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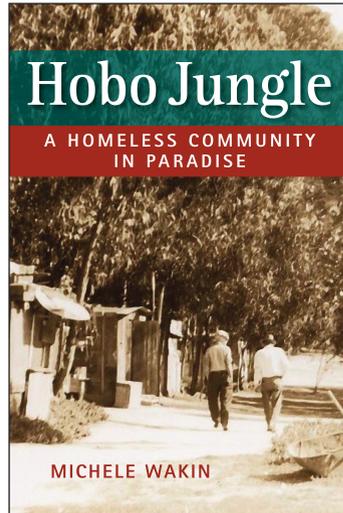
Hobo Jungle:  
A Homeless Community  
in Paradise

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# 1

## My Welcome to the Jungle

Arriving in Santa Barbara from the East Coast was unsettling. After living in Boston, an admittedly small, walkable city, I had gotten used to large multistory buildings and the bustle of city life. Santa Barbara, by contrast, is a random collection of one- and two-story stucco buildings laid out grid style downtown and nestled in the foothills in completely unplanned curves and angles. It feels lonely and untamed, with only the ocean and the mountains framing its grandeur. I was studying sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, focusing on homelessness, but did not yet have formal research questions, only the beginnings of a study and a growing interest in the themes of criminalization and shelter. Santa Barbara's hobo jungle immediately drew my attention as a mysterious camping area along the railroad tracks by the ocean, where it has existed in some form from the early 1900s to the present. In this book, the jungle offers a window through which to understand and track changes in the meaning and experience of living unsheltered for yesterday's hoboes and today's homeless people.<sup>1</sup>

Studying the jungle and understanding the resources and risks associated with different types of makeshift housing solutions led me on a journey that spans several years and encompasses multiple time periods, methodologies, and settings. The result is that this book is not only about the jungle but also about our changing understanding of unsheltered homelessness and how this understanding

shapes policy, public opinion, and overall life chances for homeless people. The intent here is to explore the experience of being homeless and unsheltered, rather than seeing it as a quality, a condition, or a characteristic of a person. This approach incorporates elements of both symbolic interactionism and historical comparative research to shape and interpret the common categories of experience used to understand jungle living. Data sources in the chapters that follow include historical archives, ethnographic fieldwork, and applied advocacy research. I use these sources to trace the persistence of the jungle for over seven decades in one of the most opulent cities on California's South Coast.

The early chapters of this book include historical archives kept by men living in the jungle in the 1940s and 1950s. Access to the writings and opinions of the men, in poems, letters, and short stories, informs the focus on mobility that characterizes the hobo lifestyle during this era. I supplement these data with research on the historical preservation and commercial development of the waterfront area, where the jungle is located. Using maps, photographs, and city planning documents to track the evolution of the waterfront shows the confluence of environmental preservation and luxury tourism that are its signature features, making the jungle's endurance that much more surprising. In a city hoping to attract tourist revenue and using the railroad and eventually the freeway to do so, Santa Barbara was also attracting hoboes, and one of the city's most prominent property owners invited them to stay. This ignited debate in the community, portrayed in local newspapers, showing how the jungle was understood and managed.

Exploring the jungle's next rise to prominence in the 1980s relies on a combination of published scholarly sources, thirty interviews with people active in the protest movement, and over 300 newspaper articles to illustrate the rise of the shelter industry and its impact on the local homeless population. Tracking the evolution of the jungle community is easier in the 1980s, relative to earlier decades, because of the proliferation of media accounts, scholarly research, and policy and advocacy work, as well as the prevalence of activism throughout the nation and the local community. This decade is also pivotal in defining and dividing people experiencing homelessness and linking policy with rewards and punishments for categories of people seen as deserving or undeserving, a divide that will widen by the early 2000s.

It is during these later years, from 2000 to 2005, that I spend over 450 hours in the field, conduct thirty-five formal interviews with people living in the jungle, and carry a digital audiotape recorder for approximately nine months, recording hundreds of conversations. I also take countless photographs and extensive field notes throughout, in addition to transcribing the recordings. To elucidate the experience of jungle living and focus a diverse and fluid data set, I examine the representative experience of three relationships between people living in the jungle. These relationships help situate the jungle within a larger context of public space and criminalization, survival, and resistance. To further explore these themes, I work with the Committee for Social Justice as an advocate and volunteer expert witness in fifteen court cases in which homeless people are cited for sleeping and camping offenses. I also conduct fieldwork at the day-labor line and employ people seeking work there to assist me in translation and data gathering as I explore the changing shape of migratory labor and how immigration status, language, and culture shape criminalization.<sup>2</sup>

To focus on local policies and responses to homelessness, I start working extensively with the Santa Barbara City Council, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, Police Advisory Board, Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness, and other regional and local service boards in charge of setting policy and offering punishment and provision to homeless people. My involvement with these groups is advocacy based and includes monthly if not weekly meetings with each, directly related to setting policy and arguing for increased rights and privileges. To enhance this work, in 2005 and 2006, I organize a series of classes called The People's Institute, for people living in the jungle, and evaluate their efficacy and impact on overall quality of life. I return to Santa Barbara in 2008 and 2016 to revisit its shelters, jungles, and beaches, to interview activists, advocates, and people experiencing homelessness and to attend meetings related to policy and protest movements. I also conduct comparative research in Santa Cruz and Sonoma Counties for three-week stints in 2006 and 2008 to see how prevalent unsheltered homelessness is in comparison with Santa Barbara, and to gauge the differences in the local response to criminalization and resistance activities within these communities.

Although this additional research is important in establishing a more current context for examining jungle living and tracking its evolution, it is also limited because of my inability to gain the trust

of such a hidden population, particularly as I was always new in town. As a result, this research enhances the present analysis of the jungle, but the bulk of the fieldwork presented here was conducted earlier and in Santa Barbara, which are related limitations. My lack of unfettered access to the jungle, discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 and the appendix, and the timing and diversity of data sources are an added weakness. I address but perhaps don't completely solve these problems by using historical data to view the societal trends that influence our ideas of the jungle and policies used to manage populations seen as marginal or dangerous. What results, however flawed, is a focus on the power dynamics involved in living unsheltered and understanding and managing its exigencies.

In the field, I go from being a "buddy researcher" to a legal advocate and service provider to a lifelong friend, confidante, and champion of homeless rights. While conducting participant observation, I become immersed in the lives of the people included in these chapters. I take them to appointments, listen to their daily struggles and triumphs, and share my own. I become part of their relationships and routines and care deeply about what happens to them. When they get separated from one another, I remain in contact with both sides and carry information back and forth. In some cases, I am in touch with their families. Although I conduct formal interviews, I learn far more by listening and becoming a part of people's daily lives, leaving them in control of what and how much they want to tell me. I also elicit their stories and opinions, formally and informally. I bring newspaper clippings about homelessness, of which I have hundreds, for people to comment on. I learn to play pinochle and to speak passable Spanish. I hire people, when I can, to assist me with data collection, and I incorporate their insights, expertise, and direction throughout this research. All of these things help as I try to become a part of an environment so different from my own, as I strive to understand its various dimensions.

My approach to fieldwork allows the interests and pursuits of the individuals and small groups I study to inform my goals and methodology. Rather than viewing homeless people as subjects, this research collaborates with them as experts, setting a course for both research and action, key features of a participatory action approach (Foote Whyte et al. 1991; Gomez and Ryan 2016). Although I contextualize the Santa Barbara jungle within statewide and national trends and explore its history, the heart of this work relies on natu-

rally occurring interaction and the voices of homeless people to inform more general claims about jungle living. The methodology in this book is exploratory, allowing initial inquiry to become gradually focused through field observations and through using a diverse set of methodological tools (Blumer 1969). It is also directly linked to wider questions of social inequality and social justice (Humphries, Mertens, and Truman 2000, 13).

For me, the lure of the jungle is in the idea of an unfiltered sense of loyalty homeless people seem to have for one another and the idea of questioning societal rules and structures and developing alternatives. The questions that drive this inquiry are: How do people living in the jungle develop a sense of community and identity? How do they understand and explain themselves in relationship to other homeless people and to housed society, and how are these explanations received? And finally, how does the experience of geographic and social mobility change over time to allow different forms of survival and resistance? This study of the Santa Barbara jungle explores answers to these questions and examines the changing nature of work, mobility, and urban spaces. It focuses on outlining a framework through which to understand how the structural and individual causes of homelessness converge on everyday life experience, shaping both the problem and the solution.

