relied on vehicles as affordable housing regularly told me they would not abandon their homes for an overnight bed in “home-less” shelter which lacks off-street parking, separates males over the age of twelve, and may be perceived as less-than-safe, unhealthy or inappropriate. For these otherwise settled neighbors, vehicle residency was an optimal adaptive strategy within an environment of persistent unsettlement. The vehicles shown here are forms of affordable housing in the City.

---

<sup>8</sup> Gmelch 1977a, 1977b, 1982; Susser 1996; Phelan, Link, Moore & Stueve 1997; Smith & Greenfields 2003; Kabachnik 2010a, 2010b; Merolla, Hunt, & Serpe 2011; Crowley & Kitchin 2016;

<sup>9</sup> Bertolet 2016; City of Seattle 2019a; Glynn & Fox 2019

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

However, there is a particular form of conscious and unconscious *stigma* (a reputation, behavior, or attribute that discredits in a specific way) and *bias* (a preference that prevents objectivity) which positions mobilized people as an aberration to a settled ideology and society. This dissertation explores *settled bias: a bias toward particular forms of emplaced settlement by settled people that socially constructs alternate forms of settlement as an oppositional “nomadic threat.”* An inherently mobilized identity of “nomadic wanderlust” persistently reinforces the concept and question of the homeless/G\*psy/migrant/hobo/savage/itinerant/nomad who chooses to move; or, a need for “re-settlement” similarly termed the homeless/G\*psy/migrant/hobo/savage/itinerant/ nomad “question” or “problem.”<sup>10</sup> The following are stories of settlement within commonly-held spaces until a social or biological environment-compelled displacement; and yet, settled societies insist these are “nomads.” The sociolinguistic construction of the itinerant “nomad” in its many forms centers the onus of mobility and suffering on a mythic wanderlust of the displaced, obscuring the nuanced forces of past and present unsettlement. This research suggests that stigmatization of a sociolinguistically constructed “nomad” psychologically disconnects the social responsibility between settled communities, the forces of unsettlement they deploy, and their (often violent) dispossession and disaffiliation of unsettled neighbors – such as the historic enclosure of common lands to produce capital and cheap itinerant labor.

The enclosure of a common pool of overnight public parking used by vehicle residents in Seattle does more than generate income through property seizure and fines; the regulation of public parking for anonymous movement perpetually mobilizes a low-income workforce by openly exiling this population using regular law enforcement and posted overnight restriction

---

<sup>10</sup> Anderson 1923:125-262; Gmelch 1982; McVeigh 1997; Neary 1997; Smith & Greenfields 2003:13-43; Ó hAodha 2007; Korac 2009

signs.<sup>11</sup> This spatial control acts as a form of social control – what Katherine Beckett and Steve Herbert describe as a “banishment” from public space.<sup>12</sup> While nearly all of the vehicle residents I met were raised with settled ideals and sought settled stability, my ethnographic and archival research showed that mobile sheltering exposed unsettled communities to what Robbie McVeigh and Eric Ringmar (separately) describe as an “anti-nomadic” bias of settled societies. The stigmatized, constructed identity of an aberrant “nomad” tends to render unsettled people and their attempts at settlement as invalid and block their inclusion in settled systems. A presumption of inherent mobility can obscure shared forces of unsettlement and make them illegible, justifying the banishment, criminalization and violence against bodies and property shown in these pages. By investing an unsettled person with an identity of mythically-inherent “nomadic” wanderlust, settled bias works as a tireless non-human actant that shifts a social responsibility for unsettlement and suffering onto displaced people.

I conducted this research to help individuals and communities relieve immediate suffering and develop long-term social cohesion. Irene Glasser and Rae Bridgman called for similar “holistic ethnographies” in their *Anthropology of Homelessness* to explore, “every possible factor that contributes to the state of homelessness, whether it is internally (personally) or externally (structurally) induced.”<sup>13</sup> My goal is to answer micro and macro questions into the root causes of the instability and disaffiliation I observed. Rather than construct another academic truth to define “the home-less” or “the nomad,” my research seeks to understand the anthropological relationships between behaviors of mobile sheltering and social or biological environmental forces – of material culture to culture as a whole.

---

<sup>11</sup> So, MacDonald, Olson, Mansell & Rankin 2016; Herring, Yarbrough & Alatorre 2019

<sup>12</sup> Beckett & Herbert 2009

<sup>13</sup> Glasser and Bridgman 1999:9-11

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

This project applies the four fields of anthropology, examining this human behavior of mobile sheltering according to socio-cultural, socio-linguistic, physical-biological, and archaeological perspectives. In particular, this study focuses on the sub-field of ethnoarchaeology, combining ethnographic and archaeological methods to understand the environmental, social and economic challenges that people living in vehicles face in contemporary Seattle. I use five ethnoarchaeological research methods during my study of vehicle residency, including (1) participant observation and experimental archaeology, (2) material culture analysis, (3) settlement mapping, (4) ethnographic interviews, and (5) ethnographic documentation, such as material collection, field notes, and photography. The next section examines the ethics behind this research, the methods employed and my positionality as a researcher. These sections both introduce vehicle residency and construct a foundation for the following histories, critical tales, scientific research, grounded recommendations and theoretical interventions. The experiences shared in these pages inspired my passion for this work, and hopefully produce a compassion in others for our shared humanity.

*Cultural anthropology is not valuable because it uncovers the archaic in the psychological sense. It is valuable because it is constantly rediscovering the normal.*<sup>14</sup>

### *1.1 Ethics, Methodology and Positionality of this Research*

This study was initially inspired by Jason De León's ethnoarchaeological research<sup>15</sup> and my participation in his Summer 2010 Undocumented Migration Project field school, as well as Holly Barker's applied anthropological work with Marshallese communities.<sup>16</sup> I wanted to conduct similar applied ethnographic research with a community that I cared about, based on my brief time as a "teenage runaway" in 1992 and lifelong experiences with vehicle residency, detailed further in this chapter. I began this study at the University of Washington as an undergraduate honors thesis project following a thorough ethical review with my advisor, Rachel Chapman, and have repeatedly reassessed my methods with successive doctoral chairs Miriam Kahn, Danny Hoffman, and Sven Haakanson.

Doctor Haakanson's ultimate mentorship was personally and professionally invaluable to my doctoral program, inspiring me to conduct applied ethnoarchaeology that is deeply rooted in ethics of empathy and healthy community. I trained through undergraduate and graduate coursework to produce responsible ethnography, collecting data that (re)presents a contextualized tale and protects the safety of its storytellers. Funded by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program, this research and doctorate progress has been subject to annual reporting and review. This study received an Institutional Review Board (IRB) waiver twice – as graduate study at the University of Washington (September 26, 2018), and a research fellowship at Seattle University (reconfirmed October 1, 2018) – because, while I did not perform human subject experimentation nor surveys, I documented the use of public

---

<sup>14</sup> Sapir 1932

<sup>15</sup> De León 2015

<sup>16</sup> Barker 2012

space and refrained from collecting personally identifying information as much as possible. Although I did not document experiences with individuals during my employment in social services to protect client confidentiality, during follow-up I received individual informed audio consent to record, photograph and present their experiences in public spaces. In particular, I found photography useful in building rapport by sharing images during their production, as well as powerfully encapsulating visual data for later analysis and (re)presentation.

Recording the intimate and public details of vehicle residency through extensive photography and field notes helped me to organize, analyze, and convey many of the forms, functions, causes and effects of using a vehicle as home. Visual anthropologists John and Malcom Collier described this value of photography to document human behaviors, objects and places: “The photographic inventory can record not only the range of artifacts in a home but also their relationship to each other, the style of their placement in space, all the aspects that define and express the way in which people use and order their spaces and possessions.”<sup>17</sup> I produced over 5,250 photographs during this research that were curated for use in this dissertation under the guidance of Dr. Haakanson, a visual anthropologist renowned for his work with Siberian “nomadic” Nenets (Samoyed) communities of northern arctic Russia. I filled four weatherproof field journals with observations and notes regarding many aspects of vehicle residency during this research, based on my interactions with vehicle residents, the general community, law enforcement officers and policy makers. Additionally, I photographed and collected three medium-sized boxes of materials, from community threats (see Image 1), parking tickets and impound-warning stickers (see Image 2), to vehicle resident outreach fliers and a counterfeit “No Parking 2-5 AM” sign (see Image 3).

---

<sup>17</sup> Collier & Collier 1986:45



Image 1  
An 8.5"x11" sign placed on the front window of a vehicle residence in Seattle and collected by advocate for vehicle residents, Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett. September 9, 2012.

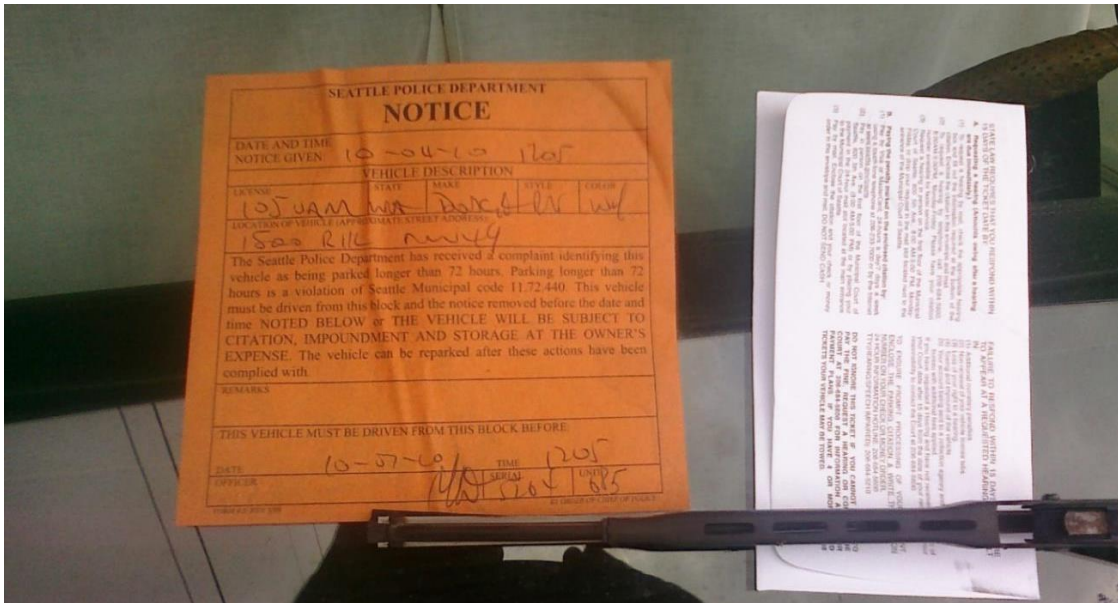


Image 2  
Detail of Parking-over-72-hour Violation Notice stickers on my RV, sometimes referred to as "Orange Tags." Although I had parked the 1976 "Travelze" for one day on this industrial street, the RV was "tagged and ticketed" as part of a sweep of all vehicle residents in the vicinity. October 4, 2010.



Image 3

Counterfeit “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs. While at a friend’s rental home in industrial Ballard, I noticed this stack of signs among piles of discarded machinery and debris. Note the lack of municipal codes or city authorization on their lower edge. June 30, 2015.

Throughout this research, I observed how publicly identifying people engaged in socially stigmatized behavior can endanger their social relations, safety, and physical or mental health – detailed in research by Jo Phelan, Bruce Link, Robert Moore and Ann Stueve.<sup>18</sup> Stigma of a “homeless label” may endanger future relationships with family, romantic interests, employment or housing providers who view legally-consented, widely-available images and details. The potential to cause harm by publishing a map, image or personal identifier has increased with the use of social media in a digital age because the internet is pervasive and never forgets. This was

---

<sup>18</sup> Phelan et al., 1997

my primary research challenge: to ethically portray the personal aspects and social contexts of vehicle residency in a way that does not expose vulnerable people to risk.

To protect current and future safety of research participants, I did not record, or have edited to remove all personally identifying information in my research data except where it is otherwise available in public news reports. The study areas of this research (particularly during settlement mapping) were based on reported locations from Seattle Police Department Parking Enforcement Department Supervisors to avoid exposing unknown communities to additional legal pressure. Beyond altering identifying names and information in-text to protect safety and privacy, I chose photographs for use in this dissertation that do not clearly show faces, specific locations, or license plates. Although names and identifying information have been altered in the ethnographic vignettes, all of the quotes herein are otherwise directly transcribed. I stored the audio files on a keypad-secured external digital hard drive and personally transcribed only the quotes used from these interviews for this dissertation. I have attempted to reconnect with all interview participants featured to reaffirm their intent and consent, as well as accuracy of the information and their portrayal.

This research included interviews with a wide variety of individuals involved with vehicle residency in some form – from the concerned housed and business community, law enforcement, social service providers, *and* their neighbors who inhabit vehicles as primary shelter. I chose an informal process of semi-structured interviewing for this project, defined by H. Russell Bernard as having the “quality of unstructured interviewing, but ... is based on the use of an interview guide. This is a specific list of questions or topics that need to be covered in a particular order.”<sup>19</sup> I digitally recorded the audio of conversations that occurred at locations and

---

<sup>19</sup> Bernard 2006:212

times chosen by the interviewees. Each interview began with a recorded discussion of my research, intentions for publication, and a verbal confirmation of informed consent from the interlocutor to document our conversation. Interview questions began with basic demographics questions regarding individual histories with vehicle residency, then progressed into life-story questions focused on personally experienced causes and effects of vehicle residency. Seven women and six men who had experience inhabiting vehicles participated in twenty-five recorded interviews during this study, varying in individual length from fifteen minutes to over five hours. Vehicle resident interviewees reportedly occupied vehicles from two weeks to over twenty years between the ages of seven and sixty-seven. Additionally, I conducted six recorded interviews with members of the local housed and business community, as well as innumerable off-the-record conversations with policy makers and law enforcement officers.

My employment as an Outreach Specialist led to several lasting associations with vehicle residents who would later contribute to this research, findings and a set of concluding recommendations – an important process of relationship building suggested by Shawn Wilson.<sup>20</sup> However, I did not solicit or perform interviews during work-hours, to focus on the difficult tasks at hand as well as maintain the safety, rapport, and confidentiality of social service “clients.” As this nine-year (2010-2019) project progressed, my increasing visibility and recognition as an “expert” or “advocate” provided opportunities for snowball sampling with interviewees, from vehicle residents and their advocates to law enforcement officers and city council members. On this critical note, partially due to a sense of “imposter syndrome,” I consider myself neither expert nor advocate regarding vehicle residency. The experts in vehicle residency are vehicle residents, who should be the source of their grounded information

---

<sup>20</sup> Wilson 2008

regarding their specific needs. I support the personal agency of all vehicle residents who value their home as their optimal form of shelter, and encourage communities as well as policy makers to empower this important property as a transitional space for people who might seek permanent stability. I advocate for inclusive stability and housing for all, so that vehicle residency in public space is not perceived as the preferred sheltering strategy among a constrained set of options. I show in this study how a punitive push destabilizes our struggling neighbors. Instead, I suggest that a positive pull into off-street parking spaces with civic infrastructure and social service support can help stabilize many vehicle residents and alleviate the problematic occupation of public streets. This recommendation is among several gleaned from interviews and extensive archival research, detailed in the conclusion of this dissertation.

Ethnography, the primary tool I used to convey this data, typically describes cultural constructions through regular *in situ* (or, “in position”) observation, using video or audio recordings, photography, notes taken “in the field,” “head notes,” and “scratch notes.”<sup>21</sup> In his lengthy historical and methodological review of an anthropologist’s note taking process, *A Secret Life of Fieldnotes*, Roger Sanjek described how this emplaced documentation connects the researcher to their research.<sup>22</sup> Citing Walter Goldschmidt, Sanjek reminds that the “special quality of anthropology is holism, contextualization, and the preserved sense of the human scene as exquisitely complex and intricately articulated.”<sup>23</sup> My work continues an ethnographic tradition of “critical tales,” what John Van Maanen described as a form of study that is “situated to shed light on larger social, political, symbolic, or economic issues.”<sup>24</sup> However, Sanjek corrects any separation of “critical” and “realist” tales,

---

<sup>21</sup> Jackson 1990:3; Clifford 1990:47; Ottenberg 1990:139

<sup>22</sup> Sanjek 1990

<sup>23</sup> Goldschmidt 1985:172

<sup>24</sup> Van Maanen 2011:127

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

These are not opposing forms. Rather, a critical element may be either weaker or stronger in any ethnography, but it is this element that gives the work meaning and purpose. Both our theoretical and ethnographic productions are, at last, subordinate to the social, political, symbolic, and economic issues that move and motivate use. These never permit escape. They are Science, and scientists; Interpretations, and interpretationists, (realist) Ethnography, and (critical) ethnographers.<sup>25</sup>

The field notes, photographs, material and data collected during my study provided grist for the following *critical realist ethnography* on vehicle residency. Engaged critical research gave meaning and purpose to my work, empowering connections between the following (auto)ethnographic productions and the “social, political, symbolic, and economic issues that move and motivate use.” I attempted to embody this grounded yet critical philosophy, immersing myself through five years of volunteer and paid work with vehicle residents, social service providers, law enforcement officers, policy makers, housed and unhoused communities across Seattle. Whereas all ethnography is subjectively and inescapably framed by its creator, these extensive and connected moments developed a profound sense of responsibility to share the stories of my neighbors.

Alongside ethnographic accounts of personal histories and experiences, I used ethnoarchaeological methods to empirically document environmental factors that constrain the settlement of people who occupy vehicles as “home.” Nicholas David and Carol Kramer suggest that this research strategy of combining qualitative and quantitative methods to understand our relationships with material culture can inform powerful analogies and inference,

Ethnoarchaeology is neither a theory nor a method, but a research strategy embodying a range of approaches to understanding the relationships of material culture to culture as a whole, both in the living context and as it enters the archaeological record, and to exploiting such understandings in order to inform archaeological concepts and to improve interpretation.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Sanjek 1990: 187

<sup>26</sup> David & Kramer 2001:2

The mixed methods of ethnoarchaeology inform an understanding of social experiences through intensive contextualization of physical objects in space as forms of material culture. Using this methodological and analytic frame, I show the relationship and economies of a vehicle residence as material culture, or sites of social processes that are shaped by and shape the identity of their possessors – from their contemporary (“systemic”) creation and maintenance, to their (“archaeological”) deposition and recycling or reuse. This strategy produced cross-cultural analogy and inferences, offering grounded suggestions for programs and public policy regarding mobile sheltering. Based on similar research with British *Traveller* communities who have regularly inhabited vehicles for centuries, Phil Scraton suggests that experiencing critical research creates the space to “speak truth to power” regarding social service provision, policies, and understanding of unsettled communities; in particular, how structural forces are obscured by implicit and explicit biases.<sup>27</sup> The following critical research methodology produced grounded data, analysis, analogy, inferences and recommendations for understanding mobile sheltering in an archaeological and contemporary context. I began this project using the method of experimental archaeology: the purchase, habitation and maintenance of a vehicle as temporary residence on the streets of Seattle.

Alan Outram described the process of experimental archaeology as the re-construction of conditions and human behaviors, specifically to generate and test archaeological hypotheses.<sup>28</sup> Whether crafting an arrow through flint-knapping or (re)constructing kayaks from museum artifacts, Outram argues that these are rigorous scientific experiments which produce “actualistic” representations of past behaviors, providing unique opportunities to develop and refine hypotheses and inferences. I employed an initial participatory method of experimental

---

<sup>27</sup> Scraton 2004

<sup>28</sup> Outram 2008

archaeology to understand how and why a vehicle was used for emplaced homemaking within Seattle's public parking.

These experiences led me to develop a basic hypothesis that vehicle residency settlement patterns in public parking were primarily constrained by posted ordinance and law enforcement. The procurement, maintenance and sporadic habitation of a recreational vehicle in public parking for four months (discussed further below) produced a trove of experiential data, research questions and theses. I observed considerable social and legal stigmatization directly related to my experimental use of the vehicle as residence, and wanted to understand how law and social services approached this form of shelter. I continued a participatory research model through nearly two years leading the Ballard Community Taskforce on Homelessness and Hunger (2011-2013), two years of employment as the official social service outreach provider to all vehicle residents in Seattle (approximately 1,500 people at that time, 2013-2015), one year membership on the Executive and Governing Boards of the regional (King County) social service oversight agency (2015-2016), and three years (2017-2019) developing and coordinating the local vehicle resident subpopulation focus for the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) count of unsheltered people. These experimental and participatory methods provided a set of holistic data to suggest grounded, systemic and theoretical interventions. In addition to my first-hand and participatory experiences, this research included regular collaboration with vehicle residents, their advocates, social service providers, law enforcement officers, and policy makers who contributed their knowledge and guidance to this ethnographic and archaeological project.

Archaeologists and anthropologists such as Larry Zimmerman, Rachael Kiddey, Matt Salo and Pamela Campanelli offer numerous suggestions to assist in the documentation and service provision for "outlier" and "hard-to-survey" populations, including participatory and

collaborative research with unhoused communities.<sup>29</sup> Zimmerman and Welch’s “archaeology of homelessness” in particular offers excellent ethical, methodological, and analytical considerations. However, documenting settlement patterns of diverse vehicles in a wide field of public parking presents specific challenges that are unresolved by their exemplary archaeological excavation of contemporary encampment sites in Minnesota and Indiana. For example, due to a common technique of camouflaging the use of vehicle as a residence many of these mobile settlements are entirely self-contained and may not deposit objects in a consistent pattern, such as “caching” items in public space or evidence of food preparation sites.<sup>30</sup> A full *in situ* excavation of settlement patterns in public parking is further confounded by the regular (up to every seventy-two hours) enforced migration of vehicle residents across large interjurisdictional areas with different local laws, community responses, and vital resources. Like Jason De León’s studies on undocumented migration across the border between Mexico and the USA, my intent was to protect the safety and anonymity of potentially unknown or hidden communities while documenting how environmental factors affect behavioral patterns. To this end, I used archaeological mapping of anonymous vehicle resident settlements according to vehicle type, within areas reported to me by law enforcement officers as previously known for vehicle residency. Findings were aggregated to remove individual identification, and present settlement maps at least seven years after their inhabitants have relocated. Many of the streets documented here have since been further restricted through additional “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs.

With the generous support of Donna Franklin, Catherine Hinrichsen and Dean David Powers at Seattle University, I developed the Vehicle Residency Research Program (2012-2013) to map these spaces. I led our settlement mapping student teams during day and night intervals

---

<sup>29</sup> Salo & Campanelli 1991; Zimmerman, Singleton & Welch 2010; Zimmerman & Welch 2011; Kiddey 2017

<sup>30</sup> Zimmerman & Welch 2010:74-78

for two, eight-week multi-seasonal studies across a wide area of constrained public parking in North Seattle. University of Washington geography students Mike Richey and Giram Wolfe combined these maps into geographic information system (GIS) format, and then correlated this data with legal restrictions and known public resources. My settlement mapping is comparable to similar research with “nomadic” and “sedentary” Irish Tinkers by Kevin Kearns in 1977, revealing striking parallel settlement adaptations to social and legal constraints. In the conclusion of his extensive archaeological and ethnographic study, Kearns describe the plight of the Tinkers in nearly indistinguishable terms to what I observed experienced by Seattle (See Image 4),

Some charitably see them as "God's poor," pawns of a neglectful society, and deserving of compassion and assistance. Others view them rather innocuously as a pitiable lot and general nuisance. Many, however, dispassionately condemn them as social aberrations, their encampments a visual and moral blight upon respectable communities.<sup>31</sup>



Image 4

Personal property in corporative space: a vehicle resident micro-community in SODO that was corralled on this street by law. Note the associated goods that are comparable to descriptions of Tinker and Traveller communities regarding objects for homemaking, work or “scrapping.” February 2, 2015.

---

<sup>31</sup> Kearns 1977

While I contest Kearns' so-called academic truth that, "Like Romany [G\*psies], Tinkers possess *l'instinct migratoire*" ("the migratory instinct"), his descriptions of "Tinker economic adaptation" mirror the ethnographic accounts in this dissertation – including "Scrap Metal Collecting," "Begging," as well as "Peddling, Odd-jobbing, and the Dole." My personal observation and performance of these acts has nurtured my insider (*emic*) and outsider (*etic*) perspective toward this research, presenting an opportunity for a unique auto-ethnography of vehicle residency.<sup>32</sup> I weave in my auto-ethnographic experiences throughout this work because, as former chair of the American Association for Anthropology and head of the American Ethnological Society Walter Goldschmidt wrote, "In a sense, all ethnography, is self-ethnography."<sup>33</sup> The following depictions of "homelessness" and vehicle residency show how people use mobile shelters to find their subjectively optimum stability, offering background (or, positionality) to this research and its biases.

I first observed vehicle residency when I was six years old in 1982, living in the Californian Central Valley farming town of Tracy. My mother and father purchased a house that had been destroyed by a previous fire in the distant South (San Francisco) Bay Area. My parents invited a family friend who named himself "Pan," recalling the Roman deity of the wilds, to park his live-in camper on the property while he helped my general-contractor father build our future home. Among his many positive and negative lessons, Pan taught me how people use mobility to find stability. He showed me how a mobile home was more than what it contained, and not readily abandoned. My parents wanted me to learn from Pan, who they described as a "magical story-teller" that lived out of a handcrafted, wooden camper trailer since the mid-1970s. Pan often bragged of being a founding "hippy" from the Haight-Ashbury community in San

---

<sup>32</sup> BRE 2007; Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011

<sup>33</sup> Goldschmidt 1977; 294

Francisco, one of the original members who famously led a procession for the “death of the hippy” after they saw the national “Summer of Love” co-opt their local counterculture movement in 1967. When young, Pan was a “public character,” like those described by Mitchell Duneier in his book *Sidewalk* – with “eyes on the street,” a person who shapes the fabric of their community, who *is* public.<sup>34</sup> Pan was unique: an aging motorcycle “biker” *and* “mountain man,” he was later diagnosed as bi-polar and often complained of impending doom. He had surgically cut the tops his ears to fashion points like his namesake, and kept a live African lion in his Bay Area apartment throughout the early 1970s. I remember Pan resembling Dan Haggerty from the US television show “Grizzly Adams” (NBC, 1977-1978). Pan was living anachronism – covered from hat-to-boots in leather tassels, bear and lion claws, reptile skin, feathers, petrified shark teeth, and more turquoise than most people see in their lives.

By the early 1980s, the man I knew as “Uncle Pan” had traveled for years across North America in his camper-truck, but sought a place to rest his weary bones and store his Tolkienian home. I fondly remember his sweet tobacco-scented, wood-shingled camper where every wall had a stained-glass window, cupboard, photograph, or some personal memento of his travels – often a feather, flower, painting, or woven art. We never thought of Uncle Pan as “homeless;” rather, we saw how he worked through personal challenges, travelled to find himself and sought a place to settle. Like Pan, untold Americans struggle to survive poverty and avoid homelessness by similarly “doubling up:” a “self-help strategy” of moving into housing paid for by relatives or friends studied by social scientists such as Marguerite Marin and Edward Vacha.<sup>35</sup> These individuals and families actively step outside standardized definitions of “homelessness”<sup>36</sup> by

---

<sup>34</sup> Duneier 1999:6

<sup>35</sup> Marin & Vacha 1990

<sup>36</sup> Argeriou, McCarty & Mulvey 1995

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

creating their homes for extended periods in non-standard ways. Within weeks of parking his home, Pan moved into the only (dilapidated) shelter on the construction site.

As our family built the house through the following years, Pan relocated into the newly available spaces but kept the camper ready for use at a moment's notice. During an extended vacation (described below) my parents learned that Pan had rented a room in our house to his female teenage-runaway friend – a source of phone calls from her concerned family for years. My parents asked Pan to leave our home, two years after he entered my life. He collected his belongings on the back of his motorcycle, rode to his sister's house, and left his camper behind. I never saw Pan again, and the abandoned camper became by childhood “play fort” until he surreptitiously retrieved the structure around five years later. These experiences laid a foundation for my lifelong interest in the causes and effects of unsettlement, settlement, and homemaking.



Image 5

My parents and I, after a three-month vacation in this seventeen-foot RV. Photograph by Thelma Vannoy. August 2, 1984.

I first experienced vehicle residency personally in 1984, during a family vacation throughout North America for four months in a seventeen-foot-long RV (see Image 5). While my fully-employed parents typically only had weekends to spend time together, this vacation afforded the opportunity to connect as a family through close intimacy and interaction. We parked at RV campsites, as well as occasional urban streets and open areas without utilities or services, described as “boondocking” in anthropologists Dorothy and David Counts’ research with “RVing seniors.”<sup>37</sup> I played at community parks with fellow children who were “on the road,” kept warm at night behind inch-thick walls, and learned to share a tiny family home. I remember the cramped conditions in the vehicle, the amplified hot and cold weather, the smell from the septic tank, difficulties maintaining amenities and the engine, and a general feeling of separation in this mobile bubble of space from the surrounding world. We had to protect our mobile home because it was our primary source of safety, privacy and storage in an often-unfriendly environment. Through this experience, I learned that there are many reasons for vehicle residency – including vacation, migration, housing affordability, and personal or family safety. Like many of the vehicle residents who participated in this study, I learned to love a vehicle as home.

My biased and privileged appreciation of vehicle residency, particularly using a recreational vehicle, was further reinforced through observing and joining my grandparents on regular jaunts across the Western US in late-model RVs. We visited historic sites in their medium-sized (approximately twenty-five-foot-long) motor homes throughout the 1980s, sleeping in campgrounds at National parks, along isolated rivers and in dense forests. An experience that may be familiar to others, we used a vehicle for vacation as a family to

---

<sup>37</sup> Counts & Counts 1996:5

affordably access places and experiences. Members of the RVing senior community studied by Dorothy and David Counts, my grandparents were “snowbirds” who owned a traditional house and enjoyed extended travels throughout their retirement until my grandfather’s declining health made trips impossible. While we did not consider these experiences as homelessness in any sense, like the Counts’ snowbirds, my (non-Roma) grandparents frequently referred to themselves by the racialized term, “g\*psies.”

I first experienced the intersection of “homelessness” and vehicle residency personally in 1992. At sixteen years old, I quit high school and ran away from my suburban life after several clashes with the law and a winter living in a group home for troubled youth. I traveled during the days throughout the San Francisco Bay Area searching for vital resources. At nights, I slept inside vehicles, in community parks, and under bridges – spaces later documented by Philippe Bourgois and Jeffrey Schonberg in their book, *Righteous Dopefiend*.<sup>38</sup> Like many unhoused people, particularly teen runaways, I avoided emergency shelters and services because of perceived legal, safety, privacy and health concerns, detailed extensively by Kim Hopper.<sup>39</sup> I became intimately familiar with the actions described in the following pages – such as bathing in sinks at community restrooms, eating food at community meals, and begging for change on public sidewalks. I relied on a set of survival actions that I chose from perceived options, and the repetition of these strategies reinforced these behaviors as normative for me.

I began this research in 2010, with the purchase of a seventeen-foot-long 1972 Dodge Tioga Recreational Vehicle (RV) from a stranger through an online listing for \$1,100.<sup>40</sup> Wanting

---

<sup>38</sup> Bourgois & Schonberg 2009:xvi

<sup>39</sup> Hopper 2003:93-100

<sup>40</sup> I researched and shopped extensively for RVs at the time, and found this as the “going rate” – currently, this is a ridiculous price considering the availability of RVs for as little as one dollar at weekly auto-auctions. At the time of its purchase, the RV had a functioning stove, water and electrical system. However, typical of RVs its age, the 1972 Dodge-“Sportsman”-van with “Travel-eaze”-camper had significant rot, little remaining insulation, and a non-functioning toilet/shower combination room.

to develop and record first-hand experience with vehicle residency in public space, I intentionally occupied the small RV on public streets in North Seattle (throughout the Ballard neighborhood) for one week per month over four months. Much of this activity was personally revelatory: learning how to sleep, eat, and maintain comfort or entertainment within a vehicle for extended periods. My intent was to study experiences within the RV, and I attempted to refrain from contact with the outside world as much as possible. While my observations as a researcher temporarily sleeping in a vehicle were not representative of long-term vehicle residency, this experience allowed me to build familiarity with vehicle residency that empowered rapport in future interviews. Further, this experimental archaeology helped develop research questions, theses, and provided detailed auto-ethnographic data concerning sleeping overnight on public streets in an RV. Almost immediately upon acquiring the vehicle, I observed intense social stigma and criminalization of the mobile shelter in urban space.

The morning after I purchased the RV, I received my first ticket for overnight parking the oversized vehicle in front of my rented house along a non-industrial street. Although I had owned the RV for less than twelve hours, affixed to the window was a standard “orange sticker” warning that the vehicle had been documented as having parked for more than seventy-two hours and was subject to immediate impound (see Image 6). I received two additional parking tickets in the following months, at least seven official warnings of property seizure, and was surrounded by police while sitting in the parked RV a block from my home under a reported suspicion of “car prowling” (see Image 7). I learned that Seattle law required the overnight public parking of any vehicle over eighty-inches-wide (including my RV) in an industrial/manufacturing zone, and soon familiarized myself with these neighborhoods. There, I saw waves of social control through spatial control of the RVs around me, similar to the processes of legal “banishment” from public

space in Seattle through ticketing and zoning studied by Katherine Beckett and Steve Herbert.<sup>41</sup>

On the rare moments when I spoke with those living in the parking spaces next to my RV, they shared regular complaints of discrimination and legal constraints. Upon completing experimental archaeology of inhabiting the RV within public parking, I gave the vehicle to a local non-profit organization and transferred title to an otherwise unsheltered neighbor (see Image 8).



Image 6

The 1972 Traveleze, parked across the street from my rented house on the morning after I purchased the vehicle. An “orange tag” sticker warning of impending tickets and impound is affixed to the window. Under the windshield wiper with the same date and time information as the “orange tag” warning sticker, a (white, rectangular) ticket was issued for violating this ordinance. Although I had parked the vehicle for less than twelve hours in this space, the RV was immediately “tagged and ticketed.” September 9, 2010.

---

<sup>41</sup> Beckett & Herbert 2009



Image 7

My 1972 “Traveleze” surrounded by three Seattle Police Department patrol cars (upper left and lower right). After I returned from an event and parked the RV in a legal space adjacent to city park near my rented house, the police allegedly received a report that I was “car prowling,” surrounded the vehicle with multiple units, then (unsuccessfully) attempted to enter and search the RV without warrant. I was detained for one hour before being released on lack of evidence. September 19, 2010.



Image 8

“Bobby with the Bus” watches as a truck tows my 1972 Dodge “Traveleze” RV (at left) to a vehicle resident encampment in North Seattle’s Interbay neighborhood. After using the vehicle for experimental archaeology, I gave the RV to a local non-profit and transferred ownership to a person in need at this encampment. August 10, 2015.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

As additional participatory observation research, I sought employment in the role of Seattle's *only* official "Outreach Specialist" for vehicle residents from 2013 to 2015 – the primary community, government, and law enforcement referral point for all street outreach. My full-time job was to offer information or guidance to receive social services for around one thousand and five hundred families and individuals who slept in cars, trucks, vans, and RVs throughout the marginal backstreets relegated to vehicle residency in Seattle. Every weekday, I navigated roughly eighty square miles in urban traffic on a fuel-economic and agile motorcycle during Seattle's typically inclemental weather. The outreach referrals I received almost invariably warned of an impending "street sweep" (see Image 9) or the removal of private property and settlements from public spaces by law enforcement officers or their agents – extensively detailed in Amoshaun Toft's critical discursive (sociolinguistic) research of "deviant subjectivities" and "self-managed encampments" in Seattle.<sup>42</sup> I witnessed how these sweeps of vehicle homes produced routine primary and secondary trauma, from disastrous personal property loss of vehicle residents, to social worker, law enforcement officer and community "compassion fatigue,"<sup>43</sup> also described as secondary traumatic stress (STS) or vicarious traumatization. Outside of this outreach work, I recorded ethnographic observations in several handwritten notebooks and produced extensive photography of public spaces. I avoided recording identifying information in my outreach records, such as full names and vehicle license plate numbers or locations to protect vehicle resident safety in case of data loss or subpoena. This study was never intended to collect demographic data on vehicle residents, but to document how vehicle residency is experienced in Seattle – all demographic information presented in this dissertation is from archival research and public reports.

---

<sup>42</sup> Toft 2014

<sup>43</sup> Figley 1995; Ellickson 1996



Image 9

A follow-up visit to the aforementioned vehicle resident encampment in the North Seattle Interbay neighborhood (see Image 8). While a parking enforcement officer issued tickets and applied “orange tag” stickers, another vehicle resident (foreground) attempted to contact the owners of unoccupied RVs so they might defend their homes from ticketing and impound. August 19, 2015.

Nine months after I began employment as an outreach provider to vehicle residents, the “pilot” safe parking program was transferred to the management of a large, local non-profit organization. The individual records of my outreach while employed with this non-profit organization are confidential; however, prior to the program transfer I produced monthly aggregate outreach reports for municipal oversight funding that were available for analysis. During those initial nine months, I visited an average of fifty-six vehicle resident settlement sites per month (thirty-three to seventy-five per month, totaling five hundred and eight sites), and spoke with an average of forty-three vehicle resident individuals or households per month (twenty-two to sixty-two per month, totaling three hundred and eighty-seven). If these averages

are applied to the twenty-one months of my employment as an outreach provider, I made contact with as many as one thousand settlement sites and nine hundred vehicle residents during the course of my outreach employment. After two years of difficult ethical and emotional labor discussed throughout this dissertation, I ended my outreach employment to focus on the individual and social suffering I observed from a (con)structural perspective. As the final method of participatory observation for this study, I volunteered to serve on the Executive and Governing Board as well as Chair of the Policy Committee the regional social welfare services continuum of care (CoC) coordinating agency, All Home.

The CoC Program was (re)codified under the US Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) to formalize a single local Federal grant submission and disbursement agency for all services, centralize data reporting through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and incentivize important Federal initiatives of the moment – what could be thought of as, “concerns *du jour*.” Like all CoC agencies in the USA, All Home was generally self-organized but required to “include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual” on its governing board.<sup>44</sup> I sought an appointment to observe from inside how the CoC system coordinated federal and regional funding and guidelines for social services, to better understand the local politics of emergency services providers and policy makers regarding vehicle residency. I was chosen to serve from October 2015 to December 2016, based on my previous experiences with homelessness as a youth and outreach provider, our vehicle residency research, and my regular participation in the annual enumeration of unsheltered people.

---

<sup>44</sup> US HUD 2012:5

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Despite the honest compassion and well-meaning of my colleagues, I observed a systemic disaffiliation of vehicle residency during my year with All Home. On more than ten public occasions, I heard vehicle residents and their advocates demand off-street parking spaces as well as a moratorium on signs and enforcement that forced them from public space. Despite this outcry, my fellow board members were quick to dismiss their demand for parking space and, instead, included vehicle resident concerns with the general needs of the total unsheltered population – primarily, a demand for permanent affordable housing. To be fair, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) similarly offers no guidance for vehicle residency and equates sleeping in a car with a park, defining “homeless” somewhat generally as:

An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including *a car*, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground. 24 CFR §578.3: Ch. V (4–1–17 Edition)<sup>45</sup>

Despite a lack of specific federal recognition and guidance, there were at least nine “Safe Parking Programs” operating across the US West Coast in 2018 that focused on the specific need of overnight parking for vehicle residents.<sup>46</sup> From San Diego (CA) to Kirkland (WA), these programs offered ten to one hundred and fifty parking spaces for vehicle residency (sixty average spaces) – often in an overnight-*only* church parking lot that did not allow RVs (see appendix data, developed through a collaboration with UW Evans School of Public Policy students Alisha Dall’Osto, Kayla Jackson, and Alexis Rinck). However, requests for parking space in Seattle were roundly denied and met with the (paraphrased) response, “Yes, everyone needs housing.” I heard similar responses throughout my tenure at All Home, such as during a closed funding meeting in which an Executive Board member dismissed any need for parking in emergency

---

<sup>45</sup> US Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2019, emphasis added

<sup>46</sup> Daal’Osto, Jackson & Rinck 2018 (See Appendix)

services, “Why are we even talking about people living in cars, when we know that we need more shelter beds?” On a related note, All Home reported in 2018 that the number of people living in vehicles (3,372) and emergency shelters (3,585) was nearly identical<sup>47</sup> – yes, everyone needs housing; right now, vehicle residents need a home for their home.

I felt like a lonely voice at All Home, consistently pressing to reverse the historically-low inclusionary space for vehicle residency. Toward the end of my tenure in 2015, I had the opportunity to present alongside advocates to the All Home Governing Board on the regional conditions of vehicle residency and the need to provide overnight parking spaces that connects vehicle residents with local social service systems. A prominent Executive Director of a large advocacy organization and fellow Executive Board Member erased the particular needs of vehicle residents in their public response to our presentation: “People who live in cars are lucky to have a tin roof over their heads. I’ve seen nothing that shows they need anything different from anyone else who is homeless.” While our presentation resulted in a “Policy Statement on Vehicle Residency Solutions,” there remained little direction for developing parking space that connected vehicle residents to existing social service systems, including permanent housing assistance.<sup>48</sup>

Ignoring the well-reported, important differences between the habitation of a vehicle as a primary shelter and other forms of so-called “homelessness” excludes a significant portion of Seattle’s “unsheltered” community. While there is a wide diversity of our neighbors who inhabit vehicles as a primary shelter, a 2018 survey of “unsheltered people” in King County (n=885) showed several key distinctions between the general “unsheltered” population and vehicle

---

<sup>47</sup> All Home 2018:9

<sup>48</sup> All Home 2015

residents (n=171) that may disrupt stereotypes.<sup>49</sup> Compared with the surveyed unsheltered community, vehicle residents in King County were disproportionately between the ages of twenty-five and forty years old (fifty-nine percent v. thirty-five percent) and were more likely to have lost their previous traditional housing due to eviction (twenty percent v. nine percent), loss of job (thirty-one percent v. twenty-three percent) and divorce (twelve percent v. seven percent).<sup>50</sup> Otherwise, local vehicle residents reported similar statistics on gender (sixty-four percent male and thirty-two percent female), as well as health care needs and criminal justice history. These demographics suggest, as advocates have repeatedly claimed, that many vehicle residents are people newly unhoused or struggling to avoid “homelessness,” and can benefit from relatively simple economic assistance. Among these particularities, there is a primary difference between people who inhabit vehicles and those who sleep in other forms of shelter in public space: there is a significantly-low likelihood that a vehicle resident will abandon their vehicle-home and the property it contains in public space overnight for a temporary shelter bed. While what is sometimes termed “diversionary” social service outreach from public space is always difficult, attempts at alleviating the occupation of public parking is nearly impossible without a space for vehicle residents to park their home. My job was to provide this diversionary outreach to my neighbors.

Living “in the field” affords a unique perspective into an implicit and explicit bias toward vehicle residency. Lanita Jacobs-Huey offers an excellent critique on how “conducting fieldwork ‘at home’ is a fundamental break from the problematic classic tradition of what [had been characterized] as the ‘Lone Ethnographer’ riding off into the sunset in search of the native” that

---

<sup>49</sup> All Home 2018

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*:79-81

creates space for voices of grounded, long-term experience with their subject matter.<sup>51</sup> This critical realist ethnography includes my personal experiences of banishing vehicle residency to the most industrially-polluted, under-resourced, and unprotected parts of public space in Seattle. I (re)enforced and documented unchecked acts of public violence and discrimination toward vehicle residents throughout Seattle – from irate neighbors to concerned citizens, law enforcement officers and compassionate providers. I worked within a system for half of a decade that refused to provide the parking space necessary to include vehicle residents, up to half of King County’s “unsheltered” population, in existing services designed to “end homelessness for all.”<sup>52</sup> I observed a *settled bias* that rejected the perceived and real value of a vehicle as a safe, supportive home.

The next chapter details a history and theory behind my research, providing further context into this adaptive strategy of mobile sheltering. There are few academic texts that specifically focus on the habitation of vehicles in public parking;<sup>53</sup> however, considering vehicle residency as a mobile sheltering strategy connects this contemporary behavior with a considerable body of research with mobilized communities, such as the British and Irish “Travellers” and “Tinkers” – often pejoratively labeled “nomads” and “G\*psies.” This cultural comparison unmask a long-standing discrimination among settled communities that constrains the stabilization of mobilized people and erases social responsibility for their imminent displacement. I will return to this analogy in chapter four, after the following historical and theoretical review of mobile sheltering and settled bias.

---

<sup>51</sup> Jacobs-Huey 2002

<sup>52</sup> All Home 2018

<sup>53</sup> Counts & Counts 1996; Mendoza 1997; Wakin 2005, 2014; Augé 2011

*At night when the streets of your cities and villages will be silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land.*<sup>54</sup>

## *2.0 A History of Vehicle Residency and Unsettlement*

This history of Seattle includes certain facts, and respectfully acknowledges that the lands occupied by the City of Seattle and the University of Washington are taken from long-settled people. The unsettlement, marginalization and under-recognition of these past and current communities is a prominent example of the “weaponized mobility” discussed throughout these pages. Less than a decade after the Euro-American colonization of Seattle, Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens’ 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott forced the relocation of many extended families who spoke Lushootseed – including the linguistic and collateral kinship groups of the Puget or Coastal Salish and assembled Duwamish communities.<sup>55</sup> This violent dispossession of living space engenders harm to individuals and societies, a well-documented determinant on individual and community mental/physical health, diet, and occupational mobility.<sup>56</sup> An example of this systemic harm can be seen in the 2019 federal count of Seattle and King County’s “sheltered and unsheltered” community, that reported sixty percent of the people surveyed who identified as “American Indian or Alaskan Native” slept outside of the emergency shelter system – the highest rate of service disaffiliation among the local unhoused community. According to this report, although “American Indian or Alaska Natives” currently represent one percent of the general population they are ten percent of King County’s unhoused population. Furthermore, local community leaders report that existing documentation methods have consistently under-represented indigenous peoples.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Attributed to Duwamish Elder “Chief” Si’ahl, c1780-1866. Thrush 2006:93

<sup>55</sup> Treaty with the Dwamish, Suquamish, etc., 1855

<sup>56</sup> Hopper 2000; Lee, Tyler & Wright 2010; Moutlon 2013; Medas 2015; Crowley and Kitchin 2016

<sup>57</sup> EchoHawk-Hayashi 2019

In South Seattle during the years between World War I & II (1914-1945), the natural rivers and estuaries were carved up and redirected to construct the Duwamish Waterway. This area became home to Boeing Aircraft Manufacturing in 1910, “flourished” with industry during the World War and Post-War Years, and was named one of the US’ most hazardous “superfund” toxic clean-up sites in 2001.<sup>58</sup> A contingent of the Duwamish community sued for tribal recognition in the 1970s but were denied by the infamous Boldt Decision (1974, upheld 1979), based on the US government claim that they were physical unable to occupy their ancestral land while it was reconstructed from 1915 to 1925. The industrialization and pavement of these South Seattle waterways continued through the twentieth century, as they became the mixed-zoned manufacturing, commercial, shipping and residential communities of SODO (“South Of the [former] King *DO*me”), South Park, and Georgetown. In North Seattle, similar development transformed the Shilshole Bay into the Ballard Shipping Locks and channel “cut” that connects the Puget Sound (and Pacific Ocean) with Seattle’s Lake Washington. These industrial and manufacturing zones that line Seattle’s waterfronts featured prominently in my research, as the few legal streets available for overnight parking for up to half of local vehicle residents that inhabited oversized vehicles such as RVs and school buses.<sup>59</sup>

Sometimes referred to as “car camping,” “vehicle dwelling,” “mobile home-lessness,” or “wheel estate,”<sup>60</sup> vehicle residency has been the most commonly reported form of shelter for people who inhabit public space in Seattle and King County (WA, USA) for over a decade.<sup>61</sup> While the proportion of vehicle residency had matched the local rise in homelessness through the early 2000s and consistently represented at least thirty percent of unsheltered people, the

---

<sup>58</sup> Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition (DRCC) 2019

<sup>59</sup> All Home 2018:9

<sup>60</sup> Bruder 2017

<sup>61</sup> Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH) 2019; All Home 2019

visibility of vehicle residency appeared to be increasing across King County.<sup>62</sup> According to the 2018 national Point-in-Time (PIT) count of homelessness,<sup>63</sup> over half (fifty-three percent) of the people who inhabit public space in Seattle sleep overnight in a recreational vehicle (RV), car, van, truck or school bus.<sup>64</sup> That year, King County’s total homeless community reportedly increased to over 12,000 people, with roughly half living in public spaces such as parks or parking (referred to as “unsheltered”), and half in emergency shelters, transitional or permanent supportive housing (referred to as “sheltered”).<sup>65</sup> All of these reports are minimum estimates given the remote locations of vehicle residency and tendency to camouflage vehicle residencies – vehicle residents and advocates who I met often argued that an accurate census was at least double the reported estimates in any given year. Due to a combination of improved counting methods (detailed in 4.2) and new population growth, the reported number of vehicle residents across King County increased by forty-six percent from 2,314 in 2017 to 3,372 in 2018. Moreover, the number of vehicle residents had nearly quadrupled from 881 people in 2008, surging three hundred and eighty-three percent in the next decade.

Despite these widely reported numbers, there were few service providers that offered the necessary parking to 1,163 people living in cars, 479 living in vans, let alone the 1,730 vehicle residents occupying larger RVs or school busses who comprise twenty-seven percent of the “unsheltered” community reported in King County.<sup>66</sup> Whereas local municipalities provided over 3,500 emergency shelter beds that connected people with social services, these same communities responded to increasing vehicle residency by criminalizing sleeping in a car

---

<sup>62</sup> SKCCH 2019; All Home 2019

<sup>63</sup> US HUD 2018

<sup>64</sup> All Home 2018:8-9

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> All Home 2018:133

outright or through the banishment of overnight parking using ordinance, signs and their enforcement.<sup>67</sup> This trend of socially disaffiliating vehicle residency was widespread, as shown in the 2014 report by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty that found the number of cities which banned sleeping in cars across the USA had increased one hundred and nineteen percent from 2011 to 2014.<sup>68</sup> Like its discrimination, the reliance on mobile shelters as a housing strategy for “unsheltered,” unsettled and migrating communities has a long and well-documented history.<sup>69</sup>

In the early twentieth century, “car-camping” gained popularity across the USA with the production of camping attachments for the Ford Model T. Arguably, the first commercial travel trailer was released in 1919 – designed and built by aviation and motorcycling pioneer Glenn Curtiss who referred to the vehicle as a “motorized [G\*psy] van” and “motor bungalow.”<sup>70</sup> The *Curtiss Aerocar* was part of a growing market of recreational travel products for automobiles, such as homemade “auto-tents” (a lean-to tent that relied on the car as its primary support and shelter) and the “Auto-Kamp” trailer (early towed vehicles that moved the living space out of the car and into the tent-trailer). Similarly, the “Chenago Camp Trailer” (a mass produced, wagon-like trailer with a solid floor and rear wall, but foldout wood and canvas living space) and the “Covered Wagon” (a small Conestoga-styled wagon with rubber tires), kicked off the development of the burgeoning Recreational Vehicle industry. In popular and news media, U.S. automobile and tire companies promoted vehicle-based vacations through wilderness adventures,

---

<sup>67</sup> So et al., 2016

<sup>68</sup> National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) 2014:24

<sup>69</sup> 1977 Gmelch; Counts and Counts 1996; Clements & Campbell 1997; Kenrick 1997; Kendall 1997; Clark 1997; Hancock 2002, 2007; Corbett 2007; Ó hAodha 2007; Power 2007.

<sup>70</sup> Wallis 1991

such as a well-reported 1921 car-camping trip led by Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone and Thomas Alva Edison to a Maryland campsite owned by President Warren G. Harding.

Detailed thoroughly by James Twitchell, the popularization and mass-production of the “camper-car,” “camper-trailer,” “camper-truck,” “camper-van,” and emerging commercial-vehicle-sized (over eighty-inches-wide) RV markets continued through the first half of the twentieth century across the USA.<sup>71</sup> RV industry growth was encouraged by the post-World War II manufacturing and baby “booms,” offering middle-class families with disposable income a wide-variety of options for affordable recreational vehicles to enjoy weekend vacations. The commercialization of the RV for vacationing sparked an emergent “RV culture” in the 1950s, popularized mass-produced long-term shelters such as tow-behind stainless-steel “Airstreams,” and smaller “tear-drop” or larger “fifth-wheel” trailers. By the early 1960s, the general RV market was dominated by commercial-vehicle-sized models that were self-propelled, making many of the earlier “car-tents” and other experimental designs obsolete. However, aftermarket and conversion industries developed for van and truck owners in the 1960s, empowering people to purchase camper-shells, portable water and electrical/generator systems, as well as conversion components to rebuild virtually any vehicle into a home.

“Non-traditional” vehicle-homes came into frequent use during the mid-1960s, such as converted school buses like “Further” – the (in)famous travelling commune, home to Ken Kesey and Neal Cassady’s well publicized exploits with their band of Merry Pranksters. Inspired by reports of these new travelers, people converted an untold number of Volkswagens, ice cream trucks, bread trucks, cargo vans, ambulances, school buses and firetrucks into long-term shelters. Mobile shelters could be easily equipped with aftermarket or handcrafted accessories to improve

---

<sup>71</sup> Twitchell 2014

the occupant's quality of life, including stoves, heaters, running water, sanitation, or refrigeration. These vehicles residencies became connected with the rising subversive culture of the 1960s, as identifying objects for "hippies" like Uncle Pan who traveled searching for new opportunities. The addition of these particular aftermarket or conversion vehicles to the recreational vehicle identity dramatically affected the future of vehicle residency by cementing a connection between vehicle residents and transient "hippies" for generations, such as with the "Rainbow Family" studied by Michael Niman.<sup>72</sup>

Detailed further in chapter four, an oversized overnight municipal parking restriction mandates that any vehicle over 80" wide (such as an RV or school bus) park within industrial and manufacturing zones between midnight and five AM. Within these spatial constraints, "No Parking 2-5 AM" signs were installed in areas with a high number of business and housed community complaints regarding vehicle residency (see Image 10). In these polluted and under-resourced spaces, thriving arterials, crumbling backroads, and dirt alleys wind their ways around warrens of warehouses and shipping yards. Lines of RVs, school buses, box-trucks, trailers, vans and cars are legally required to relocate throughout these areas every seventy-two hours (see Image 11), endlessly looking for settlement in a shared hostile environment.

---

<sup>72</sup> Niman 1997

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

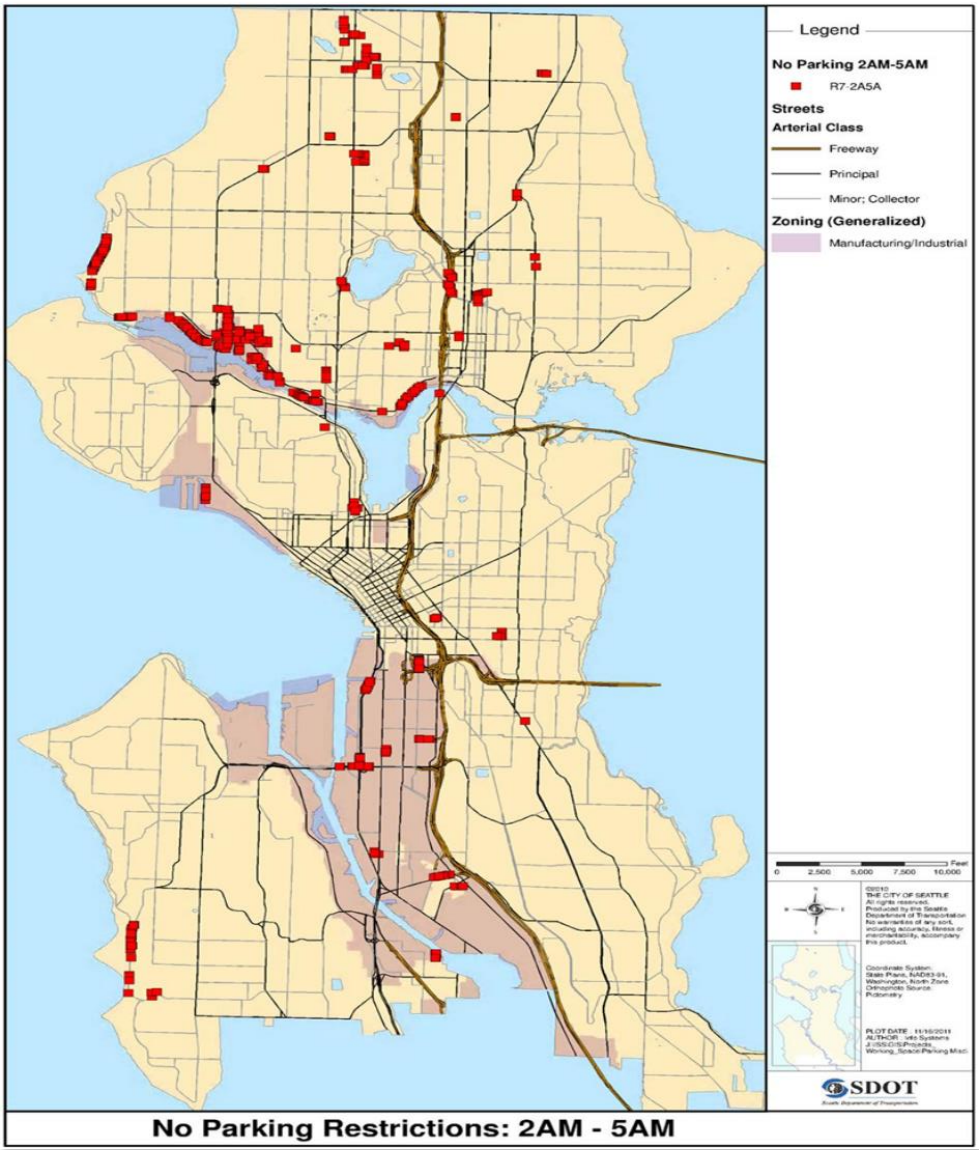


Image 10  
Manufacturing/Industrial Zoning (tan) and “No Parking 2-5 AM” sign placement (red dots) in Seattle  
(Courtesy of Seattle Department of Transportation, 2011)

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss



Image 11

“Ivar,” a Scandinavian-born and long-time Ballard vehicle resident shows a ticket. Ivar was a senior citizen who lived with his developmentally disabled son in their van – note the comment that his disabled placard does not exempt him from endless migration due to “72 HR PKG Violation.” May 30, 2014.

Through economic and technological booms of the late twentieth century, communities across the USA saw a torrent of investment from the “new rich,” raising average housing prices from \$151,000 to \$200,000 according to the Consumer Price Index.<sup>73</sup> During this time, inflation increased thirty two percent and drove a need for multiple incomes to support struggling families.<sup>74</sup> From 1993 to 2000, the US economy grew annually by four percent, as opposed to two and seven-tenths percent for the twenty years leading to 1993.<sup>75</sup> Despite a progressivist assumption that increasing productivity would improve living standards through increasing compensation, US productivity rose eleven percent from 2002 to 2007 while hourly incomes for

<sup>73</sup> US Census Bureau 2019

<sup>74</sup> US Bureau of Labor Statistics (US BLS) 2019

<sup>75</sup> Jolliffe 2003

high school and college educated workers fell.<sup>76</sup> According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, when “The US Great Recession” began in late 2007, many of these “new poor” found their incomes insufficient to afford the quality of lives they had come to expect – including housing in valuable urban space.<sup>77</sup> According to a 2009 Reuter’s article, when the “longest and deepest recession in 70 years” hit amid a foreclosure and subprime mortgage crisis, many Americans found themselves priced out of their communities.<sup>78</sup> In 2008, nearly ten percent of Americans were reported as unemployed, the highest number since the Great Depression (1933-1940). Like vehicle residents Junior and Star discussed in chapter three, 39.2 million or thirteen percent of all Americans (304.1 million in 2008) lived at or below the poverty level.<sup>79</sup>

By 2008, the Great Recession was in full-swing and forty-two percent of the 664,414 Americans that were counted as “homeless” on a January night were “unsheltered” or living in situations defined federally as “not meant for human habitation” such as a “car or truck.”<sup>80</sup> For innumerable reasons, the journey to or from living in public space often followed a route that intentionally avoided emergency or transitional shelters: specifically, through the vehicles held onto during economic setbacks or purchased from dwindling or new found capital. This capital to purchase a vehicle for shelter may be gained through employment, asset liquidation or inheritance, as shown here and in Bourgois and Schonberg’s *Righteous Dopefiend*.<sup>81</sup> These ethnographic accounts reveal how vehicles may become “homes” when traditional housing has been stripped away; when people find themselves climbing up or sliding down the precarious ladder between housing and a total loss of property. People from all backgrounds looked to the

---

<sup>76</sup> Economic Policy Institute (EPI) 2018

<sup>77</sup> NBER 2008

<sup>78</sup> Mutikani 2009

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> US HUD 2008

<sup>81</sup> Bourgois & Schonberg 2009

City of Seattle as a land of opportunity – whether they were evicted, struggling to stabilize, or seeking their fortune like a growing mass of high-technology employees.

Seattle experienced another labor market shift in the early Twenty-first Century, from “blue-collar” aeronautics and manufacturing to highly-educated and highly-paid information technology professionals. This immigrating (American *and* international) population of educated “white-collar” workers brought and incentivized capital to further enclose, build or purchase private spaces.<sup>82</sup> Throughout the City, property developers bought land, tore down single-family housing, and built densely-packed micro-apartments or condominiums that were often more expensive than the previous home and regularly lacked adequate off-street parking. Like their predecessors, newcomers may not have seen their investment in local communities and property as a cause of unsettlement, but as a boon to the economy. However, the influx of capital into Seattle severely constrained housing availability and affordability, further displacing vulnerable people – often, strongly correlated to racialized and socioeconomic class.<sup>83</sup>

Visitors and rare locals with a (US) right-leaning politics frequently decried the often (US) left-leaning politics of King County, Seattle’s Mayor, City Council and populace, citing these as the cause of a growing “homeless blight.” In 2017, a J.D. Power survey of 26,000 tourists ranked Seattle 37 out of 50 U.S. cities based on travel experiences, citing public cleanliness, safety, as well as the price of goods and services.<sup>84</sup> Leaders of the “Visit Seattle” non-profit marketing organization in 2018 reportedly sought extra security for tourists, after a visiting advanced planning group for the American Pharmacists Association (somewhat, ironically) questioned scheduling future events after complaining of open drug sales and use,

---

<sup>82</sup> Balk 2018

<sup>83</sup> Bertolet 2016

<sup>84</sup> Balk 2017

“aggressive behavior,” as well as public urination and defecation near the downtown convention center and hotels.<sup>85</sup>

Local advocates and politicians responded that the causes for historic numbers of unhoused individuals and families are primarily structural, stemming from a decades-long regional spike in housing unaffordability.<sup>86</sup> This assertion is reinforced by an epic surge in property and rental costs alongside studies that correlate contemporary US housing unaffordability and homelessness. Whether examples of correlation or causation, by the summer of 2018 the reported average local home price was rising by five dollars an hour,<sup>87</sup> rents had soared sixty-nine percent from 2010 (compared with the national average of thirty-two percent,<sup>88</sup> and across King County roughly one-quarter of the reported 12,112 unhoused men, women and children inhabited a vehicle as their primary shelter.<sup>89</sup>

Vehicle residency has been portrayed for decades in the US media as a substandard shelter at best and a public health threat at worst, part of what Susannah Taylor referred to as a discourse of disease and disorder (discussed further below).<sup>90</sup> The mobile shelter has been used as a ridiculous tool for slapstick as a stigmatized inappropriate space: whether its home for “Matt Foley,” Chris Farley’s character from the television series *Saturday Night Live* (who “lives in a van down by the river”), or “Cousin Eddie,” Randy Quaid’s character from the film franchise *National Lampoon’s Vacation* (who lived with his bumpkin family in a RV “tenement on wheels”). The RV as a confined shelter is familiar punchline in comedy films, such as *Spaceballs* (1987), *Meet the Fockers* (2004), *The Incredibles* (2004), *RV* (2006), and *We’re the Millers*

---

<sup>85</sup> Horcher 2018

<sup>86</sup> City of Seattle 2019a

<sup>87</sup> Adolph 2018

<sup>88</sup> Rosenberg 2018

<sup>89</sup> All Home 2018

<sup>90</sup> Taylor 2013

(2013). Closer to the reality I observed in this study, there is a common stigma and hardship in poignant representations of vehicle residency such as John Steinbeck's classic *The Grapes of Wrath* (1932), the more contemporary film *Wendy and Lucy* (2008), as well as documentaries such as *American Nomads* (2011) and *The Overnighters* (2014). Unfortunately, the most common cultural reference to vehicle residency I heard while conducting this research involved a popular 2008-2013 AMC network television show, a pervasive stereotype of RV-based methamphetamine production I called, "the *Breaking Bad* effect." While vehicle residents are often referred to as "transient" or even "home-less," the people I met frequently decried these terms and settled in place for as long as possible to access necessary resources. As one vehicle resident comments in *Rubber Tramps*, a 2002 documentary on vehicle residency featuring Ken Kesey, "I'm not homeless; I have a home. My home is homeless, not me."<sup>91</sup> The people I met used their vehicle for long-term housing; without a private location, they lived in public space.

There are more similarities than differences between the mobilized neighbors who share their stories in these pages. Where previous studies of vehicle residency tend to reasonably site this behavior within specific settings, the trend to differentiate these subjects may limit the scope of their analogous conclusions that can suggest inference between mutual experiences of unsettlement. The practice of mobile sheltering is not unique; it is a common adaptive response to environmental constraints on settlement. Moreover, a socially constructed settled bias is not unique; it is a common form of social control to reinforce a settled ideology. Like Virgil decried some two-thousand years ago in the *Aeneid*, these constraints on settlement "shut up the shore" to our "drowning" neighbors, "and drive us to cruel seas again."

---

<sup>91</sup> Koetter 2005

For decades in places like North Seattle’s Ballard and Interbay neighborhoods, people who worked in the fishing and maritime industries have inhabited RVs to accommodate seasonal employment. The recent increase in vehicle residency added urgency for an “exit strategy” that could alleviate *public* vehicle residency. However, only a handful of social services in the King County region provided the resource that was most requested by vehicle residents – long-term parking, particularly for larger vehicles such as RVs. The lack of private locations for these vehicles limited their options to occupy space – as Robbie McVeigh noted of similar conditions experienced by Irish “Travellers,” detailed in chapters four and five,

In the absence of legal sites, nomadism is rendered illegal *whatever individual nomads do*. Thus sedentary colonization ends up with nomads criminalised not for their acts but for their *existence*. Through this kind of sedentary incursion, nomads are forced into illegality by the logic of sedentarism rather than the ‘nature’ of nomadism.<sup>92</sup>

Vehicle residents in Seattle inhabit a hostile environment where, *in the absence of legal sites, vehicle residency is rendered illegal whatever individual vehicle residents do*. Seattle’s law enforcement, social service outreach and “navigation” have been constrained by primarily disciplinary policies that only pushed vehicle residents from block-to-block, as well as a lack of “diversionary” off-street parking space. Endlessly enforcing migration on vehicle residents causes reiterative trauma and disconnection from social support shown in these pages. The continuous unsettlement of mobile shelters also required a massive personnel time and cost for law enforcement and social service outreach providers who, like myself, frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the laws and policies they were paid to enforce. To the public, the rotating community of mobile shelters across the region produced the obvious material common to

---

<sup>92</sup> McVeigh 1997:24 (Italics reproduced from original. *Sic.*)

human housing and settlements – such as the mounds of possessions, personally valued resources, and consumer or biological waste. These growing piles of objects and refuse inspired a crescendo of public complaints. These complaints legitimately concerned people dumping raw sewage on easements, accumulating bottles of urine (common for shut-ins and those in vehicle-hospice), and building mountains of resources (often, in various states of deconstruction for scrapping) near vehicles that occupied public parking spaces for weeks or months on end.

At the present, nearly all vehicle residents in Seattle live within a diminishing pool of available public parking. The following accounts of Bobby with the Bus, Junior and Star, Bernie, Mac, and the protestors of Bangarang village show how these neighbors chose optimum strategies for settlement from an environment of constrained options, including severely-limited overnight parking space that is safe from tickets, impound, as well as near the resources needed to survive. As of this writing this policy of pushing mobile shelters throughout the communities across King County continues, despite the growing number of vehicle residents alongside increasing law enforcement and social service personnel costs. There has been an inadequate response to both the needs and scale of this community, and punitive policies have objectively failed to reduce the occupation of public parking in vehicles across King County (see Image 12). This is the endemic discrimination faced by vehicle residents in Seattle: a structural violence of settled bias that alienates mobile shelters as eternally aberrant, justifying their banishment from public space and social services.

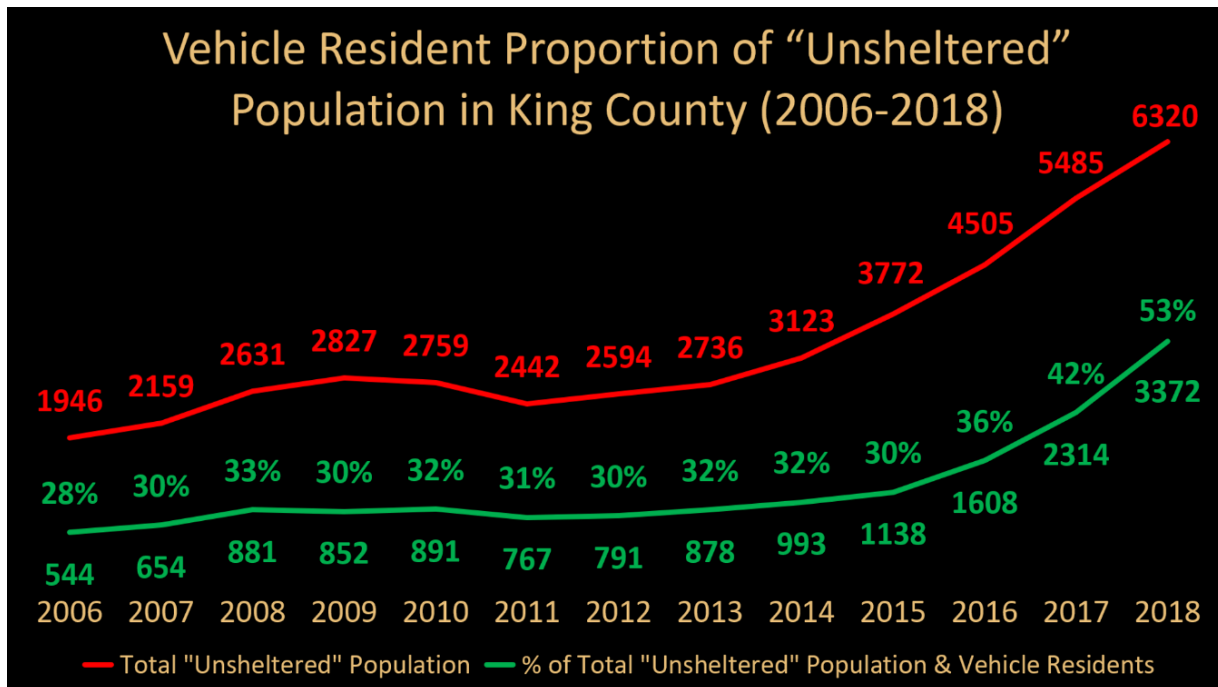


Image 12

Vehicle resident proportion of local “unsheltered” community (2006-2018)<sup>93</sup>

I chose a critical realist ethnographic framework to produce my holistic study of vehicle residency for analogy with other forms of mobile sheltering. Through this lens, I observed the adaptive behavior of mobile sheltering as a socially constructed form of *homoplasy* – a parallel or convergent, and individual or cultural adaptation to similar sociobiological environments. This chapter connects my research on vehicle residency in Seattle with other unsettled communities, revealing adaptation, discrimination and violence by settled people who reinforce their social order through aberrating so-called “nomadic” behaviors.<sup>94</sup> My work contributes to a body of research with stigmatized and marginalized communities who rely on mobile shelters, that together expose a pattern of settled bias which repeats through at least two-thousand years of Western European and (post-)colonial societies. This bias defines particular forms of settlement as acceptable and others invalid according to a socially constructed hierarchy of shelter.

