

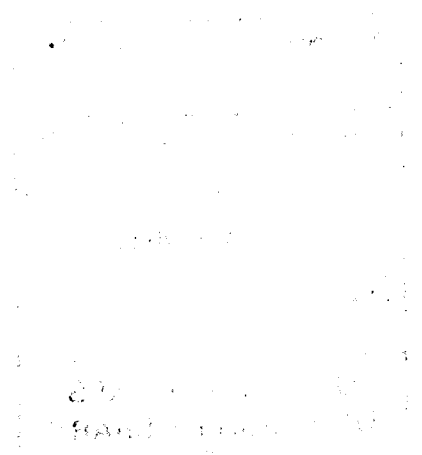
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF REPEATED HOMELESSNESS IN
OXFORD

CHANTAL BUTCHINSKY

This degree is awarded by Oxford Brookes University

**This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the
award of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2004



Abstract

An Anthropological Study of Repeated Homelessness in Oxford - Chantal I Butchinsky
School of Social Sciences and Law, Oxford Brookes University, July 2004

This is a study about the spatial and temporal routines of rough sleepers in Oxford, whose homelessness persisted and was repeated, and how these routines intersected with their social worlds. Participant observation undertaken over three years provides new insights into the practices rough sleepers were engaged in whilst living on the streets. These practices were related, on the one hand, to processes of creating meaning and order for individual rough sleepers, and on the other hand, to social constructions and discourses applied to the entire homelessness category, and to those in particular whose homelessness took place on the streets. The lack of narrative coherence rough sleepers experienced when they became homeless led them to undertake activities that compounded the physical and emotional problems they already experienced as a result of their precarious livelihood. Participant observation enabled the researcher to examine the way personal and public practices were connected through rough sleepers' identities, manifest in the uses they made of public discourses about them.

Whilst the patterns that created the recurring nature of their homelessness are analysed here, the argument is also made that repeatedly crossing between various forms of accommodation reflected a pattern of impermanence that became taken for granted by rough sleepers. This impermanence was created by both rough sleepers and non-homeless individuals and parties whose encounters with each other often resulted in rough sleepers moving on. The variety of institutional and non-institutional settings many rough sleepers passed through lay at the heart of their impermanence and reflected difficulties they had with cycles of health, intoxication and in their social relationships. It is recommended that the skills rough sleepers developed to deal with the difficult conditions of living without shelter and, as a consequence of their low social status, without entitlement to shelter, should be emphasised and applauded.

Acknowledgements

There are many people to whom I owe thanks. Firstly I am immensely grateful to all the rough sleepers who allowed me to participate in their routines and who agreed to answer the many questions I asked. They also offered me protection, companionship and immense consideration. I will never forget them. In particular I must mention Colin, Bryn, Ritchie, Jason, Jo, Pete, Steve C., Richard and Steve W.

I am also indebted to all of the staff of Oxford Housing Rights Centre. Gerard, Debbie, Pat, Sitara, Yvonne, Dave, Robin and Nigel gave me much of their time. My thanks also go out to Kiwi from The Big Issue, who trusted me and who I hope I have not let down. Simon also helped me at The Big Issue, and my thanks are due to him as well. I must also thank John, from the Street Scene Task Force, who at various stages of my fieldwork agreed to answer my questions, despite being very busy indeed.

The Wingate Foundation gave me a very generous scholarship for the period 2001-2003 and I received a RAI/Satusoma Award in 2003. I would like to here acknowledge these organizations' assistance with immense thanks.

I am very grateful to the graduate community at Oxford Brookes University, who listened to me as I developed this project and who gave me useful comments. I am grateful to all the academics in the School of Social Sciences and Law, who encouraged me. My immense thanks go to my supervisors, Professor Jeremy MacClancy and Dr. Chris McDonagh. They read many drafts of my work, supported me and helped to improve my work by discussing it with me. I would also like to thank the administrative staff, especially Jill Organ and Jan Boylen.

Finally I must also mention my family and friends: Joe and Richard took care of me through all the ups and downs; my parents JF and Charm (and of course, Alan) have supported me too. My friends Gem, Jim, Big Jo and Helen kept me going and from Brazil, my friends Rutnea, Chris and Beto in particular, always encouraged me whilst I completed this work.

Table of contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of contents	iii
Figures	vii
 <u>Part One. Theoretical Framework</u>	 1
Chapter 1. Homelessness in context	1
Section A. Development of discourses about homelessness	4
1. <i>Creating 'vagrants' and 'the impotent poor'</i>	4
2. <i>Poverty and pauperism: the nineteenth century</i>	6
2.1. <i>1824 Vagrancy Act and 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act</i>	7
2.2. <i>Science, the 'new philanthropy' and the 'pauper'</i>	8
2.3. <i>Charity and the development of state welfare</i>	10
3. <i>1977 – 1997: Debate closure</i>	11
3.1. <i>'Rolling back the state' 1979 – 1997</i>	13
3.1.1. <i>'Blame the victim' theories: dependency and the underclass</i>	15
3.1.2. <i>'Blame the system' theories and citizenship</i>	16
4. <i>'Social Exclusion' and 'belonging': 1997 – present</i>	18
4.1. <i>New Labour and communitarianism</i>	19
4.2. <i>Social exclusion</i>	20
4.2.1. <i>Social exclusion as 'closure'</i>	21
4.3. <i>State and charity</i>	22
4.3.1. <i>Homelessness industry</i>	23
Section B. Literature about the social problem of homelessness	25
1. <i>Definitions</i>	26
2. <i>Measurements</i>	28
3. <i>Causes</i>	29
4. <i>Solutions</i>	31
4.1. <i>Prevention</i>	31
4.2. <i>Provision</i>	32
5. <i>Problems with the research agenda</i>	33
5.1. <i>Locating the importance of agency</i>	34
Section C. Ethnographic insights	35

1. <i>Classifying ethnographies</i>	36
2. <i>Mobility/transience</i>	38
2.1. <i>Homeless spaces</i>	40
2.2. <i>Time</i>	43
3. <i>Community</i>	44
3.1. <i>Shadow work</i>	45
4. <i>Cultural resources and selfhood</i>	46
Section D. Where this project fits in	49
 Chapter 2. Methods	 52
Section A. The research process	53
1. <i>Chronology of research</i>	53
2. <i>Homeless people: sample and recruitment</i>	53
2.1. <i>Modes of gaining access to rough sleepers</i>	55
2.2. <i>Methods</i>	56
2.2.1. <i>Recording data</i>	57
3. <i>Undertaking research within organisations that worked with homeless people</i>	59
Section B. Issues arising in the research process	61
1. <i>Undertaking research alone</i>	61
2. <i>Doing anthropology 'at home'</i>	63
2.1. <i>'Immersion' in the field</i>	63
2.2. <i>Participant observation at night times</i>	64
2.3. <i>Nature of the 'field'</i>	67
Section C. Ethics	68
1. <i>Ethics and organisations/workers</i>	68
2. <i>Ethics and rough sleepers</i>	69
2.1. <i>Informed consent</i>	69
2.2. <i>Money and rough sleepers</i>	69
2.3. <i>Confidentiality</i>	70
3. <i>Ethics and covert research</i>	71
 <u>Part Two. Ethnography in Oxford</u>	 73
Introduction to Part Two	73
Chapter 3. Routines of daily life on the street	94
Section A. Home/no home	94
Section B. Daily routines of mobility and place-making	103

1. <i>Sleeping places outdoors</i>	106
1.1. <i>Passers-by</i>	111
1.2. <i>Police</i>	111
1.3. <i>Shelter</i>	112
1.4. <i>Obtaining basic provisions</i>	113
1.5. <i>Being stationary and being mobile: places and routes</i>	114
1.6. <i>'Pitches' (working places for homeless street workers)</i>	115
1.7. <i>Vending and begging places</i>	118
1.8. <i>Places for drinking and using drugs</i>	119
2. <i>Patterns of time on the streets</i>	120
2.1. <i>'Empty time'</i>	121
2.2. <i>Present orientation</i>	122
2.3. <i>Weekday routines</i>	124
2.4. <i>Using substances</i>	129
 Chapter 4. Repeated homelessness: Patterns of periodic mobility	 134
Section A. How daily and periodic time-frames intersected	136
1. <i>Cycles of intoxication and detoxification</i>	138
1.1. <i>Cutting down, unaided detoxification and abstinence</i>	139
1.2. <i>Aided detoxification and residential detoxification</i>	140
1.3. <i>Relapse</i>	141
2. <i>Cycles of ill and good health</i>	142
2.1. <i>Physical ailments arising from use of drink or drugs</i>	142
2.2. <i>Mental health</i>	144
3. <i>Cycles of sociality</i>	145
3.1. <i>Family members</i>	146
3.2. <i>Friends</i>	146
Section B. Patterns of repeated homelessness: intersections of tenure and longer time frames	 148
1. <i>Home</i>	149
1.1. <i>'Home' as privacy</i>	149
1.2. <i>'Home', stability and meaningful work</i>	150
1.3. <i>No home</i>	150
1.4. <i>'Home' as normality</i>	151
2. <i>Routes in and out of accommodation</i>	151
3. <i>Accommodation in private and socially rented sectors</i>	153
3.1. <i>Licence contracts</i>	156
4. <i>Services and welfare/housing benefits</i>	157
4.1. <i>Hostels</i>	158
5. <i>Prison</i>	164
6. <i>Fleeing violence</i>	165
7. <i>Accompanying friends</i>	165
8. <i>From accommodation to shelter or streets</i>	166

9. <i>First homeless episode</i>	167
10. <i>Permanent end to homelessness</i>	169
 Chapter 5. Social world of homeless people	 176
Section A. Internal classifications	180
1. <i>Forming typologies and lack of clear-cut identities</i>	180
1.1. <i>Mobile vs. institutionalised homelessness</i>	182
2. <i>Drug users – ‘dark’ and ‘white’</i>	184
2.1. <i>‘Brown’</i>	184
2.2. <i>‘White’</i>	184
2.3. <i>Levels of addiction</i>	185
3. <i>Drinkers – ‘functional alcoholics’ and ‘alcoholics’</i>	186
3.1. <i>‘Social drinkers’ and ‘functional alcoholics’</i>	186
3.2. <i>‘Alcoholics’</i>	187
4. <i>‘Community care’ people</i>	188
5. <i>‘Straights’</i>	189
Section B. Meeting in outdoor places	191
Section C. Social life	193
1. <i>Street relationships</i>	193
2. <i>Link ups</i>	194
2.1. <i>Nature of link ups</i>	195
2.2. <i>How link ups were formed</i>	196
2.3. <i>Breakdown of link ups</i>	197
3. <i>In groups and alone</i>	199
3.1. <i>Groups</i>	199
3.2. <i>Three-people link ups</i>	201
3.3. <i>‘Loners’</i>	201
4. <i>Quality of relationships on the streets</i>	203
Section D. Internal conflicts	205
1. <i>Drinkers and drug users: negative perceptions of each other</i>	205
1.1. <i>Trading insults</i>	206
2. <i>Crossovers</i>	207
2.1. <i>Crossover link ups?</i>	207
2.2. <i>Substances crossovers?</i>	208
3. <i>Bullying and intimidation</i>	209
Section E. Economy	211
1. <i>Financial differences between different homeless people</i>	212
1.1. <i>Drinkers</i>	212
1.2. <i>Drug users</i>	213

2. <i>'Making raises'</i>	214
2.1. <i>Giros</i>	215
2.2. <i>Begging and vending</i>	215
2.3. <i>Other ways to make raises</i>	218
2.4. <i>'Serving up'</i>	218
2.5. <i>Scavenging</i>	220
3. <i>Money</i>	221

Chapter 6. Rough sleepers in relation to the wider society: Discursive frames/constructions and practices 227

Section A. Public order and welfare 229

1. <i>Changes in approaches to public order</i>	229
1.1. <i>Homelessness and citizenship: links between public order and welfare</i>	231
1.2. <i>Welfare. Voluntary sector agencies: past and present</i>	232
1.2.1. <i>Funding and bureaucracy in voluntary sector organisations</i>	233
2. <i>Multi-agency partnership: the Street Scene Task Force</i>	236
3. <i>Work procedures and rules within buildings accommodating rough sleepers</i>	241
3.1. <i>Other workers and ex-staff from agencies in the voluntary sector</i>	244
4. <i>Relations with police officers</i>	248
4.1. <i>Sleeping</i>	248
4.2. <i>Begging</i>	250
4.3. <i>Main police actions</i>	251
4.4. <i>Being a 'grass'</i>	253

Section B. Relations with the general public 256

1. <i>Images of homelessness and the media</i>	256
2. <i>Local residents and homeless people</i>	258
3. <i>Passers-by</i>	261
3.1. <i>Givers</i>	261
3.2. <i>Non-givers</i>	262
3.3. <i>Unsolicited attention</i>	264

Conclusion 270

Bibliography 282

Appendix 300

Figures

Intro.1. Accommodation status of participants	74
Intro.2. Rough Sleeper counts	75
Intro.3. Demographic characteristics	77
Intro.4. ‘Risk’ and ‘trigger’ factors	82
3.1. ‘Home’	99
3.2. Spaces: Indoors and outdoors	105
4.1. Some reasons for repeated homelessness	152
4.2. Participants, where they stayed and duration of first episode	168

CHAPTER ONE: HOMELESSNESS IN CONTEXT

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine repeated homelessness from the perspective of rough sleepers. Using data obtained through participant observation, undertaken within the spatial and temporal routines of rough sleepers themselves, this research explores their transience by linking their quotidian lives to larger historical discourses and social constructs. In particular, it examines the agency rough sleepers display, through their manipulation of spatial and temporal orders and in the various ways that they occupy socially ascribed identities. The transience of rough sleepers has long been recognised as a characteristic of street homelessness, but it has not been given analytical focus or priority. However, the reasons are not fully understood why many rough sleepers, having obtained some form of accommodation, return (often repeatedly) to living on the streets. This study foregrounds their mobility because it has been found to be a vital aspect of their routines and capacities to craft their identities within the practical and discursive constraints they encounter.

Being a rough sleeper is to occupy an historically constructed social position of individual unimportance. Currently dominant discourses about rough sleepers classify them as socially excluded vulnerable people whose behaviour is anti-social, but in the recent past they were viewed as ordinary people, who were victims of socio-economic and political circumstances beyond their control. The way that rough sleepers related to the identities imposed upon them by others, has been conceptualised in this project using Holland et al's notions of 'history in person' and 'identity in practice'. Holland and Lave's edited collection of papers presented at a seminar is about 'the mutually constitutive nature of long and complex social, political, and economic struggles and the historically fashioned identities-in-practice and subjectivities they produce' (Holland & Lave 2001, 3). The authors describe two sets of relations: first is that between local practices and 'broader... historical, processual, and open-ended struggles' (ibid. 6); second is that between local practices and identity and subjectivity. In relation to rough

sleepers, these sets of relations can be articulated thus: firstly, the historical existence and continuity of socially degraded categories used in relation to poor people are detectable in local practices of various non-homeless parties in relation to rough sleepers; however, local practices are not undifferentiated and the translation from dominant discourse to local practice is not direct, but diffused through a variety of competing discourses about rough sleepers as well as a variety of institutional and non-institutional settings. Secondly, rough sleepers, in their interactions with each other and with non-homeless parties, do not only help to reproduce inherited negative images of themselves through their continued occupation of and interaction with their socially ascribed identities, but also they create additional, critical ways of being.

The set of relations between local practices and the subjectivities of rough sleepers has been emphasised more strongly in this project than the first set of relations, that between sociohistorical enduring discourses and local practices. This focus has been further emphasised by the main method chosen, participant observation, to obtain data. Holland et al's work about what they call 'identity-in-practice' provides a particularly useful conceptual framework for understanding rough sleepers' daily and periodic practices. Holland et al view the person and society as 'sites or moments of the production and reproduction of social practices' (Holland et al 1998, 270). Identity is, for them, 'a central means by which selves and the sets of actions they organize form and re-form over personal lifetimes and in the histories of social collectivities'; it is the name for the 'dense interconnections between the intimate and public venues of social practice' (ibid.). It also 'responds to both the imaginary and embodied communities in which we live' (ibid. 192).

I have explained how the public sites of social production and reproduction are themselves locally differentiated. Discourses, as forms of power, 'produce something less than an "epistemic" totality' (ibid. 193). In the relation between historical social constructions and local practices, there exist many contradictions. This renders the public sphere open-ended and not fully determined. There are both constraints and openings, within which rough sleepers can both be trapped and free to improvise and craft their intimate selves, there is room for personal and collective agency.

The transience of rough sleepers leads them to repeatedly cross between forms of accommodation and street homelessness. This involves repeatedly adjusting spatial and temporal frameworks. Whilst they live on the streets, rough sleepers are on the outside of mainstream structuring conditions of work and home and they occupy public spaces where their visibility is high and where they constantly encounter a variety of strangers and acquaintances, both domiciled and homeless. Their exclusion and visibility in some respects renders them vulnerable to the negative judgement of others, including legal authorities. Nevertheless rough sleepers can, to an extent, turn these conditions to their advantage, and thus make their street lives viable by structuring their own time and by moving between different spaces.

In trying to understand the repeated nature of many rough sleepers' homelessness I have examined other author's work on the matter. Randall & Brown suggest various reasons why rough sleepers often return to the streets: wanting to be with their street friends, a desire for freedom, not having to pay rent, are listed. Wiseman, writing in the 1970s in the USA, suggested that 'sober time' was a 'neglected variable' that might help to explain why resettlement failed for many Skid Row alcoholics. The reason why 'sober time' may lead to 'recidivism', according to Wiseman, is that alcoholics have become used to the activities and social lives they undertake with other drinkers, so that when they give up drinking, they are left feeling at 'loose ends' and wish to return to their drinking lifestyles. In this study, elaborating on Wiseman's study, it is argued that rough sleepers actively took on the spatial and temporal structuring of their lives and thus were able to order their lives and to feel strong and independent on many occasions. Having feelings of autonomy however, clashes with public identities of rough sleepers and thus, rough sleepers may hide their abilities (which in any case, do not protect them at all times). An important reason for repeated homelessness, it is here argued, is the way rough sleepers, upon finding accommodation, may have to surrender feelings of autonomy and yield to rules and routines imposed upon them by others, who see them in a more conventional way.

In the first section of this chapter I outline the development over time of discourses about poor people through which they are classified in socially degraded positions. In Section B I review

literature about homelessness that derives from a perspective viewing homelessness as a social problem. Section C has a review of ethnographic literature about rough sleepers, including literature produced in other countries and Section D outlines the way this project fits in with existing literature.

A. Development of discourses about homelessness

In this section, the development of legal, official and scientific categories encompassing homeless people is examined. To begin with, an historical overview is presented in which I explore how, as the state became increasingly important, eventually taking over the care of the poor from the church, classifications of poor people also were produced in the formulation of state legislation. Meeting the conflicting requirements for labour of feudalism and capitalism, which for hundreds of years co-existed as capitalism developed, resulted in categories of poor people that reflected the state's concerns to both control and provide for them. These categories developed further over the course of the nineteenth century with the emergence of the social sciences and of collectivist politics as a significant force that contributed to the emergence of state welfare. In the late twentieth century, as global forces posed challenges to the capacities and appropriateness of state welfare, renewed and revised categories of poor people were created and the specific category of 'rough sleeper' came into being.

1. Creating 'vagrants' and 'the impotent poor'

The earliest laws of settlement were not aimed at the very poor or travellers of 'good will' (Humphreys 1999, 18) but against the threat of invasion by nearby 'adventurous hostile tribes and races' (ibid.) These legal statutes (pre-1349) determined people's lawful place of residence and that those 'suspected of being an outlaw... (were to be) chased or even slain with impunity' (ibid.) The borough or parish was developed as a locality in which individuals became mutually associated, making pledges of responsibility for its peace, tithing and security (ibid.) The laws constrained mobility but also gave economic security by allowing for labour and property to be developed in safety. After the Black Death however, there was a shortage of labour and, consequently, labourers were sometimes able to travel to where they would receive higher pay for their work. This mobility was penalised through the use of vagrancy and settlement legislation.

From the 1530s long-distance migration grew and the numbers of transient poor people increased (Beier 1987, 31). The gradual transition from feudalism to capitalism brought about increasing numbers of unemployed ('idle') poor people who, having left their parishes to earn wages working the land or in industries elsewhere, subsequently became unemployed as a consequence of trade fluctuations. The disestablishment of the monasteries, demobilisation of soldiers, harvest failures and enclosures all contributed to the occurrence of rising numbers of people leaving their parishes in search of work, who if caught, were severely punished by whipping, branding, cutting ears off and banishment overseas (Beier 1987, Archard 1979, Crane 1999, Humphreys 1999).

In the development of legislation to deal with 'vagrancy' and poverty, able-bodied but 'idle' poor people were distinguished from those unable to work (the 'impotent' poor). This distinction was the basis of the thirteen poor laws passed between 1495 and 1610 (Beier 1987, 9) that contrasted able-bodied and 'impotent' poor people. The development of the 'stereotype of the sturdy beggar' (ibid. 12) was pivotal to this. Poverty had previously been idealised (ibid. 4); seen as 'an unavoidable misfortune' (Whelan 1996, 4); and alms-givers did not 'distinguish between worthy and unworthy recipients' (ibid.), nor did they inquire about 'the causes of poverty' (ibid.). The sanctification of poor people meant they were felt to be instrumental in the salvation of alms-givers' souls. Beier suggests St. Francis had been an inspirational figure in that discourse of the poor but that later 'St. Paul's dictum that a good Christian worked to pay his way' (Beier 1987, 5) became more significant and beggars were pilloried for taking 'relief that the genuinely poor needed' (ibid. 6). Whelan notes how 'instead of being regarded as an unavoidable misfortune... poverty was viewed increasingly as a preventable problem, susceptible to scientific analysis, and often stemming from personal habits which could be changed' (Whelan 1996, 4).

Beier argues that vagrancy laws were 'part of a larger extension of state authority' (ibid. 13) intended 'to deal with a new social problem' (ibid. xxi). Rising numbers of wandering poor people, who had become detached from the feudal world, also had 'no stake... in the emerging bourgeois world of discipline' (ibid.) and were 'subject to the buffetings of the market

economy' (ibid. 12). By being 'able-bodied' but masterless and breaking with 'conventions of family, economic, religious and political life' (ibid. xix), they were felt by the ruling elites to be 'poised to destroy the state and social order' (ibid. 4). The various sources that Beier refers to show how vagrants were associated with physical corruption (infectious disease, bad smells), criminal activities and political sedition and subversion. On the basis of highly questionable eyewitness literary accounts that were popular and widely believed, they were also associated with an underworld, an 'anti-society of vagrants' (ibid. 7). As the state took on the role previously occupied by the church, of caring for the poor, it also initiated the concept of collective crime, 'of a good society *versus* a wicked one; of Christians against covens of witches; of rightful rulers against treasonous plotters; of law-abiding citizens against anti-societies of rogues' (authors' italics, ibid. 12), and created novel and radical institutions to deal with vagrants: poor laws, impressments, increased number of gaols and houses of correction, transportation.

The development of the stereotype of 'vagrant' by 'a wide range of learned authorities' (ibid. 12), the characterisation of poor people generally (as 'sturdy beggars', as 'impotent poor') and their insertion into the dichotomous relationship of worthy (settled, impotent poor)/unworthy (wandering able-bodied) can be said to have begun at this time and endured in modified forms since. Interest in the phenomenon of homelessness (or vagrancy, or pauperism) has subsequently been framed by stances regarding the worthiness and character of poor people. The state took a significant stance in relation to poor people that was both framed by this dichotomous view whilst simultaneously institutionalising and reproducing it through vagrancy and poor law legislation and practices undertaken in their application. This stance taken by the state had the additional consequence of extending institutions of the state and expanding its role in society, even if it was to be a 'supplier of last resort' (Whelan 1996, 55).

2. Poverty and pauperism: the nineteenth century

For a while in the nineteenth century the market economy became prevalent in England. It was the middle classes who used the acquisition of wealth and the pursuit of profit as a route to social advancement. The 1795 Speenhamland system, that supplemented wages of rural

workers, was criticised by the middle classes who argued that it provided a disincentive to work, 'obstructing the creation of a labour market' (Polanyi 1957, 223). In combination with the 1662 Settlement and Removal Act, which restricted the mobility of labourers, the interests of the landed gentry and those of the middle classes were opposed. Polanyi interpreted this clash of interests as a 'double movement' (ibid. 132). On the one hand economic liberalism whose proponents wished to establish 'a self-regulating market, relying on the support of the trading classes, and using ...laissez-faire and free trade as its methods' (ibid.) clashed with 'the principle of social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization, relying on the varying support of those most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market – primarily ...the working and the landed classes – and using protective legislation, restrictive associations, and other instruments of intervention as its methods' (ibid.).

2.1. 1824 Vagrancy Act and 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act

As Humphreys noted, 'the division between poverty and vagrancy has invariably been far from clear-cut' (Humphreys 1999, 85). In the nineteenth century there were rising concerns about the expenses incurred in the relief of the able-bodied poor, both settled and travelling, who were deemed to be avoiding work due to the availability of outdoor relief and 'aid-in-wages'. The 1824 Vagrancy Act was passed in order to address complaints about the expenses incurred by parish officials when transporting vagrants back to their parishes of origin, about how the deterrent of prison seemed to be ineffective and, in particular, about the 'lack of uniform response to applicants for relief from locality to locality' (ibid. 81). The act introduced the notion that 'it was a "suspicious" person's responsibility to clear themselves of any mistrust against them' (ibid. 83).

In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed. This act represented a triumph for the middle classes who, in the 1832 Reform Act, had gained franchise. It was a triumph for the values of free trade and the belief that pursuing individual self-interest would be beneficial to society as a whole. The concern with local variations was one of the issues the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act was designed to address in its setting up of a central authority (the Poor Law Board) and teams of inspectors and auditors to oversee local administrators (Digby 1989,

33). It also abolished outdoor relief, making workhouses the sites for poor relief instead. The workhouses operated a rule of 'less eligibility' which stipulated that 'relief was not to be such as to put a recipient in a better position than' (Sommerville 1999, 30) 'the lowest class subsisting on the fruits of their own labour' (quoted in Lowe 1997, 21). Given that rural and urban wages were already very low, the workhouses were designed to 'be deplorably poor and degrading' (ibid.), in order to deter the able-bodied from applying for relief and thus reduce the tax burden of parishioners and provide an incentive to work.

Both Polanyi and Digby argue that the workhouse was 'an abode of shame' (Polanyi 1957, 82) where the pauper was isolated from the community; where family members were separated in different parts of the workhouse; and where inmates were dehumanised through paupers' uniforms (Digby 1989, 32). When travellers were 'believed to be genuinely searching for work, (they)... were subject to the 1834 code' (Humphreys 1999, 85) but when parish officials doubted their motivation, they 'could find themselves shackled by the 1824 vagrancy legislation' (ibid.). Either way, being poor enough to apply for indoor relief almost invariably meant becoming stigmatised.

2.2. Science, the 'new philanthropy' and the 'pauper'

Polanyi argues that discussions about paupers and the economy 'shifted the vision of men towards their own collective being... A world was uncovered... that of the laws governing a complex society' (Polanyi 1957, 84). These discussions began in the eighteenth century and concerned the workings of the market and the promotion of various authors' arguments that the self-interested pursuit of profit resulted in a healthy and happy society. Mandeville's 'Fable of the Bees', written in 1714, argued that self-interest (private vices) leads to public benefits and Adam Smith's 1776 vision of competitive self-interest leading to a good society, 'as if an "invisible hand" were directing all these self interested competitors' (Ball and Dagger 1991, 68), were important texts drawn on in efforts to promote laissez-faire. In the nineteenth century some writers believed society was subject to the laws of nature. 'Poverty ...(was) regarded as a necessary element in society' (Rose 1986, 10) because, as contemporary writer William Townsend claimed in 1786, 'only hunger ...can spur and goad them [the poor] on to labour' (cited in Polanyi 1957, 113). Poverty, in these discourses, had 'no independent

meaning' (Procacci 1991, 154) as it was felt to be only the 'counterpoint to wealth' (ibid.) Self-help and hard work were felt to be the ideal routes out of poverty.

Both Rose and Procacci argue that investigating the causes of poverty led to the breakdown of early nineteenth century views (Rose 1986, 14). Procacci's analysis of writers Sismondi (in France) and Malthus (in England) shows how the 'new scientific object' (ibid. 155) of 'the pauper' began to be developed as part of a 'politics of poverty' (ibid.). Malthus had argued that paupers might be 'stubbornly indifferent to the lures of well-being' (ibid. 155) so that there was also a danger of their 'refusal to make the passage from penury to comfort' (ibid.). Their poverty thus posed a moral danger to the order of society because paupers' self-interest did not appear to cause them to create wealth. 'It was not poverty but pauperism or destitution which was regarded as a social problem' (Rose 1986, 10). Pauperism suggested a 'limit to economic discourse' (Procacci 1991, 153).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a 'movement for a more informed approach to poverty' (Rose 1986, 25). Many reformers were members of local statistical societies (ibid. 25) and the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science was founded in 1857. Poor Law investigators prepared reports in which they detailed information about poor people's lives. Journalist Henry Mayhew's work, from 1849 to 1862, showed how low wages and the 'overcrowding of the labour markets exploited by employers' (ibid. 24) resulted in poverty 'from which self-help and hard work offered no escape' (ibid.). Mayhew posited the notion of 'the poor as a residual group' (ibid.). William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army, reckoned, in 1890, that there was a 'submerged tenth' (Whelan 1996, 37) of the population living in 'poverty, misery and vice' (ibid.) and Charles Booth (no relation), in the 1880s, devised the 'poverty line' as a measure of the condition (Rose 1986, 28). These and other studies chimed with contemporary fears of 'a pauper residuum inhabiting the slums... and posing a threat to property and morality' (ibid. 24) as pauperism was considered to be 'contagious' (ibid.) Rose notes how there was concern about 'sending all able-bodied applicants for relief to the workhouse... since this would involve mixing honest workmen put out of work through no fault of their own with the idle and feckless whose indolent habits they might contract' (ibid. 38)

2.3. Charity and the development of state welfare

Rose argues that the New Poor Law had been 'increasingly ignored as a device for social reform' (Rose 1986, 14) as its focus was upon the unemployed able-bodied and it paid 'little regard to the problems of those who were pauperised because of physical or mental ill health, old age or loss of parents' (ibid.), attending also to rural rather than urban poverty. Charles Booth's studies revealed that many poor people were not in receipt of poor relief (ibid. 28) and charitable organisations were the main providers of relief to the poor. Working class movements (Chartism, Trades Unions), radical liberals (such as T.H. Green) and socialists (in particular the Fabian Society) contributed to changing the 'tide of opinion... (which) started flowing against the ... ideal of self-help' (ibid. 30). The role of the state was being reconsidered because there was 'a growing feeling that the scale of poverty and unemployment, which seemed to afflict industrial societies on a cyclical basis, was beyond the scope of charitable solutions' (Whelan 1996, 56). For Rose, the basis of English welfare services was the effort to 'remove various classes of the poor from dependence on poor relief' (Rose 1986, 40). Reformers began to identify particular subgroups (for example, the young, the ill, the old, the unemployed) that needed 'specialist treatment' (ibid. 36).