## **Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness**

Having a private, backstage area in which to relax and let down your guard is central to the idea of home. People also view living spaces as reflections of self-worth and social value (Goffman 1959; Reitzes et al. 2015). Just as those living in luxury homes in gated communities are seen as social and economic elites, those living in jungles and ghetto neighborhoods are seen as social and economic failures (Anderson 2012). Equating failed spaces with marginal people means that they become synonymous referents for one another, melding personal, social, and political stigmatization (Jones and Jackson 2012). Stigma is a status we ascribe to various groups based on presumed differences and deficiencies rather than inherent qualities, and it changes over time, depending on social and cultural preferences, although some forms of stigma seem immutable. Understanding the stigma of homelessness through experiential categories is a way of

highlighting its constructed meaning by tracking changes in society's treatment of it over time.

Homelessness is often seen as a combination of personal and structural issues that make accessing housing out of reach. Emphasizing personal over structural causes means viewing homeless people as culpable, as causing or deserving their present state. This is part of the stigma theory that justifies the cruel and unusual punishment of homeless people (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 2013). After all, one of the worst characteristics of stigma is that we see the bearer as tainted, discounted, less than human, and deserving what they get (Goffman 1963, 3). It is in this context that the jungle is a place to hide, to be accepted, and to develop a sense of identity and community. These features of jungle living remain constant, yet the way it intersects with other city areas, with transportation routes, and in the context of mainstream shelter and housing and employment markets, fluctuates over time. Living in makeshift settings like the jungle means negotiating a complex nexus of space, time, and mobility mapped onto the development of identity, community, and resistance, and it is never a one-sided game. People experiencing homelessness must negotiate the power dynamics that dictate the legality of public space and codes of conduct, which threaten their existence.

The experiential categories outlined in Table 1.1 represent the most constant and enduring features that set hoboes and unsheltered homeless people apart from the mainstream while still being applicable to the mainstream. Space, time, and any of the other categories do not belong to or define homeless people but characterize their experience, instead of focusing on problematic identities, characteristics, or maladies. In so doing, they explain the effects of macro-level policies on the lived experience of the jungle. These categories also correspond with the methodological approach employed here, in the attempt to balance the need for representativeness with the singularity of the Santa Barbara jungle and the disparate time periods this book covers. Using experiential categories over other modes of analysis allows for fluidity and flexibility, rather than reifying the binaries so prevalent in research, service, and policy approaches to homelessness: deserving/undeserving, good/bad, worthy/unworthy. Treating homelessness as an experience one goes through rather than as an identity characteristic removes the blame, moral judgment, repentance, and even valorization that go with examining street liv-

**Table 1.1 Experiential Categories: Living Unsheltered**

Space	1940s–1950s	Skid row housing, jungles, migrant labor camps, jails
	1980s	Makeshifts, streets, shelters, jails, prisons
	2000s	Shelters, jails, prisons, service organizations, makeshifts, encampments, tent cities
Time	1940s–1950s	Periods of work and rest, harvest cycles, train schedules
	1980s	Survival and protest, submission to institutional routines
	2000s	Time-stretch, lack of control, submission to institutional routines
Mobility	1940s–1950s	Regular, nationwide travel, automobile over railroad
	1980s	Circumscribed, urban spaces and service areas, cyclical
	2000s	Circumscribed, urban and rural spaces, service areas, cyclical, confined
Identity	1940s–1950s	Stigmatized, older, “disaffiliated”
	1980s	Stigmatized, diverse, split: deserving/undeserving
	2000s	Stigmatized, criminalized, polarized, marginalized
Survival and resistance	1940s–1950s	Skid row, service driven
	1980s	Advocacy driven, organized protest, shelterization, criminalization
	2000s	Advocacy driven, muted protest, shelterization, criminalization

ing. It is a way of capturing the lived experience of the jungle, then and now, as a place of sanctuary and marginalization with punitive and protective aspects, similar to other marginal spaces and defined in relationship to the mainstream (Waquant 2012).

In this chapter, I track changes in how homeless people occupy public, city spaces and how makeshift living areas like the jungle proliferate. I examine changing housing options, from skid row to prisons and shelters, as the nation’s understanding of public space becomes more overtly based on fear, control, and resource protection (Davis 1990; Blakely and Snyder 1997) rather than public interaction and discourse. Over time, mobility in the jungle becomes limited and cyclical, rather than geographic or social, and it is shaped by various means of repression and punishment that exclude homeless people from city spaces or repeatedly punish their visibility and behavior there (Wright 1997; Ellickson 2001; Mitchell 2001; National Coalition for the Homeless 2004; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 2009). This creates and exacerbates the stress and trauma that make transcending homelessness difficult, as it is

associated with a problematic identity and survival eclipses resistance. To understand how the experience of jungle living changes over time, I examine the Santa Barbara jungle in the context of the social, political, and economic changes that take place over the decades of interest and compare it with other forms of unsheltered homelessness to situate the Santa Barbara location within a hierarchy of makeshift settings.

### **Jungle Meaning, Jungle Beginning**

The word *jungle* conjures up images of a primitive and unruly place, where outsiders face hidden dangers and even those who live there face the unknown (Conrad 1899; Kipling 1984; Sinclair 1906). The jungle is primordial but replicates itself expertly into modern urban consciousness. The jungle is the home of the indigenous other and the darkness inside us all. It lives within the ghetto, skid row, and the encampments, tent cities, and shadow cities that proliferate today and in the feeling of marginality that pervades them. It exists in the interstices of urban, suburban, and rural spaces and in the hearts and minds, the words and deeds of people who live there. The jungle is beaten back, but it grows just the same, flourishing in its wild expression of beauty. It uses the grid but remains separate from it, threatening its values and structure. This threat, albeit imagined, is used to justify various forms of exclusion that lock people up, silence them, and strip away their opportunities, even their hopes, until there is nothing left but to give in to societal expectations and let the jungle take over. How do people who live in the jungle survive? Is survival enough or is something closer to revolution needed to change their perilous situation? These larger questions are addressed through an exploration of the jungle as an outdoor camp for people without shelter.

Hobo jungles begin as a home for itinerant laborers in the late 1800s, in part as an outgrowth of Civil War bivouacs, which taught men to live off the land (DePastino 2003). The jungle is a public but hidden setting, a temporary camp close to the railroad and the main stem, with the city lights twinkling in the distance. It is a place to learn about life riding the rails, to access temporary seasonal employment, to spend time in the company of one's fellows and share a muligan stew. The jungle overlaps with more permanent urban areas such

as skid row, but men who live in the jungle are typically passing through. It serves, in a sense, as a poor man's Motel 6, where the bed is always available, the light is always on, and you can count on at least this small measure of comfort from the dangers of life on the road. But, as its name implies, the jungle is off the beaten track and designed to remain hidden. Men who live there adhere to the unspoken rules of anonymity and reciprocity, often leaving standard cooking and camping supplies behind for incoming men to find respite (Anderson 1923, 1930). Temporary and permanent camps differ, although the former are more common, and men who live in the jungles are "domesticated without the aid of women" (Anderson 1923, 18). As hobbing becomes more widespread from the turn of the century into the early 1900s, these features of jungle life ensure basic standards of domesticity and help facilitate a life on the move.

The jungle is an island of stability in an otherwise transient existence, yet hobo life holds hidden dangers for the unaware. Jackrollers and jungle buzzards are two kinds of transients, waiting to part young hoboes from their money or their virtue (Shaw 1930). And trains themselves pose imminent danger for those who fail to prop open boxcars or who ride in cars with shifting cargoes. Even railroad workers are at risk, with 2,550 deaths recorded in 1900 alone (Caplow 1940). In addition to fatalities, many hoboes lose limbs because they are not fast enough or do not jump high enough to reach the moving train. Still others ride the rods underneath the train or cross paths with "bulls" (transportation workers), police, or townspeople, and risk various forms of danger or sanction. If jungles can be considered a home base, the rest of the world requires a performance: to convince employers to hire you, housewives to feed you, and police and citizens to leave you alone. When unsuccessful in winning over any of these constituents, hoboes face violence, fines, or jail time, or merely go hungry. Jungles are a place to learn about these dangers and to learn from the experts how to negotiate a life on the road.