<sup>93</sup> SKCCH 2019; All Home 2019

<sup>94</sup> Ibn Khaldūn 1377; Khazanov 1994; McVeigh 1997; Gmelch 1982; Smith & Greenfields 2003; Kabachnik 2010b, 2010b; Crowley & Kitchin 2016; Ringmar 2017

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

The field of anthropology is littered with studies on cultural taboos and norms that may be perceived as strange without a sociobiological and cultural context. The goal of this chapter is to provide context for the habitation of vehicles as primary shelter in public parking. Contemporary vehicle residency is controversial, nuanced, as well as under-represented in academic literature, social service provision, public advocacy and legal protections. I contextualize this complicated survival strategy in these pages by weaving social theories, ethnographic vignettes, and empirical data. I continue by introducing the theories used for my study in this chapter alongside the story of Bobby with the Bus, a neighbor who has inhabited vehicles for over one-third of his life. This second chapter presents his critical tale alongside a deeper historical context of mobile sheltering and settled bias, as well as a literary review of so-called home-lessness in Seattle and vehicle residency in the USA. In the third chapter, I correlate Bobby's experiences with those of a family who relied on a series of seven vehicles as primary shelters during this research. There are several analogies that can be drawn between these stories as adaptive responses to sociobiological environmental forces of unsettlement, connecting vehicle residency in Seattle with a global history of displacement, sedentism, anti-nomadism and settled bias. Chapter four reviews the primary analogy I observed in depth, while chapter five details a subsequent inference. In conclusion, I detail a set of findings and recommendations of how communities can include vehicles as transitional shelters into existing systems of care for those who seek this support. This inclusion requires a paradigm shift to recognizing the potential value of a vehicle residence for unsettled people. I will return to Bobby's story in the final chapter, after reviewing the theories, methods, analogy, inference, conclusions and recommendations developed through this research.

*It is not the nomad who defines this constellation of characteristics; it is this constellation that defines the nomad, and at the same time the essence of the war machine.*<sup>95</sup>

## 2.1 Literature Review: Vehicle Residency, “Homelessness” and Mobile Sheltering

There is a resounding academic cannon on the reiteratively “new face” of homelessness and unhoused people in America,<sup>96</sup> yet relatively few examples that focus on mobile sheltering such as vehicle residency.<sup>97</sup> Despite a dearth of research, there are growing ranks of fiction and non-fiction texts on the vehicle residency in the Twenty-first Century. These range from manuals such as Bob Wells’ *How to Live in your Car, Van or RV (And Get Out of Debt, Travel, and Find True Freedom by Dropping Out of the Rat Race)* or Veronica Harnish’s *Car Living When There’s No Other Choice (Tips & Strategies for Survival & Safety)*, to personal accounts of extensive vehicle residency such as Craig S. Robert’s *Ten Consecutive Years Living in Cars (Living, Traveling, Camping, Attending College, and Performing Surveillance in Cars---and Loving it!)*, A.J Heim’s *Car Living Your Way: Stories and Practical Tips from those who have been Down the Road*, and Ramona Mayon’s affective *Nomadic Proud*.<sup>98</sup> There have been exceptional works from mainstream publishing houses, such as Richard Grant’s *American Nomads* and Jessica Bruder’s *Nomadland*.<sup>99</sup> Early in this research, my pre-teen daughter even recommended several children’s and young adult books that she read in elementary school and which focused on vehicle residency, such as *A Shelter in Our Car* and *How to Steal a Dog*.<sup>100</sup> There are countless social science and historical studies on home-lessness, unemployment and

---

<sup>95</sup> Deleuze & Guattari 1987:423

<sup>96</sup> Anderson 1923; Bogue 1973; Spradley 1970; Kozol 1988; Rossi 1989; Burt 1992; Jencks 1994; Susser 1996; Desjarlais 1997; Anderson 1998; Duneier 1999; Glasser & Bridgman 1999; Kusmer 2002; DePastino 2003; Hopper 2003; Arnold 2004; Lyon-Callo 2008; Beckett & Herbert 2009; Bourgois 2009; Willse 2010; Wagner & Gilman 2012; Taylor 2013; Howard 2013

<sup>97</sup> Mendoza 1997; Counts & Counts 1998; Wakin 2005, 2014; Augé 2013

<sup>98</sup> Heim, 2001; Roberts 2007; Harnish, 2013; Wells 2014; Mayon 2016

<sup>99</sup> Grant; 2003; Bruder 2017

<sup>100</sup> Gunning & Pedlar, 2004; O’Connor, 2009

poverty, yet the particularities of vehicle residency tend to go unnoticed when these homes are included in a general list of “home-less shelters.” This section reviews some of the limited academic literature on vehicle residency, focusing on the works of anthropologists James Spradley (1970), Phillippe Bourgois and Jeffrey Schonberg (2009), David and Dorothy Counts (1995), as well as sociologist Michelle Wakin (2014).

In the field of contemporary anthropology, James Spradley popularized the term “urban nomads” based on his ethnographic research with self-identified alcoholics (or, “tramps”) and the criminal justice system in Seattle.<sup>101</sup> Spradley’s contradiction of terms combines what anthropologist Anatoly Khazanov distinguished between urban, *settled* development/extraction of resources *in situ*, and *nomadic*, environmentally-reflexive production of new resources where they do not exist.<sup>102</sup> Spradley’s book, *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads* (1970), has been lauded as a “classic” of “good systemic ethnography,”<sup>103</sup> inspiring generations of social scientists to study urban poverty in European and post-colonial states such as the USA. Spradley argued for a system of characteristics to define the itinerant and unhoused people he termed “tramps” because, “A decision as to their social identity will not only enable us to identify who they are, but also why they live as they do.”<sup>104</sup> Continuing a western scientific tradition of external identification and labelling, Spradley reduced the thousands of lives he studied into a fixed set of categorical academic ‘truths.’ His problematic definition of the “urban nomad” immediately struck a nerve with my research: “The urban nomad culture is characterized by *mobility, alienation, poverty*, and a unique set of *survival strategies*.”<sup>105</sup> While these

---

<sup>101</sup> Spradley 1970

<sup>102</sup> Khazanov 1983:3

<sup>103</sup> Muecke 1994:193

<sup>104</sup> Spradley 1970:66

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*:253

characteristics are a provocative start, they may overlook the causal relationship between *mobility* as an adaptive *survival strategy* to environmental *alienation* and *poverty*. Moreover, Spradley's shorthand taxonomies may be deterministic, and are certainly determined by his biases, those of his contemporaries and his study sample. I concur with Larry Zimmerman's critique that considering "the homeless" as urban nomads who use "optimal foraging" akin to "Classical foragers" is potentially inappropriate and reductive.<sup>106</sup> Ethnoarchaeological techniques employed during this research helped me parse material and mental realities of mobile sheltering, showing how labels such as "urban nomads" and "the home-less" can reinforce stereotypes.

Based on his informant interviews, Spradley describes a single "tramp domain" for vehicle residents (who he terms, "rubber tramps") as, "untrustworthy because he steals from other tramps and can easily escape in his car."<sup>107</sup> This negative depiction of rubber tramps reinforces cultural stereotypes of rootless mobility and is likely to be externally constructed. Spradley defines a non-specific, rather redundant typology of vehicle residency that includes seven shelter, or "flop," categories: "truck, used car lot, junk yard, transit bus, harvest bus, car on street, own car."<sup>108</sup> Spradley's highly influential work may help perpetuate a pattern of reductionist categorization that values discursive efficiency and management over subjective, lived realities. If Spradley's seven "flop" categories of "rubber tramps" were used to document vehicle residency for a Federal Point-in-Time count today, they would produce a wildly inaccurate number with low confidence.

In contrast to Spradley's categorical divisions, David R. Cole shows how *nomadic theory* can help the field of social science by "adding a new dimension to social inquiry"<sup>109</sup> that is

---

<sup>106</sup> Zimmerman & Welch 2010:82

<sup>107</sup> Khazanov 1983:79

<sup>108</sup> Spradley 1970:103 [*sic*]

<sup>109</sup> Cole 2013:226

ambulatory and environmentally reflexive. Nomadic theory combines well with an ethnoarchaeological research strategy by intentionally transgressing constructed mental, material, and methodological boundaries. This itinerant science may counter what Edward Said called a “textual attitude” that builds on written academic ‘truths’ to reinforce cultural stereotypes.<sup>110</sup> A nomadic theory directly contests new forms of political or population management such as Spradley’s taxonomies, and looks to understand the social and biological ecology surrounding actions. Nomadic theory encouraged me to consider how people use vehicles as home to document vehicle residency according to sheltering *behaviors*, counter to Spradley’s complicated flop taxonomies. The behavioral-based identification system developed during my research was adopted as the official vehicle residency enumeration methodology in the 2017-2019 King County Point-in-Time counts of all “unsheltered people,” discussed further in chapter four.

Although I was initially inspired by James Spradley’s research on “urban nomadism” in the 1960s, his focus on people entwined in alcoholism, incarceration and “home-lessness” seemed to miss the deeper relationship between urban spatialization, unsettlement and mobile sheltering practices. Philippe Bourgois and Jeffrey Schonberg’s equally admirable and influential 2009 work focuses on intoxicant (alcohol, heroin and crack-cocaine) addicted men and women who were unhoused in San Francisco.<sup>111</sup> Their text, *Righteous Dopefiend*, affected me personally, documenting the same spaces under bridges in the San Francisco Bay Area that I called home as a runaway teen.<sup>112</sup> Although Bourgois and Schonberg’s ten year research briefly includes vehicle residency, their four-page mention is soaked in depictions of criminality. Amid an omnipresent structural violence of crime and addiction, Bourgois and Schonberg describe

---

<sup>110</sup> Said 1979:92-94

<sup>111</sup> Bourgois & Schonberg 2009

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*:xvi

how interlocutors Tina and Carter built a home in a “fifteen-year-old orange and white Chinook camper.” The following excerpt shows numerous similarities to the experiences I document in my study, particularly the investment in a vehicle as a preferred “home” in a hierarchy of settlement:

They parked their camper in an alley behind the McDonalds in order to use the restrooms more conveniently, and they began bathing every morning in the sinks. After their second ticket from the police, Carter and Tina moved their camper five blocks deeper into the warehouse district to a less conspicuous side street amid disabled big-rig trucks and garbage strewn empty lots. Al and Sonny parked their pickup and camper-shell next to them. Sal, the dealer, also moved his sales spot onto this same side street using the Chinook to block his visibility. Carter was outraged, relishing the opportunity to display a “not-in-my-backyard” homeowner role, complete with a patriarchal detail of protecting his woman from scum.<sup>113</sup>

This pervasive focus on addiction and criminality in influential studies with unhoused neighbors may unintentionally reinforce negative stereotypes of inherent substance use disorder, such as Bourgois and Schonberg’s ethnography of heroin and crack users and Spradley’s research with chronic inebriates. I regularly observed people using substances to manage or mitigate sociobiological environmental and traumatic forces during this research. However, it is incorrect to relegate substance use as particular to a “lumpen” class outside of larger societal factors, such as a contemporary over-prescription of psychological medications as well as a malaise of social, psychological and physical disconnection.

In her 2013 article, doctor of social work Susannah Taylor showed how a “discourse of disease and disorder” in research on so-called homelessness can act as “the weapons of structural violence.” Taylor challenges with the simple question, “*What is homelessness?*”<sup>114</sup> She presents a nuanced response through a lens of structural violence, conflict theory and the work of prominent “homelessness” researcher Randall Amster, discussed below.<sup>115</sup> Where medical

---

<sup>113</sup> Bourgois & Schonberg 2009:70

<sup>114</sup> Taylor 2013:256,267

<sup>115</sup> Amster 2008

anthropologist Arline Mathieu described the neoliberal medicalization of homelessness in New York City in the 1990s by displacing structural unsettlement and disaffiliation onto the “mentally ill homeless subject” who is subsequently justified in their removal,<sup>116</sup> Taylor similarly addresses a trope in social science to reinforce a neoliberal notion of a self-imposed “homeless threat”:

A structural definition of homelessness has to do with what it means to occupy public space in non-normative ways.

Thus, divergent use of public places is presented as disorderly, thereby justifying intervention. This divergent use of place is threatening to the social order.

Therefore, the homeless need to be seen as a threat to the social order rather than people who simply use place in a different way.<sup>117</sup>

I believe that the threat detailed by Taylor is the socially constructed fear of unsettlement, part of what I describe here as settled bias. In her conclusion, Taylor suggests a praxis for an applied social work in the true sense – the work of nurturing societies:

If we want to transform oppressive social arrangements we have to transform current proprietary attitudes towards the use of place. The fact that place is mobilized, that it is a site of contested meanings and that it is a process (Staehele, 2003), must become a focus of social [science]. Therefore, places are sites of power relations. That people are not allowed to occupy public places in private ways is different than saying that society should be structured in such a way that people should not have to.<sup>118</sup>

Susannah Taylor’s sociolinguistic and post-structuralist approach shows how an academically-common discourse of disease and disorder needs to be redressed, dismantled, and understood as integral to the process of political disaffiliation. Taylor’s conclusion supports my research thesis, that a person who “occupies space in non-normative ways” is positioned as a “threat to the social order.” For these reasons, I choose to focus on the use of a vehicle as primary shelter – a mobilized place – and how this may expose people to explicit and implicit forms of settled bias. A discourse of disease and disorder regarding mobile sheltering connects

---

<sup>116</sup> Mathieu 1993

<sup>117</sup> Taylor 2013:255 & 265

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*:269 (*sic*)

vehicle residents in Seattle with a global community that use mobile sheltering practices in response to forces of unsettlement. While there is extensive research into the causes and effects of so-called “homelessness,” there are few academic studies focused on vehicle residency in North America. Perhaps most renowned among this vehicle residency research, anthropologists Dorothy and David Counts conducted participatory observation in early 1990s with “RVing seniors,” or “snowbirds” who regularly owned land but migrated seasonally for cheaper living in warmer climates.

In *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing*, the Counts document three years of their participant observation, surveys, and interviews with "large numbers of North American seniors [that] give up their homes, families, and communities and become rootless nomads living in their RVs."<sup>119</sup> Where David and Dorothy Counts use the racial epithet “G\*psy” throughout their writing, I replace all uses of this term in the following quotations. We should consider how their use of this term may reflect an enculturated implicit and explicit (settled) bias:

Outsiders often stereotype 'people who live on wheels' as being like [G\*psies]. They think both are homeless, dishonest, untrustworthy, tax-avoiding 'trailer trash,' because they are nomadic and presumably poor. RVers, on the other hand, emphasize freedom and independence of their way of life and think of themselves as being like the early pioneers. Ironically, the contrasting images of rootless [G\*psy] and freedom-seeking pioneer both have their origins in the history of RVing. After the settlement of the west, but long before vacation camping in cars became a craze in the 1920s, some North Americans lived in mobile dwellings. Families of migratory workers such as professional horse traders, circus and carnival people, and [G\*psies] lived in wagons, often simple ones with straight-bed bodies and canvas roofs.<sup>120</sup>

Throughout their work, the Counts reflect a settled bias that struggles to justify the community among vehicle residency as “extremely important,”<sup>121</sup> while dividing the “courageous pioneer” from “disreputable [G\*psies].” As participatory observers and scientists within a settled society, an enculturated bias and socially constructed hierarchy of appropriate

---

<sup>119</sup> Counts & Counts 1996:2

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*: 51-60

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*: xvi

shelter appears to influence the Counts' research perspective and their insistence that RVing  
“freedom seeking pioneers” as more stable than “homeless [G\*psies]”:

The terms “[G\*psy]” and “pioneer” resonate with conflicting metaphoric and symbolic meanings. Depending on the qualities to be emphasized, a nomad may have a heroic image – the courageous pioneer – or a disreputable one – the [G\*psy]. One persistent image is that RVers are [G\*psies]. If we say of an RVer ‘he is a [G\*psy],’ we have a different picture of him than if we say ‘he is a pioneer.’ Both [G\*psy] and pioneer are in the domain of persons who live on wheels. [G\*psies] and pioneers are on the move, without settled homes, on the margins of mainstream settled society. However, [G\*psies] are negatively stereotyped as being untrustworthy. They are portrayed as rootless, poor, dirty, dishonest transients who attempt to get something for nothing. Landlords are reportedly reluctant to rent to them because they fear rubbish, loud noise, and damage to property.<sup>122</sup>

While they detail a history of discrimination targeting RVs and “trailer colonies,”<sup>123</sup> the Counts may also reinforce negative stereotypes by consistently separating people that positively “embody the qualities of individualism and ingenuity, who cooperate on their own terms for mutual security and to share resources,”<sup>124</sup> from “itinerant nomads” and racialized “homeless [G\*psies].” I experienced a similar pitfall early in my research, by focusing on specific behaviors of mobile sheltering as distinct (cars vs. RVs) rather than as similar adaptive responses in a complex environment of unsettlement. In the following passage, the Counts discuss a negative “G\*psy metaphor” that is strikingly similar to the “G\*psy myth” of a genetic wanderlust, debunked by Irish Traveller ethnographers, Úna Crowley and Rob Kitchin.<sup>125</sup> Further, the Counts show *settled bias*, including a *hierarchy of shelter* akin to the “intra-homeless hierarchy” documented by Michelle Wakin further in this section. According to the Counts’ extensive interviews with RVers such as Joe and Kay Peterson – founders of the largest RVing

---

<sup>122</sup> Counts & Counts 1996:80 (*sic*)

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*:40

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*:56

<sup>125</sup> Crowley & Kitchin 2016

organization in North America at that time, the “Escapees” (cleverly known as “SKPs” or “Skips”).<sup>126</sup>

One component of the [G\*psy] metaphor that adheres to RVers is the notion that people who have no fixed address – whose home is not attached to a piece of ground somewhere – are nomadic and, therefore irresponsible and untrustworthy. As a full-timer (RVer) told us, the biggest problem with RVing is ‘the way ‘normal’ people see RVers as nomads and shiftless, when nothing is farther from the truth.’ The Petersons (founders of the camping club, The Escapees) explain distrust of some outsiders as deriving from the mistaken notion that RVers are homeless: ‘most of us are afraid of what we don’t understand, and our society certainly does not seem to understand that an RV can also be a home. The general attitude seems to be that full-time RVing is a new social disease. They say, ‘responsible people don’t live like [G\*psies].’

In part, outsiders place RVers in the same category as [G\*psies] or the homeless because they do not know what else to do with them. Escapees recount with wry humour the results of their being counted in the U.S census in 1990, during the fall Escapade in Los Banos, California. After the Skips were enumerated, the story goes, census officials were unsure where to put them because there is no census category for RVers whose only address is their rig. So they classified them as “homeless people.” One official was overheard wondering if they shouldn’t be termed, “slightly affluent street people.” We were told there were so many Escapees enumerated that federal funding for the needy was increased in Los Banos.<sup>127</sup>

Products of a settled society and ideology, the Counts and their RVing interlocutors echo many of the “full-timers” (long-term vehicle residents) I met in Seattle who may inhabit vehicles for years yet express a settled bias and hierarchy of settlement that separates their self-identity from a stigmatized identity of “the homeless,” “the nomad,” and “the G\*psy.” However, these vehicle residents occupy similar socioeconomic as well as physical space in the USA, and are likewise counted in official enumerations of unsheltered people as being “homeless” – disturbingly described with “wry humour” by the Skips in Los Banos (California). After developing and directing the specialized subpopulation count of vehicle residents during the official enumeration of “unsheltered” people throughout King County (Count Us In) from 2017 to 2019,<sup>128</sup> I believe that there is a very high probability the people documented by the Counts would be reported as “unsheltered” and “homeless” if they were parked on a street in Seattle.

---

<sup>126</sup> Counts & Counts 1996:45

<sup>127</sup> Counts & Counts 1996:53 (*sic*)

<sup>128</sup> All Home 2019

Instead of forcing a separation between these groups it should be noted that, like nearly every vehicle resident I met in Seattle, the Counts' RVers were primarily on a limited or fixed income, used their mobile shelters as a way to respond to socio-economic and biological imperatives, and needed legal space to create their personal place. According to the Counts, "full-time and serious RVers firmly insist they are definitely no indolent slob;" instead, the Counts describe these snowbirds similarly to many of the vehicle residents I met as, "couples and ... singles," "compulsive planners," "retired people and ... 'Boomers' who either dropped out or were pushed out of the mainstream economy."<sup>129</sup> Similar to the income level of most vehicle residents I encountered, the Counts report that four out of five of the retired RVers they surveyed made less than \$25,000 a year, well below the US poverty line of \$37,800 when they wrote their book in 1994.<sup>130</sup> These vehicle residents saw their home as affordable housing, whether they received limited retirement payouts like the Counts' RVers, or occasional pay from low-income labor or Social Security and Disability Insurance (SSDI) checks like many of the vehicle residents I document in this study.

Despite many similarities, the vehicle residents documented in my study and the Counts' differed in several ways. The Counts describe living alongside "men and women in roughly even numbers" "between the ages of 60 and 65," who were "well educated, with some college or university training," from diverse occupational backgrounds that are more likely "white-collar workers, teachers or health professionals than mechanics, bus drivers or farmers."<sup>131</sup> In contrast, less than ten percent of the vehicle residents I met in Seattle were retired RVers, and the majority told of working in "blue-collar" manual labor or service industries.<sup>132</sup> Contrary to depictions by

---

<sup>129</sup> Counts & Counts, 1996:81

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*: 224

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*:81

<sup>132</sup> All Home 2018

the Counts, these were not homeless “nomads” fueled on wanderlust but settled people raised with settled ideals. These settled ideals are readily seen in the 2018 report that ninety-eight percent (672; n=686) of local unhoused survey respondents replied “Yes” to the question, “If safe, affordable housing were available, would you move inside?”<sup>133</sup> While their research rather rigidly defines a study group, are the people studied by the Counts that different from those they exclude? Moreover, how do these mobile shelters represent adaptive behaviors within environmental constraints?

Alternately, Michelle Wakin’s impressive research in Southern California describes vehicle residency as part of an “intra-homeless hierarchy” of shelter-value. As Wakin explained in the closing of her 2014 book,

The resources that vehicle living offers are transformative for homeless people. At minimum, they allow status within an intra-homeless hierarchy and a safe, private living space. They also have the transformative potential of offering privacy, mobility, and choice for people who are otherwise homeless.<sup>134</sup>

Like the vehicle residents in Wakin’s study, the people I interviewed often considered their shelter a “home” and self-rejected an itinerant identity of “the home-less” – a reasonable behavior for anyone who might inhabit a space for an extended period. Wakin shows how this is specifically problematic for social programs that served “the homeless,” where vehicle residents faced systemic- and self-rejection based on a confusing, arbitrary identity of “home-lessness.” On one hand, their vehicle was negatively stigmatized as an inappropriate form of shelter that was not allowed in the emergency shelter system, and on the other the vehicle residence was “better than a tent,” separating this form of mobile sheltering as more beneficial than shelters used by other unhoused people. Similarly, nearly every vehicle resident I met during this

---

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*:122

<sup>134</sup> Wakin 2014:174-175

research described their home as optimal to a standard overnight-only emergency shelter bed.

Wakin's book, *Otherwise Homeless: Vehicle Living and the Culture of Homelessness*, proposes that vehicle residency is a way for people who inhabit "makeshift shelters" to resist legal restrictions. As Wakin summarizes,

Resistance is a counter to regulation. It is a way of preserving choice and autonomy over living space. Homeless people have limited resources with which to pursue ongoing, organized resistance (Cress and Snow 1996). As a result, the most common forms of homeless resistance are designed to preserve a sense of self-worth or argue for services and provisions, including affordable housing and entitlement to public spaces. Immediate survival needs often overshadow ongoing, organized resistance. Vehicles offer unique resources for enacting resistance as they give homeless people a private, legally defensible space in which to conduct activities usually done in public.<sup>135</sup>

Wakin continues, "Vehicle owners bring something new to the table. Those who legally own their vehicles represent a form of identity work that homeless people are usually not able to access or sustain: the procurement and arrangement of a legally owned physical setting."<sup>136</sup>

Vehicle residency regularly represents the optimum housing option available to the occupant – they are affordable and allow families or couples to stay together when a shelter would likely separate them. Vehicle homes ensure a place for pets to live with their owners, act as a movable bubble of security for traumatized people, and provide a considerable improvement in conditions over other "unsheltered" options such as a tent, bench, or doorway. Wakin considers the realities of this hierarchy of shelter-value, "Examining the range of vehicle and housing choices over time, along with variations in the homeless community, puts vehicle living into perspective as an affordable housing choice that allows occupants to preserve a degree of control and autonomy that other settings do not offer."<sup>137</sup> A vehicle residence is more than a home on wheels; it

---

<sup>135</sup> Wakin 2014:5

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*:13

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*:21

provides a place for the vagaries of life that do not fit into an overwhelmed and often inflexible social welfare and emergency shelter system.

Wakin and I share a similar view that, “preserving a vehicle as a home base is a way of resisting the idea that shelters are the proper place for homeless people” – what she describes as, “shelterization.”<sup>138</sup> Like Wakin, I too sought a holistic understanding of this nuanced vehicle residency, not to reinforce stereotypes or manage the (re)construction of truths. I found that an abductive reasoning of nomadic analysis, a serendipitous becoming of an itinerant auto-ethnographer, helped me to realize the proverbial forest from the trees – to distinguish the socially constructed “nomadic threat” from the human being who optimized a vehicle as home.

I came to understand vehicle residency as a continuing anthropological story of unsettlement, rather than what is often called “homelessness” or “urban nomadism.”<sup>139</sup> I detail the theoretical framework for my study in the remainder of this chapter, in addition to my primary methods of participant observation, ethnographic interviews and photography. These initial methods led to a quantitative material culture analysis and settlement mapping, as well as a historical and legal archival research of vehicle residency. I introduce a man who called himself “Bobby with the Bus” in the following pages, and describe forces that constrain his agency to settle as he chooses. Bobby sought stability throughout our friendship. However, Bobby was blocked by four specific barriers revealed in this chapter from the only social service program that provided a supportive home for his home.

---

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*:45

<sup>139</sup> Spradley 1970

*It is impossible, or not easy, to alter by argument what has long been absorbed by habit.*<sup>140</sup>

## 2.2 Bobby with the Bus

From 2013 to 2015, I was employed as the only designated “outreach specialist” and official city liaison for vehicle residents in Seattle. Every weekday from noon to six PM, I visited a small portion of the around one thousand and five hundred people who lived along the diminishing industrial thoroughfares, backstreets, and alleys relegated to vehicle residency in Seattle. I carried a pack filled with supplies to distribute – such as bottled water, hard or soft packaged foods, socks, and informational fliers for outreach – as well as my notepad, pen, and smartphone. I wrote only sparse notes about my activities in a waterproof outreach journal, including the person’s first name (if possible), a basic description of the vehicle, the neighborhood, and the results of our outreach. As required by my supervisor, I recorded my guess of the gender and “ethnic background” of people who I typically observed for seconds, if at all. I contested the ability to document personal data under these situations, and did so in ways that would not identify the person or their location. Officially, it was my job to connect all vehicle residents who occupied public parking in Seattle with resources, services, and information that could guide people into what was considered “stable shelter.” This included a parking space in our program, an overnight shelter bed, motel vouchers, or a multi-year waitlist for subsidized housing.

I met Bobby in the Spring of 2014, when he was twenty-five years old and I was conducting outreach in North Seattle. Like all people, Bobby chose what he considered optimum strategies from an environment of opportunities and constrained options. He had survived in public spaces for over half of his life – under bridges in camps with men Bobby called

---

<sup>140</sup> Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 7. 9:15.

“homebums” who taught him to scrap and beg, in open aired shopping plazas with other teens, and in a series of busses starting in 2009. Parking laws and their enforcement drove Bobby throughout public spaces where he *might* be safe from legal fines and property seizure. He parked where he could for as long as he could, nestled between brambled hillsides dotted with tent encampments, multi-million-dollar houses and condominiums. Sometimes Bobby lived on the under-policed dirt roads that ran parallel to twenty-four-hour freight train rails and industrial warehouses. At other times, he parked among the rotating roster of vehicle-homes that encircled street lamps or twenty-four-hour businesses offering food and hygiene facilities. Like all vehicles over eighty-inches-wide in Seattle, Bobby’s bus was legally restricted to parking between midnight and six AM in manufacturing and industrial zones (Seattle Municipal Code 11.72.70).<sup>141</sup> While this common and pragmatic law ensured the unobstructed nighttime passage of over-sized emergency vehicles along residential streets, it also relegated the majority of people who slept in oversized vehicles such as RVs and busses to the most polluted, resource deficient, and unprotected parts of the City.<sup>142</sup> By the time we met, Bobby had lived for five years throughout rare industrial streets plastered with “No Parking 2-5 AM signs” (see Image 13), in an endless search for unrestricted long-term parking near the resources he needed to survive.

---

<sup>141</sup> Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) 2019

<sup>142</sup> So et al., 2016:21



Image 13

“Welcome Home.” Official signs in the north Seattle. July 16, 2015.

Bobby grew up hard and fast, developing an edginess that made sure no one got close enough to hurt. He was among thousands of young adults that sometimes call themselves “travelers” or “train hoppers” due to their occasional use of freight trains for transportation between communities and resources throughout North America, similar to the “hobo-” or “tramp-armies” of the early 1900s documented extensively by Nels Anderson, Todd DePastino,

as well as the book and film *American Nomads* by Richard Grant.<sup>143</sup> Bobby wore his long hair, leathered skin, and visible tattoos of railroad companies as badges of strength and wisdom. He dressed in dark, sturdy, de-branded clothing emblazoned with anti-authoritarian messages. In the preceding thirteen years, Bobby had experienced countless negative interactions with forces of law, similar to the systems of social control through spatial control documented in Seattle by Beckett and Herbert.<sup>144</sup> Bobby held such distrust for authority that he signed his official Washington State Driver's License and Identification Card in block script: "FUCK THE COPS."

I was instructed to visit Bobby and his neighbors as a form of spatial control experienced regularly by vehicle residents. My employer – an off-street, or "safe parking" program – offered vehicle residents professional social service and housing case management, while coordinating with local faith-based organizations to provide parking and hygiene facilities.<sup>145</sup> Beyond the endless quest for indicators of vehicle habitation to locate and offer my limited assistance for people in need, I was directed by my supervisors to respond to referrals from law enforcement and local politicians with immediate and follow-up (so-called) "outreach." These referrals often included a summary of a complaint from the local business or housed community, such as vehicle residents alleged failure to relocate every seventy-two hours, garbage, dumping of septic waste, or involvement in drug sales or sex work. I was instructed to begin referral-based "outreach attempts" with a verbal warning to all vehicle residents in the vicinity of impending fines and property seizure. After issuing this legal threat, I was to encourage the occupant(s) to abandon their vehicle-home for temporary emergency or transitional shelter, or to apply for entry into our (consistently full) safe parking program – what has been called "diversionary" outreach.

---

<sup>143</sup> Anderson 1923; Anderson 1998; DePastino 2003; Grant 2003, 2011

<sup>144</sup> Beckett & Herbert 2009

<sup>145</sup> City of Seattle 2019b

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

I called these warnings of unavoidable eviction “velvet hammer outreach” – a veneer of compassion that covers a crushing blow. On a particularly challenging assignment, I was sent to a street known as a “hot spot” of dense vehicle residency shortly before the January 2015 National Football Championships in a nearby stadium. The next day, I returned to find the area cleared of vehicle residents, tents and makeshift structures. The approximately seventy-five people who inhabited that public parking were replaced by hundreds of sports fans by the evening, who openly consumed drugs and alcohol, lit bonfires in the streets and left the area strewn with waste. Like Bobby’s referral, I regularly participated in the removal of vehicle residents from public space through what has been called “diversionary outreach” at the bequest of the housed and business community when there was no known private location to divert the outreach recipient. While I parked my motorcycle and prepared for the difficult job ahead, I saw Bobby and another man carry a bench seat from his forty-foot-long school bus, then place it perpendicular to the vehicle on an adjacent dirt easement.

As I crossed the street, the setting sun painted the clouds like rusting steel above the row of mobile shelters. A recent downpour amplified the nearby smells into a thick mélange of pine, earth, motor exhaust and urine. Rush-hour traffic of commercial, freight and commuter vehicles streamed past, blasting an occasional honk or jeer at the vehicle-homes. I approached with a wave, and yelled a cheery, “Hello!” Bobby stared through me with no response. Trying to appear unfazed, I introduced myself and offered a smile. I explained the reason for my outreach as directed by my supervisor: businesses had complained about this row of vehicles being parking for over seventy-two hours and I had been sent to ask that everyone “move along.” I then described the safe parking program, and asked if Bobby was interested in participating. Although

I was ostensibly an outreach provider, Bobby had good reason to consider me his adversary. He looked me up and down with an icy glare and said, “Go fuck yourself.”

I commonly observed this (so-called) self-rejection of my social service outreach, *the first of four key barriers* to Bobby’s entry into the only safe parking program in Seattle. Forms of social service “self-rejection” have been well-documented as an outcome from a presumedly inherent “disaffiliation” of “the homeless,” studied by social scientists such as Howard Bahr, Mark La Gory, Ferris Ritchey and Kevin Fitzpatrick.<sup>146</sup> However, Michael Sosin and Maria Bruni note how Bahr’s theory of personal disaffiliation suggests “special personal attribute perspective on services rejection” which may overlook many of the “situational factors (that is, external circumstances), which are alleged to influence clients’ perceptions of the rewards of the services compared to the costs.”<sup>147</sup> I saw this as a form of transcendentalism throughout my work and research with social service providers, that insists the person transcend their inherent flaws into a higher state through intervention. However, Bobby and the vehicle residents I met did not need to be “saved” or transformed from alleged failures by external forces; rather, their learned behaviors were chosen as optimal within a historic and present sociobiological environment of options and constraints. Without legal space to exist, as well as connect with stabilizing resources, Bobby had become trapped in a perpetually destabilizing and hostile environment that reinforced his oppositional view of law enforcement and social services.

During my employment, the safe parking program offered up to twelve off-street parking spaces for long-term vehicle residency – two at each of six local churches – that were paired with hygiene facilities and weekly visits from a social worker or housing case manager. These constantly full spaces offered off-street stability for around twenty-five people, representing less

---

<sup>146</sup> Bahr 1973; La Gory, Ritchey & Fitzpatrick 1991

<sup>147</sup> Sosin and Bruni 2000:16-17

than 0.1 percent of all local vehicle residents in Seattle at that time.<sup>148</sup> Three of the twelve parking spaces were provided for smaller (under twenty-foot long) RVs. There was no parking space available for Bobby's forty-foot long school bus, representing *the second barrier* to his entry into the only service designated for vehicle residents in Seattle. Without a safe harbor (off-street) to shelter his home, Bobby faced a multi-headed hydra of law enforcement, the general community, and social service outreach who forced him to "move along" throughout public space. Settled bias holds a vehicle residence in mobile stasis as perpetually "out of place" *anachorisms*, what Stéphane Tonnelat described as the "'Out of Frame' (in)visible life in urban interstices" based on his similar research on vehicle residency in public space.<sup>149</sup> Documented further in chapter four, the minimal scale of overnight "safe parking" space for vehicle residency compared to the overwhelming local need is a principle cause of the social service disaffiliation and systemic criminalization experienced by vehicle residents in Seattle. Without a legal space to exist, vehicle residents are rendered illegal whatever they do.

As I first approached Bobby during our introduction, I had a strong suspicion that this would not be considered a "successful outreach attempt" based on his vehicle and his personal appearance (see Image 14). When I asked for a self-description in one of our later interviews, Bobby identified himself as a "one hundred and ninety pound white male," "product of the school-to-prison pipeline,"<sup>150</sup> who first experienced homelessness at the age of twelve. He was visibly intelligent, strong, focused, and among the forty percent of local unhoused people at that time who were under thirty years old.<sup>151</sup> The limited scope of safe parking program required it to only serve "high need populations" such as families with children, single women, and senior

---

<sup>148</sup> SKCCH 2019

<sup>149</sup> Tonnelat 2008

<sup>150</sup> Meiners 2007

<sup>151</sup> All Home 2018:24

adults. Like many programs with meager funding, a screening process determined a “needs assessment score” that would certainly rate Bobby’s need too low for eligibility based on his age, gender, number of present dependents, as well as his abundant mental and physical capabilities – a system adeptly described by Virginia Eubanks as “automated inequality.”<sup>152</sup> *If* he had expressed interest, Bobby’s inevitably low “needs assessment score” would have been *the third barrier* to entering the safe parking program. Although he had been living on the streets since the age of twelve and in busses since 2009, Bobby would not have been determined as “needy enough” to receive a legal space for his home.

The histories of unsettled and mobilized people documented in this dissertation show a pattern of settled bias. Labelling the shelters of unsettled people as invalid makes them nearly impossible to integrate into social support, producing negative outcomes to long-term and intergenerational medical and social health.<sup>153</sup> Entrenched, this bias and subsequent policies of exclusion have historically produced massive costs to human lives, as well as economically through costs of social services, (re)integration, and law enforcement. There have been few investigations into the rationale of settled societies to disaffiliate and criminalize people who are displaced by shared or targeted violence, socioeconomic conditions and environmental or personal catastrophe.<sup>154</sup> However, the inclusion of displaced and mobilized people has been well-documented in the US and Europe, and may provide analogy, experience and best practices to include mobile sheltering such as vehicle residency in systems which are designed to “end homelessness for all.”<sup>155</sup> The next chapter details the theoretical framework I used for this study,

---

<sup>152</sup> Eubanks 2018

<sup>153</sup> Medas 2015

<sup>154</sup> Smith & Greenfields 2003; Kabachnik 2010b; Crowley and Kitchin 2016

<sup>155</sup> Khazanov 1983

preparing space for an analogy between vehicle residency in Seattle and other forms of mobile sheltering discussed in chapter four.

The following theoretical intervention of settled bias presents an opportunity for scholars, policy makers, advocates, and neighbors to deconstruct this powerful force within settled societies. Settled bias connects abysmal discourse regarding vehicle residents and unsettled people in Seattle<sup>156</sup> with perpetually displaced communities such as Roma, Irish and British “Travellers,” described by Úna Crowley and Rob Kitchin as, “Decades of negative categorisation and representation of Travellers [that] have produced stereotypes and social attitudes [which] cannot be easily erased; not even in the minds of those who would discredit the intolerant and the racist.”<sup>157</sup> My choice of this theoretical frame and “nomadic” analogy arose from engaged ethnographic research model, and offers new ways to connect historic forces of unsettlement with the lived experiences of contemporary unhoused people. I believe that considering the role of settled bias in the construction of private property, unsettlement, “nomadism” and “homelessness” can help social services better incorporate mobilized people into systems of care, as well as reframe the archaeological record on the causes and effects of mobile sheltering.

---

<sup>156</sup> Johnson 2019; Driscoll 2019; Hinrichsen 2019

<sup>157</sup> Crowley & Kitchin 2016:165 (*sic*)



Image 14  
“Bobby with the Bus” sitting atop his home. July 16, 2015.

*The continued criminalization of nomadism seeks to deny an existence which – symbolically and practically – challenges a sedentarist hegemony.*<sup>158</sup>

### *2.3 Theoretical Aberration: Sedentarism, Nomadic Threats and Settled Bias*

I unpack a set of theories in this section to explore the criminalization and disaffiliation of vehicle residents. This research suggests that unchecked *settled bias* tends to produce structural violence through the social construction of an enemy “nomadic threat,” part of what Robbie McVeigh termed a “sedentarist hegemony.” These concepts inspire, explain, and critique each other. Together, they show how an ancient bias that privileges a hierarchy of shelters continues to dehumanize contemporary unsettled and mobilized people. I examine implicit and explicit settled bias as a form of structural violence, according to this theory of Johann Galtung and Paul Farmer. Turning this lens toward unsettled and mobilized people, I review a form of structural violence studied among Irish Travellers that has been termed “cultural racism.” I ask a research question below that echoes similar inquiries by and with unsettled people, such as Randall Amster’s study on a common hostility toward the “yet-unborn threat” of “the homeless.” Loïc Wacquant responds to this question, suggesting that an ideological drive toward prosperity tends to self-construct poverty and “the poor” as oppositional aberrations to be surveilled and controlled. The concept of cultural racism connects Robbie McVeigh’s dual theories of sedentarism and anti-nomadism, as forms of structural violence that have been documented throughout centuries of settlement. Úna Crowley and Rob Kitchin adeptly critique these ideas as potentially reinforcing incorrect academic ‘truths’ about mobilized people, such as a pervasive “nomadic myth” of inherent wanderlust.

I build upon McVeigh’s idea of anti-nomadic bias in this section, suggesting that a *settled bias* constructs the image of the “nomad” as an oppositional threat which disconnects social

---

<sup>158</sup> McVeigh 1997:22

responsibility for the displacement of otherwise settled people through the colonization, privatization and enclosure of their shared space.

According to Eric Ringmar, the origins of this anti-nomadic bias can be found in the work of Aristotle, leading me to consider how a transcendental political philosophy underlies settled bias. This philosophical consideration leads to deeper look at nomadic theories, data, and analysis, through the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, as well as Michele Lancione's rhizomatic view of "the homeless city." As suggested by Antonio Gramsci, I use counter-narratives throughout this dissertation – such as extensive ethnographic, photographic and archaeological documentation – to deconstruct this cultural hegemony of settled bias. In conclusion, I employ these theories to support my research thesis using three premises: (1) mobile sheltering tends to be an adaptive strategy to a social and biological environment of constrained settlement; (2) the habitation of (constrained) public space requires forms of property ownership that may be cause tension through its counter-normativity to private property – the possession/occupation of personal property in a communally-held ("corporative") pool of space; and, (3) this conflict of producing place in the public spaces that have been designated for anonymous transportation between private property (what Marc Augé termed "non-place") can expose people to stigma of an oppositional "nomadic" identity which reduces a perceived unsettled human to a "nomadic threat." These theories demonstrate how settled bias disconnects the social responsibility for structural violence against unsettled people and formalizes their alienation as mythical nomadic aberrations who suffer of their own accord.

Building on the peace-studies of Johann Galtung,<sup>159</sup> Paul Farmer described similar examples of implicit and explicit bias as *structural violence*, or, "The mechanisms through which

---

<sup>159</sup> Galtung 1969

large-scale social forces crystallize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering. Such suffering is structured by historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces that conspire – whether through routine, ritual, or, as is more commonly the case, these hard surfaces – to constrain agency.”<sup>160</sup> Farmer developed this concept of structural violence through his employment as a medical practitioner in Haiti working with people who were sick and dying within severe socioeconomic constraints. Likewise, I investigate how a structural violence of settled bias may constrain the agency of people who use a vehicle as home within sociolegal-constrained public spaces across Seattle. This research shows how a bias of settler/colonizer communities to label unsettled people as aberrant may act as a powerful force that can morally justify otherwise amoral acts of intimate, public and structural violence.

A pervasive “nomadic myth” that reinforces a constructed identity of “the nomad” as one who inherently wanders – or, “wanderlust” – has been widely-studied and debunked among Roma and Traveller communities as a product of an “anti-nomadic” structural violence that obscures systemic social disaffiliation and perpetual unsettlement, sometimes termed “cultural racism.”<sup>161</sup> The somewhat confusing term of cultural racism is defined by Karen Wren as “a refined replacement of earlier biological racism. It relies on history rather than biology or religion to explain superiority.”<sup>162</sup> For people who are phenotypically akin to their settled neighbors such as Irish Travellers, the structural violence of racism and anti-nomadism appears to be so similar that this notion of cultural racism may be an attempt to bridge an elusive gap. Perhaps, the idea of cultural racism is an effort to explain the ubiquity of settled bias experienced

---

<sup>160</sup> Farmer 1996:263

<sup>161</sup> Halfacree 1996; Helleiner 2000; Fanning 2002:152-177; Belton 2005; Taylor 2008; Kabachnik 2010a; Kabachnik 2010b; Ó hAodha 2011; Convery & O’Brien 2012; Stewart 2013

<sup>162</sup> Wren 2001:143

by historically unsettled people – a form of structural violence that both constructs and aberrates a nomadic identity for political exclusion.<sup>163</sup>

This controversial debate speaks to the primary question of “nomadic politics,” rephrased by Sinéad ní Shúinéar as: “Why do Gaujos [non-G\*psies] hate G\*psies so much, anyway?”<sup>164</sup> My research question was similar, if particular to the study topic, “*Why are vehicle residents openly criminalized and excluded from social support in Seattle?*” Through ethnoarchaeological research, analysis, analogy and inference, I believe the answer to both of these questions is settled bias. Randall Amster considered parallel bias in his 2008 work, turning his post-structural analysis to a discussion of poverty and homelessness in the USA. There is an uncanny likeness between the “as-yet-unborn threat” of “the homeless” he describes, and the constructed nomadic threat detailed in Roma and Traveller studies. I suggest that the “antipathy” toward “the homeless other” described by Amster is an example of the historic settled bias experienced by unsettled people globally,

Why would cities risk undermining their distinctiveness and desirability over so vulnerable a group as the homeless? After all, homeless people lack almost any indicia of societal power, posing no viable political or military threat to the dominant culture. Of course, it is often the case that a society’s response to deviant elements is rarely linked directly to an actual threat. Rather, the threat is generally more one of perception than reality, more of a societal preemptive strike against an as-yet-unborn threat – a threat that often originates within the dominant culture itself but finds concrete expression in some abject, powerless element of society.<sup>165</sup>

Anthropologist and sociologist Loïc Wacquant provides a comparable response to this shared question, theorizing that (“neoliberal”) societies define contradictory socioeconomic elements of themselves as “aberrations” to protect their ideals.<sup>166</sup> According to Wacquant, poverty and its effects are criminalized through an ever-expanding security apparatus that

---

<sup>163</sup> James 2014

<sup>164</sup> ní Shúinéar 1997

<sup>165</sup> Amster 2008:79

<sup>166</sup> Wacquant 2009

increases surveillance-control of the aberrant, but rarely decreases poverty and its effects. Thus, the aberration of economic poverty begets its disaffiliation and criminalization; implicitly and explicitly, poverty is dismissed and penalized as “outside the norm.” Wacquant’s terminology offers an unexplored insight into a settled bias – the original Latin *aberrans* denotes an inherent movement, derived from the combination of *ab-* (Latin: “to be”) *errare* (Greek: “wandering or straying”). Beyond introducing a theoretical background for an aberrant nomadic threat discussed further here, Wacquant offers critical advice for praxis that helped shape my research on mobile sheltering and settled bias:

Social science does not intervene here to “excuse” such and such behavior, as misinformed politicians like to bemoan, for the simple reason that it does not follow the logic of the trial, which aims to inculcate or exculpate. Its goal is to explain and to interpret, which is to say to supply the instruments of verifiable knowledge, which can also become tools for reasoned public action: “*Savoir pour prévoir, prévoir our pouvoir*” (“Know in order to predict; predict in order to act”), said Auguste Comte, the forefather of modern sociology.<sup>167</sup>

Indeed, I do not attempt to “excuse” any behavior in this study. Instead, my goal is to explain and interpret the patterns I observed during my work and research with vehicle residents in Seattle: (1) mobile sheltering in public space is used as an adaptive strategy to hostile environments and (2) requires the possession of personal-property-in-corporative-property that may be counter-normative to settled ideals (detailed in the analogous inference below). I show how the criminalization and disaffiliation from social support of vehicle residency in Seattle reflects a larger pattern of settled bias toward unsettled people, and how this stigmatization of the mobile shelter inhibits social stabilization and (re)integration.

An international call for dismantling this geographically disparate, yet commonly-experienced prejudice suggests that a dominant settled ideology – what Robbie McVeigh described as a *sedentarist hegemony* – reinforces its ideals by constructing the identity of a

---

<sup>167</sup> Wacquant 2009:283

nomadic “other” as an emergency enemy threat for social and political exclusion. My research thesis is grounded in Robbie McVeigh’s theories of “sedentarism” and “anti-nomadism,” based on his comparable research into the sociolegal exclusion of “Irish Travellers” and Roma “G\*psies.” McVeigh defined sedentarism (or, sedentism)<sup>168</sup> as, “That set of ideas and practices which serves to normalize and reproduce sedentary modes of existence and pathologize and repress nomadic modes of existence.”<sup>169</sup> He demonstrates how sedentism may camouflage overt structural violence such as racism and classism under the guise of protecting hegemonic settled ideals through acts of what he termed “anti-nomadism:” the political exclusion of an existential nomadic threat. According to McVeigh,

Anti-nomadism is not simply about bourgeois or colonial hegemony – it is not reducible to class or colonialism. This is because nomads do not just threaten current property relations which benefit a particular sedentary class: they also threaten the sedentary identity which has been adopted by every non-nomadic class.<sup>170</sup>

In their recent article entitled “Academic ‘truth’ and the perpetuation of negative attitudes and intolerance towards Irish Travellers in contemporary Ireland,” Úna Crowley and Rob Kitchin similarly applaud and critique McVeigh’s theory of anti-nomadism. Crowley and Kitchin summarize a history of Traveller politics and research in Ireland, showing how a pervasive negative framing in academic discourse reinforces cultural stereotypes of settled communities toward socially and politically marginalized unsettled communities. Crowley and Kitchin interrogate McVeigh’s research among the history of anthropological studies on Travellers, and show how these have produced what Edward Said called the “textual attitude,” or “A tendency to engage reality within a framework of knowledge gained from previous written texts.”<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> McVeigh’s “sedentarism” (the bias for a *sedentary* or inactive lifestyle) might be more grammatically accurate as “sedentism” (the bias for a lifestyle of long-term, single-location *settlement*)

<sup>169</sup> McVeigh 1997:9

<sup>170</sup> McVeigh 1997:21. *Italics* preserved.

<sup>171</sup> Said 1979:67

Challenging the body of research on Travellers and even the idea of so-called “nomadism,” Crowley and Kitchin pushed me to critically assess how my study of settled bias might continue or disrupt this textual attitude toward unhoused, unsettled and “home-less” neighbors. Terms such as “the nomad,” “the G\*psy” and “the home-less” are sociolinguistic constructs that can identify people who are persistently destabilized by forces of unsettlement within a settled community as an oppositional other who moves by an inherent imperative. While McVeigh’s concept of anti-nomadism is theoretically useful, it may reinforce the nomadic myth of genetic wanderlust by disconnecting the forces of unsettlement from the social construction of so-called nomadism. The term anti-nomadism is thus reductive because the processes of unsettlement, settlement and perpetual disaffiliation includes construction of the oppositional “nomad” as an aberration to reinforce unified settled ideals and identity.

An incorrect presumption of nomadic voluntary inferiority by McVeigh and other researchers is similarly contested by Crowley and Kitchin, who argue that “By implying that the negative and hostile attitudes towards Travellers are a consequence of their unconventional lifestyle, these academics unintentionally prolong a tradition that positions Traveller culture as the cause of their own circumstances.”<sup>172</sup> Rather, the biases of a settled society are reflexively reinforced by its particular stigmas that position unsettled people as wandering outsiders, and the mobile shelter (i.e. a vehicle residence, tent or “makeshift” shelter) as a visible marker of their (un)settlement used to mark the group for exclusion or assimilation. This transcendental philosophy implies that individuals perceived as unsettled are “broken” and only “fixed” through (re)settlement; anything less than a culturally normative housing is invalid.

---

<sup>172</sup> Crowley & Kitchin 2016:164

Specific to my study, a settled bias that stigmatizes mobile shelters can unconsciously influence housed communities and policy makers to dismiss a vehicle as inappropriate for transitional space to a person seeking long-term settlement, as well as justify the public banishment of these homes from settled space. A prevalent (Aristotelian) philosophy of constructing citizenship through invested settlement constrains political representation for those perceived as lacking invested settlement. This neoliberal management of people as “broken failures” that must be “fixed” through an external stabilizer is pervasive through social services and public policy. However, a transcendental model is ahistorical, obscuring the past, present and future forces that may constrain the agency of a person to choose and reinforce subjectively optimal strategies as normative, such as mobile sheltering, substance use, or social service “self-rejection” (all, discussed below). “Fixing” the estimated 554,000 people who are “home-less” in the USA (without actually providing homes for all of these people, or a “housing is a human right” model)<sup>173</sup> can be an impossibly paralyzing task. As opposed to this transcendental frame, a wider focus on intersectional personal and structural forces of unsettlement provides opportunities to deconstruct harmful systems and create environmental options that are healthy and supportive.

Thus, otherwise settled people have been historically mobilized through subtle and violent social forces of unsettlement, then externally re-classified by settled/colonizing neighbors through stigmatized, fetishized, and often racialized terms such as “the nomad,” “the savage,” “the traveler,” “the migrant,” “the G\*psy,” “the homeless” who must transcend their itinerant fallen state to (re)attain their settled humanity. Historically, a perception by settled people of mobility has been used as a visible (yet, potentially arbitrary) marker to distinguish an unsettled

---

<sup>173</sup> Davis 2015

group for elimination or assimilation, termed in the Old Testament as a *shibboleth*.<sup>174</sup> Unsettled people experience a stigma empowered by a shibboleth of mobility. Political Scientist Eric Ringmar describes this exclusion of people based as an ancient, present and culturally-specific method of reinforcing colonized/privatized/urbanized space by alienating displaced communities through an “anti-nomadic bias” that idealizes an invested settlement in response to an existential threat of unsettlement and catastrophe.<sup>175</sup> Ringmar describes Aristotle’s widely influential philosophy of transcendental politics as designed to produce an economy of settled citizenship, where political life (*Zoë*) is produced through participation in the city-state (*polis*). As “the acorn becomes the oak,” this philosophy argues that an investment in the *polis* empowers transcendence of bare human life (*Bios*) to become a political being – a *citizen* of the city-state. Giorgio Agamben showed how this philosophy legally justified political exception by sovereign power through a concept of the *Homo Sacer*, or the person separated from law (“sacred”), and how this is perpetuated by states of emergency.<sup>176</sup> I suggest that Aristotle’s transcendental philosophy of *Zôion politikòn* (ζῷον πολιτικόν) – “Man is by nature a political animal” – engenders a settled bias which has been used to justify the exclusion of unsettled people for centuries.

The experiences that vehicle residents shared throughout this dissertation show behaviors that are perceived as optimal within an immanent environment, such as the use of mobile shelter as home for persistently unsettled people. A stigmatized and fetishized oppositional identity of

---

<sup>174</sup> Judges 12:4-6 “(4) Jephthah then called together the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. The Gileadites struck them down because the Ephraimites had said, “You Gileadites are renegades from Ephraim and Manasseh.” (5) The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, “Let me cross over,” the men of Gilead asked him, “Are you an Ephraimite?” If he replied, “No,” (6) they said, “All right, say ‘Shibboleth.’” If he said, “Sibboleth,” because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time.”

<sup>175</sup> Ringmar 2017

<sup>176</sup> Agamben 1995

“the nomad” has contemporarily and historically disconnected dominant settled groups from their social responsibility of unsettling others, obscuring this process and reinforcing socioeconomic instability by holding unsettled people in a similar mobilized stasis through constraints on their settlement. The similarities between mobile sheltering behaviors can be viewed as convergent adaptive strategies in similar sociobiological environments of implicit and explicit bias that constrains settlement. I hope to meet the challenge laid out by Crowley and Kitchin, to both disrupt stereotypes and show how similar attitudes, policies and practices engender structural violence toward marginalized and unsettled neighbors,

Instead of producing new academic ‘truths’ that incrementally build on previous studies, and which frame such ‘truths’ within grand narratives (e.g. modernisation, post-industrialisation, capitalism etc.), the contingent and relational nature of knowledge about Travellers should be laid bare. Only in this way can a ‘new politics of truth’, the possibility for a new discursive understanding, be opened up for discussion. It is only in this way that we can begin the move forward to genuine attitudinal change, increasing tolerance and true acceptance of diversity.<sup>177</sup>

My ethnoarchaeological study of mobile sheltering follows many of Crowley and Kitchin’s recommendations, and may offer analogy for an anthropology of so-called nomadism. If we dislodge these entrenched academic truths of a mythic nomad, anthropologists should reconsider what has been traditionally termed “pastoral nomadism” as an alter/native system to organize the occupation of wide-areas, what Anatoly Khazanov terms “corporative ownership.”<sup>178</sup> I observed a similar corporative ownership of public parking among vehicle residents, as well as a “liquid relationship to possessions” studied among consumer research to “global nomads” by marketers Fleura Bardhi, Giana Eckhardt and Eric Arnold. While “pastoral nomads” are described as moving in productive, environmentally-reflexive circuits within an expansive territory, these communities tend to relocate their total settled territory only when

---

<sup>177</sup> Crowley and Kitchin 2016:166-167

<sup>178</sup> Khazanov 1994:124

displaced by social and biological imperatives.<sup>179</sup> The final words of ethnoarchaeologist Roger Cribb's extensive study in the Near East, *Nomads in Archaeology*, hint at this environmentally-reflexive property and settlement system, resonating with my observations of mobile sheltering as an adaptive strategy to unsettlement and constraints on settlement,

The variations in dwelling form and settlement pattern appeared sensitive to long-term cyclical changes related to the stability of residential groups, access to territory and subsistence strategies. This suggestion contains the seeds of many hypotheses which promise to enliven the archaeology of small settlements both within and outside the Near East for many years to come.<sup>180</sup>

Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari described a seemingly impossible warp and weft of incompatible "nomadic" and "settled" threads as a "holey space" of the peripatetic metalsmith, or "Tinker," that "communicates with smooth [nomadic] space and striated [settled] space."<sup>181</sup> Michele Lancione similarly brings these post-structuralist perspectives together, describing "homelessness" in terms of a Deleuzian "becoming," wherein an individual "becomes" their socially constructed identity within intersectional "rhizomes" (i.e. stems of root systems) that unveil forms and functions of a larger socially constructed machine.<sup>182</sup> Lancione defines "homelessness" as a "machinic subject:" "The homeless city is a rhizome of eventful post-human crossroads (Simone 2010) within which – and not only where – multifaceted experiences of homelessness are constituted."<sup>183</sup> That is to say, "homelessness" can be seen as integral to the construction of the City, as a visible alternative and opposition that reinforces the normative ideals of invested settlement.

Deleuzian jargon aside, like the ninety-eight percent of unsheltered people surveyed in Seattle who stated they would "move into permanent housing immediately if it was available,"<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> Cribb 1991:133-161

<sup>180</sup> Cribb 1991:229

<sup>181</sup> Deleuze & Guattari 1987:415

<sup>182</sup> Lancione 2016

<sup>183</sup> Lancione 2016.:147

<sup>184</sup> All Home 2018:122

so-called “peripatetic” or “urban-nomads” regularly assert they do not move through some mental illness of wanderlust.<sup>185</sup> Instead, the persistent personal and social constraints on their opportunities and the viability of fixed-settlement can pragmatically idealize mobile sheltering as an optimal survival strategy. As suggested by Crowley and Kitchin, the initial moment of unsettlement and forces that perpetuate mobility are not be universally experienced, nor are the varied people referred to as “the homeless,” “vehicle residents,” “Travellers,” “G\*psies,” or “nomads” homogenous.

People may not self-identify with externally-constructed labels (or, exonyms) and describe these terms as similarly reductive.<sup>186</sup> Interviews with vehicle residents during the settlement mapping portion of this study (discussed below) showed a similar and somewhat unexpected pattern – many of the people who gathered together in groups of mobile shelters appeared to share minimal social relationships beyond the need to occupy the same legal space. Moreover, the vehicle residents I interviewed frequently distinguished themselves as unlike people they called “homeless,” reaffirming Michelle Wakin’s description of an “intra-homeless hierarchy.”<sup>187</sup> For vehicle residents like Bobby with the Bus who may disrupt a “nomadic myth,”<sup>188</sup> a mobile shelter can represent a first opportunity to legally own invested property and a step “off the street” from unsheltered “homelessness.” To vehicle residents fleeing natural disaster such as the 2018 California fires,<sup>189</sup> hurricanes,<sup>190</sup> and climate-related unsettlement, these mobile shelters can represent a (hopefully-) transitional space during environmentally-forced displacement. For a growing number of Americans who have grown disenchanted with

---

<sup>185</sup> Gmelch 1982; Halfacree 1996; Smith & Greenfields 2013; Crowley & Kitchin 2016

<sup>186</sup> Crowley & Kitchin 2016; Taylor 2013; Phelan et al., 1997

<sup>187</sup> Wakin 2005; 2014:15

<sup>188</sup> Smith & Greenfields 2003:25,32-37; Clark 1997:136; ní Shúinéar 1997

<sup>189</sup> Reyes-Velarde 2019; Stryker 2018; Bradford 2018

<sup>190</sup> Wakin 2014:38

their settled lives, vehicle-homes offer the possibility to disengage from “The City” while maintaining a digital social network and employment through high-speed internet connections. This has been referred to as a turn toward a “nomadic urbanism,” typified by YouTube video producers with hashtag social media personalities such as #FullTimers, #RVLife, and #VanLife.<sup>191</sup> This discursive (holey) space could be described as a Foucauldian field of the “urban nomad,” an extending plateau bordered by Spradley’s taxonomic fits of fields and flops.

Echoing narratives of the past and present informed my research thesis: *an implicit and explicit settled bias underlies the criminalization and disaffiliation of people who use strategies of mobile sheltering in public space as resilience, resistance, and response to socially and biologically unsettling forces*. This thesis formalizes three premises developed during this study through review of my research with my doctoral advisors, vehicle residents, advocates, policy makers, and law enforcement officers. Each of these premises directly connect to my following ethnoarchaeological analogy and inference, offering a set of recommendations in conclusion.

My first premise is rooted in the anthropological field of human behavioral ecology: (1) *mobile sheltering strategies such as vehicle residency tend to be used as adaptations within a social and biological environment of constrained settlement*. This premise derives from the “weak sociobiological thesis” espoused by anthropologists such as Lee Cronk, that human behavior *tends* to adapt to social and biological environmental forces; as opposed to a deeply problematic “strong sociobiological thesis” that would directly equate behavior and genetics.<sup>192</sup> While any theory is potentially controversial, I must critically explain why and how I use the idea of adaptive behavior strategies based on a human behavioral ecology “weak sociobiological thesis.” Among others, Roy Rappaport argued against the progressivist and potentially racist

---

<sup>191</sup> Monroe 2017

<sup>192</sup> Cronk 1991

ideas of “evolutionary morality” that a sociobiological thesis can support.<sup>193</sup> Rappaport calls the idea of “innate predispositions to cooperate” (or manipulate, according to Richard Dawkins’ “selfish gene theory”) a “sociological phlogiston,” referring to the mythically inherent element that was seen as self-evidenced in its observation (what we might consider as confirmation bias), yet was later disproved by this same evidence.<sup>194</sup> “Assertions of such predispositions are dubious if they claim direct genetic determination but, just as damaging, are indubitable if the assertion is that humans (at least “normal” humans) are genetically capable of internalizing moral sentiments.”<sup>195</sup> Rappaport both critiques and praises a theory of human behaviors as adaptive strategies within a social and biologically informed environment, by further tempering this weak sociobiological thesis with the fact that symbolic and physical internal and external elements may be reflexively related but are often not the same. In rather dire terms, Rappaport describes the importance of parsing these differences:

If we understand adaptive entities as systems of information, we must recognize that, among humans, these systems include symbolic as well as physiological and genetic information. Whereas the biotic elements of such systems are fundamental – without them there is nothing – it seems that the symbolic components have become increasingly dominant. These elements are not, in the main, representations of biotic elements nor are they necessarily in the service of those elements’ preservation or reproductions.

As it stands, however, the abiding and perhaps irreducible contradiction between the symbolic and biotic information constituting human systems – a contradiction unique to humanity which evolutionary biology, because of its very nature, may not be able to recognize – may be the deepest, most dangerous, and most difficult problem facing not only our species but the world which our species is increasingly able to destroy.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>193</sup> Rappaport 1994

<sup>194</sup> Early chemist Johann Joachim Becher (1635-1682) theorized that *phlogiston*, a fire-like element, allegedly caused combustion, was released into the air when “phlogisticated substances” “dephlogisticate” during burning, then absorbed into growing plant matter – readily explaining why air is necessary for fire but does not combust on its own, and why plant matter burns. However, the combustible material is oxygen (discovered by Joseph Priestley, who termed it “dephlogisticated air”) and the process is known as oxygen theory, opposite to phlogiston theory.

<sup>195</sup> Rappaport 1994:332

<sup>196</sup> Rappaport 1994:347-348

Where Rappaport's engagement with a weak sociobiological thesis focuses primarily on morality and religion, I consider here how the mental (social, or symbolic) and material (biological, or biotic) realities of vehicle residency tend to reflexively influence similar individual and group behaviors. My second premise builds upon Anatoly Khazanov's theory of personal property use in a commonly-held ("corporative") pool of property within a constrained environment. I found that (2) *the habitation of a constrained and often catastrophic environment requires the maintenance of personal property within a corporative property, such as a vehicle residence in a pool of public parking*. The personal, social and biological environmental imperatives that require someone to move and guard their personal possessions in an unsafe public space can be and effectively managed through this corporative property use and protection – similar to Elinor Ostrom's "common pooled resource management."<sup>197</sup> Alternately, as suggested by thirteenth-century historiographer Ibn Khaldûn, perhaps this personal-within-corporative-property-ownership documented among so-called "nomadic" communities results from an otherwise naturally catastrophic environment, as opposed to a constructed privilege of private property ownership in socio-legally defended settlements.<sup>198</sup> The ownership of personally-held objects and places within a communally-used space can become normalized with repeated, even intergenerationally experienced conditions as a potentially counter-normative behavior to explicit and implicit rules of settled private property ownership. The tension in this counter-normativity is what Khazanov terms in his global studies on "nomadism" as the "problem of property ownership" between settled and unsettled people, and Marc Augé described in his theories on non-places of anonymous transportation that connect the increasing places of modernity, explored through his "ethnofictional" account of a man who inhabits a

---

<sup>197</sup> Ostrom 1990

<sup>198</sup> Khaldûn 1377

vehicle on the streets of Paris, France.<sup>199</sup> The shift in property relations – from a private model that privileges an ability for objects to retain unguarded ownership by a pervasive threat of legal violence, to a personally-possessed ownership of unprotected property in a commonly-held field in a potentially hostile environment – may help explain some of the settlement patterns and practices of unhoused communities.<sup>200</sup> Further, it may explain a common antipathy toward unsettled people.

This stigma and bias underlies my third premise, that (3) *mobile sheltering behaviors have been socially constructed as markers of unsettlement within “Western” settled society, exposing mobilized people to an implicit and explicit settled bias that validates humanity, citizenship and shelter according to a perceived investment in settlement.* Western European settler/colonizer communities and their (post-)colonies tend to equate political representation to perceived investment in emplaced settlement such as housing, business or infrastructure. Robbie McVeigh theorized this as a “sedentarist hegemony” that employs what Eric Ringmar equally describes as “anti-nomadism” in his (remarkably unconnected) historical and political analysis. This is where the difference is most clear between my description of *settled bias* and from what McVeigh called *sedentarism*: contrary to McVeigh’s theory that “sedentarism” uses “anti-nomadism” against “nomads” to reinforce its “sedentarist hegemony,” my concept of settled bias recognizes the sociolinguistic construction of the stigmatized “nomad” and “nomadism” as integral to reinforcing a bias toward privatized settlement and normalizing the violent social relationships of unsettlement.

Vehicle residency and mobile sheltering fits into a larger process of unsettlement that predates its modern machination. Ringmar traces this particular philosophical system of

---

<sup>199</sup> Khazanov 1983; Augé 1995

<sup>200</sup> Zimmerman & Welch 2011; Gmelch 1977a; Kearns 1977; Halfacree 1996; Kiddey 2017

producing citizenship and political representation by investing in settlement back to Aristotle, at least. This has moralized the enclosure of a settled-space, creating private places and their interconnective non-places in a manifest “spirit of capitalism” to optimize “god’s gifts” for the most gain.<sup>201</sup> Through this philosophical lens, a counter-investment or lack of settlement is projected as counter-citizenship and a lack of political representation. This lens is what casts communities of Roma or Travellers that have been reiteratively unsettled, discriminated and socioeconomically isolated as “G\*psies” that “choose to move.” Implicitly and explicitly, this bias of the settled community toward those they have unsettled has been used to disconnect social responsibility for harm, and allows for unchecked violence against those who are (O)thered but otherwise brethren. The term "the homeless" similar in this way to the epithet "G\*psy," in their mutual reduction of a person to being inherently-mobile identity that disconnects the social responsibilities for their persistent unsettlement.

A bias of settled people that stereotypes the “aberrant poor” as choosing a voluntary unsettlement obscures these forces, making persistent violence and unsettlement unrecognized and illegible. Implicitly and explicitly, this bias psychologically converts a person who has been unsettled into a “nomadic threat” – detailed in the conclusions as the extrapolation of a “little other” into a “Big Other.” Perhaps not so coincidentally, these unsettled people have tended to become itinerant low-income labor groups that are employed to work with these enclosed, capitalized resources. Settled bias appears connected to "primitive accumulation," critiqued by historical economists as the enclosure by force of commonly-utilized resources for capitalization, displacing the original inhabitants or dependents on that resource. However, it appears that this form of structural violence pre-dates Western European Nations and their (post)colonial/settler

---

<sup>201</sup> Weber 1930

States such as the USA – and yet, all of these wield this weaponized mobility with deadly accuracy.

Following Antonio Gramsci's suggestion, I create spaces throughout this work for counter-narrative voices of the subaltern that might challenge hegemonies, or the "common sense" implicit and explicit biases that reinforce norms.<sup>202</sup> I detail varied histories of mobile sheltering here to deconstruct a hegemonic system of settled bias, what McVeigh called the "sedentarist hegemony." This critical tale connects vehicle residency in Seattle with a human tradition of settled bias and adaptive mobile sheltering, detailed in chapters two, four and five. The stories of lives I present are intended to reaffirm our mutual humanity, such as these auto-ethnographies of Bobby with the Bus, as well as "Junior" and "Star" (below).

My neighbors who inhabit vehicles across Seattle repeatedly described similar conditions, uncannily reciting descriptions from a global community that relies on mobile sheltering to live amid persistent forces of unsettlement. These are familiar stories of displacement, mobilization, disaffiliation, criminalization, and intimate loss. These journeys are shared here through our experiences and, like many journeys they often begin with a meal. We create our mutually beneficial spaces of humanity in such meals, breaking bread with strangers to remind us of our fraternity, mortality and need for simple things. I will return to a theme of meals, food, and diet in chapters throughout this work, creating a space for these simple acts to offer grounded, systemic, and theoretical recommendations. The following everyday experiences provide cultural context for the histories of "home-lessness," vehicle residency, and mobile sheltering discussed throughout this dissertation.