The concerns with laissez-faire and collectivism marked the nineteenth century as a time when views about poor people developed. 'Hard-line, Victorian, evangelical view(s)' (Whelan 1996, 78) were advocated by people such as C.S. Loch, secretary to the Charity Organisation Society, founded in 1869, who 'promoted the doctrine ... of the distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor' (ibid. 38) that reflected the fear of 'pauperisation' (the notion that providing relief from poverty discouraged people from working), the values of self-help and the interpretation of poverty as arising from 'moral failings such as drinking, idleness or dishonesty' (ibid. 78). Philanthropists of this kind felt poverty was 'essentially a moral sphere' (ibid. 57) that only needed for 'the state to stand aside' (Hughes cited in Whelan, ibid.) Whereas the beginning of the century was dominated by the opinion that 'welfare services are provided by charity, with the state filling in the gaps' (ibid. 60), by its end this belief was reversed.

Whilst the division of the poor prior to this period often used mobility as a means of distinguishing the deserving from the undeserving, during the nineteenth century the division pauper/poor gained significance. Pauperism, became a 'trope for all that was "dangerous" in society' (Wright 1997, 16) and paupers 'assumed the mantle of "difference", carrying behaviours that were subject to moral scrutiny' (ibid.).

Throughout the twentieth century, the numbers of 'vagrants' who 'tramped' around the country in search of food, shelter and work were affected by a variety of factors. Unemployment, various wars (the Boer War, the First and Second World Wars) and the expansion of the welfare state, were all influences that led to fluctuations in their numbers. Whilst prior to the Second World War, discourses and practices in relation to vagrants remained stringent and unsympathetic, after the war, 'officials... (were) under the spell of post-war welfare-state euphoria... (and) remained set on identifying and rectifying individual problems at an early stage' (Humphreys 1999, 146).

3. 1977 – 1997: Debate closure

In 1966 the National Assistance Board produced a report called 'Homeless Single Persons', thus confirming the growing tendency since the early 1960s, to 'use the term "homelessness" to describe the condition of those who for centuries had been viewed by the law and many members of the public as "vagrants"' (Humphreys 1999, 146). In the NAB report, homeless people were characterised as 'aged 40 or over, male and single ... (who) had strayed into an unsettled way of life' (ibid. 147) as a result of problems experienced in their personal relationships (marriage breakdown, death of a parent or spouse). As homelessness was increasing in the 1960s affecting many families, who were 'identifiably part of the mainstream population ... regarded as "deserving" of assistance...' (Sommerville 1999, 30), campaigns to generate sympathy for the homeless and new approaches to its explanation gained currency.

In the 1970s various interrelated factors yielded a 'new ideological climate' (Jacobs et al 1999, 17) in which homelessness was treated as a structural problem of housing compounded by government failures to acknowledge and deal with housing shortages brought about by slum clearances and a decline in the private rented sector (Jacobs et al 1999, 17). Whilst the 1948

National Assistance Act repealed the Poor Laws, it failed to eliminate their exclusionary and stigmatising treatment of vagrants and poor people (Lowe 1997, 22) through linguistic and practical means. Breaking up families and the use of age and sex-segregated hostels carried on; the rule of 'less eligibility' still influenced local practices and resulted in discriminatory treatment by local authorities who 'saw themselves catering for the needs of the... long-term residents of the area with clearly stable household structures' (Sommerville 1999, 30); and the idea that homelessness was a problem of individual fecklessness, refusal to work, irresponsibility and personal choice had remained in place (ibid.).

Surveys by Greve (1964, 1971) and Glastonbury (1971) about homelessness and analyses about poverty by Townsend (1964), are cited by various authors (for example Burrows et al 1997, Jacobs et al 1999) as influential in both documenting the rising numbers of homeless people as well as discrepancies in the claims to universalism and impartiality of state welfare provision promised by the 1948 Act. Reports by committees (for example, the Seeborn Report 1969 and the Cullingworth Report 1969, are both cited by Crane [1999]) recommended that responsibility for homelessness be transferred from social services to housing departments of Local Authorities. Various organisations (such as Shelter and Crisis at Christmas) were founded and campaigned to redefine homelessness as housing need, rejecting the blameworthy idea that personal, individual problems of morality or pathologies were causing homelessness. TV screenings of Jeremy Sandford's plays *Cathy Come Home* (1966) and *Jonny Go Home* (1975) in which the plights of a homeless single mother and a young homeless man were dramatized, contributed to increasing social awareness of homelessness as a housing rather than welfare issue, showing homeless people as victims of circumstances beyond their control (Jacobs et al 1999, 15).

The 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act represented a major victory for such groups, as it provided for the first time, rights to long-term housing for homeless people. A right to council housing, on a permanent basis, was extended to homeless families who could meet the criteria of local housing departments (Somerville 1999, 34). These criteria though, contained two hurdles – 'intentionality' and 'local connections' – that perpetuated traditionally held distinctions between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' applicants. Homeless families were

required to show that their homelessness had come about through no intention of their own, and that they had local connections (either through length of residency or by virtue of employment). Very few single homeless people were able to obtain accommodation from housing departments as they usually failed to meet another criterion – that of ‘priority need’ – and they were entitled only to ‘advice and assistance’. Traditional charities such as the Salvation Army, and newly formed voluntary sector organisations attempted to address their needs by (variously) providing advice, outreach services and hostel or shelter accommodation (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 4).

The construction of homelessness as a housing problem (Crane 1999, 149) was part of an increasing tendency by many social groups (academics, campaigners, staff from voluntary sector agencies, some politicians and others) to view homelessness as a symptom of structural problems, which affected both single people and families. However, these populations were viewed differently. Nicholas Beacock, who headed the Campaign for the Homeless and Roofless (generally referred to as CHAR) argued that government policy’s ‘cardinal criterion’ (Beacock 1979, 126) was to discursively consider the single homeless as a ‘separate, special group of people’ (ibid.) and make provisions that were similarly segregated. Beacock noted that there had been an increase, since the Second World War, of people wanting to own their own homes whilst simultaneously expectations of more privacy and less overcrowding also rose (ibid. 121). For Beacock this suggested that some ‘ordinary’ single people were being forced to live in hostels and other communal accommodation, thus indicating that there was a failure of housing supply. Looking at single homeless populations, Beacock found its members shared high levels of unemployment and a lack of work skills. This problem was compounded by a decline in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, which affected single homeless people disproportionately.

3.1. ‘Rolling back the state’: 1979 - 1997

Collective provision for working and poor people came under sustained attack when the Conservatives won the 1979 election, in a return to the ‘traditional polarities of ...laissez-faire or collectivis(m)’ (Digby 1989, 103). Thatcher’s neo-conservative government espoused the view that successful (efficient) economies were more important than collectivist social

programmes (such as welfare and trades unions), which were seen to be constraints upon the freedom of the individual and it set about stimulating private enterprise and cutting tax rates (ibid. 106). Influenced by ideas of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School (ibid. 104), the political right argued that 'the market rather than the political process was the efficient way to make decisions' (ibid.).

Digby argues that the 'divide between ...the wage-earner and the welfare-dependent (became) much starker' (ibid. 107). As unemployment rose following the decimation of the manufacturing sector, able-bodied unemployed people were deemed to be morally blameworthy for their own poverty. Byrne, citing MacKay, notes how unemployment was perceived to be a choice, because 'the unemployed can find a way into work by demonstrating a willingness to accept lower wages, less attractive working conditions, longer journeys to work or by transferring to other occupations, industries and locations' (Byrne 1999, 18). Arguments developed that welfare was providing an incentive against working, and cuts were made to the collective provision for various groups in society (for example, most of those between 16 and 18 years old lost their entitlement to benefits and were guaranteed places in job training schemes instead). As well as these cuts, the government also introduced the 'Right to buy' scheme and, following their Labour predecessors, reduced the amount of available council housing by reducing local authorities' building programmes.

The campaigns developed in the 1960s and 1970s led to a focus upon a particular segment of poor people, namely the homeless. Whilst campaigners made gains on their behalf – in statutory terms and by an expansion of voluntary sector agencies delivering services to homeless people unable to access local authority housing – it was just three years after the 1977 Housing Act that the Conservative government began privatising housing and promoting home-ownership. During their governments, both the numbers of unemployed people and homeless people rose dramatically, affecting a wide variety of social groups, and leading to the revival and reinscription of the idea of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' populations.

The 1996 Housing Act reflected a political rhetoric of 'fairness' portraying, for example, single mothers as welfare cheats who used their children to obtain council housing by queue-

jumping ahead of other, perhaps more deserving, applicants (for example, childless couples) (Hutson 1999, Jacobs et al 1999). The 1996 Act was introduced amidst rhetoric by the then Conservative government, about ‘loonie left’ councils and “municipal incompetence” (Somerville 1999, 42). The new Act, as well as introducing new criteria – that of ‘eligibility’ – that excluded some households (mostly people from abroad) from assistance, also restricted access to housing, where other ‘suitable’ accommodation was available in the area. For homeless households still entitled to housing provision, local authorities only had a duty to provide temporary accommodation (for two years), during which time applicants were expected to gain access to permanent accommodation no differently from any other households. Although homelessness campaigners feared disastrous consequences, Cloke et al (2000) reveal that, in practice, local housing officials were able to carry on housing the same categories of homeless people as before, minimising the Act’s practical restrictions.

The 1996 Act reflected the government’s minimalist definition of homelessness to mean rooflessness, rather than to include households who lived in other, highly inadequate, housing circumstances. Even so, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, numbers of roofless homeless people increased dramatically. The government, in 1990, launched the “Rough Sleepers’ Initiative” to reduce rough sleeping by funding outreach work, hostel places, move-on accommodation and resettlement services (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 5).

3.1.1. ‘Blame the victim’ theories: dependency and the underclass

During this period ‘the political debate ... moved... to the individual “pathology” view’ (Kennett 1999, 4). The main arguments made by politicians, the media, and other parties, posited the existence of an ‘underclass’ and the notion of a ‘dependency culture’. Whilst such theories are ‘nothing new’ (Byrne 1999, pg.20), they became increasingly important during the 1980s, as free market liberalism gained force. In 1990 and 1994 Charles Murray was invited from the USA, by a Sunday newspaper and a New-Right think-tank, to publish his accounts of UK’s ‘underclass’. Underclass discourses claim that ‘miserable conditions are self-induced – the poor do it to themselves’ (Byrne 1998, pg.1). Theorists claim that in ‘underclass’ neighbourhoods and families, there is no incentive to work because claiming

benefits, committing crimes, becoming single mothers (as a route to council housing), are all encouraged by the availability of welfare.

Theories of a 'dependency culture' posit a cycle of deprivation that is passed on, inter-generationally, through inadequate parenting, and is characterised by values and behaviours that demonstrate an unwillingness to take up opportunities in society. Blame the victim explanations use stereotypes of welfare scroungers, alcoholics, vagrants, work-shy idlers and criminals who are undeserving of support and who have a malignant effect on society by creating a moral vacuum between the taxpayers in mainstream society and socially excluded groups.

3.1.2. 'Blame the system' theories & citizenship

On the other hand, campaigners, workers in the voluntary sectors and academics were active in developing theories about homelessness that attributed its causes to structural factors occurring at the macro level. Drake et al.'s commissioned research argued that homeless people were 'ordinary' but that 'housing and labour market forces, migration, demographic and socio-cultural factors interacted to create the preconditions of ...homelessness' (cited in Humphreys 1999, 150). Greve argued that 'relationship breakdown, landlords requiring the accommodation (including eviction); and rent arrears... overcrowding; harassment by landlords; and unauthorised occupancy of a council dwelling' (Greve 1997, xiv) had been identified as immediate causes of homelessness, with mortgage arrears emerging as a 'significant factor' in the late 1980s and 1990s (ibid.).

Opposition in the 1980s and early 1990s to Conservative ideologies of free market neo-liberalism was articulated in a notion of citizenship (Levitas 1996, pg.7) and the social rights of citizens to 'a share in the collective social surplus' (Lund 1999, pg.447). Beacock noted that workers joining voluntary organisations were showing a commitment to providing services to homeless people, as well as developing a critical awareness of 'daily frustrations caused to their project by the lack of suitable housing and work for the single unskilled' (Beacock 1979, 135). He noted that voluntary workers had been developing trade union affiliations as well as 'building ...greater unity with organisations campaigning on behalf of

family homeless ...so as to reduce the capacity ...of public authorities to play one priority off against another' (ibid.) Beacock articulates the objectives of such unity in terms of 'rights': 'the right to decent housing when homeless, the right to a statutory minimum income, and equal civil rights along with the rest of the community' (ibid.)

Carlen's ethnographic work investigated the expectations and aspirations of young homeless people and she found that, whilst many of them had 'the same aspirations ... the same range of personal values and moralities as are held by any other cross-section of society' (Carlen 1996, 123), they nevertheless had low expectations that their rights as citizens would be attended to. She records how 'again and again (they)... had been victims of crimes and injustices at the hands of adults who would never be held to account for their depredation' (ibid. 123). Martin also notes how those homeless people who joined traveller sites, took responsibility for their housing and welfare needs – this included not claiming welfare benefits – and, he argued, this is 'commensurate with the prevailing political ideology' (Martin 2000, 4).

Both Carlen and Martin note how this 'aspiring' aspect of homeless populations is ignored in discourses of underclass and/or social exclusion. As Carlen and other authors have noted (Dean 1999, Fooks and Pantazis 1999), homeless populations are penalised for their illegal or semi-legal survival activities rather than encouraged or given acknowledgement for their enterprising and innovative solutions to their problems. In this regard, the mobility of homeless people is penalised just as much as that of other, ethnic, travellers (see McVeigh 1997) as their citizenship rights are denied because they are not sedentarist, in a society dominated by sedentarist ideologies. Morley's comments on 'homelessness in a home-centred culture' (Morley 2000, 26-27) are relevant too. Citing Hebdige, he notes how citizenship implies 'rootedness in place' as well as ownership of property. The presence of homeless people, whose mobility and survival practices are often deemed to be illegal (or at least illegitimate), provokes 'institutional efforts' to erase their visibility by their removal to marginal places where their presence cannot be noted (ibid. 27).

The polarisation between views of homeless people as either responsible for their own plight or victims of circumstances beyond their control rendered them 'pawn(s) in a giant social

chess game, ... 'victim(s)', ... 'case(s)', or 'problem(s)'; ... candidates for political representation, treatment, punishment, parenting or salvation (Brandon et al 1980, 78). Fooks and Pantazis question the way that 'the predominant image of the homeless emphasises their status as victims' (Fooks and Pantazis 1999, pg. 126) within academia, when their representation in the 'lexicon of journalists, police and politicians' (ibid.) is 'primarily... as criminals' (ibid.) They argue that, out of the entire homeless populations, representations are made of a small number of criminal homeless people (as beggars, aggressive beggars or squatters) which serves to 'draw attention away from the material circumstances of the homeless (and) the source of their suffering' (ibid.). This leads, they argue, to a 'debate closure' 'in which only certain dimensions of homelessness are discussed' (ibid.), namely, 'the threat that the homeless, and the forms of behaviour they are associated with, present to the social order' (ibid.)

Wright's work, despite referring to developments in the USA, has application here when he argues that the focus on the term 'homeless', by academics, advocates and policy makers, had both positive and negative effects (Wright 1997, 15). On the positive side, 'it allowed for a way to talk about a special segment of the very poor in a manner that would capture public sympathy' (ibid.). It enabled advocates to develop 'active resistance movements'. It benefited services providers as policy makers developed 'new programmes... and "homeless shelters"' (ibid. 19). However, on the negative side, it 'displaced concerns over... unequal distribution of power, property and privilege' (ibid. 15), and made it 'easy to forget ... invisible families in poverty' (ibid. 17). Wright argues that 'containment of homelessness, not ending poverty, became the new goal of policy makers and politicians' (ibid. 19). Further subdivisions of the homeless – as youths, mentally ill, ex-servicemen, women, care leavers – elevated professional 'areas of expertise' (ibid. 20) and led to connecting solutions to homelessness with 'detoxification ... treatment programs and/or transitional housing' (ibid. 21).

4. 'Social exclusion' and 'belonging': 1997 - present

The New Labour government, elected in 1997, also launched initiatives to tackle rough sleeping (by setting up the Social Exclusion Unit, appointing a 'Homelessness Tsar' and making a commitment to cutting the numbers of rough sleepers by two thirds, by 2002), and

passed a new Act (Homelessness Act 2002), in which new categories of people (care leavers, ex-servicemen, ex-offenders) were classified as 'in priority need' and could therefore gain access to housing through local authorities. However, the rhetoric of New Labour politicians has not changed from that of their predecessors. Both Blair and Jack Straw have spoken on record against beggars – for example: Jack Straw expressed dismay at “aggressive begging by squeegee merchants, winos and addicts” (quoted in Humphreys 1999, 174) - and Louise Casey, the Homeless Tsar, launched a Christmas campaign in 2001, against giving to beggars.

4.1 New Labour and communitarianism

In contrast to Thatcher's neo-liberal vision of successful economies arising from 'no-society' that consisted of individuals competitively pursuing their own self-interests, New Labour espouse a communitarian view of 'one nation, one community' in which individuals adhere to common norms and values, imposed by the community, and are socially interdependent. This ideology is operationalised through a principle of subsidiarity (Byrne 1999, 26) which means that the state is to work in partnership with institutions of civil society as a way of promoting and inculcating shared values and thereby creating and strengthening the 'community' (Kendall 2000, 550-551). Communitarian theorists view individuals as embedded in and shaped by their community, which is seen as an important social good, serving to create identity and belonging and to counteract alienation. Although some communitarians believe in a plurality of communities and consequently an absence of universal and transcendent values, this does not coincide with New Labour's communitarianism which instead advocates moral values that are strong enough to transcend diversity and permit people to live 'through common meanings and understandings, norms and values' (Driver and Martell 1997, 35). Recognition of difference is limited by this morality, which favours conformism. Social exclusion has thus become a key concern leading to reform in welfare, shaped by New Labour's moral agenda.

New Labour also distanced itself from Old Labour's commitment to state-dominated provision of welfare, which they associated with welfare dependency, arising as a result of claimants having too many rights and too few responsibilities (Driver and Martell 1997, 33). New Labour's electoral successes have seen a redefinition of the notions of citizenship, rights and

exclusion, that does not challenge but instead conforms to a conservative morality. Changes to welfare and housing provision, involving private and third sector agencies show that it is now believed that the state has (and should have) a very limited capacity to change or affect macro factors. New Labour theorist D.Marquand advanced the argument that taxpayers should not have to make sacrifices for the poor unless the rights of claimants are balanced by duties, and that collective provision should be 'a means of moral improvement' (cited in Lund 1999, 448). Welfare is seen as a mechanism whereby people who are socially excluded must be connected to the mainstream via character improvement.

Communitarians are very critical of the idea of natural rights, and believe instead that rights are created by a prior obligation towards the collective community. They believe that these obligations should be called upon when welfare rights are claimed. Whereas New Right politicians could be accused of abandonment of and disinvestments in the poor, New Labour is concerned with the inclusion of the poor, but shaped in such a way as to conform to overriding moral imperatives (especially that of work). This has had a major impact upon the facilities, services and regulation of rough sleepers, both at the organisational level and in terms of the moral content of the services delivered.

4.2. Social exclusion

Most current literature (and funding for research) about homelessness is situated within debates about social exclusion. This term has occupied a position of 'virtual monopoly' (Marsh and Mullins 1998, 749) in social policy discourse. Rough sleepers were explicitly classified as socially excluded by the Social Exclusion Unit, which reported directly to the British Prime Minister.

Social exclusion is a conceptual device theorists use to analyse and describe dynamic processes and patterns of disadvantage, including poverty, in society. However, the definition of this concept is not undisputed. It contains two strands: A. poverty and material deprivation, and B. social disintegration and marginality. Policy makers and researchers often use 'poverty' and 'social exclusion' interchangeably, and the distinction between the two terms sometimes is blurred (Saraceno 1997, 177).

Saraceno explains how social exclusion emphasises the experiences of ‘individuals and groups who do not feel any membership in, and loyalty towards their community’ (ibid. 179). Their ‘lack of values’ (ibid.) can be interpreted as a moral deficit on their behalf but also (or alternatively) as a social deficit whereby society is structurally unable to reproduce shared values, links, affiliations and roots amidst its socially excluded members (ibid.) It represents a shift of concern about how much class-based inequality a society can sustain without serious social conflict, to what degree of social ‘detachment and unbelonging’ should be allowed before society falls apart (ibid. 180).

4.2.1. Social exclusion as ‘closure’

Explanations for homelessness by government ministers and New Labour theorists focus on the ‘agency’ of socially excluded individuals or groups. This requires an approach that pathologises homeless people – as either vulnerable or criminal in some way – whilst leaving the rest of society unchallenged. Byrne draws attention to how the term ‘social exclusion’ can be used to emphasise the excluded or the excluders. He cites Veit-Wilson’s distinction between ‘weak’ or ‘strong’ versions of the discourse of exclusion. ‘Weak’ versions focus on solving exclusion by changing ‘handicapping characteristics’ of individuals and thereby integrating them into dominant society (Byrne 1999, 4). ‘Strong’ versions focus also on the role of the excluders and ‘therefore aim for solutions which reduce the powers of exclusion’ (ibid. 5). In relation to rough sleepers, New Labour politicians use a ‘weak’ version of social exclusion and, using Byrne’s argument, they use it ‘as a method of closure’ that depoliticises the issue of inequality (ibid.) This approach illustrates what Levitas notes in her critiques (1998, 1996) where she claims that the term ‘social exclusion’ obscures the structural inequalities that are endemic to capitalism.

Pleace argues that research has moved beyond the dichotomy of structure/individual blame, producing findings that show rough sleepers ‘are often vulnerable individuals who need support and help as well as access to decent affordable housing in order to stay off the streets’ (Pleace 2000, 581). He shows findings that suggested rough sleepers had been ‘excluded from employment, family, friendships and sexual relationships and were often in poor mental or

physical health' (ibid. 583). This exclusion made them vulnerable to precipitous structural factors leading to their homelessness. Pleace argues, furthermore, that a consensus has been reached regarding this between politicians, academics and voluntary sector agencies (ibid. 581). Whilst social scientists appear to be using 'weak' social exclusion to frame their explorations of homelessness references are also made to negative 'street cultures' and 'social networks' (see Randall and Brown 1999, Fitzpatrick et al 2000), which imply a blame the victim approach.

4.3. State and charity

Provision made for rough sleepers is currently dominated by central government's requirement for 'joined up' multi-agency co-ordinated work, involving organisations from public, private and third sectors (Pannell and Parry 1999), in order to address the perceived complexity of issues surrounding individuals' homelessness. Services include the provision of outreach work, shelters, hostels, supported housing, foyers, day centres and medical centres. In addition to these, The Big Issue, a magazine founded by an ex-homeless beggar John Bird in 1991, was designed to help homeless people by providing an alternative to begging. The charity (The Big Issue Foundation) also provided support staff in certain parts of the country, but a lack of research over their work makes it hard to assess their role. Many services are influenced by the notion of giving "a hand up" rather than a handout. This is an idea that the Homelessness Tsar promoted and is now also being promoted by John Bird, who has been campaigning against giving to beggars which he claims is 'murdering whatever chance those people have of getting off the streets' (Sunday Times 22/12/2002, 1).

The Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s were concerned with the dichotomy of state vs. market. This concern lay behind various measures designed to 'roll back the state' and increase the role of private markets. An important area in which this ideology was enacted lay in the changing role of local authorities from provider to enabler/purchaser of services, introducing 'quasi-markets' into areas such as welfare provision. Whilst the Conservative governments did not pay high-profile attention to the voluntary sector *per se*, which remained in a position of low visibility (Kendall 2000, 550), local authorities nevertheless were instrumental in the contracting out of services to voluntary sector

organisations. This meant that contracts, rather than provision of grants, became increasingly common in the funding of these agencies.

The changing relationship between central state, local government and voluntary sector organisations reflected a dispersal of state power via strengthening links between public and private interests. Changes in the structures of state power had changed the role of charities from independent, and sometimes moral and religious, organisations to that of state welfare providers. Mort (1999) and Whelan (1996) have both expressed concerns over how the reliance by the statutory sector upon the third sector may affect charitable agencies' values and perceived unique capacities for flexibility and spontaneity. The statutory sector's 'rigid' and onerous bureaucracy and how it provides funding only 'for specific statutory requirements' (Mort 1999, 220-221) may result in fewer initiatives and a more cautious approach to spending by such agencies (ibid. 221). Whelan expresses the concerns that, as voluntary sector agencies fill gaps left by the state, the moral purposes of charity become corrupted, charities lose their independence and voluntary donations may wither (Whelan 1996, 89).

In addition to state, private, independent (The Big Issue) and third sector provision, members of the general public give money and other items (such as food and clothing) directly to homeless people, or indirectly to voluntary sector agencies, in the belief these items will reach homeless people. Much of the literature about homelessness claims the British general public blame rough sleepers for being morally bad. However, the concepts of 'general public' and 'British', are rather vague and may reflect the views of those vocal members of the general public who disapprove of rough sleepers. It is an empirical fact that many charities rely (heavily) on donations from individual members of the general public for their continued existence. This mitigates against these claims about the public.

4.3.1. Homelessness industry

There are also related concerns about whether or not such services are implicit in the reproduction of homelessness, through their contradictory position of having to sustain themselves through competition for scarce funds (Kennett 1999, 51). 'The management of homelessness is not merely about housing scarcity but has also become a site of struggle over

social change' (Carlen 1996, 10 cited in Kennett 1999, 50). Various authors (Hopper 1990, Marcuse 1993, Ruddick 1997, Carlen 1996) have noted that agencies that manage homelessness have a vested interest in maintaining homelessness for their continued existence (ibid. 50- 51). Likewise, Hutson notes how maintaining a team of support workers can cost 350 pounds per person per week, when such support is often deemed unnecessary by homeless youths themselves. She argues that directly giving young people extra money (she suggests twenty pounds per person per week) would go a long way to alleviating their problems of resettlement (Hutson 1999, 220).

I have outlined the development of discourses and practices that have been deployed, since the beginning of centralised statecraft, in relation to poor people. As explanations for and solutions to social problems became a secular rather than religious concern, a discursive division developed, between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poverty. This division in practice appears to have been fairly amorphous, depending mainly on the levels of poverty in society (generated by unemployment in particular), but it has been used as a means to define a limit to the responsibilities of both governments and members of society generally for providing for poor people.

The 'undeserving' poor have also often been associated with transience. This reflects a concern, expressed at both local and central government levels, to provide for those who can most easily be understood and known. In the USA during the nineteenth century, 'simple insider-outsider divisions marked the boundaries of community obligation' (Veness 1992, 448). Veness argues that, new understandings of home developed and, consequently, 'a special category called homeless was created to contain, describe, and rationalize the existence of outsiders permanently residing within the community' (ibid. 449). Whilst some authors have investigated the development of 'home' (for example: Kumar 1997), the analysis of links between the development of 'home' and that of the category 'homeless' would help to clarify the extent to which Veness' findings are applicable in the UK. Nevertheless, transience does appear to be a feature of those who are regarded as 'undeserving'.

Contagion is another theme to have beset the notion of 'undeserving' poor. This seems to be related to the notion that, as well as providing assistance to poor people, local and central authorities are concerned with maintaining 'order'. The 'undeserving' poor have been characterised as people who behave in deviant ways mainly because of their capacity to work coupled with their unemployment. Disciplinary technologies have been applied to them and used as a deterrent for 'deserving' poor people, who, it has been argued, otherwise might be tempted to join them.

Hutson and Liddiard suggest that 'tracing youth homelessness historically can imply a continuity that does not in fact exist' (Hutson and Liddiard 1994, 3). This very important point is also applicable here, in the historical review of developments of discourses about poor people. Nevertheless, despite different social and economic circumstances and different populations over time, the social construction of poverty does display a degree of continuity over long periods of time, as I hope I have demonstrated above.

B: Literature about the social problem of homelessness

As both Archard and Crane have commented, research in United Kingdom about homelessness is dominated by 'housing management and medical concerns' (Crane 1999, 26) and with controlling the phenomenon (Archard 1979, 19). Whilst journalistic and literary accounts based on personal observations (ibid. 11) about homelessness have emerged over the past eighty years¹, most academic research into this topic has been based on data obtained in surveys, from questionnaires and through interviews conducted inside facilities where provision is made for homeless people, with workers and with homeless people themselves. There is a dearth of ethnographic material obtained through participant observation undertaken with rough sleepers, in the spaces and times of rough sleepers themselves. The research is practical rather than conceptual or theoretical, concerned with inspecting policy implementation, identifying and publicising gaps in provision, fund-raising or promoting

¹ For a literary account, G.Orwell's 'Down and out in London and Paris' (1949) is a good example in the UK. Lars Eighner's autobiographical account 'Travels with Lizbeth: Three Years on the Road and on the Streets' (1993) about his homelessness experiences in the USA is another good example of literature of this kind. Journalists have periodically produced in-depth reports as well, for example A.Masters' article 'The cold shoulder' in Guardian Society supplement, The Guardian, November 29th 2000.

administrative remedies for the symptoms of homelessness (Jacobs et al 1999, 22-23).

Theoretical and conceptual concerns are more often dealt with by independent researchers (for example, Watson 1999, Sommerville 1992) who explore various aspects of homelessness, for example, the meaning of 'home', the 'competing ideologies' (Jacobs et al 1999, 22) to which the definition of homelessness is subject, or the resistance of homeless people (Lee 1993).

Much of the research has been commissioned by government departments (for example: Brandon et al 1980 'The Survivors' was commissioned by the [then] Department of Health and Social Security; Drake et al 1982 'Single and Homeless', by the Department of the Environment; Randall and Brown 1995 'Outreach and Resettlement Work with People Sleeping Rough', by the Department of the Environment) and by charitable organisations (for example: Greve 1991 'Homelessness in Britain', was commissioned by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Crane 1993 'Elderly People Sleeping on the Streets in Inner London: An Exploratory Study', by Age Concern; Fitzpatrick et al 2000 'Single homelessness: An overview of research in Britain', by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and CRASH; Fountain and Howes 2002 'Home and Dry? Homelessness and substance use', by Crisis).

1. Definitions

That 'there is no universally accepted definition of homelessness' (Crane 1999, 9) reflects the struggles of 'vested interests... to impose their particular interpretation... and to push the homelessness issue as they define it either higher up or lower down the policy agenda' (Jacobs et al 1999, 11). Diverse definitions of homelessness lead to diverse quantifications and explanations of this phenomenon. Homelessness can be defined in a variety of different ways and these reflect the variety of approaches and stances authors, campaigners, policy makers and homeless people themselves have adopted.