The hobo himself, his employment patterns, culture, and place in society is the focus of early Chicago School sociologist Nels Anderson. His work was funded, in part, by Ben Reitman, noted for developing a Chicago branch of the Hobo Colleges that were an outgrowth of the International Brotherhood Welfare Association (Burgess and Bogue 1964, 6), one of the last times anyone would seriously consider offering educational opportunities for homeless adults.<sup>3</sup> Anderson's books include *The Hobo: The Sociology of the*

*Homeless Man* (1923), *The Milk and Honey Route: A Handbook for Hobos* (as Dean Stiff) (1930), and *Men on the Move* (1940). His work explains the hobo as a social category enjoying heightened mobility because of employment circumstances but also enduring a marginalized, degraded status. Anderson focuses on the services and accommodations that skid row provides for working, wandering men. He describes the jungle as a flat, shady sleeping area, close to a railroad division point, a water source, wood for a fire, and a town to supply basic needs.

Unlike skid row areas, where women also live, early jungles are almost exclusively a man's domain.<sup>4</sup> Although jungles are more racially diverse than skid row areas, Anderson's pronouncement that they are "the melting pot of trampdom" is perhaps an overstatement (Flynt 1972). Although jungles are more inclusive than skid rows, a hobo's life is defined by motion between the two, facilitated by railroad travel and seasonal labor, periods of work and rest. One of the essential differences between skid row and the jungle is that the latter is seen as a place where the informal relations governing city life hold less sway. In the context of being a feared, marginalized group of workers, the jungle provides a place to shed these constraints. As a result, "the hobo enters this life as he does no other. Here he turns his back on the world and faces his fellows and is at ease" (Anderson 1923, 44). This sense of freedom, community, and danger, coupled with a simple and anonymous "no strings attached" form of domesticity, is and remains central to the jungle's appeal.

Tracking the use of the jungle over time is difficult, as both its form and meaning undergo change, and it is more difficult to access and study than traditional shelter or skid row settings. The use of jungles is widespread throughout the mid- to late 1800s, surging during the Great Depression and waning precipitously until the 1970s, only to proliferate again in the 1980s and endure into the twenty-first century, in many forms and under many different names, including encampments and tent cities. What kind of place is the jungle, as a makeshift camp, in comparison to other kinds of housing and shelter options? Does it offer a site for community and resistance or for vice and suffering? How can we understand the jungle and the people who live there in the context of changes in the national economy, employment, and housing markets? And how can we understand, through the experience of jungle living, what kind of home unsheltered homeless people are striving for?

## **Space, Time, and Mobility**

In this section, I briefly explore the advent of hoboeing and early attempts to reintegrate wandering men in the early 1900s, focusing on the degree of control hoboese have over space, time, and mobility, relative to later decades. Because they have more time than their wage-earning, head-of-household counterparts and more choices about where to work and rest, hoboese have a greater sense of freedom. Despite this, they are still at the mercy of train schedules, the waxing and waning of seasonal labor, and the threat of physical harm, jail, or other forms of danger or sanction. Whereas skid rows are crowded urban thoroughfares that mirror the routines of city life, hobo jungles take on a rugged and romantic quality, where these routines hold less sway. Over time, the larger, nationwide circles hoboese travel, between harvest work and rest, become smaller, localized, and controlled and defined by agencies of assistance or correction, or both. Freedom eventually turns to submission by luck, punishment, or choice, and living in alternative makeshift settings like the jungle reinforces a cycle of marginality. Part of this is informed by the hobo's changing experience of space, time, and mobility.

The idea of space-time compression is central to mobility theory (Harvey 1989). Tim Cresswell describes this as “the effective shrinking of the globe by ever-increasing mobility at speed enabled by innovations in transportation and communications technology” (2006, 4). Perhaps this is why there is initially some romance in the idea of the hobo—someone who can be in Chicago tonight and California tomorrow. Railroads are the first emergent, transformative technology to open the American West, and hard as it is to imagine in an age when plane travel is commonplace, the excitement of a railroad connecting the nation so that cross-country travel becomes a matter of days instead of months was unprecedented. Beginning in the late 1800s, the railroad as a mobility system facilitated the hobo as a social category (Anderson 1930; Urry 2007), containing the now famous distinction between tramps, bums, and seasonal laborers (Anderson 1923; Cresswell 2001).<sup>5</sup> With hundreds of people riding boxcars in search of work, what would eventually be termed the “migrancy problem” is just “an extended job hunt in the casual labor market” (Anderson 1940, 273), in which the conditions, duration, and even availability of work are unpredictable.

In this context, mobility is essential. It informs the very culture and identity of the hobo, as it is a “thoroughly social facet of life

imbued with meaning and power” (Cresswell 2006, 4). It involves the blending of geographic and social movement and gives rise to and reinforces social inequality (Urry 2007), marking hoboes as different and suspect (Monkkonen 1984). The power of the hobo, albeit limited, is in the degree of mobility, flexibility, and choice that accompanies his lifestyle and employment patterns (Anderson 1930). But this power is not without limits. While he is working, the hobo is tolerated, but when work is over, he is unwelcome and sent packing. Hoboes as mobile subjects are made meaningful through interaction with the established order, telling the hobo to move on or inviting him to the table. Although often maligned as dirty, dangerous, dishonest, or merely a drain on resources (Uys 1999), hoboes in the early 1900s have options that place them in control, in motion, and with choices. When they cease to be mobile, or when they enter towns and cities without employment, they are beaten, jailed, and barred from entry or forced to leave (Pacific Rural Press 1880; Cresswell 2001). This rejection and regulation increases in the decades leading up to the 1940s and 1950s, where this book begins, reflecting the changing value of the hobo in society (Chambliss 1964).

Our appreciation of the hobo as a social category starts to fade as early as the 1920s, by which time he has become “a man out of time, a relic from a world that had once rewarded freewheeling masculinity” (DePastino 2003, 128). Mobility begins to take on an ironic meaning still associated with adventure but threatening the establishment of a traditional home base and subject to sanction or rehabilitation, or both (Davenport 1915). Part of this has to do with cultural standards of masculinity. Todd DePastino (2003) describes the shifting definition of masculinity with the closing of the Gilded Age and the triumph of corporate capitalism in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The idea of the “self-made man,” defined by “success in the market, individual achievement, mobility, wealth” (Kimmel 2012, 18) wanes with increasing industrialization and the fear and self-doubt that accompany the loss of autonomy and submission to wage labor. The identity of the hobo—a man without a traditional home to retreat to—becomes fused with wandering and transience, threat, and questioning of the wage system, unfair labor practices, and capitalism, more broadly speaking. It is also associated with protest.

Early attempts at social protest through uniting with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) helped turn hoboes into slightly more respectable transient workers, formulating what Robert Park calls a

masculinist “group consciousness” for men wandering “without destination” (Park 1967, 159). The IWW focused on direct economic action through strike and sabotage, justifying and valorizing the physical prowess needed to sustain both work and protest. Ironically, the very traits that marginalized hoboes in the eyes of housed citizens made them powerful men among their fellows and friends of the IWW. Pairing hoboes with the IWW also brought a culture of protest to the fore in the form of songs and spoken word, fomenting revolution (DePastino 2003; Garon and Tomko 2006; Industrial Workers of the World 1905). Yet the tactics and schisms within the IWW, along with government opposition, made its reign in the jungle short-lived.