---

<sup>202</sup> Gramsci 1935

*To make a gift of something to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself.*<sup>203</sup>

### *3.0 Junior & Star (Part 1)*

Soon after beginning this study as an undergraduate at the University of Washington, I organized several annual “Orphan Thanksgiving” indoor potluck dinners with friends for our housed and unhoused neighbors in our North Seattle community of Ballard. We planned these events to creatively bring diverse groups together, such as coordinating donations of backpacks and jackets from Seattle Police Department officers for our unhoused community, and collaborations between a local chapter of an “outlaw” Motorcycle Club and the controversially conservative Mars Hill Church. We expanded the event after two annual dinners inside a heavy metal/punk rock music venue (see Image 15), to a weekly outdoor meal starting in December 2011 under the nearby Ballard Bridge. We cooked cauldrons of hearty stews and collected donated bread every Sunday evening rain or shine, then arranged these with fruits or deserts, bowls, spoons, hygiene supplies, clothing, and social service information across several folding tables for waiting attendees (see Image 16). We called ourselves the “Stone Soup Group” (SSG), and our weekly meals soon became a beloved space for unhoused and housed neighbors. I was personally invested in these meals, bringing my parents, grandmother, young son and daughter regularly, and intervening on rare occasions that law enforcement officers intimidated attendees or sought to end the dinner (see Image 17). For six years, each of these simple meals provided a safe, shared space for ten to fifty neighbors from the vehicle resident, unhoused and housed communities in Ballard. Junior and Star first approached me at one of these meals in June, 2012. Their familiar origin moment(s) of unsettlement and personal histories introduce an analogy and set of inferences with a global community that relies on mobile sheltering.

---

<sup>203</sup> Mauss 1950:12



Image 15  
Stone Soup Group (SSG) “Orphan Thanksgiving” dinner. November 28, 2013.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss



Image 16  
SSG community meal. January 18, 2015.



Image 17  
Clichéd photograph of ethnographer (at right) presenting their legal identification to law enforcement officers. Stone Soup Group Meal. January 6, 2014.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Photograph by Curt Loper. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were produced by the author.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

When we met, Junior and Star (respectively aged 28 and 32) were living in a white Ford Explorer Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV); the couple would occupy at least seven vehicles during our three years of sporadic contact. I was recommended to Junior and Star by a fellow vehicle resident neighbor (a former police officer, “Stacey”) who also lived in a large North Seattle retail parking lot. Although I was not employed by the safe parking program at that time, I shared anything I knew about available resources, assistance programs or local laws with fellow SSG meal attendees. Junior and Star began attending the meals weekly and we quickly developed a friendly rapport. Our informal conversations matured into regular meetings, a close relationship, and a series of life-story interviews.

Junior kept his curly brown hair and beard short, mirroring his stature and tolerance for perceived threats against his family. Before coming to Seattle, Star cared for the couple’s three children in their Montana home. While the couple both described themselves as “white,” Star also described herself as a Brazilian-American woman raised in the USA, whereas Junior did not know his father’s identity nor heritage. Junior was dominant in their affectionate and inseparable public relationship, often speaking over or answering questions for Star. On the rare occasions when Star spoke, she whispered agreements with Junior from behind her long brown hair and avoiding eyes. Contrasting Star’s silence, Junior regularly spun tales with a boundless energy – though he rarely discussed his (two) military tours in Iraq and (one) in Afghanistan.

In private, Junior explained to me that his military service had ended after a combat wound from a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack during an ambush on his Humvee convoy, killing his commanding officer and causing a large wound in Junior’s right abdomen. Following an in-field promotion during this RPG attack, Junior began issuing commands while under the influence of pain medication given to him for the injury. According to Junior, the orders he gave

while intoxicated resulted in significant loss of life and materials, leading to his summary “Other Than Honorable” (OTH) discharge; however, without his official records, I cannot verify these details. The couple both explained during interviews that the OTH military discharge disqualified their family from many of Junior’s veterans’ benefits, including family medical insurance. Junior’s combat injury combined with a severed military career and benefits were powerful forces that would ultimately unsettle the family, a story common to many of the vehicle residents I met in this research.

By the time Junior ended his active duty military service in 2008, the couple had been married for two years with a daughter and son, as well as another son on the way. When Junior returned to Montana, he resumed a vocation in construction that he began before his service. The family made a down payment on a house at the height of the 2008 US Housing Crisis with Junior’s savings from work, his military signing bonus and service wages. Shortly after purchasing their home, their third child was born with expensive and potentially terminal complications. Lacking adequate insurance for their child, the medical bills quickly accrued beyond the family’s ability to repay.

Star and Junior’s family struggled for months to cover their debts, draining their remaining savings and eventually declaring bankruptcy. Three weeks after the bankruptcy, during a national downturn in construction spending Junior’s employer – the largest construction firm in their town – laid off the majority of their workforce; the following week, the largest construction firm in the next town over did the same. As Junior reportedly waited six months for his Unemployment Insurance benefits, the couple sold off hard-earned possessions to pay their mounting bills. Their assets were insufficient to cover their debts and, making matters more challenging, the couple learned that Star was pregnant with their fourth child, Mary.

An inability to pay past-due bills for health care, housing, legal fines and education were among the most common contributing factors of unsettlement to the vehicle residency I observed in this research. Like the following accounts, the people I encountered almost universally reported outrageous and accruing debts and requirements of payment plans and paycheck garnishment. This socially (and morally) constructed system of credit and debt has been extensively documented by David Graeber, who contests its justification and the inequality it applies: “A debt is just a perversion of a promise. It is a promise corrupted by both math and violence.”<sup>205</sup> As Junior and Star experienced, these perverted promises of economic support (credit) and constraint (debt) have created indentured poverty through their immediate and long-term constraints of income. Economic debt was a recurring force of unsettlement described to me during this study, reinforcing itinerancy by constraining the ability to invest in settlement.

In 2010, their bank seized the family’s house and two of their three vehicles with the help of law enforcement officers. Their Jeep Cherokee had been registered under a friend’s name. According to Junior, four county sheriffs and two state troopers gave the family two hours to rent and fill a detachable trailer with their remaining possessions. Now living in the Jeep, Junior continued to seek work while Star tried to hide their situation from rural Montana neighbors. Both efforts were in vain. One week after losing their home, the family left for Seattle to find employment and improve their lives.

“Home-less” in Seattle, the couple secretly parked in church lots at night fearing the precarity and violence common to living in urban public space. While Star cared for their daughter and two sons in the Jeep during the days, Junior continued his job search through North Seattle Community College’s public computers as well as the Department of Social and Human

---

<sup>205</sup> Graeber 2011:391

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Services Community Service and Work Source offices (US Federal employment/(re)training service). After two weeks shuffling between lots, an official at a church noticed the family preparing their vehicle for sleep, told them they couldn't stay, but offered to pay for a week of shelter at a nearby motel. The lodgings were located on North Aurora Avenue, a street well-known locally for drugs, sex work, and violent crime. This strip of motels was a remnant of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) low-income rental system in Seattle, a disappearing alternative to unaffordable housing that did not require a first/last month or deposit payment and credit check. When I was working as Outreach Specialist for the Road to Housing Program, we offered vouchers to these same motels for families, single women and people with medical emergencies. In a later interview, Junior described his opinion of these motels' conditions:

Go there armed.

I don't mean with a weapon; I mean with a nuclear arsenal.

It's bug ridden.

Pimp-run.

It's just bad.

Bad.

We would have been better off staying in the vehicle in the church parking lot.

Hell, even in the [large retail store] parking lot we would have been better off.

After two-nights inside, two-and-one-half weeks after arriving to Seattle, the Jeep and trailer were stolen from the motel parking lot as the family slept. Beyond losing their shelter, the vehicles were filled with family heirlooms, personal documents, as well as Junior's construction tools. Junior and Star made one of the most difficult decisions any parent would have to face. Star swallowed on tears as Junior explained,

I have a sister who happens to be a teacher.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

She found out about our situation and she offered to watch the kids while we got our feet under us.

So now, our kids are with my sister (...) in Southern California.

She has a lot of friends and community there that are willing to help – so, they were able to fly up and help and get the kids.

And since then, we’ve hitch-hiked down twice, because it’s so hard to be away from our kids.

On this last time, we went down there, we ended up coming across a quick job and bought [the white Ford Explorer SUV].

Junior and Star had lived in California as children, where they fled poverty, violence and trauma, and had determined to make their future in the Pacific Northwest. The couple both told of experiencing significant physical violence and stigma within social services (including foster care) and emergency shelters, heavily influencing their decision to avoid these systems at all costs. With the income from the aforementioned “quick job,” they made a down payment on a truck that would become their future shelter and “home.” With no credit or legal income, they “flew a sign” to pay off the vehicle before they could take possession – Junior described this process and his invested value in the vehicle:

Flying a sign is when you get a piece of cardboard, and you write on the cardboard,

‘Anything Helps,’

‘Looking for Work,’

or whatever it is that you’re for and need help with.

And pray, and count on the kindness of some random person to come by, and see you in need, and be willing to give you a dollar.

We used that to pay for the car and buy food.

Literally, we would eat once or twice a day, if we were lucky.

Just to get the car.

We weren’t allowed to get the car until it was paid off, because we have no income.

So, we stayed on the streets.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

We had no other ... They told us to go to the shelter.

We would be separated, well ...

Most shelters, are: men here, and females ten miles down the road.

And there's crack heads, and there's drug addicts.

And, excuse the term, but there's women who've been in prison for last so many years that they are more attuned to women than anything else.

And, I'm not going to put my wife in a situation where there is a female version of 'bubba.'

I mean, she's petite.

And she's never, ever been in a physical fight in her life.

So, we busted ass to get the car we have now.

Junior first approached me at a Stone Soup Group Meal (that he termed, "feeds") shortly after the couple had returned to Seattle with the recently-purchased white Ford SUV. By that point, they had learned more than I can share about surviving in public spaces – lessons many people hope they will never need. One thing was clear: the couple highly valued their vehicle as a home and would not abandon it for a temporary bed in an emergency shelter. From then on, either Junior or Star would always remain within line-of-sight of their vehicle-home to guard it from theft, impound, and vandalism (see Image 18).



Image 18

“Shh There Sleeping.” I repeatedly saw vehicle homes vandalized by graffiti that is extremely difficult to remove and can lead a person to repaint the vehicle using non-automobile paint. February 2, 2015.

We first spoke one month after their return to Seattle with the white SUV, over a bowl of beef and barley stew at the SSG meal, roughly five miles north of downtown Seattle’s emergency shelters and services. Junior arrived at our first scheduled conversation on July 30, 2012, partially shaved after another in a series of unsuccessful job interviews. He had taken a “sink bath” in the restroom of a Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) office that morning, before he was discovered by custodial staff and told to leave. He spent the remainder of the morning continuing his search for a place to wash, aided by a referral from DSHS and phone-confirmation that he could shower at a local community center. Upon arrival at the community center, Junior was told that the showers were only for “community members” which, apparently, did not include him. Junior blamed his unkept beard, dirty skin and foul-smelling clothes for

another unsuccessful job interview at a nearby fast food chain. He told me that he would wait four more days to pay for a shower.

Junior explains in the following single passage about the couple's disconnection from important resources they needed to stabilize, and why they avoided the primary emergency service distribution sites of downtown shelters. This quote from Junior was a regular narrative I heard from vehicle residents in Seattle, and encompasses many of my points in this dissertation. I provide an extended space in this section for Junior to explain how he used vehicle residency as an optimal strategy within an environment of constrained options:

You either go and deal with all the problems downtown or you go without a shower.

It's not like out here [at the SSG meal].

Yeah, everybody says there's feeds.

Oh yeah, they feed there, they feed here, they feed there.

There's this food bank, that food bank.

But we can't cook none of that.

Not only can we not cook that food, but we have nowhere to put it.

You can't store a thing of meat in your car, it goes bad in hours or a day.

And then, to top it off, in order to get to the actual feeds where they actually have the food prepared – *gas*.

No place provides gas that we've found, and we've called a lot of places.

We've called for help with vouchers for assistance in a motel.

We've called for assistance for temporary living – and shelters, for that matter.

Family shelters.

We're on a three-year waiting list for a couple of places.

Two years, a year ... One said eight years.

It's like, I'm going to wait six to eight years for a shelter?!

What am I supposed to do?

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

How am I supposed to get clean to get work?

They say, 'Well, you can go to the Urban Rest Stop.'

Perfect example.

You get there, you sign up for showers.

An hour, two hours, three hours later, you get your shower.

Well, now it's noon.

Where are you going to go after noon?

How are you going to park your vehicle downtown?

It's fifteen dollars for an hour-and-a-half for most places.

Hell, if I had fifteen bucks, I could get a shower.

Damn, I'd go out there and fly a sign again ...

Look, when we fly a sign, we start around eleven [AM] ...

Because every morning I go out there and I put in applications, and I try to find jobs.

Every morning.

Up on Aurora, I go to the North Seattle Community College, look up on the computer, every day.

I look up on the jobs list.

I look up on Craigslist.

Craigslist is great, but 90% of the places don't leave a number on there.

It's like, 'I'm perfect for this job! But I can't connect to you.'

You can't connect to them on Craigslist.

And, it won't let you reply at community college, because it's considered 'chatting.'

None of that stuff [inaudible].

So, I'm like, 'That's perfect, but aww, I can't call them.'

The ones that leave numbers, well I call them and most of them are in Spanish, and I don't speak Spanish.

So, I'm like, 'Ok.'

At this point, I can't even go into Burger King for a job because I smell like ... [unintelligible]

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Until I can get a shower.

And DSHS, all they say is, ‘Well, call these places.’

We’ve called EVERY number YOU have provided us.

We have a stack, literally two-and-a-half to three inches thick of four or five shelters or programs on there, per page.

OK?

We’ve called every number in the book, on our cell phone.

Because, when you go into DSHS, you only can call half of the numbers because they’re local.

The rest of them are [a long-distance area code], and you can’t call long distance.

So, you can sit there and wait two-and-a-half hours to talk with a case worker.

And, then they’ll make the phone call for you, then tell you there’s nothing they can do more.

The last time we went in [to DSHS], two-and-a-half weeks ago, for gas assistance, they said, ‘We can help you with bus tickets.’

I said, ‘Ok, fine. I’ll park the car in a church parking lot and take the bus to these jobs and so forth.’

It worked out half-way decent, but was actually a real pain in the ass.

Because, you don’t know if your car is going to be there when you get back –

which is your home.

So, you’re like, damn.

That’s like, you leaving your house and, you going every time you leave,

‘Damn, every time you leave is my house going to be blown up?’

‘Damn, is it going to move?’

‘Damn, is it going to be stolen?’<sup>206</sup>

Like many of the vehicle residents I met, the couple had learned to stay away from the downtown core that lacked available parking, particularly after repeated confrontations between Junior and men who sexually propositioned Star. They described feeling barred from resources

---

<sup>206</sup> Junior, interview from July 30, 2012.

provided at emergency shelters because they were “lucky” to sleep in their vehicle, as opposed to a park or bus stop. They described their vehicle as immensely preferable to other available forms of shelter – reflecting their own enculturated bias toward a hierarchy of settlement, in addition to lived experiences that positioned their vehicle-home as more stable than a tent. They spoke of an inability to use available social services such as the community center and hygiene centers like the “Urban Rest Stop,” specifically due to lack of parking. They feared leaving their home in a hostile, shared public environment – and that it might “be blown up,” an idea I will explore further in chapter five. They described experiences similar to those of Bobby, particularly regarding the dietary effects of lacking storage and preparation necessary to use publicly available food. I will return to this issue in chapter eight, among numerous grounded, systemic and theoretical recommendations.

Junior and Star had settled into a standard routine by the time of our first interview. While their SUV did not appear to be a vehicle-home during the day, at night the couple would fold down the back seats to make a bed and block the windows for privacy. They covered their windows quickly with blankets, hoping to avoid attention while they prepared their home. This transition period between these symbolic states of “the vehicle” and “the vehicle-as-home” was one of the most precarious times, when a housed neighbor or business might notice the couple’s preparations and alert law enforcement.

The couple spoke well of the police overall, noting that many officers were helpful even when asking the couple to move along. However, they described two humiliating late-night searches of their vehicle in the previous month, involving the removal and/or rearranging of their total possessions in public space. On these occasions, they were told that someone had reported that the couple were involved in drugs or sex work – familiar activities to the North Seattle area

where they parked overnight. On that note, Junior and Star were adamant that they did not use drugs or drink, and recalled Junior drinking his last beer one-and-one-half-months prior to our conversation. They did not appear intoxicated in our many encounters over three years.

In the mornings, Junior typically searched for jobs at North Seattle Community College, before the couple drove the five miles South to Ballard to continue the search for income using a cardboard sign on a street corner. According to Junior, he made less money if he flew a sign that mentioned he was a veteran – he suspected this was because,

Everybody expects you to be better.

Well, I came home to a job.

I had a job before I left the military.

Half of my buddies that I know who came back had no job.

Basically, half of the homeless veteran population are from Iraq and Afghanistan.

An actual combat buddy of mine is down in San Francisco right now, homeless.

Labeled like a piece of garbage.

I flew a sign here that said, 'Iraq veteran, need your help.'

And I think, you know?

I need your help for work!

You know how much I made, in eight hours?

Six dollars.

Six dollars!

That's random people, you know, coming by, handing me a dollar here and dollar there.

But there are some days when somebody drives by and hands us a twenty.

And it's like, wow we made more than we have in ...

But, ninety percent of the time, it takes us a lo-ong time.

If I go out there all day long, like I said I can make six dollars sometimes.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Some days, I'll be out there for three, four, five hours and make, fifteen cents?

She's goes out there sometimes, and being pregnant woman, she makes ...

Sometimes, she's usually the one who makes any money!

And it's sad, you know?

Heck, yesterday, right before you guys came over to 'feed.'

We had a guy come by with his homeboy and say he was going rob her!

Every day she that goes out and flies [a sign], people try to proposition her.

They look at her funny.

They look at me like I'm a piece of crap.

They threaten us.

And, you know, they tell me to get a job.

I would LOVE an effin job!

I would ABSOLUTELY love a job.

Heck, like I said,

I spent my time in the military.

I served my country.

I BLED for my country.

But yet, this is the treatment we get?

Junior and Star took turns watching their home every afternoon, securing resources such as food or water, and asking for donations from drivers via their handmade signs. They earned around ten dollars each day between the couple if Junior could not find day labor. Their income went to fast food (six dollars' worth of "\$1 menu" items) and gas for a return to Aurora Ave N, to begin again the next morning. They usually slept in parking lots of large retail stores, trying to find locations with indirect light that offered the right mix of privacy and public visibility for safety. At the time of our first interview, Junior had not found reliable work for weeks. They

struggled to avoid losing their vehicle-home while seeking the resources and assistance they needed to survive. As Junior explained,

We rely on each other out here, in reality.

Most programs don't help with anything.

Very, very, very little do they actually help.

People don't realize that.

With little outreach and almost no services that included their vehicle-home, Junior and Star relied on networking with other unhoused people to locate assistance or resources, well-documented by Stacy Rowe and Jennifer Wolch in "Skid Row," Los Angeles (CA).<sup>207</sup> Star and Junior were fortunate to meet the aforementioned fellow vehicle resident Stacey, who was living in her car with a dog following a relationship break-up, mental break-down, and loss of employment as a police officer. Along with several other individuals and families, they co-existed in the parking lot of a large North Seattle retail store while they communally slept at nights. Stacey recommended that Junior and Star contact me at the SSG meal, and I subsequently introduced the couple to the social worker/case manager at the safe parking program.

Junior and Star met with the safe parking program's social worker (or, case manager) regularly, completing multiple applications for housing and assistance. The case manager helped the family "fast-track" the process to secure a room in a church for Star and her soon-to-arrive newborn. The couple continued to relocate their vehicle-home daily around North Seattle for the next month, until Star gave birth to their fourth child. The next morning, I learned from the family's social worker that a basement room in one of the churches which hosted the Safe Parking Pilot program would be available the next day.

---

<sup>207</sup> Rowe & Wolch 1990

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

The afternoon following the birth, Junior and Star invited me to visit the hospital and meet their daughter, Mary. I thought that the nurses appeared agitated when I arrived, but smiled and introduced myself as a friend. Star invited me to hold her healthy baby girl. Mary grabbed my finger, and I gazed into her huge amber eyes. Junior beamed with pride, repeating over and over, “Isn’t she beautiful, isn’t she just so beautiful?” A nurse walked in and asked Junior, “So, where do you live, again?”

When I left their hospital room an hour later, the same nurse approached me in private to ask if I knew anything about the family. I informed the nurse that the couple was working with social services to move into a church room upon leaving the hospital. The nurse shook her head adamantly and said, “That baby shouldn’t be living in a car.” As revealed in later court proceedings, the nurses entered the room with a security guard and an unidentified official later that night. After a heated exchange, Junior allegedly told them, “You’ll take my daughter over my dead body.” The staff and onlooker recognized this statement as a threat, and de-escalated the situation for the evening.

Junior called me the next morning seeking help. According to Junior, the doctors would not release Mary to live in the car, and told him that Child Protective Services were preparing to remove their daughter. I immediately contacted the Outreach Coordinator for the safe parking program (my predecessor), and within ten minutes confirmed with a hospital nurse that there was a room in a nearby church for Star and Mary. I informed the nurse that the Outreach Coordinator was preparing the room, and would be transporting the family to the church within two hours.

Before the Outreach Coordinator could arrive, Mary was removed from her parents by Child Protective Services (CPS) and hospital security staff. Homelessness alone was not a legal reason for CPS to take possession of a child. However, in later proceedings the CPS investigator

present the previous night (the previously mentioned unidentified official) claimed that the child should not be with the family because they were “chronically homelessness” – described by Craig Willse as a constructed, neo-liberal condition of bio-politics.<sup>208</sup> The family habitation of their vehicle as primary shelter and Junior’s “violent outburst” provoked the question of drug use and enough concern for the safety of the child to open an investigation mandating removal of the newborn. While Mary was away from her mother for her first week of life, the social worker for the Safe Parking Pilot program and I met with CPS and family courts to advocate for family reunification. Junior, Star and Mary were required to submit drug analysis tests. They all passed.

After a little over a week, Star and Mary were reunited inside a basement bedroom at a church, while Junior was provided one of the rare spaces to park overnight in a distant safe parking program church lot. These would be their homes for the next six months, while they waited on an expedited voucher for family housing. Mary would be seven months old when the family was reunited, raised in a windowless church basement, knowing her father through weekly supervised CPS visits. In the meantime, Junior and Star fought to keep their family together and to create a place where they might reunite with the children they had lost. I am over half-way through the tale they shared, and will return in the conclusion of this dissertation.

Star and Junior experienced a loss of family, possessions, and stability that was common among the vehicle residents I met. The tribulations and sociolegal bias documented here show a patterns of unsettlement reported by local and global mobilized communities. Yet, they defy many stereotypes of “the urban nomad” described in academic and popular literature. This was a family who struggled through deep personal and structural unsettlement, and used a mobile shelter to seek what they perceived as immediate and long-term stability.

---

<sup>208</sup> Willse 2010

The reflexive nature of ethnoarchaeology enables comparisons across time and space that create opportunities for cross-cultural inference and recommendations. My research with vehicle residency in public parking seeks to understand the relationship of mobile shelters (“material culture”) to their socio-legal and physical environment (“culture as a whole”), in order to inform archaeological concepts and improve interpretation. My thesis and its premises connect directly with a primary analogy in the next chapter, providing inference between my study in Seattle and research with other unsettled communities to inform contemporary and archaeological knowledge of mobile sheltering. I develop this by comparing my research with other examples of mobile sheltering, as well as Anatoly Khazanov’s ethnoarchaeological analysis of so-called “nomadic” communities, their settlement strategies, and behavioral or cultural adaptations. While participant observation, interviews and photography provided data for my total dissertation, this particular analogy was developed through ethnoarchaeological methods of material culture analysis, settlement mapping, and cross-cultural archival research. This analogy empowers cross-cultural inference shown in chapter five, as basis for an inclusionary set of conclusions and recommended grounded and systemic responses to mobile sheltering and vehicle residency detailed in chapter seven and eight.

My primary analogy shows how mobile sheltering is a form of what Khazanov described as *economically productive nomadism*, showing how this adaptive behavior empowers the creation of new resources where they are otherwise unavailable. I develop this analogy by comparing ethnoarchaeological research by George Gmelch on the “urbanization of itinerant” Irish Tinkers, Kevin Kearns geographic mapping of Tinker settlements, together with my similar mapping of vehicle residency settlement patterns in Seattle’s public parking.<sup>209</sup> There is a

---

<sup>209</sup> Khazanov 1983:16-17

conflict between settled and unsettled people over their normative understandings of urban property revealing an inference to what Khazanov termed a “*problem of property ownership*” – or, pooled (corporative) resource property relations within privatized space. I explore this inference by correlating Khazanov’s global comparative studies of so-called “pastoral nomadism,” Sally Kendall’s study on Irish “Traveller” homemaking in public thoroughfares (what she calls areas of “time-space compression”) as “sites of resistance.” I examine the causes and effects of vehicle residency through ethnographic, archaeological and archival research, to show how the occupation of a mobile shelter in urban space – described by Marc Augé as *placemaking in a built environment of non-place* – exposes people to a settled bias. My thesis is that settled bias underlies the criminalization and disaffiliation of people who rely on adaptive mobile sheltering behaviors.

I believe that the tension between this normative construction of place and non-place, a counter-normative form of personal-in-corporative-property-ownership, is a primary cause of the antipathy experienced by unsettled people at the hands of their settled neighbors. This tension between the settled and unsettled people over their use of settled-space and non-place for habitation produces an implicit and explicit structural violence of settled bias experienced by vehicle residents in Seattle. I develop an analogy of mobile sheltering in following chapter to explain the construction of this settled bias, preparing space for subsequent inference in chapter four. These inferences are the foundations for a set of grounded, systemic, methodological and theoretical conclusions and recommendations presented in chapter seven and eight.

*The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude.*<sup>210</sup>

#### *4.0 Ethnoarchaeological Analogy: Bernie & Settlement Mapping*

The primary analogy I observed between so-called “urban nomads,” vehicle residents and Anatoly Khazanov’s global history of “nomadic” cultures is that mobile sheltering or “nomadic settlement” is a subjectively optimal behavior which enables the attainment of otherwise constrained survival resources. In his seminal text, *Nomads and the Outside World*, anthropologist Khazanov declares “pastoral nomadism” as a form of immanent food-producing economy within a limited social and biological environment of pastoral space.<sup>211</sup> Khazanov positions this (“nomadic”) production of resources where they are unattainable as oppositional to a (“settled”) sedentary system that accumulates resources into pools for investment by protecting and maintaining the borders of these resources to ensure their continued extraction.

Familiar examples of this “nomadic” production include moving livestock to fertile pastures, or producing trade-goods with environmentally available materials. These “peripatetic economies” contrast with “sedentary” investment and extraction economies such as agriculture, or urbanized space and systems – what the Greeks termed the *Polis* (from which citizens derive “political representation,” discussed in chapter two) and I refer to here as, “The City.” Khazanov shows the productive capacity of “nomadism” in the movement of people and herds between sites and pastures of limited resources, in addition to the itinerant (peripatetic) trade relations between unsettled people and City dwellers.<sup>212</sup> If “pastoral nomadism” focuses on pastoral food production (pastoralism) and “urban nomadism” focuses on urban place-production (urbanism)

---

<sup>210</sup>

<sup>211</sup> Khazanov 1983

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*:85-118, 202-212

then, following Khazanov's lead, I suggest that mobile sheltering is a form of immanent place-producing economy within a sociobiological environmentally limited urban space.

Vehicle residents access the resources and economies of The City through the productive capacity of their mobile shelter to create a "home" place where it is otherwise unattainable. The following ethnographic account focuses on this place-making, briefly describing how my friend Bernie has made his home inside an RV for nearly two decades within urban space to connect with vital resources offered by The City. When he moved to Seattle as a handyman and musician some twenty-five years ago, Bernie could not afford local housing. He had friends in Ballard who allowed him to "double up" or "couch surf" in their homes, until he purchased the RV for \$500 in 2002. Since then, Bernie has occupied that RV continuously on the streets of Seattle – producing place in a sociobiological environmentally-constrained urban field of public parking. Bernie currently lives on an offshoot of a busy mixed residential/industrial street in a blue-trimmed, white RV that is approximately forty-years old, eighteen-feet-long, clean and well-maintained. The toilet in the vehicle is disabled, the water, (propane-fueled) cooking and heating systems function well. The home is warm, cozy, and the walls are stained from continuous cigarette smoke. Bernie keeps ice in the broken refrigerator to chill milk and other small-packaged foods. He is quick to offer a fresh cup of coffee, like Bobby and many other vehicle residents I met. I suspect this was due to the commonality of a propane stove in many larger vehicle residencies – a resource with a high social and survival value that provides hot water and food, as well as heating ambient air by boiling water for steam.

Bernie can be heard playing music regularly at local "open-mic night" shows across North Seattle, often covering Beatles songs on bass guitar and singing with a rich tenor voice. Bernie is soft spoken off-stage, empathetic, highly intelligent, and pauses when he speaks to

think carefully over answers. As we grew to know each other better, Bernie introduced me to his social group called the BAND, or “Ballard Area Nomadic Dwellers.” These men and women were musicians who played at open-mic events around North Seattle, then went home to sleep in vehicles, tents, or other “makeshift” shelters as described by Michelle Wakin.<sup>213</sup> In our eight years of friendship, he has *never* altered his immaculate personal uniform of plaid flannel shirts tucked into blue jean pants, with a baseball cap topping his mid-back-length, greying brown hair. A carpet layer for most of his life, Bernie continues his trade as of this writing although it challenges his sixty-six-year-old joints. He began receiving his Social Security Disability Insurance payments (early), and says, “the six-hundred-and-sixty bucks really helps me get by.”

Bernie’s adaptive strategy of mobile sheltering is remarkably similar to the history and experiences of the Irish and British “Tinkers” or “Travellers,” locating contemporary vehicle residency in a historic context of people who inhabit constrained urban space. This study focuses on mobile sheltering in the socio-legal ecosystem of privatized space to understand how similar environmental imperatives (re)enforce itinerancy and unsettlement. Using this analogy, I compare the results of my mapping and photographic surveys of the settlement areas (see Image 19) in this chapter with research by George Gmelch and Kevin Kearns in 1977 regarding Irish Tinkers. Bernie’s experiences similarly demonstrate how the agency of unsettled people can be constrained by social contracts that reinforce anonymous movement in privatized space.

We have spoken over one hundred times as fellow musicians, several times during semi-structured interviews, and once during a recorded conversation including Bobby with the Bus, who looked up to Bernie as a locally-famous “old timer.” While I was employed as the primary outreach provider to the vehicle residents of Seattle, I came to know Bernie’s RV as a subject of

---

<sup>213</sup> Wakin 2005

regular referral, among the many I was directed to “move along” (see Image 20) within a limited local area. Common to more than one dozen vehicle residents I met, Bernie owned a second vehicle (a cargo van) that he used for occasional daytime carpet work, and provided for others to inhabit at night. Bernie was a “public character” in his community – described by Mitchell Duneier as regularly present in a social stage.<sup>214</sup> He became important interlocutor for my outreach and later research, introducing me to people and inviting me for coffee into his home for conversations with his community on numerous occasions. We have sat for hours discussing the value of his RV and the role it plays in his daily life. His mobile shelter offered access to resources of The City: the ability to connect with available employment, social support or services, familiar medical care and his community – including playing music with the BAND nightly, either acoustically in a vehicle or on-stage at a dive bar somewhere in North Seattle.



Image 20

“Full-timer” RV residents who parked near Bernie. As with Bernie, this group lived in the area for up to one decade during this research, relocating whenever necessary and avoiding conflict with local businesses by maintaining a clean area around their vehicles. This street was banished with “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs on both sides in 2018. June 13, 2014.

---

<sup>214</sup> Duneier 1999

Like many long-term vehicle residents with some form of income, Bernie more closely resembles the people Peter Rossi described as “extremely poor” rather than “literally homeless.”<sup>215</sup> Like many vehicle residents,<sup>216</sup> Bernie does not identify as “homeless” and sees his vehicle-home as his primary alternative to sleeping without shelter. According to Bernie, he drives his RV about twenty miles each year, relocating every three days to avoid tickets. He explained,

I just drive a couple of blocks away and park there until I get orange-stickered.

Then, I move to another spot. I pay about ten bucks for gas a year.

I got friends around here and this is really centrally located.

Bernie claims to have only received four tickets during the seventeen years he has occupied his current home within a five-block radius, and knows parking law better than nearly anyone I have met. A mix of parking laws weave a net consistently cast by police and parking enforcement officers to seize vehicle residencies that occupy open passages between private places. If Bernie is hospitalized, away from his home for an extended period, or fails to move his RV for more than a couple of days, he risks losing his long-term shelter and primary asset to impound. His monthly social security check and limited side-income cannot pay the compounding tickets, impound and storage fees which must be paid to retrieve his home – costs detailed further in chapter four. Bernie knows and follows the rules to survive.

Bernie’s story is common among vehicle residents: he lives in an optimal shelter within a place wrought by spatial control that has legally enforced his migration with no visible exit. I once asked Bernie if he could have any three things that could help him better live the life he wanted to live, what would they be? He immediately replied,

---

<sup>215</sup> Rossi 1989

<sup>216</sup> Mendoza 1997; Wakin 2014

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

A safe parking place where the cops aren't going to be ticketing me, or tagging me.

There's so many "No Parking 2-5" signs around that it's really putting the squeeze on where you can park around here.

Just a safe place to park, and maybe some electricity would be nice I suppose.

Bernie is part of a growing number of Americans who are becoming socially isolated in public space. These individuals and families are often hiding in plain sight, in warehouse districts, under highways and viaducts, and increasingly on residential streets. Vehicle residents may rely on survival strategies such as distancing oneself from their home during by day, self-enforced invisibility at night, and a general camouflaging of the vehicle as a residence. These behaviors can impede social service outreach and assistance as well as the documentation of population size and demographics. Because our neighbors who inhabit vehicles use publicly shared space, some members of this community have come into conflict with businesses and housed residents who share community parking and easements. The habitation of a vehicle in public parking ensures unique challenges to government, advocacy, faith communities and social service agencies eager to assist this growing subpopulation of individuals and families who occupy public space. For those who reside within oversized recreational vehicles ("RVs") and school buses like Bernie and Bobby, Seattle's common parking laws further constrain living space to unsafe industrial zones.

*Home is the here and now, where all the wonders of life are already available, where the wonder that is your body is available.*<sup>217</sup>

#### *4.1 Material Culture Analysis of Vehicle Residency in Urban Parking of Seattle*

There is an exceeding wide variety of vehicle residency in urban parking – during this research I have met people living in almost every model of vehicles from older RVs and “schoolie” buses, to box trucks, bread trucks, limousines, subcompact cars, rented or luxury RVs, high-tech “sprinter” vans, ambulances, fire engines, expensive sport utility vehicles and even “fifth-wheels” and boats on trailers (see Image 21). Sleeping in local public space during one-week intervals over four months within an RV helped me better understand, develop and test hypotheses regarding how the habitation of a vehicle in on-street parking exposes people to legal, social and economic forces. Using this method of experimental archaeology, I recorded processes of procurement and maintenance of mobile shelters (including parking tickets), as well as their lateral cycling (sales or transfer), secondary use (as storage or a work-tool), recycling (stripping into base materials) disposal (a finally-impounded or “junk” vehicle that may be crushed into scrap), and reuse (sale at auction to future vehicle residents). I continued to document the flow of this material culture through public space by attending auctions of impounded vehicles. These observations were correlated with extensive conversations and interviews of vehicle residents, their advocates, as well as Seattle Police Department Parking Enforcement Officers and Supervisors. I found that the shelter was more than a simple vehicle confined to a specific set of parking law; like many homes, they can be self-contained microcosms that signify security, investment, cost, responsibility, hope, and fear of damage or loss. This perspective shows the mobile shelter as a single object *and* an assemblage of material culture. Moreover, I saw these mobile shelters as examples of human settlement behavior over a

---

<sup>217</sup> Hanh 2013:12

wide area that could be readily described using archaeological methods. These often self-contained settlements exhibited a spatial patterning of (potentially) moving rapidly within a confined space, contrasting with similar ethnoarchaeological research on emplaced “homeless” communities in encampments, shelter systems, or “urban hybrid spaces.”<sup>218</sup> Documenting the context of the vehicle residence showed these as *in situ* evidence of homemaking in a constrained environment, a personal property fiercely guarded in a pool of corporative space (see Image 22). These were new, or perhaps renewed, imaginations of mobile sheltering that potentiate and contend the trappings of private property and homeownership.



Image 21

A van inhabited by a couple in their mid-twenties for at least two years in the Ballard neighborhood. During the summer of 2014, they kept an angora goat who grazed on the grass easement during the day and slept in the van at night. November 7, 2014.

---

<sup>218</sup> Hopper 2002; Mitchell 2003; Lyon-Callo 2008; Gowan 2010; Zimmerman & Welch 2010; Perry 2013; Lancione 2016; Kiddey 2017



Image 22

RVs and Buses in the North Seattle Interbay industrial neighborhood. Bobby's school bus is on the left, early in its remodel. June 13, 2014.

Cultural and environmental processes shape the symbolic and physical use of the vehicle-as-home while it “flows” from a “systemic” (in a living or “behavioral system”) to “archaeological” (often buried or discarded) placement in a public field of space.<sup>219</sup> The real and symbolic value of a vehicle-as-home can be shown through the various formal, spatial, normative, and relational uses of these durable elements of material culture within its Systemic-to-Archaeological (S-to-A) context. Based on similar (ethno-)archaeological analysis by Michael Schiffer and William Rathje, I considered a vehicle residence according to “four dimensions of variability:” (1) formal, (2) spatial, (3) frequency, and (4) relational.<sup>220</sup> Schiffer developed this analytic frame based on earlier work by Lewis Binford (and many others), on the basic assumption that “the spatial patterning of archaeological remains reflects the spatial patterning of past activities;” however, Schiffer noted that there are many ways in which objects may be relocated in the archaeological context or re-enter a systemic context, what he termed *formation*

---

<sup>219</sup> Schiffer 1972:156

<sup>220</sup> Schiffer 1987:13-23

*process concepts*.<sup>221</sup> These techniques include certain challenges, such as the facts that using any single or group of archaeological sites as representative of systemic material cultural processes can be reductive (“sampling bias”) and that biological-environmental processes can degrade archaeological sites over time to reduce the frequency and integrity of remaining durable material (“entropy view”).<sup>222</sup> Recognizing these challenges as creating patterns themselves, Schiffer suggested an additional consideration of objects according to “cultural” and “environmental formation processes.”<sup>223</sup> I chose a mixed-methodology of ethnoarchaeological research North Seattle specifically to address these confounding factors, correlating the material and mental realities of vehicle residency using experimental archaeology, participant observation, and settlement mapping. The following material culture analysis details how vehicles are used as personally-held homes within a common-field of public parking.

There are many ways to measure the formal dimension, or “physico-chemical properties of an artifact, such as shape, size, weight, color, hardness, and chemical composition.”<sup>224</sup> The potential sample for a vehicle residence in public parking of Seattle is exceedingly diverse, reflecting vehicles of virtually any combination of type, make, model, and year (see Image 23). The diversity of designs, materials used, and age of vehicles that may quickly relocate across jurisdictions at a moment’s notice confounds any personal attempt at a full census for typology. Representative chemical, industrial and spatial (regional) transformational analysis were similarly impossible within the scope of my project, presenting opportunities for future study.

---

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*:9-10

<sup>223</sup> Schiffer 1987

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*:15



Image 23

Vehicle residents cluster in dense settlement patterns within rare industrial parking lacking overnight (“No Parking 2-5 AM”) restrictions. At least thirteen vehicle residencies are shown here. May 8, 2016.

Instead, I used sample settlement mapping, ethnography, and experimental archaeology to document the life-cycle use of a vehicle for residence in public parking (see Image 55). Experimental archaeology was particularly effective in building an initial set of observations to further investigate vehicle residency in public parking of Seattle. Sleeping in a vehicle for extended periods allowed me to glimpse a small portion of the hardship experienced consistently by vehicle residents. Temporarily experiencing these conditions of suffering afforded a sense of compassion to understand, at least in part, what my research collaborators described. On more than one occasion at the conclusion of an interview I was thanked by the participant, told that they hadn’t been able to talk with anyone about this topic before, and appreciated the chance to speak with someone who understood. Findings from these experiences and observations helped me to generate and test hypotheses, as well as document the following informal and formal dimensions of vehicle residency in public parking (see Image 24).



Image 24

“Reggie” shows me how he transfers air from the tires on his blue RV to the small wagon he uses to get supplies. Informal relationships revealed complex dimensions of vehicle residency. November 7, 2014.

According to the 2018 All Home Report on “unsheltered people” in King County, roughly half of all vehicle residents sleep in RVs (or one-quarter of all “unsheltered people,” and one-eighth of the regional “homeless” community”). My goal was to experience an entry into vehicle residency – to explore the transaction of buying the vehicle with little (adult) knowledge of RVs, to experience what I came to know as “vehicle residency law” first-hand. I learned how sleeping in a vehicle, in this area on a repeated basis affected my life in regard to my safety, privacy, diet, sleep-patterns, mental/physical health, and my ability to socialize as well as maintain my self-respect. I was able to keep this monthly schedule from September 20<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010, recording over 200 hours of (waking) habitation within and experiences

surrounding a vehicle residence in public parking. Many of the more informative experiences occurred during the first week; as such, I will primarily share my initial experiences of purchasing, owning, maintaining, and temporarily residing within a RV on city streets. I continue this section with a brief exploration of a day inside the “Traveleze.”

I must stress that I was not, nor did I claim to be, a vehicle resident during this study because the RV was not my primary shelter. My experiences showed some of the hidden costs and needs associated with the use and maintenance of a vehicle residence in public parking. Despite sleeping in my RV while parked on a public street for a week at a time, I had access to vital resources that may not be available to many vehicle residents. These resources include nearby supportive family and friends, steady income, physical and legal security of home and property, a toilet and shower, a washing machine and dryer, a dishwasher, a full sized stove, hot/cold running water, the ability to dispose of my waste, consistent electricity and warmth, cable television, internet, a secondary vehicle, the ability to attend the University of Washington. Like all homes, an outward appearance may not reveal what is inside; my experiences here can only represent a limited and privileged view into a complex world of vehicle residency.

I returned from ethnoarchaeological field school in mid-summer 2010, working under Dr. Jason De León documenting and studying material culture depositions left during undocumented migration across the border between Mexico and the USA. Upon my homecoming, I told a “car guy”-friend (“Paul”) my idea for this project, including buying a RV, and he excitedly offered to accompany me on my quest for a vehicle. I quickly learned that, among car aficionados, the ownership or knowledge of a particular vehicle could create an immediate rapport and bond. I saw this in the welcoming and encouraging nature of Paul’s reaction to my request for aid as a self-professed “car dimwit.” Later, on many occasions – almost every time I purchased gas

and/or was publicly identified with the vehicle by parking it in the day – I was approached by strangers who complimented me on my RV, asking the year, engine size, and other specialized knowledge questions. These conversations were consistently positive and friendly, often leading to a dialogue about our shared experienced in owning an RV. Initially, Paul and I struggled to locating the right RV for the right price. Then, on September 7, 2010:

#### Day One

Bought the RV from Tony in Auburn @ 7:30pm. Researched for several months, looking for \$500-800 but was recommended to go for \$1000-1500 (also, saw what \$800 bought ... yuck!) Found ad in craigslist for \$1600, figured I might be able to talk it down. Tony was nice, the van looked good and it seemed to run well – unfortunately, none of my friends who knew cars/engines/vans could come & I know nothing at all. Told him (Tony) about the project & he was interested. We haggled a bit & I ended up getting him down to \$1100!

After getting the cash from the bank & signing the papers, [my then-partner] and I drove it to the gas station (very excited!). Filled the tank (\$52) and went to leave ... turned the key and, nothing. Dead battery it seemed, though everything had been working minutes before. Called Tony, but he had already left; however, he was very honestly concerned & promised to help. Got cables from a trucker but it wouldn't jump. Trucker checked the engine out and said he thought a wire was disconnected or corroded, but was 'going to kill myself to get to Spokane by morning,' and couldn't help more.

Cops came by, twice; honestly, with their hovering around staring at us, it seemed they were trying to harass – talked to gas station guy and he was super cool, saying he didn't call them. I explained to the cops what was up with just buying the rig and the battery being dead – they offered to push me out of the front of the gas pump if I needed it. Of course, that would still be within the station, and out in the rain, so it wouldn't work. The police eventually left but one came by about an hour later & watched us for, it seemed, a couple of hours while we waited for the tow truck. Luckily, I had one AAA tow left; spoke with Tony and we agreed to leave it @ his place & for him to have someone check it out in the morning. Drove home, got back @ 2 am.<sup>225</sup>

Following the first night challenges of owning a vehicle home, “Tony in Auburn” had “someone check it out in the morning.” I was assured that “it was the battery” and a “loose wire” was fixed. Again, Paul was unavailable and I did not know another competent person to come with me, so I was unable to ascertain the repairs and maintenance required – a common lament I heard from non-mechanic vehicle residents who purchased vehicles with electrical or engine

---

<sup>225</sup> Vehicular Residency Pilot Project (VRPP) Journal. September, 7 2010: 2-5

problems. Tony and I parted ways, my then-partner and I drove the rig the twenty miles from Auburn to Seattle, and we parked in front of our house at seven pm. The next morning,

Day three,

Ran errands to fix up the RV. Checked for which lights needed bulbs, basic repairs & supplies, etc. Got list and went to Dept. of Licensing in my car to get the registration tabs for the rig. Expected it to cost \$75 to register the vehicle, as Tony had said – it ended up being \$250 w/ \$110 in taxes! ☹️ But the vehicle is officially in my name and registered as of 1pm, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010! Yay!

Bought the bulbs, only needed a couple, really... everything was well maintained 😊 Wait, before I bought those bulbs, I went back home because [my then-partner] had to work. Went to put my new ‘tabs’ on the rig and ...

### **WAS ORANGE FLAGGED AND TICKETED!**

That’s right, I’ve owned and had the vehicle at my house less than 19 hours, and it was reported as parked there for more than 72 hours! Notice says that it must be moved from the block by 9/12/10. Ticket is for \$40 for expired tabs. This should be easily fought as the ticket was written @ 1:30pm and I registered the vehicle @ 1:00pm. Still, nuts. Most likely was the neighbor across the street whose house I am parked in front of.

Need to find out laws on what constitutes a “block,” “moving,” and how long I must be gone. Is across the street ok?

Anyway, got bedding, silverware, pillows, a flat screen computer monitor (\$15!) to mount, some \$2 speakers (all for the laptop when I’m in here), and a clock – was roughly \$60 total, all from Goodwill.

So, with bulbs, carburetor cleaner (recommended by Tony), a couple mountable lights & air freshener (at \$40), the Goodwill stuff (at \$60) and tabs/taxes (at \$250), I’m up to \$350 on day 3, plus the \$1100, bringing total investment to \$1450.<sup>226</sup>

I recorded numerous journal entries like the above that included my financial costs of securing and outfitting a vehicle residence. I compared this information with data from vehicle resident interlocutors, and vetted our findings with social worker and outreach colleagues as well as legal and community advocates to produce a potential annual estimate of “unsheltered” cost by type in Seattle (see Image 25). These estimates could vary widely due the possible retention of personal property from previous housing, as well as the ability to evade or pay tickets in a

---

<sup>226</sup> VRPP Journal. September 9, 2010: 8-11

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
 Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

timely manner and avoid collection fees. This chart compares the possible investments in these forms of shelter to show how people may incur substantial costs for all of these homes. Average cost of vehicle residency ownership shown below at \$11,495 compares with \$11,462, the US Census Bureau 2015-2016 average estimated expenditure on a private vehicle in Seattle.<sup>227</sup>

	Tent	Pack & Sleeping Bag	Pack & Blanket	Improvised Structure	Occupied Structure	Vehicle Residence
Initial purchase	\$100	\$50	\$30	\$50	\$0	\$1-5000
Tickets for public use	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$300-1500+
Ticket collection fees	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$450-2250
Upgrades for habitability				\$100	\$50	\$50-1500
Registration						\$200-500
Maintenance						\$250-3000
Required License						\$85
Required Insurance						\$1000
Gas						\$20-\$1500
Impound/Seizure Fines & Fees						\$800
One Week of Impound						\$700-2000
Potential Annual Cost	\$350	\$300	\$280	\$400	\$300	\$3,856-19,135

Image 25  
 Comparison of Potential Annual Cost by “Unsheltered” Type

Many RVs like my Traveleze are perceived as self-contained or self-sufficient because they are manufactured with a sink, a refrigerator, air conditioning/heater, a toilet and shower; however, these facilities need frequent and costly maintenance or they will quickly break down. Additionally, the necessary supplies to maintain these facilities such as fuel, batteries, or cleaners, as well as the waste they produce must be contained within the vehicle. Powering a refrigerator and AC/heater by propane can burn through funds quickly, costing twenty to forty dollars for a tank refill. “Gray water,” or used sink water, cannot legally be unloaded onto public streets and requires access to off-street drainage. Sewage is more difficult to dispose, requiring a

---

<sup>227</sup> US BLS 2018

certified biowaste locations – within North Seattle there is only one business which accepts raw sewage drainage from RVs, located roughly six miles north of Ballard.

The maintenance issues of the engine, electricity, and hygiene facilities were among the most common concerns of vehicle residents I met who inhabited public space – behind ticketing, property seizure and access to legal overnight parking. Occupants of RVs and other vehicle residencies I observed typically used a twelve-volt electrical system that resembles a “car-lighter” slot, as this is often the easiest way to draw power from the car battery. Additionally, the vehicle electrical system typically powers the “house lights” and any “car lighter-powered” house-ware items or gadget. In some RVs or camper-vans, there may be at least one “house battery” that is on a separate circuit from the car battery, charges when the engine runs, and is used to power the “house lights” or anything else that is wired/plugged into the twelve-volt (12v) system. Vehicles with one-hundred-and-ten-volt (110v) electrical outlets – a standard US plug – require either an external source for this increased voltage or an “inverter” that draws the substantial electricity from the house battery, draining it quickly. Installing some of form of 110v electrical system is costly, complicated, and often vital because most (high-voltage) electrical heaters will only function on a standard outlet. Without a 110v electrical connection, some people use potentially deadly ways of heating their vehicle, exposing them to open flames or other flammable and suffocating-gas (such as CO<sub>2</sub>); this has tragically resulted in several well reported fires and deaths.<sup>228</sup> My RV, also called “the rig,” being thirty-nine years old, was one of the many without a standard form of power – even if it was, the question of keeping that battery charged while on parking on the streets was never adequately resolved. This experience showed a clear need for electrical connections among vehicle residents, discussed further in my

---

<sup>228</sup> Gillis 2010; Anthony-Goodwin 2016; Seattle Post-Intelligencer (PI) 2017; KOMO 2018

recommendations. Ultimately, the fancy flat-screen monitor and speakers I purchased from Goodwill were worthless, as were the other non-battery powered items.

The above journal entry shows my frustration with immediately receiving warnings and tickets for parking my older-model RV on public streets, specifically through the application of a “72 hour” notice when the vehicle had been owned and parked in the area for less than nineteen hours. From another ticket the following day, I found that I was legally required to park the “oversized” RV on industrial streets between midnight and five AM. What I came to term “vehicle resident laws” soon became a source of investigation, and would be documented at length through my partnership with the Seattle University Human Rights Advocacy Project’s 2016 report, *Living at the Intersection: Laws & Vehicle Residency*.<sup>229</sup> I explore these laws in the following Spatial Dimension of a Vehicle Residence in Public Parking.

The weekend following my purchase of the RV, my daughter, partner and I went on our first vacation to the nearby mountains in the vehicle. On our return, I parked the RV on the street in front of our house and began unpacking our camping gear. My next-door neighbor immediately ran up to me, gesturing wildly and yelling, “You can’t park here! You can’t camp in our neighborhood, man! You can’t live on our street!”

As I stood next to my daughter, ice chest in my arms, staring into the eyes of a man I had welcomed into my house, I told him, “I’m not living in there.” Visibly shaking, he continued, “No, we know you! They know who you are, they know your vehicle! They’re gonna tow that if you don’t move it. You can’t live in your car in front my house, man!” I responded, “Dude, I know you. I live next door. You’ve been in my house, you know my girlfriend, right? I’m not camping on our street.”

---

<sup>229</sup> So et al., 2016

The neighbor stammered as he realized who I was. He tried to compose himself and, still charged with tension, suggested that I move the RV to the next block over, “In front of someone else’s house.” I complied and learned that, because I did not have off-street parking for my recreational vehicle, I would be among the Seattle citizens subject to “vehicle residence law.” Additionally, I learned that I could be identified as “homeless” and a community threat simply because I parked an old RV on a residential street. Throughout the course of this research, I shuffled my RV between legal parking spaces within nearby industrial zones every couple of days and received at least six orange tags concurrently with tickets over nine months, until I was able to find off-street parking and conclude my participant observation. Abundantly seen throughout this study, space is one of the most important dimensions to vehicle residency in public parking.

There are numerous ways to document spatial positions such as an archaeological site grid, using satellite positioning and Geographic Information Systems, or relational markers of environmental fixtures *in situ*. However, as Schiffer’s diatribe against this overused term – *in situ* – points out, the “natural or original position” of an object is a relatively subjective location. It is somewhat ridiculous to consider “an original placement” within the many systemic, natural and cultural processes that shape an object, let alone the forces that might move an artifact within an archaeological context. For these reasons, Schiffer suggests that the term *in situ*,

Is without a precise referent and its use should be discontinued. A less drastic solution is to use *in situ* exclusively for the find-spot of an artifact – its original position of discovery, which is more consistent with usage in geology or paleontology.

I agree with Schiffer in this regard, and documented the spatial dimension of vehicle residency in public parking according to this definition of *in situ*, in its original position of discovery. Because of the numerous cultural transforms and forces that may reposition a vehicle residence in public parking, I produced the aforementioned series of *in situ* snapshot maps of

vehicle resident settlements, recording the discovery position of those objects at that time. Correlating these Point-In-Time (PIT) maps produced the Point-Over-Time (POT) maps, showing a more detailed provenience of vehicle residency patterns – or their specific places and times at the point of discovery for correlation to identify patterns. I used ground reconnaissance to visually search for sites of individual and group vehicle resident settlements in public parking, and mapped these according to environmental fixtures using public (street) maps. This methodology and description of the spatial dimension of a vehicle residence in public space is detailed at length in section 4.2 – Archaeological Mapping of Vehicle Residency in Urban Parking.

There are two other aspects to the spatial dimension of vehicle residency in public space that bare consideration regarding my primary analogy, that vehicle residency is an example of a *personal property* held in a *corporative field*. Both of these spatial dimensions of a mobile shelter, or vehicle residence, may compel adaptive strategies that become individually and socially normalized through their repeated use. First, many vehicle residents use a behavior of manufactured invisibility to separate their personal space from public space. Second, legal and pragmatic spatial constraints on a vehicle (as previously detailed) can require its resident to leave the home unprotected while they work or secure other resources, exposing this personal property to immanent risk within a commonly-held field of public parking. The need to protect unattended personal property in this hostile corporative space may engender spontaneous defense networks of otherwise unassociated communities to guard settlements (see Image 9). Through repeated use, these adaptive behaviors may become normative as ways to protect the safety of bodies and personal property, through attempts at invisibility and corporative property defense.

At the ground-level, parking law in public ways are boring at worst and pragmatic at best. Some of these widely applied laws are clearly necessary, such as a 1979 Seattle ordinance that restricts any vehicle over eighty-inches-wide to overnight parking within industrial zones, allowing the safe passage of emergency vehicles on residential streets. Others are targeted at specific behavior, like the community complaint-driven installation of “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs within industrial zones, the only legal space available for many “oversized” vehicles such as RVs. An overlapping pattern of law and enforcement attempts to control vehicle residency using widely applied laws to “corral” unsettled people into isolated areas, where specifically applied laws and enforcement remove open space for settlement.

The map of “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs created for this study by the Seattle Department of Transportation directly correlates with industrial zoning, as well as the historic and current settlement patterns of vehicle residency throughout Seattle (see Image 10). In other words, this 2011 map of installed “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs detailed a historic spatial banishment of vehicle residency in Seattle. The islands of remaining legal overnight parking within a sea of restriction became *de facto* vehicle resident settlements that were communally defended (see Image 9), shown further in the next section. These sites are relied upon for community and shelter by a variety of unsheltered, non-vehicle residents such as single-parent families, ‘the working poor,’ senior citizens, those who are mentally ill, veterans, and young adults. Under-serviced mental and physical health was a near constant concern seen in my outreach, as was hoarding possibly associated with the trauma of an individual suffering social, personal and property loss (see Image 4). These diverse individuals are routinely conceptually grouped together under a singular identity, then labeled by property owners as a cause of crime, ‘filth,’ property devaluation, and the “yet as unborn threat” of the “homeless” (see Images 22 & 23).

In these constrained legal spaces, competition over limited parking pits marginalized communities against politically powerful business and residential interests in a battle they cannot win. A socially constructed opposition and structural violence inherent to the enclosure of these common spaces can be seen in the well-reported illegal installation of counterfeit “No Parking 2-5am” signs along Leary Avenue in the Ballard neighborhood during the summer of 2013. When Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) refused to post additional requested overnight parking restrictions to banish vehicle residents because of an unofficial moratorium on these signs, a local business took the matter into their own hands by creating and installing a set of four illegal duplicate signs that were distinguishable only by their slight difference in material and lack of Seattle municipal code. These signs were re-installed three times by the business, after they were repeatedly removed by city workers. Despite receiving a notice from the city to ‘cease and desist’ the placement of the signs, the business feigned ignorance of the illegality of their counterfeit placement on city easement. Through direct outreach, I learned of the signs and mentioned them to a local reporter. For at least a month, the signs illegally remained to restrict the space, confusing vehicle residents as to the validity of official signs after they eventually learned about the counterfeits. The illegal signs were finally removed following a report by a local advocacy newspaper (and employer) of the unhoused community.<sup>230</sup> The business did not conceive another way out and valued this choice as the most pragmatic, creating a physical (illegitimate) perception of law despite the risks. This shows a structural breakdown of norms in this system, when a ‘law abiding’ business feels unrepresented enough to violate the law by creating its own perceived/conceived legal/illegal private enclosure of public space. This is the hostile space of public parking inhabited by vehicle residents in Seattle.

---

<sup>230</sup> Burkhalter 2013

Vehicle residents may limit their time in the vehicle and create spatial distance between themselves and their home to avoid these forms of perceived harassment and shame. Some people I met used invisibility to minimize a perceived connection to the vehicle as a stigmatic marker, a materiality of poverty that identified the possessor as “living in a vehicle” and subsequently “homeless.” Additionally, certain vehicles such as RVs are inappropriate to drive to a jobsite and may require the vehicle to remain unsupervised during the day to avoid potential stigma while at work. These are just a few of the reasons that vehicle residents may need to leave their highly-invested and valued personal property unattended for long periods in a hostile corporative parking – regularly subject to ticketing, “booting,” and seizure.

Additionally, I saw vehicle residents use manufactured invisibility as a survival tactic for various reasons. First and foremost, vehicle residents tended to hide while within their vehicle to avoid a real or perceived violence from other people or forces who dominate public streets. Interview participants explained that this behavior of hiding was out of fear that being seen will make them a target for crime or violence, bring community attention, law enforcement, an unpayable ticket, and an enclosure of their commonly held space. Daily, I saw how vehicle residents applied countless materials such as curtains, cardboard, paper, plastic sheeting/bags, and miscellaneous cloth to block windows. Another frequently observed tactic was layering of clothing, blankets, or filled shopping bags as insulation from the environment and view (see Image 26). People hide by minimizing movement within the vehicle, as well as between the inside and outside world of the vehicle-home.



Image 26

“Craig” lived in this car for at least three years, using bathrooms at nearby fast food restaurants. We met before I worked in outreach, and Craig appeared to struggle with mental health. He slept in a space “hiding in plain sight” under bags and behind blocked windows on this busy street. June 13, 2014.

Throughout my time occupying in the RV in public parking, I experienced this cramped, restricted and lonely world of enforced silence. The need to remain still within a vehicle so that it doesn’t rock and thus show that you are inside takes away so many luxuries. When you are living hidden within a vehicle, if you ever need to do anything involving movement you must plan out your invisibility. If you need to eat, you scan the streets through curtains and wait for opportune moments to jump out, turn on the propane, and jump back in. You quietly cook food and do the dishes, then scan the streets again. When the workers at the shipping company are driving their forklifts away, you jump out, turn off the propane, and then jump back in again. If you want to be active past sundown, you stay either outside and “hang out” as long as you can until you have to sleep in the vehicle or you block the visibility (and fresh air) of all windows, use low light sources to ensure that your vehicle doesn’t “glow” and limit all movement.

I repeated this cycle of silence/inactivity and covert entry into the “outside world” during four months of sporadically inhabiting the RV. When I was observed exiting the vehicle, I saw people staring in ways that made me uncomfortable, led me to feel shame, demoralization, and a

wish to disconnect from the “home.” Although my time sleeping on the streets was temporary, these same concerns were repeated often during interviews with vehicle residents. Before my pilot study, learning that my long-time friend Emery was a long-time vehicle resident initially started me thinking about this topic for research. Shortly after he exited his vehicle for traditional housing, I asked Emery what people should know about vehicle residency; his response speaks directly to the many of the structural and spatial dimensions of inhabiting a vehicle residence in public parking,

I think the biggest awareness needed is, when people are down on their luck, it doesn't mean they're bad people, just like when people have wealth it doesn't automatically make them good people.

And, I don't come from a background of homelessness.

I'm not an inner-city youth.

I didn't fit the stereotype.

I grew up in the eighties so, it was, 'if you're a black man between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five to thirty, you're expected to either join the military or go to jail or be dead.'

So, I went the military route.

I think everyone should be treated as humans.

I protected the country,

I went to college.

But yet, people look at you ...

People saw me climbing out of my vehicle early in the morning and automatically they assumed I was trash.

I have a beautiful home now, but that didn't mean anything when I was sleeping outside.

It already a bad, bad, bad feeling and you don't need to have your nose rubbed in it.

That's what I want people to come away with.

You're a bad investment, or losing your job or a bad break-up away from being homeless.

People don't understand that, it could be gone in a heartbeat.

And then ...

I hope they come to realize it before that happens.

That's what I want people to understand.<sup>231</sup>

For some, particularly youth and young adults like Bobby with the Bus, the vehicle residence may represent their first form of significant property ownership. For families like Junior and Star, their vehicle can serve as both a life-raft of shelter and anchor of stigma. For many on a fixed or limited income, the vehicle residence was their only perceived form of available affordable housing.<sup>232</sup> For nearly all, the vehicle home was their most valuable asset that they would not relinquish for an overnight shelter bed. As a form of material culture, the vehicle residence is both invested with and invests its possessor with a constructed identity. The vehicle residence, or mobile shelter, exists within a hierarchy of settlement that extends beyond an “intra-homeless hierarchy.”<sup>233</sup> Like other vehicle residents in the rare academic studies, the people I encountered described their choice of home as subjectively optimal among their limited set of options – often, an alternative to what they perceived as a problematic emergency shelter system in an environment that constrained their settlement opportunities.<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>231</sup> Emery, Personal Interview. May 5, 2011 (02:46-04:10).

<sup>232</sup> Wakin 2005; Wakin 2014

<sup>233</sup> Wakin 2014:175

<sup>234</sup> Bennett 1995; Desjarlais 1997; Hopper 2003; Lyon-Callo 2008; Merolla, Hunt & Serpe 2011; Glynn and Fox 2019

*The number becomes a principle whenever it occupies a smooth space, and is deployed within it as a subject, instead of measuring a striated space. The number is the mobile occupant, the movable (meuble) in smooth space, as opposed to the geometry of the immovable (immeuble) in striated space. The nomadic numerical unit is the ambulant fire, and not the tent, which is still too much of an immovable: "The fire takes precedence over the yurt."*<sup>235</sup>

#### 4.2 Archaeological Mapping of Vehicle Residency in Urban Parking of Seattle

While I use ethnographic interviews and vignettes elsewhere to offer a qualitative perspective on vehicle residency, this chapter details quantitative methods and data on human behavioral patterns of mobile sheltering within a social and biological environment.

Anthropologists such as Rachel Kiddey, Larry Zimmerman and Jessica Welch have excellently demonstrated the value and holism of archaeological methods to document the behaviors of contemporary unhoused communities.<sup>236</sup> However, while previous archaeological studies tend to focus on *in situ* excavation of public encampments that are occupied for extended settlement to explore patterns of consistent site use and deposition, I found this method unsuitable for my field research. Specifically, I could not sufficiently excavate a single or consistent site or area because the array of settlements I documented were self-contained vehicle-homes located across a wide-area of commonly-managed parking, where they were legally required to migrate as frequently as every three days. Instead, I chose to conduct a Point-Over-Time (POT) count of vehicle residency across wide areas of public space based on visible indicators of mobile sheltering adaptive behaviors. This methodology and analysis are based on the "Treatise on Nomadology" by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari that suggests "nomadic science" is a reflexive form of environmental existence, whereas "Royal or State science" attempts to striate the universe for surveillance and control. This section looks at how these behaviors tend to be adaptations within their ecosystems, rather than categorize nuanced strategies into rigid taxonomies.

---

<sup>235</sup> Deleuze & Guattari 1987:389

<sup>236</sup> Albertson 2009; Zimmerman & Welch 2010:71-82; Kiddey 2017:116-159

During my participation in the 2010 official count Seattle’s “unsheltered” community, the only training we received to identify vehicle-homes was to look for a single characteristic: condensation in windows. However, many uninhabited vehicles contained condensation inside windows during that early morning in Seattle – commonly frozen during official counts that occurred on the last Thursday of January. Conversely, we were instructed to not count vehicles that held a large number of items or bags because these were to be considered “junk cars.” And yet, this research shows that a visibly excessive volume of items or bags tends to be one indicator of vehicle residency. A strict adherence to these instructions, or their alternatively subjective “you’ll know it when you see it,” can produce an inaccurate census for local, regional and federal funding.

The population enumeration and mapping method described below is an alternative to a *Point-In-Time* (PIT) count, a commonly-used method of documenting data within a pre-arranged area over a brief window of time – for example, biannual federally-mandated PIT counts of “unsheltered homelessness” across the USA occur on a single night.<sup>237</sup> Here, I compare vehicle residency settlement patterns in Seattle with Kevin Kearns’ 1977 “empirical study of the Irish Traveller subculture within a social geographic framework.” Where Kearns used ethnographic surveys, archival review, and systematic sampling to map settlements within a large area of public space, I conducted a series of POT counts to produce multiple data sets at diverse times for three, eight-week, multi-seasonal intervals over three years.

Both *Point-In-Time* and *Point-Over-Time* methods of enumerating difficult-to-study populations have advantages and disadvantages. A PIT count needs only a single expenditure of resources to produce, creates a “snapshot” of a population which may avoid duplicate records of

---

<sup>237</sup> US HUD 2018

individuals who move within an area, and provides instant results for analysis and publication. However, because many cycles of reiterating counts may be needed to ensure methods and study areas respond to on-the-ground changes, the time-gaps between PIT counts can make methodological or siting “improvements” inappropriate by the time they are applied. The time-lag between reiterations is specifically problematic when people (almost inevitably) change settlement areas due to shifts in social, legal and environmental pressures. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development recommends that PIT counts are conducted consistently during the last week of January in the early morning hours, when shelters are full and unsheltered people most likely at rest. This regularity allows for comparisons between reports, but cannot show the seasonal effects on settlement nor the causes or patterns of individual movement. Further, (bi-)annual reports cannot reflect intermittent increases and decreases in population sizes and densities due to often rapidly changing forces of spatial control such as law enforcement “sweeps” of public settlements or the installation of “No Parking” signs. On the other hand, POT counts can show these reflexive adaptive changes and patterns of movement, are better able to rapidly refine due to shorter intervals between counts, and provide far more accurate and detailed information due to the increased number of data sets. Nevertheless, while a single POT count requires a similar investment in personnel and resources as a PIT count, the investment is multiplied by the number of data sets produced according to frequency of data collection. A POT count also requires a minimum data set of three to begin comparative analysis, and should go through a reiterative (potentially costly) process of interstitial analyzation and correction for confounding variables.

Fellow University of Washington undergraduate Leah Nelson and I sought to develop a vehicle resident count methodology in 2010. I recognized an opportunity to develop this process

through documenting vehicle residency in the North Seattle community of Ballard (reported to me by law enforcement officers at that time as well-known for vehicle residency). We began by conducting a weekly visual survey of anonymous cars, trucks, vans and RVs parking public space by documenting the location and type of vehicle residencies. We documented these as “Visibly Lived-in Vehicles” (VLV), using six dry-erase markers (red, green, black, light blue, dark blue and fuchsia) on a laminated map attached to clipboard. As we alternated driving at night and day intervals throughout Ballard’s streets, we marked the map red if the street showed a VLV and green if it did not, recording the number and types of vehicles (see Image 27).



Image 27  
Completed map from survey of “Visibly Lived-in Vehicles.” December 2, 2010.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

For our pilot research, we compared vehicle residency across the general study site with a focus area covering two blocks in each direction from a Department of Social and Human Services Community Service Office (DSHS) located in the heart of the Ballard industrial area (see Image 28). We compared this focus area with the total study site to investigate relationships with this specific location and the resources it provided, by investigating whether clustering around DSHS changed proportionate to the total population trends. Our mapping showed that incoming vehicle residents often took the place of a relocating non-VLV that appeared owned by members of the business or housed community, steadily increasing the density within the focus area. Due to the limited legal overnight parking spaces in the focus area, that were typically occupied by vehicle residents on a long-term basis (some, throughout the course of this study), the presence of subtle population growth within the focus area showed a condensing of this population within constrained legal space. These maps show patterns of settlement within a communally maintained and constrained space – a mobile sheltering behavior of inhabiting personal property within a corporatively-shared environment.

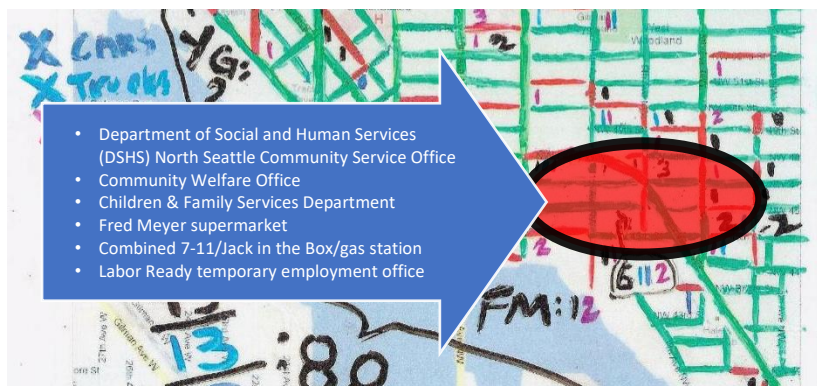


Image 28

Resources located within the DSHS focus area. December 2, 2010.