A **narrow** definition of this phenomenon is one that regards homelessness as 'rooflessness'. Under this category can be found rough sleepers mainly, but also people who have experienced emergencies such as fires, floods or even persecution from which they have had to flee (in other words, refugees). Governments sometimes have used this definition as a means of disguising social inequalities. For example: responses by governments to rough

sleeping (setting up the Rough Sleepers Initiative, prioritising rough sleeping as an early aim of the Social Exclusion Unit), suggest they may have been unwilling to tackle the housing problems of other people who lived in temporary housing, hostels or shelters (Humphreys 1999, 163). Rooflessness is also a dominant image of homelessness in the media and it may also reflect the existing definition of homelessness held by the British general public (Hutson and Liddiard 1994, 27).

The **statutory** definition of homelessness, used by local authorities, often excludes single homeless people (who fail to meet the 'priority need' criteria), and is considered to be a device for rationing housing provision and marginalizing certain groups, rather than for explaining the nature of homelessness (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 8). Many authors have examined this issue (Burrows et al 1997, Evans 1999, Anderson 1999, Cowan and Gilroy 1999, Cloke et al 2000). The definition was first created in the 1977 Act. It was subsequently restricted in the 1996 Act and has now been broadened in the 2002 Act. In rationing housing provision to only 'genuine' homeless people, the statutory definition perpetuates the traditional distinction of deserving/undeserving through its criteria of 'intentionality' (Burrows et al 1997, 3).

Whilst the statutory definition of homelessness is **broad**, it is applied in a specific context. However, it derives from the transference in the 1977 Act, of responsibility for homelessness to housing departments. For campaigning groups such as Shelter, the association of homelessness with housing need was an important achievement and housing advice centres across the country continue to regard housing needs such as squalor, overcrowding, and even threats to personal well-being, as forming part of the meaning of homelessness. Various authors though, have doubted the usefulness of broad definitions (Burrows et al 1997, Fitzpatrick et al 2000). Burrows et al argue that 'by referring to all housing need as a form of homelessness, the unique nature and distress of actual homelessness becomes lost' (Burrows et al 1997, 8). On the other hand, as Fitzpatrick et al note, if hidden homelessness refers to groups or individuals whose homelessness has not been recorded by local authorities or agencies dealing with homeless people, then even rough sleepers' homelessness can be 'hidden' (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 9).

Also, using broad definitions of homelessness, some authors (for example: Watson and Austerberry 1986, Veness 1992 & 1993, Tomas and Dittmar 1995, Watson 1999) have associated homelessness with the concept of 'home' rather than the more practice-based idea of housing need. Writing in the USA, Veness argues that the drawing of a boundary between home and homelessness is itself a construction of conformity that 'runs counter to how many poor people understand and define their own personal worlds' (Veness 1993, 325) and denies their own home-like constructions. Others argue that home is a 'site of social relations' (Watson 1999, 85) and that many who live in a house, feel homeless nonetheless. This is an important point which, in these cases, has been made about women and their feelings of homelessness, but which can usefully be applied to rough sleepers' accounts of homelessness when considering their motivation for leaving various forms of accommodation.

Homeless people's own interpretations of homelessness are an under-researched area (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 9). However, it has been found that even some rough sleepers do not always count themselves as homeless (Hutson and Liddiard 1994, 29). Hall suggests that some homeless youths reject the label 'homeless' 'as an attempt to distance themselves from a label they find to be disempowering and stigmatising' (Hall 2003, 79n). Brandon et al found their respondents defined homelessness 'as a composite state involving such factors as having no employment or money and implying inadequacy, shame and loneliness or sometimes a way of life, state of mind, an "experience"' (Brandon et al 1980, 53).

2. Measurements

As Hutson and Liddiard argue, 'the problem of definition (of homelessness) is particularly crucial because of its impact upon how homelessness is measured' (Hutson and Liddiard 1994, 30). Given that homelessness is intricately bound up with social policy, the broader the definition, the larger the social problem appears to be (ibid.) Measuring this population is therefore a politically charged issue that gives rise to disputes concerning both the definition and scale of homelessness. In England there are two main sources of estimates regarding the numbers of homeless people (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 13). Firstly, local housing authorities provide statistics of those applicants about whom they have reached a decision. Secondly,

rough sleeper counts, which are undertaken by voluntary groups and statutory agencies, provide another source.

Local authorities' statistics do not include those who do not apply to them for assistance. Whilst those whom they refuse to house (as a result of failing to meet criteria of homelessness, no other suitable accommodation, intentionality, eligibility, local connections and priority need), are still counted, all statistics refer to households rather than individuals and consequently the numbers do not reflect accurately who is homeless (Hutson and Liddiard 1994, 31 – 37).

By far the more relevant counts for this project are the rough sleeper counts, which have become commonplace over the past ten years. These are undertaken at night, when groups of people visit safe areas where they believe homeless people may be sleeping outdoors. They are 'snapshots' (Burrows et al 1997, 9) of rough sleeping and, critics claim, should be treated with caution (Breakey and Ficsher 1990, Rosenthal 1991, Hutson and Liddiard 1994, Fitchen 1996, Glasser 1996, Burrows et al 1997, Glasser and Bridgman 1999, Cloke et al 2001). This is for various reasons. Given the mobile nature of rough sleepers, on any given night their numbers will vary (Burrows et al 1997, 9); also, some rough sleepers are concerned to stay out of sight from passers by and officials and may simply not be counted (Rosenthal 1991, 110), despite their presence, as a result of staying in inaccessible or dangerous places (Rosenthal 1991, Cloke et al 2001). Obtaining counts of shelter users by shelter staff fails to provide accurate numbers as these leave out non-users (Rosenthal 1991, 109) and may (on the other hand) lead to double counting by including previously counted rough sleepers who use a shelter on a one-off or seasonal basis (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 17).

3. Causes

It has been shown already that defining and measuring homelessness does not result in objective, empirical knowledge but rather is embedded in conceptual and methodological factors that vary, frequently reflecting the ideological positions of different parties. Theorists with **individual or cultural** explanations of homelessness are divided into two strands (Neale 1997b, 36) – those that 'blame the victim', considering them to be responsible for their own

homelessness, and those who consider individuals' homelessness arising from personal vulnerabilities and requiring some kind of support. Various authors (for example, Archard 1979, Wright 1987) have argued that 'our energy is directed at resolving the personal manifestations' of homelessness (Archard 1979, 14), treating the phenomenon as 'an aggregate of social 'characteristics' symptomatic of underlying causes' (Kennett 1999, 51), when it is necessary to allow 'for the inclusion of structural and institutional components such that our vision of the problem is extended to a radically political appreciation of the task involved in the long-term abolition of the conditions which give rise to the problem in the first place' (Archard 1979, 15).

Structural explanations focus on causes at the macro level, beyond the control of individuals. They examine factors such as: privatisation, marketisation and deregulation within the housing markets and consequent shortages of affordable housing for those who have been evicted or had their homes repossessed due to mortgage arrears (for example, Ford 1997, Sommerville 1998); unemployment and under-employment produced by global economic changes in labour markets (for example the relocation of manufacturing industries to cheaper labour markets and their replacement with service industries that have different employment conditions such as low paid part time work). Contributory factors also include the cuts to welfare and housing benefits, particularly for youths who, between 16 – 17 years old mostly have no entitlement and between 18 – 24 receive lower rates of Jobseekers Allowance (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 21); deinstitutionalisation and care in the community programmes that left many mentally ill people homeless or vulnerable to becoming so (Barham and Hayward, 1991), other forms of background institutional influences, such as the armed services, prison, care homes (Higate 2000, 1997, Carlisle 1997). These factors are felt to cause homelessness for individuals who experience their force within their private lives, for example, through the fracturing of their family relationships or by their being evicted due to mortgage arrears resulting from unemployment and a consequent fall in income.

As Crane (1999) and Fitzpatrick et al note: 'the idea ... that homelessness is a 'chosen' life-style for significant numbers of those affected is almost universally rejected' (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 19). Although this may be the case, this viewpoint appears to disregard the agency of

people who become homeless, giving the impression that they have had no choice on the matter. Homeless people, however, do exercise choice, even if it is within constrained circumstances.

4. Solutions

Pleace argues that services for rough sleepers are influenced by theories about 'risk society' (citing Giddens as an example) which have the effect of limiting solutions to rough sleeping to prevention and resettlement rather than addressing macro structural factors such as the lack of affordable housing or the hypercasualisation of labour (Pleace 2000, 584). He sees intervention as consisting of equipping homeless people with the skills and resources they lack and that will prevent them from becoming homeless in future instances when they are exposed to these precipitous structural factors (ibid. 584). Kennett also examines the context of 'risk' in society and explains how 'strategies for containing uncertainty and risks (have been transferred) from the state and employer to the family and the individual' (Kennett 1999, 45).

Homeless people themselves have, in various instances, attempted to solve their own homelessness. Both Martin (2000, 1997) and Higate (2000, 1997) have shown that some rough sleepers and young people, at immediate risk of becoming homeless, joined traveller protest movements and traveller sites; squatting is another homeless solution to homelessness that has been widely documented (Glasser and Bridgman 1999, Mitchell 1992, Greve in Burrows et al 1997, xi). The leadership qualities of certain homeless individuals is also a possible route for a few to homeless solutions (Glasser and Bridgman 1999, 92) though evidence of this is unavailable in the UK. Whilst many homeless people have at times made use of cheap private rented accommodation (in houses of multiple occupation), this option is becoming less widely available due to spatial factors (for example: in the USA the clearing of "skid row"; in the UK, creation of 'areas of restraint', rising house prices, selling off of council housing, housing associations taking over certain houses of multiple occupation).

4.1. Prevention

Whilst the attribution of blame to structural factors leads logically to calls for the prevention of homelessness through 'alleviating poverty...raising benefit levels...restoring entitlements

to young people, reducing unemployment and tackling ‘unemployment traps’ and increasing the supply of affordable rented accommodation’ (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 24), preventative work that is targeted at those individuals most at risk of becoming homeless has also been called for (Randall and Brown 1999). Measures Randall and Brown recommend include: providing housing advice, mentoring services (to tackle social isolation), support for tenants with substance use or mental health problems, education in schools, services to help people return to their home areas, rent deposit schemes (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 29). New Labour’s 2002 Homelessness Act expands the category of ‘priority need’ to include care-leavers, ex-armed forces personnel, and people leaving prison, which is a preventative measure, though assessing its effects has not yet been accomplished.

4.2. Provision

Given the long term and unquantifiable effect of preventative work though, it may not be considered as important as service provision to those who are already homeless (Hutson and Liddiard 1994, 154). During the 1970s and early 1980s, research about homelessness was concerned with structural explanations, ‘downplay(ing)... the role of individual characteristics and experience and emphasis(ing) the essential ordinariness of many people sleeping rough’ (Pleace 2000, 583). This approach changed during the 1990’s and early 2000’s as both ‘a range of support needs’ was identified through research (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 37) and the heterogeneous nature of homeless populations was fully recognised. Pleace argued that, given the unique nature of each person’s experiences of homelessness, services must also be designed to meet their individual needs (Pleace 2000, 592). He argues there is no ‘typical’ rough sleeper and that services must ‘leave behind the preconceptions of what homelessness is’ (ibid.).

Whilst Pleace has found that ‘there was little difference between the view that housing staff took of the needs of homeless people and the views that they themselves expressed about their own needs’ (Pleace 1997, 170), from my own research, the role of agencies that provided services to homeless people appeared to play a rather important role in the repeated nature of their homelessness. Homeless people themselves are “catalogu(ed) ... according to a range of individual vulnerabilities ...” (Kennett 1999, 51) and some are provided with accommodation

and support they often find so unacceptable that they leave after just days, or even hours (Hutson 1999, 211). Otto and Orford (1978), Brandon et al (1980), Fountain & Howes (2002) and others have similarly found a mismatch between the perceptions of needs that homeless people and staff from agencies have.

5. Problems with the research agenda

The approach to homelessness as a social problem, in the main yields research that is oriented towards finding solutions for this problem. Inevitably such research makes recommendations for social policies that may solve, alleviate or prevent homelessness, without consideration of its 'positive possibilities' (Brandon et al 1980, 78). Third argues that 'to study homeless people out of academic curiosity is no more defensible than to undertake research simply to keep ourselves employed' (Third 2000, 460) and that it is only not exploitative if 'it contributes directly to the well-being or improving the prospects of homeless people' (ibid. 463). This conveys the idea that theoretical and conceptual research about homeless people is exploitative. Likewise Fitzpatrick et al recommend that research commissioners should 'direct research ... to those areas where least is known' (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 49), identifying duplications, gaps and unresolved issues in current research (ibid. 47).

That homelessness is a social problem for many people is not disputed here; however, that this fact should always frame the methods and interpretations of findings in research is. Jacobs et al argue that 'research has often been deployed as a smoke-screen to hide policy failure and ... proves far more effective both in resource terms and in fending off criticism' (Jacobs et al 1999, 22). Commissioned research, they argue, has been 'largely practice-based, the assumption being that administrative remedies can alleviate the symptoms of homelessness' (ibid.) They argue that there is consequently a lack of research of a theoretical or conceptual nature (ibid. 23). It is interesting to note that twenty years prior to Jacobs et al's comments, Archard also complained about the paucity of 'critical focus' (Archard 1979, 14) in literature about homelessness. He states that 'virtually all the literature on vagrancy' (ibid. 13) keeps vagrancy and policies about vagrancy separate from 'the wider society in which it is located' (ibid.), denying historical specificity, avoiding connecting vagrancy with unequal distributions

of political, economic and social power, not grasping class and class consciousness concepts sufficiently (ibid.)

Pleace's recommendations that individualised solutions to homelessness must be tailored by services providers is problematic because such solutions 'displace any sense of collective empowerment in favour of socialising individuals into some mainstream "norm"... accept(ing)... the status quo of ongoing social inequalities' (Wright 1997, 318). Ruddick notes of homeless youths in Hollywood, Los Angeles, that such individualisation causes 'the meaning of "homeless(ness)"... (to) become as infinite as the places and circumstances that (homeless people)... found themselves in, and as varied as individual histories and personalities' (Ruddick 1996, 191). The multitude of referents 'any of which might point to a different set of labels and treatment' (ibid. 190) renders analyses of those classified as homeless unclear.

5.1. Locating the importance of agency

Increasingly authors have been calling for research to describe homelessness in terms of 'routes' (Kennett 1999), processes (Hutson 1999) and 'housing pathways' (Clapham 1999, Fitzpatrick and Clapham 1999). Fitzpatrick et al argue that 'this shift in perception' (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 10) is related to interest in longitudinal research in which 'what happens before and after homeless episodes' (ibid.) has become a concern within homelessness agencies. Fitzpatrick et al also suggest that little research has been produced about the friendship networks of homeless people (ibid. 35). These research gaps are present because of the emphasis upon defining homeless people and the social problem of homelessness in terms of policies and services provision. It is not surprising that the social networks of homeless people have been conceptualised in a negative way (for example Randall & Brown 1999, Fitzpatrick et al 2000), given that they may be a resource for homeless people who may be reluctant to accept services aimed at integrating them into a social world in which they occupy a position of very low social status.

One way conceptually to incorporate both the practices and the agency of those classified as homeless is to expand the notion of homelessness by examining how it is defined in relation to

normative notions of 'home'. As Veness notes, 'studies on home and homelessness are both typically collapsed into one analytic category – housing' (Veness 1992, 445. See also Deacon et al 1995, Hutson 1999 and Franklin 1999). The introduction, in 1980, of 'right to buy' legislation encouraged tenants of 'begardened semis' (Guerney 1990, 2) to become homeowners by offering up to 70% discounts of their market value. In the seven years up to 1986, 'receipts from the sale of council housing were greater than that of all the other privatisation programmes put together' (ibid. citing Forrest and Murie). Guerney argues that home-ownership has become 'normalised' through the operation of discourses, in public and private accounts, that present homeowners as 'better citizens, better parents and better caretakers' (Guerney 1999, 177) than those living in other tenorial forms, who are characterised as 'lack(ing) ...pride and self-esteem', being lazy and feckless (ibid.) He notes authors' debates about the idea that new political, economic and psychological cleavages have opened up that are 'based not upon production determined classes but by access to the means of consumption' (Guerney 1990, 2) whilst also pointing to how such discourses suggest 'the emergence of new forms of exclusion' (Guerney 1999, 179) in their creation of an 'outgroup or a "shameful (housing) class"' (ibid.180). Proposed solutions to homelessness do not include buying homeless people houses and thereby converting their 'social exclusion' to that of integrated home-owner, despite, as Pleace noted, there being sufficient funds in services provision to do so (Pleace 2000, 582).

C: Ethnographic insights

Despite a great deal of attention being focussed on the personal characteristics and collective agency of homeless people, there have not been many explorations about their social and personal identities or the contours of their collective agency. This is especially so in the UK literature. It is nevertheless possible to find some insights about this that researchers in both the UK and the USA have obtained and commented on.

Ethnographic work is important to this project because its focus on the perspectives of homeless people themselves makes it possible to explore not only their own interpretations about their position in society (for example, what their lives are like, how they feel they have been classified by themselves and others) but also the manner in which they view and interact

with structures in society from their position as mobile and homeless people. Ethnographic research provides an opportunity to analyse links between homeless people's agency and the context of constraints they find themselves within. Instead of a starting point whereby homelessness is considered to be a social problem, homeless people's perspectives are explored. In the case of rough sleepers, the discursive context that views them as anti-social or as vulnerable is one they reflexively interact with in a critical way. The perspective of rough sleepers enables the ethnographer to describe an ambivalent resistance that characterises many of their practices, and which may be partly visible to researchers using other methods, but not fully appreciated.

1. Classifying ethnographies

Various ethnographic studies have been made about homeless people, but it should be noted that these are far outnumbered by work using approaches aimed at analysing social policies about homelessness. Temporal and spatial orders that condition the activities and routines rough sleepers engage in on the streets have not been sufficiently studied in the UK (Wardhaugh 1996, Hall 2003 for example). Geography researchers have produced material about this (see Lee 1993, Cloke et al 1999, May 2000), though there is more material of this nature produced in the USA (for example: Ruddick 1997, Wright 1997, Wright and Vermond 1996, Wolch et al 1993, Snow and Anderson 1993, Gounis 1992, Lovell 1992, Baxter and Hopper 1981, Hopper et al 1985, Hopper 1990 & 1991, Desjarlais 1997, Passaro 1996, Hill and Stamey 1990, Spradley 1970).

Different ethnographers have studied street homelessness under various different headings: 1. 'Anthropology of homelessness' – This term is useful as it is broad enough to include ethnographies not only about homeless people, but about the service providers and the interactions between these two groups too. Ethnographies such as those by Rowe (1999), about outreach workers, and Mort (1999), about the network of services providers in the voluntary sector in Oxford, fit in here just as well as those about homeless people that are obtained through participant observation undertaken within shelters or other facilities (for example, Hopper 1990, Hutson & Liddiard 1991, Veness 1992 & 1993, Snow & Anderson 1993, Deacon et al 1995, Carlen 1996, Pleace 1997, Desjarlais 1997, Hutson 1999, May

2000). But Veness noted that sometimes she was mistaken for a staff member and ‘had to disassociate (herself)... from the “system” in order to gain confidences and conduct personal interviews’ (Veness 1993, 327). This suggests that homeless people have other, undisclosed aspects of street life, inhibited as they are by the site in which interviews take place.

2. ‘Street ethnography’ – Using this term has two advantages. Firstly it indicates the location of homeless people’s daily routines and practices as being the source of material for ethnographic study; secondly, it enables homelessness to be seen as part of street life world wide, including ethnographies such as Shepherd-Hughes’s (1992) about street life in Brasil or, for example, about gangs in America (such as Fleisher 1995). However, a major drawback is that street ethnography is one strand of urban anthropology (Weppner 1977, Gigengack and van Gelder 2000) and consequently it leaves out rural poverty and homelessness. Furthermore, it is difficult to draw valid comparisons between people who have such different experiences of street life across the world.

3. Ethnogeographies, as noted above, have contributed a great deal to theorising about homelessness. The ‘disintegrating sense of “home” and “place” (and) the breakdown of established socio-spatial structures ...’ (Wardhaugh 1996, 702) that processes of globalisation have brought about, forms an important part of current homelessness which can usefully be understood in terms of socio-spatial relations. Ruddick (1997), Wright (1997), Wolch et al (1993) and Duncan (1979) have analysed classifications and uses of space that homeless people make in USA. Lee (1993) analysed the critical manner in which young homeless people used spaces in London, and Cloke et al (1999) have explored routes homeless people took in rural England. May (2000) has significantly built on this material by classifying types of mobility homeless people undertook. Ethnographies about displacement and globalisation (for example, about refugees) could fit in the same framework as can those about colonialism, when both powerful and powerless groups experienced dislocation. Work about ethnic and New-Age travellers (see for example, Martin 2000) could fit in here as well.

4. ‘Anthropology of disorder’ - This term, coined by Hopper (in Dehavenon 1996, xii), refers to the rule-breaking that becoming homeless entails, both in spatial terms (being out-of-place)

and in processes of survival (for example, Hopper et al 1985, Snow and Anderson 1993, Carlen 1996, van Doorn 2000). It captures a more critical and political meaning of homelessness and could include ethnographic studies about squatting (Maxwell 1996, Mitchell 1992), homeless protest travellers (Higate 2000, 1997), as well as studies such as Hebdige's (1992) and Smith's (1996) about the building of the "poliscar" – an ironic expression of resistance. All ethnographers of homelessness have agreed, however, that homeless people, whether organised in subcultures (Wagner 1993) or not, occupy a socially constructed position of powerlessness and marginality in relation to dominant groups and their ideologies (Lovell 1992, 86).

2. Mobility/transience

Ethnographers have discussed the mobility of homeless people in a number of different ways. Wolch and Dear (1993) and Wolch et al (1993) have analysed the routes homeless people take on a daily and periodic basis, finding that their mobility is either voluntary (search for food, work and maintaining social contacts) or involuntary (getting moved on by the police and other parties). Whilst the reasons they cite for homeless people's mobility are also found in other ethnographic accounts, some researchers have presented a more complex analysis of their mobility (Higate 1997 and 2000, Cloke et al 1999 & 2001, Carlen 1996, May 2000, Martin 2000 and 2002), and some have concluded that homeless people are 'nomadic' (Spradley 1970, Stamey and Hill 1990).

Cloke et al documented the strategic considerations some homeless people had in their travels around different rural areas, towns and cities, where facilities and 'street spaces' were known to exist. They found that people compared places and the reception they had received. They found that spaces were not invariably kept 'pure' and the generosity of locals varied, possibly according to the numbers of homeless people they encountered in their daily lives. They also found that some homeless people took holidays. Avoiding surveillance formed another part of the routes people took, which tended to be circuitous (Cloke et al 1999, 72-76).

Higate analysed travel amongst ex-servicemen (a group whose members are disproportionately represented amidst homeless populations). He found that a masculine

gendered ideology, rooted in practices of the armed services and carried over into civilian life, combined with limited socio-economic conditions to make the freedom of travel and homelessness a positive choice, (at least for a while), despite the many spoken and unspoken problems they experienced. He documents how some ex-servicemen joined New Age Travellers and, in particular, traveller protest movements, finding new social roles for themselves 'on the road' (Higate 1997 & 2000).

Carlen discussed youth homelessness and found that increasing numbers of homeless young people had joined New Age Travellers and had thereby achieved a sense of personal independence as well as community interdependence. She explains how some young people rejected places in shelters and hostels because these were expensive, had rules and regulations that some young people (especially those who had previously lived in institutions) resisted and, for a few young people, implied a loss of self-respect (Carlen 1996). Carlen's findings are confirmed by Martin's whose ethnographic work with New Age Travellers revealed a generation gap between older travellers, who had chosen to become travellers, and younger travellers, many of whom had been pushed into travelling as the only means to gain independence (Martin 1998, 2000 & 2002).

Spradley labelled the populations he studied 'urban nomads'. He found their mobility was a 'life style' that required constant movement not only for survival, but also because 'one of the quickest ways to come to the attention of the police is to stand, sit or lie in a public place with no apparent purpose' (Spradley 1970, 98). He shows how the mobility of 'urban nomads' was partly created by settled populations who told them to 'keep moving on' (ibid.) Spradley found that the identity of urban nomads was derived from processes of 'making the bucket' (going to jail on a drunk charge), which he interpreted as a rite of passage.

Cresswell argues that accounts of mobility should recognise its diversity and how different material conditions produce and are produced by varied mobilities (Cresswell 2001, 24). 'Mobility is to movement what place is to location. It is produced and given meaning within relations of power' (ibid. 20). The mobilities rough sleepers engage in, once they have become homeless, can be seen to have been produced by intolerable economic conditions, a

desire for freedom (Higate 1997) or a better lifestyle (Martin 2000) but also by a dominant sedentarist ideology (McViegh 1997) that prevails in Western societies and produces prejudices against the homeless who consequently are constantly being 'moved on' – kept mobile. Provision made for homeless people carries mostly unquestioned, sedentarist assumptions that fixing people to places is a social good. Hutson (1999) and Carlen (1996) show how some young homeless people refuse these assumptions when shelter or hostel accommodation is offered to them. Hopper's work on the spatial aspects of shelters (1990) and Gounis's work about shelter disciplines of time (1992) show that preventing or stopping the mobilities of rough sleepers is a strongly disciplinarian task. May explores homeless people's sense of home as 'place' rather than as 'residence'. He notes how some authors have examined homeless people's understandings of home and found these to be similar to those of domiciled people, for example: feelings of belonging, security, independence, control over one's interactions with others (May 2000, 739). May, citing Kawash, argues that in their journeys, the homeless do not go 'somewhere' as 'they have nowhere to go' (ibid. 737). Thus they are both 'without home, but more generally without place' (ibid.) Through in-depth interviews with forty-three respondents in a night shelter, he reconstructs their biographies which he interprets using four 'narrative frames'. These are: (dis)placement, 'the homesick', spectral geographies and new nomads.

2.1. Homeless spaces

The social exclusion of rough sleeper populations, deemed to be marginal and powerless, occurs within and through disciplines of space and time. Ethnographers have documented this by looking at how rough sleepers appropriate spaces (for example, Mitchell 1992, Lee 1993, Wardhaugh 1996, Ruddick 1996, Wright & Vermund 1996, Wright 1997) in cities that are divided by "geographies of exclusion" (Marcuse 1993, Hall & Hubbard 1996) into 'prime' and 'marginal' spaces (Duncan 1979, Ruddick 1997, Snow & Anderson 1993) as well as how they are involuntarily moved away (Wolch & Dear 1993) by parties who enforce social order, such as the police, and others, who find the visibility of rough sleepers threatening and dangerous (for example, Baxter and Hopper 1981, Wardhaugh 1996, Desjarlais 1997). Organisations that worked to disperse and contain street homeless people expanded their roles, over the duration of this research project. It could be argued that their presence captured the marginal

spaces of street homelessness and removed the visible aspects of homelessness – either through placing homeless people in other spaces (such as hostels) or through remedial programs (such as detoxification).

Street homelessness is a spatial condition that visibly takes place in public spaces. However, because street homeless people are ‘out of place’, it is also a condition that disrupts dominant moral orders. Wright for example, argues that ‘the shopping mall, the city park ... the office ... present little challenge to (the) established identities (of privileged consumers)’ because these spaces are ‘consistent with’ their identities. For homeless people, negotiating such places may reveal not just how privilege is socially constructed but also how homeless people are deemed less worthy – by their being avoided, refused service, given sidelong glances (Wright 1997, 5). Wardhaugh argues that street homeless people ‘have been constructed as “dangerous” ... because there is no ... clear or safe divide between the housed and the homeless’ (Wardhaugh 1996, 703). The visibility of the street homeless is disturbing to the domiciled who themselves are precariously placed in the flux of a global economy. For Declerck (2003), the street homeless are perceived as dangerous because they transgress the ‘totalitarian’ social norm to work, and their suffering is maintained (by structurally inadequate systems of provision), in order to prevent the domiciled from being tempted to join them and give up working. Simply by virtue of being shelter-less, the homeless are perceived as stigmatised and their spatial presence, consequently, is rendered problematic.

Sibley (1988) investigates the idea of purified spaces and how boundaries divide communities from what they exclude. He argues that collectively people take action in order to deal with perceived threats to social and spatial homogeneity (for example, by evicting people with different lifestyles, sexual preferences, etc.). Likewise, Weiss (1994) observed territorial seclusion within the home, of children who had impaired appearance, by their families. This area of literature is concerned with stigmatization and how this is expressed in spatialised practices. It may account for some aspects of homeless people’s mobility, whilst it certainly contributes to the liminal and subtle nature of homeless people’s spaces.

Notions about 'spatial comportment' (Wright and Vermund 1996, Tani 2002) in the home and in neighbourhoods, may influence homelessness through gentrification and nimbyism. They are also encountered in struggles over varying ways to define urban spaces. Street homeless people undertake their daily activities in spaces that are also used by non-homeless people. The usage of public space is something that can often be contested (for example, in Oxford the council are rebuilding the public toilets in town, with the intention of discouraging drug addicts from using them, private shopping malls are policed by security guards, early morning cleaners chuck out people they find sleeping, etc.) Homeless people, lacking abode, privacy and shelter (forms of 'home' [Somerville 1992]), are exposed and subject to surveillance, judgement and physical removal by the authorities. Such struggles between differing ideas about people's activities and status in spaces, can be seen taking place in schemes of redevelopment that involve city authorities and business interest groups developing commercial areas that incorporate images, conveying the sorts of meanings that will attract target consumers (for example, affluent tourists) and investors (for example, global corporations) to the area. Homeless people's uses of public spaces clash with the intentions of interest groups that get embodied in the architecture as well as in dominant routinised uses of spaces and times. Simply by their presence, street homeless people undermine the symbolic value of redeveloped post-industrial spaces, such as shopping malls, 'themed' areas, because they are a visible reminder of labour and poverty (Cook & Braithwaite 1979, Donnison 1987, Wardnaugh 1996, Ruddick 1997, Wright 1997). Carlen, citing Lifton, notes how the visibility of homelessness makes it 'harder to numb yourself to the plight of people who are hurting ... it really means that all of us have to cope with more numbing, more dissociation' (Carlen 1996, 79).

The focus by authorities on removing rough sleepers from the streets can be understood better by contextualizing these local practices within global forces. Griffiths outlines aspects of marketing practices adopted (by local governing authorities, business groups, urban development corporations and other bodies), in the UK over recent years. Because of the locally felt effects of national and global developments, the old 'managerial' forms of urban governance dissolved and gave way to a new "entrepreneurial" mode of governance (Griffiths 1998, 42). This is outlined as a "competitive quest for new sources of economic investment"

(ibid.42). It can also be seen in new organizational forms, different alliances (namely, ones that involve private and voluntary sectors), and in an acceptance of inequality at the ideological level (or perhaps a collapse in resistance). Griffiths explains how the city leaders' choices, in terms of what development they can attract, are constrained by their position in relation to the power of global capital. For example: leading European cities like Paris or Frankfurt, are in a very good position to compete for key functions in government, finance, media and communications. Their favourable position is rooted in the fact that these cities are already international centres of arts and consumer spending. Uneven development, which is displayed in these dynamics, results in inequalities between cities. Within the city there are also bigger and sharper inequalities arising from entrepreneurial governance. Griffiths identifies tensions in how place-marketing strategists address both external audiences (attracting flows of capital, which are volatile and global, as well as consumer spending and affluent/highly skilled migrants) and internal audiences (seeking legitimization for redevelopment policies, fostering social cohesion, etc.). The promoted image of the city leaves out and detracts attention (and money) away from social and economic divisions within the city.