## **Depression and Reintegration**

The federal government intervened during the Great Depression to provide for transients and workers, connecting the idea of assistance with identities or populations deemed acceptable, in this case “transients” (Higbie 2003). The Federal Transient Program, established in 1933, when an estimated one-third of the workforce was unemployed, attempted to reintegrate transients by granting state aid for communities willing to shelter them. It was also an early attempt at a comprehensive census of homeless people, as by 1934, all states except Vermont were participating in the program (Anderson 1940, 302). Program administrators identified several kinds of transients, including boys, girls and young women, men, families, persons and families seeking employment and healthier climates, the aged and handicapped, the mentally ill, and persons who had been institutionalized (Reed and Potter 1934). They also separated people for federal aid based on a definition of “transience” as having been in a state for less than twelve months. Those not meeting this requirement had to rely on state aid and on missions and almshouses or depend on friends and family, as in the case of black or “negro” transients who faced overt racism, limiting or directing their overall mobility.<sup>6</sup>

In an attempt to stem the growing tide of transients during the Depression, the federal government provided funding for states to offer shelters, camps, and rented rooms, as well as an impressive array of services, including those providing basic needs such as food and clothing to those addressing the root causes of long-term poverty, including unequal access to education and employment. The idea was

that tailoring services and programs to meet people's needs would help them reintegrate more quickly and become part of their host communities or return to their city of origin. Federal transient camps were particularly effective in serving working young men and clustered in the warmer states, such as California, where outdoor living is tolerable on an almost year-round basis. There is some evidence to suggest that the Federal Transient Program reduced the number of young men living in jungles, a solution they turned to because jungle life was preferred "rather than submit to the humiliation of forced contact with the degrading atmosphere of the indiscriminate shelter and soup kitchen" (Reed and Potter 1934, 46).

Here we see a distinction between the deserving and undeserving beginning to take shape through federal policy. One group is employable, flexible, and amenable to physical labor, and the other is limited by a combination of factors including age and infirmity. Although geared to serve those considered the most vulnerable, most acceptable, and/or the easiest to reintegrate, there is general recognition that the increase in migrancy in the 1930s is need driven by a "socially valuable and enterprising people willing and anxious to work" (Reed and Potter 1934, 31). There is also a keen understanding that services need to be attractive to the service population. Making services need driven and attractive are sentiments that will bear repeating in the 1980s and beyond. And finally, there is the recognition that wandering can be reduced or eliminated entirely by a combination of reintegrative strategies that reinforce community membership and long-term buy in, something the Federal Transient Program was not always successful in doing (Caplow 1940). Despite its gains and the promise of its ideology, the administration of this federal program turned out to be poorly coordinated and short-lived.

The end of the Federal Transient Program and failure to plan for its future means a resurgence in jungle areas (Kusmer 2002), which overlap with the Hoovervilles commonly seen on the outskirts of cities, full of people seeking work. As a result of these developments, states become even more hostile to hoboes, whom they now see as crossing their borders to draw on resources, with Florida and California leading the pack. Along with receiving support from the Federal Transient Program, which lasted from 1933 to 1942, younger men on relief also enlist in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program that grew out of legislation that was part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), designed to provide envi-

ronmentally based employment programs for young men. Focusing on education and vocational training as keys to family stability, the CCC builds 46,000 bridges, plants more than 2 billion trees, slows soil erosion on 40 million acres of farmland, and develops 800 state parks (Maher 2008, 43). Not only does the CCC transform the landscape, it also transforms boys into men rather than leaving them stuck in a state of dependence, or a life without achievable, mainstream goals (Suzik 1999). Instead of joining the hobo ranks, young men receive training, employment, and wages to send home to their families, and the focus on youth and physical fitness serves as a counter to “the lure of the open road.” Although the CCC is administered like a military program and is overseen, in part, by the Department of War, its explicit disconnect with the armed forces is eventually called into question in a prewar era that makes it seem superfluous (Suzik 1999).

The nation’s understanding of poverty during the Depression and the solutions that arose to handle it are indicative of the struggle to define and manage a problematic social category. Whether labeled “transients, wanderers, hoboes, homeless,” there is a subtle and growing distinction between those who fit in and those who, in part because of their poverty and mobility, do not. In fact, for some time, mobility itself is associated with “nomadism,” “feeble mindedness,” or “wanderlust” as quasi-psychological conditions (Solenberger 1911; Davenport 1915). Even before the Depression, sociologists wonder: “What, if anything, is the matter with the hobo’s mind?” (Park 1925, 158). Why, instead of setting down roots, does the hobo seem to wander for wandering’s sake without contributing more to society than struggle-inspired poetry and hard physical labor? And, more important, how can hoboes be reintegrated into society? The Depression-era response to these questions is to ground the hobo and limit his mobility and to direct and focus his labor through social policy, traditional family building, and community reintegration. This also happens through technological progress, as the mechanization of agricultural work and the ever-increasing use of automobiles over railroads conspire to keep wandering men close to home.

During the 1930s, migration to California differed from the prior decade, when people moved because of a mix of push-pull factors ranging from the strain of poverty and unemployment to the promise of a better life, a healthy climate, and greater economic prospects.

By the 1930s, push factors prevail and people are migrating in search of work over adventure and with a sense of urgency, if not panic. Individuals and families flock to California from Dust Bowl and Cotton Belt states, with 400,000 from the Southwest alone and the majority moving to Los Angeles and the more rural San Joaquin Valley (Gregory 1989, 12). Many migrants on the move do not find work, and squatter encampments known as Hoovervilles become an embarrassing national symbol of a dream gone wrong (Gravelle 2015). Throughout California, the agricultural labor that hoboes once sought is gradually replaced with service and semi-skilled jobs, with Mexican and Asian families preferred for the most arduous farm work (Wyman 2010). With the onset of World War II, everything changes again, and the fear that accompanied being a receiving state for migrants from other areas is replaced with a renewed interest in attracting workers, this time for wartime industry.

### **1940s–1950s: War and Decline**

As the country pulls itself out of Depression-era poverty to face World War II, able-bodied young men become soldiers and support workers. Those who cannot work or cannot fight are left to fend for themselves without a fully developed safety net. Although Social Security benefits for the aged and unemployed are signed into law in 1935, they only become payable by 1942, and many low-wage earners, including agricultural workers, are not eligible for benefits (Piven and Cloward 1979, 114). Making states the arbiters of federal work relief through the Works Progress Administration is informed by the same ideology informing the English Poor Laws: relief is a local responsibility, allowances should be lower than wages, and settlement should be a prerequisite for aid (Piven and Cloward 1979, 130; Morris 1994; Wagner 2005). Localities manage the terms of work relief, requiring place-based loyalty and loyalty to industry as keys to long-term stability. Geographic mobility is sublimated for a presumed increase in social mobility, a goal Stephan Thernstrom (1964) points out can mean property ownership or the move to white-collar professions and is often elusive.

With the onset of war, eligible men are called to military service and women are employed in greater numbers than ever before, with the participation of women in the workforce jumping from

13.8 to 19.1 million from 1940 to 1944 (Gregory 1974). The country also tightens its belt, rationing food, clothing, gas, and other commodities, and ideologically tightens its belt to focus on an external threat.<sup>7</sup> When servicemen return from war, several federal programs assist in reintegrating them into mainstream society as breadwinners, and a combination of government policy and popular culture sells the idea of suburbia and the private automobile to the populace. The GI Bill facilitates reintegration by offering over 2 million men college and university training, 3.5 million school training, and 3.4 million on-the-job training (Servicemen's Readjustment Act 1944). It also targets home ownership, business loans, and employment as keys to a good and stable family life. This thwarts a feared repopulation of skid row by former servicemen, but not everyone participates equally in these programs. A combination of factors, including a legacy of racial oppression and overt discrimination, limits the preparedness of and opportunities available to black servicemen (Onkst 1998). These inequalities set the stage for growing racial disparities, segregated urban housing, and an overrepresentation of people of color within the homeless community for years to come.<sup>8</sup> With the push toward domestic prosperity, homeownership, and employment, those who do not enjoy these rewards are themselves thought to be somehow deficient.

The postwar era sees both skid row and jungle areas begin the slide into obscurity, and the embrace of the domestic ideals hoboes once shunned is never stronger. Skid row populations plummet accordingly during this decade (Hoch and Slayton 1989), and the adventure that characterized the hobo lifestyle, embodied in images of hobohemia and soapbox orators, fades into memory (Brundage 1997).<sup>9</sup> Skid row becomes isolated, segregated, and detached, while the country embraces the nuclear family, living in a home with a white picket fence, with women as homemakers and men as breadwinners. Disaffiliation theories of the time describe homeless people as having "low social attachment" and being generally prone to retreatism (Bahr 1973). Although this is not an entirely fair reading of why people are homeless or of the social ties they maintain (Grigsby et al. 1990), they are still seen as a category apart from the mainstream and fixed in urban spaces. Homelessness is increasingly viewed as an individual problem of a group of old men drinking and going nowhere, costing cities needed revenue (Bogue 1963; Spradley 1970; Bahr and Caplow 1973).