The exploratory phase of our mapping was performed weekly in 2010 from October 11 to December 30 (as possible) within an approximately one-hundred-and-twenty-block-area that was highly utilized by vehicle residents. There were several confounding factors to this

undergraduate pilot study, including changes in its developing methodology – we first documented only a single category of VLVs, but later separated these into categories of “car,” “van,” “truck” and “RV” – as well as a frequent difficulty conducting mapping due to inclement weather, since we could not see *inside* vehicles and, therefore, could not determine them as “visibly lived in.” We also noted that the time when the count was performed produced differing results that appeared to reflect a temporal spatial exclusion – for example, the predominant use of industrial parking by RV-inhabiting vehicle residents (particularly at night) appeared to correlate with a Seattle law restricting any vehicle over eighty inches wide from outside an industrial zone before midnight and after five AM. Ultimately, all of our conclusions were based on the debatable assumptions that our settlement mapping methodology was effective and our (rather subjective) definition of a “Visibly Lived-in Vehicle” was accurate.

Comparing the data collected from these mapping surveys between vehicles inside and outside of this “DSHS Adjacent Area” produce several initial observations and conclusions. During this pilot research, we found that (1) there was a rise in the number of VLV documented in the study area(s), potentially due to vehicle resident population increase, seasonal changes, the various times of the collections, and/or improved techniques. We also noted that, (2) vehicle residents disproportionately parked within the focus zone around the DSHS, representing an average of forty-one percent of Visibly Lived-in Vehicles documented within the larger study area, while the focus zone constituted roughly thirteen percent of the total study area (sixteen square blocks out of roughly one hundred and twenty). Experimental archaeology of inhabiting an RV on these same streets led me to hypothesize that the total study area may have been preferred for vehicle residency because (1) a significant proportion of its land industrially zoned, necessary for parking an oversized vehicle overnight while (2) the “VLV” occupant may access

nearby resources such as the Department of Social and Human Services Community Service Office, a temporary employment contractor, a food bank and several large retail stores or chains (see Image 28). Our mapping findings reinforced this hypothesis, that legal spatial control and access to vital resources tend to be determining factors for the location of vehicle residency settlement in focus area (see Image 29).

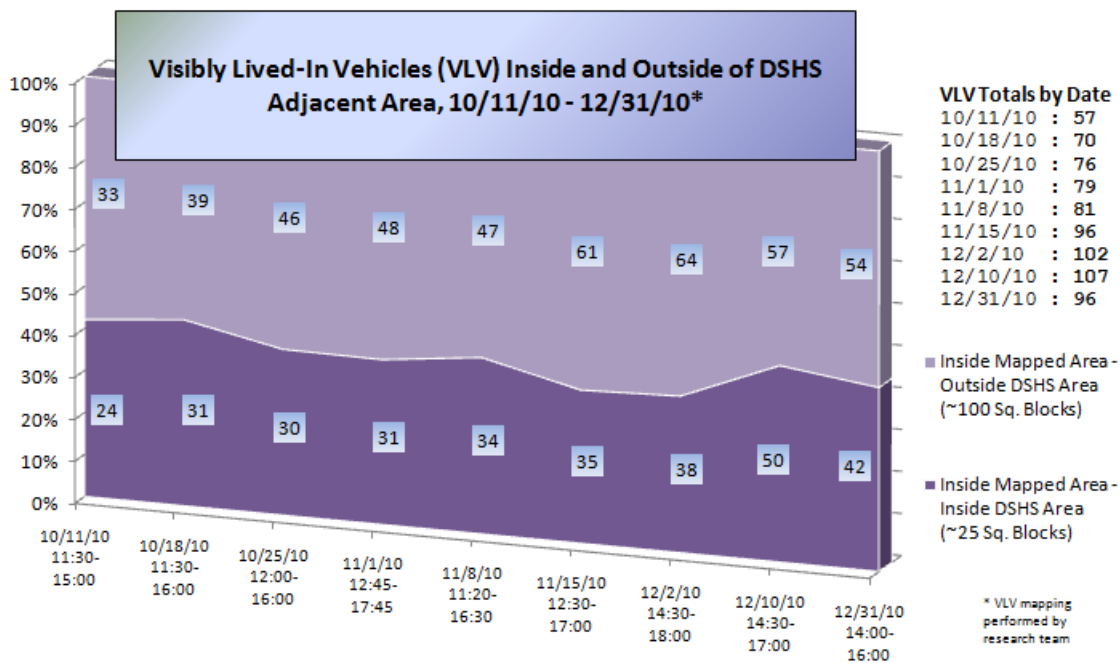


Image 29  
 Comparison of data sets from pilot mapping project. July 23, 2012.

Interestingly, our data showed that the amount of VLV within the focus zone tended to match changes in the overall documented VLV number. The above chart (inset, upper right) indicates that the total vehicle resident population in the Ballard area appeared to be increasing during this timeframe, from a low of 70 (it should be noted that the first number of 57 is likely low and an outlier due to evolving methods) to a high of 107, and that the focus zone adjacent to DSHS had matched this. Contrary to our findings, according to an article from the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation site the official 2011 PIT documented “43 people living in cars,

trucks, and dilapidated campers” in the “Ballard neighborhood.”<sup>238</sup> Our final mapping data was collected three weeks prior to this PIT count and, using the official two-person-per-vehicle formula employed at the time, showed that at least 182 people were living in vehicles within in the Ballard study (sub)area – a variation of four hundred and twenty-two percent. This disparity reflects the need for standardized and accurate PIT-count methods to document vehicle residency. We also noticed that decreasing legal space for overnight parking within the focus zone appeared to produce increasing densities of vehicles within VLV micro-community settlements over the course of the study. As hypothesized, the spatial use of vehicle residents appeared to be primarily constrained by legal available overnight parking space and parking enforcement – as the number of VLV rose without an exit into off-street parking, the population densities rose accordingly.

Our initial pilot found that legally available space and available resources appear to strongly correlate with spatial patterns of vehicle residency settlement. These conclusions provided the empirical evidence required to answer (in part) my pilot research question: “Was there a group of people living in vehicles in this area who demonstrated common characteristics and what would this ‘community’ look like?” While there is a wide-diversity among vehicle residents, the regular patterns of settlement we document show how the placement of these homes was primarily constrained by law and its enforcement, and was secondarily optimal due to access of survival resources. Although these settlements densely packed consistent streets, their disparate occupants did not necessarily socially interact nor coalesce into what might be considered a traditional ‘community.’ Rather, they appeared to have been pushed into this area through legal penalties and parking constraints, as well as pulled by a draw of limited resources.

---

<sup>238</sup> Golston 2011

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

After undergraduate studies, I was honored to accept a fellowship at Seattle University (SU) in early 2012 to develop the first local research program dedicated to vehicle residency, the Seattle University Vehicular Residency Research Project (SUVRRP). Most of our students attended the SU School of Sociology, were trained as research team leads, and directed mapping within seven locations across North Seattle including the Ballard industrial zone. I nurtured an interscholastic partnership with the University of Washington (UW), inviting several additional students from the UW Schools of Social Work and Nursing to participate as research assistants. I sought numerous opportunities to collaborate interdisciplinarily and through political engagement during this study – from membership on the Urban@UW Homeless Research Initiative and the regional Higher-Ed on Homelessness collaborations, to partnerships with the UW Arts department developing outreach fliers for law enforcement and outreach teams, leadership of the annual PIT counts of vehicle residency, and membership on the Mayor of Seattle’s Innovation Advisory Council. These diverse collaborations offered vital feedback on my research and opportunities to apply the findings of this research in the real world.

Based on visual surveys and interviews with vehicle residents as well as parking enforcement officers, our SU teams refined the subjective VLV identification system by determining a set of six characteristics specific to the use of a vehicle for shelter (see Image 30). Our schema is an example of applied behavioral ecology, using indicators of residency to identify a space as shelter. To address the difficulties and privacy issues of looking inside vehicles, our flexible “schema” suggests recording a vehicle as “lived-in” if it exhibits two (later, updated to three) of six visible external characteristics of vehicle habitation, allowing for a wide-variety of vehicles and environmental conditions. Moreover, this schema enables the documentation of a vehicle without making contact with the inhabitant (important during the

early morning official PIT counts) from up to a city block away. We vetted this process with vehicle residents, social service providers and outreach workers, as well as parking enforcement officers, and called the approved system a *Vehicle Identification Schema* (VIS). The VIS was adopted as the official methodology for enumerating vehicle residencies during the 2017-2019 official PIT counts of Seattle/King County’s “unsheltered” community.

## Vehicle Residency Research Guide

This guide was produced by the Seattle University Project on Family Homelessness and the Vehicular Residency Research Project to help identify and document vehicles which are used as homes. This information is for data collection only, so that service providers or governmental agencies can better identify people who may be in need of assistance and secure the proper resources to aid.

### Vehicle Identification Schema

A vehicle should be considered a vehicle residence if it exhibits two of the following six characteristics:

1. The view through the front to rear windows is blocked.
2. The side and/or rear windows are blocked by sheeting, panels, and/or curtains to restrict visibility on both sides,
3. There is evidence of unfrozen condensation on windows.
4. At least one window is partially open.
5. There are items often associated with vehicle residency such as generators, bicycles, or storage containers externally secured.
6. There are unusually large volumes of possessions, sometimes appearing to be “refuse” (often in bags), within or near the vehicle.



### Vehicle Residency Mapping Instructions

1. **DO NOT INTERACT WITH ANYONE. DO NOT SHINE LIGHT INSIDE OTHER VEHICLES. DO NOT BRING ATTENTION TO YOURSELF OR OTHER VEHICLES.**
2. Attach your Study Area Map to your clipboard, write the researchers’ initials, create a basic color code key (suggested below), then note the date and time when you are beginning the count.
3. On your Study Area Map, highlight each block in **red** if there is a vehicle residence (VR) matching the *vehicle identification schema* parked on that block, **green** if there is no VR. If there is a VR parked on a block, write the total number of vehicle(s) in descending order to the WEST of a N/S street or SOUTH on the EAST side of a W/E street.

Use your color code to show the total of each vehicle type; suggested color code:

Car

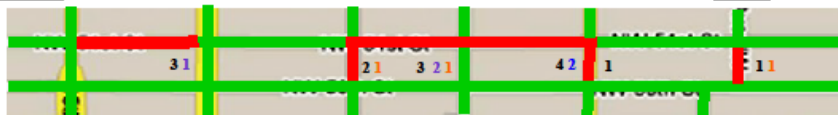
Van

Truck (including any non-car or van VRs which is less than 80” wide)

RV (including and limited to any VR over 80” wide)

Example:

Total: 14 / 3 / 3 / 2



4. When you have documented all blocks within your study area(s), write the end time, then tally the totals by vehicle type, using the color code for each total.

Image 30

“Vehicle Residency Research Guide.” SUVRRP (2012-2013).

I trained each of our researchers during coursework to avoid personal contact or drawing attention to other vehicles or people during our study. Each research team was provided a letter documenting the study, explaining their actions for the rare contact with police officers while driving slowly throughout public streets late at night. Although our mapping instructions were useful for collecting data on the use of public space, they are not necessary for single night PIT counts. To this point, no data was collected during our mapping on individual vehicles or their owners to preserve the safety of vehicle residents, their communities, and our researchers. We designed our methods to be easily taught and used by PIT-count volunteers and researchers, producing a Vehicle Residency Research Guide that included our Vehicle Identification Schema and instructions for collecting population size data of vehicle residency.

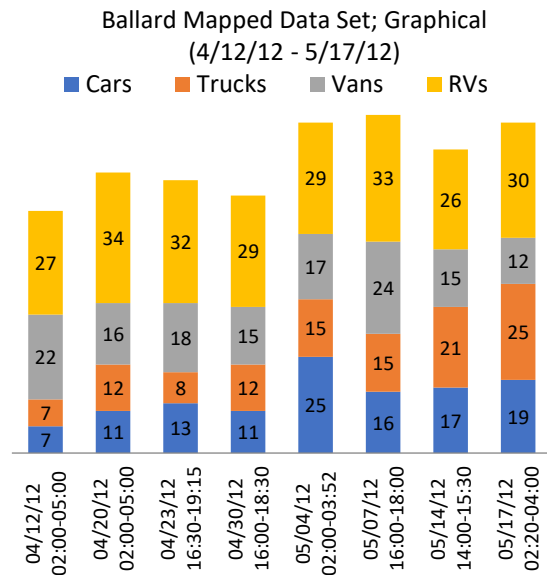
The mapping portion of the SUVRRP was performed by three-member research teams over a two-year period, documenting the type and street placement of vehicle residencies during day and night semi-weekly intervals using the VIS and our Vehicle Residency Research Guide (see Image 30). We studied several North Seattle neighborhoods that had been suggested by law enforcement as high vehicle residency “hot spots;” again, to observe the *in situ* patterns of individual and long-term settlements, while not exposing unknown vehicle resident communities to police attention. We collected sixteen weeks of multi-seasonal maps of vehicle residency settlement patterns throughout Seattle, converted this data into individual and aggregate GIS-formats, then overlaid with zoning and parking ordinance restrictions to investigate potential patterns. This analysis showed a similar direct correlation between posted parking-restriction signs and law enforcement as my pilot study, with dense multi-vehicle settlement growth on increasingly limited unrestricted streets (see Images 31 & 32).

## A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Ballard Mapped Data Set (4/12/12 - 5/17/12)

	Cars	Trucks	Vans	RVs	Total VRs
04/12/12 02:00-05:00	7	7	22	27	63
04/20/12 02:00-05:00	11	12	16	34	73
04/23/12 16:30-19:15	13	8	18	32	71
04/30/12 16:00-18:30	11	12	15	29	67
05/04/12 02:00-03:52	25	15	17	29	86
05/07/12 16:00-18:00	16	15	24	33	88
05/14/12 14:00-15:30	17	21	15	26	79
05/17/12 02:20-04:00	19	25	12	30	86

	Cars	Trucks	Vans	RVs	Total VRs
<i>Ballard Average</i>	15	14	17	30	79
<i>Ballard Average AM</i>	16	15	17	30	79
<i>Ballard Average PM</i>	14	14	18	30	61



Greater North Seattle Mapped Data Set (4/27/12-5/23/12)

	Cars	Trucks	Vans	RVs	Total VRs
04/27/12 02:00-04:50	8	16	0	9	33
05/02/12 14:00-17:30	11	22	8	5	46
05/05/12 02:00-05:15	8	27	10	8	53
05/09/12 14:00-17:30	18	27	10	9	64
05/16/12 14:00-17:00	9	23	8	12	52
05/23/12 14:00-17:15	11	22	7	9	49

	Cars	Trucks	Vans	RVs	Total VRs
<i>N Seattle Average</i>	11	23	7	9	50
<i>N Seattle Average AM</i>	8	22	5	9	43
<i>N Seattle Average PM</i>	12	24	8	9	53

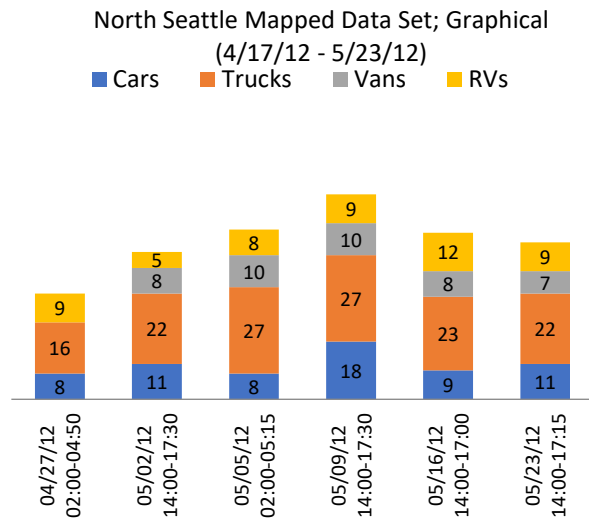


Image 31

Comparison of findings from Ballard and North Seattle settlement Mapping (2012).

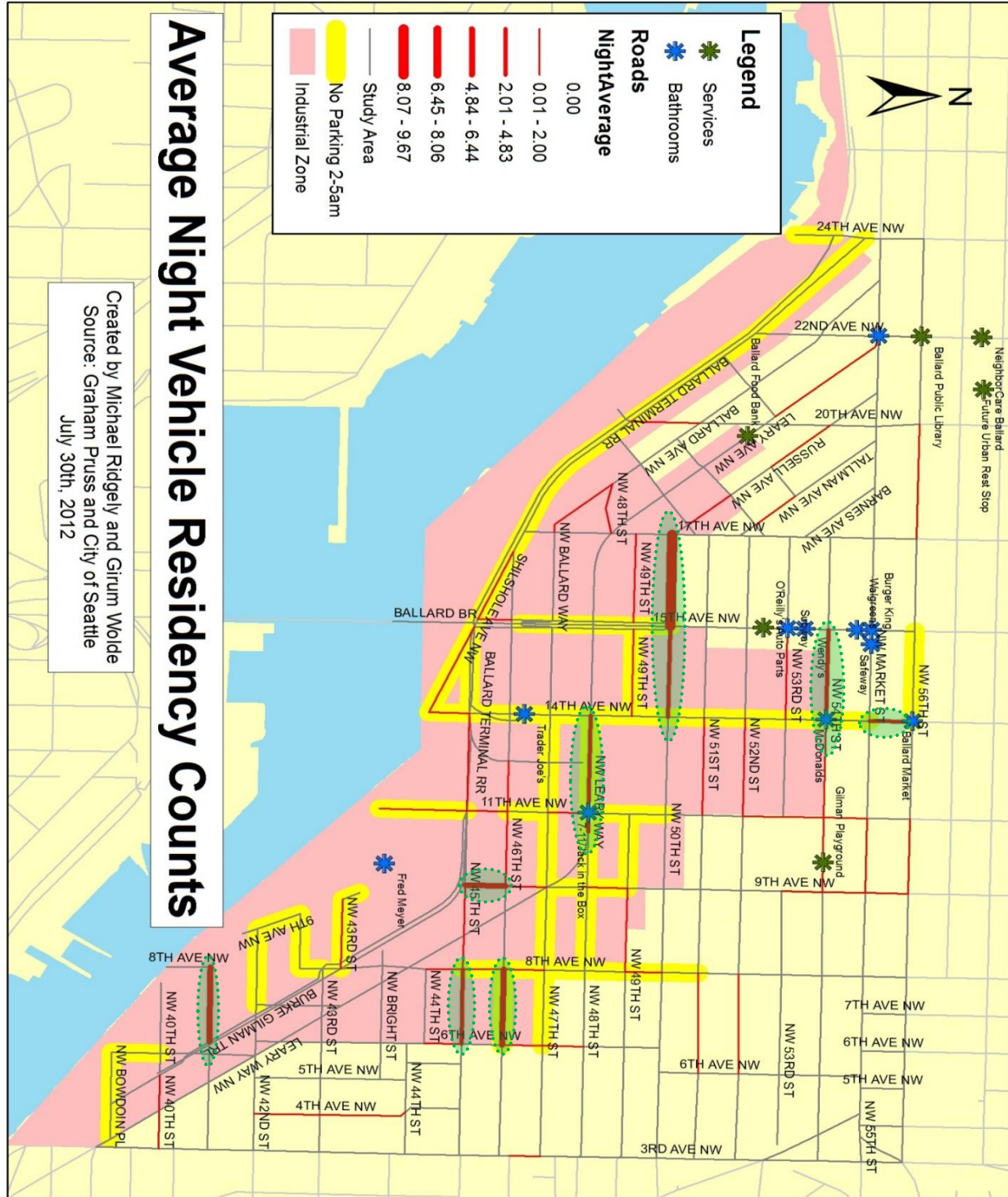


Image 32  
 GIS Mapped Data of Vehicle Residency Settlement Patterns in Ballard at Night (2012). Green circle highlights added to show streets with an average density >4.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

University of Washington School of Geography graduates Michael Ridgley and Girum Wolde volunteered their services to enter our data into Geographic Information Systems (GIS) format, then performed a computerized spatial and temporal analysis (see Image 32). This process showed how vehicle residents occupied public streets with varying degrees of density over the study period. We correlated this data with spatial restrictions, such as industrial or manufacturing zoning and “No Parking 2-5am” signs, then added locations of services within the study area that were utilized by vehicle residents, as shown in ethnographic interviews. Where documenting the “frequency dimension” of an object may seem relatively straight-forward, archaeologist Michael Schiffer pointed out that this can be complicated by the breakdown of artifacts (such as pottery sherds) or cultural formation processes that affect the production, maintenance, reuse or deposition of an item *in situ*. These are important factors to consider regarding the frequency of vehicle residencies in public parking – a wide-variety of vehicles that are inhabited, dismantled or disposed, entering, exiting and re-entering a corporative pool of space. I observed a fascinating sub-economy that relates to this frequency dimension of a vehicle residence in public parking which I hope to explore in future research: the purchase, possession, habitation, protective-occupation, rental, and subletting of multiple vehicles in public parking, reported as “car ranching.”<sup>239</sup>

The mapping of vehicle residency in Seattle revealed frequencies of mobile shelter settlement patterns over time, indicating how a particular set of environmental conditions constrained the placement of what appear to be otherwise settled communities. These frequencies of vehicle residency in public parking strongly correlate to parking law, posted signs, and their enforcement. A 2016 Seattle University School of Law study of parking ordinances in

---

<sup>239</sup> Greenstone & Brownstone 2019

29 urban and rural Washington communities documented an average of 10 laws each that interweave to disproportionately affect people who inhabit public parking.<sup>240</sup> Their study showed that many of Seattle’s parking laws have been reproduced in cities across Washington State, while other communities have explicitly criminalized sleeping in vehicles. Although municipal and state parking laws may seem mundane, their application and enforcement have been motivated by property owner or occupant complaints to remove the vehicle-homes of vulnerable people. Vehicle residents in public parking face a consistent risk of fines and seizure on their registered property that bars their immobile, stable settlement and, if unpaid, will destroy their credit and opportunities for traditional housing. In Seattle, the application and enforcement of these four specific laws or ordinance (i.e. signs) interweave as powerful forms of spatial control over vehicle residency:

1. *Seattle Municipal Code: 11.72.440* – All vehicles must move at least one block every seventy-two hours. This is regularly notified using “orange tag” stickers that warn of imminent impound.
2. *Seattle Municipal Code: 11.72.070* – Restrictions on parking for vehicles over eighty-inches-wide (nearly all RVs) to industrial or manufacturing zones between the hours of midnight and five AM.
3. *Seattle Municipal Code: 11.72.260; 11.72.330* – “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs installed throughout areas of high vehicle residency.
4. *Seattle Municipal Code: 11.35.010-030* – The “Scofflaw Law,” enabling use of a mechanical tire-“boot” on vehicles with unpaid fines for immobilization and seizure.

Similar stories of communities that struggle with emerging vehicle resident populations are widespread, as are the problematic responses amid searches for solutions.<sup>241</sup> Regressive legal policies and their enforcement punish the emergency survival strategies of vulnerable people, perpetuating an endless migration within limited space.<sup>242</sup> They position vulnerable people

---

<sup>240</sup> So et al., 2016

<sup>241</sup> Brey 2018; Kent 2018; Agahi 2018; Gilger 2018; Bendix 2018; Kato 2018; Arora 2018; Marchetta 2018; Croxton 2018; Romeo 2018

<sup>242</sup> Alexander 1989; Snow, Baker & Anderson 1989; Foscarinis 1996; Ellickson 1996; Parnaby 2003; Smith & Greenfields 2003; O’Grady, Gaetz & Buccieri 2013

against powerful residential and business constituent interests in an unwinnable war over public parking, where a vehicle resident's pyrrhic victory is bare survival. This situation led me to ask, "How can we create proactive solutions to the problems of our built environment, dismantling rather than compounding barriers to the social affiliation, health and well-being of all?"

Sociologist Howard Bahr described a theory of disaffiliation, as the ways in which people are stigmatized as defective, are socially isolated, and learn through these repeated experiences to reject social support.<sup>243</sup> While disaffiliation may affect many unhoused people, I found in my research that vehicle residents experience several specific forms of systemic and social exclusion. Although the vast majority of the vehicle residents I met were local – according to the 2018 official report, approximately eighty-three percent of local people experiencing homelessness lived in King County before their loss of housing<sup>244</sup> – they regularly reported feeling stereotyped as defective outsiders throughout the occupation of a vehicle in their familiar community. As repeatedly shown, people who live in their vehicle often perceive it as a "home" and do not self-identify as "home-less" – disaffiliation from a "homeless" identity may further separate vehicle residents from a surrounding unhoused community and lead them to reject "homeless" services. Perhaps most vexing, vehicle residents are disaffiliated and disconnected from standard brick-and-mortar social welfare systems with parking-less sites in dense urban areas, where critical services are often channeled for unhoused or "homeless" people.

I used the information from our mapping projects to develop a report on the state of local vehicle residency for the Seattle City Council Human Services Committee. This 2012 report focused on causes for the observed spatial use of vehicle-homes within specific locations, as well as suggestions for policies, programs and changes to assist vehicle residents and the communities

---

<sup>243</sup> Bahr & Caplow 1968; Bahr 1973; Sosin and Bruni 2000

<sup>244</sup> All Home 2018

where they reside. Portions of that report, my honors thesis, as well as other unpublished writing that I produced on vehicle residency throughout this project are included in this dissertation. Our report showed that the increasing use of anti-vehicle resident law enforcement alongside a rising population of vehicle residents constrained vulnerable people to create dense, yet often unaffiliated, communities on limited legal space. I presented our findings to the Seattle City Council in 2012, suggesting a halt in the new placement of anti-vehicle resident parking signs and investment in off-street spaces to alleviate the occupation of public parking.<sup>245</sup> From the analysis of our mapped data, in addition to many conversations with vehicle residents, service providers, advocates and parking enforcement personnel, I developed four primary conclusions:

1. *Public perception of vehicle resident population size and spatial/resource use may differ from reality.* While vehicle residency had been the most common form of housing for unsheltered individuals for over a decade, the needs of vehicle residents were widely overlooked.
2. *The use of public parking space for vehicle residency in North Seattle demonstrated patterns of densities within highly constricted legal space.* The compounding installation of signs that restrict legal overnight parking space have created an ever constricting and condensing available living area. As the number of vehicle residents increased and their legal space decreased, there has been a rise in vehicle residency density and longevity in remaining legal (as well as illegal) spaces. These growing densities have led to community complaints, law enforcement and social service costs, as well as tickets or impounds that engender personal debt and property loss.
3. *Current ordinances within Seattle place vehicles residents at personal risk and position them in direct conflict with the communities where they reside.* The enforcement of a law which restricts overnight “oversized” vehicle parking to Seattle’s industrial zones disproportionately affects people living within RVs. However, because the remaining legally available streets where these RVs congregate can become de facto vehicle resident encampments, other non-RV owning vehicle residents tend to use these areas in an attempt to “blend in.” This wide-variety of vehicle residents may use and develop an impromptu community to share resources, information, and defend property – especially important considering their communal need to protect their individual spaces and homes in a hostile environment. Objections regarding vehicle residency on public streets often concern regular products of human settlement: material and biological waste. However, there are typically no public restrooms, hygiene facilities or waste disposal units located within the often-isolated industrial areas where vehicle residents live – particularly true in SODO and along the Ballard waterfront. When complaints are received by the business and housed communities that surround the growing densities of vehicle residents, a legal response is often directed toward the entire street, not the source of the specific complaint. These responses to these community complaints have placed vehicle residents in direct risk of personal and

---

<sup>245</sup> Pruss 2012

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

economic harm, including persistent ticketing, threats of private property seizure or the further installation of overnight parking restriction signs to limit their legal living space.

4. *Vehicle residents have specific needs which are unaddressed by general services designed for unsheltered people.* Programs which are effective for Seattle's unsheltered and street-level homeless do not respond to many needs of vehicle residents, particularly those which do not provide adequate (including oversized) parking to access food and hygiene services. Without this off-street parking space, services can disaffiliate vehicle residents by requiring them to abandon their vital property on dangerous streets. Throughout conversations with vehicle residents in the Ballard area, our researchers found that many do not consider themselves homeless and are often new to living on the streets – reaffirming similar findings by Michele Wakin.

These findings can improve services for vehicle residents by explaining how vehicle resident settlement patterns may develop in public parking, identifying characteristics of locations valued by vehicle residents, as well as developing techniques for the enumeration and study of vehicle residency. I developed our mapping methodology contribute to the efficacy of local and federal reports on vehicle residency, so communities can better understand and support their vulnerable neighbors. Our mapping demonstrated that vehicle residents developed settlement patterns in public parking that were highly constrained by legal control on space and, within these diminishing legal living areas, center their habitation around services and resources necessary for survival. This mapping shows that mobile sheltering is used as an adaptive strategy within environmental constraints to produce long-term settlement in urban space.

Tonight, a mother and her teenage son are sleeping in their truck near his high school while a disabled senior hides in her van near a Veterans Hospital. Young adults like Bobby are developing equity through vehicle residency – their first significant property ownership after exiting a broken criminal justice system. People are trying to rent parking spaces, and hopefully secure an electrical connection (see Image 33). There are untold forces of unsettlement that drive people to mobile shelters; today, nearly all vehicle residents in Seattle move around a limited pool of legal overnight public parking. They search for spaces that provide safety through street lights, nearby access to twenty-four-hour restaurants and their restrooms, and a quiet spot where

they can get some sleep. They regularly see their vehicle as home, and perceive it as more beneficial and preferable than other options, including an overnight emergency shelter bed.



Image 33

Russ, Nikki, and their two sons (aged 10 and 14), advertise their search for a parking space on a street in the South Seattle SODO neighborhood. Although we met shortly after my outreach work for the day, their habitation of an RV excluded their entry our off-street parking program. July 31, 2014.

*The streets did not intrude amongst the bricks, but those cursed bricks came to imprison the streets.*<sup>246</sup>

#### 4.3 Archaeological Mapping of Tinkers in Rural and Urban Parking of Dublin

The origins, adaptive strategies, and stigmatization of vehicle residents in Seattle correlate with histories of other mobilized people such as Irish and British Tinkers or Travellers. The cultural identities of the Tinkers and Travellers are among the oldest and widely studied versions of what has been called peripatetic nomadism in Western societies. Tinkers and “tinkering” have been a touchstone for social theorists from Claude Lévi-Strauss’ descriptions of the *bricoleur*<sup>247</sup> (the French term for “to tinker”) to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theoretical considerations of the Tinkers’ “holey,”<sup>248</sup> hybrid or liminal existence as “nomads” in a “sedentary” world. Known as a traditionally itinerant community of metalsmiths and metallurgists (or, metal scrappers), these communities have populated the British Isles since at least first millennium CE, and are possibly named after their tin working or the sound of their hammers on metal.<sup>249</sup> Itinerant metalsmithing and trading has been used since at least the fifth century CE by people across Europe to survive unsettlement, constraints on settlement, and poverty.<sup>250</sup> This section details a history of Tinkers and Travellers by weaving together the 1977 research of George Gmelch and Kevin Kearns. I suggest that the experiences documented of the Tinkers and Travellers are analogous to vehicle residency in Seattle in their optimized strategy of mobile sheltering as a form of settlement within a social and biological environmentally-limited urban space. This analogy suggests an inference, that these adaptive behaviors represent the development of an otherwise restricted resource: settlement connected to urban resources.

---

<sup>246</sup> De Quincey 1821:94

<sup>247</sup> Lévi-Strauss 1966

<sup>248</sup> Deleuze & Guattari 1987:414

<sup>249</sup> Gmelch 1977a:8

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

Tinkers – alongside former “knackers” (traders or “reclaimers” of ailing horses), *salpeen* (Irish migratory farm labor), and locally-uncommon Roma “G\*psies” – are often grouped under the umbrella term of “Traveller,” making up roughly 0.6 percent of the Irish population. In 2017, advocates from the persistently alienated Traveller/Tinker communities produced genetic tests to legally support “ethnic” protection, indicating that they are distinct from the Irish population.<sup>251</sup> These claims of genetic variation within a relatively heterogeneous population of Ireland are reportedly due to roughly 500 years of family intermarriages (endogamy) and social disaffiliation from their settled neighbors. This community developed their own languages of *Cant*, *Shelta* and *Gammon* and, while many claim a (disputed) ethnic heritage of Travellers, there is no one specific background of Travellers that is distinct from the general Irish population.<sup>252</sup> Rather, their DNA study suggests that ancestors of the Travellers tested genetically split and remained isolated from their Irish neighbors around the early 1600s. At that time, forces of unsettlement such as waves of enclosure of publicly held land swept across Europe, displacing a diverse array of local people who were subsequently locked into poverty, stigma and unsettlement on the outskirts of small communities for centuries.

In the period between the 1500s and 1700s, Ireland and the UK experienced State colonization of land for industry, such as the British Plantation of Ulster colonies in Ireland (1609) developed to “civilize” the locals. Enclosures of available public space and subsequent evictions forced people into urban areas and itinerant labor as resource harvesters. Like the majority of vehicle residents I met, many Traveller communities identify themselves as different from international im/migrant groups such as the Northern Indian Roma (pejoratively termed, “G\*psies”). For example, in Norway, the corollary to Tinkers are the indigenous *Taters*,

---

<sup>251</sup> Ahlstrom 2017

<sup>252</sup> Gmelch 1977a

distinguished as *smavandringer* (“short distance travelers”) from their international “G\*psy” counterparts, *stovandringer* (“long distance travelers”).<sup>253</sup>

Today, there are around 60,000 Tinkers or Travellers in the UK, Ireland, France, Germany, and the rural Eastern US. Similar to the vehicle residents I met, the families in this diverse population have experienced individual and societal forces of unsettlement such as conflict, historic eviction, landlessness, poverty, and substance use disorder.<sup>254</sup> They have relied on many forms of mobile economic production such as scrapping or recycling, “asphalting,” and other “handy man” or day-labor employment. The reported causes and uses of “nomadic” behaviors among Travellers, particularly of mobile homes in urban spaces where private space is otherwise unavailable, mirrors the vast majority of the vehicle residents I met in Seattle.

I studied vehicle residency using a behavioral ecology approach similar to George Gmelch’s 1977 ethnographic research with Tinkers in Ireland. Gmelch’s work occurred while the mobile sheltering and inclusion of Tinkers/Travellers in the British Isles was a prominent political issue. In 1968, the British Parliament passed the Caravan Sites Act to develop for four hundred “halting” or “caravan sites” across England and Wales. These sites had previously existed in Ireland, and are remarkably similar to the aforementioned safe parking program, as discussed further in chapter eight. Gmelch details versions types of Tinker encampments in Dublin that are nearly identical to conditions of vehicle residency I observed in Seattle:

- (1) Local roadside camps: A number of wagons, tents, trailers are strung single file along the grassy margin or shoulder of a road. These camps tend to be small, limited by the amount of open space. There are a number of favorite locations which are occupied continuously: when one family or group moves out, others soon move in. In recent years many roadside camps have been eliminated by the local authorities, who have erected such barriers as concrete posts, mounds of earth, and chain-link fences to prevent families from pulling in their trailers and wagons.<sup>255</sup>

---

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> Kearns 1977:539

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*:55

Despite their cultural and temporal peculiarities, there is an uncanny similarity between the descriptions by Gmelch and Kearns, and the disparate yet connected communities of RVs and campers I saw – some neatly enclosed, while others sprawled their personal property in public. Where Tinker caravans with tethered or grazing animals settled in the areas between suburban housing and agriculture, vehicle residents in Seattle stored their vital resources, scrap materials and waste between retail stores and warehouses. According to Kearns,

Encampment along the urban fringe offers access to industrial factories and scrapyards and proximity to suburbs for peddling and begging. Most unauthorized sites are located along a peripheral belt where suburban housing interdigitates with agricultural land. Vacant lots and waste, or derelict, land offer the best prospects for casual encampment; little distinction is made between private and public land. Proximity to city boundaries is generally determined by local ordinances and by the prevailing climate of acceptability by local residents. Owing to their "exotic" ambience, most unauthorized settlements are highly conspicuous. Chaotically scattered caravans, pitched tents, scrap heaps, tethered or grazing animals, and open fires fashion a scene deplored by many Irish as an "affront to humanity."

Gmelch documented approximately fifteen percent of Dublin Traveller family units living in these places; by my estimate, approximately ninety-seven percent of vehicle residents currently live their contemporary equivalents throughout Seattle. The similarities between vehicle residency in Seattle and Gmelch's description of these "Local roadside camps," strongly compare with the "settlement types," patterns, and "economic adaptations" described by Kearns, in particular the "Unauthorized Settlement Sites" that were home to half of the Tinkers in his study. In contrast, what Kearns called "authorized settlement sites" are virtually non-existent in Seattle. Gmelch described these as,

- (2) Empty lots and fields: In a number of instances the fields are owned by the City Corporation and are scheduled for future development as housing estates and shopping centers. In the interim, the Corporation and local [Itinerant Settlement Committee] have encouraged Tinkers to camp in these fields, often to keep them out of areas where local residents would object.<sup>256</sup>

---

<sup>256</sup> Gmelch 1977a:55

While the empty lots and fields described by Gmelch were authorized, in Seattle trespassing laws are often quickly enforced when a vehicle resident is observed un-authorized in these open or undeveloped places. I documented several encampments in comparable empty lots during this study, deep within industrial zones that are isolated from the urban core of The City. Gmelch’s research showed that approximately forty percent of Dublin Traveller family units were living in these places; by my estimate, approximately two percent of vehicle residents currently live in these rare spaces in Seattle. Without these authorized “lots and fields” to park a mobile shelter, I regularly met individuals and families attempting to secure space on private property (see Image 33). Gmelch similarly describes these off-street places as,

- (3) Private property with permission: There are six such sites in Dublin, each for a single family: three are located on convent grounds and three in the backyards of private citizens. Families often do not remain long in these sites, because they soon feel isolated and lonely when on their own.<sup>257</sup>

These are extremely similar to spaces offered by the safe parking programs in Seattle and across the US. When I was employed as an outreach specialist for the only safe parking in Seattle, there were up to two parking spaces in each of six church parking lots throughout the City – roughly ten spaces at that time, and expanding to nearly fifty with later addition of “safe zones” on gravel lots (discussed further below). What Kearns called authorized or approved sites may be compared to these “short-term” safe parking lots; in general, these have been under-supported and under-scaled. Kearns critiqued:

Approved sites are not designed to be permanent; they are a “stop-gap” measure to remove families from the road. Since families here are destined for *tigin* living, tenancy is ostensibly short-term, but many remain for years. Despite their importance in the sedentarization scheme, relatively few authorized sites have been developed. By 1975 only six counties had provided them, offering accommodation for sixty-three families, or less than four percent of the population. Most counties oppose authorized sites contending that they lure Itinerants from other regions, thereby creating an economic and social burden on the community.<sup>258</sup>

---

<sup>257</sup> Gmelch 1977a:58

<sup>258</sup> Kearns 1977:546

When I worked as an outreach provider, the ten spaces we offered were the only official off-street parking available for approximately 1,500 local vehicle residents. As of this writing, these sites are no longer officially supported by the City of Seattle, most have been closed, and there are reports that plans to re-open new sites have been “scuttled” indefinitely.<sup>259</sup> Gmelch documented approximately two percent of Dublin Traveller family units living in these places; by my estimate, 0.1 percent vehicle residents lived at these sites in Seattle during this study.

I was early and long-standing proponent of the safe parking sites in Seattle, submitting the public grant to begin first City-funded program in 2011. However, through this research I learned that a disconnection of parking lots at faith-based organizations from existing emergency shelter systems can cause two significant challenges. First, relying on these sites as “one-off” locations rather than fully-integrating their development into emergency shelter planning virtually ensures that they will not meet their scale of need. Second, without an *on-site*, consistent and diverse professional staff of housing case managers, healthcare providers and employment specialists, disconnected programs may not be able to effectively connect their “clients” with the long-term stability necessary to move into traditional or permanent supportive housing. My colleagues on the All Home Executive and Governing Boards were diligent in recognizing the needs of diverse housing and service needs of subpopulations such as veterans, families, youth, young adults and LGTBQ+ communities – vehicle residents deserve the same level of attention. This was the observation of the Irish and UK governments in the 1960s; a fully-integrated program for parking a “wagon or trailer” can be compared with “local authority sites” described by Gmelch:

- (4) Official local authority sites constructed specifically for Tinkers: Accommodation is provided in huts which range in size from a single room (known as a *tigin*, Irish for “small house”) on the older sites to a five-room shelter or “chalet” on the newer sites. Amenities included electricity,

---

<sup>259</sup> Davila 2018a, 2018b; Barnett 2019

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

hot and cold running water, toilets, a place to store scrap metal, and, on several sites, communal land for grazing horses. The huts, which measure only 10 feet by 15 feet, were originally designed to be annexes to the Travellers' own trailers and wagons. In fact, ownership of a wagon or trailer was a requirement of tenancy, but many families soon sold their caravans and moved into the small huts. [The first site, Labre Park, was built in 1967 in an industrial area and] offers some grazing land, a primary school for Traveller children, and a small recreation center. A city employee is on duty round-the-clock to maintain order and to keep the site tidy. There is little incentive to move away from fellow Travellers into an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile settled community. In recognition that serviced sites do become permanent homes for many families, all local authority sites now under construction must have three bedrooms and full amenities in order to qualify for government subsidies.<sup>260</sup>

Also known as “Caravan” or “Halting Sites,” these high-resourced locations that are constructed specifically for vehicle residency do not exist in Seattle. The closest local analogy in Seattle would be authorized “tent city” encampments that utilize semi-permanent “tiny houses,” but these do not provide parking nor anything close to the scale and level of services described above. Gmelch’s description of these sites matches (and exceeds) requested services from nearly all of the vehicle residents I have met during the course of this research. Gmelch documented approximately forty-three percent of Dublin Traveller family units living in these places; nothing like these sites exist in Seattle. I will return to this idea of Halting Sites in chapter eight, as an example of an inferential knowledge, design, and best practices that can help develop similar programs for vehicle residents. In his conclusion, Gmelch describes many of the Tinker responses to environmental constraints in comparable terms to my research with unsettled people in Seattle, as adaptive strategies to a socioeconomic environment – particularly, a social and economic “shift” from rural to urban existence. Gmelch suggests that these,

Coping responses made by Tinkers are aimed primarily at lessening the immediate anxiety and psychic pain created by their new environment. The excessive consumption of alcohol among men is one obvious example. At present, housing within the settled community offers an escape from many of the constraints under which Tinkers live. It is obvious that the desire of many Travelers to be housed is based upon a wish to escape the limitations and problems associated with Traveller life today. For only when Travellers have settled and gained some degree of acceptance from the settled community will many of the job and educational opportunities of settled folk be available to them. Although the social and personal adjustments required by

---

<sup>260</sup> Gmelch 1977a:58-60 (*sic*)

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

housing are great, the experience of housed families in Mullingar and Tuam has shown that under the right circumstances itinerants can adapt to housing with little difficulty. The rapid success of these families who have been exposed to a new opportunity structure demonstrates forcefully that behavior is to a large degree shaped by the socioeconomic environment in which people live.<sup>261</sup>

There are countless forces of unsettlement that drive the use a mobile shelter to occupy an otherwise unattainable private place within a restricted public field. People may be born into historic and normative cultural practices of itinerancy or so-called “nomadism,” such as the Tinkers and Travellers. For those like Bernie, a vehicle-home in public parking is a form of affordable housing that similarly provides a connection to the urban resources of The City. For the snowbirds like my grandparents and those documented by Dorothy and David Counts,<sup>262</sup> the mobile home provides for a consistent bubble of home in open spaces where they can protect their property while on an extended travel during retirement, vacation, or medical care. For families like Junior, Star and their children, the vehicle-home provides a private space where they can remain together in their last remaining or hard-earned possession. For a growing number of Americans who post about “#VanLife” on social media and video websites, modern upscale mobile shelters provide an opportunity to reject a surrounding settled society in favor of a relatively comfortable life “on the road” while remaining connected to urban resources (such as employment and community) using the internet through satellite and WIFI networks. Like Gmelch, Kearns suggests a “nomadic to sedentary transition,” or “rural to urban migration” is afoot – a possible difference between Tinkers and vehicle residents in Seattle. Or, perhaps, Tinkers are a historically conglomerate community that has been reiteratively unsettled since their original individual and communal displacement, have developed a cultural identity through generational common struggle, and (still) seek settlement in harmony with their society.

---

<sup>261</sup> Gmelch 1977a:160

<sup>262</sup> Counts & Counts 1996

Both Kevin Kearns and Keith Halfacree’s extensive analysis on decades of Traveller “distribution of caravan sites” show these as recurring attempts at settlement that are otherwise unsettled through legal and social control enforced by housed communities.<sup>263</sup> I will return to this inference in my conclusions, to offer a recommendation that can broaden our anthropological and archaeological understanding of unsettled people. I suggest that it is not an origin or condition of movement which distinguishes a so-called “nomad,” but the way people understand and use space. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari, “the primary determination of nomads is to occupy and hold a smooth space: it is this aspect that determines them as nomad (essence). On their own account, they will be transhumants, or itinerants, only by virtue of the imperatives imposed by the smooth spaces.”<sup>264</sup> Environmental forces within an open “smooth” space demand a reflexive migration to secure and maintain access with a community pool of resources, such as shared pastoral lands or public parking. Like Bernie, this description of spatial use readily applies to the residents of Bangarang Village – detailed in the next section – who, moved by the imperatives of their environment and otherwise sought settled stability within a mobile home. This analogy of mobile sheltering as a form of immanent production provides several opportunities for inference and recommendations. This analogy shows how, for many people struggling to find a place in The City a mobile shelter is an adaptive form of affordable housing to produce and invest in urban settlement.

---

<sup>263</sup> Kearns 1977; Halfacree 1996

<sup>264</sup> Deleuze & Guattari 1987:85

*For, by the law of nature and reason, he, who first began to use it, acquired therein a kind of transient property, that lasted so long as he was using it, and no longer; or, to speak with greater precision, the right of possession continued for the same time only that the act of possession lasted. Thus the ground was in common, and no part of it was the permanent property of any man in particular; yet whoever was in the occupation of any determined spot of it, for rest, for shade, or the like, acquired for the time a sort of ownership, from which it would have been unjust, and contrary to the law of nature, to have driven him by force: but the instant that he quitted the use or occupation of it, another might seize it, without injustice. Thus also a vine or other tree might be said to be in common, as all men were equally entitled to it's produce; and yet any private individual might gain the sole property of the fruit, which he had gathered for his own repast.<sup>265</sup>*

### *5.0 Inference: Vehicle Residency in Public Parking as Personal-in-Corporative Property*

Objects are created and invested by individuals and societies with identity as material culture or artifacts. Igor Kopytoff suggests that, “a culturally informed economic biography of an object would look at it as a culturally constructed entity, endowed with culturally specific meanings, and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories.”<sup>266</sup> My goal here is to present a culturally informed biography of a vehicle residence within a shared space of public parking.

Using experimental archaeology early in this research afforded an opportunity to recorded the processes of procurement and maintenance of a mobile shelter (including parking tickets), as well part of its lateral cycling (sales or transfer), secondary use (as storage or a work-tool), recycling (stripping into base materials), disposal (a finally-impounded or “junk” vehicle that may be crushed into scrap), and reuse (sale at auction to future vehicle residents). I continued to record the flow of vehicle residencies as material culture, documenting these objects in states of decomposition on public streets (see Image 34), attending auctions of impounded vehicles (see Image 35), and conducting extensive interviews with vehicle residents, their advocates, as well as Seattle Police Department Parking Enforcement Officers and Supervisors.

---

<sup>265</sup> Blackstone 1825:3 (*Sic.*)

<sup>266</sup> Kopytoff, 1986:68

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss



Image 34  
An RV in SODO that was used for shelter and storing waste while being deconstructed for valuable scrap metal and parts. April 10, 2014.



Image 35  
As parking enforcement-referred tows of vehicle homes flooded impound and storage lots, auctions that previously occurred every other month now take place weekly. I observed vehicle-homes that contain personal objects sold at these auctions for as little as one dollar. November 18, 2017.

The vehicle-as-home in urban parking is a symbolic object, part of what Erin Taylor described as a “materiality of poverty” that exposes its occupant to discrimination and a stigmatized label of the homeless “other.”<sup>267</sup> Ian Woodward similarly described how humans act reflexively upon the artifacts created and possessed within social and biological environments, “For the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social interactions and giving symbolic meaning to human activity.”<sup>268</sup> Considering a vehicle residence as a material culture artifact that is invested with and invests its possessor with meaning helped me to correlate its symbolic relationships and applied use – what ethnoarchaeologists William Rathje and Cullin Murphy called the “mental and material realities” of a human behavior. Rathje and Murphy observed that, “It is a rare person in whom mental and material realities completely coincide. Indeed, for the most part, the pair exist in a state of tension, if not open conflict.”<sup>269</sup> The vehicle residence exists in a state of radical cognitive dissonance – a conflict between the mental and material realities of mobile sheltering, both within the behavior and as it is viewed from outside. Materially, the vehicle-as-home is used a form of settlement; mentally, the vehicle-as-home is perceived as a form of unsettlement.

An analogy of mobile sheltering as an immanent production of a resource where is otherwise unavailable, housing in urban space, suggests an inference between so-called “nomadism” and vehicle residency that may help better understand this adaptive behavior and settled bias. Khazanov observed this “nomadic adaptation” to a communal occupation of environmentally-constrained fields, or “the problem of property ownership” that derives from the habitation of socially and biologically constrained, yet commonly-held (corporative) spaces such

---

<sup>267</sup> Phelan et al., 1997; Taylor 2013b

<sup>268</sup> Woodward, 2007:3

<sup>269</sup> Rathje and Murphy 2001:12-13

as public parking. Here, enforced boundaries of “public” thoroughfares between “private” property goes beyond a point of theory, they can define the borders of physically allowed space and political representation for otherwise settled people. These restrictions are among the continuing personal and social forces that unsettle people who depend on hybrid spaces.

Similarly described by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as the hybrid unsettled/settled spaces of “Tinkers,” I explore these areas here by comparing the studies of Irish and British Travellers by Sally Kendall with the following ethnographic account of “Bangarang Village.” Where my primary analogy compares how Tinkers and vehicle residents like Bernie use mobile sheltering as a way to produce housing where it is otherwise unavailable in a constrained environment, this inference explores the constraints of this environment and what happens when they are challenged. The following pages show how violating the implicit and explicit rules of public space that mandate its open access through anonymous movement exposes a risk of “blowing up the spot” or drawing attention that eliminates access to the space and its resources for themselves and others. Vehicle residents possess their homes as personal property that must be protected in this commonly-held, or corporative public space; they must pass regular checks on the implicit and explicit contracts of public space to maintain their place to exist. Failure to comply with these contracts exposes a person who relies on public space to otherwise socio-legally inexcusable acts of public banishment, property seizure and open physical violence.

Archival research on vehicle residency led me to a short book about a man similarly occupying a subcompact car on the streets of France, titled *No Fixed Abode* (Augé 2014) – the French term (translated from *Sans Domicile Stable*, or SDS) for a person who might be considered “homeless” in the USA. Augé wrote his book in a style he called “ethnofiction,” a composed account based on social theory research that is presented without analysis as a

heuristic tool. I found the text generative yet frustrating, and uncomfortably void of contextual, methodological, or ethical consideration. To investigate the reasons behind his text, I read Augé's work on "supermodernity and non-place," which resonated deeply with my study and caused me to reconsider his ethnofiction as heuristic device. I found that the social and physical construction of non-place which enforces anonymous movement between multiplying places appears to underlie the structural violence experienced Tinkers, Travellers, G\*psies, the members of Bangarang Village and others who see inhabit public space as their (often only) perceived option.

Augé's theory of non-place considers its function in supermodernity (the excessive plurality of temporal, spatial and subjective realities) as constructed areas for transportation (anonymous temporality) between fixed places of identity.<sup>270</sup> Augé based his theory on the language of Michel de Certeau, who described place as precise: the anthropocentric history or memory of physical or metaphysical objects; whereas space is abstract: the quantified relationship between subjective, mutable places. Through this geographic lens, places are constructed to form identity, whereas space is an abstract field where places are defined. Augé challenges Certeau in this regard, "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place."<sup>271</sup> According to Augé, places are constructed to live, work, play, and develop identity; whereas non-place is constructed to pass through and maintain ahistorical anonymity. Augé's non-place facilitates modernity – or the specialization of places for the controlled (re)production of life – as an uninhabitable passage built to reinforce the movement of resources between specialized sites of production. A relatively recent expansion of

---

<sup>270</sup> Augé 1995

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*:63

quantifiable non-space is part of what Augé termed supermodernity, the excessive multiplicity of physical and metaphysical space that requires connective non-place. I was observing in my research what Augé had described in his ethnofiction, vehicle residency in public parking is the production of place in non-place. As Augé concludes his treatise,

The stumbling block to the coexistence of places and non-places will always be political. But the extension of the non-places corresponding to [newly connected places] – empirically measurable and analyzable non-places whose definition is primarily economic – has already overtaken the thought of politicians, who spend more and more effort wondering where they are going only because they are less and less sure where they are.<sup>272</sup>

The maintenance of non-place for passage between specialized places requires an implicit contract enforcing anonymity and movement. This political “stumbling block” of producing places (i.e. a mobile shelter) within non-places (public streets) produces, socio-legally justifies and obscures acts of violence. The following ethnographic account of Bangarang Village shows how the habitation of a mobile shelter in public space can easily violate the un-negotiated terms of this implicitly defined and enforced contract.

I explore an analogy and subsequent inference between mobile sheltering and vehicle residency here, comparing the work of Sally Kendall with the “Traveller” community in Leeds (UK) with my research through anthropologist Marc Augé theories lens of place and non-place. Kendall’s research showed how Irish Travellers’ homemaking in thoroughfares, or transportational non-places of “time-space compression,” exposed these local people to an antagonism as positioned outsiders within their communities. This chapter includes some of the results from my material cultural analysis on vehicle residency in public parking, to show how the possession of this personal property in a commonly maintained field is regulated by “checks on its contract,” as Augé describes, “Alone, but one of many, the user of a non-place is in

---

<sup>272</sup> Augé 1995:272

contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it). He is reminded, when necessary, that the contract exists.”<sup>273</sup> I infer from this comparison of vehicle residents and Travellers that the enforcement of non-space tends to expose people who inhabit these socially constructed areas to a specific form of structural violence: settled bias. This inference connects with conclusions in the final chapter, to suggest analysis of forces that reinforce settled bias within the academic, contemporary and archaeological record. Furthermore, this supports my thesis that a discrimination against an adaptive strategy of mobile sheltering in urban space (corporate property in privatized space) derives from the conflict between the personal constructions of place in socially constructed non-place – such as the habitation of a vehicle in public parking.

According to Augé, as modernity and supermodernity developed locally and globally, space has been increasingly carved into specialized places and their connective non-places.<sup>274</sup> Augé described the declaration of non-place as a form of power, deployed as social control through spatial control. The experiences of vehicle residents in public parking I documented were analogous to people who use adaptive mobile sheltering behaviors in available space that has been converted to non-place, and reveals some of the behaviors which vehicle residents use to avoid, challenge and even channel legal power. Michele Wakin came to a similar conclusion based on her research with vehicle residents in Santa Barbara, CA, and suggested that vehicle living represents a resistance to this regulation, “It is a way of preserving choice and autonomy over living space.”<sup>275</sup> This is nearly identical Sally Kendall’s assessment of “homemaking” by Irish Tinkers as resistance to forces of social control,

The creation of ‘home’ as a community of resistance is particularly important for marginal groups as this may be the only spatial area where they have some form of control over their environment. In turn, its existence is likely to be viewed as directly threatening the dominant society’s power

---

<sup>273</sup> Augé 1995:82

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> Wakin 2014:5

over and control of, marginal groups. As a response to this threat the dominant group may attempt to destroy the marginal groups means to create a 'homeplace' in order to achieve the goal of cultural assimilation and/or subjugation.<sup>276</sup>

Heavily influenced by the work of feminists bell hooks and Doreen Massey, Sally Kendall describes the Irish "Traveller" production of place in non-place in remarkably similar terms to my assessment.<sup>277</sup> Although her research is thoroughly centered on the Traveller 'homeplace' as a (gendered) site of resistance, she too connects a "nomadic" production of place in space, the marginalization of people who inhabit space that is converted into non-place, and the development of supermodernity through a "time-space compression." Kendall's article detailed what she saw through Massey's concept of time-space compression, describing the rules of anonymous transportation deemed necessary to ease movement between rapidly increasing places. This is strikingly similar to the multiplication of places in Augé's theory of supermodernity, requiring an exponential production of connective "non-place." Kendall connects the exclusion of legal space to enforced movement and anonymity for Travellers – or, the declaration of non-place – with a global sense of xenophobia against a nomadic outsider, what I term as settled bias:

Those with power in relation to space-time compression have also used it to control groups who are physically mobile, like Travellers. A belief in the apparently universal experience of time-space compression has been utilised by groups within society to perpetuate a defensive and reactionary sense of place. Current fragmentation is set against a past, idealised sense of place inhabited by coherent and homogenous communities. This in turn may lead to antagonisms toward 'outsiders' such as Travellers at a local, national, and trans-national level<sup>278</sup>

Kendall describes a displacement of vulnerable people by dominant groups through a redefinition of space/place that is endemic in research with so-called nomadic and homeless

---

<sup>276</sup> Kendall 1997:78

<sup>277</sup> hooks 1992; Massey 1993a, 1993b

<sup>278</sup> Kendall 1997: 72 (*sic*)

populations.<sup>279</sup> The space-time compression theorized by Kendall and Massey closely resembles what Augé described as the goal of non-place, as sites designated for fast transport between places that requires a constant anonymity of movement. According to Kendall,

Travellers' occupation of marginal space (both physical and cultural) within the sedentary society is neither given nor fixed and may be open to renegotiation by either side. Nevertheless, static, rigid and bounded concepts have been utilised by the dominant society to create reactionary and defensive notions of place which, in turn, have been used as a tool for the spatial and cultural exclusion of 'marginal' groups like Travellers. Travellers are excluded from these bounded notions of place because of their nomadism (real or perceived) i.e. their ability to cross spatial boundaries.<sup>280</sup>

These "reactionary and defensive notions of place" are the renegotiation of allotted space. The following account of the Bangarang Village protest shows how the renegotiation of space – or, the declaration of non-place alongside the provision of an alternative site for proposed occupation – then subsequent removal of alternative space, is used to eliminate perceived "nomadism." I recorded this process on multiple occasions in interviews, participant observation and three years of settlement mapping of vehicle residency in Seattle's public parking. I show this explicitly in the (concluding) story of Mac, through the development of "Safe Zones" along with a nearby installation of "No Parking 2-5 AM" signs, the corralling of vehicle residents into the Safe Zone site, subsequent closure of the Safe Zone site, and the expulsion of vehicle residents from their former community to distant streets. For vehicle residents who rely on overnight oversized vehicle parking, this process of ghettoization and eviction converts public parking from habitable corporative property to uninhabitable non-place, banishing the population from "desirable" urban space. The vehicle resident habitation of an open parking space that is later declared uninhabitable through the application and/or enforcement of signs and laws to

---

<sup>279</sup> Gmelch 1977a; Khazanov 1983; McVeigh 1997; Clements and Campbell 1997; Kendall 1997; Duneier 1999; Clark 1997; Amster 2008; Beckett & Herbert 2009; Harcourt 2001; Wacquant 2004; Mitchell 2003, Arnold 2004, Lyon-Callos 2008

<sup>280</sup> Kendall 1997:87

mandate movement and anonymity is analogous to mobile sheltering or homemaking in open (or provided) space, that is later controlled by sedentary forces as place or non-place. This shows a pattern of (1) unsettled people inhabiting public space as an adaptive behavior, (2) and a targeted conversion of common land to non-place to evict an unsettled population. The following account of the Bangarang Village protest and its aftermath shows the very real threat of failing to comply with the implicit and explicit rules of a socially constructed non-place.

*Rufio: You are the Pan. You can fly, you can fight, and you can ...  
Peter Pan: Crow!*<sup>281</sup>

### 5.1 Bangarang!



Image 36  
Several of the RVs that would comprise the Bangarang Village protest. June 29, 2015.



Image 37  
Davey with Bangarang Village sign. July 23, 2015.

---

<sup>281</sup> Spielberg 1991

The oversized-vehicle-focused protest known as Bangarang Village consisted of roughly twenty RVs and buses parked along a busy arterial street in North Seattle (Image 36). When I first saw the encampment, I feared it was doomed to catastrophe. The group refused to relocate from a posted “No Parking 2-5 AM” restricted street in a mixed-manufacturing/residential zone, directly contesting legal constraints on the available pool of overnight public parking for extended-length vehicles. This was an act of *insurgent settlement* (see Image 37), similar to actions described by James Holston as “insurgent citizenship.”<sup>282</sup> Their protest shows how people may guard and (re)claim their access to civic resources, space and representation through *sabotage*, or the visible occupation of space by available property (such a shoe, tent or RV) to inhibit or confound a challenged social process. Superbly documented in a three-part series by Rhianna Hidalgo at *Real Change Homeless Empowerment Newspaper*, the embodied protest of Bangarang Village sparked a city-wide debate on vehicle residency.<sup>283</sup> My reflection of the protest is no victory march. Instead, this story shows how the habitation of shared settled space can expose unassociated people to settled bias and criminalization.

Vehicle residents who inhabit public parking survive in an environment designed to enforce perpetually anonymous movement. Like nearly all of the vehicle residents I met, the Bangarang protesters sought settlement but were continuously pushed through public space. The everyday enforcement of parking as non-place exposes its inhabitants to structural violence of endless destabilization and social disaffiliation. Bangarang Village expressed concerns that were common to others in their situation, not only as vehicle residents but as unsettled, disenfranchised and landless people. Vehicle residents often inhabit a hostile environment where persistent visible, legal and social cues demand they, “Move along” (see Image 38).

---

<sup>282</sup> Holston 2008

<sup>283</sup> Hidalgo 2015a, 2015b, 2015c



Image 38

“Move Along ... TO WHERE?” painted on RV, parked at the (unrelated) “Camp Sanctuary” vehicle resident protest encampment in South Seattle. May 25, 2017.

The following ethnography of Bangarang Village demonstrates how social and biological environmental constraints on a pool of available space – like pastures for livestock or overnight public parking – can compel ideals of corporative property ownership and protection that are counter-normative to social constructions of private property and its connective non-place. I explore this idea here through the term *blowing up the spot*, a phrase frequently documented by (typically, veteran) vehicle residents when condemning other (typically, novice) vehicle residents for the accumulation of possessions or waste near their shared parking. Those who accumulated waste were accused of blowing up the spot, or bringing public or legal attention that results in a restriction on corporatively-held resources – in this case, available overnight parking space. I met several of the encampment founders through my outreach work with vehicle residents in the years before they assembled their protest, and others in the Village or adjacent parking over the months of their occupation. However, their story begins much earlier, when the participants learned to demand their rights by intentionally occupying public space. This section shows how and why the Bangarang Village protest blew up their spot.

Bangarang Village illustrated the issues of vehicle residency in the extreme and, although they were somewhat unique in their protest, represent the concerns experienced by the vast majority of vehicle residents I have encountered through my research. Each member of Bangarang Village, and nearly every vehicle resident I have met, expressed a similar desire: the right to safe space for a stable and happy life. However, Bangarang Village's explicit resistance to checks on anonymous movement caused their total available space to be legally enclosed as non-place by the installation and enforcement of "No Parking 2-5 AM" signs. Thus, they *blew up the spot* through its permanent restriction from overnight habitation for protestors *and* others. One might ask, "Why would Bangarang Village bring attention through a protest that was nearly assured to strip away their most valuable resource of legal space?" The histories of its members suggest that Bangarang Village blew up their spot because they used a learned behavior of protest by claiming place in a commonly-held space through a subversive, non-anonymous settlement. They found that their primary resource of occupied public space was valued by The City, and explicitly placed their homes at risk in protest for a place to survive. Their act of sabotage demanded citizenship was punished with banishment.

Around 2005, several of the future founders of Bangarang Village began living on the streets of Seattle as youth and young adults, quickly learning how to create their homes within occupied public space. During our dozens of informal conversations, nearly every member of Bangarang Village detailed a history of destabilization that began with a perceived lack of family/social support during times of emotional or physical hardship. Each had been living in public space for at least one year (several for almost a decade) and had connected to this protest

through a street-based social network vital to many unhoused people, as shown by Stacy Rowe and Jennifer Wolch.<sup>284</sup>

As I had experienced at fifteen (a potential research bias), most of the members of Bangarang Village had flowed in and out of the US juvenile criminal justice system, state-run housing and “the streets.” They learned to commodify the body to produce capital in numerous ways – working unreported and dangerous jobs, or “spare changing” and “hey mistering” for money. Many learned to numb away their traumatized nights and days with intoxicants, and to protect their bodies and property in public spaces through communal strength.<sup>285</sup> They had experiences similar to those detailed by Mary Ellen Mark and Martin Bell, in their film and book *Streetwise* that documented the harrowing lives of Seattle’s “street kids” in the 1980s.<sup>286</sup>

The street kids who became Bangarang Village grew up in the same streets and alleys as Mark’s exposé, now renovated into an upscale shopping area and adjacent plaza. Several founders of Bangarang Village inhabited these spaces in downtown Seattle alongside the Occupy movement – a public protest that included temporary tent communities during their actions of the early 2010s, well-documented by David Graeber.<sup>287</sup> For the former “street kids” of Bangarang Village, creating communities and using the visibility of their bodies for protest in public space had become normative. They were repeating and promoting settlement as protest, demanding their rights to property ownership and a legal space to thrive.

In October 2014, several of the Bangarang Village founders organized a tent encampment protest of fellow unhoused youth and young adults along nearby the busy University Way,

---

<sup>284</sup> Rowe & Wolch 1990

<sup>285</sup> Kruse 2015

<sup>286</sup> Bell 1984; Mark 1988

<sup>287</sup> Graeber 2011:397, 2013a, 2013b

known locally as “The Ave.” They called themselves “The Ave Foundation,”<sup>288</sup> and verbally protested that they were “tired of being forced out of places to sleep that aren’t in the public eye.”<sup>289</sup> The Ave Foundation intentionally blocked a busy sidewalk and Federal Post Office entrance with their tents for over a month, sparking a local public debate on neighborhood homelessness.<sup>290</sup> The group moved only after the Seattle Police Department and several advocates secured a temporary tent encampment in a nearby church parking lot for one month. They knew that the City of Seattle had established official encampments for hundreds of unhoused individuals and families, and they learned from their experiences that occupation protests could lead to legal, if temporary, space for their community.<sup>291</sup> However, the Ave Foundation were evicted back to nearby streets following their month in the church parking lot.

After relocating repeatedly throughout the spring of 2015, several of Bangarang Village’s founders purchased RVs to ‘move off the street.’ They described immediately feeling an intense, daily pressure from law enforcement and community interests commonly reported by vehicle residents in Seattle. They were well aware of the political and social forces designed to move them along public space, but would learn differences between their lives as *street kids* and *vehicle residents*. They explained how the constant movement of a multi-ton vehicle that could be immobilized, ticketed and incur debt *under their name* was more difficult than abandoning a backpack or tent to escape police officers or during a “sweep.” Moreover, their strategy of inhabiting space long-term as public protest did not mesh with the rules of vehicle residency in public parking – specifically, their lack of movement brought public and legal attention that

---

<sup>288</sup> Burkhalter 2014

<sup>289</sup> Drew 2014

<sup>290</sup> Ryan 2014

<sup>291</sup> City of Seattle 2011; Stephens 2015; Beekman 2015

would banish all vehicle residency from their area. Their learned behavior of visible protest was on a collision course with anonymous mobility, and would blow up their spot.

Davey was the arguable leader of Bangarang Village. A self-described thirty-two-year-old “white male” who had lost his housing three years earlier, Davey was a public character with experiences that were repeated among people I met. He had been released from military service directly to the streets following an “other than honorable discharge” similar to Junior, and deeply distrusted authority like Bobby. His blonde dreadlocks bounced as he skipped from topic to topic with a frenetic energy, often unreeling a line of legal complaints. Perhaps closer to “Rufio” than “Peter Pan,” Davey led this “group of Lost Boys;” as he described:

The kind that fight the pirates.

Because pirates steal from people, they rape and they pillage.

They hurt people; pirates are bad.

But we use the swords and boats of the pirates to fight them.

We know the laws and our rights, and we use the streets and our vehicles.

Just like in [*Hook*], when they had no food and no hope, and when they fought against their oppressors, the pirates, they shouted, ‘Bangarang!’ and it made them believe.

When we stay together, and have fun together, and believe together, then we can have much, much better together.

That’s the power of Bangarang to me.

Having fun, believing, looking at what you’ve got and making it better.<sup>292</sup>

Davey described how Bangarang Village had come together from various places and groups of unsheltered youth or young adults, all tired of being moved around public space with disregard for their safety. His called his home the “Flagship,” an approximately forty-foot long former luxury RV valued at roughly \$30,000 if properly maintained. It was covered in blacklight

---

<sup>292</sup> Davey Personal Interview

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

graffiti art (the vehicle at the right in Image 42), needed significant body, electrical and engine repairs, and had substantial aftermarket remodeling that made the interior generally unrecognizable as an RV. Davey had illegally parked the vehicle perpendicular on this street for at least three months before the protest began (see Image 39). During this time, the RV intentionally obscured a “No Parking 2-5 AM” sign because as Davey stated,

That sign is illegal, it blocks the right of free movement through public space!

I do not recognize that sign, so I park here to block it.

Fuck that sign.



Image 39

Davey’s Flagship with “Sovereign State” placard at the future site of Bangarang Village. January 5, 2015.

Davey replaced his license plate in late 2014 with a piece of paper declaring his vehicle a “Sovereign State” (see Image 39), a surprisingly successful and not-uncommon legal strategy.

According to Davey, this referenced article ten of the US Constitution: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, *or to the people.*” This legal strategy claimed that the property was subject to US federal law *only* and *not* state or municipal laws, such as a “No Parking 2-5 AM”

sign. Davey explained that his goal to avoid possible fines from parking a vehicle in a single place for an extended period of time – this could be perceived as effective, considering Davey allegedly received no tickets during his half-year of daily illegal parking.

With this personal declaration as a “Sovereign State,” Davey used his understanding of law to immunize himself and his property from a pervasive hostile environment of settled bias. Like the seemingly non-common-sense revelation in Bourgois and Schonberg’s study, that people viably use water to clean HIV-infected syringes, this “crackpot idea” shows how people use legal vagaries and precedents as forms of resistance to defend their personal property from what they may see as hostile forces in a public environment. I observed the tactic of declaring a vehicle as “Sovereign State” used on several occasions in this research, leading me to consider how the viability of signs for declaring a vehicle as residence might immunize the home from property seizure. Davey used the tools at his disposal, his knowledge of legal vagaries, to assert his citizen rights in an act of insurgent settlement and *sabotage*.

Shortly before the US Independence Day in 2015, the small community of young adults living in recreational vehicles (“RVs”), busses and trucks officially formed their public protest surrounding Davey’s Flagship – throughout that year, an immobile symbol of resistance to enforced mobility. Their encampment specifically protested through a lack of movement: like the original concept of French term *sabotage*, they would place an object (the *sabot*, or wooden shoe) in their environment, insist their right to protect their property, and refuse to relinquish control over its space. This protest tore at the organized fabric of the city, positioned community members against each other, and was debated throughout the highest levels of local government.