The uses street homeless people make of spaces, places them in conflict with dominant normative expectations about the 'proper' order of things. Homeless street dwellers develop an intricate understanding of city and neighbourhood spaces, which authors have classified in a variety of ways. Duncan (1979) developed a spectrum of 'marginal' and 'prime' spaces to help explain the various usages 'tramps' made of spaces. Wright (1997) conceived of 'pleasure', 'refuse', and 'functional' spaces to describe the polarised nature of homeless people's inhabitation of cities. The knowledge of different types of spaces enables homeless people to undertake everyday activities avoiding, to some degree, unwelcome attention from authorities and other parties.

2.2. Time

Theorists also inspect the time routines of homeless people, both on the streets (Spradley 1970, Wardhaugh 1996, Lovell 1992, Wolch and Dear 1993) as well as within shelters (Gounis 1992). Spatial practices and disciplines within shelters for homeless people are

investigated by theorists such as Hopper (1990) and Desjarlais (1997) as well as the classifications shelter workers apply to homeless people (Marvasti 2002, Liddiard and Hutson 1991, Hutson 1999).

Snow and Anderson identified a 'negative articulation' (Snow & Anderson 1993, 170) between the present and future orientations. Lovell analysed the differences between dominant and marginal temporal practices and found that marginal time is present rather than future oriented and is flexible and fluid, whereas dominant time is 'highly segmented and rigidly ordered ... (with) ... well defined periods of work and leisure' (Lovell 1992, 87). Given how homeless people lack a 'home', in the sense of a place where multiple survival requirements for food and shelter can be met (ibid. 98), meeting these needs can be a full time occupation that requires mobility between sites and a tactical use of time that fits in with dominant time structures. Wiseman (1971 & 1972) analysed 'sober time' – the time ex-alcoholics from 'skid row' faced when they had given up drinking. For Wiseman, 'sober time' was difficult to cope with as it highlighted the loneliness and absence of structure ex-drinkers faced in the absence of a key structuring and social factor in their lives (namely, drink).

3. Community

Downing Orr (1996), Spradley (1970), Carlen (1996) and Hill and Stamey (1990), found that uniting in collective groups helped the survival of homeless people in three distinct ways. Firstly, the unpredictability of everyday life (when on some days a person may obtain nothing whereas on other days they may obtain a surplus) was eased by the sharing of goods. Secondly, when homeless people were together, they were less likely to be attacked by passers by, or unfairly treated by the authorities. Thirdly, other homeless people were often more loving and caring than the families they had become separated from. These factors could give rise to communities of homeless people. Spradley found 'a man will never again feel threatened when he is alone on the street without a penny in his pocket, for he has discovered that there is a spirit of reciprocity within the world of tramps, something he may not have known before but which now draws him into that world' (Spradley 1970, 242).

It has already been noted (Cloke et al 1999) that some homeless people travel around circuits of rural, town and city areas, moving on in search of new sources of income and trying not to exhaust them. Hill and Stamey (1990) also note how the mobility of homeless people prohibits them from the accumulation of possessions but instead, requires them to carry what they own with them. Thus portability is an important value for homeless people. Lars Eighner's auto-ethnographic material about his experiences of homelessness illustrates this when he describes his scavenging activities ("Dumpster diving"). He found that domiciled people threw away immense amounts of valuable items and he could only take items that were of use to him. He found that, when he obtained his food from 'Dumpsters', he put on weight. And he developed a less materialistic attitude as a result of his experiences (Eighner 1992).

3.1. Shadow work

Many ethnographers have studied the survival strategies employed by rough sleepers (Spradley 1970, Baxter and Hopper 1981, Hopper et al 1985, Hill and Stamey 1990, Eighner 1992, Snow and Anderson 1993, Carlen 1996, Cloke et al 1999, Fooks and Pantazis 1999, van Doorn 2000). For Hopper et al, simply becoming homeless, rather than a 'state of captivity', is in itself the first of these strategies of survival (Hopper et al 1985, 193). Hill and Stamey, who also found that homeless people formed a 'nomadic society' (Hill & Stamey 1990, 316), studied the exchange relationships between homeless people, which they found fitted in with theories of generalised reciprocity. For them, homeless people could easily identify with one another over daily routine matters of survival, such as gathering food and organising protection, and they displayed generosity and trust towards each other, forming networks and a sense of community.

Van Doorn studied the various income strategies of homeless people in Utrecht, Holland. She found that these included: begging, claiming welfare benefits, making and getting loans (from other homeless people), selling street newspapers, telling an interesting story, swindling, prostitution, dealing, theft and burglary (and receiving and selling stolen goods). To these must be added scavenging, which supplements incomes. Van Doorn finds that the income strategies employed by homeless people fit into 'a dynamic and heterogeneous social arena, in which there is some social order, structure and code of behaviour' (van Doorn 2000, 45). She

posed the question: Do these strategies help homeless people to move off the streets and to become more socially integrated? And she found that the chances of this were very small because the semi-legal and illegal nature of their work led them to becoming further marginalized both by learning skills applicable only in a street economy and by getting into trouble with the authorities as a result of their income generating activities. Snow and Anderson term the work practices of homeless people 'shadow work'. They argue that homeless people are not idle, as they are commonly perceived to be. Instead they are oriented to the economies of shadow work because it remunerates them in a more immediate manner than wage-labour, which failed them in the first place and which, in any case, they could not often obtain.

4. Cultural resources and selfhood

For both Hopper (1991) and Donnison (1987) the 'real alternative to homelessness ... is not shelter but solidarity' (Hopper 1991, 130). However, investigations show that representations of poverty, in particular rough sleeping, are imbued with hints of 'otherness' and sustain the exclusion of rough sleepers as well as exposing them as figures that society can do without. Desjarlais' analysis of media and official representations of rough sleepers shows them portrayed in 'images of death, transgression and grotesque bodies' (Desjarlais 1994, 2), with visual identities that connote 'a lasting moral career' (ibid.) He notes the metaphors journalists use, rendering their appearances as 'mad "old woman"... birdlike young man' (ibid. 2-3) that are cautionary models of ancient narrative figures such as witches, old hags, tramps (ibid.5). He warns that these representations are not unrelated to the violent, sometimes fatal, attacks that street sleepers across the world have been subjected to (ibid.)

Whilst some authors have become preoccupied with the idea of a negative street culture (for example Snow & Anderson 1993, Randall & Brown 1999, Fitzpatrick et al 2000), that has the effect of delaying or preventing homeless people from leaving the streets, others have suggested the presence of hidden, denied cultural resources amidst street homeless populations. Ruddick's work about a 'punk' youth subculture in the USA suggests that other identities, apart from the spatialised one of homelessness, are possibly present amidst homeless populations but that these identities are overridden by that of 'homeless'. Ruddick's

analysis of youth homelessness, charts the decline of their 'punk' subculture. This subculture contained many runaway youths as well as other youths who had chosen to live away from home. She notes how they would inhabit spaces that were 'homologous' with their subculture. For example, the cemetery served as their 'living room', their 'homes' were manor houses, which they squatted, and which had been the scenes of famous murders and orgies in the past. Ruddick explains that the marginal spaces they used 'were not simply the place where subculture "takes place". They were themselves the object of bricolage' (Ruddick 1996, 111), 'inherently expressive of ... (a) rupture of meaning' (ibid. 114).

Ruddick observes how these marginal spaces were lost, to processes of demolition and redevelopment, whilst simultaneously, there was 'a shift in the social and public definition of these youths ... (who) were no longer viewed primarily as members of a particular subculture, but first and foremost, as runaway and homeless youths' (ibid. 127). This change, in the ascription of identity, was influenced and accompanied by a rise in the shelters and services available to youths. These services and shelters 'began to define the youths' public identity' (ibid. 127).

Here in the United Kingdom, it may be that ex-servicemen (see Higate 1997, 2000) or travellers (see Martin 1998, 2000, 2002) are identities that are hidden or denied. The use of drink or drugs as a social and cultural resource is recognised to a limited extent. Carlen found that drugs consumption amidst young homeless people was 'therapeutic in the short term' because, as well as being pleasurable, they provided a 'rationale for getting up in the morning, an occupational framework to the day, and a sense of community and identification with other drug users' (Carlen 1996, 131). However she also notes how homeless youths felt drugs 'get you nowhere' in the longer term (ibid. 131). Higate found that ex-servicemen were frequently involved in drinking groups and that their extraordinary high intake of alcohol could be traced back to their time in the armed services, when drinking copiously was associated with their masculine sense of self and was promoted as a means of camaraderie. He found that ex-servicemen experienced a 'sense of mutual recognition and affinity' with complete strangers, who they could bond with, enjoying a friendly communion through drinking in groups (Higate 2000, 337).

Lee (1993), Wright (1997, & Vermund 1996) and Ruddick (1996) have argued that homeless people have used spaces in a tactical manner, not just so as to be less visible when working or sleeping, but to resist strategies of authorities and other parties who may label them, disperse them or seek to contain them. These authors have explored tactics of resistance, reflecting upon the degree to which they may have implied homeless cultural forms or else affiliations between homeless and non-homeless people.

Ruddick argues that the tactical uses of spaces that homeless people made 'cannot be conceptualised in the structure/agency dyad' (Ruddick 1996, 57). This is because homeless people, as agents, may conceal their practices and thus 'only apparently reproduce specific structures' (ibid.) Pretending to be insane, in order to avoid being attacked; pretending to be travelling, in order to sit in the shelter of a station, are examples of homeless people's use of invisibility as a means of access. They 'negotiat(e) ... the assigned meaning of space for purposes other than those intended' (ibid.) Wright and Vermund describe various strategies of the authorities – exclusion, repression, displacement, assimilation – and Wright interprets these as having two main intended results: that of dispersal and that of containment. Dispersing homeless people, from pleasure or prime spaces, and by breaking up communities they may form, prevents them from gaining power. Containing homeless people, in refuse, marginal spaces and within shelters or hostels, provides a means to control them, through surveillance and discipline. These strategies 'can have the drama of a police raid or the subtlety of gentrified redevelopment' (Wright 1997, 8).

Wright argues that 'the dominant social imaginary held by the privileged of the very poor... allows for the avoidance of larger questions of power and domination' (ibid.6). This 'social imaginary' explains the actions of homeless people as survival and adaptive mechanisms, creating a sense that the very poor are 'passive agents, merely reacting to their immediate situation' (ibid.) For Ruddick the precariousness of homeless people's lives, the transitory and fleeting uses they make of spaces, is precisely the source of their 'tenacity' (Ruddick 1996, 59). As Wright notes, 'the reality is that homeless actions can include both survival and opposition, adaptation and resistance' (Wright 1997, 6).

On the other hand, some authors portray street homeless individuals as bereft of cultural resources and struggling to maintain or create a sense of self. Desjarlais worked in a homeless shelter for homeless people classified as mentally ill, and found that their accounts of life on the streets showed their homelessness to have a fragmentary effect upon them, forcing them to be fully engaged in a disruptive flux of physicality, leading them to lose their narrative voice (Desjarlais 1994 & 1997). Declerck's work in Paris, France, led him to conclude that street homeless populations do not have a social life and are 'broken' individuals (Declerck 2003).

D: Where this project fits in

Work about the selfhood and the cultures of homeless people involve three distinct but overlapping conceptual factors: practice, agency and identity. As Willis notes, there may be a disjunction between role behaviour, role compliance and role commitment (Willis 2001, 213). These disjunctions 'indicate the space for a practice of social learning that ...is evidential in ways of being, in cultures that are lived in both within and beyond their conditions of existence' (ibid.) Homeless people may occupy their 'homeless' identities in a restless way, they might use such identities, in fact, to suit their own purposes and such purposes may vary with those of the institutions and individuals or groups who have ascribed such identities to them. Not only can homeless people deny their homelessness by re-defining the spaces they occupy in different terms (Vennes 1993), they can also create and partake in different individual and collective identities that may or may not be visible to onlookers. Willis found that it is possible to 'maintain an epistemological "doubling" of reality, (which is)... the ability ...to occupy material conditions as, up to a limit, something else' (Willis 2001, 208).

Homeless people have disreputable identities ascribed to them by virtue of their lack of shelter. Not only do they occupy a 'shameful' housing class (Guerney 1999, 180), but they are also implicated in identities of beggars, substances abusers, failed education, broken families and criminal activities. Their occupancy of public spaces means they are continually confronted by their socially ascribed low status identities in their interactions with domiciled people. Whilst their homelessness seems to mark them in disreputable ways, it has already been shown above, in the historical overview, that the source of such identities lies in social

constructions about poor people. Anyone who is poor enough to not have a conventional form of accommodation will find their identity reformulated by the social position they occupy, regardless of their own biography. History is already present in the social spaces occupied by homeless people. However, such identities have also been shown to be changing, thus reflecting what Holland and Lave call 'structure as process' (Holland & Lave 2001, 6).

As Holland & Lave note, 'history in institutional structures and history in person are never simple equivalents' (Holland & Lave 2001, 5). There are 'powerful socio-political and cultural worlds' (Skinner et al 1998, 3) that produce constraints, recreated in local practices by individual and collective actors. However, these discourses and practices can be viewed 'not as indicators of essential features of ... (homeless) selves or culture, but rather as the media... around which socially and historically positioned persons construct their subjectivities' (ibid. 4). Thus there is space, albeit limited, in which homeless people can act to affect the nature of the constraints being reproduced. Agency is a possibility, despite being mediated.

This study adds to existing knowledge about homelessness because it offers a new perspective on the experiences of rough sleepers themselves, as a result of the participant observation undertaken to obtain data. Existing literature has been based on data obtained in different conditions. Here, it is possible to show a more complex and contradictory set of practices, undertaken by rough sleepers, than is known about hitherto.

This project could fit in the 'ethnography of personhood and an emerging "practice theory" of self', because I am interested in examining how those classified as rough sleepers 'fashion and are fashioned by social, political, and cultural discourses and practices' (ibid.) within their specific, local spaces and times. In particular, I am using this interpretative framework to analyse the way many homeless participants in this project crossed between indoor and outdoor spaces. The phenomenon of repeated or recurring homelessness has both preoccupied researchers and defied definitions of what 'homelessness' means. When a rough sleeper obtains accommodation, they cease to be classified and counted as street homeless, yet many still work and sometimes sleep out on the streets after obtaining accommodation. Relations with landlords, neighbours and services providers often break down and people return to living

on the streets. These processes have been found, in this project, to happen many times. By focussing on the various spaces and times rough sleepers use to fashion their dwelling practices, out of dominant spatial and temporal forms, as well as their sociality (with both other homeless people and with domiciled individuals and groups), I hope to show processes of self-making that those classified as homeless undertake.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

Introduction

When considering doing research the topic I was interested in was how a sense of belonging could develop for populations who were mobile. I considered doing research about how changing employment patterns in the North East of England intersected with people's patterns of mobility and memory; I then considered doing research comparing asylum seekers' with homeless peoples' biographical histories of travel. I finally decided to concentrate on rough sleepers' social lives and the role of mobility in their daily and periodic practices, and I applied my theoretical concerns with mobility and belonging to this population.

A striking feature of the available literature on this topic was the dearth of ethnographic material. In particular there were practically no ethnographies derived from findings obtained through participant observation with homeless people in their spaces and times. Almost all of the ethnographic material had been obtained through interviews with homeless people on sites of services provision. This approach, in my view, inhibited findings concerning the relations between homeless people and other, non-homeless, parties. More relevant still, I felt data obtained in such circumstances would mask the possible existence of social, economic, political and cultural resources homeless people might have created for themselves in other spaces and times.

This factor was particularly important given the identities socially ascribed to homeless people. Such identities portrayed homeless people in negative terms, as passive victims or aggressive victimisers, whose social links were negative. The spatial condition of homelessness was portrayed as one of decline and suffering, marked by a loss of personal agency. These portrayals were influential in the provision of services to rough sleepers and it became increasingly apparent to me that rough sleepers did not always define themselves in this way. Instead they interacted with a whole variety of different socially ascribed identities, as they undertook their daily and periodic activities.

A. The research process

1. Chronology of research

OCTOBER 1999: PhD starts (on a part-time basis). Volunteering at an advice centre – shadowing advice workers, participant observation within organisation. First contact with a homeless man – series of in-depth interviews, shown city centre routes, sleeping spots, places to look for spare change and how to scavenge from skips.

DECEMBER 1999- JANUARY 2000: Temporary part-time job at a winter shelter in nearby town. In-house training received regarding professional boundaries, risk assessment, safety measures and admittance procedures.

APRIL 2000: The Big Issue start distribution outlet from advice centre where I volunteer. I am given administrative duties as a volunteer. Contacts with rough sleepers develop. Many interviews and conversations. I am shown more sleeping spots, people's possessions and luggage; start learning about drink/drug divisions and routines.

MAY 2000: My role with The Big Issue changes to that of badging-up and allocating pitches to new vendors. Suspended from research activities within advice centre though retained in my role as volunteer.

JUNE 2000: 1st interview with worker in charge of rough sleeper counts.

NOVEMBER 2000: One week spent as a rough sleeper. I formed a 'link-up' with a rough sleeper and spent all nights in a car park. Worked as a vendor and beggar in daytimes. Full time participant observation in day and night routines on the streets.

JANUARY 2001 – MARCH 2001: Temporary part-time job as housing advisor to ex-offenders in nearby town. Volunteering with The Big Issue carries on and contacts with rough sleepers maintained. One day training courses in housing law and human rights law.

MAY 2001 – JUNE 2002: CORE PERIOD OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION ON THE STREETS. Each week I worked two days for The Big Issue and spent two days (often also nights) out on the streets with rough sleepers. Also during this period: interviews with members of the Street Scene Task Force (with the worker in charge of rough sleeper counts, with the homelessness police officer and with the outreach nurse). Generous scholarship from the Wingate Foundation received in September 2001, enabling me to change from part to full time basis of PhD for following two years.

JUNE 2002 – JANUARY 2003: daytime only participant observation. Work for The Big Issue continues.

JANUARY 2003: Finish volunteering for The Big Issue and finish the main period of participant observation on the streets in order to write up thesis. Contacts with some rough sleepers are maintained in order to keep up to date.

2. Homeless people: sample and recruitment

Over the three-year period spent in the field (October 1999 – January 2003), I met 200 homeless people who were either currently sleeping rough or had been sleeping rough in the recent past (within the previous six months from time of interview). All were aged between

18 and 60 and lived in Oxford when they took part in this project. Some of them had two or three names and a few had false identities. In addition to there being more names than people, many other names were remembered and referred to, of people I never met. Some people I missed because they were on the streets on days when I was not. Others had left Oxford before my project started; some did not come onto the streets despite having done so in the past. There were also some people who had died in previous years but who were remembered and discussed. At a very rough guess, the inclusion of all these names would yield a figure of well over one thousand, including people living in various forms of accommodation (sleeping rough, living hostels or shelters, staying with friends, living in private or social rented housing).

Literature about homeless people provided few clues about their social life, and therefore how to conceptualise homeless people as a social group, rather than a legal or political category. One of my aims was to delineate the contours of rough sleepers' sociality in contrast to the categories in which they were placed. This process was difficult because spatial presence was not a necessary requirement of inclusion in social groups. The mobility of homeless populations meant there were social bonds across both space and time. The links between social life and mobility seemed important from the start of fieldwork. Given that I was developing my initial exploratory theoretical framework whilst also undertaking fieldwork, I was at this stage finding as much literature as I could about the spatial and temporal mobility of homeless people.

At the first stage of fieldwork, I started interviewing homeless people who came to the Housing Advice centre where I volunteered. A housing adviser recommended me to one of his clients, Mr.A, who agreed to meet with me. Mr.A and I had many meetings over the following few months, during which Mr.A told me many details about the history of his travels, friendships, drinking problems and current attempts to get somewhere self-contained to live and to stay off the drink. During these meetings Mr.A highlighted my developing concerns to learn about the long-term, recurring nature of homelessness.

Later, when The Big Issue recruited me, I made many contacts with rough sleepers who were vendors, or trying to become vendors, for the magazine. Homeless people outnumbered vendors and this suggests that my sample may have been partial, leaving out non-vendors. However, in Oxford The Big Issue gave ten free magazines to newly recruited vendors (as a means to 'get them started'). This meant that many rough sleepers would sign up to become vendors simply in order to obtain the free magazines. As a result of this, I met many rough sleepers through working for The Big Issue, who did not go on to become vendors.

All of the participants in this project had experiences of substances abuse at some time in their lives and almost all used alcohol and/or heroin and/or crack cocaine to varying degrees and for varying lengths of time. In addition to unconventional housing identities, the participants also had substance-based socially ascribed identities, which affected their relations with services providers, the police and the general public. Whether a person drank or used heroin or crack, I discovered, also marked a social division amongst rough sleepers themselves, at least some of the time.

2.1. Modes of gaining access to rough sleepers

Both Declerck and Mort claim that gaining access to homeless people is easy. Declerck, in his research amidst rough sleepers in Paris, found, to his surprise, that there were 'no procedures of admittance' (Declerck 2003, section 4). Mort, who worked on research about voluntary sector agencies in Oxford, claimed that 'it is necessary simply to put on clothes which are not smart and join the people on the streets. Whether pretending to be one of them or explicitly asking them questions the literature shows that the researcher meets with an accepting response' (Mort 1999, 17). These modes of gaining access pose problems as they may lead the authors to assume that homeless street dwellers have no social organisation of their own. Declerck explained that, much to his surprise, he found 'no alternative society' instead 'a collection of broken men and women' who had become desocialised, incapable of maintaining relationships with each other, with society and, importantly, with their own selves. He found people who were, for the most part, alcoholics or drug addicts 'malnourished, medicated, exhausted and near-unconscious', their mental worlds 'poor, depleted and repetitive' (Declerck 2003, section 5).

My own approach differed from Declerck's and from those referred to by Mort. The first reason for this was that I assumed from the outset that there would be admittance procedures and I set about trying to meet rough sleepers in order to be introduced into their social networks, and learn about their daily and periodic routines and practices from a perspective as close as possible to that of an 'insider'. This assumption derived from my training in anthropology, which I felt had taught me to approach research with an open mind so that I would be more able to discover the social organisation of rough sleepers without prejudice. I did find many instances of what might appear to be 'social organisation' – link-ups, territorial rules, a fleeting and almost invisible collective memory – and I present accounts of these in the chapters that follow.

The second reason I did not adopt the approach of simply showing up on the streets was practical. At the start of my PhD I had intended to make a comparison between the mobility patterns of homeless and refugee populations. It was only after one year that I dropped the comparative element from my project (which was becoming unmanageably large, yielding incomparable types of knowledge), by which time I was already known in my capacity as a volunteer in the advice centre and for The Big Issue.

2.2. Methods

Over the entire fieldwork period I undertook episodes of participant observation, unstructured interviews, in-depth conversations, chats, simple observation, walks around routes, and visits to sleeping, work, and drug-using spots. I visited people in their bedsit rooms and in the hostels where they sometimes stayed, and I accompanied them when they visited friends and dealers. Some rough sleepers would sometimes visit me at my home, and many of them knew my son and gave him gifts (of money and of found objects). Whilst this practice of permitting rough sleepers to know my address was against the code of conduct of services providers, other researchers (Murray 1984, Hall 2003) also allowed homeless people to stay with them on occasions. One advantage of this practice was that it confirmed to rough sleepers that I was who I said I was.

The most common grouping I found was 'link-ups' – partnerships between (mostly) two people. During the core period of participant observation I formed link-ups with 30 individual rough sleepers. Some of these were sleeping on the streets, others were in and out of shelters, hostels and/or bedsits. This meant that sometimes I stayed out overnight, other times I returned home, when my link-up partner went to the place they were staying for the night. I had no access to overnight facilities in hostels and therefore could not accompany my partners who were using them. As I was also working for The Big Issue on two days of the week, I was around rough sleepers on a full-time basis during this period.

2.2.1. Recording data

My choice of site (the spaces and times of rough sleepers) meant that recording information was difficult to do. On my first day as a participant observer I met up with Mr.B. He was with Mr.NP and when I arrived we all went to the Job Centre. Both Mr.B and Mr.NP walked extremely fast, and I had to run to keep up. I ran for almost all of the rest of the day and night, accompanying Mr.B from place to place, meeting other homeless people, learning their stories in breathless conversations undertaken whilst on-route, and observing their interactions with Mr.B when they exchanged important information (dealers' phone numbers, news). Being on the move the whole time not only made it difficult to take notes, but it also meant I rather quickly gained the appearance of a rough sleeper. It was too cold and I was too exhausted to stay clean, neat or presentable. On the first morning when I woke up in a car park, my hair had become matted and, to disentangle it would have taken too much time.

Routines became comprehensible to me as chains of events. An example of a chain of events went thus: going to the phone box while Mr.B rang a dealer, going to where the dealer stated, meeting other people along the route and on the site, purchasing the drug, finding a place to use the drug. Cycles of activity were short but undertaken with great speed during which time there was no opportunity to take notes and I would try to retain as much information as possible to note down at the first window of opportunity. This frequently was the time when I was vending or begging – because at such times I was stationary. The other main times were the mornings and late nights, when I was in bed. Apart from these times, I was busy in a social swirl of mobility and many notes had to be written up when I returned home.

Initially I decided not to make tape recordings or take photographs, as I worried rough sleepers might mistrust me. As homeless people got to know me, I decided to take a camera and tape-recorder to the field. However, opportunities to make tape recordings were few and far between and taking photographs yielded material of limited worth.

My choice of site was motivated by both the lack of ethnographic material derived from participant observation with rough sleepers and my desire not to be regarded as a staff member or other kind of authority figure. Even exceptionally useful work such as papers and books by Brandon et al (1980), Hutson and Liddiard (1991), Lee (1993), Carlen (1996), May (2003), for example, used data gathered on sites where services were provided. The choice of site is important because I quickly learnt that rough sleepers responded to the non-homeless in a tailored manner. Talking to services providers, rough sleepers tended to emphasise their neediness; talking to the police, they tended to emphasise their innocence, and so forth. Also, apart from Baxter and Hopper's (1981) work, undertaken in the USA and Lee's (1993) thesis about homelessness in London, there was no material about the range and variety of sites rough sleepers used in their daily routines. My desire to not be thought of as 'staff' was successful though only to some extent. Mr.I told me that when he first started working with me he thought I was 'some variety of do-gooder', which meant that my choice of site might not have made a difference.

Nevertheless, as time passed by I gained a much more ambiguous reputation – some rough sleepers thought I was addicted to drugs; others thought I was in relationships with my link-up partners, whilst many knew I was 'doing a project'. As rough sleepers were very busy, it was impractical to expect them to give up time for interviews, etc. without remuneration. Joining in their working practices meant I was welcome as a link-up partner because I paid my own way and gave money I earned to my link-up partner. Also, when I formed a link-up with someone who did not trust me (for example, Mr.D gave me very uninformative answers to my questions), I was still closer to street life. While vending or begging I would meet other rough sleepers who passed by, and we would chat. On one occasion Mr.T and Mr.S passed by and

asked me to deliver twenty pounds to Mr.L; on various occasions I was asked to pass on messages or for other details regarding the whereabouts of someone.

3. Undertaking research within organisations that worked with homeless people

Given that this project was mainly concerned with obtaining an understanding of rough sleepers, gaining access to organisations was of importance to me as a means of understanding aspects of how their mobility is produced (see Cresswell 2001). There is also plenty of literature about how many organisations are structured, financed and working in partnership, as well as about their internal cultures (see Edwards 1994, Mort 1999, Pannell and Parry 1999), and I did not feel the need to study them in depth. Many workers were very open and helpful towards me, generously explaining many things and most of my research in this area took place through informal conversations. I undertook a slightly more formal approach when interviewing workers from agencies where I had not volunteered (in both the voluntary and statutory sectors).²

As regards outreach workers, I avoided participant observation with them and did not develop strong relationships with them. This was because I wanted to avoid becoming associated with them by rough sleepers. Whilst many of these workers had good and friendly relations with most rough sleepers, there were also some problems and conflicts on occasions. I wanted to be sure that the rough sleepers I knew felt confident enough to trust me with their comments on these matters. I therefore kept some distance between myself and outreach workers and when I did ask them questions, it came as no surprise that I was asked to put them in writing and send them to their bosses.

My secondary aim of working in organisations as a volunteer and, on two occasions, as a paid worker, was to gain insights into the systems of provision that formed an important context in which rough sleepers undertook their activities. I was concerned to find out how these systems were linked vertically to local and national political agencies and horizontally, to statutory and other voluntary sector agencies. I also wanted to find out about the different services made available to rough sleepers and how access to them was regulated.

² A list of organisations contacted can be found in the appendix.

Working for The Big Issue did not provide me with much data about organisations, but rather served mostly as an access point for meeting rough sleepers. I was widely known by rough sleepers in my role there and, given that only two people ran its operation in Oxford – myself and a vendor – there was little to learn about it as an organisation. I picked up small bits of information from other vendors and workers who occasionally visited Oxford, learning about how it had been run by ex-rough sleepers in the past and for this reason had a good reputation amidst rough sleepers. I also followed changes The Big Issue was undergoing, but not closely, as they concerned staff members based in London and elsewhere.

My work in other agencies gave me much stronger insights into organisations. Briefly working in a shelter showed me how professional distances are maintained between workers and clients; how rules and procedures regulated the behaviour of clients using the shelter and how spatial features, such as entry doors, alarms, locks and ‘safe’ spaces, are used to control people perceived as dangerous. My work as a housing advisor gave me insights into the difficulties ex-offenders have in finding accommodation as well as into processes whereby local housing authorities ration housing through their implementation of housing law. On these two occasions I gained many valuable insights into aspects of client/staff relationships as well as funding issues and these insights have informed my research. I learnt about how workers and rough sleepers work together to produce identities that fit statutory requirements of local housing authorities.

My time spent at the advice centre gave me close-up experiences of the variety of cultures, at times in conflict with each other, contained within voluntary sector agencies. Whilst Pleace (2000) has found there to be a ‘consensus’ regarding the causes and needs of single homeless populations, between politicians, academics and services providers, at the micro social level, I found staff from voluntary sector agencies appeared to be divided. Accounting for these divisions led me to read literature about the development of the voluntary sector providing services to homeless people and campaigning on their behalf (Wilson 1970, Beacock 1979, Kendall 2000). In particular I noted there were staff whose original training and values were rooted in different historical phases in the development of relations (in particular those of

funding) between such agencies and local and national governments. Staff loyalties appeared to be constantly divided between meeting funding requirements (largely administrative and bureaucratic) and those values (such as face-to-face, jargon-free contact with clients) they felt rooted and maintained their culture of 'independence' (from state or private, profit-making organisations).