## Skid Row: The Hobo's Urban Home

Skid row provides an urban counterpart to the more rustic jungle areas, making it easier to study as representative of hobo life. The organization and evolution of skid row and its residents is the subject of many studies and figures centrally into the urban sociological paradigm developed through the Chicago School in the early to mid 1900s. Some of the ideas initially posed about urban change and development boil down to a simple question: Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Does it make us more diversified in thinking and acting or more fragmented, disconnected, and unhappy?

Unlike the jungle, which exists in the interstices of urban development, skid row is seen as a negative part of urban change, a “zone of penury” for the highly mobile, disaffiliated subject (Burgess 1925). Skid row residents are pathologized and divided into various social categories. Their most common traits include “the nature of a man’s employment and his propensity to travel about” (Bahr 1973, 112; Anderson 1923). As long as mobility and employment are used to characterize hoboes, they are respected slightly more than mere wanderers. Once this link is broken, those who cannot work are stagnant, tied to localities for shelter, service, and correction, and with dwindling opportunities.

Skid row helps fix the hobo in space and time and connects him to various organizations designed to cater to his needs. These same organizations also further his alienation, as the bar for service is gradually raised, vices are catered to, and money-making schemes part hoboes from the spoils of their labor. Particularly as shelter and service organizations grow within skid row, hoboes and eventually homeless people find themselves becoming passive clients, rather than active workers or consumers (Berger, Berger, and Kellner 1973). In Bahr’s (1973, 120) view, one of primary challenges homeless people face is the effect of “occupying several stigmatized statuses at once,” causing the embrace of skid row values in an act of self-preservation, a precursor for identity work (Snow and Anderson 1993). Bahr (1973) draws on Robert Merton’s theory of anomie to explain disaffiliation among hoboes as a way of coping with their own inability to forge and sustain productive social ties. He also examines the lack of power among hoboes as a reason for disaffiliation:

Power is control over environment—both the physical and the social environment . . . affiliations can be conceived as reflections

of power . . . power is manifest through organizations. A homeless man lacks the power to influence others or to mold his own future. It is an unenviable, and at the same time, a threatening condition. Skid row is reputed to be full of men in this state. (Bahr 1973, 31)

Skid row caters to the needs of the homeless traveler, but as consumers, hoboes have little power and engaging with service organizations reaffirms their marginality. At the same time, authorities develop new ways of rounding up, sheltering, and policing a seemingly permanent troublesome population and redeveloping city areas to make them more lucrative, exchangeable spaces. Laws against loitering, trespassing, and other nuisance offenses proliferate, restricting the movement and behavior of skid row residents and replacing the anti-tramp laws that regulated mobility in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Cresswell 2006). Instead of mobility being the primary problem with hoboes, occupying public space and performing private activities in public become the most poignant issues, as hoboes negotiate their position in a changing urban environment (Amster 2008).

What happens to the jungles during the postwar period is difficult to track, as few detailed records exist of them, even in their heyday. The Santa Barbara jungle is a semipermanent community that provides a unique view of what life was like from the perspective of its residents. Existing on private land in the downtown waterfront area, this jungle offers a setting through which to explore ideas of masculinity, domesticity, and how a marginalized group, of both men and eventually women, fits into a town that doesn't want them. Neatly situated between the beach, the dump, and the railroad station, the early jungle is a collection of twenty to sixty shacks, surviving until the late 1950s, when it fades out of existence only to resurface in the 1980s and endure to 2020, the present year. It provides an understanding of the hobo population; why the jungle is preferable to skid row, shelters, or a life on the move; and how marginal men develop social ties among one another and with the local community.

## **The 1980s: Survival and Resistance**

By the 1980s, the jungle has risen to prominence, along with homelessness in general, as a nationwide problem of crisis proportions. Primary causes include deinstitutionalization, the 1981–1982 recession, polarized housing and employment markets, inadequate public

assistance, domestic violence, mental illness, and changes in family structure (Baxter and Hopper 1981; Burt 1991, 1992; Wolch and Dear 1993; Baumohl 1996). The 1980s also inherit the loss of shared prosperity that occurs with widening income inequality beginning in the 1970s, when income gains at the top economic sector begin to flourish and continue to grow exponentially faster than in other sectors (Stone et al. 2018). But it is more than just increasing economic polarization that causes the immediate crisis; it is the four-pronged attack of inadequate housing, inaccessible employment, criminalization, and individual risk factors that set the scene for disaster. Employment trends show increasing levels of training and education needed to access the growing professional and service sectors (Wyatt and Hecker 2006; Fisk 2003). The housing market shows a lack of affordable units, stagnant growth, the elimination of subsidies, and the lack of a shelter safety net. And to make matters worse, jails and prisons, inevitable way stations for the marginal, explode during this decade and into the 1990s, with changing policies that promise a war on drugs and a get-tough-on-crime approach (Western 2001). The result is that the seasonal manual labor that hoboes relied on is either gone or provides just enough to survive on, but not enough to procure housing, which is not available anyway, and they are at risk on the street.

Understanding unsheltered homelessness in the 1980s is a challenge, particularly in terms of quantifying and regulating a large, diverse, and less mobile population. Instead of reducing mobility by restricting travel, regulation in this decade focuses on stagnation or mere visibility in public spaces; people experiencing homelessness are seen as a problem that won't go away. With the homeless ranks growing to Depression-era proportions, the nation's response comes from a sense of helplessness, and because of the volume and diversity of the population, structural factors are considered the most likely cause. But the focus on individual causes and vulnerabilities never disappears entirely. Some categories of homeless people are seen as undeserving, sympathetic victims, incapable of providing for themselves, and are offered a handout. Others are seen as people who are too lazy, addicted, or otherwise weak or flawed to merit assistance or are considered a threat to public safety. Service in the 1980s means minimally providing for sympathetic victims and leaving the rest to fight criminalization and struggle to survive on the streets. This inherent split between good and bad informs the cre-

ation of shelters and services for specific segments of the population, making entry requirements exclusive and confusing. Focusing on specific categories of homeless people rather than the overall population supports the status quo view of poverty as a permanent part of society (DiFazio 2006).

The first and only major federal response to homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100-77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482, 42 U.S.C. § 11301 et seq.) is designed to offer immediate assistance as well as a continuum of care, implemented in 1994, to move people up a stepwise ladder beginning with behavioral compliance and emergency shelter and advancing to transitional and perhaps eventually permanent housing. People who are unsheltered are initially treated in a nuanced way as living in “a temporary makeshift accommodation in the residence of another individual, or a public/private place not . . . ordinarily used as . . . a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings” (S. Res. 813, Sess. of 1987), but wording is simplified in the final version to lacking a “fixed nighttime residence.” Understanding exactly who people living unsheltered are, what they need, and what society is prepared to give them is up for grabs in the 1980s and beyond. But whatever its flaws and inadequacies, McKinney-Vento offers some ameliorative solutions to the immediate and growing crisis directing the most aid to those seen as undeserving victims of structural inequalities. It also begins the complicated process of defining unsheltered homelessness ideologically as needing service participation but increasingly unable to access welfare benefits, reintegrative strategies, or mainstream housing and employment. As a result of limited shelter space and directing resources to vulnerable populations, single men are last in line to receive federal assistance (Passaro 1996) and the face of unsheltered homelessness remains predominantly male.

In the midst of this crisis, many new enforcement measures are developed to protect citizens from the damage that seeing homeless people can cause. These measures reinforce the social, spatial, and behavioral norms that make public spaces the domain of housed citizens (Feldman 2004; Arnold 2004) and further marginalize people experiencing homelessness. This legal response assists municipalities in protecting themselves from the discomfort caused by homeless people in public, as well as any dangers and risks they may pose, including a loss of revenue. These laws are enacted locally but have federal implications, as they directly challenge the fundamental

rights of citizenship embodied in several Constitutional Amendments (Feldman 2004; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and the National Coalition for the Homeless 2009, 2013). They are also flexible, as they can be tailored to the needs and concerns of specific municipalities to address local issues related to the appearance and behavior of homeless people in public. Despite its effectiveness in removing homeless people from public places, anti-homeless criminalization ensures a lack of all but cyclical mobility, as homeless people are easy to find and cite repeatedly, reinforcing the cycle known as “churning” (Hudson 2015). This makes it more difficult to escape homelessness, prolongs time on the street, and creates enduring barriers to housing and employment.