Their protest goal was something many people take for granted: long-term overnight parking. While other vehicle residents tried to avoid drawing attention to their occupation of

public space, Bangarang Village was explicitly attempting to draw attention *for* their occupation of public space. The younger (perhaps, more brash) members of Village shouted their complaints against a legal system that they insisted was enforcing their migration with no way out.



Image 40  
Davey with the Bangarang Village rules sign. July 23, 2015.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Bangarang Village took their name from a battle cry of the “Lost Boys” in the movie, *Hook*, Steven Spielberg’s 1991 sequel to the story of Peter Pan. However, Bangarang Village was not in Neverland. These RVs were settled on a busy road lined with luxury homes, boat garages and repair shops, popular restaurants, entertainment activities, and a high-traffic jogging path (see Image 36). They defended their settlement from outsiders, posting signs to warn away interloping drug-users or predators (see Image 40). Bangarang Village directly contested the stereotypes perpetuated by “anti-homeless” community groups (discussed in the conclusion) and the aforementioned “Breaking Bad effect,” posting notice that their settlement was not a (intravenous drug) “shooting gallery,” (methamphetamine) “tweaker den,” or “diggle daggles” – the product or place of production for waste created during an often drug-induced deconstruction of goods for recyclable materials.

However, without waste disposal facilities the settlement continuously accumulated food and beverage containers, vehicle parts, and debris from “scrapped” objects into large piles. Additionally, some of the Village residents, their visitors, pets, and passersby along the adjacent jogging path were urinating and defecating on a wooded hill that bordered their parking. As more vehicles joined the protest through summer, the encampment’s waste piles overtook the jogging path, the temperatures rose, and the smell as well as sheer size of the encampment forced it into public view. For a protest using limited means at their disposal, namely personal property and waste, Bangarang Village had successfully raised public awareness of their community.

The waste piles were quickly noticed by the business and housed communities, as well as the local non-profit “homeless-rights” advocacy organization. This non-profit, Facing Homelessness, coordinated members of these diverse groups to dispose of the waste and provide necessary social services, using a social media campaign built on photographs and counter-

narratives of Bangarang Village's young parents with small children. Nearly fifty people descended on the site with garbage bags and smiles. They brought promises of future assistance such as vehicle parts and repair, fuel, food, permanent housing or permanent parking. On the same day that the pro-Village advocates celebrated their clean-up event, irate business and property interests rallied against the encampment, complaining to politicians and police about the piles of waste, smell of urine, and lack of movement.

At four AM on the day after community advocates helped remove Bangarang's waste, all vehicle residences in or near the protest encampment received a "24 Hour Notice" that they must relocate or face immediate property seizure (see Image 41). The next afternoon, nearly two dozen advocates, neighbors, police officers, vehicle residents, city council members and a Mayor's representative met at Bangarang Village to discuss a "compassionate response" to remove the encampment (see Image 42). After police officers suggested a compromise that allowed for a two-week parking extension based on an agreement to relocate civilly, I asked the attending Lieutenant to identify potential legal sites for relocation. He cheerfully agreed, "That sounds reasonable, we'll get right back to you on that." After twenty minutes, the Lieutenant concluded that no legal long-term parking space existed for Bangarang Village in Seattle.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

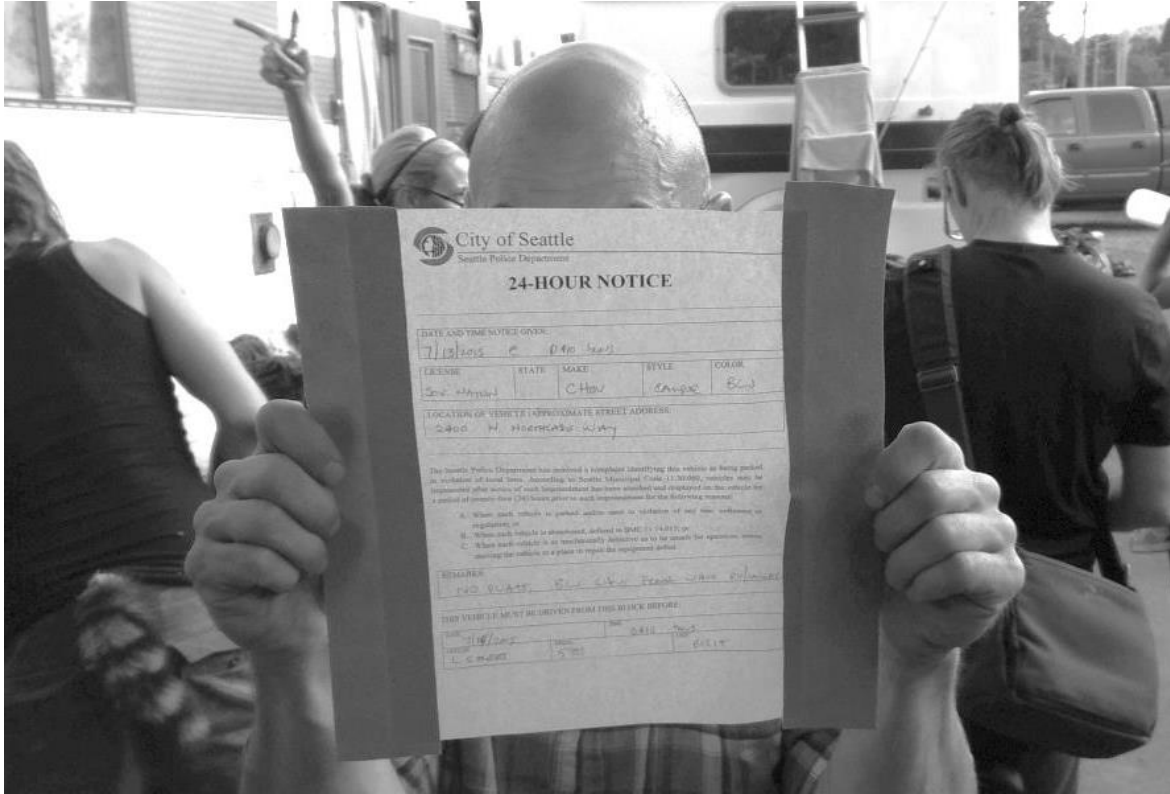


Image 41  
Eviction notices issued to all vehicles associated with Bangarang Village. July 14, 2015.



Image 42  
The community meeting at Bangarang Village to discuss plans for the site removal. July 14, 2015.

After the encampment was granted a two-week-reprieve from property seizure, social workers, advocates and well-wishers immediately arrived to speak with the protesters and offer assistance. Conversely, joggers, bicyclists and drivers routinely shouted insults and implored Bangarang Village to “get out of our neighborhood!” Radio and television news crews frequented the Village looking for sound bites to connect with their base, designed to invoke revulsion or empathy depending on the audience. Police vehicles and law enforcement photographers became daily visitors, some offering mechanical parts and repairs while others overtly took photographs and reportedly documented identities of the protesters.

The visits by everyone except hatemongers and police officers slowed to a trickle within the first week of their grace period. Remaining protesters who had identified as former foster children and “street kids” described feeling, “Abandoned, again.” As the second week of the reprieve wore on, the demeanor of the encampment turned to resignation. At the community meeting to finalize the eviction, police and advocates for or against the protest far outnumbered the vehicle residents. Several of the vehicle residents attending the eviction meeting angrily expressed that they were unassociated with the protest but had been swept up in the law enforcement pressures and feared losing the corporatively held parking space they had relied upon for decades for settlement.<sup>293</sup>

By the end of the two-week grace period, all vehicles associated with the protest encampment had complied with their eviction and the largest among them moved ten blocks east. Only one person received supportive services – off-street parking for an RV, provided with transitional housing for the owner and her daughter. Several unassociated vehicle residents reported visits by multiple police officers and notifications of potential raids within their homes

---

<sup>293</sup> McNichols 2015; Spain 2015; MyNorthwest 2016

if they did not move. Finally, police officers escorted the social service agency-funded tow of Davey's Flagship RV to a distant and marginalized northern industrial street, utterly devoid of nearby resources such as public toilets or bus lines. The rest of Bangarang Village's vehicle residents scattered among the two hundred or so blocks common to vehicle residency across Seattle. The parking strip is now clearly identified as a "no overnight" parking section and, as of this writing, remains heavily enforced. This specific strip of parking had been occupied by an otherwise unrelated "community" of disparate mobile homes for three decades according to a 1991 article in *The Seattle Times*;<sup>294</sup> their corporative pool of legal living space for vehicle residents is now permanently removed.

The dozen or so members of Bangarang Village were surrounded by two dozen vehicle residents on adjacent city blocks, seven hundred and seventy-six people sleeping in "cars, trucks, vans or RVs" in Seattle, and over eleven hundred individuals and families who relied on a vehicle as primary shelter in the greater King County region at that time.<sup>295</sup> All of these vehicles and their owners were subject to the similar forms of social control that routinely destabilized the members of Bangarang Village. The difference with Bangarang Village was that they broke the rules in protest, claiming a right to visible settlement in non-place. Vehicle residents like Bernie and Bobby had learned to migrate anonymously for years, upholding the rules of non-place. Nearly all of the vehicle residents I met in this research experienced conditions described by Sally Kendall (below) as "spatial and social exclusion," "blame" as "strangers," domination as a "marginal" group, and a (false) presumption that their visible "negative characteristic" of mobility was somehow "inherent in the 'deviant' group." Like Traveller communities of the past

---

<sup>294</sup> Henderson 1991

<sup>295</sup> SKCHH 2019

and present, Bangarang Village is a chronotype specific to a social space and time; I connect these stories here with larger social constructs through ethnoarchaeological inference.

These acts of public settlement challenge the socially constructed boundaries of property because they blur the lines between public and private space. They do this by occupying a personal property for extended periods in a corporatively held pool of public space, extending their personal spatial control over public space in ways that are restricted to a settled society. Bangarang Village existed within a settled society with a motivation and method of privatized places, where connective space is restricted for efficient transportation. The long-term occupation of public parking, especially in protest, failed to comply with checks on anonymous movement – thus, breaking the rules of the corporative non-place and “blowing up the spot” for the protestors and other vehicle residents. These otherwise settled citizens experienced a fear of housed communities to perceive public acts of settlement as an existential threat that transgresses socially constructed borders of private and public property. Sally Kendall explained this fear based on her research with Irish Travellers, in a passage that adeptly describes the stigmatization described by vehicle residents such as Bangarang Village and Mac (in the next chapter):

It is Travellers' ability to transport themselves around and cross spatial boundaries which is seen as a direct threat by the sedentary society. They oppose attempts at spatial and social exclusion and have the ability to cross into, for example, 'middle class space'. Their nomadism (real or perceived) locates them as 'strangers' within a spatial area. It is easier to blame 'strangers' for deviant behavior (especially if they come and go) rather than blame your 'own' people and thus have to critically examine and possibly undermine or threaten the structure of your 'own' community. Hence when Travellers pull on to unauthorized sites in residential areas local residents transpose their fears onto them. As 'strangers' they provide the ideal scapegoat for undesirable behaviour such as criminal activity and the dumping of waste. This process also acts as an additional safety valve for the dominant group. By ascribing/transposing its negative characteristics onto a marginal group and by making those characteristics inherent within that group the dominant members serve to maintain their position of power and further weaken the position of the marginal group. It also means that those negative characteristics do not have to be dealt with by the dominant group within their own community because they 'belong' to/are inherent in the 'deviant' group.<sup>296</sup>

---

<sup>296</sup> Kendall 1997:79

I returned to document the remains of Bangarang Village on the day it was ultimately dismantled and its constituents pushed back into migration. Unrelated vehicle residents attempted to legally relocate into the space for the next several days, but the police response was swift and severe. Remaining vehicle residencies faced increasing pressure from police officers enforcing the banishment of overnight parking through “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs and “Over 72-hour Parking Violation” tickets. Within one week, all vehicle residents had dispersed. From a political and community stand point, the issue was far from resolved – the population had only relocated into other nearby public space, inevitably increasing the densities and community complaints there. Banishing this community was just another force of unsettlement that held them in a perpetual stasis of migration.

Phillipe Bourgois and Jeffery Schonberg’s similar documentation of people living unsheltered in San Francisco explored the *moral economy*, invoking Karl Marx’s concepts of variant forms of capital and “*lumpen masses*.” Within this *moral economy*, social capital that is traded for physical or psychological resources is created and transacted through culturally defined networks of exchange. This pragmatic form of capital investment tends to develop when there is a perceived lack of resources within an environment. Matthew Gandy succinctly showed how bio-politics of the “modern city” define authorized access, creating what he called “zones of indistinction” within urban space that reduce their inhabitants to a bare life without political representation. A *moral economy* empowers forms and sites of *insurgent citizenship*,<sup>297</sup> where people assert through protest what Giorgio Agamben identified as rights of *Zoë* (bare life) where those of *Bios* (citizen rights) have been repressed.<sup>298</sup> When we consider the valuation of chosen options for action or thought, a *moral economic exchange* can include actions and events which

---

<sup>297</sup> Holston, 2009

<sup>298</sup> Agamben, 1998

may appear to be irrational, unsafe, or ‘bad’ by the *metropole* (the “mother city” or “amalgamated constituent culture”), precisely because they are *transgressive and performative* acts. Bangarang Village was one such transgressive, performative act – a protest of insurgent citizenship in attempt to claim their rights of *Bios* where settlement and representation was otherwise repressed. Bangarang Village demanded a home for their homes, and were punished for their settlement through the permanent conversion of a legally-habitable common space into uninhabitable non-place.

Johnny and Terry (who self-identified as a thirty-eight-year-old “white male” and twenty-two-year-old “white female,” respectively) spoke with me at length about the protest before they were relocated, claiming that they were “leaving Seattle for good to go to Colorado.” The couple decried Bangarang Village’s public attention, subsequent banishment of the space, and their looming eviction. They were parked at least ten blocks away and insisted that they were not involved in the protest, but were ‘guilty by association,’ harassed, and banished.

The couple had lived with their three-year-old daughter in their forty-foot-long overnight-tour bus for three years, and for a two years prior in an RV. This five-year period of vehicle residency occurred within the same five blocks near what became Bangarang Village, until they were caught in a net of parking ordinance and enforcement related to its expulsion (see Image 43). Johnny commuted thirty miles daily on nearby bus lines to upscale Bellevue where he worked as a fry cook. Terry stayed at home with the kids, maintained their abode, or sought household resources and services during the day. They relied on this particular space because it was one of the rare locations in North Seattle that offered legal overnight parking for their extended-sized vehicle, near a familiar community of friends, public resources and social

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

services. Terry explained their situation and how Bangarang Village “blew up the spot,”  
banishing the family from their home:

[Bangarang Village] made it so we can't live here.

I've lived down here almost three years with no major incidents, and in less than a year of people complaining to the city we're dealing with this mess.

The local businesses have said that me and my wife are not the problem.

[Bangarang Village] are breaking the rules.

You have to move every 72 hours, keep your trash cleaned, don't mound stuff, stay in your bus, go to work.

If you break those rules, you blow up the spot.

Picture a house – if you blow it up it's unlivable.

After four years, we can't live here.

Better analogy: think of a picture – if you want to look at one person in the picture you 'blow up' that one person.

It focuses in on that one person, that one block, that one neighborhood, that one area.

It focuses in on that one place that brings the attention of the police, and the media.

All of a sudden, there are 'No Parking 2-5am' signs everywhere.

Because somebody else broke the rules, we lose our place to live.

*They* blew up *our* spot.

I try to play by the rules, and that's not good enough.

And all I can say is, what do you want me to do then?

It's because the people on the hillside, who pay \$1800 a month for their one-bedroom apartment, see us living for free.

And, they get mad because they pay all that money to live in this neighborhood for amenities like the low crime rate.

The same reasons why we chose this neighborhood are, I'm sure, the same reasons why they chose this neighborhood.

It's one of the only safe neighborhoods close to a major bus line.

We have to stay in industrial zones, and this is one of the very few neighborhoods we can park in.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

They have ‘No Parking 2-5’ through so much of the free industrial parking that it has pushed everybody into a very few blocks.

The homeless population hasn’t shrunk, in fact it has grown, and yet there is so much less available parking for us.

We just want to live somewhere that is safe, and they want to live here.

I don’t want to be by train yards, I don’t want to live in a drug-addicted neighborhood, and I don’t want to live in emergency housing with addicts.

We try to save for a place, but they hit us with tickets.

We just want a safe space.

Something, anything.

I would love somewhere with water, showers and bathrooms, but we just want some space.



Image 43

Unassociated vehicles that were caught up in the eviction of Bangarang Village. June 29, 2015.

Johnny, Terry, Bangarang Village, Bobby, Bernie, Junior and Star all personally-held their mobile shelter in a commonly-used pool of space. Their shared-use of this space requires

that they all follow any implicit and explicit social contracts to maintain common access. Sally Kendall observed that antipathy toward Travellers was caused by a difference in these ideals of “time-space compression” within corporative spaces, from using “rural” wild open fields for disparate settlement to clogging “urban” parking with trailers – or, between inhabiting an ancient open space and the constraints of modern places with connective non-places. The protestors of Bangarang Village were *producing* settlement in places designed for movement in alternate form of “time-space compression;” however, theirs was an urban-to-urban, rather than rural-to-urban transition. Like those who had historically relied mobile shelters for settlement, Bangarang Village soon discovered that they could not challenge the hegemonic laws of settled space. Back in his bus, Bobby cursed Bangarang for invoking the banishment of fellow vehicle residents by housed neighbors. He shook his head and reminded me, “It’s their house, we’re just visitors.”

Terry’s above description of “blowing up the spot” supports my primary inference between forms of mobile sheltering in public space: the nature of a shared (often, hostile) public environment requires its occupants to similarly possess their personal or shared property within a commonly-maintained (corporative) pool of space, such as an area of pastoral land or available overnight parking. Anatoly Khazanov similarly contends that, “The economic relations which exist in nomadic societies are based on two important functions: private ownership of livestock and corporative ownership of pastures.”<sup>299</sup> In this way, Khazanov’s description mirrors the expressions of property rights made by many of the vehicle residents I have encountered. Building on his analysis, I suggest that these material culture relationships are more akin to *personal* (occupied or held) property than *private* (absentee) property ownership.

---

<sup>299</sup> Khazanov 1983:123

Bangarang Village may represent a turn for the state of “homelessness” in Seattle, as a push for what are often referred to as traditional rights for “nomadic” groups. Their protest reiterates the imperative in the refrain among Seattle’s advocates for “homeless” services, “Without Shelter People Die” (see Image 44). This phrase was shouted during the numerous Bangarang Village meetings, and is heard repeatedly at public forums on “homelessness” throughout Seattle. It is somewhat ironic that “shelter” is being demanded at Bangarang when it is admittedly already secured; what is needed here is a legal-‘home’ for the mobile-‘home.’ Vehicle residents need safe, non-committal, resourced sites that are located near important public services to maintain their vital property, engage with self-determination, and allow the acquisition of resources to stabilize lives. Until these spaces formally exist hundreds of vehicle residents will continue a legally enforced migration through Seattle’s streets, struggling to maintain a bubble of home within a social and legal system that challenges their right to personhood through spatial exclusion. Critically, as shown in the following chapter, these spaces must be developed within existing social service systems and emergency shelter providers, or they risk perpetuating the disaffiliation, instability and suffering of vehicle residents.



Image 44

School bus owned by "Pax" with commonly observed advocacy sign. Fellow vehicle resident "Bobby with the Bus" helped Pax purchase and retrofit this bus into a home. August 27, 2015.

*In addition to community of affection, there is community of forces, the concentrated courage and resistance of both house and man. And what an image of concentrated being we are given with this house that “clings” to its inhabitant and becomes the cell of a body with its walls close together. The refuge shrinks in size. And with its protective qualities increased, it grows outwardly stronger. From having been a refuge, it has become a redoubt. The thatched cottage becomes a fortified castle for the recluse, who must learn to conquer fear within its walls.<sup>300</sup>*

## 6.0 Mac

Mac died of natural causes on March 10, 2018. I address his death at the onset of this account so there is no cliché “tragic finale.” The tragedy that I hope to address is not the death of my friend Mac, but the lack of outrage for the conditions that kept him in a stasis of public suffering. When we first met in 2014, Mac told me he was dying from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) – the same terminal affliction that took the life of my grandfather nearly a decade earlier. My grandfather passed away in a hospice bed after years of care and oxygenation; he said goodbye to loved ones, and we each made our final peace. Mac passed away alone in his RV after years of public suffering, parked on a dirt alley between a massive warehouse that housed a sexual-offender treatment facility and six lanes of heavy-traffic railroad tracks. This story of Mac connects our shared humanity and environment, reminding us that everyone deserves a peaceful death. While I cannot undo Mac’s suffering, I suggest ways to deconstruct the ecology of constraints that held his life in stasis.

Discussed previously, Michele Wakin suggests that vehicle living is a form of resistance and resilience to forces of regulation and “shelterization,” or “the set of ideas and regulatory mechanisms that suggest that homeless people belong in shelters.”<sup>301</sup> I frequently observed well-documented structural inequalities and challenges with systematically engaging disparate sub-populations in homogenized emergency shelters<sup>302</sup> – from youth and young adults who did not fit

---

<sup>300</sup> Bachelard 1958:45-46

<sup>301</sup> Wakin 2014:10

<sup>302</sup> Bennet 1995; Kuhn & Culhane 1998; Lyon-Callo 2000; Metraux, Culhane, Raphael, White, Pearson, Hirsch, Ferrell, Rice, Ritter & Cleghorn 2001; Culhane, Metraux, Park, Schretzman & Valente 2007

in older-adult-focused shelter systems, to families with males over the age of thirteen who faced separation in family shelters, to people fearful of visibility and State services while hiding their domestic violence, undocumented (im)migration or legal histories. Mac represents another community who challenges an idea of shelterization because they are not funneled into most shelter models that have few (if any) spaces for them, those who rely on a vehicle as their only attainable space for long-term palliative or terminal hospice. For those who define, benefit from or feel unaffected by the organization of public space, parking ordinances can seem bureaucratic and quotidian in the extreme. So much so, that connecting a public death to parking laws may appear absurd. However, these laws and their enforcement are among the innumerable legal, personal, social, economic and biological forces that can constrain otherwise private lives to suffer in public space. I came to know too many people like Mac during this research, who struggled through terminal illness, then died in a parking space with no way out. Mac often shared his story with advocates and media.<sup>303</sup> I identify Mac here so others might know him, and learn from this small portion of his long life.

Throughout the time I knew him, Mac leaned out of his RV window day and night (see Image 45) in his standard routine of watching the world go by while struggling on each breath. He offered advice, a sounding-board, companionship or friendship to his fellow vehicle residents, all while endlessly inhaling industrial exhaust from his environment and struggling to maintain his necessary supply of bronchodilating inhalers. Mac lived in the Ballard maritime/manufacturing area for ten years before being pushed into a “Safe Parking Zone” in the Interbay industrial neighborhood (see Image 46); when that Zone was closed, he was banished from North Seattle to another Zone in the Southern industrial SODO neighborhood.

---

303

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

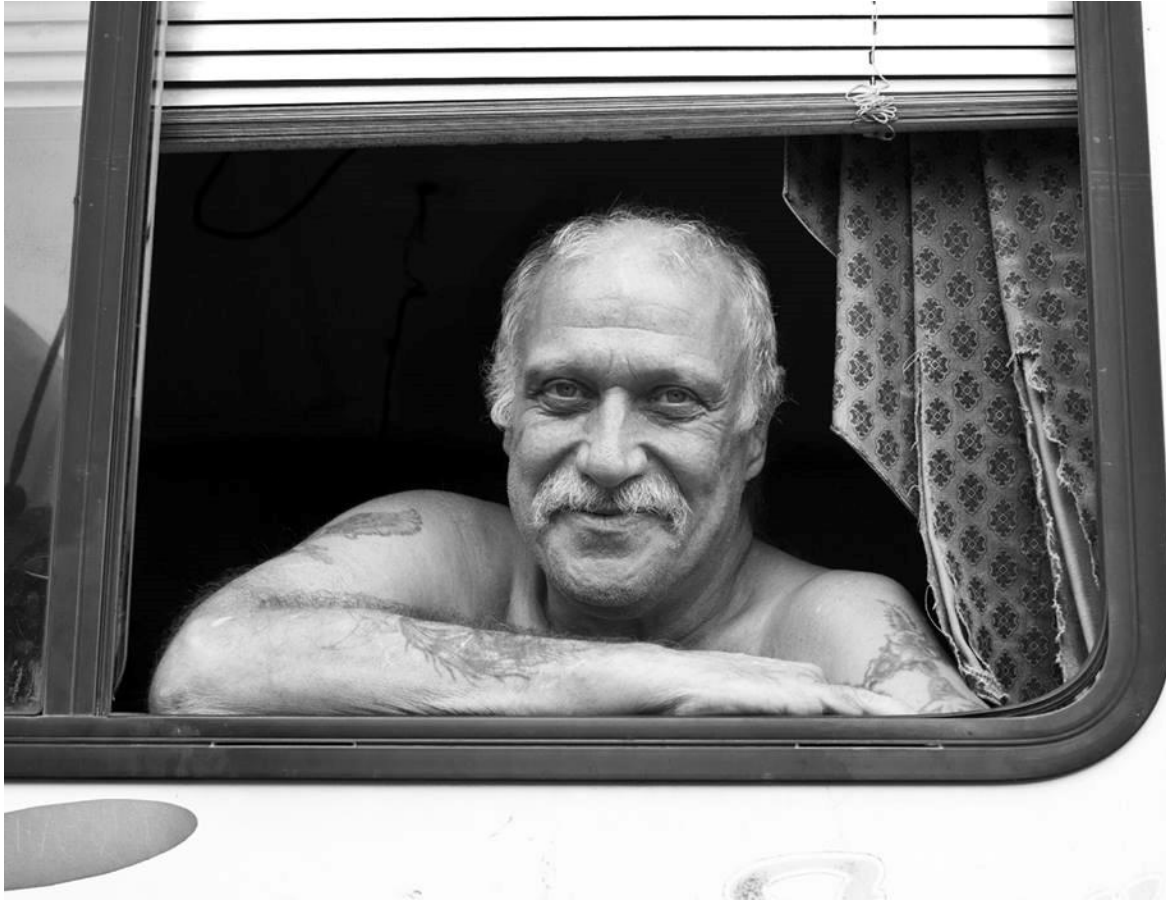


Image 45  
Mac at home. May 18, 2016.<sup>304</sup>



Image 46  
Interbay Safe Parking Zone and Magnolia Neighborhood (behind). May 27, 2016.

---

<sup>304</sup> Reprinted with permission of Rex Hohlbein from *Facing Homelessness*.

Like many vehicles residents I met, Mac had inhabited unrestricted parking for years with relatively few problems, until that space was restricted through the application and enforcement of anti-vehicle residency regulations (i.e. hourly parking or “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs). Vehicle residents like Mac described being intentionally ghettoized, or corralled into sub-standard places for consolidation, surveillance, and elimination from the public view. Surrounding, previously unregulated-overnight parking was restricted during this ghettoization, turning otherwise habitable public space into uninhabitable non-place. When the ghettoized sites were closed, the former inhabitants of the surrounding overnight parking found these areas removed and themselves banished. In Mac’s case, he and others relocated to the remaining Safe Parking Zone, isolated far away from his former space, community hubs, and medical providers. Mac guarded his RV with fierce dedication throughout his banishment from North Seattle – really, he had no other choice. His vehicle was a consistent site of homemaking, maintained inside and out. It provided him privacy, security, storage, a place to socialize, prepare food, and live. It gave him a place to live. Mac’s declining health was severely exacerbated with the disconnection from his familiar medical support caused by his banishment from North Seattle. He relied on the kindness of donors through a non-profit website (Facing Homelessness) who delivered him food and water during the last years of his life. Outside of emergency medicalization for an asthma attack from his COPD, Mac was virtually imprisoned in his vehicle until he passed away. Mac first spoke with me for an interview on May 28, 2016, immediately prior to the closure of the Interbay Safe Zone.



Image 47  
Residents of Interbay Safe Parking Zone, two weeks before eviction. May 28, 2016.

At the time of our interview, Mac was living with roughly forty other vehicle residents in the Interbay Safe Parking Zone (see Image 47) – a strip of gravel alongside a busy access road to parking for Seattle’s massive cruise terminal and entrance to the US Army Armory for Seattle. I came to see the development of this zone and its outcome as part of a coordinated banishment of vehicle residency from North Seattle, specifically RVs from the industrial neighborhoods of Ballard and Interbay. This banishment was a mass-declaration of previously open settled-space as non-place through regulation. Local vehicle residency advocates who had been promoting Safe Parking Zones for years were unprepared to have their demands met and may have missed the larger implications of the Zones’ development alongside a proposed restriction of nearby overnight parking. Although I too had previously argued for Safe Parking Zones, I felt uneasy about this particular plan to create the Zones and feared that those who designed this plan possessed ulterior motives. I saw settled bias in practice, through a process of constructing unsettled people into a “nomadic threat” for ghetto-ization and elimination by a settled community. This is how it happened.

On January 6, 2016, I attended a public meeting led by the “Neighborhood Safety Alliance” (NSA) – a prominent local anti-homeless advocacy later renamed “Safe Seattle” – of “concerned citizens” in Seattle’s high-income community of Magnolia who condemned the RVs inhabiting the nearby industrial neighborhood of Interbay.<sup>305</sup> While the overwhelming majority of the attending Magnolia residents did not live near the RVs personally, they complained of the presence of vehicle-homes on the streets used to travel from workplaces to upscale houses – the habitation of place in non-place. Specifically, they attributed the use of illicit drugs and proliferation of used hypodermic needles on local streets to the RV residents of Interbay. Before the meeting began, a loop of images was projected on a screen at the front of the room: a line of parked RVs, then a photo of children playing in a nearby city park, hypodermic needles scattered on a discarded soiled mattress, cars filled with possessions, a posed photo of a person presumably using drugs in a doorway, a photo of a smiling woman pushing a stroller with a child, the Seattle City Seal alongside the NSA logo, a photo of a large unauthorized tent encampment, a pile of hypodermic needles under a tree, a burned out RV, ad nauseam. The NSA paraded an army of “community representatives” before the crowd, who each denounced a local “invasion” of “motor homes, needles, garbage, and crime.” As they spoke, organizers re-circulated several sealed mason jars of used hypodermic needles throughout the over-capacity room of over two hundred people.

I was struck by the connection made between settled community identity, fear of the foreign/nomadic-“Other,” the NSA’s use of propaganda and unrelated imagery, and the agitation to “drive the criminals from our community.” There was a sense of righteousness in the settled community; they were homeowners on a crusade to save the City. This was the sedentarism

---

<sup>305</sup> Groover 2016

described by Robbie McVeigh, and the NSA were effectively constructing the “nomadic threat.” The Magnolia meeting ended with a surprise proposal from the NSA: the creation of a set of Safe Zones across Seattle, including Interbay. In a *Seattle Times* article written two weeks after the Magnolia meeting, one NSA founder made her intentions clear when calling for a “moratorium on car camping,”

“I hope that the people who are truly homeless and living in RVs get the resources they need,” said Pierce, 57. “But this won’t take care of the criminals and drug users living in RVs and committing property crimes. They need to leave our neighborhoods”<sup>306</sup>

During our interview at the Interbay Safe Parking Zone, Mac – who had inhabited one of these RVs in Interbay – addressed the concerns of the NSA and its crowd directly,

People are passing judgement on you, you know, when you’re parked on the side of the street all the time.

Like you’re into drugs or this and that.

I’m not into drugs, I’ve got COPD.

I’m dying.

I just want to pass along here in peace.

I don’t want to cause no trouble; I don’t want to deal with none of that.

You know, all of these people here [gesturing to the surrounding vehicles in the Safe Zone] have contributed to society.

Robz there, he’s in his 70s.

There’s vets and all kinds of walks of lives here in these motor homes.

People who’ve paid their taxes and their social security and stuff like that.

But the people, when you’re parked on the side of the street, they don’t ...

They act like you’re ...

They just don’t know, and they don’t take the time to think it through either.

---

<sup>306</sup> Beekman 2016

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

According to Mac, he “got moved here” by Seattle law and parking enforcement officers who “helped” RV residents into Safe Zones through a free, escorted tow. Meanwhile, a wave of “orange-tags,” tickets for “violating” over-seventy-two-hour parking restrictions, and impound notices were issued to vehicle residents outside the Zone. Soon, new “No Parking 2-5 AM” signs appeared along the streets in Ballard and Interbay where Mac had parked, previously referred to as “hotspots of vehicle residency” by the contacts for my outreach referral from the Parking Enforcement Department. However, while the Interbay Safe Zone was imperfect Mac told me of the significant benefits it afforded for his security, health, and sense of community. Since he moved into the Interbay Safe Zone, for the first time in ten years, he felt safe living in his RV and had come to know his fellow vehicle residents as neighbors.

I first interviewed Mac at the Interbay Safe Parking Zone because its residents faced imminent eviction. Days after our interview, the site was closed and several of the homes occupied by older residents, including Mac’s, were towed to the last remaining Safe Parking Zone located deep in the Southern industrial SODO area. The SODO Zone was situated between multiple tracks of commuter and freight railroad lines, and the previously mentioned facility for registered sexual offenders. Although they were full and malodorous whenever I visited, the portable toilets and dumpster at the site offered a sufficient level of required services to pull dozens of vehicle residents to the streets surrounding the Zone. The SODO Zone had no physical barriers/fences yet was officially designated to serve only twenty mobile homes; as such, the waste from the dozens of vehicles that parked on the periphery consistently overwhelmed the facilities. The SODO Zone was extremely isolated, far from major thoroughfares, public transportation, food banks or stores, and twenty-four-hour dining or gyms frequently used by vehicle residency for well-maintained toilets, sinks and showers. Mac soon ran out of supplies,

relying on outsiders to bring in food and water. On November 7, 2016, Mac sent a public message to founder of the local non-profit, Homeless in Seattle:

I could really use some things like chili beans, top ramen noodles, fruit cups -- such as peach's, pudding chocolate and banana flavor, whole milk, water... Things are a little tight for me so I really appreciate any help you can manage. Love ya brother<sup>307</sup>

One month later, Mac was taken to the emergency room for complications from his COPD – his lack of medical care had exacerbated the illness and he was told by his doctor, “Next time there won’t be a next time, you won’t survive another episode.” He was soon discharged back to his RV, where his health continued to decline. Mac passed away alone around eighteen months later. The specific experiences of Mac are far too common among vehicle residents in Seattle – I have met at least fifty people who used their vehicle as affordable hospice space while they lived through chronic illness, recovered from surgery or disease, or waited for a restful death. Mac was well-known and adored among his fellow vehicle residents, by parking enforcement officers, and even the upper leadership of the City’s Human Services Department. Despite the wide acknowledgement that Mac was dying, suffering, *and* experiencing compounding harm due to lack of proper medical attention, his only local option for long-term legal parking was an unpaved industrial alley. This was the best space provided by the City of Seattle to vehicle residents, widely reported as up to half of the local unsheltered community. I believe that settled bias obscures this travesty of injustice, because Mac’s perceived “nomadic” mobile shelter is denied its validity for settlement and its place within existing shelter systems.

Robbie McVeigh theorized that anti-nomadic bias is a tool of sedentarism (discussed in chapter two), itself a form of structural violence that is socially constructed to reinforce a “sedentary hegemony,” or sedentary social order.<sup>308</sup> Peter Kabachnik’s research on cultural

---

<sup>307</sup> Facebook 2016: Facing Homelessness social media page. (*Sic.*)

<sup>308</sup> McVeigh 1997

narratives of Travellers in England used a comparative study of media accounts, and found that so-called “place invaders” are constructed as an outsider or “nomadic threat” due to a similar sedentary-nomad antipathy, despite their often long standing local/regional/national presence and history of placemaking.<sup>309</sup> Kabachnik reminds his reader that,

We must examine, rather than take for granted, how people construct nomadism as backward and inferior and identify unequal power relationships, both of which create the circumstances and obstacles that lead to conflict.<sup>310</sup>

In Seattle, the NSA effectively manifested a “nomadic threat” at the Magnolia meeting, constructing vehicle residency as “backward and inferior,” as the first step used in a well-honed sedentarist process of eliminating perceived nomadism from settled space. The second step used to eliminate nomadism was to push the nomadic threat to an isolated place and remove alternatives, as Mac experienced when he was driven from Ballard into the Interbay Safe Zone and the previously available public space was restricted. The final step was the elimination of the isolated place, experienced by Mac when the Interbay Safe Zone was removed and he was banished from the City to the Southern industrial Zone. In his studies with British “G\*psy,” Traveller, and Tinker communities, Robbie McVeigh precisely described this situation of countless vehicle residents like Mac, where the legal space around them is removed by regulation, rendering their existence illegal by the “logic of sedentarism” rather than by their criminal acts. The *criminalized existence* described by McVeigh is part of Mac’s two-year process of removal from the streets of Ballard to the (in-city) Interbay Safe Zone, then banishment to the isolated SODO Safe Zone. This ghettoization mirrors a similar forty-year process of exclusion and inclusion shown throughout research with Tinkers and Travellers discussed in chapters four and five. Although the NSA *may* not have been intentional or

---

<sup>309</sup> Kabachnik 2010a; Kabachnik 2010b

<sup>310</sup> Kabachnik 2010a:92

conscious of their role in a mass-public banishment, they deployed a historic weapon of spatial control to eliminate a perceived social threat of “nomadism.”

Vehicle residency in public parking of Seattle is part of a larger tradition of mobile sheltering practices within privatized spaces, an international pseudo-community that is often loosely termed as “Travelers” or “G\*psies.” These labels are both reviled as slurs by some and proudly claimed by others for an ancestral or invented connection to a global meta-culture of mobility. Terms such as “traveler,” “g\*psy” and “nomad” have been used to describe virtually any itinerant population on the planet, unveiling a deeper truth: these are descriptions of a perceived behavior – mobility – that is applied as a master status identifying characteristic. Moreover, this mobility is used as an observable identifying characteristic to brand unsettled people as outsiders for exclusion (a *shibboleth*). As discussed previously, people tend to move in response to social and biological environmental forces, not a genetic predisposition toward wanderlust. Persistent environmental restrictions on settlement and resources reinforces movement as normative, which can lead to intergenerational adaptive strategies of what has been termed “nomadism.” Like unsettled people throughout the planet, the vehicle residents I met were from nearly every socioeconomic background, education, language, skin color and gender identity imaginable.<sup>311</sup> This adaptive strategy can be seen through millennia of what has been termed pastoral nomadism, where research consistently shows humans moving based on environmental constraints on resources rather than genetic wanderlust.<sup>312</sup> We can see this further in the history of unsettled and settlement-restricted populations that are later termed “nomadic,” or itinerant (peripatetic) because of their reliance on cities as necessary resource sites.<sup>313</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> Khazanov 1983

<sup>312</sup> Khazanov 1983; Cribb 1991; Convery & O’Brien 2012; Crowley & Kitchin 2016

<sup>313</sup> Gmelch 1977a, 1977b; Kearns 1977; Clark 1997; Neary 1997; Helleiner 2000; Hancock 2002; Corbett 2007; Ó hAodha 2007; Kabachnik 2010a, 2010b

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

The vehicle-as-home offers its resident opportunities for homemaking and investment in local citizenship, among the many reasons that a person will not abandon their invested home explored in these pages. At one-point in our interview I asked if Mac ever had his vehicle impounded; he corrected me, “This here is a home, first off. This is my home.” And, yes; Mac reported that his home had been impounded several times. Now a familiar refrain, Mac strongly rejected this master identity of “home-lessness,” yet was subject to the same discrimination, criminalization and disaffiliation as many others who inhabit public space.<sup>314</sup> Introducing our interview and the conclusion in the following chapter, Mac explained the deep respect for his home as well as the settled bias he experienced,

I’m always respectful of my house. It’s full functional – my motor home is.

So, there’s no urinating outside, no garbage dumped.

I’ve never done anything like that.

But they put seventy-two-hour notices on your windshield, and it’s always on complaint.

Well, I was parked over there by the Ballard Bridge for four-and-a-half years in the same spot, and none of those [local businesses and residents] were calling in on me.

I knew them all!

So, it wasn’t on complaint.

Or, at least the majority of it wasn’t, I’m pretty sure.

But, you know, the one thing that people need to understand is that we’re not homeless. I have a home!

I’m not homeless.

When you boil it all down, we’re human beings and we’ve all gotta be somewhere.

---

<sup>314</sup> Duneier 1999; Amster 2008; Beckett & Herbert 2009; Harcourt 2001; Wacquant 2004; Mitchell 2003; Arnold 2004; Lyon-Callo 2008

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

*What men, what monsters, what inhuman race,  
What laws, what barbarous customs of the place,  
Shut up a desert shore to drowning men,  
And drive us to the cruel seas again?*<sup>315</sup>

*7.0 (No) Conclusion: Junior & Star (Part 2)*

Critical tales in ethnography unpack the social, political and biological ecologies of our everyday lives. They allow us to peak behind the curtain, to behold the vast cultural mechanisms that encompass our mental and material realities. They show how we construct barriers against our neighbors, and how we may deconstruct these barriers within ourselves. The critical tale of Junior and Star told in chapter three, illustrates how an environment of discrimination, criminalization and social disaffiliation inhibits stability. Their voices resonate with others I met during this research, and provide an opportunity to address several recurring themes in this study. I conclude my representation of Junior and Star here, showing how an implicit and explicit bias of settlement can act as a timeless constraint on stability. This resolution of their ethnographic vignette introduces a set of conclusions and recommendations in the following chapters.

When Junior and Star’s daughter Mary was born in September of 2012, the concerns of hospital staff regarding their vehicle residency began a chain reaction that would undo and unsettle the family. Although advocates had assured doctors and nurses that the family were immediately moving into a room in a nearby church, a fear of potential vehicle residency triggered a call to Child Protective Services (CPS). Threatened with the removal of his daughter by the hospital staff, Junior made a vague reference to violence in her defense – something to the effect of, “You’ll take my daughter over my dead body.” An unidentified CPS observer opened a child protection case in response to Junior’s comment, and Mary was removed from her parents

---

<sup>315</sup> *Aeneid*. Virgil, c30 BCE.

the morning after her birth. During the following week, social workers and family advocates worked with appointed lawyers on testimonials for the Family Court. I was asked to testify as an expert witness for the family, and on my knowledge of their living conditions. The Family Court judge ordered that CPS return Mary to Star immediately, while Junior was restricted to weekly supervised visits.



Image 48  
Star, Mary (stroller) and Junior at center. Stone Soup Group meal. November 25, 2012.

Over the following months, Star, Junior, and Mary used some of their rare family time to attend Stone Soup Group (SSG) meals under the Ballard bridge (see Image 48) – by this point, their regular tradition of Sunday dinner with friends for half a year. I started working with the safe parking program as their “Outreach Specialist” shortly after Mary was born. After they entered the safe parking program, the family was officially protected under client confidentiality agreements of my employer and we temporarily lost contact. The following account was

reconstructed from a final interview with Junior and Star, the former social worker/case manager for the Safe Parking Program, and advocates who assisted this family.

Star moved into a basement room in a North Seattle church, with the help of the social worker/case manager and outreach provider (my predecessor) at the safe parking program. Junior was offered a space for his vehicle-home in the parking lot of a different church in the program, three miles away. In response to his “violent outburst” at the hospital, Junior was required to attend and pay for parenting classes, as well as twice-weekly drug tests before he could see his wife and daughter. None of the family tested positive for drugs during this account. He quickly settled into the church lot, fulfilled his regular legal requirements, and found construction work. Separately, Star and Junior met with the social worker/case manager to complete applications for transitional and permanent housing support. The child protection case remained open after Junior completed parenting classes, restricting him to scheduled visitation with his family under the supervision of the CPS or safe parking program social worker/case manager.

For the next year, the family was separated under these conditions. Star raised Mary in the windowless basement every day, while Junior returned after working construction every night to his parking space and the cold backseat of their SUV. The distance from the arbitrary construction site throughout Seattle where he was assigned that day, to the parking lot, parenting classes, as well as the drug testing center produced consistent logistic and economic challenges. Junior petitioned to relocate his tests closer to the parking lot, but was denied. After six months of jumping through these legal hoops, as their “Section 8” housing assistance voucher and the possibility of family reunification loomed, Junior showed up ten minutes late to a drug test. Mercifully, the courts only added another six months of required drug testing for Junior, and the family began the search for an available apartment. According to their social worker/case

manager, the family's previous bankruptcy and eviction in Montana made the housing search particularly difficult.

The safe parking case manager worked closely with Star and Junior throughout this process to help them navigate the housing and social service system. The importance of a navigator through this journey into social stability cannot be understated. Indeed, during this research I found that a primary determinant of long-term stability for unhoused people in Seattle was the dedication of a (human) case manager who worked from stable position to navigate existing systems of funding, housing and social services, as well as to move numerous applications for assistance through multiple agencies. This dedicated, professional care was a primary benefit provided by the safe parking program, empowering the vehicle-home to become a transitional space while the family secured off-street stability. Together, they found a market-rate space deep in South Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood. According to the case manager, "It wasn't a beautiful apartment, and it wasn't in the greatest neighborhood, but it was a home." The family moved into the apartment roughly one year after entering the Safe Parking Program church basement and parking lot, ecstatic to be reunited inside traditional housing.

Settled, the family worked to rebuild their life. The child protection case remained open, and Junior's drug testing continued at the couple's expense – by this time, the testing had become a requirement for their continued family housing subsidy. But it was the little things that made for a good life. Star cared for Mary and their home, expanding her comfort zone to include nearby parks and neighbors in the apartment complex. Junior worked weekdays in construction after a good night's sleep and a shower. They had a television, a shared bed, a refrigerator, a stove, and a place where they could make a family meal. They were agents of their future success, working to build a better life in their community.

After six months living in the apartment, Junior showed up fifteen minutes late to a drug test. He begged the technicians to allow his test, blaming congested traffic during the drive from his construction job on the other side of the town. Citing protocol, the technicians refused his request and reported the late appointment as a “positive test” for drug use. Immediately after they received the report of alleged drug use, CPS removed Mary from her parents for the final time. According to the couple, the CPS social workers claimed Junior’s “failed” test was evidence that Star was also on drugs and he was physically abusing her. The family unit was officially dissolved, and their housing subsidy was instantly put into jeopardy. By that time, Junior was barely paying the subsidized rent by working door-to-door vacuum sales. Soon, the couple received a bill for five months of back rent due to their revoked family subsidy. They were evicted, by this time they had lost their vehicle and the majority of their possessions. The family was undone and unsettled two years after accessing the only shelter program in Seattle that allowed them to retain their vehicle.

I saw the couple again in July of 2015, nearly three years after our initial conversation and shortly after I had quit my job as Outreach Specialist. By that time, I had heard fragments of Junior and Star’s story repeated by thousands of vehicle residents – these critical tales of initial unsettlement, settled bias, ultimate sacrifices and persistent destabilization. We reconnected for what may be the last time about one mile from a house I was renting in North Seattle. I was leaving my local grocery store when I saw Junior flying a sign by the parking lot exit. We spoke briefly and arranged to meet the following day. Star and Junior mentioned that they had not eaten well in weeks and, like our initial introduction at the SSG community dinner, our interview began with a meal.

I offered to purchase lunch at an all-you-can-eat Indian food restaurant that was three blocks from the grocery store parking lot and sure to fill our stomachs. On this note, I did not offer monetary compensation for any interviews during my research; however, I frequently provided information on available resources or services, access to my personal hygiene facilities, a cup of coffee or shared meal, and a safe place to relax away from the hostile environment of public space. This non-monetary compensation, as well as my employment as an outreach provider, liaison with law enforcement, and public visibility created the strong potential for an unequal power dynamic between myself and interlocutors. I worked consistently to mitigate this inequality through leveling proxemics, physical touch with clear consent and developing familiar rapport. This included kneeling or sitting to converse on equal physical levels, offering to shake hands or give a hug, and recalling hundreds of names, situations and personal experiences of vehicle residency and outreach.

I proposed the couple use the shower and laundry in my rental home after we finished lunch, explaining that this was not a trade dependent on our interviews, but freely offered without pressure and available regardless of their participation. The couple enthusiastically accepted the offer, and took turns in private cleaning their clothing, backpacks, and bodies while we spoke for nearly four hours. We began by reviewing the details of our relationship. While Junior listed off the many vehicle homes they had inhabited since we first met, he interjected with a fatalistic reflection:

It's just destiny.

We are meant to be the ones always going back and forth, with life.

We've had the house.

We've had the cars, we've had the motor homes, we've had the apartments.

We've had vehicles.

And it's not because of drugs.

We don't gamble, we don't do drugs.

I smoke a little pot, but I don't think you can smoke enough of that to be homeless.

(...)

Yeah, I know you can't look at every homeless person and go,

'Oh yeah, he's a veteran ...'

But, come on!

I mean, I don't look like I'm some twacked out, some druggie person.

I don't sit there and, you never see me drinking.

I can tell you the last time I had a beer.

The last time we had a motel room.

Uh, a month and a half ago?

I had A beer.

That someone gave me, literally.

And that was the last beer I've had in I don't know how long.

We don't drink, we don't do drugs.

I smoke cigarettes.

If we're lucky, we eat once a day.

This denial of substance use by interviewees was a recurring theme in this study – particularly, opioids and methamphetamines, in contrast to “soft-drugs” such as alcohol or marijuana (“pot”). Hundreds of vehicle residents I met during the course of this research and my employment in outreach decried hard-drug use, pointing to nearby “addicts” as the primary

source of public complaints against their community. However, multiple news media reports in Seattle were published during this study that correlated substance use and “homelessness,” such as an infamous 2019 exposé titled, “Seattle is Dying.”<sup>316</sup> In contrast, advocates for unhoused neighbors, social service providers *and* these news media confer that relatively few of the people who occupy public space are there because of substance use, with only twenty-one percent self-reporting “alcohol or drug use” as a “cause of homelessness” according to 2018 surveys.<sup>317</sup> Furthermore, I observed several causal intersections of structural violence regarding addiction and the occupation of public space.

Similar to the US housed population, many unhoused people use mind-altering substances to mitigate personal and social trauma as well as manage environmental conditions. For people who live in public space, this may include using methamphetamines all night for self-protection in dangerous areas, and opioids or alcohol to self-medicate past and immanent trauma. I frequently met unhoused neighbors who described systemic over-prescription for life-long diagnosed anxiety or hyperactivity, starting when housed and continuing as these medications became sporadically availability. They had developed increased tolerance through years of medication then saw their prescriptions dramatically reduced or altered, either by insurance-employed “medication management specialists” or the loss of insurance altogether. Several interlocutors described using hard-drugs to fulfill their chemical dependency to previous prescriptions – including opioids or methamphetamines as substitutes to common medications for anxiety (i.e. “Xanax”) and hyperactivity (i.e. “Ritalin”). I recommend future study on the strategic use of illicit intoxicants among unhoused people in response to over-prescription as well as environmental, medical or mental health conditions. While I did not observe Junior or

---

<sup>316</sup> Johnson 2019

<sup>317</sup> All Home 2018:34

Star visibly under the influence of “hard drugs,” their vehicle residency at the time of Mary’s birth drew a suspicion of drug use that ultimately unraveled their family. As they took turns washing and swimming in the pool at my rental house, the couple alternated telling their story of unsettlement.

The loss of their daughter and the apartment in South Seattle devastated Star and Junior. Mary was placed into foster care, and the parents were initially allowed visits twice per week. After four months, Mary was moved across town, and Junior was required to enter a drug rehabilitation center to maintain visitation. By this point, it was early September and the couple were inhabiting a tent in a Seattle greenbelt. Their dreams of stability and faith in their society dashed, Star and Junior left Seattle and traveled across the US West Coast for the next two years. They found work where they could on the road, tried mining in Nevada, were swindled and driven out. They purchased an RV, two more trucks, another Jeep, and two cars. Each was lost to impound, the environment, or because they lacked mechanical expertise and purchased a barely operable vehicle, as they complained, “another lemon.” The couple returned to Seattle several times, but when we spoke for the last time they had no vehicle, no savings, and no prospective income.

Both Junior and Star laughed with an uncomfortable and tired optimism, speaking of dark times in the past, present and future. Their fatalism suggested a possible institutionalization into a homeless identity, akin to the process becoming socialized as a “good patient” described by Erving Goffman’s research with total institutions of prisons and asylums.<sup>318</sup> They were in the system of automated inequality described by Virginia Eubanks, waiting in a long invisible line for a social service provided phone, a meal, and some stability.<sup>319</sup> As they packed their bags to

---

<sup>318</sup> Goffman 1961

<sup>319</sup> Eubanks 2018

leave my house, Junior denounced sleeping in cars with a laugh and said they wanted to try living on a boat. As requested, I drove the couple to the nearby grocery store. After they agreed to be photographed without showing their faces (see Image 49), I never saw the couple again.

And, as usual, I've written too much. Junior best summarized the couple's experience "in the streets" and his view of the future:

You walk down the street, and you see the homeless person.

And how many people walk by?

They're desensitized.

You desensitize somebody for so long until nobody is going to look twice when a homeless guy is getting taken by the police.

I'm classified as below white-trash.

White trash at least has a trailer.

Trailer trash has a trailer.

We're travelling ... nothings.

We're imaginations.

If we go out there right now on the corner,

I can stand in the middle of the sidewalk and I bet you, ninety percent of the people are going to walk around me, by me, or just through me.

Not one of them will say shit.

So, I'm just a figment of the imagination.

Because, only a figment of imagination, nobody speaks of, nobody speaks to.

People are actually out here that want to work.

People that want to get better.

We're not out here because of drugs.

We're not out here because we're horrible people, and criminals, and this and that.

We're not.

We're people that lost our jobs.

I got laid off.

It's not that I got fired for violence, or because I'm crazy, or any of that crap.

It's because there was no work.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

My company had thirty-six men.

They laid everybody off but four.

Thirty-two men, laid off work.

The construction company that was also in Montana, that was right next to us,

You know, there's multiple companies in one-town,

They laid off one hundred and thirty-seven men out of one hundred and thirty-nine.

They only kept two men for repairs.

So, when you have that many laid off, you don't get a job.

In this economy? You're screwed.

If you don't have a job now?

Look at the economy.

Look at the people around you.

Where are the jobs?

Would you go from making twenty-four bucks an hour on most of your jobs?

I was basically making twenty-four dollars an hour, almost regularly.

Every day.

Day in and day out, month in month out.

Now I'm in the streets.

Not because of lack of savings, or lack of money management.

We didn't have extraordinary stuff, we had small stuff.

Small crap, you know.

Cheap cars, cheap this, cheap that.

But we paid for it.

We worked hard for it.

Now we're here on the streets.

Something's got to give, and it's not us.

It's the society.

I mean, how many more homeless, how many more thousands of people is it going to take to become homeless before we stand up and fight?

The worse thing that I see coming, isn't a world revolution, in a way.

Or world-war.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

The end of the world as everybody looks at it, is going to be when all the homeless, and the poor, and the poorest of the poor, all the low class, low income people actually realize it and band together.

There's no stopping it.

None.

We're all going to get tired of watching these people drive by in their brand-new Mercedes, while we're counting pennies to pay for our bus fare to live.



Image 49  
The last time I saw Junior and Star. July 20, 2015.

*Wherever the “home” is violated, wherever at any rate a violation is felt as such, you can foresee a privatizing and even familialist reaction, by widening the ethnocentric and nationalist, and thus xenophobic, circle: not directed against the foreigner as such, but, paradoxically, against the anonymous technological power (foreign to the language or the religion, as much as to the family and the nation), which threatens, with the “home,” the traditional conditions of hospitality. The perversion and pervertibility of this law (which is also a law of hospitality) is that one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one’s own hospitality, the own home that makes possible one’s own hospitality.<sup>320</sup>*

## 7.1 Conclusions

If a person sleeps under bridge for a month, inside a tent for a year or an RV for a decade as primary shelter, why are these spaces so easily invalidated as homes and to what end? How may this invalidation separate a person from their social support, rights and property? A home is more than four walls and a roof. Homes are crafted in diverse forms that coalesce socially constructed ideals. A reaction to violating the status of home should be no surprise, whether that home is a house, condominium, RV or compact car. Indeed, ideals of home are based on learned behaviors and personal experiences that may not match other versions created under different circumstances – such as the un-housed or home-less person who may highly value a “home” in public space as optimal among their perceived, highly-constrained options.

Eric Ringmar and Robbie McVeigh show how an oppositional “anti-nomadism” reinforces settled norms – a socially constructed hierarchy of shelter that determines certain housing as valid while others are deemed invalid. This sociolinguistic construction of “home” extends beyond a semantic argument. The recognition or condemnation of a particular space as appropriate for shelter has a direct effect on the civil rights and access to social support for those who use alternative forms of housing as adaptive strategies to original and persistent displacement. If mobile shelters are perceived as invalid, it can be nearly impossible to imagine an RV as a viable form of short-term, transitional, or permanent supportive shelter.

---

<sup>320</sup> Derrida & Dufourmantelle 1997:53

And yet, this research documents routine social and legal bias against vehicle residents, such that their disassociation from service programming and criminalization appears to be widely accepted. The preceding pages show how the conflicted construction of a home in public space (or, as Augé suggested, “non-place”) reflects a settled bias holding these shelters in stasis as perceived forms of unsettlement. One prime example of this can be seen in repeatedly mentioned “2-5 AM No Parking” signs that were widely installed throughout Seattle’s high-vehicle-residency areas over the preceding decades, openly criminalizing the occupation of public space by a specific population based on individual property-owner complaints. An explicitly discriminatory practice of banishing a specific population through posting legal signs, removing their private property, and intensely visible surveillance (see Image 50) should inspire protest in the US. However, public acts of posted exclusion, as well as threatened and real legal violence of property seizure during “sweeps” against these mobile shelters and their occupants proceed with impunity. I suggest that a stigma of unsettled people as “nomads” – the transgressive “other” invader that ignores socially constructed boundaries by creating private homes in public space – thrusts people who rely on mobile shelters as adaptive behaviors into an ancient existential conflict wherein settled societies subjugate perceived nomadic practices through elimination and assimilation. As otherwise settled people use mobile sheltering behaviors in public spaces to survive individual and social forces of unsettlement, these communities tend to be positioned as a “nomadic other threat” based on the perceived differences in their mobilized behavior from their extant settled society. A neoliberal othering of “the nomad,” “the G\*psy” or “the homeless” – identities based on a mythical inherent mobility – has denied realization and recognition of settlement of mobilized people. Settled bias tends to shift the responsibility of displacement onto displaced people, obscuring their shared and often targeted social forces of displacement.



Image 50

A Seattle Police Department panoptic surveillance tower (at left, behind green barricade) overlooks a well-known vehicle residency "hotspot" in SODO where I often met Bobby with the Bus. July 14, 2019.

Social scientists such as Don Mitchell have reported for decades that a historic and present criminalization of homelessness – what we might consider a contemporary behavior of mobile sheltering – through spatial control causes specific harm to vulnerable people.<sup>321</sup> Many vehicle residents I met described an increasing criminalization, surveillance, and banishment of their home from public space – the development and enforcement of Augé's non-place that is regulated for anonymous transportation between a multiplying number of places. Reiterating the voices in my interviews, a 2016 Seattle University School of Law study documented an intersecting set of "proscriptive" and "prescriptive" laws or ordinances that weave a net which clears vehicle residencies from public parking.<sup>322</sup>

The preceding decade saw a consistent increase in the number of "No Parking 2-5 AM" signs across Seattle, causing more spatial restriction and settlement densities, more community complaints, and more personal instability in a persistent cycle of harm (see Image 56, at

---

<sup>321</sup> Mitchell 1997

<sup>322</sup> So et al., 2016

bottom).<sup>323</sup> Seattle was not alone in this regard; stories of communities responding to emergent vehicle residency with a punitive push without providing adequate overnight off-street parking to alleviate the habitation of public parking have become pervasive across the USA.<sup>324</sup> These documented socio-legal factors enforce a perpetually destabilizing migration within limited legal open space, pitting unsettled individuals and families against powerful residential and business interests over a remaining pool of overnight public parking. This environment inhibits the capacity for community building and social worker outreach, engendering significant personal, public health and law enforcement cost. The policy response of a punitive push out of or throughout public streets banishes personal and social suffering of neighbors to invisible, illegible, anonymous poverty in isolated urban wastelands.

Vehicle residents frequently receive fines for their survival strategy that, if unpaid, can damage their credit history and inhibit their opportunities for future market rate housing. For example, a person cannot register a vehicle with unpaid fines and penalties in Washington State (RCW 46.16A), leading to compounding tickets for unregistered vehicle-homes that creates overwhelming debt which can drain savings and future income. Most of the vehicle residents I met were legally savvy like Bernie, with deep environmental knowledge of local parking laws – they know when to move, how far to move, and that they can often avoid tickets or impound if they (or a vehicle’s guardian) are able to relocate the home on demand. Vehicle residents routinely expressed the fear of significant property loss or damage if their vehicle was left unattended; this real or perceived fear of losing their home and property creates a significant barrier to vital social welfare services that lack sufficient parking and are often located in (parking-challenged) urban cores. Immobilized vehicle residents like Mac can become

---

<sup>323</sup> Pruss 2012

<sup>324</sup> Argueza 2018; Quinn 2018; Wittenberg 2018; Holder 2019; Pike & Mackey 2019; Sharp 2019

imprisoned in their homes within an otherwise hostile environment. Thus, the criminalization of vehicle residency produces systemic disaffiliation of vehicle residents from social support.

The criminalization of vehicle residency received local media attention in March 2018, following a King County Superior Court ruling that the City of Seattle had violated the Constitutional rights of fifty-seven-year-old Steven G. Long when they seized then sold his 2000 GMC camper-truck/home.<sup>325</sup> This important ruling deserves a brief review, as it summarizes many of the social, economic, and legal conditions shared by vehicle residents in this research. Like many of these neighbors, Mr. Long was a general laborer who could not afford rising rents, was evicted from his apartment, and saw his vehicle as an optimal form of shelter. Steven's common use of his long-term shelter to store vital possessions (such as work tools, medications and legal documents) meant that he faced disproportionate and compounding effects from the seizure or loss of this vehicle. Steven lived for years in the industrial/commercial zones of Seattle, struggling to keep his home in sanctioned motion. Presiding over his "fascinating" case, King County Superior Court Judge Catherine Shaffer noted that,

[Mr. Long is] a poster child as far as I'm concerned for a lot of other people who are in this situation. We are increasingly seeing a crisis with people who are unable to afford not just low income but middle-income housing and a shrinkage of the supply of middle income and low-income housing. So, people like Mr. Long who are now finding that they cannot make rental payments and they cannot find alternate housing are unfortunately a growing group in our city and in our county generally. And we're part of I think a national trend on this, but it's pressing us in particular here.<sup>326</sup>

---

<sup>325</sup> Hernandez 2018

<sup>326</sup> Verbatim report of proceedings for City of Seattle v. Steven Gregory Long, 2018:2 (*sic*)

According to Court transcripts, “The problems here began around the middle of the summer of 2016 when Mr. Long noticed that his truck was having issues operating, and he became concerned about driving it further.”<sup>327</sup> After failing to comply with multiple warnings to remove the vehicle within seventy-two-hours, Steven returned to his settlement site late at night to find his vehicle missing and the area littered with some of his belongings. He called 911, learned that his vehicle had been impounded, and eventually made his way to a nearby emergency shelter at three AM. Six days after the vehicle-home was seized by the City of Seattle’s regular contracted tow company, Steven visited the impound lot in an attempt to retrieve his property from inside the truck.

Before a registered-property owner such as Mr. Long can retrieve their vehicle from impound in Seattle, they must make payment arrangements for all tow fees, as well as any existing legal fines or fees on the vehicle. Like Steven Long, many of vehicle residents I met stated that they could not recover their seized shelter from impound because of an inability to immediately pay the totality of fines. Others could not retrieve their property from impound because they were not the registered owner of the vehicle but, rather, were borrowing or renting it from others as recipients of vehicle-housing in a system called “car ranching” (a recommended topic for further research). For most vehicle residents, the impound of a vehicle-home was an ultimate act of violent displacement that removed their vital property – such as shelter, legal documents, medication, or work-tools – rendering them “literally home-less.”

Unable to pay the mounting storage costs to release his vehicle-home, Mr. Long contested the impound to a Seattle Municipal Court magistrate. The Court recognized his plea to reduce the legal fines, but required he enter arrangements to pay \$557.12 *per month* for the

---

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*:3 (*sic*)

impound and storage fees. To retrieve his home, Steven had to immediately sign a promissory note to the Seattle Municipal Court for \$547.12 plus interest. This cost far exceeded his ability to pay, based on his reported earnings of three hundred dollars per month. Mr. Long made these payment arrangements, retrieved his property, and filed an appeal with the support of Columbia Legal Services. Judge Schaffer later noted of the required payment, “I don’t know why it’s so high, but it’s a lot, even from my point of view.”<sup>328</sup> During my experimental observations and material culture analysis, I observed similar impounds and saw a likely cause for these exorbitant fees. In particular, these impound and storage fees disproportionately effect an RV owner – the most common reported form of vehicle residency in Seattle.<sup>329</sup>

As Judge Shaffer detailed, the contracted tow company reports their charges for equipment, services and labor hours to the City. As of this writing, the City of Seattle sets the prices its tow-contractors can charge for the *standard* (Class A) vehicle impound at \$120.50 per hour, with storage fees at a reasonable (following the *Long* ruling) \$14.50 every twelve hours, after the first twelve.<sup>330</sup> Additional fees for impound and storage are added for *non-standard* oversized vehicles based on the special equipment and extra space that is typically required for large trucks, buses and RVs. The costs are highest for the “Class C” equipment used to impound extended vehicles such as an RV, increasing exponentially to \$224.50 per hour, in addition to a possible winch fee of \$82 per hour. Moreover, there is an extreme cost difference between storing an RV and a standard car: for *every foot* over twenty feet in length, the fee increases by one hundred percent of the standard storage amount (\$14.50 per twelve-hours). For a thirty-foot RV (a not uncommon shelter for vehicle residents in Seattle), a *minimal* two hour impound

---

<sup>328</sup> Verbatim report of proceedings for City of Seattle v. Steven Gregory Long 2018:9-10

<sup>329</sup> All Home 2017, 2018, 2019

<sup>330</sup> City of Seattle 2019c

(\$613) and one day storage (\$290) could cost at least \$900. In the case of Steven Long's standard-sized truck, the reported *six-hour* impound/tow process (\$723) and six days of storage (\$174) likely accrued to at least \$891.

According to Judge Shaffer, the sale of Mr. Long's vehicle-home to recoup these disproportionately harmful fees had violated US Constitutional protections of the Eighth Amendment: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." Judge Shaffer reaffirmed that this constitutional protection applied to the inconveniences of everyday life such as parking tickets and impounds, noting, "The Eighth Amendment's text is not limited to criminal cases for the excellent fact [...] that its provisions date back to Magna Carte and to expressly civil protections that have been honored in common law for over a thousand years. The history of the Eighth Amendment therefore of course does not require a criminal limitation."<sup>331</sup> This historical ruling by Judge Shaffer connects the US Eighth Amendment, vehicle residency, and precedents in sections fourteen and twenty-one of Magna Carta (1215 CE). Magna Carta's fourteenth section states that a merchant or villain (translated as an "inhabitant of a village") was protected from excessive penalties *and* loss of merchandise or items for livelihood, such as Mr. Long's tools. In section twenty-one, a vehicle ("cart") was specifically protected from seizure without proper *compensation* by law enforcement officers or their contractors.<sup>332</sup>

Furthermore, Judge Shaffer ruled that impounding the vehicle residence to pay a fine violated the 1862 Homestead Act and its related Washington State constitutional provision which states, "The legislature shall protect by law from forced sale a certain portion of the homestead and other property of all heads of families. [...] The homestead consists of real or personal

---

<sup>331</sup> Verbatim report of proceedings for City of Seattle v. Steven Gregory Long 2018:15 (*Sic.*)

<sup>332</sup> Magna Carta 1297:3-4

property that the owner uses as a residence.” According to Judge Shaffer, it was constitutionally evident that the City of Seattle could not impound Mr. Long’s home in order to *forcibly sell* his primary residence to pay a fine, as well as the cost and/or penalty of seizure such as the excessive fees of the contracted tow company. While the *Seattle v. Steven G. Long* ruling provides a legal precedent protecting a vehicle that is *explicitly declared as residence* from impound, as of this writing the City of Seattle is appealing the case. The extended application of this punitive legal process has flooded impound lots across Seattle, where the reported auction rate for an RV has been reported as low as \$1.<sup>333</sup>

Many vehicle residents in this study described their mobile homes as invested property that afforded a potential of political transformation. For some, this may reflect a form of liberation ideology – a transcendence to informal citizenship of a vehicle resident from a “broken” state of “the home-less” that is reinforced daily by the public, law enforcement, and social services. For others, the mobile home was used as a form of self-medication-in-mobility to mitigate what is termed “post-traumatic stress disorders,” typically developed through military service and other traumatic or catastrophic environments. For all of the neighbors who shared their stories in these pages, what might be considered as a “choice” to sleep overnight in their vehicle was made within a constrained environment of unaffordable living conditions to access urban resources of employment and social support.<sup>334</sup> The majority of vehicle residents I met explained their “choice” to use the vehicle for homemaking similarly, as optimal among limited alternatives of unpreferable or unsheltered conditions (see Image 51).

---

<sup>333</sup> Markovich 2018

<sup>334</sup> Merolla, Hunt, & Serpe 2011



Image 51

The sub-compact home of over-six-foot-tall ‘Mike with the Bikes’ in North Seattle. After his primary shelter was impounded, Mike moved under a tarp on a nearby sidewalk for two years. February 2, 2015.

In Seattle and communities throughout the United States, the primary resource that is requested by vehicle residents – legal overnight parking spaces – has been virtually non-existent and consistently outside the scope of social welfare planning. Without a space for their vehicle home, vehicle residents currently face endless criminalization and social disaffiliation. The view from inside of this disaffiliation was eloquently summarized early in my research by one former vehicle resident, my decade-long-friend Ember. She asked me to include her personal information in this study, wanting people to know that she was twenty-seven during our interview, that her parents were in their seventies, and that at the age of seven her parents moved her and her three siblings into a twenty-six-foot RV.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Ember and her family lived in this RV for the next ten years, “homeschooled” in public parking. They moved seasonally within the corporative parking of Ballard (winter), campgrounds (spring/fall), into the wilderness on logging roads or open Bureau of Land Management space (summer). Ember had not considered herself “homeless” until we began discussing my research as friends and she, subsequently, shared her experience with me. She was conflicted about her childhood experiences, expressing both adoration and deep resentment to her parents for the experiences and its related social isolation. In the passage below, Ember reflects how this “isolation breeds hopelessness,” “leads to anxiety,” and creates “perpetual behavior that could cause someone to fall into a life that they don’t know how to get out of:”

In general, what really affected me the most, at least relative to myself, was the feeling of isolation.

You know?

Take a step back and look the big picture of the world, like you paint a picture of the daily life in Ballard: the hustle and the bustle, and the groceries, and the dogs, and the baby strollers, and all this stuff, the joggers, and the cars, the crosswalks, and you have this picture of life that’s constantly moving.