During my time at the advice centre I initially had consent to carry out research within the organisation. I was able therefore to gain insights into the hierarchies and divisions within the workforce and how these were related to the above-mentioned contradictory cultural practices. I used two main methods at this time. Firstly I 'shadowed' some advisors in order to learn how to be an advisor too. This route to becoming an advisor had been followed by some of the workers and thus I also learnt about workplace traditions. Furthermore, as a volunteer, I learnt about core values of the advice centre, by being shown how to provide a friendly service to clients. I also learnt about the social divisions, expressed in spatial practices, between workers and clients and workers from other agencies. Secondly, as I formed friendly relations with many of the workers, I had many informal chats, undertaken on an anonymous basis. Some workers also agreed to a series of unstructured interviews.

My research activities within the centre were however, suspended by the director, in May 2001. This was because a worker, recently returned from being on leave, complained that I might misrepresent the advice centre in my thesis. Informally I was told the worker concerned was "the office bully" and everyone had fallen foul of this worker over past times. However, I continued to volunteer there and my informal conversations also carried on.

B. Issues arising in the research process

1. Undertaking research alone

There were certain limitations to my methodological approach the first of which was the fact that I conducted research on my own. I wanted to adopt a 'multi-sited' approach, such as that taken by Passaro (1997), which would require me to have ongoing contacts with homeless people as well as various agencies that formed part of the context of their daily lives. I

envisaged spending nights in the night shelter rather than just on the streets and conducting many more interviews within organisations, also to include outreach workers.

I found however, that rough sleepers were frequently at loggerheads – either with various individual workers or else with processes they had to undergo inside shelters and hostels. This led me to read about relations between homeless people and the staff from hostels, outreach teams and other facilities. Much of the literature revealed homeless people as having ambiguous, critical attitudes towards services provision. I decided to restrict my primary focus to gaining an understanding of their lifestyles. This meant also being ‘on their side’, when disputes developed with the police or with other workers (or, for that matter, with drug dealers and any other non-homeless party). One rough sleeper emphasised this by telling me I should pretend to workers and to the police, that I myself was homeless, in order to get a better understanding of what it was like, being street homeless. This was no longer possible as, Oxford being a small city, I was already known to most of the workers and to the homelessness police officer. (The issue of covert/overt research is addressed below under the heading ‘ethics’)

Martin (2000) describes how, in his fieldwork with new-age travellers, he did no interviews on the site where he was living, in order to maintain the most ‘natural’ environment possible. Instead, he conducted interviews on other sites that he visited (Martin 2000, pg.2). This approach might have worked well for me by providing insights into both rough sleeper lifestyles as well as practices of workers, and my work as a housing adviser and shelter worker in nearby towns did resemble Martin’s. However, the detail of disputes could only be understood by being able to learn what different parties involved felt about the situation. Another approach, adopted by Baxter and Hopper (1981) and Snow and Anderson (1993), would have been to undertake this project with other researchers who could have occupied positions within organisations; a fuller picture might thus have emerged.

Another aspect of this project that suffered from my being a lone researcher was that I became associated mainly with drug-using rough sleepers. Other groups – drinkers and those classified as mentally-ill – are underrepresented here. I did form one ‘link-up’ with a drinker

rough sleeper and I conducted many interviews with three others. I also had friendly chats with any drinker or mentally ill rough sleeper I met and, given how the line dividing these populations was often blurred, I did gain some insight into their practices and experiences. However, more researchers, working exclusively with them, would have provided invaluable material, often of a complementary nature in cases when disputes arose between members of these populations.

Some of the limitations of this project originate from my own lack of forethought, and this can be explained by my lack of research experience. There is hardly any literature about the drink/drug/mentally ill divisions within rough sleeper populations either, although Mort (1999) does examine the divisions between old and young homeless people, which I here argue may be related to substances use. In practice, my main choice of site (the streets) in combination with my mode of gaining access (often through contacts made in my role at The Big Issue) produced a bias towards drug user populations who, by virtue of the high price of drugs, needed to work long hours on the streets.

2. Doing anthropology 'at home'

My family and I lived in Oxford. This geographical proximity meant that I could undertake episodic participant observation, staying out overnight on the nights when my son was at his father's. It also meant that I had a base I could return to that was relatively removed from 'the field'. This was not absolute though, as rough sleepers did visit me and sometimes stayed overnight at my home. My home became a marginal space, sometimes serving as a 'cut-off' from the strains of participant observation, other times becoming part of a circuit of places rough sleepers visited.

2.1. 'Immersion' in the field

Various factors mitigated against my becoming fully immersed in the world of rough sleepers. Firstly, I had personal responsibilities, which required me to be at home (away from 'the field'). This meant visiting 'the field' on an episodic basis. This was advantageous for two reasons: 1. as noted above, home became a place of recovery from participant observation; 2. episodic participant observation fitted in with patterns of rough sleepers as many rough

sleepers themselves had experienced homelessness on an episodic basis. This meant that I was still able to think of myself (in my researcher role) as an ‘insider’.

However, full immersion would have yielded valuable information about other rough sleeper groups (drinkers, mentally-ill) and I would also have participated in different daily routines – for example, sitting in parks with drinkers – and learnt more, not only about the internal divisions between rough sleepers, but also about people’s individual biographies.

Furthermore, whilst there is here an appreciation of the way some rough sleepers come from the Oxford area whereas others have come from other parts of the country, this would have become more well-informed. Primarily though, as it became increasingly apparent to me that some social structures were present in the internal dynamics of rough sleepers, I became frustrated at not being more fully immersed in the field. This was because the structures I found were very unstable, irregular and intangible at times, and I would have liked to have gained a deeper understanding of their significance as determining factors for rough sleepers.

It is nevertheless difficult to determine what ‘full’ immersion would be. Many rough sleepers I worked with stayed in Oxford throughout the study, but others left and travelled elsewhere. Some of these returned to Oxford and then left again. Full immersion would not have permitted me to both travel with them and stay in Oxford with those who remained here. Furthermore, the activities undertaken each day were sometimes responses to contingent, unpredictable factors. This meant that different rough sleepers were engaged in different activities. ‘Full’ immersion would not have overcome this logistical difficulty. Furthermore, as my participant observation was mainly with rough sleepers, I have already noted that I did not gain insights from members of staff in the agencies rough sleepers used. This absence of truly ‘multi-sited’ ethnography could not have been overcome by ‘full’ immersion.

2.2. Participant observation at night times

There is a dearth of ethnographic material based on participant observation with rough sleepers in their night-time practices, and this would appear to be counter-intuitive given that rough sleepers’ homelessness is defined by the fact that they sleep outdoors. Baxter and Hopper (1981) found that ‘after midnight (was)... a prime time for research’ (1981, pg.22).

However, they were collecting stories and conducting interviews rather than participating in the night-time routines of rough sleepers³.

Declerck (2003) did undertake night-time participant observation with rough sleepers in Paris, though I do not know how many nights he spent out. I myself spent just 26 nights out on the streets, over the core period of research. This low figure came as a surprise to me when I went through my notes as, at the time, I was constantly exhausted and my life was dominated by the research process I was engaged in. The disproportionate effect of night-time participant observation can perhaps be explained by two factors. Firstly, it is possible that I experienced 'culture shock' and furthermore, that I continued to experience culture shock as I to'd and fro'd between daytime and night time participant observation and between being out with rough sleepers and coming home, away from them.

Secondly, and perhaps of greater relevance, the explanatory power of night-time participant observation outweighs that of research undertaken at different times because of its intensity. Both Declerck, from his own participant observation, and Desjarlais, who used the oral accounts of residents of a shelter where he undertook research, describe life on the streets as a highly fragmenting and mentally disturbing one, of constant interruptions, chaos and senseless, non-narrative forms (Desjarlais 1997, 120-128). Declerck said there was 'an undercurrent of terror' requiring a 'hypervigilance' from rough sleepers that dissipated an enormous amount of mental energy (Declerck 2003, section 20)

In my own work, whilst in the daytimes there were moments when I felt unsafe (for example, from aggressive passers-by), there were many other pedestrians about, shops were open and more police were around. This meant I felt there was help at hand if trouble arose. However, as nights approached the streets became less hospitable; more drunk passers-by, often behaving aggressively, would pass me and I was often shouted at in a frightening way. I was also asked for sexual favours on one occasion and, on another, a drunk man started vomiting so near me I had to move my pitch. My experiences were as nothing compared to those of

³ Though it should be noted that, on two occasions they entered, incognito, shelters for the homeless (pg.23).

other rough sleepers, both male and female, who regularly sported black eyes and who told me of harrowing attacks they had undergone in the past.

At other later times in the night, when no people passed by, there was the cold weather to contend with. In my notes I have recorded not a single night of unbroken sleep. Most of the time I was shivering with cold, moving one part of my body to get it warm and thus causing another part to become cold. One rough sleeper told me he had to get up three times during a particularly cold night, and wander around to warm up. When begging late at night it was frequently very cold and no nearby fast food outlets were open and no readily available means of getting warm could be accessed.

At these and other times I found myself highly dependent on my link-up partner. My questions about what to do if such and such happened were more urgently concerned with my personal safety rather than just my professional concerns. In the mornings after, I would enter into a kind of mental stupor – sitting-and-staring mode – which I associated with a lack of sleep and the need to ‘switch off’ and recover. At the very early stages of the core period of research (in May 2001) I, in common with many rough sleepers’ accounts, experienced anxiety attacks over a two-week period, which required me to take medication and to attend a mental day centre for a short while.

These experiences I had yielded a much closer understanding of the crushing force of street life. Rough sleepers were familiar with all of these experiences and had many worse experiences of their own. These types of experiences help to explain the presence of some social structures (for example, link-ups provide a protection of sorts) and they help to explain the drink/drug dependencies rough sleepers develop. Conversely, the way these kinds of experiences can have a fragmentary effect upon a person (by focussing concern on irresolvable threats to a person’s well-being), may help to explain the unstable, fleeting nature of social structures amidst rough sleepers.

2.3. Nature of the 'field'

Ortner (1995), using ethnographic examples, illustrates how anthropologists' refusal to engage in certain ethnographic descriptions can result in forms of knowledge that leave out a sense of the 'agency', in particular the resistance practices, of the populations described. This is a danger pertinent to the study of rough sleeping. As noted above, modes of gaining access, whereby the researcher simply appears on the streets, as well as the dearth of night-time ethnographic research, gives the impression that rough sleepers have no social organisation, and this in turn casts them in a role of passive victims whose 'choice' of lifestyle hardly counts by comparison to other, macro-structural factors.

Whilst research in this project took place in a 'field' that included participant observation in organisations and interviews/questionnaires with non-homeless parties, this was often felt by me to be a drawback as it meant I did not gain fuller insights about rough sleeper social organisation. I am not arguing that rough sleepers should be romanticized as exotic 'others'. This is a danger Passaro sought to avoid by 'choosing sites that would afford (her)... positionalities at varying points along a participant-observer continuum' (Passaro 1997, 156). There is also a danger, by leaving out contextual factors of the macro-structural level, of producing prejudicial accounts about 'the underclass' or of 'cultures of poverty' in which blame for poverty is made to look like the result of individual shortcomings.

Nor am I arguing that knowledge gained through greater personal risks taken by anthropologists should somehow be privileged (Passaro 1997, 147). After all, the personal risks undertaken by participating in night-time routines with rough sleepers are undertaken by rough sleepers themselves. There is indeed a great deal to be learnt, both about rough sleepers and about epistemology, by adopting a 'multi-sited' approach. Most of the little ethnographic material gathered about rough sleepers has been obtained in this way. The work of Wright (1997), who undertook research in many sites, is particularly revealing of the connections between spatial policies and practices of many parties, in conjunction with economic macro-forces and rough sleepers' lifestyles.

However, Wright (1997) and many other authors (for example, Spradley 1970, Hill and Stamey 1990, Snow and Anderson 1993, Higate 2000 & 1997) have found that there is friendship and solidarity amongst rough sleeper populations. There is a case therefore for adopting a more fully immersed approach when studying rough sleepers' social structures, especially as nowhere in existing literature is this issue fully elucidated.

C. Ethics

1. Ethics and organisations/workers

By taking on many duties as a volunteer I hoped to both be open about my research and find ways to repay the kindness shown to me by both the organisations which granted me access and the members of staff who befriended me. Whilst there were difficulties in obtaining/sustaining consent, this was because organisations, as charities, were vulnerable at the funding level. As already shown above, formal consent (obtained from the outset and ratified by staff when I made a small presentation at a staff meeting) was withdrawn from the advice centre, and made conditional on my giving up some editorial control. Naturally I did not do this, however it posed no problems given that my main focus was in relation to rough sleeper populations. When volunteering for The Big Issue, I requested a vendor badge and permission to undertake research. My line manager gave me permission but only informally. He explained that in the past, journalists had written negative stories about The Big Issue, prejudicing its credibility with the general public and thus harming the interests of homeless vendors. Whilst I worked hard as a volunteer, in truth the debt I owe to both the advice centre and The Big Issue can never be repaid as I benefited enormously through being granted such a role.

With individual workers from within these organisations (and from other organisations), I was always explicit about my research role and about my project and how I expected to use the information provided. In some situations I was able to buy lunch or coffee for the people I interviewed. However, it was just as likely that they would refuse and instead buy me lunch/coffee! Many of them rejected the notion that I was indebted to them and I accepted this. Some workers would see me in their workplace, simply giving me their time. I remain grateful to all of these workers.

2. Ethics and rough sleepers

2.1. Informed consent

Formal consent was sought from (and given by) all those I formed link ups with. Informal consent was obtained from a further seventy rough sleepers. This differed from formal consent in that I did not ask for signed consent (not always obtained, see below) and I provided less intricate explanations about my project. There were also many occasions when I sought no consent – when observing or chatting informally to rough sleepers with whom I spent no further time. My status was generally known and I hoped this would suffice.

Gaining consent was relatively easy – everyone I asked agreed to talk with me in my capacity as a researcher. Some of those I formed link-ups with also agreed to sign consent forms though some avoided this through various means (sudden distractions, agreeing to sign next time I saw them). A few signed under different names. I did not feel that consent forms were appropriate to my situation and I did not press for signatures mainly because I felt I was benefiting enormously from the way rough sleepers were open and willing to talk with me and to insist would be rude. In order to ensure consent obtained was ‘informed’, I talked about my project as well as questions or findings that came up whilst I was in the field. I also returned at later stages to see if I had gotten my facts right. Furthermore, as time passed by and I became known, more people agreed to let me do my research with them well before I formed link-ups with them, or interviewed them.

2.2. Money and rough sleepers

As well as giving the money I earned as a participant observer to my link-up partners, I gave sums of money to those I interviewed but did not work with (between ten and twenty pounds, depending on the length of time spent). A few rough sleepers would not accept money from me.

This is relevant as, for many rough sleepers, there is very little free time to be spent just talking – their days are spent earning money to buy drugs or drink, and the time I spent interviewing or questioning them would therefore entail a loss of income.

I also gave some rough sleepers various items – chocolate, cigarettes, hot drinks, tea-tree oil, items of clothing, birthday and Christmas gifts (such as torches, watches, lighters). However, it should be noted that some rough sleepers gave me presents too. Flowers, a key ring, a hand-made lighter holder, a wax sculpture were just some of the gifts I received in addition to small gifts of money to pass on to my son. Additionally, when I asked for old needles and ‘sin bins’ (as I considered taking photographs of these objects and I was exploring the possibility of making some kind of display of street items) these were given to me covered in artistic decoration.

A further observation about money: given that I passed on my earnings to my link-up partners and gave sums of between ten/twenty pounds to those I interviewed, it might appear as though other, future researchers might find it hard to conduct research without giving these kinds of sums to rough sleepers. This is not the case. Rough sleepers will talk to people for nothing – as they often do with interested passers-by. If a person gives them five pounds (as Melrose did in her research [1999]), rough sleepers consider this as a ‘drop’ (sum of money given by passer-by to beggar or vendor).

Participating in work practices means earning money – it is unavoidable. However, the sums I earned varied considerably; from as little as twelve pounds to as much as one hundred pounds (though this high figure was a complete exception and was earned on Christmas Eve when charitable impulses seem to be at their strongest). On average I earned thirty pounds if I stayed out for a complete day and night.

2.3. Confidentiality

While some rough sleepers did not want to hide their identities, many others did and I decided to hide everyone’s identity. In their biographical accounts, given to me in some detail, I have also changed most of the place names.

3. Ethics and covert research

Undertaking this project, I decided to adopt a mostly overt approach. This was because I needed to gain access to a variety of sites and to ask many questions. Especially at the start of the project, there seemed nothing to be gained from going incognito. As already noted above, Oxford is a small city and many workers from organisations knew each other, so it is likely that my role would have been severely limited had I adopted a covert approach. Additionally, having gained ethical consent from my university in February 2001, I also learned that covert research is not permitted.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons to suppose that some covert research could be very useful as a means of gaining insights into the way homeless people experience their relationships with workers from services provision sites. Mr.B and I had a rather long argument one morning. On this occasion an outreach team had come by with some hot drinks and, when I told them about my role as a researcher, Mr.B argued that I should have pretended to be homeless, so that I could understand what it was like to be treated as a homeless person by workers.

Summary

I have described the processes of research undertaken in the execution of this project. As well as gaining some limited experiences of the organisations providing services to rough sleepers, participant observation was undertaken with rough sleepers in their own spaces and times. This was felt to be vital to the research, which was focussed on the interaction between repeated homelessness and the social identities of rough sleepers. While there is some literature about the social lives of homeless people (for example, Downing-Orr 1996, Snow and Anderson 1993), this literature is incomplete, unreflective of the practices of rough sleepers as they carry out their daily and periodic routines.

Difficult and unresolved issues concern the delineation of who belongs in the social groups of homeless people and who does not. It was found that, as rough sleepers moved in and out of various forms of accommodation, they also had links with people who were domiciled. This

mismatch between the category of homelessness and the practices of rough sleepers, is addressed in Part Two.

Part Two: Ethnography in Oxford

INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

This introduction contains basic demographic facts about the participants in this project as well as a consideration of background factors in their personal biographies.

A: Profile of homeless population

1. Self described accommodation status

This project was about rough sleepers and therefore the entire research population in this section were either currently sleeping rough or had done so in the recent past. Whilst it may be possible to assess the material absence of a dwelling as ‘homelessness’, this emphasis downplays the subjective and social significance of ‘home’, which forms an important part of the context in which homeless people are regarded, both by themselves and by others. Crane notes how there are ‘ambiguities over the housed or homeless status of some people’ (Crane 1999, 15) in particular, ‘there is no consensus about whether people in marginal housing...are housed or homeless’ (ibid.) The participants in this project did describe themselves as homeless, but the emphasis placed on this housing need and its link with social relations varied to a great extent.

1.1. ‘Rough sleepers’ and ‘Part-time homeless’

Most of the participants in this project classified themselves as ‘rough sleepers’. This term referred to the ‘literally homeless’ nature of their accommodation status. At the time when I first interviewed them, they all slept or had recently slept in outdoor places (in shop doorways, underground car parks, fields, derelict houses, under bridges, and other places). Included in this category were many people who stayed in the Night Shelter and who also participated in the daily routines of other rough sleepers. Some Night Shelter dwellers though were not considered to be ‘rough sleepers’ as they were long-term residents of the shelter and did not work on the streets.

Fig.Intro.1. Accommodation status of participants

Accommodation status at first interview

‘Rough Sleepers’: 26

‘Part-time homeless’: 16

Length of time homeless at 1st interview

Mr.F	twelve years
Mr.A, Mr.E, Mr.L, Mr.H	ten years
Mr.N	nine years
Mr.J, Mr.Q, Mr.P, Mr.S, Mr.T, Mr.U	eight years
Ms.D, Mr.K	five years
Mr.G	four years
Mr.R, Mr.D, Mr.I	three years
Ms.A, Ms.I, Ms.J, Mr.V, Mr.B, Mr.C, Mr.O	two years
Mr.M	one year
Ms.E, Ms.F, Ms.H, Mr.X, Mr.Z, Mr.IJ, Mr.HI, Mr.LM, Mr.W, Mr.BC, Mr.DE, Mr.EF, Mr.AB, Mr.GH, Mr.JK, Mr.Y	less than one year

Rough sleepers frequently changed the location and nature of their dwellings. Some found rented rooms, some stayed for periods in squats or derelict houses, or hospitals and prisons, and others stayed for some nights in the Night Shelter or found places in hostels. Many of these carried on participating in the daily practices of street life, even sometimes sleeping outdoors. Rough sleepers would describe themselves, when they had dwellings, as ‘part-time homeless’. All of the rough sleepers in this project flitted between the two categories and most had done so throughout the time they had been homeless. The inclusion of this category in this study reflects both their social relations with other rough sleepers and the fact that they often left or were evicted from their dwellings and then returned to being literally ‘rough sleepers’.

By the end of my fieldwork new people, not recorded in the above figures, were sleeping on the streets and many of those I met previously, had left Oxford. Some of them went to detoxification or rehabilitation centres elsewhere in the country, but I have not recorded this

above as I am unable to ascertain whether or not any of them completed their stays at these centres, nor whether their homelessness persisted.

2. Counting the homeless

As I have noted above, the ‘rough sleeper’ and ‘part-time homeless’ status of the participants in this project was reckoned more in terms of mobility than whether or not they slept on the streets or inside places on any given night. This reflects a social dimension to self-classifications that was absent in the official classifications, which were based on the absence of physical, material shelter. In Oxford, over the period of this research project, official rough sleeper counts were taking place. The figures were as follows:

Fig.Intro.2. Rough Sleeper counts

May 2000	Oct 2000	Apr 2001	Nov 2001	Jan 2002	Mar2002
27	24	23	9	7	7

source: J.Adcock Street Scene Task Force Manager

These figures are ‘snapshots’ of street homelessness, obtained by teams of people who counted rough sleepers on a particular night, in particular areas. It has already been noted that some theorists (for example: Rosenthal 1991, Cloke et al 2001) are critical of the methods used to obtain quantification of homelessness, especially of rough sleeper counts. In Oxford two councillors decided to make their own count that, on the night in question (27 November 2001), came to twenty. This figure was over twice that of the Rough Sleepers’ worker, who found just nine people (in early November). The two councillors were reprimanded by Louise Casey (who headed the Rough Sleeper’s Unit for the British Prime Minister), who accused them of ‘undermining the work of people dealing with the issue’ (Oxford Mail, Saturday December 8 2001, pg.4. See also Oxford Mail Tuesday December 4 2001 pg.2 and Oxford Mail Tuesday December 11 2001, pg.5). Cllr Coates explained that they had been concerned that organisations working with rough sleepers might receive less funding if rough sleepers were not recorded. A worker in charge of rough sleeper counts explained to me that funding would be cut if rough sleeper numbers went up, as this might signal a failure of such organisations. However, this appears to go against the stipulation, by central government’s

Rough Sleepers' Initiative, that funding would only be 'awarded to those authorities able to demonstrate a "significant rough sleeping problem" through a single-night head count of rough sleepers' (Cloke et al. 2001, 266). An outreach team recently lost their funding (which was not from the state but instead a religious organisation) because of how the counts produce such low figures (Oxford Mail Saturday November 29th 2003). A councillor made her own counts and found consistently over twenty people sleeping rough.

The official figures do appear to be fairly low, and various homeless people told me they were moved off the streets on the nights when counts took place. This information was impossible to verify. Furthermore, some rough sleepers made a point of sleeping in inaccessible and hidden places where they could not be seen and were therefore not counted. Those who happened to be 'part time homeless' on the night of a count were not included either and yet they frequently were rough sleepers (literally). It could be argued that the official manner of counting rough sleepers permits government ministers and campaigners of various kinds to perform a 'sleight of hand', using low figures to prove both how effective they have been at 'solving' rough sleeping as well as claims that most beggars are not homeless.

3. Demographic profile

It is important to emphasise that the figures below are not necessarily representative, as this project was not a comprehensive survey of all rough sleepers (and part-time homeless people) in Oxford. The figures would have differed both in numerical terms, but perhaps also in terms of what interpretations could be made of aggregate numbers. Many other rough sleepers were observed over the course of fieldwork, but as these figures stand, they largely fit in with current survey findings about the characteristics of rough sleepers.

Fig.Intro.3. Demographic characteristics

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Region of origin	Nationality
Male: 35	between 25 and 59: 36	White: 39	Local area: 12	English: 36
Female 7	between 18 and 25: 6	Non-white: 3	Midlands: 6	Scottish: 1
	unknown: 2		Northeast: 4	Irish: 2
			Southwest: 3	Welsh: 1
			Northwest: 2	Other: 2
			South: 2	
			Southeast: 2	
			Unknown: 5	

Various authors (for example: Kennett 1999, Kemp 1997) have commented on how homeless populations have changed over the past twenty-five years, becoming more heterogeneous than before, with higher numbers of women, members of ethnic minorities and young people. This change must be qualified however, as many homeless people do not become rough sleepers or part time homeless, occupying places in B&B hotels, hostels and other temporary accommodation provided by housing authorities.

3.1. Gender

Three women from the forty-two people in this section were drinkers and four were drug users. Other women were also observed on the street but their numbers were considerably lower than their male counterparts. During this project it was found that men and women did not form separate or different ways of life or social circles. Whilst in overnight facilities, women and men had separate dorms, in day-to-day activities street homeless women and men shared the same lifestyles. Their daytime activities were undertaken with both women and men. Rough sleeper women were found to be either alone or else in a ‘link up’ (see below) with a man.

Jones suggests that women are less likely to sleep rough because it is a dangerous thing to do, preferring to stay on friends’ floors or obtaining access to accommodation through forming relationships with men (Jones 1999, 8). Both Ms.D and Ms.H were victims of serious violent

sexual crimes. Ms.F was in a relationship throughout the project and Ms.A formed two relationships during the project, thus appearing to confirm Jones' findings.

Jones also found that women moved between rough sleeping and other forms of accommodation more frequently than men and that women were more 'socially stable' than men (ibid. 9). These factors were not confirmed in this project but they may also account for the lower numbers of women than men on the streets. Fitzpatrick et al argued it is likely that the gender imbalance amongst single homeless people can be accounted for by the way women are often accompanied by children, which leads to their quantification as part of family homelessness instead (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 27). Their absence from the streets may be partly accounted for by how housing authorities provide accommodation to families, but at least two women from this project (Ms.A and Ms.I) were separated from their children and unable to obtain accommodation through this route.

3.2. *Age*

Kemp's report on a 1991 survey notes how between 1972 and 1991 there was a 'large increase in the proportion of young... and a decrease in the proportion of elderly single homeless people' (Kemp 1997, 73). However he notes that most rough sleepers are aged between 25 and 59 years old (ibid.) This finding was confirmed in the population described in this section. Fitzpatrick et al have noted that younger homeless people may be receiving 'newer and higher quality homelessness services' (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 26) whilst older homeless people may be getting neglected. It may be that the services available to young homeless people were more effective than those provided for older rough sleepers, who sometimes had conflicts with members of staff and subsequently left or were evicted from facilities provided for them. Defining 'old' and 'young' is not undisputed. In Oxford there were two night shelters – one for 'young' (under-25 years old) homeless people, the other for the over-25s. For Crane (1999) there are 'young elderly homeless people' who are aged between 50 and 60 years old, and there are older homeless people.

Local researchers have found a social division between older and younger homeless people. Mort described the complaints older homeless people made about the behaviour of younger

ones in an agency in Oxford (Mort 1999, 174). She argued that younger people's needs were different from those of older people, marked in particular by the need undertake creative activities to prevent dependency and destructive behaviours (ibid. 171). This division was neither confirmed nor disconfirmed. Hall has noted how young homeless people distanced themselves from the term 'homeless' as a self-description, speculating that this occurs because the label is 'disempowering and stigmatising' (Hall 2003, 79n). The youngest participant in this project was 19 years old and did not display this attitude. However many young homeless people stayed at an overnight shelter that excluded anyone over 25 years old, and I did not meet many of its residents on the streets.

Crane argued that there is a 'dearth of information about older homeless people' (Crane 1999, 22), many of who stay away from agencies for the homeless and out of sight from those who may count them (ibid. 31). There is a chance their numbers are higher than surveys indicate; Hawes argues there may be an underestimate of as much as 10% (Hawes 1997, 24). Mr.A and Mr.L, who were both over 50 years old by the end of my fieldwork, showed me sleeping places that were very hidden. Mr.A also told me of practices (such as scavenging from bins, searching for small change) that he undertook in the early hours of the morning, when his visibility to agency workers and other parties would have been at its lowest. I did observe two other very elderly looking rough sleepers who refused to talk with me. Mr.L told me one of them had 'been id'd' (identified by the police), but that he did not ever talk. Mr.A and Mr.L's approaches to their homeless routines and practices did appear to differ to some extent from those of other, younger homeless people but I was unable to ascertain any more on this matter.

Various authors (for example, Downing Orr, Carlen) have studied youth homelessness and thus have divided youths from older homeless people in their work. This may be an indication that in the past, when there were higher numbers of homeless people, there may have been social divisions along age lines. Lee and Downing Orr both found youths had formed a sense of community on the streets. Crane portrayed old people's homelessness as separate from that of youths, arising as a result of various personal and cultural factors (itinerant work, breakdown of family and marital relationships). Research on the history of homeless people is

necessary in order to discover how the nature of such populations may have changed over recent years.

One possible reason for conflict between homeless people may lie in the use some of the younger homeless people made of crack cocaine. Many homeless drug users claimed that crack cocaine had the effect of making users more brutal in their pursuit of money for drugs and crack cocaine was very popular in Oxford. However, drinkers felt it was the fact that drug addicts used needles rather than crack cocaine that made them brutal and anti-social. This topic is returned to below. For now it suffices to note that there were young and old drinkers and there were young and old drug users. Whilst the oldest drinkers were older than the oldest drug users, substance use seemed a more likely division than age, and intimidation seemed more common between weak and strong rather than old and young.

3.3. Ethnicity

Most of the participants in this sample were white (39 of 42). Only Mr.D (of Black-British ethnicity) was willing to talk with me about racism and he told me that, whilst aware of some racist comments, he was not excluded on racial grounds. As Harrison notes, some members of ethnic minority groups may be reluctant to take up services provided for homeless people, as these may be perceived to be insensitive to the needs of these populations (Harrison 1999, 110). Whilst members of ethnic minorities were found in both of the main groups that participated in this project (drug users and drinkers), it should be noted there were very few ethnic minorities represented here and racial conflict might have arisen if their numbers were greater, as there were racist and xenophobic statements made by white homeless people at times. Additionally, the perception of asylum seekers (promoted in very negative images in the media, especially some tabloid newspapers) as taking accommodation away from native people who need assistance, seemed fairly prevalent amongst the participants of this project (who often complained about the matter, saying 'charity begins at home'), suggests that racial or ethnic discrimination is still present.