For many people experiencing homelessness in this era, makeshift solutions are the only option, as even by conservative estimates, the need for housing greatly outpaces the resources, to the tune of at least a quarter of a million people without shelter (Hopper, Susser, and Conover 1985; Burt 1992). Along with emergency shelter provisions come questions about the moral worth of people experiencing homelessness, their culpability, and the basic questions: Are they honest or not? Will assistance be rehabilitative or will it reinforce laziness and dependence, possible reasons for homelessness in the first place? Many policies developed in the 1980s are geared toward ensuring that homeless people do not get too comfortable in an easy, taxpayer-supported lifestyle. And new, ugly stereotypes proliferate to corroborate this fear, including President Ronald Reagan’s infamous “welfare queen,” supporting the idea that black women, in particular, are milking the system. This skepticism, always racialized, about the overall moral character of benefit recipients sets the stage for favoring shorter subsidies with higher deliverables, for example, replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Ozawa and Yoon 2005; Danielson and Klerman 2008), and for service interactions fraught with mistrust and a legacy of personal and structural oppression.

The one thing people experiencing homelessness have going for them in the 1980s is that they gain national attention on an unprecedented scale. As the nation’s cause célèbre, homelessness inspires scholarly research, federal policy changes, films, protest activities, and other forms of cultural, political, and social expression.<sup>10</sup> Protest focuses on the structural conditions leading to homelessness, arguing for shelter, services, and a moratorium on regulation strategies tar-

getting individual behavior and the occupation of public space. Basic rights are also a focus, as many of the offenses homeless people are targeted for are life-sustaining activities or those considered central to citizenship and survival, such as sleeping and voting (Mitchell 2001). To address these issues, several national organizations are founded during this decade, including the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the National Coalition for the Homeless, and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, emphasizing the overwhelming consensus that homelessness is an emergency that needs to be remedied and demonstrating the strength of grassroots advocacy in establishing a national platform. Advocacy groups such as the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), headed by activist Mitch Snyder, and the National Coalition for the Homeless, founded by lawyer Robert Hayes, are the primary advocates for change and provisions on the federal level during this era.

In part because advocates have greater resources, higher political profiles, and the ability to negotiate eloquently on behalf of homeless people, homeless leaders never fully emerge. The logic behind silencing homeless people or speaking for them is part of a set of authoritative strategies designed to manage and exclude the unruly (Wright 1997, 182–183), even when used by advocates. For the CCNV and the National Coalition for the Homeless, the politics of compassion that characterizes homeless people as having a host of structural and individual vulnerabilities leading to homelessness is replaced by the politics of entitlement that argues for increased rights as a social justice issue that should be available to all regardless of status or identity (Hoch and Slayton 1989). Both approaches contest the idea that homelessness is an individual failing, but compassion leads to a loss of agency for homeless people who are pitied as victims of forces beyond their control, and entitlement is a threatening idea, as many Americans feel that they too struggle to make ends meet without assistance or handouts and homeless people should be able to do the same. As a result, and with Snyder at the helm of the CCNV, anti-homeless protest is both powerful and threatening, directed to offering immediate emergency services and shelter, and protesting unfair conditions.

Because of the compliance involved in seeking service, as well as the squalid conditions and a lack of shelter beds, unsheltered homelessness and makeshift living are seen as viable, preferable alternatives, and also as a form of resistance (Wagner 1993). Ethnographic

work in the 1980s and 1990s examines the distinction between sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, emphasizing the need to retain a sense of control, acceptance, and community as key reasons for going unsheltered (Dordick 1997; Underwood 1993). Resistance activities by homeless people include makeshift sleeping as part of a larger set of urban survival strategies used to manage any combination of hunger, shelter, poverty, disability, trauma, and abuse, not to mention the more controversial problems of addiction and mental illness. “Economies of makeshift” describes a series of strategies designed to adapt under duress (Hopper, Susser, and Conover 1985). They exemplify homeless people’s resilience and ability to create their own solutions to various problems and can be characterized by their ad hoc character, mobility, resort to public relief, parochial charity or begging, and participation in the underground economy (Hopper, Susser, and Conover 1985, 214). They are, by nature, adaptive to the immediate environment, whether that means having a good line to ask for spare change in cities nationwide or knowing which dumpsters have clean food in one’s home city. They also take into account one’s marginal status and the work needed to avoid regulation and get basic needs met, whether that means hiding or acting deferent or otherwise supplicatory to authorities.

The types of makeshift sleeping arrangements people use, as opposed to public and private shelters, vary widely depending on resources and availability and can include vehicles, buildings, sidewalk spaces like doorways, benches, aqueducts, tunnels, or other semipublic areas, tent cities, and jungles (Dehavenon 1996; Dordick 1997; Wakin 2014). Establishing these settings as an alternative to emergency shelter is a form of identity work that allows occupants to build self-esteem through minimizing contact with individuals and groups that reinforce stigma and marginality (Wright 1997). The jungle allows people experiencing homelessness to avoid the pain that goes with “mixed contacts,” between stigmatized and normal, and the negative public attention that reinforces a degraded status and invites police attention. The idea of “mixed contacts,” detailed in Chapter 4, draws attention to the discomfort involved in most service situations, where homeless people must account for their stigma and agree to fix it as a condition of seeking service (Goffman 1963). The shame and emotional work that often characterizes service interactions is a barrier to shelter and makes alternative living situations preferable.

The primary new space developed for people experiencing homelessness during this decade, and which they and advocates argue for vehemently, is the emergency shelter. Without a direct path to housing, emergency shelters are often empty warehouse spaces with cots or mats on the floor and a soup kitchen or other ad hoc services, when available. Instead of acting to immediately reduce the stress that homeless people are under or protect them from the dangerous conditions on the streets, shelters re-create the sense of emergency while ironically being seen as a precious resource. Homeless people entering emergency shelter in the 1980s begin a long path of service and compliance to prove their worth, which everyone doubts, and expend emotional and physical energy, which they don't have, and the promise of housing is often elusive.

The proliferation of service institutions for homeless people in the 1980s has the effect of making shelter itself synonymous with the general category "homeless." Skid row serves a similar function in earlier decades and is a much more homogenous and fixed part of the urban landscape, but beginning in the 1980s, the very definition of homelessness rests largely on service participation, or more specifically, shelter bed use. No longer able to count on skid row areas because of gentrification and other factors, homeless people are beholden to the organizations designed to serve them and are increasingly submissive to daily rules and schedules. At the same time, the increase in anti-homeless criminalization makes city spaces unsafe and makes unsheltered homeless people spend their days avoiding law enforcement. Instead of choosing periods of work and rest, people experiencing homelessness in the 1980s become accustomed to institutional routines at the expense of long-term planning or developing community, as they do more readily in makeshift settings. They also endure the duress of living a life on the run (Goffman 2014) and often avoid staying in one place for any length of time, or they opt out of service institutions entirely, and live life "off the grid."

The jungle is an "off the grid" place in the sense that people who live there often avoid services that require any intake procedure, identification, or record keeping beyond a head count. Most do not have credit cards, cell phones, or other means of ready identification indicating their position in the marketplace, as consumers. They are, in Mitchell Duneier's (2000) terminology, "men without accounts." The scavenging that they do to find food and the trappings

of shelter is often time consuming, as it involves dodging police and avoiding trouble. One citation can topple the fragile apple cart of makeshift strategies many homeless people use to meet their needs for food, shelter, and basic resources. Because their possessions may be discarded during an arrest, homeless people often find themselves without even the meager possessions they have accumulated, and the time and effort it takes to reestablish credit or obtain identification causes many to give up. This is one way that people experiencing homelessness can become trapped in a revolving door of temporal and spatial control that punishes problematic identities and prevents social mobility.