And you’re not moving, you’re in a vehicle.

And you don’t see yourself as belonging to that.

And that might actually come a lot from the fact that you know that they know... that you believe that anybody who knew, would see you as apart from them, not a part of them.

Like you’re not a part of the world at that point, you’re apart from it.

So, the psychological impact that that can have on anyone – I mean, not a child, not a man, not a woman, but anyone:

Feeling like you are apart from the world creates a sense of isolation.

And isolation breeds hopelessness.

And I think that that creates the perpetual behavior that could cause someone to fall into a life that they don’t know how to get out of, that they’re too ashamed to get out of, because they’ve actually lost the ability.

It’s not like riding a bike.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Living a normal life is not like riding a bike.

You can't just wake up one day and say, "All right! I'm done with this; I'm going to get a job and be normal."

You know?

That feeling of hopelessness, I think that it breeds anxiety.

People don't feel like they can trust anyone, they feel like they're being judged and it creates isolation.

And I think that's a really, really huge factor.<sup>335</sup>

There are innumerable reasons why a person may live in a vehicle; however, without a home for these homes, communities risk socially isolating these neighbors. My overriding goals for this study have been to contribute these findings to the field of anthropology, as well as the work of vehicle resident advocates, policy makers, social service providers, legal rights activists, and communities who seek to help all of their neighbors find settlement. The following conclusions summarize my four-field anthropological approach to this subject in twenty-one points – showing how and why a vehicle may be used for residence in public space from sociocultural, biological, sociolinguistic and archaeological perspectives. These conclusions focus on my research topic, primary analogy and inference - that vehicle residency in Seattle's public parking is a form of adaptive mobile sheltering to a constrained environment. For easier reference, the following conclusions and recommendations are presented in list format for those seeking to use this information further and provide social support for vehicle residents.

---

<sup>335</sup> Ember, Personal Interview. May 24, 2011 (16:34-18:12).

*This study on vehicle residency in Seattle demonstrates that:*

1. *Vehicle residencies in public parking can represent an available pool of privately-owned shelter beds when connected with infrastructure and support.* Off-street parking spaces are currently available in vacant or under-used overnight lots throughout King County, where safe parking programs connected with professional support can include the half of “unsheltered people” who currently sleep in vehicles outside the existing shelter system. Without the need for a bricks-and-mortar investment of an emergency shelter, safe parking programs offer a low-cost, scalable investment in public or donated/contracted privately-owned parking lots, “park-and-rides” or at emergency services (such as hospitals, police or fire stations). Safe parking programs have been remarkably successful in housing participants; according to the City of Seattle website, “In 2013, the Road to Housing program served 52 vehicular residents, helping 34 households move into a more stable living environment.”<sup>336</sup> However, this program was closed in early 2018 – as of this writing, there has been no replacement.<sup>337</sup> This safe parking program record of housing sixty-five percent of those served (34 of 52) in 2014, compared with the total Seattle’s Housing First-aligned system that reportedly housed fourteen percent of people served (2,644 of 18,356) in 2018.<sup>338</sup> Nearly as many people in Seattle currently inhabit a legally-owned vehicle (3,327) as those who sleep in overnight shelters (approximately 3,500). With social welfare support, these mobile homes can be utilized as a new stock of existing shelter beds where they are needed and otherwise unavailable.

---

<sup>336</sup> City of Seattle 2019b

<sup>337</sup> Davila 2018a, 2018b; Barnett 2019

<sup>338</sup> City of Seattle 2019c

2. *Often pragmatic parking laws disproportionately effect oversized vehicle-homes such as RVs and buses, forcing their inhabitants into unsafe places.* A relatively common and useful parking law requires that width-oversized vehicles (over eight-inches wide in Seattle) park within industrial or manufacturing zones overnight, to protect the free-movement of emergency vehicles on residential streets. Restricting *all* oversized vehicles to isolated, industrial and “unusual” “non-residential areas” (see Systemic Recommendation 1) has created competition and densities in available parking, as well as significant difficulties to distinguishing co-existing groups such as “snowbirds” from “the homeless” during PIT counts. On unpaved back alleys, hidden behind warehouses or along train tracks, all of these vehicle residents face consistent theft and damage to their unattended home, that can expose them to risk of “junk vehicle” enforcement, tickets, and property seizure. A vehicle resident’s suffering compounds when they cannot leave their homes to access necessary resources such as hygiene facilities, health care, food services, housing assistance and employment. However, oversized RVs and buses have been consistently seen as problematic, and have been repeatedly left out of safe parking programs that cite size limitations of the parking facility, problems disposing of the vehicle, and potential long-term use. Isolated in marginalized space, their occupants can become blocked from acquiring social welfare resources and services that are distributed through centralized networks, typically located in a parking-restricted downtown. This “punitive push” reinforces unsettlement, an example of weaponized mobility that destabilizes settled people and societies discussed further below.
3. *Vehicle residency in public parking is a “choice” made among severely constrained social and biological environment of options.* For many who had recently lost their

housing, vehicle residency was the best “choice” among possibilities perceived as limited to sleeping unsheltered, in “makeshifts,” or within a problematic shelter system.<sup>339</sup> For those who have recently lived in makeshift shelters, vehicle residency can be a “choice” off the streets secured through hard work or windfall.<sup>340</sup> For others, vehicle residency is a “choice” for travel, leisure, to disconnect from a settled past, or a way to live affordably while “on the road.” A frequent presumption and question of vehicle residency as a “choice” appears to derive from what can be an inaccurate perception of “wanderlust.” This idea undermines the common refrain among vehicle residents I met: vehicle residency is regularly used for the most subjectively optimal and appropriate form of settlement as an adaptation to a lack of local (urban) affordable housing.

4. *Long-term settlement patterns and behaviors of mobile sheltering tend to demonstrate an environmentally adaptive strategy to produce immanent settlement where it is otherwise unavailable, rather than what may be perceived as unshelterment.* The areas mapped in this study provided legal space, services and resources that may explain their densities of long-term settlement patterns. People who inhabited oversized-vehicles “chose” these constrained locations as a result of their available resources and legal space, settling in greater densities as the population increased and additional legal spatial constraints were applied across the area. This ebb and flow of spatial use according to environmental constraints is remarkably, but perhaps unsurprisingly, similar between other so-called “nomadic” groups. People termed “nomads” appear to create settlements in large, shared areas that move primarily through social and biological environmental imperatives. What has been termed “nomadism” should be reconsidered as the alternate use of mobile

---

<sup>339</sup> Wakin 2005, 2014

<sup>340</sup> Hidalgo 2015a, 2015b, 2015c

sheltering behavior *for settlement* within a wide-spread, corporatively-held space such as pastures among disparate hills, or available parking on urban streets.

5. *Reducing mobilization to a socially constructed identity of a mythic nomad that inherently “moves along” (“wanderlust”) renders the personal and structural causes of unsettlement and mobile sheltering invisible and illegible.* Settled societies tend to construct a fetishized and stigmatized concept of a “nomad” that asserts mobile sheltering as evidence of intentional unsettlement. The social construction of a “mythic nomad” tends to psychologically produce and reinforce an ideological threat of a stigmatized “Other” that disassociates a familiar, otherwise settled neighbor. This stigma is historically, culturally, and socio-linguistically entrenched – mixing contemporary notions of “freewheeling” hippies, “dropouts” living in a “van down by the river,” “G\*psies” driven by genetic wanderlust, RVing snowbirds, purportedly affluent #VanLife social media celebrities, and pioneers or “nomads” pushed forward by “rugged individualism” and fortitude. A common denominator of these stigmatized identities is a perceived mobility. As a visible, physical manifestation of real or perceived mobility, the vehicle residence is a readily available marker that has been used by settled societies to identify “outsiders” for elimination. In this way, the mobile shelter is used as a nomadic *shibboleth of weaponized mobility* – employing perceived unsettlement as a self-producing marker of unsettlement.
6. *A contemporary (“supermodern”) world of increasing places (and non-places) continues a two-thousand-year-old pattern of dominant individuals and groups enclosing open (corporatively-held) fields of resources into privatized property as a “primitive accumulation” for the production of individual or social capital and driving the*

*otherwise settled occupants of these open fields into unsettlement.* From Aristotle to irate community groups, the socially constructed and applied identity of a “nomad” has been used to produce and reinforce settled-space, capital, and private property by justifying and/or obscuring the banishment of unsettled people. A fear of unsettlement, a socially constructed “anti-nomadism” within settled societies has been used to justify the total privatization of a settled-space, creating bounded places and their interstitial connective non-places. As open places were enclosed and their inhabitants evicted, an “anti-nomadism” has historically rendered enforced movement as inherent to an individual or “race,” obscuring structural forces of unsettlement. I theorize that *settled bias*, the hegemonic bias toward a hierarchy of settlement that socially constructs anti-“nomadism,”<sup>341</sup> psychologically transforms the perception by settled people of a person who may be unsettled through shared or targeted forces from a neighbor into an enemy threat.

7. *Mobility has been used by settled societies as a Shibboleth to stigmatize disassociate unsettled people.* Similar to Augé (discussed below), Sally Kendall suggested that the habitation of a settled-space which is designated for movement – or, a difference in “space-time compression” – distinguishes so-called nomadic people from their emplaced neighbors. However, the “itinerant” origins of the people who inhabit these public *settled*-spaces tend to be related to forces of historical, structural and often violent unsettlement. Like the Travellers documented by Kendall, vehicle residents in Seattle experience a common disaffiliation, criminalization and stigma – despite reflecting an urban-to-urban transition, in contrast with Kendall’s assertion that this “nomadic threat”

---

<sup>341</sup> McVeigh 1997

comes from a process of rural-to-urban transition. As the aforementioned studies on Tinkers and Travellers demonstrate, these tend to be otherwise settled people who are consistently unsettled through numerous personal and structural forces, then held in a stasis of mobility. This presents an opportunity for further research to explore this connection between enclosures of space and resources to produce capital, the unsettlement of people within those spaces, and systems that channel and/or profit from these unsettled, low-income labor forces. I saw this in my research as a weaponized mobility that has been adeptly employed through implicit and explicit violence used by socioeconomically dominant groups to privately capitalize otherwise public resources.

8. *The social construction of an (O)ther disconnects shared participation in violence and suffering.* Heavily influenced by Claude Levi-Strauss' structuralism and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical concepts of "the other," Jacques Lacan described the psychologically constructed (O)ther in two forms: *das Andere* (Otherness) and *der andere* (the other person) – represented in Lacanian equations by algebraic symbols of an uppercase "Big (A)" and lowercase "little (a)" (respectively). For Lacan, the Big (A)/Otherness represented a radically absolute alterity from you (self) – such as an ideology, a deity, an "enemy," or an external State. In contrast, the little (a)/other is a personified projection and reflection of the self, as the imagined spectacle, spectator, and specular counterpart – the person on the other side of the conversation that, by their opposition, makes "your" identity distinct. In the little (o)ther, we may find our mutual humanity – a perceived threat disarmed through compassion; in the Big (O)ther, we see everything that we are not. The socially constructed aberrant *Otherness* of a nomadic existential threat to settled people can stigmatize, or as Erving Goffman termed "spoil," a

personal *other* identity as a displaced neighbor. This (O)thering – a conflation between individuals and ideologies to reinforce nominal local, “national” and “cultural” identities or hegemonies – extends beyond conversations of poverty into all manners of contemporary political discourse. This process of socially constructing the person as an oppositional little (o)ther, then extrapolating them to a threatening Big (O)ther seems to disconnect a shared participation or responsibility for visible suffering and violence by conflating neighboring human beings into ideological enemies.

In this way, mobility has been weaponized by settler/colonizer societies as a visible *shibboleth*, both marking and reinforcing people through unsettlement for (O)thering as an aberrant enemy. The people in this study described a particular (O)thering based on their habitation of a mobile shelter in urban settled-space. A pattern of “anti-homeless” (O)thering in the USA can be documented using sociolinguistics and critical discourse or conversational analysis. This subject of my additional (in-progress) research, studying over two hundred and fifty news articles and media reports focused on vehicle residency that were published from 2017 to 2019, alongside related policy development in these reported areas.

9. *Within an urban area of settled-space, personal property that lacks private place must be stored in public areas of legally available space – a common pool or corporative spatial resource.* The use of commonly-shared (corporatively-held) space is often the only evidence of a “community” among mobile shelters in public parking. Urban parking is severely restricted by publicly-posted ordinance and the enforcement of laws that may disproportionately effect vehicle residents, leading to groups of oversized-vehicles within industrial zones constrained by hourly- or overnight-parking restriction signs. Inside

these remaining open spaces that allow for overnight parking, long-term vehicle resident settlements show patterns of grouping to create (potentially unrelated) impromptu “micro-communities” of two to ten vehicles.

10. *Strategies of self-enforced invisibility are employed by many vehicle residents to protect their privacy, security, comfort and pride.* The internally and externally created identities of “the homeless” or “vehicle resident” can be socially damaging in the present and future, compelling attempts to hide a reliance on mobile sheltering from family, friends and neighbors. Similarly, vehicle residents tend to hide their homes in parking spaces that are outside of public view whenever possible to protect their property from damage, vandalism, theft, tickets, and legal seizure. However, due to socio-legal spatial constraints with no exit path, increasing densities of vehicle resident settlements are clearly visible accessing their limited available living space, resources and waste facilities. The disaffiliation of vehicle residents and their homes from social support, as well as the use of invisibility and isolation to avoid parking enforcement and public violence, disconnects vulnerable people from health care and, at best, simply moves unsettled people around in an endless migration. Disaffiliation can hold people in this mobile stasis, potentially in need but unable to access vital services and reconnect with their surrounding society. This mobile invisibility may significantly confound efforts at social service outreach and attempts at census.

11. *Many of the housed communities in areas populated by vehicle residents seem to “hide” vehicle residences from their perception, re-enforcing invisibility by under-recognizing vehicles as homes.* This confusing “materiality of poverty” may confound service provision and documentation for people who hide or deny living in a vehicle, or not

define themselves as “homeless” to avoid social ostracism. The needs, demographics and population size of vehicle residents may vary wildly from public and official observations (as with many unhoused subpopulations). Although vehicle residents regularly possess a deep knowledge of their personal or community needs, activities, population size and affecting regulations, many in the surrounding housed communities hold little comprehension of these aspects of vehicle residency. Because of these discrepancies between shared understandings, people living in a vehicle they consider a “home” are often under-recognized, under-resourced and included in counts with “home-less” subpopulations who may possess very different needs for space, services, and level of support. Enumeration and demographics techniques that focus on (adaptive) behaviors of vehicle residency can help document the scope, scale and needs of this growing subpopulation of people who inhabit public space across the USA.

12. *A disputed “homeless” identity can lead vehicle residents to self-reject necessary services or resource designated for “the homeless.”* A vehicle residence is regularly considered “home” by its inhabitants, who may dispute a stigmatized label of “the homeless.” Vehicle residents often have a strong personal connection with their homes, anthropomorphizing and giving these object human names, adorning them with illustrations, decorations or handcrafted comforts. Like Bobby and Bernie, some vehicle residents may not see themselves as homeless – or even view themselves as oppositional to “the homeless” who “blow up their spot” by breaking the rules of their shared space. Nearly all of the vehicles I entered during this research were described in some sense as a

“home” by their occupant – often, using a version of the phrase, “I’m not homeless, this is my home.” This finding is common among studies on vehicle residency.<sup>342</sup>

13. *A disputed “homeless” identity has led social service providers and policy makers to reject the needs of vehicle residents as unique among a “homeless” population.* Vehicle residents typically cannot access social services designated for people experiencing homelessness because the available programs do not fit their needs and will not allow for them to park their vehicle home. Less than ten percent of local vehicle residents, 150 people out of 1,405, were able to participate in Seattle’s vehicle residency parking programs during the Spring of 2016. This low participation was primarily because of capacity limitations— each site that provided safe, legal and healthy parking space with hygiene and waste facilities quickly filled to its maximum capacity and, in the case of street zones, were occupied by up to triple their official allotment of vehicles.<sup>343</sup> The immediate popularity of these programs demonstrates the need for legal, safe and healthy spaces. However, the differences between contemporary urban vehicle residents and “unsheltered homelessness” must be addressed to effectively connect vehicle residents with necessary social services.

14. *In this environment, some people use their limited possessions, including their bodies and the spaces they occupy, in creative attempts to protest, disrupt, or defend against the social and legal limitations on their vital access to an open field of resources and space.* The vehicle resident protests I observed reaffirm Michele Wakin’s thesis that vehicle residency acts as a form of resilience and resistance to regulation. However, visible protests and settlements such as Bangarang Village also violate checks on anonymous

---

<sup>342</sup> Wakin 2005, 2014; Mendoza 1997; So et al., 2016

<sup>343</sup> Coughlin-Bouge 2016

movement and expose all who rely on the corporatively-held resource (space) to risk of losing access. This can result in “blowing up the spot,” or a failure to comply with implicit and explicit sociolegal rules that influences the restriction of access to an area or resource(s) for other users, documented throughout this research in the “sweeps” of vehicle residents and other unhoused neighbors. Vehicle residents protect their homes from such environmental forces of unsettlement, using impromptu home-defense networks to warn others of law and spatial enforcement (see Image 9). These are adaptive settlement behaviors within a socially and biologically constrained environment, that tends to compel a mobile sheltering practice over a wide-area of corporatively-held space.

15. *Settlement in public space (mobile sheltering) breaks the implicit and explicit rules of anonymous movement constructed to govern the use of privatized-public areas, and can expose the restriction of these naturally corporative spaces into formalized non-place where habitation is impossible.* Unhoused, unsettled and “home-less” neighbors who may perceive no other optimal shelter but those within public space in a privatized environment, maintain a personal (and, by extension, commonly-held) access to these resources, including legal overnight space to sleep. However, the act of visible settlement violates socially constructed, implicit and explicit constraints that regulate public-in-private space for anonymous movement. The total banishment of an area as response to an individual or group that has “blown up the spot” through their visible settlement can affect disparate and unassociated “micro-communities” of unsettled people. Lacking socio-economic capital to enter (unaffordable) private space or housing, vehicle residents rely on public space to access urban resources; lacking an off-street space for their

homes, local neighbors have been banished to contentious, unsafe, and service-isolated areas of public parking.

16. *Without inclusion in supportive systems of care, mobile sheltering may present potential medical and mental health risks.* Health risks associated with vehicle residency can include social isolation, trauma, and communicable infections such as scabies or bed bugs, as well as crippling effects of the minimal living space offered by subcompact vehicle residences on large bodies - particularly, debilitating and life-threatening cellulitis in legs from sitting upright in car seat for years on end (see Image 51). Like all forms of housing, ensuring that a mobile shelter is safe and healthy requires attention to the biological, food preparation, and waste disposal needs of its inhabitant(s).
17. *This form of mobile shelter represents a piece of property to produce, invest, and benefit from social status within a “moral economy” of an unsettled community.* Often the final major possession remaining after an individual or family loses their housing, vehicle-homes can be viewed as a lingering indicator of social stability – particularly when compared with and by other (nearby) “unsheltered” communities. I frequently observed the access to shelter, storage, privacy and food preparation space provided by vehicles used to cement community bonds and “traded” to others for work or resources. During heavy rain and snow storms, non-vehicle residents may occupy vehicles for warmth. Some people received their vehicle as a gift, inheritance or payment and spoke of their vehicle residence as a transcendent “step out of homelessness,” shown by Bourgois and Schonberg.<sup>344</sup> Many people have previously entered and lost private or public housing before becoming vehicle residents, further increasing the normative value of the vehicle

---

<sup>344</sup> Bourgois & Schonberg 2009

for a temporary emergency residence as well as long-term settlement. For the vast majority of vehicle residents I met, the vehicle-as-home has a perceived social value in a moral economy that may surpass its real economic value in a capital economy.

18. *A vehicle may represent a significant economic investment in housing and settlement, producing a value and legal responsibility that is different from forms of what Wakin termed non-vehicle “makeshift” shelters.* The average initial purchase, parking fines, fees, seizure and collections costs for a vehicle-home typically exceed by a factor of forty the cost of other makeshift housing used to inhabit public space in Seattle (see Image 25). Although the externally-viewed economic value of a vehicle residence may be very low (with vehicles reportedly auctioned for one dollar in Seattle), the typical capital investment in a vehicle tends to be more than other forms of housing in public space, such as a tent, bus stop, or makeshift shelter.
19. *A vehicle may represent a legally-registered property that must have an explicitly justified legal cause for removal, which affords it legal protections beyond other makeshift shelters such as a tent or “squat.”* Relatively hard-to-seize vehicles provide overnight storage and a place to rest in public space outside of the elements. Conversely a tent, backpack or cardboard home could easily be removed with little legal recourse to the inhabitant.
20. *The hyper-inflation of the perceived social, economic and legal investment in a vehicle residence can turn a compulsion into a conviction for vehicle residency, creating barriers to outreach and social service assistance that does not provide a way to retain the vehicle.* The perceived socioeconomic value of the vehicle home can increase dramatically with its use, investment and dependence. Because of this, the social and

pragmatic valuation of the vehicle home over makeshift shelters is reinforced nightly by a visible comparison of with nearby people experiencing unsheltered house-lessness – what Wakin termed a “intra-homeless hierarchy.” As the vehicle residence is reinforced as a material symbol of wealth among a population of people experiencing an environment wrought with poverty, this compounding social and economic value can increase the connection between the vehicle resident, the vehicle residence and vehicle residency as optimal and normative.

21. *Mobile sheltering is an increasingly normative form of affordable housing.* Jessica

Bruder’s excellent 2017 book similarly shows how cities across the US West Coast that have experienced technological and market shifts, have also witnessed lower-income labor priced out of housing to be replaced by an immigrating high-income work force.<sup>345</sup> This appears to be driving an unsettlement of cities in a sense, as local and vulnerable people struggle to find a place near urban resources in an increasing restrictive space. While urban housing development struggles to meet the demand of growing populations, newcomers who cannot locate housing seek shelter near their jobs. Rental and housing listing website Zillow found that some high-tech employees in Seattle “choose” to live in an RV on public streets because, “it’s affording [them] the ability to pay off debts and save money so [they] can purchase some land.”<sup>346</sup> Of note, a person trying to purchase market rate housing in the contemporary USA will find it less expensive and easier to secure a loan for a new vehicle-home than a used house. As vehicle residency is further normalized for a wide variety of Americans who seek affordable housing, vehicle residency has the potential to become further normative. Cities across the North America

---

<sup>345</sup> Bruder 2017

<sup>346</sup> Allison 2016

are currently under-responding to this need, and are unprepared for growth in vehicle residency as an adaptive response to potential future social, economic, or climatic catastrophe.

*Possibility is not reality: but it is in itself a reality.*<sup>347</sup>

## *8.0 Recommendations*

I offer the following set of recommendations to conclude this applied anthropology. These suggestions are organized into three tiers: from (1) grounded, (2) systemic, to (3) theoretical perspectives. These seven recommendations align in many ways with similar anthropological and ethnoarchaeological research on unhoused, unsettled, “home-free” or “home-less” communities,<sup>348</sup> as well as US Federal Policies that follow “Housing First Model” focused on providing immediate space for vulnerable neighbors to access supportive care.<sup>349</sup>

### *8.1.0 Grounded Recommendations*

#### *8.1.1 Vehicle residents need safe parking areas to exit public space*

The pervasive lack of inclusive parking in social services is a significant barrier to a vehicle resident entering systems of care. The disaffiliation of vehicle residents, often related specifically on their occupation of a vehicle, may block up to half of the people who inhabit public space in Seattle from services designed to “end homelessness for all.” Using existing local overnight parking can potentially transform thousands of vehicle residencies across the US into new living space within current emergency shelter models.<sup>350</sup> Overnight parking paired with professional social worker engagement, food preparation and storage areas, hygiene facilities, and electrical outlets for safe heating can provide low-barrier entrance points to existing social welfare programs – similar to “tent-city” programs studied by Zoe Loftus-Farren in Seattle and across the USA as a potential “interim solution to homelessness and affordable housing

---

<sup>347</sup> Gramsci 1935: 360

<sup>348</sup> Kiddey 2017:186-191

<sup>349</sup> Padgett, Henwood & Tsemberis 2016

<sup>350</sup> Mendoza 1997

shortages.”<sup>351</sup> These emplaced resources and facilities are key in providing a *positive pull* that can incentivize places for stabilizing support rather than a *punitive push* that drives neighbors into isolation. Space for vehicle residency can be currently found in unused overnight off-street parking on publicly-owned land such as municipal employee lots, “park and ride” transit centers, hospitals, fire and police stations, or vacant parcels.<sup>352</sup> Connecting overnight parking spaces with services creates what Samuel Perry called an “urban hybrid space” that can help in “facilitating the construction and enactment of more dignified identities for the unhoused.”<sup>353</sup> Communities that struggle with envisioning space for overnight vehicle resident park may benefit by considering public parking as a “common pool resource,”<sup>354</sup> and its overnight use as available surplus that might be used in ways that have a low impact on its productivity.

For example, available or under-used space in municipal or private parking lots could quickly and cost-effectively assist vehicle residents through provisioned portable toilets, garbage cans, and electrical outlets. According to a Housing First Model, a local emergency shelter agency that works with the subpopulation served at the lot should provide consistent on-site social worker contact, organize participants for site upkeep and self-governance, as well as maintain the participants safety and service engagement. These lots can offer vehicle residents a pre-assigned stable space, vehicle maintenance training or assistance to preserve their mobility, and a safe environment to progress through multi-year housing waitlists. Parking might continue into the day, or the site could maintain the hours of standard overnight emergency shelters.

A model that pairs municipal spaces with emergency shelter management and professional social service care can scale to meet the changing vehicle resident population needs,

---

<sup>351</sup> Loftus-Farren 2011

<sup>352</sup> Bowman & Pagano 2004

<sup>353</sup> Perry 2013

<sup>354</sup> Ostrom 1990

providing safe inclusive space to help integrate disaffiliated people into their society. Moreover, multiple disparate safe parking areas located where vehicle residents currently live can provide (1) people a place for people to settle in their community, (2) diverse sites that specialize in the specific needs/challenges of subpopulations (i.e. single women, people in hospice care, or those with felony or sexual offender records), and (3) a way for communities to offer overnight *and* day-only parking as it is available.

Although this may appear to represent a philosophical shift in care, my recommendation confers with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development focus and funding evaluation based on program alignment to a Housing First model,<sup>355</sup> advising low-barrier entry to social service systems for all people in need.<sup>356</sup> By drawing people into inclusive, super-resourced space, communities can help better connect people in need with vital assistance, stabilize people who seek settlement, and alleviate the occupation of public space by people with nowhere else to go. The British and Irish “Caravan” or “Halting Sites” are prominent comparative examples of these spaces, discussed further in chapter four; for a half-century, European governments such as Ireland and the UK have utilized evolving research that can provide a robust set of best practices for “halting” or safe parking site development at local, regional and national scales.<sup>357</sup> The reports included in the below citation provide an excellent set of suggestions for policy and service development to include vehicle residency at any scale.

While vehicle residents are among the many people who use an adaptive behavior of inhabiting a mobile shelter to occupy public space, their possession of the vehicle home provides

---

<sup>355</sup> Padgett, Henwood & Tsemberis 2016

<sup>356</sup> US HUD 2014

<sup>357</sup> Gmelch 1977b; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2006; Welsh Assembly Government 2007; Keddie 2008; UK Department for Communities and Local Government 2008, 2015; Carr, Lhussier, Forster, Goodall, Geddes, Pennington, Bancroft, Adams & Michie 2014; Smith 2015; Grimwood & Smith 2017; Cromarty 2019

unique and significant resources as well as barriers to social service inclusion that lack available off-street parking. If communities want a person to “choose” services that relieve public occupation of space, the vehicle resident must perceive the options available within a new environment as beneficial. Rather than a punitive push throughout and out of our communities, we need a positive pull into stable spaces for social (re)integration – this can only be achieved through inclusion in social support and continuums of care.

Operationally, vehicle residents who seek settlement need the development of regional “Safe Parking” programs which can provide legal locations to live until they are able to enter into transitional or permanent housing. Efforts to provide safe parking must have interests of the surrounding community at heart, because neighborhood support is required to ensure site development, security, continued funding and success. I suggest these basic goals for a start:

- Engage local vehicle resident and adjacent settled communities for potential safe parking site(s) at the start of planning to understand concerns, deconstruct settled bias or service barriers, and develop neighborhood goodwill.
- Ensure that vehicle residents have a place where they can safely park overnight and sleep within their vehicle.
- Provide a central location where service providers and case managers can maintain contact with their clients.
- Work with pre-existing facilities and organizations to address the needs of subpopulations on a regional scale while maintaining a positive relationship with local communities and service providers.
- Develop a general code of conduct with a self-managed system to protect the safety of participants and the communities in which they reside.
- A “Safe Parking Program” should provide access to:
  - Resources to attain housing, employment, medical and mental health care.
  - Restrooms, hygiene facilities, waste disposal, electrical outlets and fresh water.
  - Covered food preparation, storage, meal and meeting areas.
  - Public transportation, gas vouchers, and convenient access to transportation hubs.
  - Assistance with licensing and maintenance to preserve the mobility of vehicles.

### 8.1.2 PIT counts need to standardize using a form of vehicle residence enumeration guide

As with all census or surveys, a standard methodology ensures a degree of consistency in processes, data and analysis. A Vehicle Residence Enumeration Guide, based on our Visibly Lived-in Vehicle (VLV) guide, was adopted for the official 2017-2019 Point-in-Time counts of “unsheltered” people in Seattle/King County, replacing a previously subjective method of counting two persons for all vehicles with observed “fogged windows, curtains, etc.” This improved methodology increased accurate enumeration of vehicle residency by identifying behavioral patterns of inhabiting a “vehicle residence” in public parking. I recommend using a behaviorally-based system such as the following Vehicle Residency Enumeration methodology (see Image 52) for future PIT counts of unsheltered communities:

## Vehicle Residence Enumeration Guide

A vehicle may be documented as a residence if it exhibits at least **THREE** of these characteristics:

1. The view through the front to rear windows is blocked.
2. At least one side window is blocked by sheeting, blankets, panels, and/or curtains.
3. There is *unfrozen* condensation on windows.
4. At least one window is partially open.
5. Items such as generators, bicycles, or storage containers are externally attached to the vehicle
6. An unusually large volume of possessions, sometimes appearing to be “garbage” in bags, within or near the vehicle.



Image 52  
Vehicle Residence Enumeration Guide used during the 2019 PIT Count of Seattle/King County’s “unsheltered” and unhoused communities

8.1.3 *Reflexive systems need representation*

Locally, a vehicle has been the most common unique form of shelter among people who inhabit public streets for over a decade; yet, there has been little if any service provision that provides an exit for this subpopulation from public space. Why has there been virtually no support for vehicle residency, despite years of reporting on this growing issue? I do not believe that people are heartless; simply put, there has been little-to-no funding or political representation addressing the issue whatsoever. This is a reflexive situation, where the lack of political representation is driving further disenfranchisement from social support and funding.

Responding to the scale, scope and needs of a community requires a grounded perspective. Societies need representation for all of their communities and their service providers in systems of care and governance, as reaffirmed by anthropologists who work with marginalized communities such as Shawn Wilson and Rachel Kiddey.<sup>358</sup> Theories of stigma and bias aside, I believe that the primary reason vehicle residency is not represented in social services, research, or advocacy is because funding-driven models that favor popularly supported and important issues – or, “concerns *du jour*” – may not represent the most significant needs of the community. Single mothers, veterans, youth and young adults all have a close place in a personal and collective consciousness – all have significant needs that may require immediate attention. However, a myopic focus on any one of these particular subpopulations may restrict seeing other, perhaps equally important issues in the community. One need only look to Salt Lake City’s claims of “ending homelessness” that were later critiqued as providing housing for a relatively small number of veterans, whereas a significant unhoused and housing-insecure community remained.<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>358</sup> Wilson 2008; Kiddey 2017:23-26

<sup>359</sup> Hobbes 2019

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

To be clear, this issue extends far beyond vehicle residency, “homelessness” or poverty. There will always be an important need that is likely overlooked and, like vehicle residency, it cannot be seen without representation. This is a crucial and often unmet need throughout public policy research, planning, development, and implementation – something I saw first-hand among fellow social service and outreach providers who were often under-represented by “white cis-gendered male” counterparts in leadership, like me. I hope my brief, long-past experiences of “homelessness” contributed to discussions at the Governing and Executive Board of the regional Continuum of Care oversight agency All Home, but I do not represent many of the people I helped and worked alongside who are often silenced or simply left out of conversations. This can only change through engagement of service/outreach providers and the people they work with in leadership and advisory roles throughout our systems. The people who experience the daily realities of our urban spaces have the most grounded knowledge for their care. They are often the best suited to tell us where the needs are in our communities. This is a simple, grounded lesson from anthropology: people are often their best story-tellers, we learn more when we invite each other into spaces where we can share our stories for common good.

## 8.2.0 Systemic Recommendations

### 8.2.1 Local, regional and federal policies need to include vehicle residency

There is no concerted federal recognition of the unique needs of vehicle residents in social services, particularly regarding the provision of overnight parking to connect people with assistance nor suggested methodologies for their enumeration in annual PIT counts. Because the potential or perceived mobility of vehicle residency is an intra-jurisdictional issue, vehicle-homes that cross city, county or state lines confound local efforts to document and alleviate the habitation of public parking. Applying laws or developing services in one city may only move people around, not actually alleviate the habitation of public space but shift populations between communities. Therefore, a regional coordination and planning is required to address vehicle residency through emplaced (re)settlement, and avoid an inadvertent push or pull between cities. As aligned with current US national policies, inclusion of vehicle residency into regional Continuum of Care (CoC) engagement should be directed at a federal level.

Across the USA, a gap in federal leadership on this issue places people and communities at-risk of inappropriate and contradictory planning. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued its first clarifying statement on vehicle residency that recognizes its problematic definition of “homelessness” in January 2019, specifically relating to RVs:

Because RVs are ‘ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation,’ HUD does not believe that all persons sleeping in RVs should be included in the PIT count. However, there are several factors that a CoC can consider when determining whether to include occupants of RVs in their unsheltered PIT count data, including:

- The RV is in disrepair (e.g. holes, broken windows, flat tires, removed or broken siding);
- The RV occupants do not have access to sewer, water, and electricity connections; and
- The RV is parked in an unusual place, including non-RV designated lots, non-residential areas, or areas where RVs are not allowed to park, and the RV is clearly occupied.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

If a CoC choose to count RV occupants, they must either talk to all RV occupants on the night of the PIT count to verify their housing situation or talk to enough RV occupants in the CoC on the night of the PIT count to derive a reliable sample.

The above recommendations have the potential to invalidate nearly every vehicle residency/RV count (including King County's) if adopted, with onerous rules that do not apply to other groups – such as requiring verification of housing *during* a PIT count that is typically conducted between two and five AM. Beyond this, the identification proposed would produce wildly inaccurate results, from undercounting the many vehicle residents who live on public streets in RVs that are *not* in disrepair, to overcounting the masses of “snowbirds” who intentionally “boondock” in areas without sewer, water or electricity, to overlooking the primarily legal reasons for nearly all RVs occupy “non-residential,” industrial and manufacturing areas in cities like Seattle.

A lack of appropriate federal leadership on this issue has dire consequences; for example, in 2018 the city-councilmember-run San Diego CoC decided to drop its well-known and abundant vehicle resident community from the federal PIT “unsheltered count” report.<sup>360</sup> Removing vehicle residents from official reports may temporarily “improve numbers” for local political leaders trying to curry favor with constituents; however, this effectively removes any support for this population by negating possibilities for federal funding that are based on these PIT reports, as well as potentially blocking future reports and funding through methodological precedent. The current lack of representation within federal planning for what may be the largest group of people inhabiting public spaces constrains the knowledge and ability of community, policy and law enforcement to help stabilize their unsettled constituents.

*8.2.2 A review of laws that disproportionately affect vehicle residency is needed*

---

<sup>360</sup> Halverstadt 2018

An overall policy review of ordinance and enforcement relating to vehicle residency is necessary to untangle the multiple restrictions that may disproportionately harm this legally and economically vulnerable population. The Multi-Departmental Administrative Rule (MDAR) that “harmonizes the administrative process by which individuals may be excluded from City property”<sup>361</sup> governs the removal of people and property from public space, referred to as “sweeps” by “homeless-rights” advocates and “clean-ups” by City of Seattle officials. However, as of this writing the MDAR does not cover parking enforcement; meaning, vehicle resident settlement or “encampment clean-ups” may not be subject to the same oversight, warning, and aftercare “diversionary outreach” required by official, necessary protections for this local unhoused community. In addition to this lack of recognition in systemic protections, many local laws overlap in ways that may (in)visibly exclude vehicle residents from public space through public signs and parking law enforcement. *If* all recommendations from my research were implemented, including the development of system-wide inclusive-parking for all vehicle residents, there would be little need to review public parking that would no longer affect this population; however, until this is accomplished, there is a need examine these ordinances.

These regulations and actions interweave to engender unequal suffering for vehicle residents. As in Seattle, many RV residents across the USA are required to sleep in the most environmentally-contaminated and isolated locations due to a pragmatic law that protects the free-movement of emergency overnight on residential streets. Upon “corralling” to these industrial zones through law enforcement, warnings and tickets, newcomers find themselves in competition with other vehicle residents, as well as local businesses who wield an impressive power of constituent complaints. As cities respond to property owner complaints (a consistent

---

<sup>361</sup> City of Seattle 2019d

source of my outreach referrals) with enforcement and/or additional overnight parking restriction signs, the available pool of parking diminishes. Remaining streets fill with vehicles residents that may be otherwise socially disconnected, yet are subject to group punishment when a single member breaks the contract of anonymity and movement in non-place. This can increase law enforcement cost, the social stigma against vehicle residents, as well as inhibit vulnerable people's access to necessary hygiene, healthcare and social welfare services.

### *8.3.0 Theoretical Recommendations*

#### *8.3.1 Consider the role of settled bias in anthropology, social science and public policy*

Intersecting vehicle residency with systems of contemporary urban displacement reveals a pervasive structural violence of settled bias that may influence the study, theory, and praxis of settled people regarding perceived mobile sheltering. As Marc Augé and Sally Kendall noted, it is the act of placemaking within settled-space and non-place that exposes this settled bias, both in its production and application. Settled bias delegitimizes a vehicle's status as an approved "home," justifying its disaffiliation and criminalization by denied political representation, and socially constructing neighbors who rely on adaptive behaviors within a shared social and biological environment as "broken" aberrations that must be "fixed" of their transgressions.

The hardship and stigma experienced by vehicle residents in Seattle is strikingly similar to people across the planet who rely on mobile sheltering in the face of persistent displacement. The identities of "nomads," "G\*psies," "Travellers" and "the homeless" are based on a frequently contested presumption of rootless wanderlust; but, are these genetically-itinerant populations, or unsettled people trying settle in societies that place restrictions on their settlement? From a theoretical perspective, many vehicle residents are part of a settled community that has been unsettled from and within urban space; a sort-of "control group" that may contradict theories of tensions between settled and "nomadic" groups as being due to a rural-to-urban transition. Settled bias is a form of structural violence which is deeply historic, pervasive, and often works in ways that are subconscious and invisible, yet make themselves clearly present. This suggests the need to reconsider the very notion of "the nomad" as an identity that tends to be socially constructed to erase responsibility for the unsettlement and disassociation of vulnerable or oppressed people.

8.3.2 *Counter-narratives are necessary to dismantle (O)thering*

A person viewing contemporary US news media is likely to be bombarded by images of “the homeless” threat, among an overwhelming set of demonized “others.” There is a long-standing tradition in contemporary anthropology of creating space for voices of people on the margins of colonial societies, often described as “the (O)ther” or “the subaltern,” shown by the work of ethnographers from Nels Anderson to James Spradley, through Mitchell Duneier, Rachel Kiddey, Phillipe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg.<sup>362</sup> Antonio Gramsci described “the State” as ruling by an insidious continuum that stretches between the consent of “common-sense” (hegemony) and violence (dictatorship). Robbie McVeigh suggested that a particular “sedentarist hegemony” positions settled life as normal through a consent of “common-sense,” thereby positioning “nomadism” as abnormal for elimination through violence.

On Gramsci’s suggestion, I create spaces throughout this work for counter-narrative voices of the subaltern that might challenge “common-sense” hegemonies of implicit and explicit biases which reinforce norms.<sup>363</sup> Moreover, Gramsci and Gayati Spivak note that subalternity is a relationship that defines the subaltern as “different” from the colonial State – that is, their “abnormality” is constructed as part of the “subaltern identity” that reinforces the colonial state as “normal.” In the contemporary US, “anti-homeless” and “anti-poor” rhetoric is a form of social control that positions people barred from “prosperity” for innumerable unsettling reasons as “abnormal.” This propaganda joins other well-worked campaigns of power structures that favor dominant groups over others told they are aberrant to their encompassing society.

---

<sup>362</sup> Anderson 1923, 1998; Spradley 1970; Duneier 1999; Kiddey 2017; Bourgois & Schonberg 2009

<sup>363</sup> Gramsci 1935

Societal, national and governmental perceptions of vehicle residents need increased awareness and understanding to ensure their positive inclusion within social services. Moreover, communities must be involved in these counter-narratives, through their development and production. Communities can benefit from education on how their neighbors are affected by shared social systems and structures, so these may be improved or mitigated by working together. Not including and recognizing the needs of *both* settled and unsettled communities from the onset can doom any social program, particularly when groundwork has been laid constructing negative stereotypes. This is reflected by frequently negative community responses to proposed safe parking programs when there was little previous neighborhood engagement, and in national recommendations from the UK on engaging safe parking programs with local communities. Ultimately vehicle residents, their surrounding communities, policy makers, law enforcement officers, and social service providers can align on the same goal: alleviating the use of public parking for habitation through off-street spaces where people can access social support to secure stability, permanent housing and community (re)integration.

*The withdrawal of the body, which is the condition of its autonomy, is a distancing of the text. It is the reader's habeas corpus.*<sup>364</sup>

### 9.0 Coda: Bobby (Part 2) & Mark

Without a systemic response to displacement and the settling of displaced people, historic comparisons with other internally mobilized populations suggest a hypothesis: consistent displacement and socioeconomic isolation tends to influence an individual and cultural use of mobile sheltering, observed as a perceived or real threat to settled communities. Thus, a rise in adaptive mobile sheltering may be viewed as a proverbial canary in the coal mine – an indicator of structural instability within cities that face persistent social and biological forces of unsettlement. This dissertation shows how the socio-legal discrimination experienced by vehicle residents in Seattle continues a historic pattern of unsettlement, social disaffiliation and criminalization of displaced or unsettled people.

Seattle's first official safe parking program opened in 2012, closed in early 2018, and was the only attempt to connect social services with off-street parking for thousands of vehicle residents at that time. As of June 2019, there are no official social service providers that offer parking space for vehicle-homes in Seattle. Instead of help, an increasing number of vehicle residents have faced a consistent decrease in available legal space, alongside warnings, fines, and threatened or real seizure of their vehicle-homes. Vehicle residents like Bobby with the Bus have experienced this explicit criminalization of their home, alongside extremely limited outreach and social service provision.<sup>365</sup>

Bobby possessed extraordinary skills and abilities that were different from many other people I met who inhabited vehicles. However, Bobby's descriptions are similar to nearly all

---

<sup>364</sup> De Certeau 1984:176

<sup>365</sup> Jaywork 2017a, 2017b; Groover 2018

vehicle residents I met regarding the capital and time investment required to maintain vehicle residency, the socio-legal discrimination inherent to vehicle residency in public space, as well as the relationships of vehicle residency with diet, physical disease and systems of social support.

In summary: during the year following our initial introduction, I received regular referrals to provide “outreach” that pushed Bobby into a constant state of displacement – a stasis of mobility. The vehicle residence was part of his identity at that time, evidenced by his frequent self-introduction as “Bobby with the Bus.” As a form of resistance and resilience within these endless forces of unsettlement, Bobby remodeled buses into beautiful mobile homes for otherwise unhoused people (detailed below). I ended my employment as outreach specialist in 2015 following the deaths of several people I worked with (discussed in chapter six and below), continuing ethnographic research on vehicle residency in graduate school to study the issue on a structural level. The people I interviewed throughout this study spoke of a rise in local vehicle residency, parking restriction, (real or perceived) targeted law enforcement, and subsequent protest encampments such as Bangarang Village.<sup>366</sup> I saw these protests as acts of *insurgent settlement*, where displaced local people were demanding legal space for their (often) legally-registered homes.

Bobby and I developed a camaraderie at these protests – while I facilitated negotiations between vehicle residents, members of the housed community, and law enforcement officers, he offered help with mechanical assistance or a tow from his bus. Bobby invited me deeper into his life as our rapport grew from foe to friend, repeatedly describing ways he had adapted his survival strategies to environmental options and constraints. Bobby showed me how he lived, created community, and used complex sub-economies to survive on the peripheries of the City.

---

<sup>366</sup> Hidalgo, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Groover 2018;



Image 53

Bobby looks to the Ballard Bridge. Standing atop his home, Bobby explained how he installed the solar energy panels and smokestack for his woodstove. July 16, 2015.

Bobby and I participated in our first long-form interview in July of 2015, eighteen months after our initial meeting. It was a sunny Thursday afternoon, and Bobby had parked his bus along a busy commercial street in Ballard (see Image 53), one of the few remaining industrial areas with available overnight parking in gentrifying North Seattle. Bobby invited me to sit on a large wooden couch built into the bus, then began brewing coffee on his propane-fueled stovetop. By then a common start to our conversations, we discussed the process of informed consent, how and where I intended to publish his words and story, his safeguards on his identity and ability to review the dissertation before its final submission. After his enthusiastic consent to the interview, we began our discussion over a fresh pot of Seattle's best coffee.

Bobby explained how he purchased this vehicle at auction from a nearby school district using the proceeds from selling a previously remodeled and inhabited bus. As I had observed during our first introduction years before, Bobby's friends helped him strip the auctioned school bus of its original hardware and seats, that he later sold to fuel the constant relocation of his home. He beamed as he showed-off the remodeled living room with a flat-screen television and pot-belly wood stove. He proudly told of offering his couches during heavy storms to the folks he called "home bums" who slept in nearby tents. On more than one occasion, I saw Bobby use the kitchen to prepare impressive community meals for people who inhabited the streets surrounding his home. The kitchen counter had a stainless-steel food preparation sink mounted next to a commercial propane-fueled range grill, both fed from large tanks located in storage lockers below the bus. Bobby explained how he purchased most of the appliances and materials from construction material recycling businesses. At the rear of the bus, his private room included a California King-sized bed and enclosed composting toilet - an essential luxury for un-resourced industrial zones. This was a home for Bobby, his kin and his property.

After the tour, Bobby graciously offered to make lunch for our interview. I followed as he crossed the street to an upscale grocery market, roughly 30-feet away. Bobby told me how the produce available at food bank (or alternatively, through “dumpster diving”)<sup>367</sup> was often near expiration. Bobby quipped, “Food bank veggies are over-fresh.” He explained that he would have preferred a refrigerator in the bus, but this upgrade was too expensive and difficult to attempt in public parking. The lack of refrigeration was common among the vehicle residents I met, even those with RVs who could not afford the necessary propane fuel. In fact, I regularly observed that most refrigeration, heating and hygiene systems were broken or disabled by vehicle residents because of their immediate need for difficult and potentially expensive maintenance. The lack of refrigeration in a vehicle residence often compelled the need for expensive single packet, shelf-stable foods or fast food that can produce negative dietary and health effects. Alternately, some vehicle residents like Bernie used sealed coolers filled with ice to store perishable goods.

As we walked through the aisles of the boutique market, Bobby pointed out the few affordable items that were both nutritious and could be consumed before they expired in a hot vehicle. He purchased one-half-dozen eggs, a ten-slice package of processed cheese, eight-ounces of carved ham, a small bag of English muffins and two nectarines. Bobby used a Federal food subsidy Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to pay for one day of meals for himself, his partner Amy, and I: roughly thirteen dollars, or nine percent of their monthly allotment of one hundred and fifty dollars. All of the items were uncooked ingredients, a general requirement for EBT purchases. Bobby lamented the meager amount of fruit and vegetables. Like many vehicle residents I met, he had adapted his purchases toward higher cost, individually-packaged foods

---

<sup>367</sup> Giles 2016

for daily meal production rather than bulk and free ingredients that would spoil without refrigeration. To reduce personal costs and improve dietary health, services designed for vehicle residents require a form of refrigeration and, for people without Bobby's impressive kitchen, a food preparation area.



Image 54  
Bobby prepares lunch in his kitchen. July 16, 2015.

Bobby shared his life story while preparing fried egg and ham sandwiches, tossing the ingredients in pan over a blue propane flame (see Image 54). After his parents had divorced when he was ten years old, Bobby's father moved with another woman two hundred miles south of their small town to Salem (OR), dead-end jobs and debilitating alcohol use. On stays with his negligent father, Bobby was frequently locked out of the apartment, forced to seek outside shelter, and detained for truancy. When Bobby was twelve-years-old, he was arrested for running away from a youth detention program in Salem with a group of other children. The well-to-do

father of a fifteen-year-old female co-defendant pressed charges against the group, describing her participation as forced imprisonment – a level-one sexual offense. Bobby’s parents could not afford adequate legal defense, and he was convicted then sentenced as a sex offender.

For the next fifteen years, the requirement to register and report as a sexual offender effectively barred Bobby from housing and employment. Washington State Law regarding sexual offenders states that, “a person who lacks a fixed residence must report weekly, in person, to the sheriff of the county where he or she is registered. [...] The lack of a fixed residence is a factor that may be considered in determining an offender's risk level and shall make the offender subject to disclosure of information to the public at large” (WA State RCW 9A.44.130.6.b.). Branded with the contemporary scarlet letter of sexual offender, Bobby was reported as a threat to every community, every potential landlord and boss. Bobby didn’t view himself as a sexual offender, who he bitterly described as “chi-mos” (short for “child molesters”), and kept a wide distance from any housing or services that were designed for this subpopulation.

Without visible options for settled housing, Bobby had turned toward a behavior of sleeping under a bridge at twelve, then in a squat, and finally vehicle residency – all, adaptive strategies to his socially and biologically constrained options. Any record of violent felony or sexual offense found during a mandatory background screening disqualified a person from entering the safe parking program I worked for, since each lot was located at active churches with attending families. This background screening was the third condition that barred Bobby for the only official assistance designated for local vehicle residents. As with the other disqualifying conditions – of individual self-rejection, vehicle size restrictions, and prioritization for high-needs participants – the limitations were caused by the meager scale and scope of the program,

which did not provide the capacity to offer tailored services for different subpopulations as suggested by the current US HUD funding requirements for a “housing first model.”<sup>368</sup>

As we ate our ham and egg sandwiches, Bobby explained his plans for the future. Soon, his fifteen-year sex offender registration period would expire, allowing Bobby to consider new employment and housing options. He described grand plans of buying, retrofitting and selling busses to generate the funds needed for a place outside of Seattle. Bobby had a new possibility that he was determined to make into a reality.

Bobby and I grew closer through the following years as he built capital to create his new reality. We communicated regularly by phone call, direct text messaging and through social media messaging systems in the style of “chatnography” outlined by Ilmari Käihkö.<sup>369</sup> We introduced each other to our family and friends. I would visit his home whenever possible, and he invited me to document his experiences. When Bobby’s partner became pregnant with their son, he updated me regularly on their progress toward securing housing. After the bus remodel was complete, Bobby sold the vehicle for a considerable profit. As before, Bobby purchased another bus from a school district auction that he remodeled in public parking. While retrofitting the third bus into a home, Bobby began purchasing and remodeling buses for other people at a modest fee of several hundred dollars per vehicle.

Bobby built capital from these purchases to pay for the deposit, first and last month payment on an apartment for his partner and their newborn, Jefferson. According to Bobby, the savings paid for one-year of rent on an affordable apartment some one hundred and sixty miles east of Seattle in Yakima, WA. Like the ninety-eight percent of vehicle residents who reported in 2018 that they would “enter permanent housing immediately if it was available,” Bobby was

---

<sup>368</sup> Padgett, Henwood & Tsemberis 2016

<sup>369</sup> Käihkö 2018

raised with sedentary ideals, sought a settled life, but used mobility as an adaptive strategy in an environment of criminalization and social disaffiliation. As of this writing, Bobby works in Seattle driving pedicabs during the summer to pay for the distant apartment. He sleeps in school buses owned by himself or others, and remodels vehicles into homes for people in need.

During the first year of our relationship, Bobby and I were engaged in an existential contest of what some local vehicle resident advocates called, “whack-a-mole.” This description was based on the mechanical game in which a target is struck violently, disappears, then seemingly reappears elsewhere as the object of another attack. However, we were not automatons in a carnival machine; we saw our homes and jobs as the preferred choices from our perceived options and limits. At least initially, I considered my employment as the best way to pay my bills while continuing to work with vehicle residents between my undergraduate and graduate studies. Bobby described his bus as superior to past and current options for shelter in providing a sense of property ownership, long-term private housing, and opportunities for potential employment. We navigated our environment of socially and biologically constrained options: a push from law enforcement, social stigma, or newly posted parking restrictions, or a pull toward employment, food and hygiene resources, and somewhere we won’t have to move along. We were raised in a society that had taught us to idealize sedentary behaviors, and we sought the benefits we had been told were offered by a settled life.

Although local communities struggle to provide sufficient shelter space for an increasing population of people experiencing homelessness,<sup>370</sup> a recent report by the Evan’s School of Public Policy at the University of Washington identifies vehicles like Bobby’s busses as an existing pool of temporary and transitional shelter beds (unpublished; please see Addendum).<sup>371</sup>

---

<sup>370</sup> Archibald 2018

<sup>371</sup> Jackson, Rinck & Dall’Osto 2018

This report showed how mobile homes can be quickly located on fallow or vacant land, the “Terra Incognita” studied by Ann Bowman and Michael Pagano,<sup>372</sup> at a lower cost and easier scalability than emergency shelter buildings. With resources and services - including electricity, running water, hygiene facilities, overnight parking, mental or medical health care, employment assistance, and housing case management - vehicles can be activated as a new inventory of transitional shelter space. Incorporating sites for vehicle residents can help reduce the habitation of public parking, connecting disaffiliated people with professional services and social support, while respecting the agency of people to own and hold their valuable property.

While the issue of vehicle residency in public space can be divisive, I believe that the criminalization and disaffiliation experienced by vehicle residents in Seattle has one main cause: the habitation of on-street parking. There are currently few private spaces to occupy a vehicle in dense urban areas such as Seattle – a less available for rent. Additionally, “RV parks” frequently only allow mobile homes that are less than ten-years-old,<sup>373</sup> excluding nearly all RV vehicle-homes in Seattle.

Simply put, legal space for vehicle residency – a necessary resource for up to one-half of the local unsheltered population – is outside the scope of social welfare planning. Among these rare safe parking programs, there are almost no spaces for RVs; reportedly, the home for up to half of vehicle residents in Seattle. Without legal space, people live and die hidden in plain sight, like Mark in these final pages. I do not know how long Mark inhabited an RV in Ballard, but he was the reason why I quit my job after two years as the only outreach specialist working with him. I didn’t know Mark very well; few did in the neighborhood.

---

<sup>372</sup> Bowman and Pagano 2004

<sup>373</sup> Kroman 2017

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Mark and I met in 2012 at one of the weekly Stone Soup Group community meals under the Ballard Bridge. He seemed friendly but shy from our brief conversations. Mark was in his sixties, had cerebral palsy, sold the *Real Change Homeless Empowerment Newspaper* for income, and had been living in his smaller truck-conversion RV for about five years in Ballard. I recall that Mark usually wore a buttoned flannel shirt, blue jeans and a baseball cap, similar to Bernie and many other men I encountered in this research. We shared a meal together as part of a community “soup kitchen” dinner at least two-dozen times, but I rarely remembered his name among the hundred and fifty or so people who lived in the nearby streets and parks. He would usually show up for some food, thank us and return to his home. More often, he would miss the meal and we would knock on the door of his RV to offer a bowl of hot soup. Because he was one of approximately fifty vehicle residents who lived in the area at that time, his vehicle was among my routine outreach attempts. He typically responded, “I’m ok, I don’t need anything.” I would leave a flyer about the safe parking program under his windshield wiper on his RV if he wasn’t around. I am ashamed to admit that I knew the vehicle better than I knew the man.



Image 55

Three vehicle-homes referred for “velvet hammer” outreach. Mark’s RV is at far left. February 2, 2015.

In February 2015, I received a referral from the Seattle Police Department Parking Enforcement Division to attempt outreach with three vehicles along Leary Way: a busy thoroughfare through the mixed residential/industrial neighborhood of Ballard (see Image 55). These vehicles had not moved in over a month according to the referral, prompting complaints to the police department from nearby businesses. As previously noted, the Seattle Police Department was partnered with our program and would frequently refer vehicles for “outreach,” so that we could either attempt to admit vehicle residents into our off-street parking or inform them of the complaints, their legal standing, options and “move them along.” Despite the apparent good-intentions of this partnership, I often felt like a “velvet hammer” through my employment in these situations – I was regularly sent to people who struggled to survive in public space, delivering the message: “Move it or lose it.” I knew our program had helped some people in need, but had the overall goal to remove people from public visibility and their vehicle home. After two years, I was deeply conflicted about our work. This outreach to Mark was the catalyst for me to quit my job and address vehicle residency at a structural level.

I visited Mark’s RV twice a week for a month as directed, but he appeared to be absent or would not respond. I knocked loudly, on all sides of the vehicle in case he was asleep. It was common for people to only occupy their vehicle outside of my work hours of ten AM to six PM, so I left notes and fliers for our program. I reported these “outreach attempts” to my supervisor and our contacts with the Parking Enforcement Department, attempting to buy time for Mark before the inevitable impound. As several more weeks passed and the tickets wedged the wiper blade nearly an inch from his windshield, I was informed that the tow of Mark’s home was imminent. I contacted our mutual friend Jess, a local advocate and former vehicle resident who regularly provided outreach and assistance throughout Seattle. These ad-hoc search parties were

common in our vehicle residency outreach. I often observed advocates scrambling to similarly contact vehicle owners and disrupt their property seizure. Jess arrived as the tow truck was impounding Mark's RV and frantically yelled to the tow-driver that she knew the vehicle's owner and was sure he was around, but something must be wrong. After the driver dropped the vehicle with a jolt, he and Jess between the previously closed curtains.

Mark was seated at his dinner table apparently having a meal, and had likely died months before Jess found him. The food in front of Mark had desiccated, and Jess later reported seeing "mold" on his face – as she described, "Like Marilyn Monroe's beauty mark." There were no signs of foul play. The police were summoned, Mark was removed, and the RV impounded within hours of his discovery. It is possible that over two-hundred thousand people unwittingly drove past Mark on the busy thoroughfare of NW Leary Way over those two-months. Mark's isolation in public space meant that his death went undiscovered until housed neighbors and the business community complained enough about the RV for police to impound his home. After he died, there was little local public recognition of his passing beyond a brief mention by his former employer, *Real Change*.

The lack of attention to Mark's very public death hit me hard, and it pushed me to ask what could have been done to prevent this situation. Seattle and other cities have had outreach programs designated for "unsheltered people" for decades. However, these programs have almost universally focused on people who live directly in streets or parks, on cardboard, in tents, and huddled in alcoves or at bus stops. I was possibly the only official outreach professional to speak with Mark, and my feeble attempts felt impossible. This is why I am so bothered by the question, "What about people who 'choose' to live this way?" Why is there a need to reduce this structural violence and public suffering to a decision made by Mark, Bobby, Bernie, Bangarang

Village, Mac, Junior or Star? Mark chose to live in the optimal form of housing that he perceived available within an environment that had significant constraints on settlement, such as rampant housing unaffordability. As an agent of his own choice, Mark lived and died in his vehicle isolated on an urban arterial street. People make choices within ecologies of perceived options and constraints; studying behaviors as adaptations to their social and biological ecologies can provide a holistic understanding to produce structural change.

The most common response (up to 80%) I observed to my outreach was, “Not interested at this time.” Perhaps due to the preciousness of the resources invested, the (internally perceived) intrinsic value of the vehicle to its inhabitant often appeared hyper-inflated beyond the (externally perceived) extrinsic value of the objects. This reasonable and justified intrinsic value means that people like Mark are highly unlikely to abandon their home for an overnight shelter bed that lacks parking space for their property. The vast majority of the vehicle residents that I met simply wanted to occupy their home according to social norms. I regularly saw vehicle residents treating their property like any homeowner – as a welcoming and healthy space that should be protected from intrusion, damage and loss.

However, as discussed in chapter two, the mobile shelter tends to be socially constructed, criminalized and disaffiliated as inappropriate according to a hierarchy of settlement that underlies settled bias. This hierarchy of settlement is similar to the “intra-homeless hierarchy” described by Michele Wakin, but extends well beyond “homelessness.” Settled bias positions different forms of shelter on a spectrum of validity that maps to perceived socioeconomic investment in settlement. Thus, citizens within these “sedentary hegemonies” are politically represented through their investment in the polis, according to Eric Ringmar, an ancient plan to reinforce a particular form of emplaced settlement as hegemonic.

In 2015, the US Department of Justice declared that punitive responses to survival strategies used by people experiencing homelessness are unconstitutional “if a person has literally nowhere else to go;”<sup>374</sup> however, these practices continue in many communities despite the systemic lack of accessible shelter beds locally and nationally.<sup>375</sup> Legal policy studies and law enforcement officers confirm that criminalizing homelessness is harmful, expensive and ultimately ineffective at reducing the occupation of public space.<sup>376</sup> For all vehicle residents in Seattle, a lack of legal space can produce a harmful cycle with few exits that avoid total property loss (see Image 56).

As detailed in chapter two, the local population of vehicle residents has grown more than thirty-fold during the last two-decades – from around 100 in 1998 to over 3,300 people in 2018 (see Image 12)<sup>377</sup> – despite the intensifying use and enforcement of anti-vehicle residency ordinances.<sup>378</sup> An increase in vehicle resident population and decrease in legal overnight parking space has produced a growing reliance on limited space for habitation, leading to the dense settlements of vehicle residency detailed in chapter four. These dense human settlements create predictable waste without proper disposal services, described in chapter five, that can prompt community complaints and subsequent law enforcement costs, with little improvement to the “quality of life” of housed *or* unhoused communities.<sup>379</sup> Reactionary ticketing, warnings and property seizure instead reinforces a perpetual migration in Seattle’s limited remaining overnight

---

<sup>374</sup> US Department of Justice 2015

<sup>375</sup> Skinner & Rankin 2016; Rankin 2019

<sup>376</sup> Amster 2008:79-121; Fisher, Miller, Walter & Selbin 2015; Howard, Tran & Rankin 2015; Adcock, Butler-Dines, Chambers, Lagarde, Moore, Nutting, Reed, Schreiber, Warren, Webb & Zweibel 2016; Police Executive Research Forum 2018; Herring, Yarbrough & Alatorre 2019

<sup>377</sup> SKCCH 2019; All Home 2019

<sup>378</sup> Gillis 2010; Radke and Martin 2017b; So et al., 2016

<sup>379</sup> Gmelch 1982; Ellickson 1996; Foscarinis 1996; Parnaby 2003; Taylor 2008:53-77; Adcock et al., 2016; Robinson 2017; Robinson & Westbrook 2019; O’Grady, Gaetz, & Buccieri 2013; Herring, Yarbrough & Alatorre 2019

parking space until a near-certain impound.<sup>380</sup> In a futile attempt to clear their inventory of seized vehicles, full impound lots in Seattle currently auction RVs for as little as one dollar at weekly public events, often directly back to unhoused people for future vehicle residency.<sup>381</sup> In the problematic liminal space between home-less and inhabiting a vehicle-home, individuals and families with no place else to go struggle to hold onto their optimal form of affordable housing and primary shelter.

This research demonstrates the need for a systemic inclusion of vehicle residency throughout local, regional, and national social service planning. In particular, outreach for services to vehicle residents can be ineffective at alleviating the habitation of public parking and transitioning people into permanent housing if it does not, at least, provide a space for the (1) safe, long-term placement of the vehicle residence, (2) access to survival-based resources such as hygiene-facilities and waste disposal, and (3) self-determination for an individual or family to make a difficult and prolonged transition from vehicle residency into traditional housing through social service assistance – *if and how they choose*, as aligned to the US HUD-recommended Housing First Model. Without this systemic inclusion, vehicle residents are forced to abandon their property on unsafe streets to access emergency shelter services at parking-less sites. This is like advising a shipwreck survivor to jump from a life raft stocked with vital resources, knowing they will tread water waiting for an unseen salvation. Vehicle residents need a safe harbor to connect with stabilizing support; they need a supportive home for their beloved homes.

---

<sup>380</sup> Groover 2018

<sup>381</sup> Archibald 2017

*Addendum: Interdisciplinary Collaborations*  
*Relational Comparison of a Vehicle Residence in Public Parking*

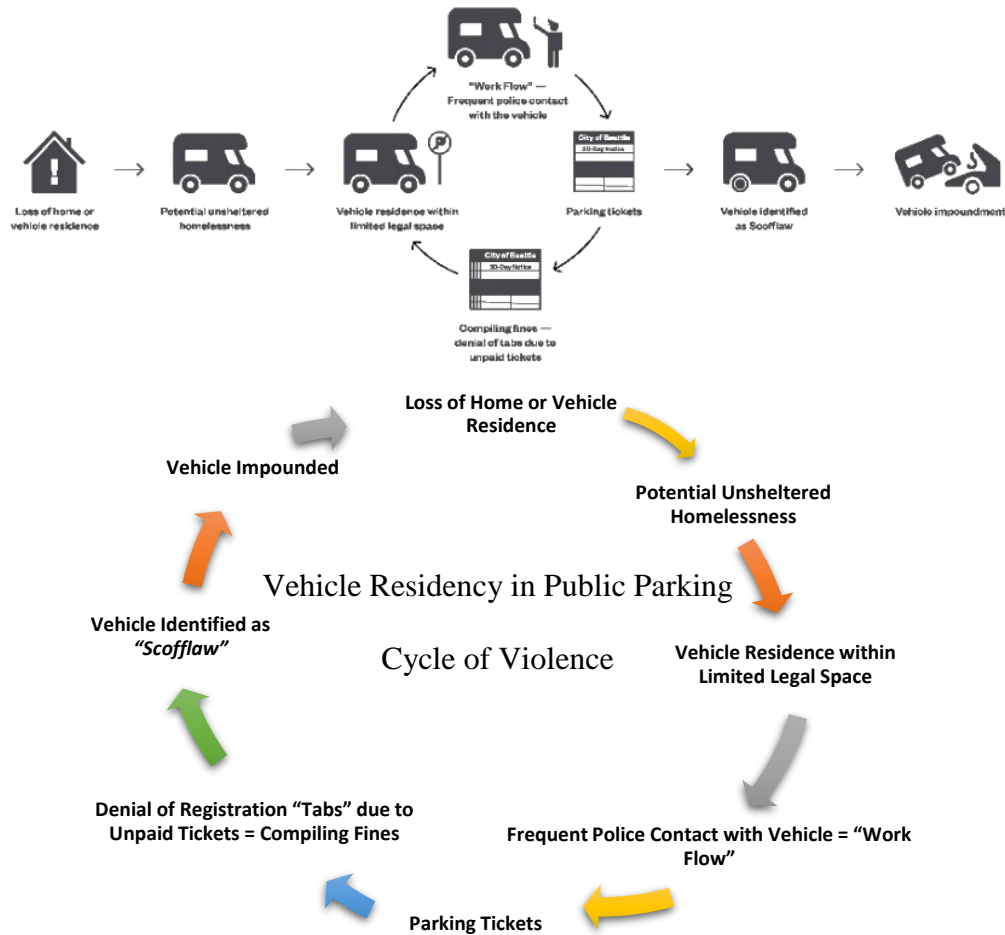
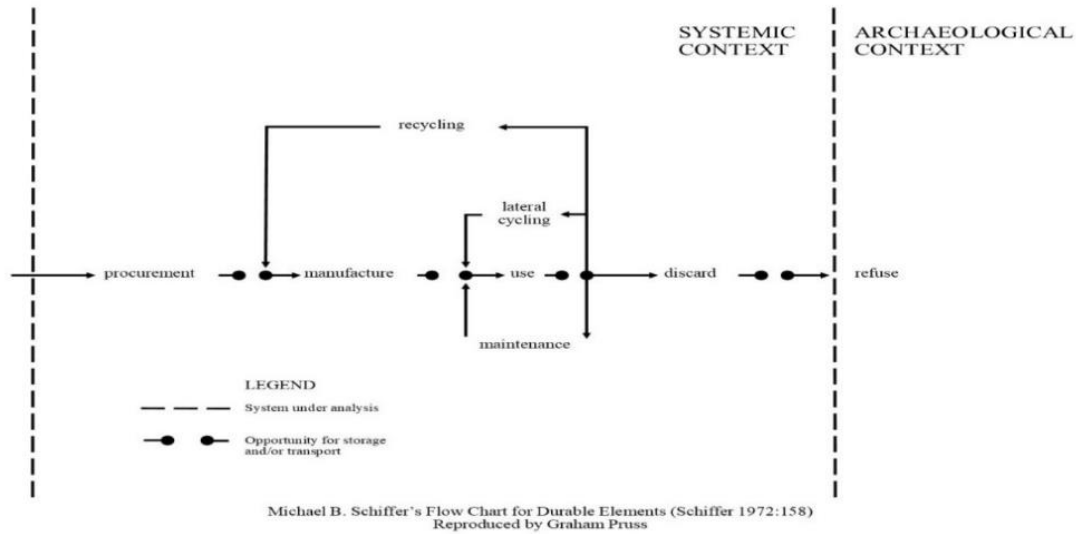


Image 56  
 Comparison of Relational Systems: Michael Schiffer's "Flow Chart of Durable Elements" (top), UW Design Division Student "Vehicle Residence 'Flow' Through Parking" (middle; also see Image 57: 4/6), and my "Vehicle Residency in Public Parking Cycle of Violence" (bottom).

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Collaborative work by UW School of Art + Art History + Design students

The following interdisciplinary work was developed under guidance of University of Washington Division of Design Professor Karen Cheng.