There may be a problem of 'hidden' homelessness amongst ethnic minority populations. It is possible that members of this group use different resources (sleeping on friends' floors, for

example). One man (of Asian ethnicity) was worried about his relatives knowing about his activities. He used a European name and never worked on the streets, thus remaining out of sight, despite his homelessness.

3.4. Regional factors and nationality

Whilst homeless people on the streets, in shelters and in hostels came from all parts of Great Britain and even from abroad (Ireland, Europe, Australasia), there were no groupings based on geographical backgrounds. People from all areas were present but mixed together socially. The only exception to this was a group of Portuguese homeless people (not included in the forty-two people in this sample) who were spread out, staying in the night shelter, a hostel and a bedsit. This group did stay together socially, but also formed links with other homeless people.

Migration may account for the presence of people from other regions and countries. Archard found that a higher proportion of people came from Scotland (41%) in his review of a survey conducted in 1972 (Archard 1979, 22). Fitzpatrick et al have noted how migration from the North of England varies with economic conditions, the South East of England attracting migrants from the North in times of economic depression (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 22). The high proportion of people from the south of England (25 of 42) may be a sign of 'inflated house prices and acute shortages of affordable rented accommodation' (ibid.)

B: Background factors and precipitating causes

Whether individual or structural explanations are used, there is always a complexity of factors associated with homelessness arising in a person's life, and existing research suggests homeless populations have very heterogeneous background factors. The way such complexity is approached by researchers yields differences in the types of explanations they formulate. In this section the backgrounds of twenty-five homeless individuals are examined. As this research is about repeated homelessness, this section does not set out to explain the causes homelessness arising in the first place, but to consider them as factors which form a part of the explanation for recurring episodes of homelessness once it has already started. Such explanations are nevertheless important for two main reasons: One is that explaining

homelessness forms part of the context in and through which homeless people are regarded by non-homeless parties. In particular the dichotomy of deserving and undeserving, which the non-homeless use to judge homeless people, is based on a notion of blame – either of the individual or of circumstances beyond the individuals’ control; The second reason why it is important to examine theories about the causes for homelessness is to assess their explanatory power.

1. *Micro, macro and socio-spatial factors*

Pleace argues that there is a consensus amidst researchers, campaigners, services providers and policy makers, regarding the vulnerability of certain individuals as they are exposed to changes at the macro structural level (for example, unemployment, housing shortages), leaving them predisposed to becoming homeless (Pleace 2000, 581). This vulnerability is conceptualised, by many theorists and practitioners, in terms of ‘risk’ and ‘trigger’ factors. Fitzpatrick et al have listed these factors:

Fig.Intro.4. ‘Risk’ and ‘trigger’ factors	
RISK	TRIGGER
- sexual or physical abuse in childhood or adolescence; - family disputes and breakdown; - a background of local authority care; - offending behaviour and/or experience of prison; - previous service in the armed forces; - lack of social support network; - debts, especially rent or mortgage arrears; - causing nuisance to neighbours; - drug or alcohol misuse; - school exclusion and lack of qualifications; - mental health problems; - poor physical health.	- leaving parental home after arguments; - marital or relationship breakdown; - widowhood; - discharge from the armed forces; - leaving care; - leaving prison; - a sharp deterioration in mental health or an increase in alcohol or drug misuse - a financial crisis of mounting debt - eviction from a rented or owned home
Source: Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 28	

The biggest difficulty in finding risk and trigger factors to be causal features that may explain homelessness, lies in the link between these factors and homelessness itself. Many individuals experience many of the difficulties listed above, without becoming homeless as a result. As Sommerville notes: 'reference to such events and attributes does not explain anything in itself, but merely results in tautology (being made roofless makes one roofless) or draws attention to something which still needs to be explained (why should a broken home in the emotional sense of home be associated with absence of home in the material sense?)' (Sommerville 1992, 536). For Randall and Brown, if risk factors such as those listed above are causes, then homelessness could only be solved by removing them, through 'long-term programmes affecting millions of people' (Randall & Brown 1999, 5), which they find to be unrealistic. They argue that knowledge of risk factors makes it possible to identify 'the much smaller number of individuals who are at risk and target... support services to prevent them sleeping rough' (ibid.)

Kennett has written about factors from the macro level implicated in the causes of homelessness. For her, the economic transition over the 1980s, from Fordist to post-Fordist production also led to restructuring at the political and cultural levels, changing work processes, labour markets and patterns of state intervention (Kennett 1995, 4-5). A 'retreat from welfarism' (ibid. 12) together with an increasing polarisation between an 'aristocracy of labour' (ibid. 10) and an excluded and isolated low-paid or unwaged minority has resulted in more inequality that is spatially reflected in the movement of housing to 'higher income groups' (through processes such as gentrification) (ibid. 13) and an erosion of housing options of those on low incomes (ibid.)

Here I briefly explore the influence of factors from social structural forces broadly categorised as: family breakdown, accommodation problems, unemployment and low incomes, institutional and cultural background factors.

2. Family and marital breakdown

Of the twenty five individuals who told me about their past, only one said she felt she had a stable and settled background prior to becoming homeless. All of the others (24) reported

problems in their childhood and adult family backgrounds. For some, homelessness was a continuation of an already disrupted way of life. For some (9) there were no memories of stability at all. Of these 24, 17 described their family backgrounds as highly disrupted. Factors cited included adoption, violence, sexual abuse, foster care, family rows and alcoholic parenting. Thirteen described marriage/relationship breakdowns as contributing to their homelessness.

Ten people cited family/relationship breakdown as immediate causes for their street homelessness. Of these 2 were children when they first became street homeless. One of these (Ms.D) was 14 when she ran away from the family home; the other (Mr.F) was 15 when he was “kicked out” of the family home. One other individual was under-18 when he got “kicked out” from his family home. Of the remaining 7 individuals, one had been in a relationship that broke down, and another left his sister’s home after a series of rows. Five left home after rows with parents. Nineteen individuals said they felt ‘out of place’ or like they ‘didn’t belong’ in their families or relationships at home. For Ms.D, Ms.E, Ms.A, and Mr.Q there was violence and sexual abuse, which had made their lives intolerable at home. However for the remaining fifteen, there were also varying degrees of abuse (physical and mental) as well as neglect, and these factors made leaving home an attractive option. This does not mean that homelessness was therefore chosen as a positive option, though.

Carlen notes how common family breakdown is for homeless people but also how this fact permits government (central and local) to ignore structural factors at the macro level (such as shortage of affordable housing, unemployment and welfare cuts) and to deny homelessness, converting it into ‘family breakdown’ instead (Carlen 1996, 67).

There does appear to be an empirical link between homelessness and family or relationship breakdown as a feature of both people’s background (24) and as a precipitous cause of homelessness (10). This link has been investigated in depth in Downing-Orr’s work about youth homelessness, where she argues that becoming homeless and living with homeless people provided a supportive environment to young homeless people, enabling them to gain

self-esteem and to counteract the alienation that their poor family relationships had brought about for them (Downing-Orr 1996, 160).

A problem though, with making this link, is that only a few of those with family or relationship problems become homeless. One way to overcome this explanatory problem is to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative homelessness (see Watson 1999, Franklin 1999, Tomas and Dittmar 1997). As Tomas and Dittmar note, women's experiences of homelessness, reflect their subjective notions about the meaning of home (for example: control, security, privacy). Home can be lost even within a house. Weitz's paper (1994) argues that territorial exclusion can occur within the home and Weitz associates this with the transformation, by its parents, of a child into "a non-person" (Weitz 1994, 463). Houses can become places of danger and alienation (Downing Orr 1996, 38). Here the explanatory problem becomes one of explaining why more people do not leave their homes. A consideration of other factors, such as welfare benefit cuts, shortages of affordable housing or unemployment, may go some way to providing a fuller understanding.

3. Rent arrears, evictions and lack of accommodation

Of the 25 individuals interviewed, only two (Mr.K and Ms.E) applied to local housing authorities for accommodation when they first became homeless and neither found accommodation through this route. The remaining 23 told me they did not think they would qualify for accommodation. 4 reported eviction due to non-payment of rent. Of these, 3 had used their rent money to obtain drink (Mr.L, Ms.E) or drugs (Mr.Q). The remaining individual (Mr.K) had recently lost his business and was unable to pay the rent as a result of this. All four had been evicted from privately rented accommodation. Ms.E had substantial rent arrears; Mr.Q was in a relationship and became homeless with his girlfriend; and Mr.L and Mr.K were single. Mr.C became homeless when he lost his job, which had provided him with accommodation.

All of them looked for and failed to find accommodation. They might not have become homeless had there been available cheap accommodation. Both Mr.K and Mr.L did not claim any benefits, relying on casual jobs such as selling The Big Issue and working on building

sites. Mr.L had lived in various cheap bed sits previous to becoming homeless and, when he became homeless, could not find a room. Mr.Q ‘gave up’ looking for accommodation and remained homeless, travelling around the country.

4. Unemployment and shortage of money

Seven people cited problems at work as directly or indirectly contributing to their original homelessness. Mr.K and Mr.G lost their businesses – for Mr.G the reason was that his wife ‘ran away’ with his business partner and all his savings, whilst for Mr.K, his business partner ‘ran off’ with all the company’s money. Both Mr.B and Mr.C were dismissed from their jobs. Mr.A, Mr.L, Mr.H cited job dissatisfaction. Ten people had never had regular jobs, which may have contributed to their homelessness.

Carlen notes how some young people leave home after ‘family rows occasioned by their lack of employment and ... inability to either contribute to household expenses or to finance their own leisure needs’ (Carlen 1996, 30-31). A shortage of money can be seen to contribute to homelessness but, additionally, the lack of decent jobs may well be a factor when the ten people who had never regularly worked are taken into consideration. This factor is considered by Craine (1997) whose work on youth poverty reveals a disillusionment with the prospects offered by training and education schemes and a willingness to enter the informal or criminal economic worlds, which were perceived to yield more money.

5. Institutional and cultural factors

Most of the twenty-five homeless participants told me of their previous involvement in various lifestyles. As Kemp observes, circumstances that lead people into institutions may also impede their access to accommodation and employment. Furthermore, institutional living itself may adversely affect people’s capacity to maintain a home of their own (Kemp 1997, 75).

Four people were ex-servicemen (Mr.A, Mr.G, Mr.O and Mr.I). Mr.A and Mr.G had served in wars. Both had sustained physical and/or mental injuries as a result of their service and, whilst

they had received treatment at the time, it may be these contributed to their predisposition to becoming homeless.

Three people had been in care. One of these (Ms.D) had absconded from both care and the family home. Twelve people had been to prison. 14 people had been in alcohol or drug detoxification units. Two people became homeless whilst pursuing a solution to their drug dependency. One (Mr.B) was told there were no vacancies in the rehab he had travelled to and he could not return to his previous accommodation; the other (Mr.R) explained that he came to Oxford in order to come off drugs, even though this meant becoming homeless.

Seven people had been in hospital (three of these had been in psychiatric units, having suffered severe mental or nervous breakdowns). Three people became homeless when discharged from hospital. Of these, Mr.A found the night shelter was full and so he slept in a multi-storey car park; Mr.G also slept rough, and Ms.A was discharged from hospital with taxi fare to take her to the night shelter.

Experiences of living in institutions were widespread amongst the participants. This factor was particularly common when considering continued and repeated homelessness. Kemp's observations about factors leading to a person entering an institution and the ways institutions affect a person's skills once no longer there, may not sufficiently explain the importance of institutions in relation to homelessness, as conflicts between staff and clients also led to homelessness, either through eviction or voluntary leaving of such facilities.

5.1.Ex-servicemen

There does appear to be a culture of drinking and drug taking within the army. Higate has noted this cultural factor in relation to drink. He notes how military 'blow-out sessions' involving consumption of a lot of drink, were 'crucial to easing the stresses of high risk exercises and operations' (Higate 2000, 338). However, Mr.G explained that, as well as consuming vast quantities of drink whilst on active duty in the army, there was also high consumption of drugs. The question as to whether drug consumption is increasing in the army

(and with what consequences) is beyond the scope of this project, however, the link between drinking cultures in the armed services and homelessness, may (or may not) extend to drugs.

For Higate the highly masculinised socialisation of military personnel require them to become 'familiar with living outdoors in cold and wet conditions' as well as to refrain from disclosing emotional need (ibid. 332-333). Furthermore, upon discharge from the army, some people become resentful of the 'total institutional characteristics of military life' (ibid. 341) and may adopt anti-establishment values, joining protest movements or travellers. This appeared to be the case with Mr.G, who joined a protest traveller site for a year, when he became homeless.

5.2.Travellers

Four people reported a background of international (Mr.E and Mr.O) and national (Mr.O, Mr.H and Mr.J) travel, which, they felt, may have contributed to their predisposition to becoming homeless. Of the three who cited having a "traveller" background, Mr.O had returned from traveller sites in Europe and became homeless shortly after his return to the UK; Mr.H had joined a traveller site in his home area when he was 16, and Mr.J left home upon becoming reunited with his cousin, who was a traveller.

Mr.O's travels in Europe were, he said, the result of laws in England that criminalized the "free party" scene, resulting in many free-party communities moving to Europe. For Mr.H and Mr.J, joining traveller sites was a very positive decision. They praised the traveller way of life as independent and free, and expressed regrets at how their drug addictions had led them away from living 'on site', and they both had plans to return to this lifestyle in the future. Whilst there were traveller sites where heroin and crack cocaine could be found, most travellers were fairly hostile to those who used these drugs and did not welcome Mr.H or Mr.J, once they had become addicted. It was explained to me that some travellers regularly frequented city centres for economic reasons (working and begging). This crossover can lead to some travellers staying in city centres as homeless rough sleepers, in particular when they become addicted and need to be constantly in contact with the economic resources of city centres.

Travelling as a positive choice was not restricted to those who had lived on traveller sites. Mr.G had spent one year (after becoming homeless) living on a protest traveller site and participating in their protest activities. Mr.E enjoyed travelling saying it was like an adventure 'like backpacking in Europe'. Mr.Q had briefly stayed on various traveller sites and expressed a desire to get a vehicle and join a site.

Both Martin and Carlen argued that many of those who joined traveller sites over the 1990s, had been 'denied social rights of citizenship' (Martin 1998, 748-749) as a result of cuts in welfare benefits to young people and endemic unemployment. Both authors argued that travellers had achieved a sense of responsibility, independence and enterprise (Carlen 1996, 39; Martin 1998, 747) that was consistent with prevailing political ideologies, despite how travellers were classified as deviant and their actions criminalized.

5.3. Youth cultures

Many of the homeless participants in this project appeared to have partaken in youth lifestyles in which consumption, particularly of drugs, featured significantly.

10 people explained that they'd been "getting into trouble with the cops" and this had directly or indirectly caused problems leading to homelessness. 2 people had drink problems prior to becoming homeless while 18 had problems related to drugs use and/or dealing. Mr.F, Mr.Q, Mr.I, and Mr.D had worked as full-time drug dealers and either had gone to prison (Mr.F) or had run up large debts. 15 of those with drug problems had become involved with drugs as part of their youth social networks. Participation in today's youth cultures often means consuming fashion and drink and drugs. Carlen notes how the expectations of youths in today's culture are different from those in past eras, and that 'images of possible and impossible existences were continuously and teasingly refracted in multimedia representations' (Carlen 1996, 4). Youths of today require considerable amounts of money and those who are poor are likely to find it difficult to sustain their lifestyles without turning to crime.

Downing-Orr argues that alienation processes that led many youths to leave home, began during their childhood, rather than their adolescence, and were pervasive. She notes how various factors, within dysfunctional family circumstances, accumulated and interacted with each other (Downing-Orr 1996, 37). Furthermore, she argues that youth's alienation was 'perpetuated in their exposure to other childhood institutions, including school, care and the criminal justice system' (ibid.)

Thirteen people reported truancy at school. For some, this was due to their experiences of bullying, whilst three of these (Mr.N, Mr.M and Mr.U) had been excluded from school as a result of their drug taking. These problems led to eviction from home as well as increased tensions in family relationships.

Carlen found that the majority homeless people 'blamed themselves' (Carlen 1996, 114) for their homelessness. Carlen argues that 'structural causes of homelessness ... exist independently of any individual's awareness of them; indeed, they frequently remain obscure to people even after they have become homeless' (ibid. 34). For Carlen, homeless youths' self-blame, rather than arising from a notion that they had done anything wrong (and thus become homeless), stemmed from 'a desperate and proud insistence that... they had, in choosing to leave home, demonstrated a laudable independence, agency and a capacity to survive' (ibid. 115).

For Craine 'the predisposition towards "alternative careers" must be understood as rooted in the complexity of fractured post-school transitions, in material circumstances, social exclusion ... and "choices" circumscribed by government policy in employment, training, housing and benefits' (Craine 1997, 150). This observation does appear applicable here. The complex interaction of many different factors can be found in the backgrounds of most homeless people and this is perhaps well illustrated in the case study of Mr.A.

Case study: Mr.A

Mr.A was born in a town in the North West. He moved abroad with his family (mother, father and sister), when he was 15 years old. Straightaway he began drinking with his friends. When he was 18, his parents and sister returned to UK and he stayed on, joining the army. He served in a brutal colonial war until he was 22. At this point he was hospitalised due to “nerves”.

When he was 23 he returned to his hometown in the UK and, not long after, married his first wife and worked as a long-distance lorry driver. This marriage broke down after 18 months, for various reasons, Mr.A’s drinking and his absence due to work, being just two of them. A few years later, Mr.A remarried. This marriage lasted 2 and a half years and Mr.A became a father. It broke down because of Mr.A’s drinking problems. For a few months, Mr.A moved from house to house. This is because some relatives who were buying and selling properties whilst living abroad had asked him to. In 1980 Mr.A, who was 32 years old, moved in with a girlfriend. They stayed together for nearly nine years.

After they split up, Mr.A, who socialised with drinkers, some of whom were homeless, was taken to hospital with alcohol poisoning. At this time it was winter and, upon release from hospital at 8.30pm, Mr.A (who was 40 years old at the time), found the night shelter was full. Having already socialised with homeless people, he knew how to make up a cardboard bed and he also knew not to sleep in the open in the car park, as the security guards were known to turn on the water sprinklers, to make homeless people leave. He spent the first night in a lift in the car park. Mr.A had been homeless for 10 years when I met him. He has since moved into a flat where he still lives.

Mr.A himself felt that the main cause of his homelessness was his drinking problem, which led him to continuously move and travel away. However, there were other factors associated with his unstable geography, namely, relationships breaking up, a traumatic army background and even his job, involved him moving around. His previous socialising with other homeless people, though leaving him informed in a practical way, did not relieve the intense fear he told me he experienced on his first night. He said he could hardly sleep because he was afraid of being assaulted, of dying of cold, of being caught by security guards and of losing his sanity.

Summary

The demographic composition of the homeless research participants largely fits in with findings as reported in existing literature. As a group, rough sleepers are more heterogeneous than they were thirty years ago, including old and young, men and women, white people and members of ethnic minorities and foreign (non-refugee) people.

Findings about background factors that are associated with homelessness suggest that, to some degree, homeless people had experiences of exclusion from home, from work and from incomes, as well as through their membership of subcultures of youth or within the armed services. There appears to be nothing, apart from homelessness itself that distinguishes these populations from other people who experience similar exclusions from home and family life, from work places, earning incomes and who are involved in drug taking, drinking and other activities common to some subcultures. It is possible that at this stage in processes of homelessness, a person's background experiences are therefore no different from those of many domiciled people.

Combining the factors of family and households, shortages of available accommodation, unemployment and low income, backgrounds of institutional experiences and cultural influences, it is possible to understand homelessness as a complex condition that cannot be explained or predicted by reference to any single factor. Structural forces (such as unemployment or welfare benefit cuts) that result in a loss of income, and the shortage of available cheap accommodation, combine with other factors, at a 'micro' level – such as family breakdowns and fractured transitions – to yield a vulnerability to homelessness. However, this project is concerned not to abstract these factors from the lived experiences of homeless people.

The situations of homelessness these individuals found themselves in was in some cases, precipitated by parties or circumstances beyond their control (for example, Mr.K or Mr.G); In other cases it may have been the best available option (for example, Ms.D, Ms.A or Mr.Q). Whilst the exclusions they all experienced in their background may have left them "predisposed" (see Pleace 2000, 581) to becoming homeless, many more people, currently domiciled, are also therefore "predisposed" to becoming homeless. This may mean that solving street homelessness (visible homelessness that can be counted) is not a solution to the social exclusion of homelessness, which is felt at the qualitative level (through a sense of not belonging). Randall and Brown's suggestion that support services be provided for target populations (those exhibiting 'risk' and 'trigger' features) in order to prevent rough sleeping, narrows the problem of homelessness down (Randall & Brown 1999, 5). This may suit

politicians, who can claim success if they reduce the numbers of people sleeping outdoors, but it does not address the problems of recurring homelessness that many participants in this project underwent.

CHAPTER THREE. ROUTINES OF DAILY LIFE ON THE STREETS

Introduction

Despite the heterogeneous nature of homeless populations, their rooflessness was ‘a great equalizer’ (Carlen 1996, 102). The spatial and temporal conditions of homelessness were shared, to varying extents, by all rough sleepers who lived on the streets as well as by all the other ‘part-time’ homeless people. In this chapter I examine the spaces and times of street living and I describe creative practices of place-making and mobility street dwellers undertook in order to cope with challenges they encountered. The material presented in this chapter is about daily life; In the next chapter, about longer time frames, I describe difficulties involved in adjusting to a variety of tenurial forms that rough sleepers faced when they decided to leave the streets and how obtaining accommodation was not the same as becoming ‘homed’.

In the first section of the chapter I examine literature about whether or not homeless people can develop a sense of ‘home’. This question is important because existing literature about the construct ‘home’ strongly associates it with constructs of ‘selfhood’ and identity. Various authors have found that homelessness has a destructive effect upon homeless people’s sense of self (Declerck 2003, for example). In this section I posit the argument that, in the processes of adapting to and coping with the considerable difficulties of social marginality and street life, rough sleepers transformed spaces and times and through this process, challenged their socially constructed identities of ‘homeless’, although this did not mean they had a ‘home’.

In section B, I describe the spaces, times and routines rough sleepers were engaged in and I illustrate my above argument with examples of processes of spatial and temporal transformation rough sleepers created.

A. Home/no home

May explores homeless people’s sense of home as ‘place’ rather than as ‘residence’. He notes how some authors have examined homeless people’s understandings of home and found these to be similar to those of domiciled people. For example: feelings of belonging, security, independence, control over one’s interactions with others (May 2000, 739). May, citing

Kawash, argues that in their journeys, the homeless do not go 'somewhere' as 'they have nowhere to go' (ibid. 737). Thus they are both 'without home, but more generally without place' (ibid.) Through in-depth interviews with forty-three respondents in a night shelter, he reconstructs their biographies which he interprets using four 'narrative frames'. These are: (dis)placement, 'the homesick', spectral geographies and new nomads.

(Dis)placement: May found that the homelessness of respondents in this category was not marked by 'extended or extensive movement' (ibid. 745). Instead, after long periods of unemployment and a reliance on insecure private accommodation, with intermittent, episodic 'hidden' homelessness (staying on friends' floors), these people would leave the towns where they had finally become street homeless, in order to become less visible to their acquaintances. Their decisions to move had been motivated not so much by the attempt to gain access to housing and employment resources as by 'a powerful sense of shame' (ibid. 746). Their experiences in shelters and hostels, once they moved, had been marked by isolation, loneliness and confusion so that 'having lost their homes elsewhere, the result of that move was simply to extend (their loss)... to homelessness as lack of place' (ibid. 747).

Here in Oxford this narrative of (dis)placement could perhaps be at least partially applied to Mr.C. He became homeless as a result of losing his job (which had provided him with accommodation). He had previously bought a house, but when his marriage broke down he left the house for his wife and child to live in. The house was eventually repossessed as the money he sent his wife to pay the mortgage had been spent on other items. His wife was rehoused by the council, but Mr.C was left with no place to go and was unable to secure a room in the private sector. He went to the Night Shelter and found it frightening. Twice he left Oxford in search of jobs and accommodation elsewhere. However, as his drinking had become problematic, he lost the job he had found and he also failed to find suitable accommodation elsewhere. He therefore came back to Oxford. His homelessness persisted for two years, which he spent in the shelter and on the streets. He told me that whenever he spotted his daughter, he would hide away in shame, afraid that she might see him 'in this state'. Whilst May finds that (dis)placed homeless people lose 'home as place' when they

move elsewhere, Mr.C's case suggests that he too lost a sense of home as place, despite returning and remaining in Oxford.

'The homesick': May explains, citing Bauman, that he uses this term 'not as the *nostalgic* yearning for home but the 'dream of belonging' ... (which)... situates (home)...within the 'future' tense' (ibid. 748). What he means is that respondents in this category never had a proper sense of home, and had experienced exclusion within their families as well as within their youth cultures, prior to becoming homeless. For May, these people were searching for, and yet failing to find, access to a sense of belonging. Their mobility, around a circuit of hostels and shelters in many different towns, persisted because they had failed to find accommodation or jobs but, more importantly, they had failed to gain acceptance from their peers. In this project both Mr.U and Mr.N described aspects of their homelessness that fitted in with this narrative frame. Mr.N told me of many occasions when he had been bullied by his homeless peers, and he spent much of his time on the streets, alone. Whilst some of his travels to other cities had been the result of his going to prison and being released there, he moved voluntarily because of the intimidating rejection he had experienced. Likewise Mr.U found it difficult to make friends, complaining that his peers had become 'brutal' as a result of the presence of crack-cocaine.

'Spectral geographies': When retracing the mobility of respondents in this category, May found that it was marked by a repetitive cycle of return, to places where respondents had once felt a sense of belonging or had experienced a settled way of life (ibid. 752). These respondents have been characterised by some authors as 'men of the road' (ibid. 750), travelling continually around a 'network of waystations and rest-points' (ibid.), that shaped an alternative sense of home 'provided by the occasional rather than sustained encounter with others following similar routes' (ibid.) However, May argues that 'these hostels (have)...rarely if ever provided ...a sense of home' (ibid.) Instead, respondents, following a 'spectral geography', had very few experiences of a sense of belonging and their travels around routes taking them to areas that 'were once meaningful' (ibid. 752) form a cycle that is hard for them to perceive and to change.

Many of the respondents in Oxford returned to areas where they had previously lived and had families, and all of them returned to Oxford. Mr.L for example, visited his family (ex-wife and grown-up offspring) with some trepidation (fearing that rows might occur, or that he might be rejected). However, these visits were qualitatively different from May's 'spectral geographies' as Mr.L was not trying to regain a lost sense of belonging. Mr.L had been a worker in the construction industry, and his work fitted in with an itinerant lifestyle. Prior to becoming a rough sleeper, Mr.L had lived in numerous bedsits around Manchester. His friendships, though, were made with other rough sleepers who he met on his travels. In this sense he did fit in with May's narrative frame.

'New Nomads': Another category of respondents May found used circuits of hostels, were those who he labelled 'new nomads'. These people travelled 'within and between the worlds of youth homelessness, New Age travelling, and an urban squatting scene' (ibid. 753). May notes that new nomads were continually frustrated in 'their attempts to build an alternative space of home in place' (ibid. 754) as a result of their transgressions of norms about residences and places. Each time they squatted, they 'felt at home' (ibid.) and yet local traders would complain and the police would break up the squats, and arrest the occupants. Subsequently these 'new nomads' would be bailed to hostels in different towns and would thus be alone again, rendered 'homeless twice over' (ibid.)

Mr.H, Mr.J, and Mr.O had histories that placed them well within the 'new nomads' category. However it should also be noted that when they became addicted to heroin, they became rough sleepers in city centres, as they felt unwelcome on travellers' sites. Although Mr.H complained that there were always a few heroin users 'on site', he also explained that it was easier to make money enough to sustain his addiction by living in city centres. This move from sites to city centres was not uncommon, and was a well-known characteristic of travellers. However, it also caused a further disruption to people's sense of belonging, as none of the above respondents returned to site life whilst this project was underway, and all expressed a sense of loss as a result of this. Some people who fitted in this category even rejected the 'residence' aspect of 'home', preferring nomadic structures instead. Mr.J said that a 'home' was not a house. For him 'a house is a trap' where a person gets stuck. He said that

for him, 'home' was being on site (traveller site), with friends. Mr.B and Mr.L both said that the accumulation of 'stuff' that takes place when a person gets somewhere to live, is 'part of the downside' of rooms. Such evaluations rough sleepers make, demonstrate that 'home' is not necessarily a fixed place and the lack of accommodation may not be experienced as 'homelessness', despite the fact that rough sleepers' low social status derives from the lack of a fixed abode.

May's work reveals narratives of unhappiness, frustration and loss. His respondents felt shame, exclusion, isolation and a feeling that 'home' was elsewhere. Their homelessness was expressive of the loss of 'home as residence' but also of a loss of connection to 'place', through a kind of marginality and exclusion from sociality. Gill found, in his analysis of homeless day labourers in Japan, that 'marginality ... (was) the defining condition' (Gill 2001, 147) of their homeless lives. Their marginality gained expression both geographically (in the marginal nature of the spaces they used), and socially (in their detachment from the family and the company, which were 'central institutions of modern capitalist society' [ibid.]).

Respondents in Oxford did not fit easily into any one of May's narrative frames but they displayed elements of all of them. Whilst this project was concerned to establish biographical details of past mobilities of rough sleepers, its focus was upon more immediate forms of mobility. Because of this there is more material about the instances when evictions or when voluntary leaving of places occurred, and less focus on the overall motivation for wider travel rough sleepers had. It is for this reason that May's work is so useful. It brings to light the feelings homeless people had of a lack of entitlement, their knowledge that they were not welcome, which pervaded the time they spent in places. These experiences of homelessness as lack of place, not just of residence, may 'have a significant impact upon a person's sense of home' (May 2000, 737) subsequent to their homelessness. It may not be sufficient to view homelessness as a housing need alone. Establishing home as place may also be necessary for a person's homelessness to end.