But the 1980s is also a time for social protest and for pro-homeless advocacy at the local and national levels. Santa Barbara's jungle is at the center of the controversy for its anti-sleeping laws and hostile attitude toward "street people." Although the 1980s jungle there exists on public land, instead of the private property the early jungle enjoyed, the active social protest movement emboldens homeless people to take over other city areas, to protest unfair conditions, and to work with local and national advocates to do so. In this sense, it shares a legacy with the early jungle of community building with housed advocates who wield substantial power within the movement. But the loss of a private space and the different demographics of the 1980s Santa Barbara jungle community both solidify the idea of danger and threat associated with a troublesome population.

## **Millennial Jungle**

It used to be the case that hoboes could travel the country surreptitiously on the same rail routes as paying customers. They had skid row as well as jungle areas and could afford cheap lodging, arranging their lives with periods of work and rest. In the 1980s, homelessness becomes a national crisis, and policy is directed toward filling emergency needs and protecting housed citizens. By contrast, homeless people today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, are living in the shadows of global cities and do not hop trains (Von Mahs 2013). They watch trains go by and hide in the bushes, drinking and beating each other to death.<sup>11</sup> They are the failures of late capitalism, unable or unwilling to embrace consumerism, spatially and socially marginalized, and shuttling back and forth between prison

and public shelters or the slightly more benevolent jail and county hospital. We valorize them only as the broken alter egos of corporate men gone wrong. In today's world, like Tyler Derden's character in the 1999 film *Fight Club*, those who do not buy into corporate capitalism completely are seen as psychotic. An ultraviolent, uber-masculine man free of the bonds of wage labor is, in the twenty-first century, just a mirage that exists in a buried part of the corporate imagination. The desire to revolt is kept down, in most cases, by the fear of becoming a social outcast, a failure, or at best a moral traffic light designed to keep us all in line.<sup>12</sup>

In this context, the jungle is a stigmatized zone where homeless in-groups not only survive but create a community of acceptance and resistance in the face of radical marginalization. Their only other options are correctional, institutional, and shelter spaces, whose proliferation is staggering. There is no valorizing or romanticizing the jungles of today, aside from the idea of freedom from responsibility, which is simply a misunderstanding. Unfettered travel and adventure are not associated with unsheltered homelessness as we now know it. Drifting and transience are only admired when done on private jets, by choice, or in the context of a youthful adventure (Krakauer 1996), but not when they involve filthy, dangerous conditions, trauma, addiction, and mental illness. Then, it's a trap (Kerr 2016). Comparing the jungles of yesterday and today tracks the change from mobility to stagnation and the resulting confines of cyclical motion and examines how alternative notions of identity and community are constructed in the context of living unsheltered.

Jungle spaces in the early 2000s are privatized and polarized, and people refer to them with a sense of ownership, "my jungle," rather than the more collective expression of "the jungle." They are also organized according to drug use and preference and overlap intimately with the organizational structure and culture of prison. People living in today's jungles are typically tethered to institutional and organizational spaces that provide resources they cannot procure on their own, including showers, meals, medical and support services, mail, and clothing and laundry facilities. Because jungle living is not legal in most areas, residents are also subject to police sweeps and receive citations for trespassing and other nuisance crimes (National Coalition for the Homeless 2004; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and the National Coalition for the Homeless 2009, 2013; Mitchell 2001). Mobility, therefore, becomes more difficult

over time, as city spaces become more and more regulated, policed, and gentrified, and homeless people's time is circumscribed according to institutional routines (Mitchell 2003). The physical danger of riding the rails is replaced with the drudgery of constant walking and movement without the excitement of possibility or new destinations and with accompanying illnesses, disabilities, and other forms of risk that make it that much more difficult (Dear and Wolch 1987; Wolch 1995). Even when homeless people buy automobiles to live in, they are chased around city areas, and new ordinances crop up that force them to remain in constant motion to avoid citation but without the means to escape entirely (Wakin 2014).

In the 2000s, how homeless people spend their time is of less interest than the length of time they remain homeless. Like the emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing nomenclature that differentiates types of shelter, time on the street is also quantified into "transitional, episodic, or chronic" (Murphy and Tobin 2011). People in the "chronic" category are defined as having a disabling condition and having been continuously homeless for one year or more, or having had four episodes of homelessness in the last three years (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 2007). As complicated as this definition is, "disabling" is further broken down to include one or more of the following issues: substance abuse, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, and an "episode" is a "separate, distinct, sustained stay" on the streets or in an emergency shelter (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development 2008). Research corroborates the idea that people who are chronically homeless are more likely to experience mental health issues and that these are exacerbated by life experiences and coping strategies prior to and while experiencing homelessness (Lippert and Lee 2015), so it is difficult to discern which comes first. Determining mental illness is also difficult, unless you have clinical expertise, so estimates often rely on guesses by "experts" and homeless service providers, and no official diagnosis.

The first point-in-time (PIT) count was implemented in January 2005, but these definitions make it difficult to understand and put a count into practice. The first 123-page guide to counting unsheltered homeless people, released in 2004, outlines possible counting methodologies, definitions, and the background and purpose of the count. Quantifying unsheltered homelessness remains a daunting task, as counting is often done in the dark, when seeing is a challenge, not

to mention conducting interviews or diagnosing mental health or substance abuse issues or determining the length of homeless “episodes.” Weather also significantly affects the count, as warm-weather areas have greater numbers of people who are unsheltered, and cold-weather areas have greater numbers of people indoors in January, when the count is conducted. As a result, unsheltered counts are the least accurate, consistent, and generalizable, and that population remains the most difficult to quantify or serve.

The length of time people experience homelessness is of interest primarily in light of the expense it causes, as chronically homeless people consume a disproportionate amount of service and tax dollars and can be more affordably housed in apartments than left on the street (Culhane, Park, and Metraux 2011). This explicit linkage recalls the classic phrase “time is money,” except that homeless people’s time is seen as other people’s money. Ending or shortening the length of time people are homeless becomes a primary means of saving tax dollars. Reducing time on the street also saves lives, evidenced by the now well-utilized vulnerability index that measures mortality risk and prioritizes people for housing on this basis (O’Connell et al. 2010). Along with the housing-first initiative (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016), this approach foregrounds the voices, needs, and concerns of the most vulnerable segment of the homeless population, rather than eclipsing them in favor of economic savings. But whether reducing the amount of time people experience homelessness saves money or saves lives, both approaches agree that it is beneficial to shorten the length of time on the street.

As they did in the 1980s, people living in jungles in the 2000s remain unsheltered in part because of the degradation involved in seeking public assistance and in part because of the confusing and inadequate array of housing and service choices and eligibility requirements, and for many other reasons too numerous to describe (Donley and Wright 2012). People also resist shelter because increased time on the streets can result in an embrace of street culture and the homeless label (Snow and Anderson 1993; Wagner 1993). Embracing the values and survival strategies employed on the street, and even the modes of dress and communication, makes it more difficult for people to reintegrate into housed society. Both existence and resistance, in the form of occupying public spaces and communicating or behaving in ways that are not sanctioned by authority (Wright 1997), are risky as they result in jail and prison

stays and other forms of institutional cycling (DeVerteuil 2003). The physical, emotional, and psychological toll that criminalization takes, not to mention legal complications, is a significant barrier to exiting homelessness (Kerr 2016).

In cities nationwide, there is still an acknowledged lack of shelter or affordable housing, leaving thousands of homeless people to find makeshift locations to sleep in on a nightly basis.<sup>13</sup> Whether they do so as an act of resistance or as a necessity, those who are unsheltered must know where to hide, as the most frequent citations are for performing bodily functions in public, including sitting, eating, sleeping, and going to the bathroom (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and the National Coalition for the Homeless 2009). For people experiencing homelessness, the inevitable cycle of one's daily routine is done under constant scrutiny and the fear of persecution, what Tate (2015) calls "policing comfort." Targeting offers a two-pronged attack against the intellectual and emotional offenses homeless people may cause, collectively referred to as "quality of life" offenses (Kelling and Coles 1996; Vitale 2005). Criminalization strategies, now far more numerous and targeted than in the 1980s, reinforce the idea that people experiencing homelessness don't merit the rights or comforts the rest of us take for granted, not even the right to vote, sit down, sleep, or rest (Mitchell 2001; Ellickson 2001). And it may also be that there is still the lingering idea that perhaps homeless people don't even understand, appreciate, or deserve these basic rights (Feldman 2004). For these reasons, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2013) calls the criminalization of homelessness "cruel, inhuman, and degrading."