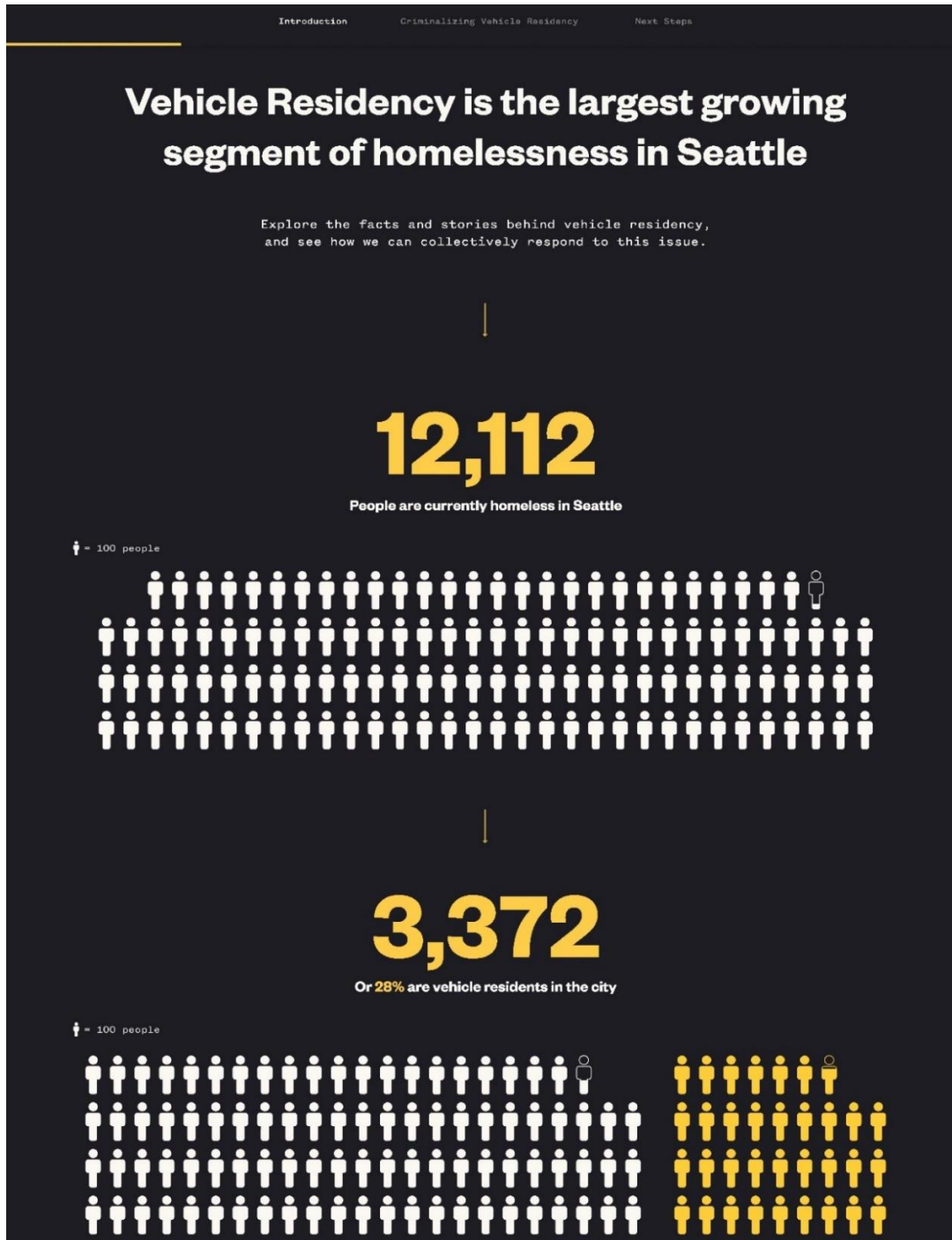


Image 57  
Vehicle residency “infographic” website (*sic*) developed by University of Washington School of Art + Art History + Design Seniors Joylyn Yang & Justin McKissick (1 of 6). 2019.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
 Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

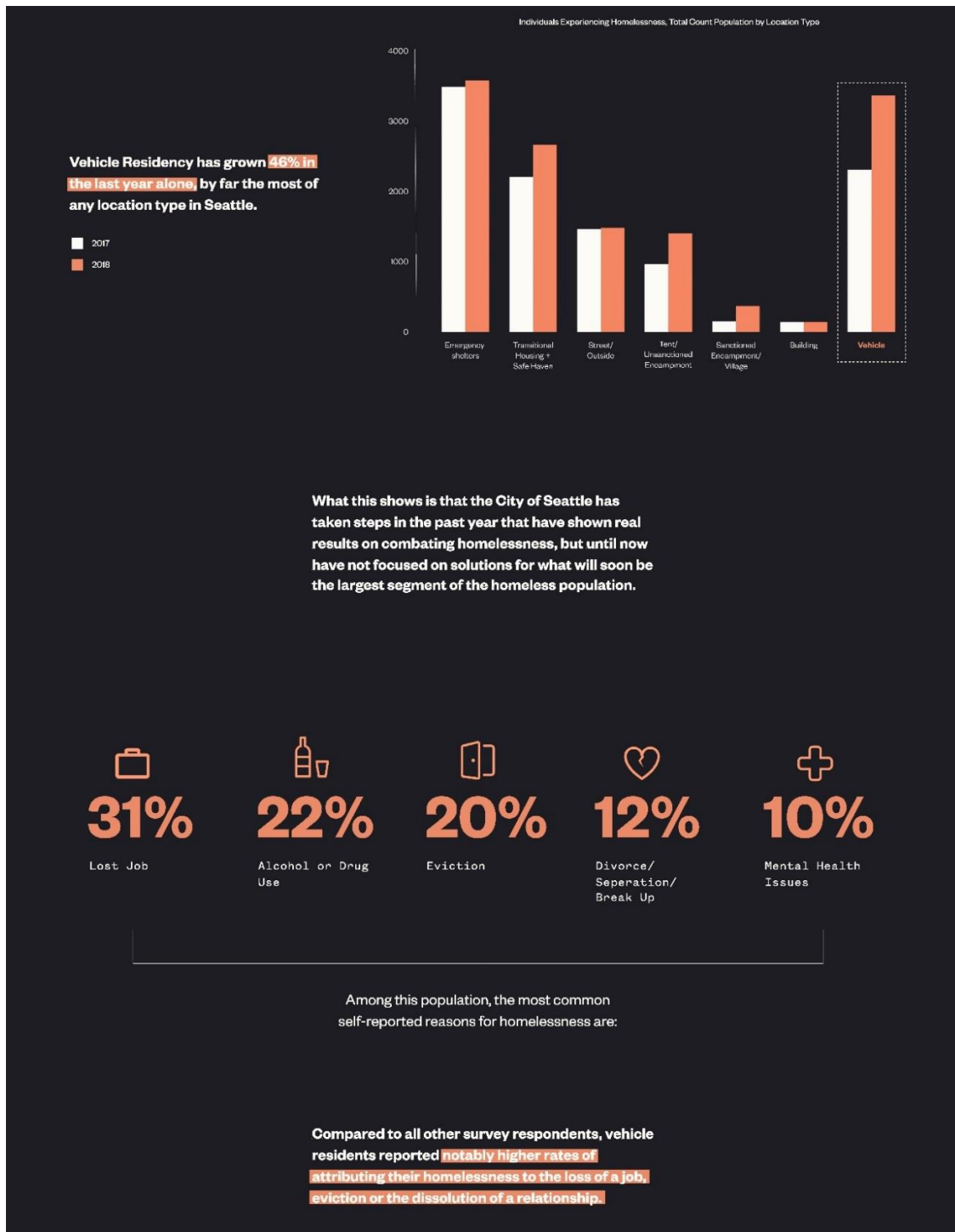
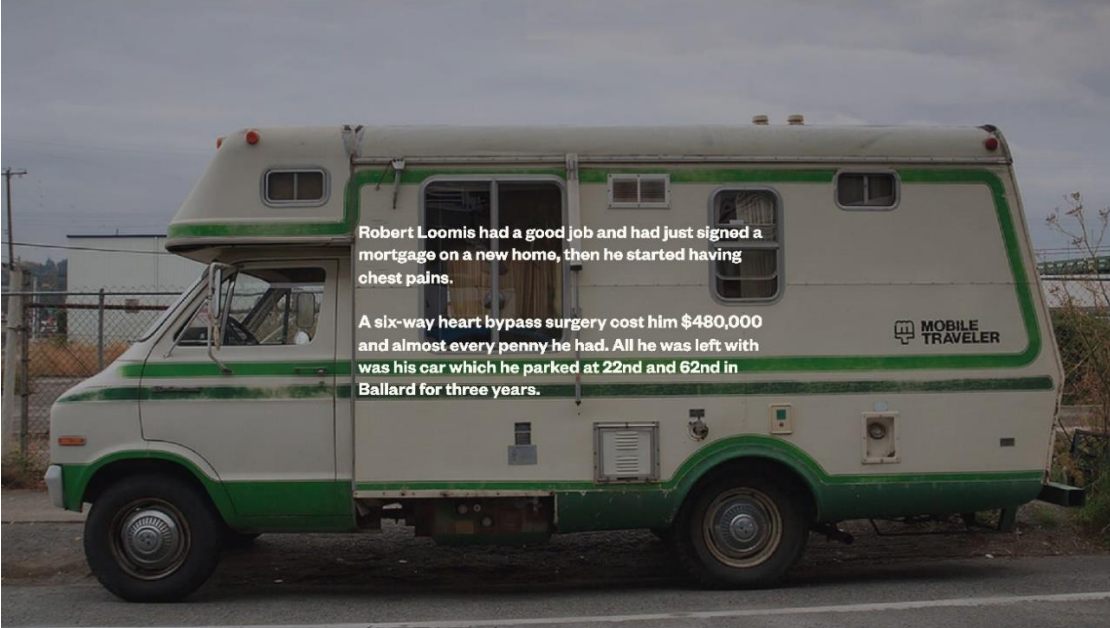


Image 57  
 Vehicle residency “infographic” website (*sic*) developed by University of Washington School of Art + Art History + Design Seniors Joylyn Yang & Justin McKissick (2 of 6). 2019.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

Compared to all other survey respondents, vehicle residents reported notably higher rates of attributing their homelessness to the loss of a job, eviction or the dissolution of a relationship.



Robert Loomis had a good job and had just signed a mortgage on a new home, then he started having chest pains.

A six-way heart bypass surgery cost him \$480,000 and almost every penny he had. All he was left with was his car which he parked at 22nd and 62nd in Ballard for three years.

“Growing up, I always heard you pick yourself up by your bootstraps. But what do you do if you reach down and there's no laces left? Your heart – that's one lace gone. Debt – there's another.”

50% of vehicle residents indicated that their health conditions prevented them from holding a job, living in stable housing, or taking care of themselves.

Loomis was harassed by strangers who called him a loser and lazy. He didn't want to live in shelters characterized as “prison dorms”. The hardest part of being homeless was trying to keep up hope.

60% of vehicle residents reported issues in trying to access services in the community, including not qualifying for the service(s) they wanted, never hearing back after applying, and not knowing where to go for help.

“There were times I wanted to kill myself literally because I didn't want to be known like this. It's not what I dreamed of in my life. I always wanted to be successful and prove to people that I was worth something, so that's what kept me going.”

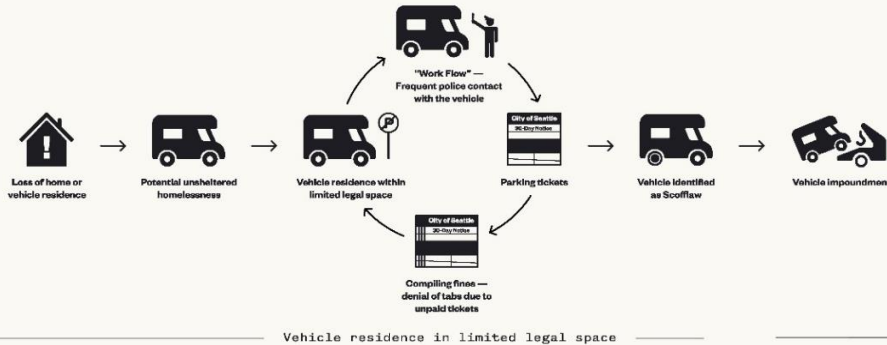
[Read Robert's story in his own words](#)

Image 57

Vehicle residency “infographic” website (*sic*) developed by University of Washington School of Art + Art History + Design Seniors Joylyn Yang & Justin McKissick (3 of 6). 2019.

## Criminalizing Vehicle Residency

More stories like Roberts are collected every year. Vehicle residents are systemically criminalized and locked into a cycle of homelessness. This cycle outlines the effects of restricted parking on vehicle residents.



### INDUSTRIAL ZONE PARKING IN SEATTLE

Seattle limits the area available for vehicle residents to park.

The majority of vehicle residents rely heavily on the few industrial zones in the city for overnight parking, but these have limited streets available for parking.



**83.54mi²**  
 PARKING SPACE OPEN TO RV RESIDENTS

**10.84mi²**  
 PARKING SPACE OPEN TO EVERYONE ELSE



### CHANGING VEHICLE RESIDENCE POPULATION

This issue is even more pressing as the population of vehicle residents in Seattle changes, with RV residents showing a 100% increase in the past year alone.



Image 57

Vehicle residency “infographic” website (*sic*) developed by University of Washington School of Art + Art History + Design Seniors Joylyn Yang & Justin McKissick (4 of 6). 2019.

# A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias

## Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss



Image 57

Vehicle residency "infographic" website (*sic*) developed by University of Washington School of Art + Art History + Design Seniors Joylyn Yang & Justin McKissick (5 of 6). 2019.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
 Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

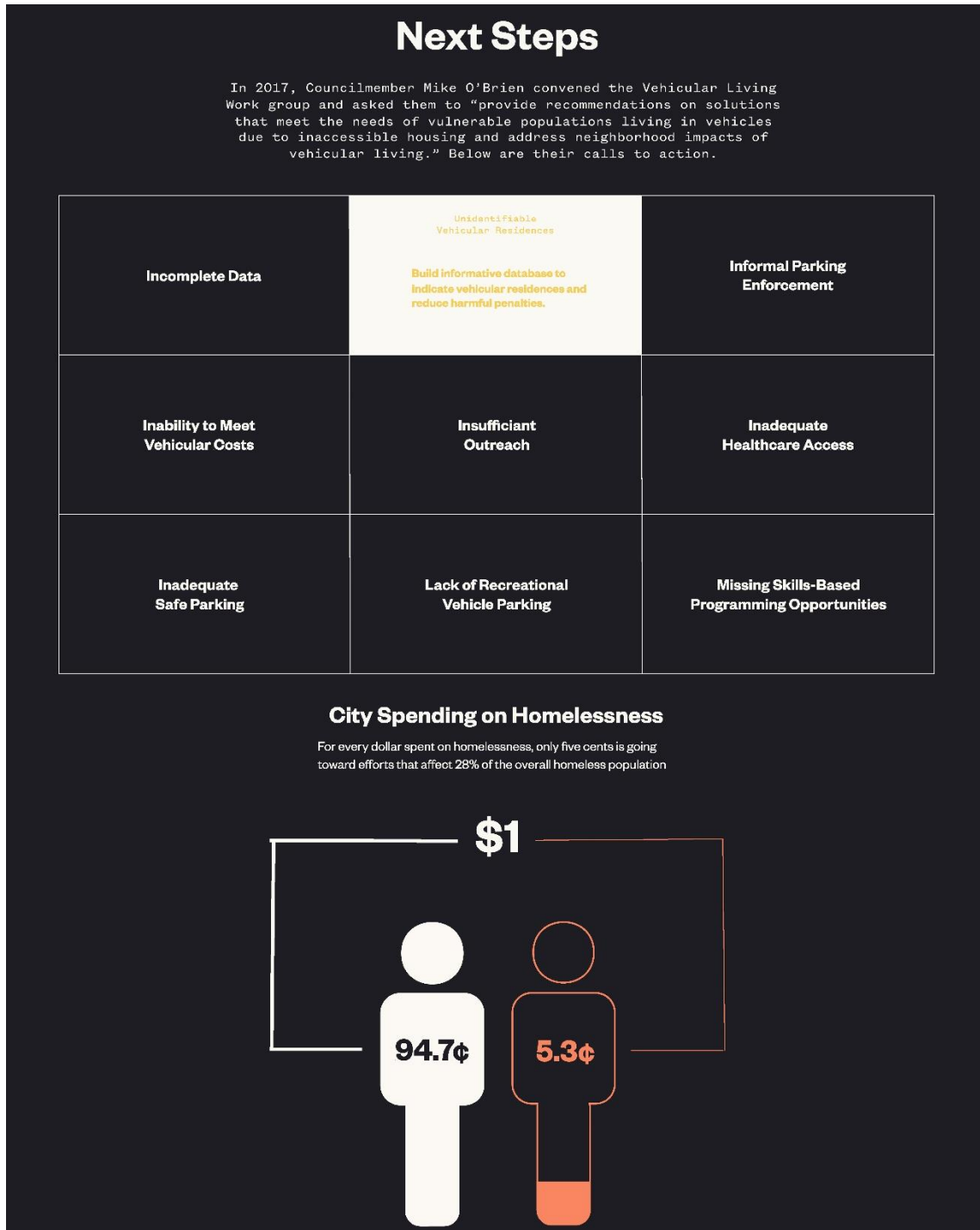


Image 57  
 Vehicle residency “infographic” website (*sic*) developed by University of Washington School of Art + Art History + Design Seniors Joylyn Yang & Justin McKissick (6 of 6). 2019.

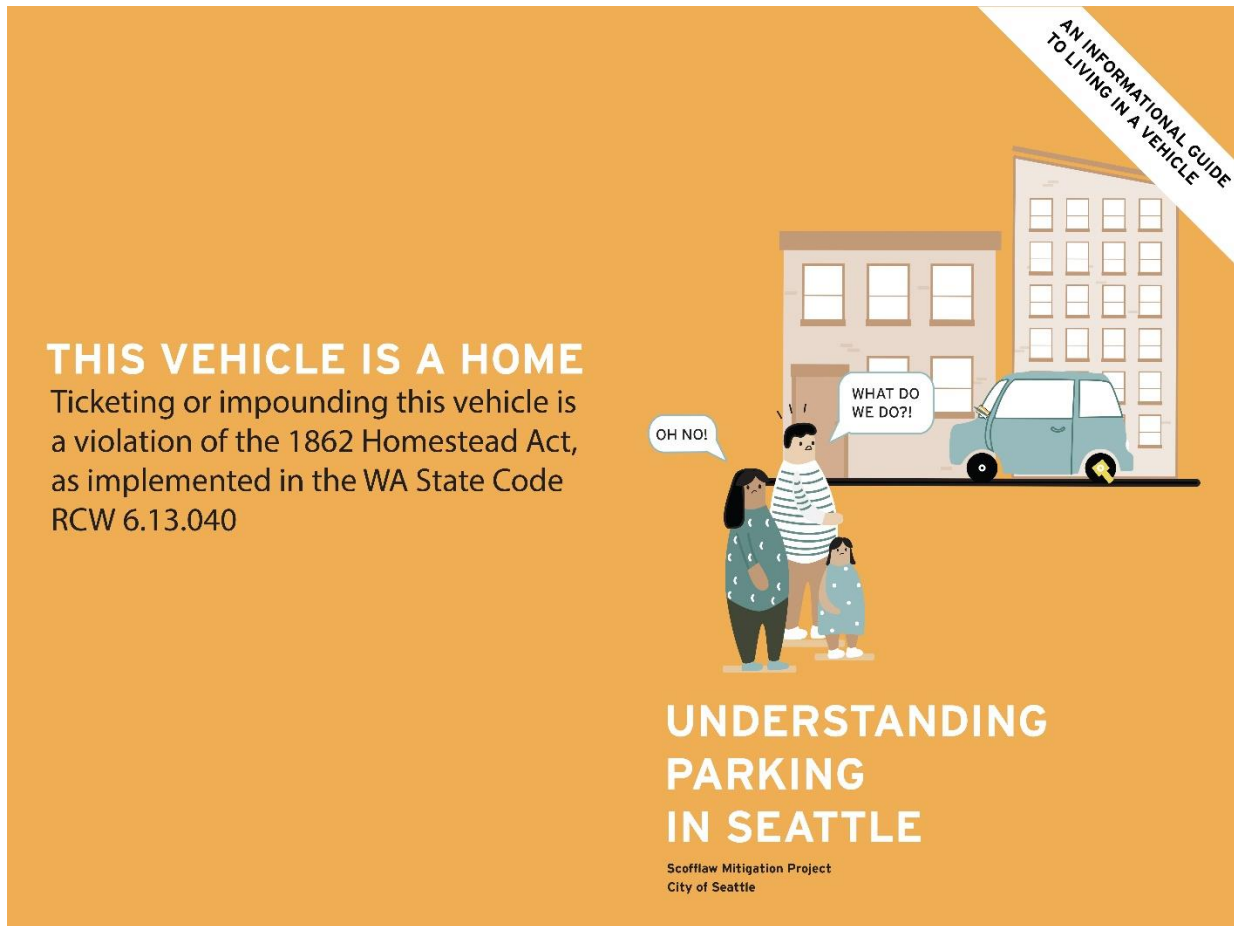


Image 58

Vehicle resident outreach flyer designed with UW School of Art + Art History + Design senior Jamillia Lopez alongside vehicle resident advocates Jean Darsie and Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett (1 of 2). 2019.

# A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias

## Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

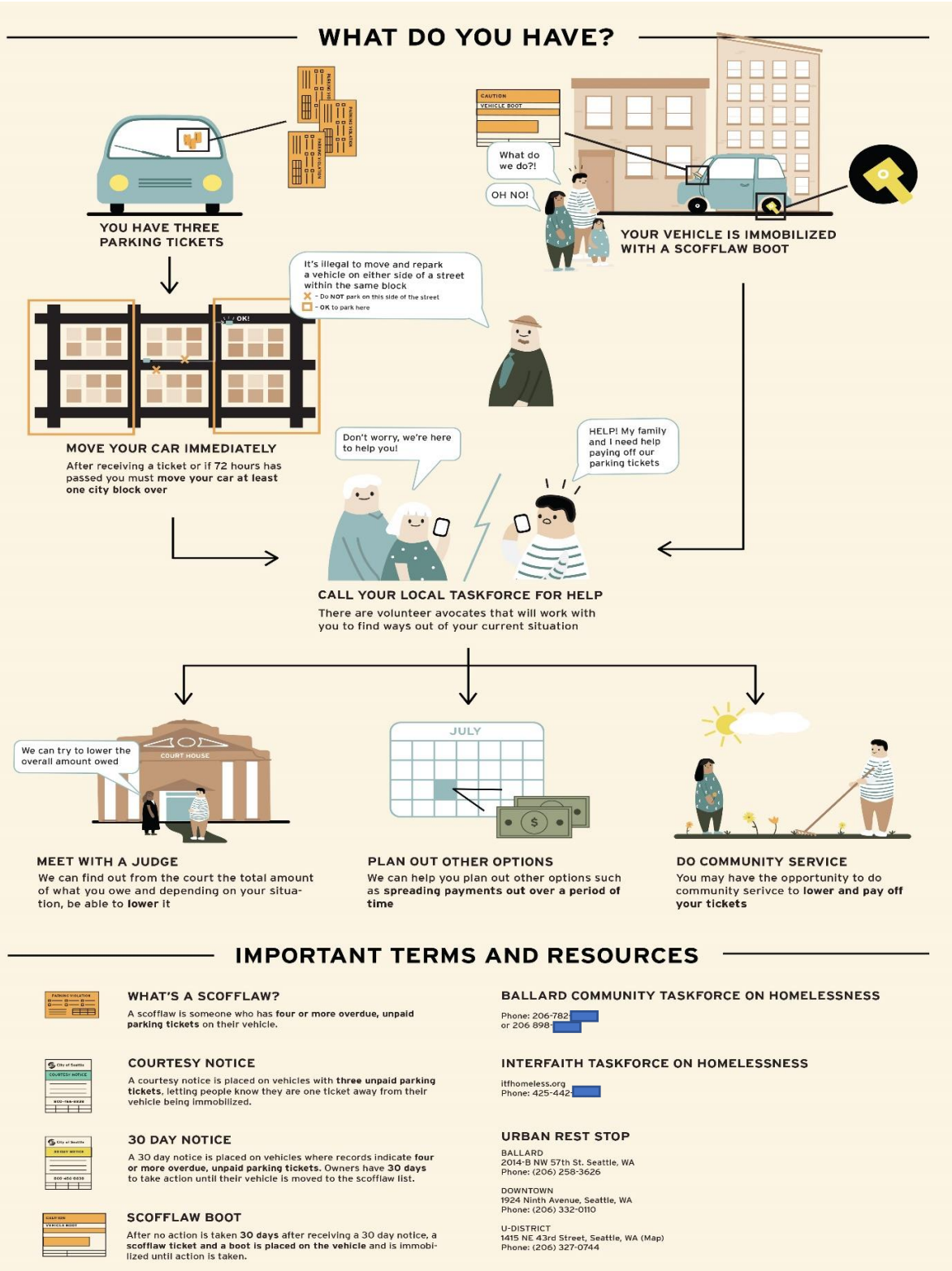


Image 58

Vehicle resident outreach flyer designed with UW School of Art + Art History + Design senior Jamillia Lopez alongside vehicle resident advocates Jean Darsie and Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett (2 of 2). 2019.

# A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias

## Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

**OH NO! I GOT A PARKING TICKET!** It can be very stressful to get parking tickets—especially if you don't have enough money to pay the fine. But you do have options! Here's how it works:

**Oh no!**  
You received an orange ticket!

**Ugh! Not Again!**

**Don't leave your vehicle where it is!**  
Move your vehicle to a new location at least one city block away ASAP.

Hmm... Where should I park?

old location  
one city block = orange area  
new location  
you can relocate anywhere **not** in the orange area

**Do you remember receiving 3 or more parking tickets?**

1 3  
2 ?

I think this may be my fourth ticket...

**If the answer is yes, you are in danger of getting a scofflaw.**

A scofflaw is someone who has four or more overdue, unpaid parking tickets on one vehicle. You can get booted!

**Don't panic!**  
There are resources to help you!

**Don't be afraid!**  
Call the court as soon as possible.

Hello! My name is Abbie and I'm calling to ask about my parking tickets!

How many tickets do I have & how much do they cost altogether?

**The total cost of your parking tickets is \$185.00!**

We can also **reduce or waive your fees** if you can prove your low-income status!

You can choose to **pay your tickets** by phone, in person, online or by visit.

If you still can't pay, you can **perform community service** instead of paying too.

SMC

**The Seattle Scofflaw Mitigation Project can help you too!**  
If you are limited financially and are unable to pay your tickets, they can help!

Hello! My name is Jean and I am part of the Scofflaw Mitigation Project!

I can call the court to **vouch for your low-income status** to help reduce the overall costs for you.

I can also **schedule you an appointment with a judge**, who can lower the amount you owe.

**Congratulations! You did it!**  
You're ticket-free!

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PAY MY PARKING TICKETS?**

**LATE FEES CAN BE ADDED**

Your tickets can accumulate over time and **late fees** may be added to the original ticket amount.

**NO RIGHT TO A HEARING**

You can **lose your right** to request a mitigation hearing with a judge or to challenge your debt.

**CAR TABS PUT ON HOLD**

Your vehicle registration (car tabs) can be **put on hold** and you won't be able to renew them or drive.

**BOOT APPLIED TO VEHICLE**

Your vehicle can be immobilized using a **boot**, a wheel-locking device.

Image 59

Vehicle resident outreach flyer designed with UW School of Art + Art History + Design senior Selina Nguyen alongside vehicle resident advocates Jean Darsie and Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett (1 of 2). 2019.

A Home Without a Home: Vehicle Residency and Settled Bias  
 Doctoral Dissertation for Graham Pruss

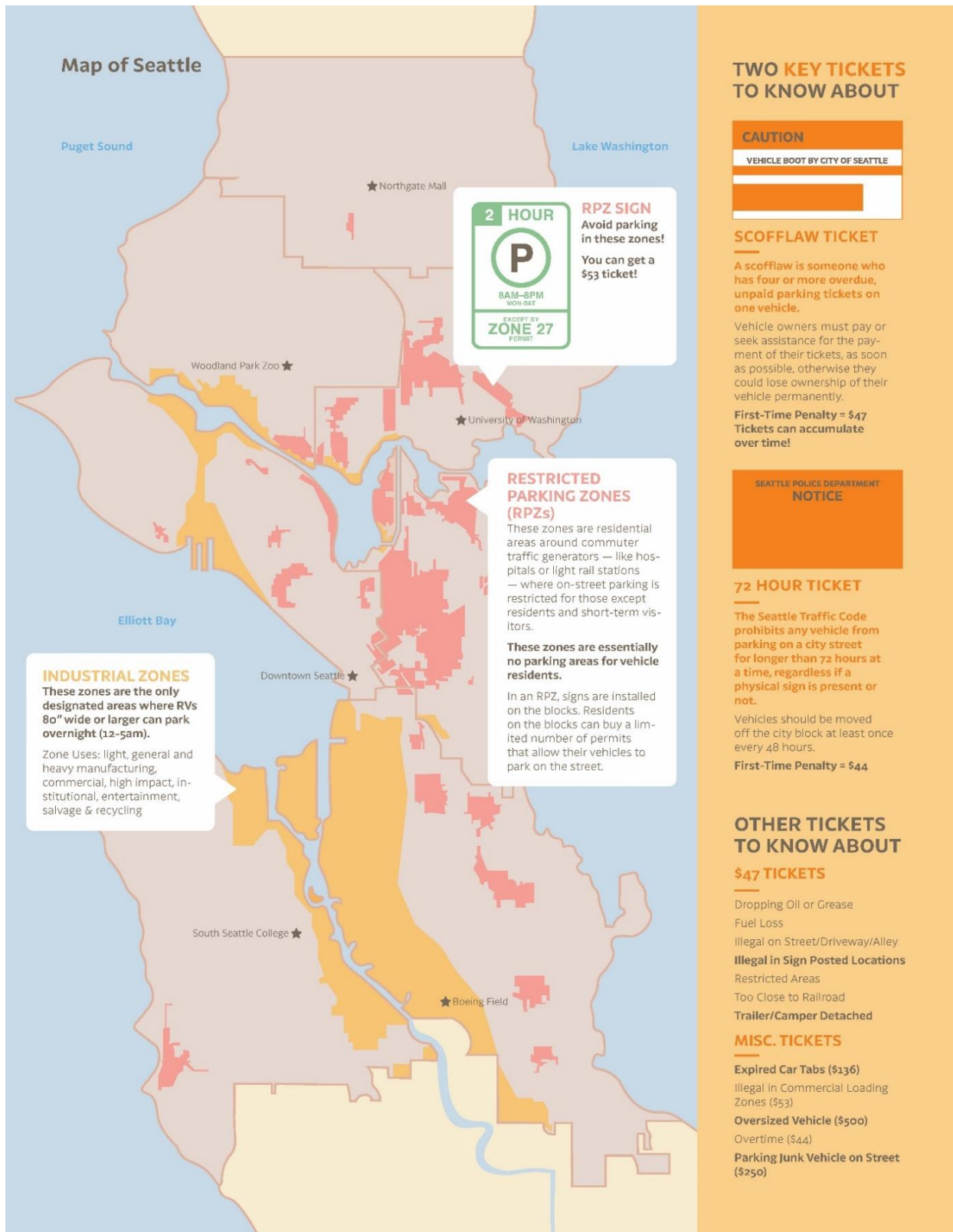


Image 59  
 Vehicle resident outreach flyer designed with UW School of Art + Art History + Design senior Selina Nguyen alongside vehicle resident advocates Jean Darsie and Reverend Bill Kirilin-Hackett (2 of 2). 2019.

## What to do and who to call when ticketed.

a guide on dealing with tickets and avoiding new ones



Provided by Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness and Ballard Taskforce on Homelessness

# NOTICE:

This vehicle is personal property being used as a residence and is therefore “exempt from attachment and from execution or forced sale” according to the Washington Homestead Act (Chapter 6.13 RCW) and as ruled in the case of CITY OF SEATTLE v. STEVEN GREGORY LONG in March of 2018.

RCW 6.13.010, RCW 6.13.040, RCW 6.13.070

### Move your car.

To avoid receiving more tickets, move your vehicle as soon as possible.



Move completely off the block you are parked on as shown above.

### Need help? Call us!

We are a group of friendly volunteers who have helped many people with their parking tickets and we are here to help you with yours!



The sooner we can help you address your tickets, the better!

Contact us at:

(425) 442- [redacted]  
(206) 782- [redacted]  
(206) 898- [redacted]

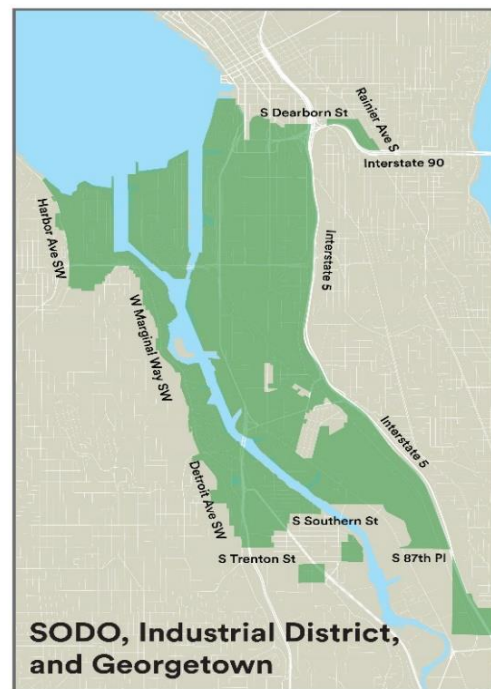
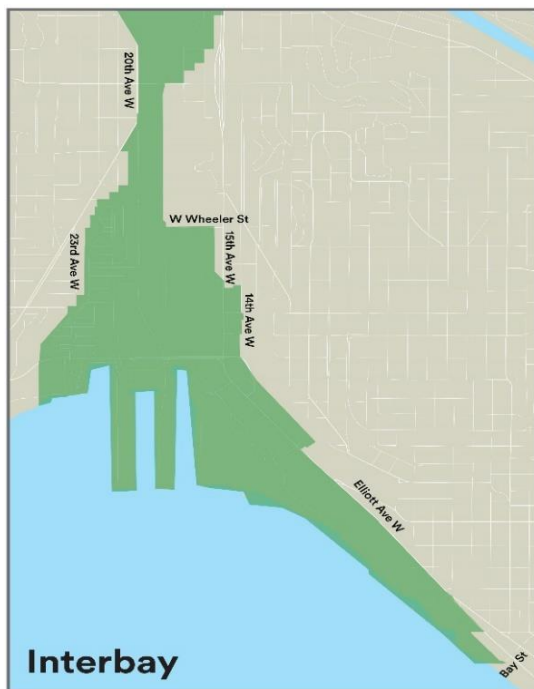
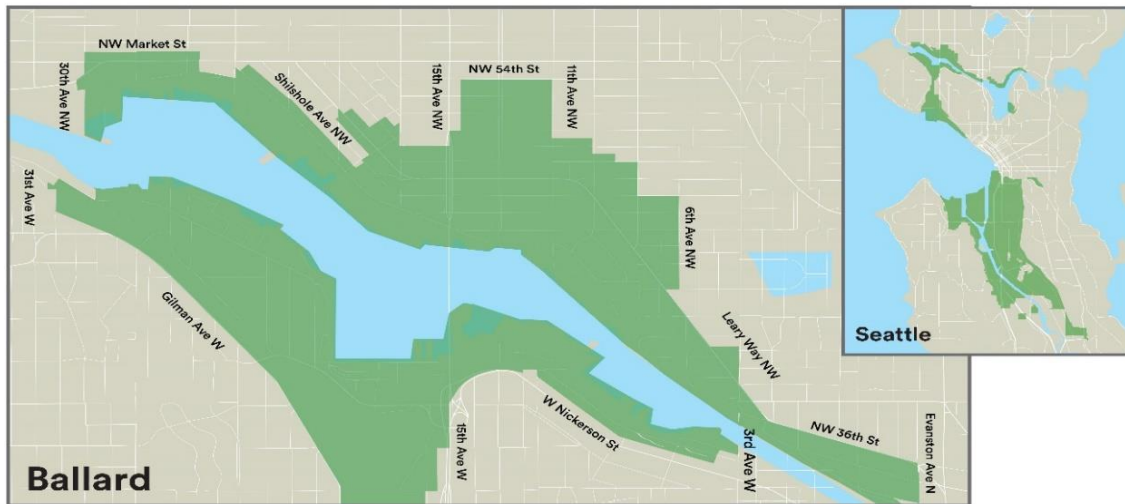
*If no answer, please leave a message with information on how we can contact you.*

Image 60

Vehicle resident outreach flyer designed with UW School of Art + Art History + Design senior Grant Muma alongside vehicle resident advocates Jean Darsie and Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett (1 of 2). 2019.

# Industrial Zones for Oversized Vehicles

You must park in these areas if you vehicle is over 80 inches wide.



When parking in these areas, check for signs like these to avoid being ticketed.

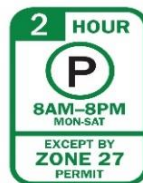


Image 60  
Vehicle resident outreach flyer designed with UW School of Art + Art History + Design senior Grant Muma alongside vehicle resident advocates Jean Darsie and Reverend Bill Kirlin-Hackett (2 of 2). 2019.

*Safe Parking Program Analysis by UW Evans School of Public Policy*

The following report was produced by Evans School of Public Policy students Alexis Rinck, Alisha Dall'Osto, and Kayla Jackson in collaboration with this research project.

## **Making Space for Vehicle Residents: A Policy Analysis for the City of Seattle**

*June 2018*

POLICY ANALYSIS PREPARED BY: KAYLA JACKSON, ALEXIS RINCK, AND ALISHA DALL'OSTO



Photo: GENNA MARTIN, SEATTLEPI.COM

### **CLIENT: SEATTLE MAYOR JENNY DURKAN**

This policy analysis is directed to Seattle's 56th Mayor, Jenny Durkan, who took office November 28th, 2017. Durkan ran for office on a platform promising to make Seattle more affordable and inclusive for all, and faces the challenge of a growing homeless community, and increasing real-estate prices resulting from an extended local economic boom. In the past five months, Durkan's office has influenced local vehicle homelessness policy. Soon after taking office, she announced \$100 million in available funds to build affordable housing development to rehouse homeless individuals. Second, after a local judge ruled that impounding a local homeless man's vehicle violated his rights, Durkan's administration moved to overturn the ruling, to protect the ability of law enforcement to ticket and impound improperly parked vehicles. Also, the Durkan administration announced that it will close Seattle's last safe parking lot this summer due to extensive costs and a lack of program success.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The most recent Count Us In Report, a comprehensive survey of homeless individuals in Seattle and King County, indicates that there were an estimated 3,372 individuals living in vehicles in January 2018. This means that vehicle residents now make up 53% of the unsheltered homeless population in Seattle and the number of vehicle residents has increased by 46% in one year. Despite the growing numbers of this group, there are limited options for these individuals to have their daily needs met, and parking restrictions keep them from attaining daily stability.

### Problem and Goal

Vehicle residents are increasingly experiencing difficulty finding long term legal parking places as the number of vehicle residents rise, further destabilizing an already unstable population. The goals of our policy options are *1) to provide legal spaces for vehicle residents to park and 2) to prevent further destabilization of vehicle residents.*

### Policy Options

- *Status Quo*: Maintain current parking enforcement measures and services for unsheltered homeless individuals.
- *Option #1: Night Parking Network* - The City of Seattle will formalize and expand partnerships with religious organizations, nonprofits, and businesses throughout the City to create a network of parking spaces for vehicle residents from 6pm-6am. The City will provide supplemental funding for basic hygiene services at each site.
- *Option #2: Vehicle Resident Support Center* - The City of Seattle will establish 2-3 Vehicle Resident Support Centers on vacant city-owned land to provide night and day parking spaces, hygiene services and case-managers to enroll residents in the county's Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) system.
- *Option #3: Rapid Rehousing* - Parking enforcement or homeless outreach teams will actively connect vehicle residents to a CEA case-worker to enroll all vehicle residents in the Rapid Rehousing program, a short-term rental subsidy for market-rate apartments.

### Criteria

Policy options were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Increased legal to parking for vehicle residents**
- **Stabilization**
- **Administrative feasibility**
- **Cost**
- **Equity**

### Recommendation

We advise Mayor Durkan to adopt Policy Option #3, Vehicle Resident Support Centers. This option will increase the number of legal parking spaces both day and night, provide basic hygiene services and integrate vehicle residents into the All Home Network of homeless support services. Although administrative feasibility may be difficult due to locating available land and setting up impermanent infrastructure to support 3,300+ people, a centralized lot program would provide an immediate and cost-effective intervention to prevent further destabilization of vehicle residents until more affordable housing is built.

MEMORANDUM

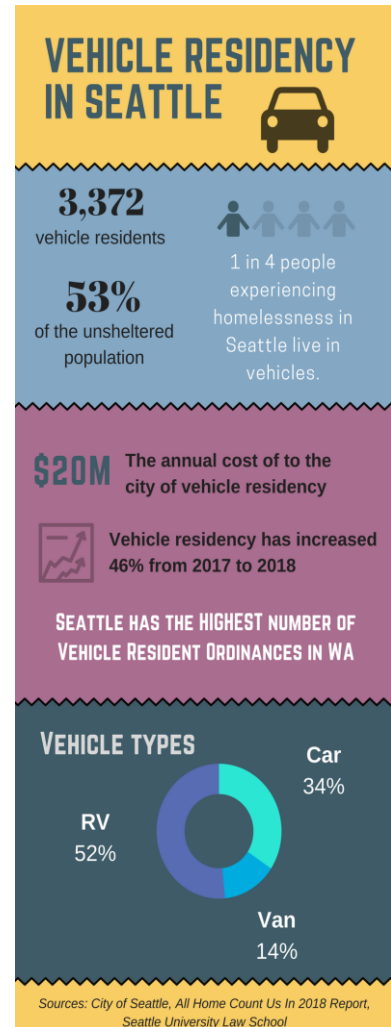
To: Mayor Jenny Durkin  
From: Alisha Dall’osto, Kayla Jackson, Alexis Rinck  
Subject: Vehicle Residency in Seattle

**The State of Homelessness in Seattle**

In November 2015, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray declared a “State of Emergency on Homelessness” to secure state and federal assistance to address a rapid increase in homelessness, and a lack of coordinated services.<sup>382</sup> The City of Seattle has increased funding to homeless services and affordable housing every year since;<sup>383</sup> however, the growing demand continually exceeds the services available. Seattle now ranks first in the nation for the rate of rent increases and third in the nation for the size of its homeless population, despite being only the 18th largest city in the United States.<sup>384</sup>

As of January 2017, 11,643 people were experiencing homelessness in Seattle and King County, 5,485 of whom were unsheltered<sup>385</sup> and primarily residing in Seattle.<sup>386</sup> A large portion of this unsheltered population, 2,314 people, were vehicle residents.<sup>387</sup> This number has since increased and the 2018 Count Us In report indicates that there are an estimated 3,372 individuals living in vehicles. This means that vehicle residents now make up 53% of the unsheltered homeless population and over 27% of the total homeless population in Seattle and the number of vehicle residents has increased by 46% in one year.<sup>388</sup>

Despite the growing numbers of this group, there are limited options for these individuals to meet their daily needs, and parking restrictions are a barrier to attaining stability. *Vehicle residents are increasingly experiencing difficulty finding long term legal parking places as the number of vehicle residents rise, further destabilizing an already unstable population.*



<sup>382</sup> Murray, Ed “FAQ: State of Emergency on Homelessness,” Website for Seattle Office Of the Mayor, (11/2/2015), <http://murray.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/11.2.15-Homelessness-FAQ.pdf>

<sup>383</sup> Mayor Durkin, “Addressing Homelessness”, Website for Seattle Office of the Mayor, <https://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/about-us/initiatives/addressing-homelessness>

<sup>384</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress”, (12/2017), <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>385</sup> “Unsheltered” refers to people living on the street, in abandoned buildings, in vehicles, or in tents.

<sup>386</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2017, All Home King County (2017), <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2017-King-PIT-Count-Comprehensive-Report-FINAL-DRAFT-5.31.17.pdf>

<sup>387</sup> Ibid

<sup>388</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

### Who are Vehicle Residents?

The 2018 Point-In-Time Count indicated that 52% of vehicle residents live in RVs, 14% live in vans and 34% live in cars.<sup>389</sup> While they are counted as a part of the unsheltered homeless population, vehicle residents face distinct challenges to accessing the homeless housing and social services available. Unsheltered persons who do not reside in vehicles more frequently connect to services through homeless shelters.<sup>390</sup> Fewer vehicle residents access hygiene and health services compared to the general unsheltered population.<sup>391</sup> Many vehicle residents are recently homeless, may not necessarily consider themselves to be homeless, and are unfamiliar with homeless housing services available.<sup>392</sup> Additionally, social service outreach providers have difficulty reaching out to and following up with vehicle residents to offer help because staying invisible in one's vehicle is a common strategy for safety.<sup>393</sup>

### Parking in Seattle

Parking restrictions, ordinances and bans on vehicle residency have been on the rise nationally for the past decade. These actions take a number of forms including: outright bans on vehicle residency, vehicle size limits, restrictions on parking time and location, and junk or abandoned vehicle designations.<sup>394</sup> The number of cities nationwide that banned sleeping in vehicles increased 119% in three years, with only 37 cities in 2011 to 81 cities in 2014.<sup>395</sup> Notably, in the state of Washington, Seattle has the highest number of these ordinances, 20, that criminalize vehicle residency.<sup>396</sup> Consequently, the criminalization of vehicle residency often implicitly stigmatizes the vehicular resident populations as dangerous or disorderly.<sup>397</sup>

Vehicle residents have received more tickets for parking over 72 hours, scofflaw and expired tabs, than people with permanent shelter.<sup>398</sup> Citations for parking over 72 hours are Seattle's third most common parking citation.<sup>399</sup> While they make up only 3% of all parking

---

<sup>389</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>390</sup> Human Services, City of Seattle "Addressing Homelessness" (2018) <https://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/about-us/initiatives/addressing-homelessness>

<sup>391</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>392</sup> Graham Pruss, Seattle Vehicular Residency Research Project: 2012 Advisory Report, (2012), [http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2012/hhshc20120926\\_8a.pdf](http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2012/hhshc20120926_8a.pdf)

<sup>393</sup> Joe Ingram, Bill Kirlin-Hackett, & Graham Pruss, Alliance Conference on Ending Homelessness: Vehicle Residency Workshop (5/16/2013).

<sup>394</sup> So, Jessica and MacDonald, Scott and Olson, Justin and Mansell, Ryan and Rankin, Sara, Living at the Intersection: Laws & Vehicle Residency (May 9, 2016). Seattle University School of Law, Homeless Rights Advocacy Project, 2016. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2776423> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2776423>

<sup>395</sup> National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, Report: Criminalizing Crisis: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities (Nov. 2011), available at <http://www.nlchp.org/CriminalizingCrisis>.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid

<sup>397</sup> So, Jessica and MacDonald, Scott and Olson, Justin and Mansell, Ryan and Rankin, Sara, Living at the Intersection: Laws & Vehicle Residency (5/9/2016). Seattle University School of Law, Homeless Rights Advocacy Project, 2016. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2776423> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2776423>

<sup>398</sup> Joe Ingram, Bill Kirlin-Hackett, & Graham Pruss, Alliance Conference on Ending Homelessness: Vehicle Residency Workshop (5/16/2013).

<sup>399</sup> Ibid

citations, this 3% represents 15,884 citations in one year.<sup>400</sup> The implementation of the Scofflaw program in 2011,<sup>401</sup> in addition to the increase in parking rates and decrease in length of time per block per neighborhood<sup>402</sup> allowed for Seattle’s department of transportation to garner enough funds to protect itself from budget cuts;<sup>403</sup> however, these measures have negatively impacted vehicle residents.

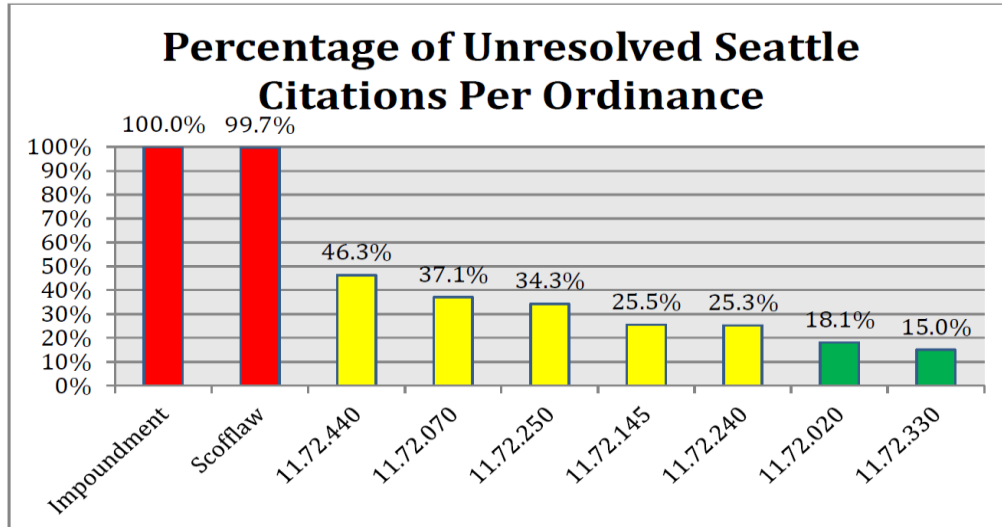


Figure 1: Graph of Unresolved Citations; Source - Seattle University Law School; Homeless Rights Advocacy Project

This chart from the Seattle University Law School’s Homeless Rights Advocacy Project demonstrates the outcome of many citations: unresolved and no payment. The first red bars represent Seattle’s scofflaw and impoundment ordinances and shows that nearly all over these citations went unresolved over a five-year enforcement period. The yellow bars represent Seattle’s restrictions on 72-hour parking, commercial vehicles in non-commercial zones, and expired plates. The study notes that, “These five ordinances resulted in a combined total of 317,448 citations over the five-year period, with 84,592 of those being unresolved.”<sup>404</sup> Overall, this chart suggests that about 25–50% of Seattle’s vehicle citations go unresolved. This indicates a heavy financial burden for the City of Seattle and a potential waste of resources since so many of these citations go unresolved. Additionally, it indicates that vehicle residents as a group do not possess the financial means to pay off citations and as they accumulate, they may be pushed further into the cycle of homelessness.

The impact of these restrictive parking measures is severe for vehicle residents’ well-being. Vehicle residents face the ongoing risk of parking tickets, fines, and towing fees, creating a financial burden that can lead to the loss of their vehicle and belongings.<sup>405</sup> Parking restrictions

<sup>400</sup> Ibid

<sup>401</sup> Parking Scofflaw Business Plan, City of Seattle (6/1/2011), available at [http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/scofflaw/Parking\\_Scofflaw\\_Business\\_Plan\\_June\\_1\\_2011.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/scofflaw/Parking_Scofflaw_Business_Plan_June_1_2011.pdf).

<sup>402</sup> Mike Lindblom, Coming Soon: Parking rates that go up at busiest times, The Seattle Times (12/29/2010), <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/coming-soon-parking-rates-that-go-up-at-busiest-times/>.

<sup>403</sup> So, Jessica and MacDonald, Scott and Olson, Justin and Mansell, Ryan and Rankin, Sara, Living at the Intersection: Laws & Vehicle Residency (5/9/2016). Seattle University School of Law, Homeless Rights Advocacy Project, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2776423> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2776423>

<sup>404</sup> Ibid

<sup>405</sup> Ibid



enforcement violated Washington state's homestead act, a frontier-era law that protects properties from forced sale.<sup>412</sup> This decision was made due to the fact that Long, a vehicle resident, considered his truck as his home. Judge Shaffer also ruled that the fines the City of Seattle charged for vehicle impoundment were too high and thus violated constitutional protections against excessive fines.<sup>413</sup> Currently the City of Seattle is seeking to appeal the Long v. King County decision.<sup>414</sup>

According to the Seattle Assistant City Attorney Michael Ryan, Seattle police and parking-enforcement officers "could now find themselves in a bind if they can't definitively determine whether a vehicle is simply abandoned or is someone's home".<sup>415</sup> Seattle Parking Enforcement has partnered with community advocates and outreach workers to help vehicle residents, particularly those who may have unpaid parking tickets. If a parking enforcement officer identifies a vehicle resident, they will issue advisory notices without booting the vehicle and then connect the owner to resources and City programs designed to help.<sup>416</sup> However, there are limited City programs and resources that vehicle residents can access.

### **Stabilizing Services**

The City of Seattle and King County contain a broad network of social service agencies that connect homeless individuals and families to services. However, not all of these can be accessed by vehicle residents. The City specifically has the following stabilizing services which vehicle residents can access: 11 Day Centers for drop-in clients in Seattle which provides hygiene services, employment services, food and connections to caseworkers; 3 Low Income Housing Institute Urban Rest Stop locations in Ballard, downtown Seattle and the University District offers hygiene services; 4 Community Centers in Delridge, Green Lake, Miller, and Rainier, provide access to bathrooms and showers; and 7 Community Pools offer showers and restrooms for Seattle Public School children and their families experiencing homelessness.<sup>417</sup> One of the largest homeless services available are shelters which vehicle residents cannot access. To access the homeless shelter, vehicle residents would have to give up their car and many of them chose not to do this because this is their last valuable possession.<sup>418</sup>

In the last year, Seattle has improved its homeless outreach methods by creating a Navigation Team that provides outreach to homeless encampments but this team does not specifically target to vehicle residents.<sup>419</sup> According to the Seattle Homeless Needs Assessment

---

<sup>412</sup> See Amended Decision and Order on RALJ Appeal at 26, City of Seattle v. Long, No. 17-2-15099-1 SEA (King Cty. Super. Ct. 3/9/18). The City of Seattle is appealing this decision.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid

<sup>414</sup> Davila, Vianna "Seattle still has no strategy for..." Seattle Times. (4/10/2018), <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/seattle-still-has-no-strategy-for-thousands-of-people-living-in-vehicles/>

<sup>415</sup> Davila, Vianna "Judge rules Seattle homeless man's truck is a home," Seattle Times. (3/18/2018), <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/judge-rules-seattle-homeless-mans-truck-is-a-home/>

<sup>416</sup> Seattle Parking Enforcement, "Outreach to Vehicle Residents" <https://www.seattle.gov/police/about-us/about-policing/parking-enforcement>

<sup>417</sup> Human Services, City of Seattle "Addressing Homelessness" (2018) <https://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/about-us/initiatives/addressing-homelessness>

<sup>418</sup> Interview with Graham Pruss, (5/8/18)

<sup>419</sup> City of Seattle, Homelessness Response, "City-Sanctioned Encampments." (5/12/18), <https://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/sanctioned-encampments>

2016, people living in automobiles, campers, RVs, and vans were approached by outreach workers less frequently than people in other unsheltered locations were approached.<sup>420</sup> Comparatively, in the 2018 Count Us In Survey, vehicle resident respondents reported a lower rate of accessing community-based services compared to all other survey respondents (71% compared to 85%). Additionally, sixty percent (60%) of vehicle resident respondents reported difficulty accessing services including not qualifying for services, never getting responses after applying for services, and a lack of clarity on where to go for help.<sup>421</sup>

### **The Safe Lots**

The City of Seattle has had limited success with several programs designed to address the needs of vehicle residents. Mayor Murray's 2016 Homeless State of Emergency Implementation Plan specifically allocated a portion of funds towards programs that target vehicle residents.<sup>422</sup> One of these programs is the Road to Housing program, which provided outreach, case management and housing assistance to people living in vehicles.<sup>423</sup> Additionally, in 2015, Murray established safe parking programs to reduce the number of vehicle residents inside neighborhoods and intensely support transitional housing.<sup>424</sup> The City, however, deemed these safe parking programs to be ineffective and expensive (about \$1,750 per vehicle per month)<sup>425</sup> and has since disbanded all but one safe lot in SODO.<sup>426</sup> Part of the reason the original safe lots were so expensive was because community members permitted them to be in their neighborhoods on the condition that they had 24 hour security for the lots.<sup>427</sup> Further, the Road to Housing Program run by Compass Housing Alliance, did not even have the capacity to meet the needs of vehicle residents and ended its contract with the City in January 2018 due to decreased staffing.<sup>428</sup>

### **Policy Goal & Criteria**

Vehicle residents cannot achieve stability that will help them transition into stable housing because of the difficulty of finding a legal place to park for an extended period without threat of punitive action taken against them. *Therefore, the goals of a successful policy solution are 1) to provide legal spaces for vehicle residents to park and 2) to prevent further destabilization of vehicle residents.*

---

<sup>420</sup> City of Seattle 2016 Homeless Needs Assessment, <http://coshumaninterests.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/City-of-Seattle-Report-FINAL-with-4.11.17-additions.pdf>.

<sup>421</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>422</sup> Office of the Mayor: "Mayor Murray, Human Services Department announce \$30 million request for proposals for homeless services" (6/28/17), <http://murray.seattle.gov/mayor-murray-human-services-department-announce-30-million-request-proposals-homeless-services/>

<sup>423</sup> City of Seattle, Human Services Department, "State of Emergency Implementation Plan." (2/1/2016), <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/pathwayshome/SOEImplementationPlan.pdf>

<sup>424</sup> Office of the Mayor, "Seattle to Open Safe Lots for homeless families and individuals living in Vehicles." (5/12/2018), <http://murray.seattle.gov/seattle-to-open-safe-lots-for-homeless-families-and-individuals-living-in-vehicles/>

<sup>425</sup> Daniel Beekman, "Seattle mayor drops plan for second 'safe lot' for those living in cars, RVs." Seattle Times. 3/26/2016, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-mayor-drops-plan-for-second-safe-lot-for-those-living-in-cars-rvs/>

<sup>426</sup> Mike O'Brien, City of Seattle City Council "Vehicular Living Workgroup," 4/2017, [https://mediaweb.kirotv.com/document\\_dev/2017/08/09/Vehicular%20Living%20Workgroup%20Recommendations%20Memo%20FINAL\\_8815124\\_ver1.0.pdf](https://mediaweb.kirotv.com/document_dev/2017/08/09/Vehicular%20Living%20Workgroup%20Recommendations%20Memo%20FINAL_8815124_ver1.0.pdf)

<sup>427</sup> Interview with Graham Pruss, (5/8/18).

<sup>428</sup> Ibid

Assessment of these options use the following criteria:

1. **Increased legal parking:** The availability of legal parking for vehicle residents throughout the day and night, considering short- and long-term impacts.
2. **Stabilization:** The extent to which the policy option improves vehicle residents' stability that can help them transition into stable housing, considering short- and long-term impacts.
3. **Administrative feasibility:** The ease of implementation and oversight of this option by Seattle.
4. **Cost:** The overall cost to the City of Seattle to implement the policy option for one year.
5. **Equity:** The extent that the policy option includes different types of vehicle residents, demographically and regionally

### Policy Options

#### **Option 1: Status Quo**

Compass Housing Alliance recently cancelled its contract with the Road to Housing program leaving no outreach program designated to addressing the needs of vehicle residents in Seattle.<sup>429</sup> In 2018, 71% of vehicle residents reported that law enforcement asked them to move from their sleeping location.<sup>430</sup> To avoid being fined for exceeding the city-wide 72-hour parking limit, vehicle residents move their vehicles frequently throughout the City in search of industrial or residential neighborhoods without additional restrictions.<sup>431</sup> As noted in a study from the Seattle School of Law, "A significant percentage of citations under these ordinances go unpaid and unresolved, resulting in significant waste of city resources. Consequently, enforcing these ordinances cannot reasonably deter necessary conduct."<sup>432</sup> Current services that could aid in stabilization are also difficult to access for vehicle residents. 60% of vehicle residents reported difficulty accessing services that could facilitate stabilization. Finally, *Long v. King County* suggests that the current system of impoundment may be unconstitutional, violating the 8th amendment of cruel and unusual punishment because there are not enough shelter beds for people experiencing homelessness. Therefore, the City may face increased legal pressure to change enforcement of certain parking rules or to change these rules altogether.

#### **Option 2: Night Parking Network**

Modeled after San Diego's Safe Parking Program created by Dreams for Change, a California-based non-profit,<sup>433</sup> Seattle will create an overnight parking program for vehicle residents. The City will partner with a nonprofit social service provider to manage the program. Additionally, the City will obtain parking spaces for vehicle residents through partnerships with private organizations (religious, nonprofit, businesses) throughout the Seattle. The City should

---

<sup>429</sup> Interview with Graham Pruss, (5/8/18).

<sup>430</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>431</sup> So, Jessica and MacDonald, Scott and Olson, Justin and Mansell, Ryan and Rankin, Sara, *Living at the Intersection: Laws & Vehicle Residency* (May 9, 2016). Seattle University School of Law, Homeless Rights Advocacy Project, 2016. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2776423> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2776423>

<sup>432</sup> Ibid

<sup>433</sup> Dreams for Change, "Safe Parking Program," (6/2/2018), <http://www.dreamsforchange.org/the-safe-parking-program/>

provide incentives to these private organizations to use their parking lots overnight. Vehicle residents who live in working vehicles will be able to park overnight in a host site's parking lot from around 6pm-6am (depending on the exact time preferences of the parking lot owner).

Parking enforcement, court officials, and outreach worker will refer eligible vehicle residents to a case manager, who will enroll the individuals and vehicle into a night lot system. When case managers assign vehicle residents to a lot, they will also enter vehicle residents into the Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) system to initiate the process of accessing permanent housing. Case managers will additionally check in with vehicle residents once per week and serve as a point of contact for lot owners.

Each case manager will manage around 5 sites per week and the City will work with the local nonprofit partner to hire 60 case managers, who will oversee a caseload of about 30 individuals. The City will provide small-scale hygiene services, such as portable toilets, garbage containers and garbage pickup, and access to electrical outlets. Host sites may additionally offer a range of resources based on their capacity and type of organization.

Cars and vans, but not RVs, can park in the night lots. The City will aim to serve around 1,619 individuals (the 48% of the vehicle resident population who live in cars and vans) in lots and garages throughout Seattle in groups of 5-20 vehicles. Therefore, this option requires between 80 and 270 sites, depending on the capacity of participating lots.

### **Option 3: Vehicle Resident Support Centers**

The City of Seattle will establish multiple Vehicle Resident Support Centers (VRSC) to provide 24-hour parking for 3,400 vehicle residents. This centralized hosting model will be located on vacant city-owned land with the goal of providing every vehicle resident in Seattle a designated legal parking space, and basic services such as water, portable toilets, portable showers, electrical hookups and garbage collection.

While these parking lots will include the basic services of a traditional shelter, they will not replicate many important homeless and housing services available in Seattle such as food pantries, medical and behavioral health services, substance abuse services, housing services, and employment centers. Onsite case-managers will enroll every resident into the county's CEA system to integrate residents into the countywide homeless services network to direct them to appropriate available services. If the land available for the parking lot is not located near current bus-routes, the City will partner with King County Metro Transit to provide a shuttle service to transport residents to and from downtown where many key public services are located but where parking is expensive.

Each VRSC will be designed around specific vehicle types to better accommodate the unique needs of each resident. For example, a Vehicle Resident Support Center would function like an RV campground with electricity and water hookups available, so the residents can access heat or air conditioning and cook food. Because cars are smaller in size, a VRSC designated for cars could fit more vehicles and offer residents additional necessities like common space and storage lockers. The City will tow eligible non-running vehicles to the appropriate VRSC.

The VRSC system is designed as a temporary intervention to help vehicle residents stabilize, with the goal of attaining stable, non-vehicle housing within 30 days through entering the county's CEA system. Due to the regional housing shortage and current lack of funding to pay for building new affordable housing units for a growing homeless population, the VRSC will offer longer stays (12-18 months) and appropriate levels of case management to keep residents stable until they secure a permanent housing program to fit their needs. Therefore, this option will require hiring and overseeing around 112 case managers with a caseload of about 30 individuals each.

#### **Option 4: Outreach to Enroll Vehicle Residents in Rapid-Rehousing Program**

Seattle currently uses Rapid Rehousing (RRH) to provide an alternate to transitional housing by immediately moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing.<sup>434</sup> RRH participants are referred to the program after completing the CEA assessment.<sup>435</sup> However in 2018, 58% of homeless individuals surveyed in Seattle had not completed, and 19% did not know if they had completed a CEA assessment.<sup>436</sup>

In this option, the City will extend RRH vouchers to vehicle residents by creating a new Vehicle Resident Outreach branch of the City's Navigation Team to offer CEA assessments and referrals to the RRH Program for all eligible vehicle residents. This option will more than triple the current RRH program capacity to potentially give the 3,372 vehicle residents identified in the January 2018 Point-In-Time Count stable housing that comes with a legal parking space for their vehicle.<sup>437</sup>

RRH vouchers work by subsidizing 100% of the recipient's rent for one month, including utilities and moving expenses. The contribution reduces to 70% of the full rent in the second month, and 40% in the third month and beyond until the household gross income equals 60% of the rent.<sup>438</sup> Seattle currently uses RR vouchers to subsidize rent for market-rate units for over one thousand homeless individuals.<sup>439</sup> In 2018 Mayor Durkan designated \$8 million dollars to RR programs linked through the CEA.<sup>440</sup>

---

<sup>434</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress", (December 2017), <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>435</sup> Seattle King County Rapid Rehousing Model Guidelines, (2017), <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FINAL-Sea-KC-RRH-Guidelines.pdf>

<sup>436</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>437</sup> Ibid

<sup>438</sup> Ibid

<sup>439</sup> Jaywork, Casey, "Can Rapid Rehousing Work if Rents Keep Soaring," Seattle Weekly, (6/28/2017), <http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/can-rapid-rehousing-work-if-rents-keep-soaring-in-seattle/>

<sup>440</sup> City of Seattle Website, "Homeless Investments RFP," (2018), <https://www.seattle.gov/homeless-investments-rfp/faq>

*Evaluation of Policy Options:*

1. *Status Quo*

**Increased legal parking:** Low. The status quo provides no new parking or housing for vehicle residents. If the vehicle resident population continues to rise (as the current trend suggests)<sup>441</sup> the number of legal spaces for vehicle residents will decline. Currently, vehicle residents can only park for 72 hours at a time on the street if they can find street parking, forcing them to move their vehicle or face threat of impoundment.

**Stabilization:** Low. It is possible for vehicle residents to access day homeless services, such as those through Compass Housing Alliance,<sup>442</sup> but vehicle residents often face unique barriers to accessing current stabilizing services. Some stabilizing services do not currently exist for vehicle residents, such as reliable places to park, hygiene services near parking, and vehicle-resident-specific case management.

**Administrative feasibility:** Medium-Low. The City would not create any new programs, but the City would continue to put resources towards law enforcement and towards dealing with negative externalities of people living in vehicles (i.e. illegal dumping, neighborhood perceptions of danger). *Long v. King County* set a precedent for more impounded vehicle residents to challenge the City, which creates the potential for an increase in administrative resources for legal cases regarding vehicle impoundment.

**Cost:** Moderate-High. We estimate that the City spends \$13 million (See Appendix B) to enforce laws and policies regarding vehicle residents, making this an expensive option. *Long v. King County*'s precedent could also increase legal and administrative costs.

**Equity:** Low. This option is not inclusive of all types of vehicle residents because not every vehicle resident is able to move their car every 72 hours to comply with city policy and criminalization of people living in vehicles likely disproportionately target people of color.<sup>443</sup>

2. *Night Parking Network*

**Increased legal parking:** Medium-Low. This option provides some legal parking in the short term, but not in the long-term. In the short term, this option provides legal parking at night, but not during the day, so vehicle residents will still need to move their cars daily.

**Stabilization:** Medium. This option is limited in its ability to stabilize vehicle residents because individuals will not have a reliable place to store their vehicle and possessions during the day. Basic services at the lots and basic case management to provide referrals and connections to other services in the City provide some stabilization, but not as much as traditional housing would provide. The large number of lots create smaller communities of

---

<sup>441</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>442</sup> Compass Housing Alliance, "Day Services," (5/27/2018), <http://www.compasshousingalliance.org/what-we-do-top/day-services/>

<sup>443</sup> Alexander, Michelle, *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. (2010). New York: New Press.

vehicle residents as compared with the Vehicle Resident Support Center. This smaller lot size could be less chaotic and thus more stabilizing than a larger lot would be.

**Administrative feasibility:** Medium. This option requires partnerships with various types of organizations and many organizations, which decreases its administrative feasibility. On the other hand, this option outsources some aspects of program funding and oversight to the nonprofit partner and to the host sites, which relieves the City of some administrative burden. The CEA assessment and enrollment systems are already in use. To scale up the program to accommodate new vehicle residents, the program would likely need to increase administrative staff.

**Cost:** Moderate-Inexpensive. We estimate the cost to be moderate at \$5,195,570 (See Appendix B), which includes the costs of facilities and staff. The private partners would also bear some of the costs of hiring and managing new staff. This option would save costs currently incurred in parking enforcement, impounding, waste removal throughout the City, and the costs associated with preventing vehicle residents from becoming more dependent on higher levels of emergency homeless care.<sup>444</sup>

**Equity:** Medium. This option is more inclusive than the status quo but leaves program eligibility at the discretion of the host lots, which lowers the certainty of inclusion for all vehicle and household types. Additionally, this option allows residents to be more integrated into neighborhoods and allows for more choice about location (to a certain extent) which could be more inclusive of vehicle residents who have strong connections to certain neighborhoods.

### 3. *Vehicle Resident Support Centers*

**Increased Legal Parking:** Medium-High. The VRSC program will provide legal parking spaces for the entire vehicle population in Seattle. This is intended to be an immediate and short-term solution. If local affordable housing supply does not increase, capacity for this program will not meet growing need.

**Stabilization:** Medium-High. The VRSCs will improve access to stabilizing services by providing onsite clean water, bathrooms, showers, garbage collection, RV electrical connections, and shuttle service to the downtown to access additional service providers. This program does not provide permanent housing, which would be most stabilizing for people experiencing homelessness.

**Administrative Feasibility:** Medium. A centralized hosting model allows for programmatic efficiency, where the City can use existing administrative resources to deliver services to large groups of people quickly.<sup>445</sup> The City of Seattle already partners with organizations throughout the county under the All Home program and has infrastructure and

---

<sup>444</sup> Archibald, Ashley, The City of Seattle Spent Nearly \$225,000 to Tow and Destroy People's Homes, Real Change News, (4/4/2018), <http://realchangenews.org/2018/04/04/city-seattle-spent-nearly-225000-tow-and-destroy-peoples-homes>

<sup>445</sup> Ivey, T. Ray & Gilleland, Jodilyn. Hidden in Plain Sight: Safe Parking for Vehicle Residents, Seattle University School of Law Homeless Rights Advocacy Project, (5/13/2018), [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3173221](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3173221)

programs in place both to administer wide outreach and service delivery. Procedure for CEA assessment is already in place, but the program would have to increase the number of outreach workers and administrative staff. The greatest challenge to administrative feasibility would be to safely accommodate and coordinate services for large numbers of people. Mega-shelters of this size become small cities and require elements of governmental support to keep residents safe and well.<sup>446</sup>

**Cost:** Moderate-Expensive. Land acquisition would be inexpensive because the VRSCs would be located on city-owned land. The greatest costs would be constructing a temporary infrastructure to provide basic service maintenance to the large groups. Costs may include installation of lighting, electrical and water delivery, waste removal, and temporary offices for case managers and staff. We estimate the yearly cost to be \$31,354,672 to implement and run the VRSC (See Appendix B). This option would save costs currently incurred in parking enforcement, impounding, waste removal throughout the City, and the costs associated with preventing vehicle residents from becoming more dependent on higher levels of emergency homeless care.<sup>447</sup>

**Equity:** Medium-High. This option would include all types of vehicles and vehicle residents and be able to offer more specialized person-centered responses to vehicle residents once they are entered into the CEA system.

#### 4. *Rapid Re-Housing Vouchers*

**Increased Legal Parking:** Medium. This option increases legal parking in the long term, but in the short term maintains the status quo of no increased legal parking. Short term: Until residents secure housing, which could be 3-6 months out, they face all the challenges of parking in status quo conditions. Long term: When an apartment become available, Residents will be housed, with parking included.