Guerney suggested that 'the presence of a spatially and temporally permanent dwelling is not itself necessarily a pre-requisite for the development of niche and belonging' (Guerney 1990,

22). He argues that the mutual support and the bonds of association and belonging some researchers have found amidst street homeless populations (for example, Biebuyck 1982, Downing-Orr 1996) were ‘a means of redefining home’ (ibid. 23) and that owning a home does not necessarily result in a stronger sense of belonging. Sommerville argued that, whilst communal bonds might provide homeless people with a ‘sense of home ... this does not mean they have, or believe they have, a real home’ (Sommerville 1992, 530). He analysed the conceptual meanings of ‘home’ and ‘homelessness’ and found them to be multidimensional concepts in which there was ‘no clear demarcation between the real and ideal’ (ibid. 533). He presents seven dimensions of meanings of home and of homelessness, identified by key signifiers that evoked ‘a specific sense of security’ (ibid. 532) and insecurity:

Fig.3.1 Home			
key signifiers	general connotation	sense of security	self
Shelter	materiality	physical	protection
Hearth	warmth	physiological	relaxation
Heart	love	emotional	happiness
Privacy	control	territorial	possession
Roots	source of identity	ontological	sense
Abode	place	spatial	space for living/sleeping
Paradise	ideality	spiritual	bliss
Homelessness			
key signifiers	general connotation	sense of insecurity	self
lack of shelter	material deprivation	physical	exposure
lack of hearth	coldness	physiological	stress
heartlessness	indifference	emotional	misery
lack of privacy	powerlessness	territorial	surveillance
rootlessness	anomie	ontological	senselessness
lack of abode	placelessness	spatial	restlessness
‘purgatory’	ideality	spiritual	suffering
Sommerville 1992, 533			

Work such as Kumar’s (1997) and Tomlinson’s (1981) about changes in the material, social and technical practices surrounding domestic spaces reveal the home to be an unstable social

space, susceptible to change, open to influences from other spheres of society. Likewise the 'home' lives homeless people had prior to becoming rough sleepers may have been fractured or dysfunctional. However, Sommerville argues, words such as 'hearth' are 'suffused with ideal meaning' (ibid.) for each individual, and these meanings 'may be retained by homeless people even though their material underpinnings have disappeared. For the homeless, it is the reality which is different, but their ideal may be the same' (ibid. 534).

Some theorists (for example, Lee 1993, Snow and Anderson 1993, Desjarlais 1997, Declerck 2003) have argued that living on the streets, finding or failing to find ways of coping with its difficult conditions, affects a person's identity and sense of personhood. Additionally, the labelling by services providers, of rough sleepers as 'vulnerable', displaying 'handicapping characteristics' and in need of support, suggests that their autonomy is damaged in some way and that others, who live in very different circumstances, should decide what is best for them.

One of the dimensions of meaning of 'home' that Sommerville found was 'roots' and he associated this with a person's sense of identity and existential meaning (Sommerville 1992, 533). He explains how ontological security (security about ones being-in-the-world) is derived from a relationship of mutual domestication between individuals and social structures: 'the individual has roots in the world in so far as that world is ordered for them – that is, tamed' (ibid.). The 'home' in a sedentarist society such as that of the UK, is a site in which norms of society can be internalised and through which people are socialised in their upbringings, into a world they find ordered. The continuous presence of 'home' in a person's background raises the chances that they will have a sense of ontological security because they internalise their 'position in a structure of social relations which is somehow grounded in a wider web of cultural and linguistic meaning' (ibid.). This association of home and selfhood, in sedentarist societies, suggests that homelessness may bewilder a person's sense of self.

Bachelard's ([1958] 1994) work about the significance of houses for selfhood, argues that 'the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind' (Bachelard [1958] 1994, 6), its closed space protecting, and thus retaining, our memories. For Bachelard, 'the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are

unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being' (ibid. 7). When considering how to interpret the hardships rough sleepers underwent, this association of selfhood and houses may have great explanatory power. Problems of, for example, addiction, ill health or loneliness are not unique to homeless people. The question is whether being homeless changes the nature of such problems.

Just as selfhood is associated with the shelter, boundedness, interiority and order that notions of 'home' represent, it is also associated, by Desjarlais, with the notion of experience. Desjarlais investigated the lives of people in a shelter for mentally ill homeless people in USA. He coined the term 'struggling along' to describe the form of life homeless people had. Desjarlais distinguished 'struggling along' from 'experience' as he argued that experience is 'a historically and culturally constituted process predicated on certain ways of being in the world. Experience is the result of specific cultural articulations of selfhood (namely, a sense of self as possessing depth, interiority, unity, stability and the capacity for transcendence) as well as certain social and technological conditions that foster and legitimate that sense of self' (Desjarlais 1997, 13). For Desjarlais, 'discourses of depth, interiority, and authenticity, sensibilities of holism and transcendence, and practices of reading, writing, and storytelling have helped to craft a mode of being known in the modern West as experience' (ibid. 17). Desjarlais draws on many philosophers' works, to elucidate what he means. Experience is 'often seen as the foundation of human agency' (ibid. 16), it is associated with 'a person's "inner life"... and is often considered synonymous with "subjectivity"' (ibid. 14); it has 'hermeneutical depth' (ibid.), carrying 'a wealth of meanings that can never be conclusively interpreted' (ibid. 15).

Desjarlais describes his concept of 'struggling along'. Whereas being at home permits a detachment from which to go out and be changed by the experiences that befall one, being homeless is a state of tension and constant engagement within public spaces, where a person is fully preoccupied with their surroundings. Fear, anonymity, transience and cold weather characterized what homeless people remembered as a single location: 'the street'. On the street a person's body became more important as 'an instrument' of being; senses became more alert to noises, activities, potential violence and people became hyper-vigilant.

'Struggling along' led people to have 'an acutely sensorial mode of awareness, which left little room or need for introspection or contemplation' (ibid. 22). Whilst experience 'goes beyond the situation at hand, with past, present, and future mutually determining one another as parts of a whole... the temporal order of struggling along ... involves a succession of engagements, which can include a constant but purely episodic plodding of events' (ibid.).

Not only is Desjarlais' work set in the USA, but it is also about homeless people who have been diagnosed as 'mentally ill'. These significant differences mean it is not possible to import wholesale the notion of 'struggling along' as a way of describing the lives of rough sleepers in Oxford. Not only are there important cultural, social, political and economic differences between Boston and Oxford, but the grounds for applying diagnoses of 'mental illness' are unknown, involving medical practices from a different country.

It is beyond the scope of this project to decide whether Dejarlais' notion of 'struggling along' is a form of experience or a mode of being-in-the-world that is different from experience. Whichever of these approaches one adopts, the notion of 'struggling along' helps to clarify that the sensation of being homeless directs the attention of homeless people towards their immediate physical and psychic survival whilst simultaneously affecting their sense of narrative, by placing them outside conventional time. Desjarlais cites Orwell's work, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, in which Orwell comments that 'the great redeeming feature of poverty... (is) that it annihilates the future... When you have only 3 francs you are quite indifferent; for 3 francs will feed you till tomorrow, and you cannot think further than that' (ibid. 23).

Being homeless, then, can be conceived of as a condition that threatens a person's sense of self through disruptions of their spatial and temporal orders. Coping with the spatial and temporal conditions of homelessness in a 'home-oriented' society can produce meaninglessness, because a homeless person is outside the structuring principles of their society, which are found partly in notions of the 'home'.

These theorists raise the question of whether a sense of 'home' is possible to achieve for homeless people. Nevertheless, practices of dwelling vary cross-culturally; that the house in our society is a site for 'home' reflects a sociocultural order that values home-ownership and sedentarism. People classified as 'homeless' nevertheless may create patterns of 'experience and behaviour... that may be transposed from place to place, and in this way the meaning of home may be reevoked if the patterns are recreated' (Dovey 1985, 38-39). Therefore, their sense of self may be disrupted but not necessarily disabled. Homeless people may retain a sense of autonomy and a capacity for agency despite their exclusion from shelter. Veness argues that 'there may be benefits to opening up a category between home and homeless, to looking at the personal worlds of marginal people without assuming that these people and the places where they live must fit prevailing definitions of home and homeless' (Veness 1993, 337). Veness suggests that the dichotomy of home/homeless is 'artificial' and she posits the notion of 'un-home', 'a messy middle ground' that lies at 'the shifting boundary between home and homeless', which she recommends be recognized as a 'valid category and lived environment' (ibid. 321).

B. Daily routines of mobility and place-making

It is important to consider the variety of spaces homeless people inhabited because rough sleepers' daily mobility practices demonstrated a tactical use of space that made it possible for them to undertake important work and living activities. The homeless themselves at times managed meaning through a skilful manoeuvring of their activities. Lee studied the survival tactics of young homeless people in London. He created a typology of the skills homeless people required under the headings: adaptability, endurance, mobility, sagacity and trickery (Lee 1993, 178). Lee argued that the skills and tactics they adopted provided them with, not only an ability to survive by acquiring commodities, but also a 'focus for identity' (ibid. 174). For him, the process of becoming dependent upon 'street skills' (ibid. 174) for 'material livelihood' (ibid. 176), led to a further process of enculturation into a homeless subculture (ibid. 175), providing 'identity, meaning and selfhood' (ibid. 174) and reproducing exclusion from 'conventional life' (ibid. 175).

Rough sleepers in Oxford also displayed these skills. They had to adapt to living on the streets, where circumstances were changeable and contingent; they had to endure difficult situations (for example, inclement weather, aggressive passers-by, but also their own emotional states and the exposure to judgement they could not avoid); they needed to be mobile, having ideas of where to go when one place was no longer possible to occupy and thus they needed to know the streets fairly intimately. Lee's conceptualisation of 'sagacity' embodies some of the skills that were perhaps the most important to homeless people in this project. In their own words they had to be 'streetwise' so as to be able to predict to varying degrees, the unpredictable. For example: When I was shown how to beg, I was told to keep a look out for the police, who could appear at any time, by watching reflections on a shop window nearby. If I spotted them I would thus have enough time to hide my hat (used for begging) and they would not be able to arrest me. 'Trickery' was similar to 'sagacity'. An example of trickery occurred when Ms.D was told to move on by the police. On many such occasions she would move and then return, once the police had gone.

Figure 3.2 lists the various spaces and uses of spaces rough sleepers gained access to. In Chapter Four I discuss the spaces listed under 1a and 1b. The remaining spaces are considered in this chapter.

1.ACCOMMODATION

1a. SELF-CONTAINED ACCOMMODATION

Council/socially rented accommodation	tenure: long-term, permanent accommodation
Shorthold assured tenancies (bedsit accommodation)	tenure: six months, which can be renewed

Someone else's home (live-in landlord or landlady)
Housing Association supervised accommodation (houses of multiple occupation)

High care accommodation in hostels

Residential rehabilitation hostel

Friends' or relatives' floors/sofas

Night shelter

Doctors' surgery, Dept. of Social Security, Job centre, Police station, Hospital	attending appointments
Day centres & evening facilities	sandwiches, shower and laundering
Public toilets	sleeping, using drugs

Shops & Shopping malls	window shopping, making purchases, shoplifting, passing through
Chemists	picking up prescription heroin substitute (methadone)
Fast-food outlets	killing time, eating, coffee/tea, using toilets (also for drugs' use)

'Pitches' (spots along streets)	vending, begging
Derelict and/or empty houses	sleeping
Public toilets	sleeping, using substances
Car parks	sleeping, using substances, scavenging
Parks & fields	sleeping, purchasing and using substances
Fronts, backs and sides of buildings	sleeping, scavenging, using substances
Benches	sleeping, killing time
Church porches	sleeping, begging
Covered Market Lanes	sleeping, begging
Shop & college doorways	sleeping, begging
Underneath bridges	sleeping
Railway stations	sleeping
Wheelie bin areas	sleeping, scavenging
Phone boxes	ringing dealers, meeting other homeless people

Location	Activities
Streets in city centre	vending, begging, selling commodities,
Streets between city centre and residential areas	purchasing substances, waiting for dealers

105

crannies of city centres, rough sleepers learnt about how places changed over the course of a day, week, month and year.

1. Sleeping places outdoors

People did not sleep well on the streets. Partly this was due to discomfort – with only cardboard to use as a mattress, the ground was hard. Furthermore, it was cold most nights and homeless people generally carried just one sleeping bag on them. Sometimes people also had a blanket but sleeping bags and blankets are bulky items and people preferred to carry the least amount possible. Those staying in town almost always used cardboard, which was plentiful and easy to find. It could be taken from wheelie bins in bin areas (see photograph no.3) but also from street bins along main roads and from behind or alongside shops. Even when the rain made a lot of the cardboard go soggy, it was still possible to get the dry stuff by rummaging around the bins. Sometimes, though, a person may be too cold during the night. At such times they may try to obtain extra blankets from the Night Shelter where, throughout the night, there was at least one staff member on duty, or they may approach other street homeless people and ask them. Many street homeless people, whether or not they stayed in town, had spent the occasional night awake and walking around to keep warm. Mr.F told me of an occasion when he was so cold he had to get up and walk around three times during a night. On these occasions people sometimes attempted to sleep for a little during the following day, but in town this was rarely possible.

Sometimes a person would drink in order to fall asleep despite the cold. Many drug users (who did not normally drink) would use drink to fall asleep. Mr.H, who was staying in a meadow during winter months, told me he was having to drink two or three cans of strong beer each night, in order to not feel the cold and be able to fall asleep.

People who slept in toilets were sometimes able to warm up by using the hot air hand dryers. Mr.A did this when he was staying in a park. He told me he returned to the dryer two or three times in one night. As Wright discussed, functional spaces, such as stations and waiting rooms, are places designated for moving through or waiting to move. They are transitional areas whose meaning is appropriated by homeless people, who may use them for living

purposes such as sitting, sleeping, using bathroom amenities. For homeless people, these places are not transit points to other places but rather, destinations in themselves. Mr.I stayed inside a public toilet for some weeks, and used the hot air dryer all night long.

In confronting the environmental difficulties of sleeping outside rough sleepers needed to have endurance so that they could bear the discomfort. They also needed to be streetwise (or, as Lee argues, to have the skill of 'sagacity') in order to find the best sleeping spots, for example, to think of occupying toilets with heaters. Mr.I even managed to acquire the keys to a disabled public toilet and he stayed there for many nights. Rough sleepers also needed to have a disregard for their long-term well-being, when they drank in order to sleep, focussing instead on their immediate needs. This practice could be dangerous and result in hypothermia. In any case, people often complained of stiff and aching bones after cold nights spent in the open.

Another factor that prevented sleep was the frequent interruptions street sleepers experienced from security guards, police and passers-by. On the whole, passers-by only interrupted street sleeping in the night times, while police, private security guards and private cleaners, often woke up street sleepers in the mornings in order to make them move on. This wake-up call could occur as early as five in the morning. Considering that club-goers leave clubs at around two in the morning, the opportunity for a good night's sleep was rare. Additionally, there was traffic throughout the night, which could be very noisy. Much council work, for example street cleaning, was done during the early hours before dawn.

Homeless people who slept outside fell mainly into two categories: those who stayed on the streets in city centres and those who left city centres at night and stayed in places further away. This distinction is important because those who stayed away from town had to finalise their activities in town at a certain point in the evening whereas those who stayed in town could carry on working (begging or vending) through the night. On the whole, findings suggest that those staying in town also finalised their activities before setting up for sleep. However, some people set up their bed and then returned to work throughout the night, leaving their sleeping place nearby. Furthermore, those who stayed in town experienced the continued presence of

passers-by and were also moved on and/or questioned by the police or security guards from time to time.

For Wright the term marginal suggests a distance from a centre (Wright 1997, 106) whereas, 'refuse' spaces are found throughout central and peripheral city spaces. They are 'excluded from development, held in reserve for future development, or residual space from a particular development' (ibid.) They are visually 'blighted' places, suggesting abandonment and neglect, but furthermore, they are socially, economically and legally marginal, carrying low social status, stigmatising their residents. The sleeping places chosen by respondents in this project did not entirely fit this description. Some spaces (for example, wheelie bin areas, certain areas in car parks) were of this kind, however other sleeping spots were in 'prime' spaces, but they became 'marginal' when trading hours ended (for example, the Covered Market lanes). The use of church porches was an interesting instance because rough sleepers claimed Christians had a duty of charity towards the poor and they counted on this maxim in order to not be moved on. However, whilst the staff who opened up churches permitted rough sleepers to use these spaces, the police did move people away from them on many occasions.

Those who stayed out of town explained to me that it was more peaceful than staying in town. Some told me that they wanted to avoid trouble. One individual explained that he only left town for his sleeping place after dark, in order to not be seen by the residents who lived nearby. He would get up to leave in the mornings, either before or after the rush hour so as to not attract attention to his presence. There were a variety of places where people chose to stay – derelict houses, in a tent in various places, under bridges, behind commercial buildings, in fields, in graveyards and other places. People staying out of town sometimes also scouted for other good sleeping spots (for example Mr.L). This happened for a variety of reasons – sometimes because they felt too conspicuous and worried they may be found out, other times because they wanted a more comfortable place. Some scouted around just to have options available to them. Most of those who slept out of town spoke of having alternative spots to go to.

Another consideration for those sleeping out of town was safety. Whilst Mr.A said it was safer to sleep in hidden places, out of town centres and thus avoid potential dangers of passers-by, there was still the possibility of unwelcome attention for those staying out of town. Mr.L showed me precautions he had taken. When we arrived at his sleeping spot (a derelict house), he checked to see whether a plastic bag he'd left on a door handle had been moved. He said this bag was his 'calling card' and that he could tell if someone had been there as he had noted the exact position of the bag prior to leaving in the morning. He also showed me a metal bar that he kept hidden and which he called 'the equivalator'. (He had never used it though). Mr.L told me he would stand still and listen carefully when he worried someone might be inside his sleeping place, and then he would enter making a lot of noise, to scare anyone away.

Those who stayed in town gave a variety of reasons for doing so. Being close to work was the main reason given, but also staying near to the amenities – especially phone boxes and the possibility of buying drugs, was an important reason too. Some people said they felt safer in town than outside town, where, if trouble occurred, there might be no help available. It should be noted that, of the small numbers of participants in this project, it was drinkers and people with more controlled, regular habits who preferred staying out of town. Places in town where people stayed were car parks, covered market lanes, the porch of a church, doorways, stairwells, in a lift, under railway platforms, in bin areas, in disabled toilets, alongside and behind buildings.

When preparing a place for sleeping, those who stayed away from city centres did not have access to cardboard. Bed preparation involved putting up a tent or, in extreme circumstances, placing bin liners around and underneath a person's sleeping bag and possessions. When staying in a derelict house, as Mr.L did, they may do no more than unpack their sleeping bag. The absence of cardboard made a difference to the level of comfort and warmth but, upon enquiry, participants told me that the benefits of seclusion outweighed those of comfort and warmth. Those who stayed in tents told me it was more comfortable in a tent and, although cold, I did find the ground in a tent in a field more comfortable than cardboard on the streets.

In contrast to working spots ('pitches' – see below), there were very few territorial disputes about sleeping places. When people arrived to sleep where others already were, it was most common for greetings and news to be exchanged and no questions arose as to their right to sleep there. There were occasions though when someone was not able to stay. Usually this was because a place was full up. Sometimes, someone had a regular sleeping spot where the local non-homeless workers and/or residents knew them, and this could lead to fruitful relationships. For example, one individual stayed in a spot where, every morning, the cook (from a college), would bring him a bacon sandwich and hot drink. When such relationships were struck up, people became secretive of where they were staying because they did not want to jeopardize these relationships, which the presence of others would make likely.

One criterion used to decide whether or not to invite someone to join a person, was their willingness to clean up after themselves and not leave a mess behind in the morning. Many street homeless people complained about others' not leaving their place tidy by not throwing out cardboard and other rubbish. This was widely condemned and messy people were avoided as sleep companions. Injecting drug users had 'pocketbins'. These were small bins that were small enough to carry in their luggage. Despite the widespread belief that rough sleepers leave dirty needles behind, this was found to be almost entirely untrue of the participants in this project, who were very careful to dispose of their dirty needles carefully.

Often, people told each other where they were sleeping, when they exchanged news during the daytime. This way, street homeless people usually knew where practically everyone else was staying, including those in hostels, in the Shelter and in places out of the city centre. This prior knowledge was very helpful to street homeless people, partly because, knowing their location, they could ask for help from others if need be, but also because they could decide, during the daytime, upon an appropriate place to stay at night, where there was enough room and the right kind of company (if any). It is one example of the importance of a flow of information, and the necessity of sociability. Sometimes people were invited to join a person on their sleeping spot and often people recommend old spots of theirs to homeless people looking for somewhere.

A major factor that influenced where and for how long a person stayed, was the continued presence of passers-by, private security guards and cleaners, and of the police, in the city centre. Unwelcome attention from such people led rough sleepers to change location. Over the course of research more people started to find places to stay out of town, because the police persistently moved people on from their sleeping spots in town.

1.1. Passers-by

Once someone 'bedded down' for the night, they still had lots of contact with passers-by, depending on how secluded their sleeping spot was. There were spots that were inaccessible, requiring someone to climb over a fence, for example. These spots, despite being in close proximity to passers-by, were nevertheless hidden from them. Other spots were visible to passers-by. Sometimes those who slept in these spots did so with a companion or their dog, if they owned one. It should be noted that, late at night, many of the passers-by were leaving clubs or parties and were drunk. This posed considerable risks for homeless people and many reported to me that they had been verbally and/or physically abused or degraded by drunken passers-by. Mr.R was attacked by three passers-by in the early hours of a morning and required hospitalising. This phenomenon was not exclusive to sleeping times, but also occurred whilst people were working. However, this was not a unanimous experience. Sometimes drunk passers-by gave people money and cigarettes, so the inconvenience of being woken up or disturbed, was balanced out on these occasions.

It is interesting to note that, whilst surveillance cameras posed problems for rough sleepers when they undertook illegal activities, such cameras were a source of protection (albeit minor) for them when passers-by picked fights with them. Both Mr.R and Mr.I told me of occasions when they had pointed out the presence of cameras to aggressive passers-by, and thereby averted a fight.

1.2. Police

The police frequently woke up those who slept (in both visible and less visible places) on the streets. Additionally, they sometimes searched them and their bags or performed an identity check, especially when the rough sleeper was new in town and therefore unknown to them.

There was a certain tension in these encounters, partly due to how tired rough sleepers felt and sometimes because they worried there might be a warrant out on them, and they may be arrested as a result. Sometimes rough sleepers felt persecuted and at such times, they reacted to the police (or to security guards) with anger. In all cases, the police stayed until the rough sleeper(s) had packed up their things and left the location. These processes are described in Chapter Six.

Sometimes a person slept at a location where private security guards were employed (usually by the local council or by traders). These guards were reputed to be very rough in their handling of rough sleepers. One rough sleeper (Ms.F) did manage to create co-operative relationship with one of them, though. Mr.B also managed to get on peaceful terms with an attendant when he stayed in a car-park.

1.3. Shelter

The Night Shelter was an emergency overnight accommodation facility that opened at 7pm and closed at 8am⁴. There were dormitories, leading off from one main eating/television area. There were also shower facilities. Staff members who vetted and admitted people into the shelter secured the entrance to the night shelter. A two-pound charge was made to all, upon admittance. People arriving in town often went to the night shelter. Eviction from there was called a "bar" and people who broke the shelter rules were barred either temporarily or for life.

Most people using the streets preferred them to the shelter, which they found intolerable for various reasons. As a facility for homeless rough sleepers, the Night Shelter had a policy of admitting anyone who had not been barred by the staff. Although drinkers had to hand in their drink, for safekeeping, and using drugs was not permitted on the premises, people could go out throughout the night, to use their drink or drugs. They were not restricted in their behaviour, as long as they did not fight or act in other abusive ways. For this reason, the Night Shelter could be alarming to newcomers. This alarming environment of drunken, rowdy behaviour, a high risk of ones property getting stolen; intimidation by other shelter users, are all reasons

⁴ Oxford's Night Shelter closed down temporarily after the research for this study took place. A new shelter is now being built. At the time of writing, shelter residents were staying in portakabins.

people gave for avoiding it. Some people, even if they were normally drug users, would drink heavily in the evening, in order to be able to sleep through the noise and alarm. Mr.E said: “You’d have to drink yourself silly and fall unconscious to sleep there... It’s an unsleepable place”. Others used the night shelter in order to have a hot meal, but did not stay overnight.

1.4. Obtaining basic provisions

In addition to sleeping outdoors, there were some important practical factors that distinguished the homelessness of rough sleepers from that of hostel and shelter residents. These were: getting food, storing possessions, and access to personal hygiene and laundering facilities.

For people using the night shelter or living in a hostel, at least two meals (breakfast and dinner) were provided. Whilst many chose not to avail themselves of these provisions, they were still available. For street homeless people, they were generally not. Sometimes a street homeless person may go to the night shelter for dinner (paying the two pound admittance charge), or they might be invited to dinner at the hostel as a guest of a resident there (whereupon they would also pay a charge for the meal). There were daytime resources available to all homeless people and, furthermore, members of the general public often gave food to people begging or vending on the streets.

Whilst people never needed go hungry, nevertheless they did not generally eat hot meals. There was a facility for homeless people out of the town centre where homeless people could get hot meals, but none of the participants in this project had ever used it. Mr.A knew of two places where volunteers would cook and serve a hot meal once a week. Thus it was not that hot meals are unobtainable, rather that many street homeless people did not go and eat them. This was particularly the case for drug users who appeared to be too busy to go and eat available hot food. Whilst some drinkers I met did go to these places, albeit on an irregular basis, there were no drug users who did. Instead people sometimes ate sandwiches from day centres and sweets that they brought from shops. People also bought cheap burgers or, occasionally, a kebab. Mr.L would eat once a day – he would buy a kebab late at night on his way out of town to the derelict house he stayed in.

Hostel users could unpack their possessions and leave them in their room during the day. However, shelter users either had to store their things at the shelter or take them with them during the day. This was not so for street homeless people, who had to carry their possessions with them the whole time or find storage places outside. Many street homeless people told me about possessions they owned in the past, which had either been stolen or else left behind in friends' places, or in shelters or hostels in other towns. Generally, people stored blankets, tents and other large items when they easily found a hiding place. Often the sides and backs of buildings were favoured (see photograph no.1) or else under bushes (see photograph no.2), because these provided camouflage and shelter from the rain. More often street homeless people carried all their possessions with them.

Hostel and shelter users had access to laundry facilities whereas for street homeless people access was limited to a day centre that offered shower and laundry facilities. Some people did use them, at least occasionally. When asked about this, people explained that it is a very time-consuming and laborious process – getting changed and showered and waiting for the washing/drying machines to finish – so some people waited until their clothes were very dirty and then threw them away, acquiring fresh ones from the second-hand clothes store on the premises. For some, the time this all took could have been better spent earning money whilst others explained that they felt too depressed to take care of themselves and became neglectful of their appearance. Some carried clean underwear in their possessions; others stole it as and when they needed to.

Many street homeless people carried a toothbrush and toothpaste with them and, on a morning, used public toilets or facilities in fast food restaurants to freshen up. For both shelter and street homeless people, public toilets could be the only facility available, (particularly in the day times, for shelter users). Public toilets were also important sites for drugs use. This will be considered below.

1.5. Being stationary and being mobile: places and routes

Duncan argued that walking 'briskly and purposefully' through residential areas means '(tramps) make...little claim on space...' (Duncan 1979, 30) and thus reduce the risk of getting

arrested. Conversely, being stationary in a prime space can result in getting arrested and thus, the mobility of 'tramps', whilst considered to be a part of the stigma of their identity, was nevertheless maintained. During participant observation it was noted that drug users ran or walked extremely fast, especially when they were meeting drug dealers, to 'score' (buy drugs). Occasionally people took buses to the location specified by the dealer, but they would run to get the bus. This was mainly because they did not want to miss the dealer but it was also because they wanted to get their 'hit' quickly. Walking very fast was customary. When I asked Mr.N about it, he replied "Why not (always rush)?" I did not ascertain any other reasons for such speed although keeping warm is one possibility; another is that by moving quickly, rough sleepers made less claims to territory, and consequently stayed out of trouble and kept low visibility. Mr.N had developed a crooked manner of walking which I learnt and found was quite efficient (though also ungraceful).

This rushing around was part of the reason why many homeless people valued lightweight portable possessions. I was advised that my boots and coat were heavy and likely to exhaust me. When I changed to using trainers and a jacket, I was better equipped to run. Various rough sleepers made objects that had a theme of compactness; for example, Mr.G made a lighter carrier; Mr.B reworked found objects into containers for his needles and for his drugs.

Duncan noted that a strategy of using props was one way 'tramps' could avoid expulsion or arrest. For example, appearing to read a newspaper enabled 'tramps' to sit in a station for many hours; seeming to read a book allowed 'tramps' to doze in libraries. This use of props 'appear(ed) to submerge his stigmatised identity sufficiently' (Duncan 1979, 29) to legitimise a 'tramp's' presence in these locales. Mr.C told me he often spent time in libraries, shopping malls and other places. Whilst he did not usually actively 'submerge' his identity, he said he relied on people not realising that he was homeless, and thus he found ways of 'killing time'.

1.6. 'Pitches' (Working places for homeless street workers)

Duncan explores the manner in which 'tramps' make use of prime spaces. He first notes that venturing into prime spaces is inevitable for 'tramps' as these areas contain the 'wherewithal to survive' (ibid. 28). The problem with using prime spaces is the risk of harassment by the

police (arrests, id checks, getting moved on), and other parties. This risk is caused by the visible out of place and low status features 'tramps' display in their dress code (shabby) and activities (begging, scavenging, keeping warm, passing the time). For example, cigarette ends could be found in plentiful supply in the 'Loop'; however this area was heavily patrolled by the police and it was likely that those found scavenging there would be arrested (ibid. 29). Whilst Duncan sees the use of 'prime' spaces as inevitable, for homeless people in this project, it was highly desirable to work, in particular as this meant there was less empty time to 'kill'. It also provided sustenance and money for drink or drugs but sometimes rough sleepers worked despite having already earned enough for their needs.

For those who worked on the streets, the issue of pitches was extremely important. A pitch is a spot, usually along a busy road, outside a shop or near to a cashpoint outlet, where a person works. A pitch comes into existence when it is 'opened up' by someone. This means that a person starts to use one particular spot to vend and/or beg from on a regular basis (generally for at least a few hours every day). When a person opens a pitch they are recognised by other homeless street workers, as having ownership rights over that pitch while they work it regularly. This means that others will either not use the pitch at all or else they will use it only until its owner appears, when he or she will take over the spot.

Given that homeless populations moved in and out of town and in and out of accommodation, their numbers rose and fell constantly. However, the number of viable pitches was limited and, consequently, disputes arose regarding people's rights over viable pitches. There were two main types of dispute. Firstly, another person vending or begging on a spot too close by could challenge the viability of a pitch. Homeless people believed that members of the general public would give them less money if too many people asked them. This belief was frequently confirmed when passers-by said that they had already given money to a beggar or bought a magazine from a vendor, indicating a spot nearby.

It was therefore widely understood, amidst homeless street workers, that too many street workers would make it impossible to earn enough money to cover their needs. When such disputes arose, the two people involved normally confronted each other straightaway and

attempted to convince each other of their rights. The person who had been there longer would maybe complain to the other that he/she was taking business away from them, whilst the newcomer would maybe argue that it was public space that nobody owns and they were equally entitled to be there. They may also claim that there was enough business for the two of them.

The second type of dispute concerned the ownership rights on a pitch. It usually arose when a newcomer worked on someone else's pitch. The pitch 'owner' upon arrival would ask this person to leave. They often negotiated so that the newcomer could stay for another twenty minutes or so, to obtain the last few pounds they needed. However, this was not always the case.