Relegating people who are already stigmatized and often traumatized to marginal areas reinforces their marginality, rather than letting them blend in and disappear, as even chronically homeless people with acute mental illness can do with the housing-first principle today (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016). This innovative approach is now mainstreamed through the federal funding application process. But the brilliance of the "housing first" idea is that it treats homeless people with acute mental illness as consumers (Tsemberis, Gulcur, and Nakae 2004). This strategy works, on an interactional level, because people experiencing homelessness are given the one thing they need above all else, with relatively few conditions and high chances for success, when properly implemented. Housing first allows for control over time and space, for the most part, and its impact on

identity is often transformative. The overall long-term goals are safe housing and individual and social betterment.

Without a steady income from employment or public assistance, all that homeless people usually have to pay is of themselves. They are expected to pay emotionally, in deference and submission to authority, by being detained in jail and/or serving prison time for transgressions of public space laws and behavioral norms. They may also pay physically in violence and sex work, which they are victims of or which they use to procure things, increasing exposure to various, insidious forms of risk, and making exit that much more difficult (Purser, Mowbray, and O'Shields 2017). These ways of paying fundamentally inform and structure the experience of unsheltered homelessness, leaving little time for long-term planning, employment, sobriety, or anything else that might lead to reintegration. Aside from the payment of public assistance and participation in weekly case management that housing first requires, it eliminates all other forms of behavioral compliance, which are not treated as a prerequisite for procuring or sustaining housing (Padgett, Henwood, and Tsemberis 2016). Eliminating this kind of high-barrier physical and emotional work and providing safety with minimal risk allows residents to focus on long-term goals and think of themselves as consumers with choices.

The farther people retreat from shelters, city streets, or housed society in general, the more they are insulated from all but targeted regulation. Despite their relative isolation, jungles overlap with tent cities (Udelsman 2011; Heben 2014) and encampments (Herring 2014; United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2015). Whereas jungles are almost always hidden, tent cities are sometimes located in more prominent areas and may be designed to draw attention to homelessness as a problematic condition in need of remedy (Herring and Lutz 2015). Tent cities also have some overlap with more explicitly political movements, for example, Occupy Wall Street (OWS), and its national and global counterparts (Schein 2012). For these initiatives, occupying space makes overlapping claims: public space belongs to all, those in power do not represent the people, the system has failed the people, and change is possible (Gould-Wartofsky 2015, 31). The revolutionary potential of these more organized and explicitly political tent cities is reminiscent of early attempts to organize hoboes under the IWW. They are also reminiscent of the 1980s reliance on advocates to focus and deliver the

movement's message and goals. Today's jungles, by contrast, do not want attention. They may share some of the sentiments expressed by Occupy, and many joined the movement, but as sleeping spaces go, they are designed to remain hidden.

## **A Jungle in Paradise**

Unsheltered homelessness today is still the domain of single men. About 35 percent of the total nationwide homeless population is unsheltered and 71 percent are male (Annual Homeless Assessment Report 2017). Half of all unsheltered homeless people in the country live in California, and 66 percent of the statewide homeless population is unsheltered. California has also been named the "meanest" state with respect to anti-homeless criminalization and having the least-affordable housing market (National Coalition for the Homeless 2004). Unsheltered homeless people living in California today face competition for scarce resources and a host of regulation measures that limit their mobility and punish their visibility in public. Does this mean they are "disaffiliated," that they lack productive social ties, or that we ensure disaffiliation by breaking down their sense of agency through constrained mobility, high-barrier shelters, and repeat interaction with law enforcement and other agencies of correction?

First appearing in the early 1900s, the Santa Barbara jungle is a collection of shacks on the property of Lillian Child, a wealthy widow and owner of prime waterfront land. It differs from most jungles of the time because of its spatial and temporal permanence. Its population ranges from a high of approximately sixty men in the 1930s to only three in the 1960s, and its collection of shacks swells and dwindles accordingly. The jungle is protected because it exists on private property, and its sense of community and social structure are allowed to flourish. After Child's death in 1951, the estate, including the jungle, is deeded to the city for the construction of a public park, and when the land is eventually developed, all of the men relocate. The jungle reemerges in virtually the same area, on publicly owned but still undeveloped land in the 1980s, when it becomes a site for social protest and a symbol of the fear and danger associated with homeless street people. By the early 2000s, jungles are more fragmented camps, still scattered along the railroad tracks

and in close proximity to the jungle of old. The fights, sweeps, and fires that occur in the jungle of the early 2000s show that it is a place where street justice holds sway.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the Santa Barbara jungle as a literal and figurative anchor point for men on the road. Using two first-hand accounts from men who live in the jungle, I explore how they survive and create a sense of community. The first account is from a resident known as the “Bookman,” who lives in the jungle from 1940 to 1943, along with approximately forty to sixty others. He writes a series of letters on daily life, an overview of survival strategies, and descriptions of the personalities and routines of the men. The second account is from Edward Anderson, who serves as mayor of the jungle from 1951 to 1958. He acts as the jungle’s spokesperson and arbiter of any conflicts that occur therein. He is also a prolific writer, and his letters appear in the local press even after his tenure as mayor comes to an end. These letters, along with two scrapbooks abundantly stocked with photos, clippings, poems, and short stories, are used in this chapter to explore the culture and community of the jungle, survival strategies, and interaction with the housed community.

Chapter 3 focuses on power and protest in the jungle in the 1980s. During this time, the jungle exists on public property and is a highly controversial site. This chapter draws on a seventy-five-page manuscript by author, activist, and Santa Barbara resident Peter Marin, which examines the structure and culture of the jungle. It also includes information from thirty interviews with homeless people and advocates active in the protest movement of the 1980s, and the summaries provided in Rob Rosenthal’s (1994) *Homeless in Paradise: A Map of the Terrain*, and Jane Haggstrom’s (1994) dissertation, “The Santa Barbara Sleeping Law Controversy: A Study of the Empowerment of the Homeless.” These sources are used to explore the protest activities that take place in Santa Barbara in the 1980s with particular emphasis on the right to sleep and vote. By this time, the existence of the jungle and everyone in it is challenged, and mobility and transiency become central concerns for authorities seeking to regulate the local homeless community. This debate plays out in local newspapers, and this chapter draws on over 300 articles to illustrate the battle. Overall, this decade raises questions about citizenship, entitlement, identity, protest, and advocacy that will be key concerns for homeless people for years to come.

Chapter 4 incorporates fieldwork I conducted from 2000 to 2005 and includes twenty visits to jungle camps and extended interviews with thirty-five jungle residents, detailed in the body of the chapter. Similar to the early chapters, initial questions that structure these interviews include pathways into and out of homelessness, current survival strategies, and forms of identity work. These issues are also explored through fieldwork, as people often furnish better answers to questions when they go unasked (Van Maanen 1991). Exploring how people in the jungle see themselves in relation to society, to law enforcement, and to their former and future selves offers a comparison with earlier years. This chapter uses three sets of partners who live together in the jungle to examine these issues in greater depth. With the rise of shelterization and criminalization as strategies of containment, the focus here is on the limited, cyclical mobility that people experiencing homelessness find themselves trapped within and on possible ways out.

Chapter 5 offers an updated view of makeshift housing solutions and includes data collected in 2006, 2008, and 2016 to trace the lives of long-term jungle residents. Using interviews, surveys, and fieldwork, I examine the evolution of the legal battle over public space in Santa Barbara and the provision of shelter and services for people living unsheltered. A comparison of different forms of unsheltered homelessness from an ethnographic perspective provides a detailed view of the reasons people choose to live in makeshifts like jungles and vehicles over other alternatives. I address the issue of how different makeshifts foster resistance and examine local advocacy efforts to assist people living in the jungle in contesting criminalization, accessing education, and preserving stable housing. I also examine grassroots efforts to offer community and support to the jungle's long-term residents, focusing on quality of life and reintegration. Finally, I explore how the experience of living unsheltered affects identity, community, and chances for survival and resistance. Chapter 6 continues this exploration and suggests that understanding the experience of jungle living warrants refocusing policies and services to address rebuilding identity and community over survival and punishment.