**Stabilization:** Medium-Low. 92% of vehicle residents survey said they would move into housing if it were available.<sup>448</sup> In 2017, RRH recipients spent 88-104 days searching for housing before moving in.<sup>449</sup> Until residents secure housing, which could be 3-6 months out, they face all the challenges of parking in status quo conditions. (See Appendix C for RRH Program Structure). Transitioning to paying full market-rate rent through RRH would be unlikely for part-time workers and those requiring more expensive housing, and for the 50% of vehicle residents who have health conditions prevented them from holding a job, living in stable housing, or taking care of themselves.<sup>450</sup>

---

<sup>446</sup> International Association of Venue Managers, Mega Shelter Planning Guide (2010), <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/disasterhousing/mspg.pdf>

<sup>447</sup> Archibald, Ashley, The City of Seattle Spent Nearly \$225,000 to Tow and Destroy People's Homes, Real Change News, (4/4/2018), <http://realchangenews.org/2018/04/04/city-seattle-spent-nearly-225000-tow-and-destroy-peoples-homes>

<sup>448</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

<sup>449</sup> All Home website, Rapid Rehousing Dashboard (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/rapid-re-housing/>

<sup>450</sup> Count Us In, Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2018, All Home King County (2018), <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>

**Administrative Feasibility:** Medium-Low. Procedure for CEA assessment and RRH enrollment are already in place. To scale up, the program could feasibly increase number of outreach workers and voucher funds. The other key component necessary for this program's success is affordable housing. In Seattle, it is increasingly rarer for a tenant working several minimum wage jobs to afford to pay market-rate rent. Unless the amount of affordable housing increases, this program will not be able to transition tenants to self-sufficiency.

**Cost:** Expensive. A low estimate for the cost of housing 3000 people in a \$2,000/month apartment is \$34.2 million (See Appendix B.) Seattle currently has budgeted \$8 million for RRH. Even if the City were to fully fund the RRH voucher program to include approximately 3,000 more individuals, the current supply of affordable housing is not sufficient to accommodate the number of people who need housing. For this program to be successful, the City would also need to invest the creation of new affordable housing units. This option would save costs currently incurred in parking enforcement, impounding, waste removal throughout the City, and the costs associated with preventing vehicle residents from becoming more dependent on higher levels of emergency homeless care.<sup>451</sup>

**Equity:** Medium. RRH has proven to successfully transition people out of homelessness when they can use the housing stability to get a full-time job. In a city like Seattle where housing is expensive, RRH would lead to permanent housing for individuals who are likely to secure employment within the first few months and earn enough to maintain housing. The program ends contributions when the gross household income equals 60% of the cost of rent, a person working full time, earning local minimum wage of \$15, must contribute 50% of their income towards a \$2,000/month rent. If participants cannot secure employment by the second and third months of the RRH program, they will return to being homeless. As stated above, 50% of vehicle residents being unable to work because of health issues prevents a large portion of this population from succeeding in maintaining permanent housing through RRH.

## **Trade-offs**

### **Number of People Impacted vs. Cost**

Of the options considered, the centralized VRSC program will serve the full population of vehicle residents in Seattle but will cost significantly more than the private lot system because of the need to quickly assemble basic infrastructure needed to serve such a large group. The VRSC lots will need to provide basic electric, water, sewer, public safety, and garbage collection services (either portable or connected to public utilities) to 3,300 people total. The VRSC program scores has the potential to stabilize the greatest number of vehicle residents immediately, increasing the likelihood that they secure permanent housing.

### **Equity vs. Stabilization**

The VRSC program includes all types of vehicle residents, with adaptations built in for varying need, VRSC excludes fewer individuals from participation, compared to RRH, which would offer more stabilization but would not likely be successful for individuals who cannot

---

<sup>451</sup> Archibald, Ashley, The City of Seattle Spent Nearly \$225,000 to Tow and Destroy People's Homes, Real Change News, (4/4/2018), <http://realchangenews.org/2018/04/04/city-seattle-spent-nearly-225000-tow-and-destroy-peoples-homes>

hold a job for health reasons. By scaling this program to meet the entire estimated vehicle resident population of around 3,300 people, the conditions of living in such a large emergency encampment could be more stressful and less stabilizing for some participants. Additionally, Councilmember Mike O'Brien's 2017 Vehicular Living Workgroup recommended that safe lot programs include 5-6 vehicles per lot and the VRSC exceeds this recommended lot size.<sup>452</sup> This workgroup consisted of homelessness advocacy groups, among other contributors, so disregarding their recommendation could compromise the needs of vehicle residents.

### **Short Term vs. Long Term Stabilization**

A significant trade-off we considered when assessing options is the immediate versus long-term stabilization effect. RRH would achieve the highest stabilization over the long term but offers no stability for VRs until housing becomes available. The lots provide short term solutions but would not be ideal long-term options if housing stock and rental prices do not change.

### **Recommendation**

After analysis of the policy options, including the status quo, we advise Mayor Durkin to follow through with Policy Option 3: Vehicle Resident Support Centers. Overall, we valued the Increased Legal Parking and Stabilization criteria the highest because they most closely measure the extent to which each policy option fulfills our policy goals. In the short term, VRSC will likely result in the greatest increase in legal parking spaces and the greatest amount of stabilization for vehicle residents. Due to the immediacy of this policy problem and the uncertainty of the housing market in Seattle, we chose to value short term over long term legal spaces and stabilization. Additionally, VRSC scores the highest of our options for administrative feasibility, meaning that it is likely to be the easiest option to implement. This option does have some drawbacks, however. VRSC will cost more than the private lots, but they will be cheaper than the status quo and RRH. While VRSC is likely the most administratively feasible, it will still require securing vacant land for the centers and managing the centers.

---

<sup>452</sup> O'Brien, Mike: City of Seattle City Council "Vehicular Living Workgroup," (4/2017), [https://mediaweb.kirotv.com/document\\_dev/2017/08/09/Vehicular%20Living%20Workgroup%20Recommendations%20Memo%20FINAL\\_8815124\\_ver1.0.pdf](https://mediaweb.kirotv.com/document_dev/2017/08/09/Vehicular%20Living%20Workgroup%20Recommendations%20Memo%20FINAL_8815124_ver1.0.pdf)

**Appendix A: Policy Matrix**



	<b>OPTION 1: STATUS QUO</b>	<b>OPTION 2: NIGHT PARKING PROGRAM</b>	<b>OPTION 3: VEHICLE RESIDENT SUPPORT CENTER</b>	<b>OPTION 4: RAPID REHOUSING VOUCHERS</b>
<b>INCREASED LEGAL PARKING</b>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> No new parking or housing</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> No new parking or housing</p>	<p><b>Medium-Low</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> Legal parking at night for the majority of vehicle residents, but very limited daytime resources</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> No solution</p>	<p><b>Medium-High</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> Legal parking day and night for large number of vehicle residents</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> No solution</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> No solution</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> Once housed, participants can save money, access support services, maintain permanent housing and parking</p>
<b>STABILIZATION</b>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> Limited access to services</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> Limited access to services</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> Basic services and referrals</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> No solution</p>	<p><b>Medium-High</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> Reliable parking, but forces people to leave their neighborhoods;</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> No solution</p>	<p><b>Medium-Low</b></p> <p><i>Short term:</i> status quo continues;</p> <p><i>Long term:</i> have access to stabilizing services, autonomy, and privacy</p>

<p><b>ADMINISTRATIVE FEASIBILITY</b></p>	<p><b>Medium-Low</b> Need for parking enforcement, garbage collection, and answering complaints throughout residential neighborhoods increases.</p>	<p><b>Low</b> Requires partnering with organizations; Coordinating utilities, staff, and financial support for about 300 sites</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> Would need to find and secure space and manage the centers</p>	<p><b>Medium-Low</b> Already a long waiting list for eligible Rapid Rehousing (RRH) participants; RRH admin process in place (CEA), but housing units unavailable; RRH proven to work for high functioning participants</p>
<p><b>COST</b></p>	<p><b>Moderate-Expensive</b>  ~\$13 million in law and enforcement arrest costs</p>	<p><b>Moderate-Inexpensive</b> ~\$5.2M (facilities + staff) May need extra financial incentives to recruit enough lot owners to participate (tax credit)</p>	<p><b>Moderate-Expensive</b> ~\$31.4M (facilities, support staff, comprehensive services)</p>	<p><b>Expensive</b> ~\$34.2M (Increase from current RRH program budget of: \$2.6M annually)</p>
<p><b>EQUITY</b></p>	<p><b>Low</b> Not everyone can move car every 72 hours; criminalization of living in vehicle disproportionately affects people of color</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> Can include many types of vehicles; eligibility likely at discretion of partnering orgs; variation in quality of services</p>	<p><b>Medium-High</b> Includes all types of vehicles; however, there is limited choice about location</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> Works best for homeless individuals likely to secure employment, i.e. Non-disabled, non-elderly, high school graduates.</p>

## ***Appendix B: Annual Costs of Each Option***

### **Status Quo:**

26% of \$78 million = \$20.2 million

Seattle has a 78 million budget to address homelessness for 2018.<sup>453</sup> Assuming that the costs to the city of vehicle residency are similar to other types of homelessness, we estimate that the total cost to the city is \$20.2 million.

**Total: \$20.2 million**

### **Night Parking Network Lots:**

*Estimated with 270 sites*

\$1391 per garbage container<sup>454</sup> x 270 containers = \$375,570

\$6000 per lot for each portable toilet<sup>455</sup> x 270 toilets = \$1.62 million

60 case managers at \$50,000 total salary cost = \$3 million

2 managers to oversee staff = \$200,000

Administrative Cost to secure sites: 80 hours x \$40 = \$2400

**Total: \$5,195,570**

### **Vehicle Resident Support Centers:**<sup>456</sup>

\$11,388<sup>457</sup> per 8-yard dumpster x 44 dumpsters = \$501,072

\$30,000<sup>458</sup> per portable toilet x 560 toilets (at 6 people per toilet) = \$16.8 million

112 case managers at \$50,000 total salary cost = \$5.6 million

2 managers to oversee staff = \$200,000

Administrative Cost to secure sites: 80 hours x \$40 = \$2400

Hiring Costs: 40 hours x \$40 = \$1200

Showers: \$60,000<sup>459</sup> per portable shower trailer w/ 3 showers x 400 showers = \$8 million

Shuttle: \$250,000<sup>460</sup>

**Total: \$31,354,672**

### **Rapid Rehousing:**

*Estimated with full rental support for 12 months, with average cost of \$2000/month per person*

Month one: \$2000 x 3000 VR = \$6M

Month two: (\$2000 x 3000 VR) x 70% = \$4.2M

Months three-twelve: (\$2,000 x 3000 VR) x 40% x 10 months = 24M

**Total: \$34.2 million**

<sup>453</sup> City of Seattle, "Addressing the Crisis," (6/3/2018), <http://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/addressing-the-crisis>

<sup>454</sup> Seattle Public Utilities, "Garbage Can Rates," (6/3/2018).

<http://www.seattle.gov/UTIL/MyServices/Garbage/HouseResidentsGarbage/GarbageRates/index.htm>

<sup>455</sup> PortaPotty.net, "Porta Potty Rental Guide," (6/3/2018), <http://www.portapotty.net/rental/>

<sup>456</sup> City of Seattle, "City of Seattle Proposed New Homeless Investments," (2015). <http://murray.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Exec-Spending-Proposal.pdf>

<sup>457</sup> Seattle Public Utilities, "Dumpster Rates," (6/3/2018).

<http://www.seattle.gov/UTIL/MyServices/Garbage/BldgOwnersManagers/DumpsterRates/index.htm>

<sup>458</sup> City of Seattle, "City of Seattle Proposed New Homeless Investments," (2015). <http://murray.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Exec-Spending-Proposal.pdf>

<sup>459</sup> Shelton, Joe, VIP Restrooms, Quotation #65160, (6/3/2018).

<sup>460</sup> King County Metro, Alternative Services Program Report, (2016),

<https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/transportation/metro/programs-projects/community-connections/pdf/alternative-services-program-report.pdf>

***Appendix C: Rapid Rehousing Program Structure***

*1st month:* 100% move in costs, first and last month's rent

*2nd month:* Household pays 30% gross income towards rent

*3rd month:* Household pays 60% gross income towards rent

Ends once 60% household's gross income = rent OR household reaches 12 months of rental assistance

To cite the other on their behalf is to make credit the simulacra produced in a particular place.<sup>461</sup>

V. References

1. Adcock, R.A., Butler-Dines, R., Chambers, D.W., Lagarde, M.J., Moore, A.M., Nutting, C.F., Reed, S.M., Schreiber, A.M., Warren, P.M., Webb, K.A., & Zweibel, E.M. (2016). Too High a Price: What Criminalizing Homelessness Costs Colorado. *University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Homeless Advocacy Project*. Retrieved from <https://www.law.du.edu/documents/homeless-advocacy-policy-project/2-16-16-Final-Report.pdf>
2. Adolph, C. (2018). Seattle-area housing prices are rising \$5 an hour, every hour, every day. *KUOW.org*. Retrieved from <https://www.kuow.org/stories/seattle-area-housing-prices-are-rising-5-hour-every-hour-every-day>
3. Agahi, E. (2018, October 27). Homeless campers on the rise amidst housing crisis. *CTV News Vancouver*. Retrieved from [https://bc.ctvnews.ca/homeless-campers-on-the-rise-amidst-housing-crisis-1.4152584?fbclid=IwAR3WBI9nAoN---wG9\\_oFeshFrWW0mGw4kcJvVyzSnGemStmHIGJfEdIT1C0](https://bc.ctvnews.ca/homeless-campers-on-the-rise-amidst-housing-crisis-1.4152584?fbclid=IwAR3WBI9nAoN---wG9_oFeshFrWW0mGw4kcJvVyzSnGemStmHIGJfEdIT1C0)
4. Agamben, G. (1995). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (English edition, 1998). Stanford, USA: Stanford University Press.
5. Ahlstrom, D. (2017, February 9). Travellers as ‘genetically different’ from settled Irish as Spanish. *The Irish Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/travellers-as-genetically-different-from-settled-irish-as-spanish-1.2969515>
6. Albertson, N. (2009). Archaeology of the Homeless. *Archaeology*. 62(6):42-43.
7. Alexander, W.L. (1989). Homelessness and Police Policy in Tucson. *Practicing Anthropology*. 11(1):8-9.
8. All Home. (2015). All Home Policy Statement on Vehicle Residency. *All Home*. Retrieved from [http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/All-Home-Policy-Statement-on-Vehicle-Residents\\_final.pdf](http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/All-Home-Policy-Statement-on-Vehicle-Residents_final.pdf)
9. All Home. (2017). Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness 2017. *All Home*. Retrieved from <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-Count-Us-In-PIT-Comprehensive-Report.pdf>
10. All Home. (2018). 2018 Seattle/King County Point-In-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness. *All Home*. Retrieved from <http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/FINALDRAFT-COUNTUSIN2018REPORT-5.25.18.pdf>
11. All Home. (2019). Count Us In: Reports. *All Home*. Retrieved from <http://allhomekc.org/king-county-point-in-time-pit-count/>
12. Allison, M. (2016). RV Living in the City: Dodging the Rent Crisis. *Zillow*. Retrieved from <https://www.zillow.com/blog/rv-living-in-the-city-192180/>

---

<sup>461</sup> De Certeau 1984:188

13. Allsop, K. (1967). *Hard Travellin': The History of the Migrant Worker* (Bloomsbury Reader & Google Books edition, 2011). Retrieved from <https://books.google.com/books?id=RZIGtwEB8gC>
14. Amster, R. (2008). *Lost in Space: The Criminalization, Globalization, and Urban Ecology of Homelessness*. New York City, USA: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.
15. Anderson, N. (1923). *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man* (Reprinted 2014). Mansfield Center, USA: Martino Press.
16. Anderson, N. (1998). *On Hoboes and Homelessness* (Raffaele Rauty, Ed.). Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press.
17. Anthony-Goodwin, D. (2016, February 11). Resident in critical condition after RV fire at temporary Interbay camp. *My Ballard*. Retrieved from [www.myballard.com/2016/02/11/resident-in-critical-condition-after-rv-fire-at-temporary-interbay-camp/](http://www.myballard.com/2016/02/11/resident-in-critical-condition-after-rv-fire-at-temporary-interbay-camp/)
18. Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHARC). (2008). *2008 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*. Washington D.C.: US Federal Government.
19. Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHARC). (2010). *2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*. Washington D.C.: US Federal Government.
20. Archibald, A. (2017, June 14). Car campers lose their shelter and pay heavy fines only to see their property auctioned at a fraction of the cost. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2017/06/14/car-campers-lose-their-shelter-and-pay-heavy-fines-only-see-their-property-auctioned>
21. Archibald, A. (2018, July 18). Homeless people seeking a way inside face hurdles and locked doors. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2018/07/18/homeless-people-seeking-way-inside-face-hurdles-and-locked-doors>
22. Argeriou, M., McCarty, D. & Mulvey, K. (1995). Dimensions of Homelessness. *Public Health Reports (1974-)*. 110(6):734-741.
23. Argueza, M. (2018, June 21). Salinas City Council votes 4-3 to ban oversized vehicles and RVs on city streets. *Monterey County Now*. Retrieved from [http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news\\_blog/salinas-city-council-votes---to-ban-oversized-vehicles/article\\_a509513e-74ea-11e8-a3c1-37d6c33f23cc.html](http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/salinas-city-council-votes---to-ban-oversized-vehicles/article_a509513e-74ea-11e8-a3c1-37d6c33f23cc.html)
24. Arora, A. (2018, April 14). As housing inventory shrinks, people look to living in RVs. *The Idaho Press*. Retrieved from [https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/2cscoop/as-housing-inventory-shrinks-people-look-to-living-in-rvs/article\\_a6042fc1-ad8e-5017-b088-1fe3c6ee2767.html?fbclid=IwAR35owSIVoQeDa54-CquQfeJcSgcQJa1mr5ux9sYGSH9NKkx\\_UdRzTvFI14](https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/2cscoop/as-housing-inventory-shrinks-people-look-to-living-in-rvs/article_a6042fc1-ad8e-5017-b088-1fe3c6ee2767.html?fbclid=IwAR35owSIVoQeDa54-CquQfeJcSgcQJa1mr5ux9sYGSH9NKkx_UdRzTvFI14)
25. Arnold, K. (2004). *Homelessness, Citizenship, and Identity: The Uncanniness of Late Modernity*. Albany, USA: State University of New York Press.
26. Augé, M. (1995). *Non-places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (2<sup>nd</sup> English language edition, 2008). Brooklyn, USA: Verso.

27. Augé, M. (2011). *No Fixed Abode: Ethnofiction* (English translation by Chris Turner, 2013). York, USA: Seagull Books.
28. Bachelard, G. (1958). *The Poetics of Space* (English translation by Orion Press, 1964; 1994 Edition). Boston, USA: Beacon Press.
29. Bahr, H. & Caplow, T. (1968). Homelessness, Affiliation, and Occupational Mobility. *Social Forces*. 47(1):28-33.
30. Bahr, H. (1973). *Skid Row: An Introduction to Disaffiliation*. New York City, USA: Oxford University Press.
31. Balk, G. (2017, March 17). Tourism in Seattle: Gee, What's Not to Like? Apparently a lot. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/tourism-in-seattle-gee-whats-not-to-like-apparently-a-lot/>
32. Balk, G. (2018, January 17). More Than Half of Seattle's Software Developers were Born Outside U.S. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/more-than-half-of-seattles-software-developers-were-born-outside-u-s/>
33. Barker, H. (2012). *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World*. Belmont, USA: Wadsworth Publishing.
34. Barnett, E.C. (2019, May 15). Homeless Pilot Project Scuttled: Why Did Durkan Discard Months of Work by Her Own Human Services Department? *The C Is For Crank*. Retrieved from <https://thecisforcrank.com/2019/05/15/safe-parking-scuttled-why-did-durkan-discard-months-of-work-by-her-own-department/>
35. Beckett, K. & Herbert, S. (2009). *Banished: The New Social Control in Urban America*. New York City, USA: Oxford University Press.
36. Beekman, D. (2015, January 15). Seattle mayor wants to allow and regulate 3 new tent cities. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattle-mayor-wants-to-allow-and-regulate-3-new-tent-cities/>
37. Beekman, D. (2016, January 19). Seattle 'safe lots' to hold homeless living in vehicles. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from [www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-to-open-parking-areas-for-homeless-in-ballard-delridge/](http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-to-open-parking-areas-for-homeless-in-ballard-delridge/)
38. Bell, M. (Director) & McCall, C. (Producer). (1984). *Streetwise*. [Film] United States: Angelika Films.
39. Belton, B. A. (2005). *Questioning Gypsy Identity: Ethnic Narratives in Britain and America*. Walnut Creek, USA: AltaMira Press.
40. Bendix, A. (2018, September 4). Parking lots are the new solution to the homelessness crisis in cities – but they're also part of the problem. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from [https://www.businessinsider.com/homeless-crisis-in-los-angeles-san-diego-are-parking-lots-a-solution-2018-8?fbclid=IwAR19-4Jw7-ygTnFLzmvVBt8\\_kvtT\\_8ebvcV0KTtSzuRJK6wbR9si4y1aDew](https://www.businessinsider.com/homeless-crisis-in-los-angeles-san-diego-are-parking-lots-a-solution-2018-8?fbclid=IwAR19-4Jw7-ygTnFLzmvVBt8_kvtT_8ebvcV0KTtSzuRJK6wbR9si4y1aDew)
41. Benjamin, D.N. (1995). Afterword or Further Research Issues in Confront the Home Concept. In D.N. Benjamin (Ed.), *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings, and Environments* (pp. 293-307). Aldershot, UK: Avebury.

42. Bennett, S.D. (1995). "No Relief but upon the Terms of Coming into the House". Controlled Spaces, Invisible Disentitlements, and Homelessness in an Urban Shelter System. *The Yale Law Review*. 104(8). 2157-2212.
43. Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford, UK: AltaMira Press.
44. Bertolet, D. (2016). Displacement: The Gnawing Injustice at the Heart of Housing Crises. *Sightline Institute*. Retrieved at <https://www.sightline.org/2016/08/10/displacement-the-gnawing-injustice-at-the-heart-of-housing-crises/>
45. Blackstone, W. (1825). *Commentaries on the Laws of England: Book the Second (Sixteenth Edition)*. London, UK: A. Strahan.
46. Bogue, D. (1963). *Skid Row in American Cities*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago.
47. Bourgois, P. & Schonberg, J. (2009). *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley, USA: University of California Press.
48. Bowman, A. O., Pagano, M. A. (2004) *Terra Incognita: Vacant Land and Urban Strategies*. Washington, D.C., USA: Georgetown University Press.
49. Bradford, B. (2018, December 17). Lack of housing leaves fire survivors searching for solutions. *Marketplace*. Retrieved from <https://www.marketplace.org/2018/12/17/economy/lack-housing-leaves-fire-survivors-searching-solutions/>
50. BRE. (2007). Hard Livin': Bare Life, Autoethnography, and the Homeless Body In Stephen Shukaitis, David Graeber, and Erika Biddle (Eds.), *Constituent Imagination* (pp. 223-241). Oakland, USA: AK Press.
51. Brey, J. (2018, July 10). Anaheim Pairs Crackdown on Oversized-Vehicle Parking with Homeless Outreach. *Next City*. Retrieved from <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/anaheim-pairs-crackdown-on-oversized-vehicle-parking-with-homeless-outreach>
52. Bruder, J. (2017). *Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-first Century*. New York City, USA: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
53. Burkhalter, A. (2013, August 14). Signs of the Times. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2013/08/14/signs-times>
54. Burkhalter, A. (2014, October 30). A new camp, an old debate. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <http://realchangenews.org/2014/10/01/new-camp-old-debate>
55. Burt, M. (1992). *Over the Edge: The Growth of Homelessness in the 1980s*. New York City, USA: Russell Sage Foundation.
56. Butler, J. (1993). Gender is Burning. *Bodies That Matter*. Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge.
57. Carr, S. M., Lhussier, M., Forster, N., Goodall, D., Geddes, L. Pennington, M, Bancroft, A., Adams, J., & Michie, S. (2014). Outreach programmes for health improvement of Traveller Communities: a synthesis of evidence. *Public Health Research*. 2(3). Southampton, UK: NIHR Journals Library. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK262870/>

58. City of Seattle (2011). History of Tent Cities in King County. *Public Meeting Records*. Retrieved from [http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2011/hhshc20110427\\_3.pdf](http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2011/hhshc20110427_3.pdf)
59. City of Seattle. (2019a). The Roots of Seattle's Homelessness Crisis. *Homelessness Response*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/the-roots-of-the-crisis>
60. City of Seattle. (2019b). Road to Housing. *Seattle City Council*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council/mike-obrien/road-to-housing>
61. City of Seattle. (2019c). Housing Placements Up 35% for People Experiencing Homelessness in the First Six Months of 2018. *Human Services Human Interests Blog*. Retrieved from <https://humaninterests.seattle.gov/2018/10/08/results-housing-placements-up-35-in-the-first-six-months-of-2018/>
62. City of Seattle. (2019c). Max Towing Fees: Police-Authorized Impounds. *Department of Finance and Administrative Services*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattle.gov/your-rights-as-a-customer/find-a-towed-car/max-towing-fees-police-authorized-impounds>
63. City of Seattle. (2019d). Unauthorized Encampments. *Homelessness Response*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattle.gov/homelessness/unauthorized-encampments>
64. Clark, C. (1997). "New Age" Travellers: Identity, Sedentarism, and Social Security, In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 125-141). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
65. Clements, L. & Campbell, S. (1997). The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and its Implications for Travellers. In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 61-69). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
66. Clifford, J. (1990). Notes of (Field)notes. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology* (pp. 47-70). Ithaca, USA: Cornell University Press.
67. Coleman, R. & Ringrose, J. (2013). *Deleuze and Research Methodologies*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
68. Collier, J & Collier, M. (1996). *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (Revised and Expanded ed.). Albuquerque, USA: University of New Mexico Press.
69. Compass Housing Alliance (CHA). (2017). Road to Housing. *Compass Housing Alliance Website* (Retrieved 2017, July 2). Retrieved from <http://www.compasshousingalliance.org/what-we-do-top/emergency-shelter/road-to-housing/>
70. Convery, I. & O'Brien, V. (2012). Gypsies, Travellers and Place: A Co-ethnography. In Convery, I., Corsane, G., & Davis, P. (eds.), *Making Sense of Place: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 43-53). Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press.
71. Corbett, F. (2007). A Short Account of the Gypsies (Roma) and How We Perceive Them. In M. Ó hAodha (Ed.), *The Nomadic Subject* (pp. 2-11). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
72. Coughlin-Bouge, T. (2016, January 27). Mayor hits the gas on Seattle's vehicle parking program. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from

<https://www.realchangenews.org/2016/01/27/mayor-hits-gas-seattle-s-vehicle-parking-program-0>

73. Counts, D. R. & Counts, D. A (1996). *Over the Next Hill: An Ethnography of RVing Seniors in North America*. Ontario, CA: Broadview Press.
74. Cribb, R. (1991). *Nomads in Archaeology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
75. Cromarty, H. (2019, May 9). Gypsies and Travellers: Briefing Paper. *House of Commons Library*. Retrieved from <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8083#fullreport>
76. Cronk, L. (1991). Human Behavioral Ecology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 20. 25-53.
77. Crowley, U. & Kitchin, R. (2016). Academic 'Truth' and the Perpetuation of Negative Attitudes and Intolerance Toward Irish Travellers in Contemporary Ireland. In I. Honohan & N. Rougier (Eds.) *Irish Travellers and Contemporary Ireland*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
78. Croxton, K. (2018, February 17). Burlington couple fights to retain home -- a bus. *The Times News*. Retrieved from [http://www.thetimesnews.com/news/20180217/burlington-couple-fights-to-retain-home---bus?fbclid=IwAR0HSsX78p049dvGiAiPeBre-gT\\_bWQdtloYd8dX9uuk1jmN5yDdGBjU6ok](http://www.thetimesnews.com/news/20180217/burlington-couple-fights-to-retain-home---bus?fbclid=IwAR0HSsX78p049dvGiAiPeBre-gT_bWQdtloYd8dX9uuk1jmN5yDdGBjU6ok)
79. Culhane, D. P., Metraux, S., Min Park, J., Schretzman, M., Valente, J. (2007). *Testing a Typology of Family Homelessness Based on Patterns of Public Shelter Utilization in Four U.S. Jurisdictions: Implications for Policy and Program Planning*. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/spp\\_papers/67](http://repository.upenn.edu/spp_papers/67)
80. David, N. & Kramer, C. (2001). *Ethnoarchaeology in Action*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
81. Davila, Vianna. (2018a, April 10). Seattle Still Has No Strategy for Thousands of People Living in Vehicles. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/seattle-still-has-no-strategy-for-thousands-of-people-living-in-vehicles/>
82. Davila, Vianna. (2018b, May 3). San Diego did what Seattle didn't: Give people a safe place to sleep in cars a safe place to spend the night. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/how-california-cities-did-what-seattle-has-not-give-people-living-in-cars-a-safe-place-to-spend-the-night>
83. Davis, M.F. (2015). Bringing It Home: Human Rights Treaties and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the United States. *Human Rights*. 41(2). 9-12.
84. De Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Paperback edition, 1988). Berkeley, USA: University of California Press.
85. De León, J. P. (2015). *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland, USA: University of California Press.
86. Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (16<sup>th</sup> Printing, 2016). Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press.
87. DePastino, T. (2003). *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped the US*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press.

88. De Quincey, T. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater and Other Writings* (Oxford World's Classics Edition, 1985; reissued 2008). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
89. Derrida, J & Dufourmantelle, A. (1997). *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Stanford, USA: Stanford University Press.
90. Desjarlais, R. (1997). *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless*. Philadelphia, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
91. Drew, K. (2014, September 24). Group sets up homeless camp on busy sidewalk in U District. *KOMO News*. Retrieved from <http://www.komonews.com/news/local/Group-sets-up-homeless-camp-on-busy-sidewalk-in-U-District--277284961.html>
92. Driscoll, M. (2019, March 25). Seattle isn't dying, but KOMO's program is hurting efforts to combat homelessness. *The News Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/matt-driscoll/article228386679.html#storylink=cpy>
93. Duneier, M. (1999). *Sidewalk*. New York City, USA: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
94. Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition (DRCC). (2019). *Superfund Info*. Retrieved from <http://duwamishcleanup.org/superfund-info/>
95. EchoHawk-Hayashi, C. (2019). *AI/AN Represent 10% of Homeless Population In King County, But Only 1% of Total Population*. Retrieved from <https://www.chiefseattleclub.org/news/2019/5/3/aian-represent-10-of-homeless-population-in-king-county-but-only-1-of-total-population>
96. Economic Policy Institute (EPI). (2018). *The Productivity-Pay Gap*. Retrieved from <https://www.epi.org/productivity-pay-gap/>
97. Ellickson, R.C. (1996). Controlling Chronic Misconduct in City Spaces: Of Panhandlers, Skid Rows, and Public-Space Zoning. *The Yale Law Journal*. 105(5). 1165-1248.
98. Ellis, C., Adams, T. & Bochner, A. (2011). Autoethnography. *Historical Social Research*. 36(4):273-290.
99. Eubanks, V. (2018). *Automating Inequality: How High-tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. New York City, USA: St. Martin's Press.
100. Facebook. (2016, November 7). Social Media Page for Facing Homelessness. *Facebook*. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/HomelessInSeattle/photos/a.183230328388885/1304742719570968/?type=3&theater>
101. Fanning, B. (2002). *Racism and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland (Second edition)*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
102. Farmer, P. (1996). On Suffering and Structural Violence. *Daedalus*. 125(1). 261-283.
103. Figley, C. (1995). *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*. Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge.
104. Fisher, M., Miller, N., Walter, L., & Selbin, J. (2015). California's New Vagrancy Laws: The Growing Enactment and Enforcement of Anti-Homeless Laws in the Golden State. *SSRN Electronic Journal (DOI:10.2139/ssrn.2558944)*. Retrieved from

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315488385\\_California's\\_New\\_Vagrancy\\_Laws\\_The\\_Growing\\_Enactment\\_and\\_Enforcement\\_of\\_Anti-Homeless\\_Laws\\_in\\_the\\_Golden\\_State](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315488385_California's_New_Vagrancy_Laws_The_Growing_Enactment_and_Enforcement_of_Anti-Homeless_Laws_in_the_Golden_State)

105. Foscarnis, M. (1996). Downward Spiral: Homelessness and Its Criminalization. *Yale Law & Policy Review*. 14(1) 1-63.
106. Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*. 6(3). 167-191.
107. Gandy, M. (2006). Zones of indistinction: bio-political contestations in the urban arena. *Cultural Geographies*. 13:497-516.
108. Gilger, L. (2018, September 19). Flagstaff Considers 'Safe Parking Program' For People Who Are Homeless. *KJZZ 91.5*. Retrieved from [http://kjzz.org/content/701449/flagstaff-considers-safe-parking-program-people-who-are-homeless?fbclid=IwAR1jTGQ2qwmgHPdorXtD23nYoRDcO6\\_YZ0ChFBAEBSq3R5I38hL3FF5LKDg](http://kjzz.org/content/701449/flagstaff-considers-safe-parking-program-people-who-are-homeless?fbclid=IwAR1jTGQ2qwmgHPdorXtD23nYoRDcO6_YZ0ChFBAEBSq3R5I38hL3FF5LKDg)
109. Giles, D. B. (2016). Distributions of Wealth, Distributions of Waste: Abject Capital and Accumulation by Disposal. In Angosto-Ferrández, L. F., & Presterudstuen, G. F. (Eds.), *Anthropologies of Value: Cultures of Accumulation Across the Global North and South*. London, UK: Pluto Press. (198-218).
110. Gillis, C. (2010, November 3). Motor Home Owners Say They're Being Driven from Ballard. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2010/11/03/motor-home-owners-say-they-re-being-driven-ballard>
111. Glasser, I. & Bridgman, R. (1999). *Braving the Street: The Anthropology of Homelessness*. New York City, USA: Berghahn Books.
112. Glynn, C. & Fox, E. (2019). Dynamics of Homelessness in Urban America. *The Annals of Applied Statistics*. 13(1). 573-605.
113. Gmelch, G. (1977a). *The Irish Tinkers: The Urbanization of an Itinerant People* (Second Ed.). Prospect Heights, USA: Waveland Press.
114. Gmelch, G. (1977b). Settling the Irish Tinkers. *Ethnology*. 43(257). 230-239.
115. Gmelch, G. (1982). Gypsies in British Cities: Problems and Government Response. *Urban Anthropology*. 11(3/4). 347-376.
116. Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York City, USA: Doubleday.
117. Goffman, E. (1986). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York City, USA: Touchstone.
118. Goldschmidt, W. (1977). Anthropology and the Coming Crisis: An Autoethnographic Appraisal. *Anthropologist*. 79(2). 293-08.
119. Goldschmidt, W. (1985). The Cultural Paradigm in the Post-War Period. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Social Context of American Ethnology, 1840-1984* (pp. 164-172). Washington D.C., USA: American Anthropological Association.

120. Golston, A. (2011, February 3). King County's One Night Count and the Invisible Families Left Behind. *Impatient Optimists*. Retrieved from <https://www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2011/02/King-Countys-One-Night-Count-and-the-Invisible-Families-Left-Behind#.XPRRG49rxZU>
121. Gowan, T. (2010). *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco*. Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press.
122. Graeber, D. (2011). *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (First Melville Housing Printing 2014). Brooklyn, USA: Melville House Publishing.
123. Graeber, D. (2013a). *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*. New York City, USA: Spiegel & Grau.
124. Graeber, D. (2013b) A Practical Utopian's Guide to the Coming Collapse. *The Baffler*. 22. 23-35.
125. Gramsci, A. (1935). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1989 edition; English translation 1971). New York City, USA: International Publishers Co.
126. Grant, R. (2003). *American Nomads: Travels in a Restless Land*. New York City, USA: Grove Press.
127. Grant, R. (Writer) & Troyna, G. (Director). (2011). *American Nomads* (TV). UK: British Broadcasting Corporation.
128. Greenstone, S. & Brownstone, S. (2019, June 12). Seattle to target junk vehicles and 'car ranchers' who rent to homeless people. *The Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/mayor-durkan-targets-junk-vehicles-and-the-car-ranchers-who-rent-them-to-homeless-people/>
129. Grimwood, G. G. & Smith, L. (2017, October, 13). Gypsies and Travellers: Planning provisions. *House of Commons Library*. Retrieved from <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN07005>
130. Groover, H. (2016, January 7). Last Night in Magnolia, Mike O'Brien Got Shouted at for Suggesting It's Wrong to Punish People for Being Homeless. *The Stranger*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestranger.com/blogs/slog/2016/01/07/23373275/last-night-in-magnolia-mike-obrien-got-yelled-at-for-suggesting-that-its-wrong-to-punish-people-for-being-homeless>
131. Groover, H. (2018, May 31). New Homeless Numbers Underscore Seattle's Failure to Serve People Living in Vehicles. *The Stranger SLOG*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestranger.com/slog/2018/05/31/26877588/new-homeless-numbers-underscore-seattles-failure-to-serve-people-living-in-vehicles>
132. Gunning, M. & Pedlar, E. (2013). *A Shelter in Our Car*. New York City, USA: Lee & Low Books.
133. Halfacree, K. (1996). The Distribution of Gypsy Caravans in England, 1979-94. *Geography*. 81(1). 37-46.
134. Halverstadt, L. (2018, May 31). Officials Excluded Hundreds of Homeless San Diegans From Latest Homeless Census. *Voice of San Diego*. Retrieved from

<https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/government/officials-excluded-hundreds-of-homeless-san-diegans-from-latest-homeless-census/>

135. Hancock, I. (2002). *We are the Romani People* (4<sup>th</sup> printing, 2013). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
136. Hancock, I. (2007). The Cryptolectal Speech of the American Roads: Traveller Cant and American Angloromani. In M. Ó hAodha (Ed.), *The Nomadic Subject* (pp. 45-61). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
137. Hanh, T. N. (2013). *The Art of Communicating*. San Francisco, USA: HarperOne.
138. Harnish, V. (2013). *Car Living When There's No Other Choice: Tips & Strategies for Survival & Safety*. Ashland, USA: Liraji Media.
139. Heim, A.J. (2001). *Car Living Your Way: Stories and Practical Tips from those who have been Down the Road*. Touchstone Adventures.
140. Helleiner, J. (2000). *Irish Travellers: Racism and the Politics of Culture*. Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press.
141. Henderson, D. (1991, May 6). Tensions Rising Near Bus-Dwellers Colony Since Recent Murder. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=19910506&slug=1281535>
142. Herring, C., Yarbrough, D., Alatorre, L.M. (2019). Pervasive Penalty: How the Criminalization of Poverty Perpetuates Homelessness. *Social Problems (Publication Pending; DOI:10.1093/socpro/spz004)*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b391e9cda02bc79baffebb9/t/5cc1c0569140b7fb43b1af44/1556201561950/Pervasive+Penalty+social+problems+%281%29+%281%29.pdf>
143. Hernandez, A. (2018, Mar 2). King County Superior Court Rules in Favor of Seattle Resident whose Vehicle and Home were Impounded by City. *Columbia Legal Services*. Retrieved from <https://columbialegal.org/king-county-superior-court-rules-in-favor-of-seattle-resident-whose-vehicle-and-home-were-impounded-by-city/>
144. Hidalgo, R. (2015a, July 22). Nowhere to Go. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2015/07/22/nowhere-go>
145. Hidalgo, R. (2015b, July 29). The Long Road Home. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2015/07/29/long-road-home>
146. Hidalgo, R. (2015c, August 5). The Pile Up. *Real Change News*. Retrieved from <https://www.realchangenews.org/2015/08/05/pile>
147. Hinrichsen, C. (2019, March 20). 6 reasons why KOMO's take on homelessness is the wrong one. *Crosscut*. Retrieved from <https://crosscut.com/2019/03/6-reasons-why-komos-take-homelessness-wrong-one>
148. Hobbes, M. (2019, May 19). Why American Can't Solve Homelessness. *Huffpost.com*. Retrieved from [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/homeless-utah-end-america-salt-lake-city\\_n\\_5cd1cac0e4b04e275d511aba](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/homeless-utah-end-america-salt-lake-city_n_5cd1cac0e4b04e275d511aba)
149. Holder, S. (2019, February 11). Finding Home in a Parking Lot. *CityLab*. Retrieved from <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/02/homeless-safe-parking-lots-sleeping-in-cars-city->

[programs/581128/?fbclid=IwAR26XUFqyi1WKx80m52k5YAHL7xvUEjzmicvEHxekuN8s1angclo\\_5HsTjU](https://www.facebook.com/programs/581128/?fbclid=IwAR26XUFqyi1WKx80m52k5YAHL7xvUEjzmicvEHxekuN8s1angclo_5HsTjU)

150. Holston, J. (2008). *Insurgent Citizenship*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.
151. hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: race gender and cultural politics* (2nd edition, 2014). Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge.
152. Hopper, K. (1988). More than Passing Strange: Homelessness and Mental Illness in New York City. *American Ethnologist*. 15(1). 155-167.
153. Hopper, K. (2000). An Anthropological Perspective on the City and Mental Health. *International Journal of Mental Health*. 28(4). 30-40.
154. Hopper, K. (2002). When (Working) in Rome: Applying Anthropology in Caesar's Realm. *Human Organization*. 61(3). 196-209.
155. Hopper, K. (2003). *Reckoning with Homelessness*. Ithaca, USA: Cornell University Press.
156. Horcher, G. (2018, June 15). Letter to Seattle Convention Leaders: Your Problem is Out of Control. *KIRO 7*. Retrieved from <https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/letter-to-seattle-convention-leaders-your-homeless-problem-is-out-of-control/770150626>
157. Howard, E. (2013). *Homeless: Poverty and Place in Urban America*. Philadelphia, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
158. Howard, J., Tran, D., Rankin, S. (2015). At What Cost: The Minimum Cost of Criminalizing Homelessness in Seattle and Spokane. *Seattle University School of Law Digital Commons*. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1000&context=hrap>
159. Jacobs-Huey, L. (2002). The Natives are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice, and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists. *American Anthropologist*. 104(3). (791-804).
160. Jackson, J. (1990). "I Am a Fieldnote": Fieldnotes as a Symbol of Professional Identity. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology* (pp. 3-33). Ithaca, USA: Cornell University Press.
161. Jackson, K., Rinck, A., & Daal'Osto. (2018). *Making Space for Vehicle Residents: A Policy Analysis for the City of Seattle*. (Unpublished undergraduate research collaboration, included in addendum)
162. James, Z. Policing hate against Gypsies and Travellers: dealing with the dark side. In N. Chakraborti & J. Garland (Eds.), *Responding to Hate Crime: The case for connecting policy and research*. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press.
163. Jaywork, C. (2017a, May 16). With Seattle's 'Safe Lots' for RVs All But Gone, Campers Are Creating Their Own. *The Seattle Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/last-year-seattles-safe-lots-for-rvs-all-but-disappeared-now-rv-campers-have-created-their-own/>
164. Jaywork, C. (2017b, June 1). RV Campers Prep for Eviction, Again. *The Seattle Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/rv-campers-prep-for-eviction-again/>

165. Jencks, C. (1994). *The Homeless* (3<sup>rd</sup> printing, 1995). Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press.
166. Johnson, E. (Writer & Producer). (2019). Seattle is Dying. In M. Markovich (Executive Producer), *KOMO News Special*. Seattle, WA: KOMO News.
167. Jolliffe, D. (2013). Nonmetro Poverty; Assessing the Effects of the 1990s. *United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service*. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2003/september/nonmetro-poverty-assessing-the-effect-of-the-1990s/>
168. Kabachnik, P. (2010a). Place Invaders: Constructing the Nomadic Threat in England. *Geographical Review*. 100(1). 90-108.
169. Kabachnik, P. (2010b). England or Uruguay? The Persistence of Place and the Myth of the Placeless Gypsy. *Area*. 42(2). 198-207.
170. Kato, D. (2018, May 12). Missoula blocks off parking lot frequented by homeless. *Missoulian*. Retrieved from [https://missoulian.com/news/local/missoula-blocks-off-parking-lot-frequented-by-homeless/article\\_0d0c96ad-b59b-5415-8109-628c4787eeb8.html?fbclid=IwAR3T7u9DFQop6E5eRFaJ5tV2I20UGTiYYmE9wZ0kah5v5pCwhiK8z-cWG2Q](https://missoulian.com/news/local/missoula-blocks-off-parking-lot-frequented-by-homeless/article_0d0c96ad-b59b-5415-8109-628c4787eeb8.html?fbclid=IwAR3T7u9DFQop6E5eRFaJ5tV2I20UGTiYYmE9wZ0kah5v5pCwhiK8z-cWG2Q)
171. Kearns, K. (1977). Irish Tinkers: An Itinerant Population in Transition. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 67(4). 538-548.
172. Keddie, J. (2008). London Borough' Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment. *Fordham Research*. Retrieved from [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london\\_boroughs\\_gypsy\\_and\\_traveller\\_accommodation\\_needs\\_assessment\\_-\\_final\\_report\\_-\\_2008\\_-\\_fordham\\_research.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_boroughs_gypsy_and_traveller_accommodation_needs_assessment_-_final_report_-_2008_-_fordham_research.pdf)
173. Kendall, S. (1997). Sites of Resistance: Places on the Margin. In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 70-89). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
174. Kenrick, D. (1997). Foreign Gypsies and British Immigration Law after 1945. In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 100-110). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
175. Kent, K. (2018, June 12). Beaverton to ban homeless camping on city streets. *Fox 12 Oregon*. Retrieved from [https://www.kptv.com/news/beaverton-to-ban-homeless-camping-on-city-streets/article\\_2e40b0ba-50b3-5550-b96d-b906bc1500a9.html](https://www.kptv.com/news/beaverton-to-ban-homeless-camping-on-city-streets/article_2e40b0ba-50b3-5550-b96d-b906bc1500a9.html)
176. Kähkö, I. (2018). Conflict chatnography: Instant messaging apps, social media and conflict ethnography in Ukraine. *Ethnography (Publication Pending; DOI: 10.1177/1466138118781640)*. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1466138118781640?fbclid=IwAR0RT0bohDvNFjncIQGpoE4lM0zwp6WxJpfxGJUbasLXXrCdsriJGS3N44c>
177. Khaldûn, I. (1377). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (English Translation by Franz Rosenthal, First Princeton Classics Edition 2015). Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.
178. Khazanov, A. (1983). *Nomads and the Outside World* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 1994). Madison, USA: The University of Wisconsin Press.

179. Kiddey, R. (2017). *Homeless Heritage: Collaborative Social Archaeology as Therapeutic Practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
180. Koetter, M. (Director/Editor) & Rosen, K. (Producer). (2005). *Rubber Tramps* [DVD]. United States: Just Passing Through Productions.
181. KOMO. (2018). RV Goes Up in Flames in SODO Neighborhood. *KOMO News*. Retrieved from <https://komonews.com/news/local/rv-goes-up-in-flames-in-sodo-neighborhood>
182. Kopytoff, I. (1986). The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. In A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (2<sup>nd</sup> reprinting, 2005). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
183. Korac, M. (2009). *Remaking Home: Reconstructing Life, Place and Identity in Rome and Amsterdam*. New York City, USA: Berghahn Books.
184. Kozol, J. (1988). *Rachel and Her Children*. New York City, USA: Ballantine Books.
185. Kroman, D. (2017, June 7). Another barrier for homeless: RV parks banning older vehicles. *Crosscut*. Retrieved from <http://crosscut.com/2017/06/homeless-seattle-rv-parks-exclude/>
186. Kruse, B. (2015, March 31). Homeless in Seattle: How one young man ended up on the city's streets. *Q13Fox*. Retrieved from <http://q13fox.com/2015/03/31/homeless-in-seattle-how-one-man-ended-up-on-the-citys-streets/>
187. Kuhn, R., Culhane, D. P. (1998). Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 26(2):207-232.
188. Kusmer, K.L. (2002). *Down & Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History*. New York City, USA: Oxford University Press.
189. La Gory, M., Ritchey, F., Fitzpatrick, K. (1991) Homelessness and Affiliation. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 43(2):201-218.
190. Lancione, M. (2016). The City and 'the Homeless': Machinic Subjects. In H. Frichot, C. Gabrielsson, & J. Metzger (Eds.), *Deleuze and the City* (pp. 145-160). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
191. Lee, B., Tyler, K., Wright, J. (2010) The New Homelessness Revisited. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 35. 501-521.
192. Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The Savage Mind*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press.
193. Loftus-Farren, Z. (2011). Tent Cities: An Interim Solution to Homelessness and Affordable Housing Shortages in the United States. *California Law Review*. 99(4). 1037-1081.
194. Lyon-Callo, V. (2000). Medicalizing Homelessness: The Production of Self-Blame and Self-Governing Within Homeless Shelters. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 14(3):328-345.
195. Lyon-Callo, V. (2008). *Inequality, Poverty, and Neoliberal Governance: Activist Ethnography in the Homeless Sheltering Industry*. Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press.

196. Magna Carta. (1297). Magna Carta Translation (Translated by Nicholas Vincent). *US National Archives and Records*. Retrieved from <https://www.archives.gov/files/press/press-kits/magna-carta/magna-carta-translation.pdf>
197. Marchetta, T. (2018, April 13). Cycle of poverty has family of 7 living inside SUV in suburban Denver. *7 Denver ABC*. Retrieved from [https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/front-range/denver/cycle-of-poverty-has-family-of-7-living-inside-suv-in-suburban-denver?fbclid=IwAR3GxHwnnSTZbghF\\_kUfUquT\\_ZRRPSVNIjdqcOylFumuqSgrKm-BYKlbC58](https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/front-range/denver/cycle-of-poverty-has-family-of-7-living-inside-suv-in-suburban-denver?fbclid=IwAR3GxHwnnSTZbghF_kUfUquT_ZRRPSVNIjdqcOylFumuqSgrKm-BYKlbC58)
198. Marin, M.V., & Vacha, E.F. (1990). Self-Help Strategies and Resources among People at Risk of Homelessness: Empirical Findings and Social Services Policy. *Social Work*. 39(6):649-657.
199. Mark, M.E. (1988). *Streetwise*. New York City, USA: Aperture Foundation.
200. Markovich, M. (2018). Seattle's 'RV auction shuffle' has towed vehicles appearing back on the streets. *KOMO News*. Retrieved from <https://komonews.com/news/local/seattles-rv-auction-shuffle-has-towed-vehicles-appearing-back-on-the-streets>
201. Massey, D. (1993a). Power, Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place. In J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson & L. Tickner (Eds.), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge.
202. Massey, D. (1993b). *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
203. Mathieu, A. (1993). The Medicalization of Homelessness and the Theater of Repression. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 7(2). 170-184.
204. Mauss, M. (1950). *The Gift* (1990 translation by W.D. Halls). New York City, USA: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
205. Mayon, R. (2016). *Nomadic Proud: Apartheid is not the same as Segregation and other lessons I never expected to learn in San Francisco*. Antioch, USA: Holy Ghost Publishing.
206. McNichols, J. (2015, July 29). Seattle Offers Help Before Rousting Car Campers Near Gas Works Park. *KUOW.org*. Retrieved from <https://kuow.org/stories/seattle-offers-help-rousting-car-campers-near-gas-works-park>
207. McVeigh, R. (1997). Theorizing Sedentarism: The Roots of Anti-nomadism. In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 7-25). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
208. Medas, G. (2015). Roma and Health: The Social Determinants of Health: Lessons from the Case of Roma in Hungary. *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*. 18(2). 149-173.
209. Meiners, E. (2007). *Right to Be Hostile: Schools, Prisons, and the Making of Public Enemies*. Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge.
210. Merolla, D.M., Hunt, M.O, Serpe, R.T. (2011). Concentrated Disadvantage and Beliefs about the Causes of Poverty: A Multi-Level Analysis. *Sociological Perspectives*. 54(2). 205-228.

211. Mendoza, C. (1997). Not a House but a Home: The Centennial Car Camp for the Homeless. *Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers*. 59. 30-50.
212. Mitchell, D. (1997). The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States. *Antipode*. 29(3). 303-335.
213. Mitchell, D. (2003). *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York City, USA: The Guilford Press.
214. Monroe, R. (2017, April 17). #Vanlife, the Bohemian Social Media Movement. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/24/vanlife-the-bohemian-social-media-movement>
215. Muecke, M. A. (1994). On the evaluation of ethnographies. In J. Morse (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 187-209). Thousand Oaks, USA: SAGE Publications.
216. Moutlon, S. (2013). Does Increased Funding for Homeless Programs Reduce Chronic Homelessness? *Southern Economic Journal*. 79(3). 600-620.
217. Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC). (2019). *Parking and Storage of Oversized Vehicles*. Retrieved from <http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Transportation/Parking-Management-and-Enforcement/Parking-and-Storage-of-Oversized-Vehicles.aspx>
218. Mutikani, L. (2009). *US Poverty Rate Hits 11-year High*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-economy-poverty/u-s-poverty-rate-hits-11-year-high-idUSTRE58943C20090910?sp=true>
219. MyNorthwest (staff). (2016, May 10). How Wallingford got rid of its roadside RV problem. *MyNorthwest.com*. Retrieved from <https://mynorthwest.com/157201/how-wallingford-got-rid-of-its-roadside-rv-problem/>
220. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). (2008). Determination of the December 2007 Peak in Economic Activity. *The National Bureau of Economic Research*. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/cycles/dec2008.html>
221. National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP). (2014). No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities. *National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty*. Retrieved from [https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/No\\_Safe\\_Place.pdf](https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/No_Safe_Place.pdf)
222. Neary, I. (1997). Burakumin in contemporary Japan. In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 111-124). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
223. Niman, M. (1997). *People of the Rainbow: A Nomadic Utopia*. Knoxville, USA: The University of Tennessee Press.
224. ní Shúinéar, S. (1997) Why do Gaujos hate Gypsies so much, anyway? A case study. In T. Acton (Ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity* (pp. 26-53). Hatfield, UK: Hertfordshire Press.
225. O'Connor, B. *How to Steal a Dog*. New York City, USA: Square Fish Books.
226. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). (2006, February 2). Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. *ODPM Circular 01/2006*. London, UK: Office of the Deputy

- Prime Minister. Retrieved from [http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/PG11\\_Circular0106-GypsyandTravellers.pdf](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/PG11_Circular0106-GypsyandTravellers.pdf)
227. O'Grady, B., Gaetz, S., & Buccieri, K. (2013). Tickets... and More Tickets: A Case Study of the Enforcement of the Ontario Safe Streets Act. *Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques*. 39(4). 541-558.
  228. Ó hAodha, M. (2007). The Emergency of Traveller Advocacy in Ireland. In M. Ó hAodha (Ed.), *The Nomadic Subject* (pp. 73-83). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
  229. Ó hAodha, M. (2011). *'Insubordinate Irish': Travellers in the text*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press
  230. Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Reprinted 2016). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
  231. Ottenberg, S. (1990). Thirty Years of Fieldnotes: Changing Relationships to the Text. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology* (pp. 139-160). Ithaca, USA: Cornell University Press.
  232. Outram, A.K. (2008). Introduction to experimental archaeology. *World Archaeology*. 40(1). 1-6.
  233. Padgett, D., Henwood, B. & Tsemberis, S. (2016). *Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives*. New York City, USA: Oxford University Press.
  234. Parnaby, P. (2003). Disaster through Dirty Windshields Law, Order, and Toronto's Squeegee Kids. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*. 28(3). 281-307.
  235. Phelan, J., Link, B.G, Moore, R.E, Stueve, A. (1997). The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label of "Homeless" on Attitudes Toward Poor Persons. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 60(4). 323-337.
  236. Pike, H. & Mackey, M. (2019, February 4). Paradise Town Council votes 5-0 to repeal ordinance allowing RV's in Camp Fire area. *ABC7 KRCR News*. Retrieved from [https://krctrv.com/news/camp-fire/paradise-town-council-votes-5-0-to-repeal-ordinance-allowing-rvs-in-camp-fire-area?fbclid=IwAR3CGdUzpvu0ZjCsjsxGZgj3xF\\_IP-uC4hI8FZdSA77gLAGg0-tKoA9vPmNA](https://krctrv.com/news/camp-fire/paradise-town-council-votes-5-0-to-repeal-ordinance-allowing-rvs-in-camp-fire-area?fbclid=IwAR3CGdUzpvu0ZjCsjsxGZgj3xF_IP-uC4hI8FZdSA77gLAGg0-tKoA9vPmNA)
  237. Perry, S. (2013). Urban hybrid space and the homeless. *Ethnography*. 14(4). 431-451.
  238. Police Executive Research Forum. (2018). The Police Response to Homelessness. *Police Executive Research Forum*. Retrieved from <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceResponsetoHomelessness.pdf>
  239. Power, C. (2007). Pavees and Muscers: Police Diversity Training, Irish Travellers, and the Limits of British Pluralism. In M. Ó hAodha (Ed.), *The Nomadic Subject* (pp. 87-116). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
  240. Pruss, G. (2012). Seattle Vehicular Residency Research Project 2012 Advisory Report. *City of Seattle, City Council Clerk*. Retrieved from [http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2012/hhshc20120926\\_8a.pdf](http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2012/hhshc20120926_8a.pdf)

241. Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). (2018). Displacement Risk Analysis. *Puget Sound Regional Council*. Retrieved from <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/rtodac201811-pres-displacement.pdf>
242. Quinn, M. (2018, July 24). 'It's a New Form of Affordable Housing': More People Are Living in Their Cars. *Governing.com*. Retrieved from [http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-homeless-shelter-car.html?fbclid=IwAR1zIT7qBccUht-1S3fMbvL6bxZ1fSUuNEUnpUKBgYxOMCZtCO6D5\\_eWNIM](http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services/gov-homeless-shelter-car.html?fbclid=IwAR1zIT7qBccUht-1S3fMbvL6bxZ1fSUuNEUnpUKBgYxOMCZtCO6D5_eWNIM)
243. Radke, B. and Martin, M. (2017, June 7). She dreamed of van life. Now she's homeless in Seattle. *KUOW.org*. Retrieved from <http://kuow.org/post/she-dreamed-van-life-now-she-s-homeless-seattle>
244. Rankin, S. (2019). Punishing Homelessness. *New Criminal Law Review*. 22(1):99-135.
245. Rappaport, R.A. (1994). On the evolution of morality and religion: A response to Lee Cronk. *Zygon*. 29(3). 331-349.
246. Rathje, W. & Murphey, C. (1992). *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001). Tucson, USA: The University of Arizona Press.
247. Reyes-Velarde, A. (2019, February 10). Fire survivors must relocate again after FEMA pressures Paradise to reverse RV rules. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-paradise-residents-pushed-out-20190210-story.html>
248. Ringmar, E. (2017). The Anti-Nomadic Bias of Political Theory. In *Nomad-State Relationships in International Relations: Before and After Borders* (Palgrave. Ed., Unpublished).
249. Roberts, C. (1999). *Ten Consecutive Years Living in Cars (Living, Traveling, Camping, Attending College, and Performing Surveillance in Cars---and Loving it!)*. Extreme Productions.
250. Robinson, T. (2017). No Right to Rest: Policy Enforcement Patterns and Quality of Life Consequences of the Criminalization of Homelessness. *Urban Affairs Review*. 55(1). 41-73.
251. Robinson, T. & Westbrook, M. (2019, April 13). Unhealthy by Design: Public Health Consequence of Denver's Criminalization of Homelessness. *Denver Homeless Out Loud*. Retrieved from <https://denverhomelessoutloud.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/unhealthy-by-design-final.pdf>
252. Romeo, J. (2018, February 17). Rogue campground crops up in Durango Walmart parking lot. *The Durango Herald*. Retrieved from [https://durangoherald.com/articles/209353?fbclid=IwAR1V\\_mPO3JujWZ9ejMQ2LGYmYPUOlyCkT3h3iqjDzRsl5VJX0XIScI1bIAw](https://durangoherald.com/articles/209353?fbclid=IwAR1V_mPO3JujWZ9ejMQ2LGYmYPUOlyCkT3h3iqjDzRsl5VJX0XIScI1bIAw)
253. Rosenberg, M. (2018, October 12). Hoping for Seattle Area Rents to Get Cheap? Don't Hold Your Breath. *Seattle Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/hoping-for-seattle-area-rents-to-get-cheap-dont-hold-your-breath/>

254. Rossi, P. (1989). *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press.
255. Rowe, S. & Wolch, J. (1990). Social Networks in Time and Space: Homeless Women in Skid Row, Los Angeles. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 80(2):184-204.
256. Ryan, J. (2014, September 24). Homeless Camp Pops Up On Busy U-District Sidewalk. *KUOW.org*. Retrieved from <http://kuow.org/post/homeless-camp-pops-busy-u-district-sidewalk>
257. Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism* (25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ed., 1994). New York City, USA: Vintage Books (A Division of Random House).
258. Salo, M.T. and Campanelli P.C. (1991). Ethnographic Methods in The Development of Census Procedures for Enumerating the Homeless. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*. 20(2). 127-140.
259. Sanjek, R. (1990). The Secret Life of Fieldnotes. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology* (pp. 187-270). Ithaca, USA: Cornell University Press.
260. Sapir, E. (1932). Cultural anthropology and psychiatry. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. 27(3), 229-242.
261. Schiffer, M.B. (1972). Archaeological Context and Systemic Context. *American Antiquity*. 37(2). 156-165.
262. Schiffer, M.B. (1987). *Formation Processes of the Archaeological Record* (University of Utah Press edition, 1996). Salt Lake City, USA: University of Utah Press.
263. Scraton, P. (2004). Speaking truth to power: Experiencing critical research. In M. Smyth & E. Williamson (Eds.), *Researchers and their 'subjects': Ethics, Power, Knowledge and Consent* (pp. 175-194). Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press.
264. Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH). (2019). *Publications*. Retrieved from <http://homelessinfo.org/resource/publications/>
265. Seattle Post Intelligencer (PI). (2007, January 5). Body recovered from deadly RV fire beneath West Seattle bridge. *Seattle PI*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattlepi.com/local/komo/article/Body-recovered-from-deadly-RV-fire-beneath-West-10837098.php>
266. Sharp, Sonja. (2019, June 17). 16,000 people in LA now live in cars, vans and RVs. But safe parking remains limited. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from [https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/nation/people-in-la-now-live-in-cars-vans-and-rvs/article\\_55a0a018-6cb3-511f-8edc-41b09ddcdfd1.html?fbclid=IwAR0\\_KDp1RxmMimYamb\\_INIAPNvLo9PrBjPEzX0OkznRdCOmmdHfMaFMrCsU](https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/nation/people-in-la-now-live-in-cars-vans-and-rvs/article_55a0a018-6cb3-511f-8edc-41b09ddcdfd1.html?fbclid=IwAR0_KDp1RxmMimYamb_INIAPNvLo9PrBjPEzX0OkznRdCOmmdHfMaFMrCsU)
267. Skinner, S. & Rankin, S. (2016). Shut Out: How Barriers Often Prevent Meaningful Access to Emergency Shelter. *Homeless Rights Advocacy Project*. 6. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/hrap/6/>

268. Smith, D.M. (1994). A Theoretical and Legal Challenge to Homeless Criminalization as Public Policy. *Yale Law & Policy Review*. 12(2). 487-515.
269. Smith, L. (2015, September 23). Gypsies and travellers: planning provisions. *House of Commons Library*. Retrieved from <https://hqnetwork.co.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n4738.pdf&ver=9700>
270. Smith, D. & Greenfields, M. (2013). *Gypsies and Travellers in Housing: The Decline of Nomadism*. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, Policy Press.
271. Snow, D.A., Baker, S.G., & Anderson, L. (1989). Criminality and Homeless Men: An Empirical Assessment. *Social Problems*. 36(5). 532-549.
272. So, J., MacDonald, S., Olson, J., Mansell, R. (2016). *Living at the Intersection: Laws & Vehicle Residency*. Retrieved from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2776423](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2776423)
273. Sosin, M. R. & Bruni, M. (2000). Personal and Situational Perspectives on Rejection of a Homelessness and Substance Abuse Program. *Social Work Research*. 24(1). 16-27.
274. Spain, M. (2015, July 22). Motorhomeless: No Place To Park Means No Place To Live. *KNKX.org*. Retrieved from <https://www.knkx.org/post/motorhomeless-no-place-park-means-no-place-live>
275. Spielberg, S. (Director). (1991). *Hook* [Film]. United States: Amblin Entertainment.
276. Spradley, J. (1970). *You Owe Yourself a Drunk* (Reprinted 2000). Prospect Heights, USA: Waveland Press, Inc.
277. Stephens, A. (2015, January 20). As Other Cities Turn Away, Seattle Turns to Tent Cities for the Homeless. *NextCity.org*. Retrieved from <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/seattle-tent-cities-homeless-support>
278. Stewart, M. (2013). Roma and Gypsy “Ethnicity” as a Subject of Anthropological Inquiry. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 42. 415-432.
279. Stryker, P. (2018, December 11). One Month After Camp Fire Began, Handful of Survivors Finally Get FEMA Trailers. *KQED News*. Retrieved from <https://www.kqed.org/news/11711508/one-month-after-blaze-began-some-camp-fire-survivors-finally-get-fema-trailers>
280. Susser, I. (1996). The Construction of Poverty and Homelessness in US Cities. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 25. 411-435.
281. Taylor, B. (2008). *A Minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the twentieth century*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
282. Taylor, S. (2013a). Structural Violence, Oppression, and the Place-based Marginality of Homelessness. *Canadian Social Work Review*. 30(2). 255-273.
283. Taylor, E.B. (2013b). *Materializing Poverty: How the Poor Transform Their Lives*. Lanham, USA: AltaMira Press.
284. Thrush, C. (2006). City of Changes. *Pacific Historical Review*. 75(1) 89-117.

285. Toft, A. (2014). Contesting the deviant other: Discursive strategies for the production of homeless subjectivities. *Discourse & Society*. 25(6). 783-809.
286. Tonnelat, S. (2008). 'Out of Frame': The (in)visible life of urban interstices – a case study in Charenton-le-Pont, Paris, France. *Ethnography*. 9(3). 291-394.
287. *Treaty with the Dwamish, Suquamish, etc., 1855*. (Jan. 22, 1855). 12 Stat. 927 (Ratified Mar. 8, 1859). Proclaimed Apr. 11, 1859. Retrieved from <http://www.washington.edu/diversity/files/2013/03/treaty-point-elliott.pdf>
288. Twitchell, J.B. (2014). *Winnebago Nation: The RV in American Culture*. New York City, USA: Columbia University Press.
289. UK Department for Communities and Local Government. (2008, May). Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide. *Communities and Local Government* (Crown Copyright). Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/11439/designinggypsiesites.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11439/designinggypsiesites.pdf)
290. UK Department for Communities and Local Government. (2015, August). Planning policy for traveller sites. *Communities and Local Government* (Crown Copyright). Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/457420/Final\\_planning\\_and\\_travellers\\_policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf)
291. US Bureau of Labor Statistics (US BLS). (2010). Employment Situation News Release. *US Department of Labor*. Retrieved from [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit\\_08062010.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_08062010.htm)
292. US BLS. (2018). Consumer Expenditures for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton Area 2016-17. *US Department of Labor*. Retrieved from [https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerexpenditures\\_seattle.htm](https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerexpenditures_seattle.htm)
293. US BLS. (2019). Consumer Price Index. *US Department of Labor*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/home.htm>
294. US Census Bureau. (2019). Decennial Census. *United States Census Bureau*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/decennial-census.html>
295. US Code of Federal Regulations (US CFR). 2019. 24 CFR § 578.3 - Definitions. *Government Publishing Office (US)*. Retrieved from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2017-title24-vol3/pdf/CFR-2017-title24-vol3-sec578-3.pdf>
296. US HUD. (2012). Introductory Guide to the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. *HUD Exchange*. Retrieved from <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramIntroductoryGuide.pdf>
297. US HUD. (2014). Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing Brief. *HUD Exchange*. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3892/housing-first-in-permanent-supportive-housing-brief/>

298. US HUD. (2018). PIT and HIC Guides, Tools, and Webinars. *HUD Exchange*. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/guides/pit-hic/#general-pit-guides-and-tools>
299. US Department of Justice. (2015, August 6). Justice Department Files Brief to Address the Criminalization of Homelessness. *The United States Department of Justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-files-brief-address-criminalization-homelessness>
300. Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago, USA: The University of Chicago Press
301. Verbatim report of proceedings for City of Seattle v. Steven Gregory Long. (2018, March 2). *Columbia Legal Services*. Retrieved from [http://columbialegal.org/sites/default/files/Seattle\\_v\\_Long\\_Order.pdf](http://columbialegal.org/sites/default/files/Seattle_v_Long_Order.pdf)
302. Virgil. (c.30 BCE). *Aeneid (Translated by John Dryden, 1884)*. London, UK: George Routledge and Sons.
303. Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press.
304. Wagner, D. & Gilman, J. (2012). *Confronting Homelessness: Poverty, Politics, and the Failure of Social Policy*. Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
305. Wakin, Michelle. (2005). Not Sheltered, Not Homeless: RVs as Makeshifts. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 48(8). 1013-1032.
306. Wakin, Michelle. (2014). *Otherwise Homeless: Vehicle Living and the Culture of Homelessness*. Boulder, USA: FirstForum Press.
307. Wallis, A. (1991). *Wheel Estate: The Rise and Decline of Mobile Homes*. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins Press.
308. Weber, M. (1930). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Routledge Classics edition, 2001)*. New York City, USA: Routledge.
309. Wells, B. (2014). *How to Live In a Car, Van, or RV: And Get Out of Debt, Travel, and Find True Freedom*. Scotts Valley, USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
310. Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). (2007, December). Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites. WAG. Retrieved from <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/1465/leg40.pdf>
311. Willse, C. (2010). Neo-liberal biopolitics and the invention of chronic homelessness. *Economy and Society*. 39(2). 155-184.
312. Wilson, S. (2009). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Winnipeg, CA: Fernwood Publishing.
313. Wittenberg, A. (2018, September 13). As RV life increases, legal parking more scarce. *Arizona Daily Sun*. Retrieved from [https://azdailysun.com/news/as-rv-life-increases-legal-parking-more-scarce/article\\_536c47d4-b3a7-53fa-8858-f097c4bc81ac.html?fbclid=IwAR2wIxPULIbjcbeioJEvQ4b0FK1TKJ0BFYrvJBuwXrvzhpoWhc7tr8gC4vQ](https://azdailysun.com/news/as-rv-life-increases-legal-parking-more-scarce/article_536c47d4-b3a7-53fa-8858-f097c4bc81ac.html?fbclid=IwAR2wIxPULIbjcbeioJEvQ4b0FK1TKJ0BFYrvJBuwXrvzhpoWhc7tr8gC4vQ)

314. Woodward, I. (2007). *Understanding Material Culture*. Thousand Oaks, USA: SAGE Publishing.
315. Wren, K. (2001). Cultural Racism: Something Rotten in the State of Denmark? *Social & Cultural Geography*. 2(2). 141-162.
316. Zimmerman, L., Singleton C., & Welch, J. (2010). Activism and creating a translational archaeology of homelessness. *World Archaeology*. 42(3). 443-454.
317. Zimmerman, L. & Welch, J. (2011). Displaced and Barely Visible: Archaeology and the Material Culture of Homelessness. *Historical Archaeology*. 45(1). 67-85.