The importance of pitches arose from two main features. Firstly, when someone worked a pitch regularly, passers-by got a chance to know that person and some would stop for a chat. Some initiated friendly relationships with a homeless person. These passers-by became known as 'regulars' and they were highly valued by homeless people. This topic will be further explored in Chapter Six (relations with non-homeless). The second factor that made a pitch important was its location. Homeless street workers usually valued pitches in busy locations, as this exposed them to more chances of 'a drop' (either a tip from someone buying a magazine from a vendor or money given to a beggar). A few workers developed pitches in less busy places but this was not common.

Establishing control over spaces required rough sleepers to oppose the claims of others who wished to occupy a pitch. This necessity was widely understood amidst rough sleepers. Mr.B asked me to occupy his pitch whilst he went to 'score' (buy drugs). Whilst I was begging (on a particularly valued pitch near a cashpoint outlet) Mr.HI told me to move as it was his pitch. I told him to talk with Mr.B upon his return. Mr.HI told me he had opened the pitch up long before Mr.B started to use it. When Mr.B returned he told me that Mr.HI was 'trying it on' and that I should tell him to 'fuck off'. He said that Mr.HI had used that pitch a year ago and was not entitled to re-claim it. Later on, when Mr.B left, Mr.HI used the pitch. Subsequently they came to an agreement to share the pitch. This example illustrates how rough sleepers had

to develop a hard, unsympathetic exterior in relation to each other and yet still managed to reach agreements. On the one hand Mr.B had to consider his own needs above those of Mr.HI (who also had a heroin habit and therefore was likely to be desperate to earn money); on the other hand, Mr.B acknowledged Mr.HI's needs and found a way to accommodate them both.

1.7. Vending and begging places

Vendors of The Big Issue were allocated pitches when they received their vendor badge. Their pitches were usually outside busy shops or on corners of busy streets. Territorial disputes often arose between vendors and beggars. (However, some vendors also begged at different times). Begging was usually undertaken in a sitting down position. People begging usually sat in shop doorways along busy streets. "Spot begging" was a form of begging whereby a person did not sit (or stand) on a pitch but instead walked up and down a stretch of road – also a 'pitch', but encompassing a bigger area. This form of begging could be quite profitable and many people who begged sitting down spot begged occasionally. Some people only spot begged. Its mobile nature made it a less cold activity; but many found it quite galling to ask for money in such a face-to-face manner.

An essential aspect of the work activities of rough sleepers was geographical proximity to many people. This required them to use 'prime' spaces – shopping and leisure areas – from which they might get moved away at any time due to their lack of entitlement to occupy such spaces. Furthermore it was not enough just to be close to passers-by. It was also essential to simultaneously maintain a social distance from them. McIntosh and Erskine found that those who gave to beggars made moral judgements as to 'whether those asking for money were 'genuine' or not' (McIntosh & Erskine 2000, 4). Being able to earn money as a beggar or vendor depended on being able to visibly confirm ones difference and social exclusion, through modes of dressing, sitting and making requests. This confirmation was evidence of a person's deservingness, which was reckoned as genuine need. Lee found young homeless people in London used various ruses to ensure they were viewed as genuine beggars including the use of different accents, having a girl to beg with, being scruffy (Lee 1993, 207). Here in Oxford this was also found to be the case. For example, Mr.B was given a warm winter coat by a passer-by one day. However, though he used this coat when vending magazines, he

would fold it up and sit on it when he was begging. He explained to me that nobody would 'make drops' (give to him) if he was to wear his coat, as passers-by would think he was not really in need.

1.8. Places for drinking and using drugs

Whilst drinkers were faced with a problem of where to drink (they were frequently barred from pubs, and moved on by the police when drinking on the streets), drinking in public is not illegal. (Oxford City Council has designated some areas to be 'alcohol free zones' though). This meant that purchasing drink could be undertaken openly. Many drinkers and drug users formed partnerships with another person or with a group of people. This will be explored further in Chapter Five, however it is relevant to mention here that groups of homeless drinkers would sometimes go back to the bed-sit of one drinker and spend the evening drinking. Some of these would leave late at night, and sleep behind buildings or in churchyards, until the morning. These locations were usually away from the city centre.

Drug users were faced with a different situation, due to the illegality of their addiction. Most homeless drug users collected phone numbers of dealers whenever possible. These were ranked with the best dealer being at the top. When a person wanted to buy drugs, they had to phone a dealer and follow their instructions. Dealers however did not work the whole time, so people would go down their ranked phone numbers until they managed to get hold of a dealer willing to supply them.

Most dealers would name a spot where a person had to go, to exchange their money for drugs. These spots were often out of city centre areas. This meant that a person had to go some distance. As homeless people frequently did not have enough money for bus fare, they would walk very fast in order to reach the location before the dealer. Dealers also often refused to accept change, which was the form in which street workers were normally given money. This factor caused problems as many shops and banks refused to change money. People were guarded about shops where they could change their money, in order to preserve their friendly relations with staff in these places. Furthermore, in the night there were usually no place open where staff would be willing to change money.

Once a person reached the spot where the dealer instructed them to go, they had to wait. Quite often other homeless people showed up or were encountered along the way. When this happened, people explained to me, it was because the dealer wanted to sell to everyone at once to save him/herself trouble and risks. However, on these occasions, rough sleepers appeared to be in a large group to any onlooker even though such groupings were never systematic.

When a dealer did arrive, he/she often sent a 'runner' to collect the money and hand out the drugs. Once people had their drugs they had to find a place where they could prepare and use them. To prepare a hit, a person needs to cook up the heroin powder in some water, mixed with citric acid (to help it dissolve). This mixture must then be filtered into a syringe, which is then injected into a vein. Preparing a hit can be quick but finding a vein used to take a long time. This requirement (of a place and enough time for this illegal activity) was often very difficult to meet and it was not unusual for the whole process to be interrupted by the sudden appearance of a passer-by, cleaner, or security guard. On these occasions people would leave, carrying their full syringe, and find another place.

It was common for people to use public toilets where they could lock themselves in a cubicle. Sometimes, if they had no mineral water on them, they flushed the toilet and caught the clean water as it flushed, to use for their hit. It was normally the case that people had to be very quiet and, when searching for a vein or if the needle clogged, they had to suppress their frustrations.

2. Patterns of time on the street

Lovell argues that long-term homeless street people have a temporality 'marked by contingency' (Lovell 1992, 94), in which the unpredictable occurs and there is a lack of any regular pattern. For Lovell homeless people's time is not ordered by 'regular sequencing, spacing and duration of events' (ibid.). Instead it is fluid. This was certainly the case for participants in Oxford. For example: Mr.L spent six months living in a derelict house. One day he returned to the house to find it had been demolished. For the next three months Mr.L had no regular sleeping spot, but stayed in various locations. The fluidity of 'marginal' time

derives from the contingency of street life where social contact is potentially 'ubiquitous', and street people's subsistence activities are very varied. Lovell describes 'marginal' time as consisting of large chunks of free and flexible time (ibid. 87), lacking a conventional 'division of everyday life into activities of production and reproduction, or the conventional dichotomy of work and leisure' (ibid. 91).

2.1. *'Empty time'*

Eighner wrote an autobiographical account of the two years he spent homeless in USA (with his dog, Lizbeth). Introducing his work, he said, 'Day after day I could aspire, within reason, to nothing more than survival... the identical barrenness of existence was exposed to me, day in and day out. I do not think I could write a narrative that would quite capture the unrelenting ennui of homelessness... Every life has trivial occurrences, pointless episodes, and unresolved mysteries, but a homeless life has these and virtually nothing else' (Eighner 1993, xi).

From the very beginning of fieldwork, most rough sleepers emphasised a particular category of very negative time. This category I have called 'empty time'. Some rough sleepers used this term whereas others did not, saying instead that they had to 'kill' time, or that they found the greatest problem they faced was 'boredom' or 'too much time with nothing to do'. This type of time appeared to be a major factor that determined the uses rough sleepers made of various spaces. The extent to which rough sleepers in Oxford experienced homelessness as 'empty' time was related to the activities they undertook. Eighner decided to not beg or steal, nor did he have addictions to drink or drugs. For him, the boredom of homelessness meant two years of homelessness could be 'represented by relatively few examples' (ibid. x). Many rough sleepers in Oxford though, tried to be busy in order to avoid empty time.

Respondents who stayed at the Night Shelter often complained of how difficult it was to be homeless because they had long expanses of time during which there was nothing to do. Mr.C for example, told me that, once the Night Shelter closed in the mornings, he would wander about the place, 'killing time' waiting for it to open again in the evening. He told me he would walk around, stop and sit somewhere until he felt people might tell him to go, and then walk around again. He hated Sundays only a little less than bank holiday Mondays, as both

services providers and traders were often absent on such days, leaving long stretches of time to kill. He claimed that his drinking only became problematic as a result of this, because buying and consuming drink as well as actually being drunk, helped to pass the time. This empty time was a source of dread for many rough sleepers.

2.2. Present orientation

Snow and Anderson explored the differences between newly arrived homeless people ('recently dislocated'), those who were adapting to becoming homeless ('straddlers') and those who had fully adapted to being homeless ('outsiders'). They found that the 'recently dislocated' shunned other homeless people, not knowing who to trust, and were frightened and appalled by street life. For them the present was in such stark contrast to the past that they strove to return to past situations. Snow and Anderson argued that they were 'oriented to the larger sociocultural context but physically mired in life on the streets' (Snow and Anderson 1993, 47). 'Outsiders' on the other hand, had wholly adapted to street life, 'with both their cognitive orientation and their daily routine riveted on surviving on the streets rather than making it off' (ibid. 57). For Snow and Anderson their 'past and ... future (had)...collapsed into the present' (ibid. 58). 'Straddlers', having got used to the people and routines of street life, start to disconnect from the past, which is often strikingly different from the present (ibid. 52). At the same time, 'the relationship of present to future loses continuity and clarity. There is a desire... to tie the future to the past by escaping from street life...(but) planned ways of getting off the street tend to become increasingly unclear, and there is a tendency to slip into lassitude, letting the days flow by without taking any action' (ibid.).

Snow and Anderson situate the contradictions homeless people face: Unless they get off the streets quickly, their orientation starts to change to surviving on the streets. As Phillimore noted, while rough sleepers are aware that domiciled people locate themselves (socially and personally) with their pasts and futures in mind, rough sleepers do not. Therefore, domiciled parties may be preoccupied with the need for accommodation and services for rough sleepers but rough sleepers themselves consider these factors to be largely irrelevant. Instead, they are 'grounded in the present' (Phillimore 1979, pg.43), 'act(ing) for short-term advantages... because the actions of one day bear no implications for the actions of another day' (Phillimore

1979, pg.44). Survival is absorbing and because of this, an involvement with the present takes over from memories of the past and plans for the future. In this project, most of the participants appeared to fit into the 'straddler' category. Many participants had various plans for an immediate future off the streets. However, either people did not enact their plans in the first place or they reappeared shortly after leaving to do so.

Mr.C was particularly prone to bad luck and many of his plans failed as a result of this. On one occasion Mr.C was returning from a town in the Lake District (having found and lost a job there). He had planned to return to Oxford and get a bedsit and was fairly confident as he had money and was clean and tidy. However, when he changed coaches on the return journey, he left his bag behind. Despite his attempts to retrieve his belongings, they did not reappear and Mr.C was left with nothing as all his clothes, money, documents and even letters had been in the bag. He said getting a job had made no difference to his situation – 'I'm right back where I started'.

Mr.O had a long term plan which was to save up enough money and go to Europe to meet up with old friends of his and rejoin the 'free party' traveller scene he had left behind. There were three occasions during this project when Mr.O had successfully cut down on his drugs' use and saved up more than enough money to undertake his plans. However, faced with buying his ticket and finding a friend to take care of his dog, he spent all his money on drugs (mainly crack cocaine, which can be consumed in very large quantities indeed – I was told of 'sessions' when people would spend over one thousand pounds in a day). When I next saw him, he would tell me 'I blew it. I blew it all on white'.

Mr.FG was a young man who had left home and who lived both on the streets and on a traveller site where he stayed with a friend. On one occasion he found a buried 'stash' (hidden quantity) of crack cocaine that would have been worth over three thousand pounds had Mr.FG sold it on the streets as he intended to. He told me he was going to buy a vehicle so that he could live on site without depending on his traveller friend, with whom he often rowed. He also wanted to travel, and felt the money gained from selling 'rocks' would be sufficient. However, instead of selling it all, he consumed vast amounts of it with a friend of his. He sold

the remaining rocks but bought heroin with the money gained and ended up with a fairly severe 'habit'.

In a conversation with Mr.B and Mr.IJ, I asked about their hopes and plans for the future. Mr.B told me he would like to start a car-vaiting business but, when asked about how he intended to fulfil this ambition, he said he was 'just a junkie'. Mr.IJ complained that there were no training schemes for street homeless people and undertaking detoxification appeared only to offer freedom from the problems of addiction, without offering positive prospects for people to follow it through with. Both Mr.B and Mr.IJ commented that there were no prospects for their futures and this made them unable to undertake detoxification (which they both felt they could undergo on their own, without entering an institution). For them, being homeless was not the main problem in their lives. It was, rather, being 'stuck' – with a habit and with no attractive prospects.

Here I outline the main aspects of daily routines of street homeless people and various significant periods of time. As fieldwork was undertaken mainly with street homeless drug users, their daily routines were the more familiar. For this reason, I draw mainly on their experiences. Having spent some, though less, time with drinkers, I have included their routines wherever possible.

2.3. Weekday routines

Quite a few street homeless drug users would wake up 'clucking' (with the beginnings of withdrawal symptoms). So as to avoid this, many of them saved a hit for the morning and, if they had not been moved on first thing, they would take this hit to start the day. Some drinkers had a 'tin' (can of strong beer) for 'breakfast', in order to stave off the 'rattle an' rolls' (shakes drinkers experienced when withdrawing from alcohol). People stayed as long as possible in 'bed' in order to have less 'empty' time to 'kill'. Some people had pieces of chocolate, left over from the night before, whilst some were given coffee or tea by the outreach team. Once people had to get up, they packed up their things and (usually) tidied up, throwing the cardboard and other rubbish away and storing larger items if need be.

Mornings. Once a person packed up, whether or not they had been moved on by the police, they either started working (begging or vending magazines if they still have some left over from the previous day), or they were faced with a stretch of time to fill in. This they would do by, variously, wandering around or going to fast food restaurants where they would sit down with a hot drink for a while (some stayed for over two hours nursing just one cup of coffee). Sometimes a person would sit at a bus stop for some hours. Mr.C did this on an occasion when it was raining and he did not want to get his clothes wet. If they had not yet had a hit or a drink, they set about earning the money to buy it. For a drug user, this was twenty pounds, the minimum a drug dealer will accept, though if two drug users were going to 'chuck in together' (share the cost of a hit) they had to each earn ten pounds. If people were starting to 'cluck' (experiencing withdrawal symptoms), there was some urgency and, if they were not managing to get money, they would try to find a fellow addict to lend them a hit (or a drink, if they are a drinker), with the promise of repayment, usually later on that day. A day centre opened on weekdays at 9am, and sometimes a person would go there and have breakfast and possibly a shower.

10am. By this time the library had opened and some people spent time reading in there. Also at this time, the office opened where vendors could buy magazines (The Big Issue) to sell to the general public. Many drug users were on a 'script' of 'juice' (methadone prescription) and had to go to the chemist where they consumed their daily dose in the presence of the pharmacist.

Many vendors spent three hours selling magazines as the office closed at 1pm. People tried to work for a stretch of time in both mornings and afternoons at least. This helped to build up regulars, and legitimise their ownership rights to a pitch, but it was also a structured activity that helped pass the time of day. However, if someone was 'clucking', their morning's work would be interrupted by the process of acquiring and using drugs (or drink). As can be seen from above, this process is complex and time-consuming for drug users. The police also frequently moved on street homeless workers. If they were vendors, after checking their vendor badge, the police usually permitted them to stay. However, if they were begging they were told to move away and warned that begging is illegal. This was not always the case

though, and relationships between the police and homeless people will be further explored in later chapters. For now it should be noted that the mornings' work was sometimes interrupted and this fact made it necessary to work longer hours. The problem street vendors faced was that the office where they bought magazines from closed after 1pm. If they had not earned enough money for more magazines, they had to beg instead of vending for the rest of the day.

Street workers usually worked through the lunch hours, as the streets were busy at that time (12pm – 2pm). After this time some people stopped for the day. This was especially so for drinkers who did not have a severe problem of addiction and started drinking in the afternoons. If possible they would go to pubs; however, some got barred from pubs, some felt for reasons of their appearance alone. People with this type of routine would stay in one or two pubs until closing time. Some would do the crossword (Mr.L told me that doing the crossword was his 'television'), some were known as regulars. This passed the rest of the day away for them.

Whether or not a person carried on working through the day depended primarily on how much money they needed until the following day (or else for some longer term aim such as travel or a deposit for a room), and whether or not they had succeeded in making their target. However, their social connections were also a factor, as people sometimes decided to spend time with friends rather than work. Other factors such as doctor's appointments, viewing accommodation or finding new sleeping spots, attending interviews for rehabilitation or detoxification, occasionally interrupted the day's work as well.

Having enough food was not usually a problem of availability as passers-by often gave people sandwiches and there were day centres that offered food. Some homeless people preferred to snack on bars of chocolate and other sweet things, which they bought using the change from their hits. Mr.L used to buy a kebab at the end of each day, on his way back to his sleeping spot. Many homeless people went to a centre that opened between 5pm and 7pm, where there were sandwiches and tea on offer. Those with dogs though, generally did not go there, as they had to leave their dog outside. These evening hours, till around 10pm, were not very busy so, whilst some people carried on working, the majority did not.

Evenings. From 7pm onwards, the Night Shelter opened and those who stayed there were able to enter again, whilst others would go there for a meal. Many did not go there until much later as they still needed to work to earn money for drugs or drink. Hostel residents could come and go to the hostel at any time, and therefore, were differently situated in terms of passing time both during days and nights. However they often complained that hostel living made them sleepy (due to the heating) and, if they were on a 'juice script', they said they became lazy and stopped working all hours to keep their addictions going. Some did come out on an evening to vend or beg, though.

Street sleepers were not in a position to go somewhere and so they often carried on working and using drugs or drinking until they wanted to sleep. They were still at risk of being moved on by the police or security guards, and most evenings a few were.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT TIMES

Giro day. On giro day, usually once a fortnight, those homeless people who received benefits, collected their giro cheques and cashed them at the post office. There were exceptions to this as some people had weekly allowances, which they collected by cashing a book each week, for instance. If a person is not intimidated into giving their money to another homeless person (which frequently occurred and will be explored in the next chapter), giro day was a good day. This is because a person did not have to work as hard to meet their needs. On this day a person may have had to pay back debts, either in cash or by sharing a drink or drugs. On the other hand, they sometimes lent someone some money and thus accumulated a return favour for the future. Most people, though not all, still worked on this day, but they were more relaxed in their approach to work.

Sundays and bank holidays. Whilst on Saturdays there were very few if any, day centres open, city centres were still busy. This meant that people did not have long stretches of 'empty time' to pass by. However, on Sundays and bank holidays, there was very little to do. Street homeless people tried to stay in bed for as long as possible on these days. The police were generally less present on these days as were security guards, which made a lie-in more possible. People generally did not enjoy Sundays and bank holidays because there was little to do. People from the Night Shelter, having to leave at 8am, could not go to the library or inside shops during the day.

Times of year. Whilst winter brought real problems, especially of health, for homeless people, in particular those who lived on the streets, it was also quieter than the summer when many homeless people travelled and passed through the city. In the winter, fewer homeless people wanted to work the streets, so there were greater chances

of keeping one's pitch. Fewer homeless people could manage sleeping on the streets, so there was less potential for trouble. This time of year was also good for relations between street homeless workers and passers-by, who could be more friendly and sympathetic during the cold.

Students. The presence of students was highly welcomed by street homeless workers and, when they went away, their absence was strongly felt. People did not prepare themselves financially for their absence, as this would require more forward planning than possible, however they earned less money and had to get by on the minimum amount necessary unless they had good fortune.

Christmas. Most street homeless people tried to make arrangements to go away for Christmas and Boxing Day. However, not all succeed. For them, it was essential to get enough drugs beforehand as, on Christmas day there were no dealers working. On Christmas day people stayed in their bed all day long. No one moved them on and the emptiness of town was easiest to avoid by sleeping as much as possible through the day.

In the run up to Christmas, passers-by could be very generous indeed and homeless street workers worked as much as they could, as they were given so much more. This made it possible to get enough drugs to get through the day without clucking. Some street homeless people arranged to spend the day (and overnight on Christmas eve) with friends or family. Many reported these times as being fairly fraught. Christmas day was a day when none of the normal resources were available and many homeless people disliked it and wanted it to pass by quickly. There was an inversion of the meanings of certain times – namely public holidays were, for homeless people, days when resources were less available. The festive and family oriented meaning of Christmas translated into lonely and empty waiting time for those unable to find shelter.

When considering patterns of daily mobility rough sleepers undertook, I found that being stationary was an important feature. As Lee noted 'the homeless are quick to ascribe permanence to a place even if they have been there for a relatively short time' (Lee 1993, 194). Stability was quick to achieve on the streets of Oxford and a sense of place could emerge for respondents. However this was dependent upon whether or not a person was working. Just 'killing time' made the experience of being stationary unbearable and addictions to drink or drugs could worsen when faced with 'empty time'.

Having a pitch enabled respondents not only to work but also to form relationships with some passers-by ('regulars') as well as with some friendly local traders (for example, staff in shops who were willing to change money; security guards willing to allow a rough sleeper to sleep in a car park). For some respondents, having a pitch enabled them to undertake habitual

activities. For example, Mr.B always bought hot tea from the same place, as the staff 'liked' him and know how he wanted his tea. Earning money on a regular basis also enabled respondents to gain a measure of control over their drink or drugs use. When respondents were able to be stationary through their pitches, many of them cut down their drink or drugs use.

Life on the streets was also marked by interruptions and degrees of unpredictability. Rough sleepers were exposed to the unknown. At any time they may for example, have been attacked by aggressive passers-by, arrested or moved on by the police, suddenly fall ill, be given a large 'drop', be offered accommodation, or even be asked to purchase drugs for a passer-by. The unpredictability of street life was often related to their visibility, which they needed to be able to control to a degree. At least when finding places to sleep, many rough sleepers felt it was important to lessen their visibility. The viability of street life depended on respondents being able to cope with unexpected hardships as well as to exploit unforeseen opportunities.

2.4. Using substances

Snow and Anderson find that 'the selves of some have been so brutalized that they are abandoned in favour of alcohol, drugs, or out-of-this-world fantasies' (Snow and Anderson 1993, 229). In this section I argue that rather than abandoning meaning altogether, or creating alternative realities, rough sleepers create an economy of selfhood, in order to cope with spatial and temporal incoherence.

As Fountain and Howes argue, there is a causal relationship between homelessness and the misuse of drugs. While 'drug use may be a trigger for homelessness, ... homelessness is ... a stronger trigger for drug use' (Fountain and Howes 2002, 11). For Snow and Anderson the use of substances was an alternative to processes of accounting for oneself using 'conventional folk understandings' (Snow and Anderson 1993, 208), serving as 'insulation from ... psychic assaults... creat(ing) illusions of personal autonomy and well-being' (ibid.) and providing a 'psychological escape from a brutalizing world out of which physical escape seems unlikely' (ibid. 213).

Wincup argues that viewing drug addictions through a medical prism 'glosses over' the role that social structural forces play in addiction and focuses on individuals as addicts, who are felt to be weak and passive (Wincup 2000, 3). For her, addicts are active and rational agents who choose to use drugs as a way of coping with pain (that arises from problems of a social structural level – such as homelessness) and of getting pleasure (ibid. 6). Her analysis about women awaiting trial and the way they use drugs may have application here when considering links between rough sleeping and drug addictions. She notes that people continue to take drugs partly because they are addicted but also because their social networks include other drug users and coming off drugs is difficult to do in the presence of drugs (ibid. 7).

Carlen likewise acknowledges the role that drugs play for young homeless people, in alleviating pain. She argues that drugs give 'an occupational framework to the day...(and) a sense of community and identification with other drug users' (Carlen 1996, 131).

Mr.S said to me that street homeless people have different priorities from most (housed) people, valuing money and drugs above clothing, shelter and food. As fieldwork was undertaken mostly with drug users, it is here possible to describe ways in which drugs 'solved' problems. Heroin made people relax, and thus able to ignore problems. A strong hit could make a person 'gouch'. This means sit, in almost complete oblivion. Some people would say 'he's nodding off' referring to someone becoming 'gouched'. This physical and mental condition was akin to sleeping. Sometimes I could not tell if someone had fallen asleep or were 'gouched out'. Most people were not hungry when they were high, and they also did not feel the cold; for example, some people did not bother to collect cardboard to make their bed. Physical injuries or illnesses could be ignored under the influence of heroin. The comfortable feelings ('mellow') induced by heroin meant insults and betrayals seemed to matter less, and fears of attack were subdued as well. It simply wiped out problems by making them easy to ignore, albeit on a temporary basis.

So far using drugs appears to conform to notions of pain relief and escape. When considering what this escape is from, it is possible to argue it is from the meaninglessness of spaces and times outside of mainstream society. However, it may be fair to suggest that this does not

fully explain what is going on. For example: in the preparation of a hit, the stage of heating up the mixture of heroin, citric acid and water, is called 'cooking up'. It may be pertinent here to consider the symbolism of cooking as a process that mediates between the inside and outside. In Carsten's (1997) work about people in Langkawi Island, she found that new members of the family were incorporated through partaking in a cooked (rice) meal. The heat of the hearth was the force that, through cooking the meal, also transformed people from outsiders into insiders. I am arguing that the 'cooking' of heroin, whilst transforming it into something that can be put inside a person's body, also led to a transformation of time. 'Empty' time is reproduced (oblivion) but no longer feared. A person who used heroin thus contained 'empty' time, in a way that was akin to putting it inside a structure of meaning. It is possible that, rather than escaping meaning, the precise opposite is true: meaning is being introduced. Furthermore, if this is the case, rather than simply addicted (and therefore dependent), rough sleepers might be actively using their personal agency.

Conclusion

I have argued that rough sleepers, in the absence of 'home' as a place in which both space and time are rendered meaningful, coherent and personal, are faced with the problem of managing space and time themselves. When considering patterns and routines rough sleepers undertook each day, it is notable how spaces, in the absence of 'home', could be distinguished by time. Activities of work, sleep, personal hygiene and substances use took place in many of the same spaces, but at different times. On the face of it both spatial and temporal orders were those of mainstream, domiciled society; however these orders were negotiated and transformed by rough sleepers into different spaces and times.

Whilst many researchers have identified 'present-orientation' as a defining characteristic of the temporal structure of homeless street people (Murray 1984, Snow and Anderson 1993, for example), findings in this project suggest the category 'empty time' is also very important. This type of time appeared to have a major influence in the structuring of everyday routines. Empty times were associated with holidays (Sundays, bank holidays) as well as states of intoxication (processes of acquiring and using substances as well as states of intoxication were antidotes to empty time). Empty time conjured negative emotions of boredom, depression and

misery; and it appeared to threaten structurelessness, meaninglessness. I think it served as a reminder of the excluded social position of rough sleepers: their homelessness was not simply a housing need but also an absence of social connections to spatial and temporal structures of conventional society and links with peers, family members and employers.

Dealing with empty time led to the adoption of habitual behaviours of work and substances use that, in practice, resulted in altered spatial and temporal orders. Cycles of intoxication and detoxification helped rough sleepers to maintain themselves as personal individual agents, with purposes and capacities even though, in conventional terms, they were classified as 'vulnerable' and therefore less able than the domiciled to exercise autonomy. Some authors (Snow and Anderson, for example) have argued that the use of substances increases as a result of homelessness, thus offering an alternative to conventional portrayals of homelessness arising because of the use of substances. In this chapter I have argued that use of substances is a means of controlling time. I have also suggested that it controls 'empty' time by reproducing it within the more comfortable setting of oblivion. Thus, rather than using substances to escape reality (Snow and Anderson's contention), rough sleepers might be embracing their reality, altering its excluded nature through processes such as 'cooking up'.

This transformation of time and space does not mean rough sleepers were not 'vulnerable' or in need of support. Their suffering obscured the fact that they had personal agency, albeit turned towards sustaining their 'selves' through their management of space and time. Their management of space and time resembled what Willis called a 'doubling'. For Willis, in his analysis of factory culture, practices of workers on the shop-floor enabled them to 'inhabit... materially enforced "objective" conditions as *really* something else' (author's italics, Willis 2001, 197). Present in the 'piss-taking' practices of the workers towards each other, was 'an *alternative* continuous reality that (had)... not been officially named or sanctioned' (author's italics, *ibid.*), which acted to limit the capacity of the capitalist labour process 'to capture the mind, consciousness, language and all of the cultural forms of collective awareness and vigour that go with *human* bodies and their symbolic interactions' (author's italics, *ibid.* 198).

Conventional spatial and temporal realities were inescapable, and ‘empty time’ was the clearest manifestation of the social construction of homelessness in a home oriented society. However, this reality, objective and material, could nevertheless be mediated through the adoption of routines and practices. In the next chapter I examine how this altered, ‘doubled’ reality was affected by the patterns and routines rough sleepers adopted when they obtained various forms of accommodation. Repeated homelessness was prevalent amidst the participants of this project and it is pertinent to consider how their daily practices of mediating space and time intersected with the longer time frames encountered in residence patterns of living environments.

CHAPTER FOUR. REPEATED HOMELESSNESS – PATTERNS OF PERIODIC MOBILITY

Introduction

Repeated homelessness was prevalent amongst the participants of this project and it is pertinent to consider how their daily practices of mediating space and time intersected with the longer time frames encountered in residence patterns of living environments, which rough sleepers repeatedly passed through.

Many researchers, when choosing participants for their projects, use those who have slept rough for a certain amount of time in the past. For example: Randall and Brown surveyed 120 people 'who were either currently sleeping rough or had a recent history of doing so' (Randall & Brown 1999, 1); Fountain and Howes interviewed 389 people who had 'a history of rough sleeping' (Fountain & Howes 2002, 2). Theorists note how mobile homeless populations are without examining this mobility. For example: Burrows et al note how 'People sleeping rough tend to be mobile... and they also spend periods on and off the street' (Burrows et al 1997, 8). In describing the long-term homelessness of older homeless people (over 55 years old), Crane and Warnes (2000), for example, used the term 'prolonged homelessness' throughout their paper and Crane (1994, cited in Hawes 1999, 189) used the term 'chronically homeless'. Hawes explains how older homeless populations 'may use hostels, night shelters or other informal networks of vagrancy' (Hawes 1999, 189) 'either temporarily or serially' (ibid. 202) and many 'become homeless again... resort(ing) back to street life' (ibid. 203).

There appears to be very little UK literature that is expressly about repeated homelessness. However discussions surrounding the support needs and resettlement of homeless people do sometimes address this issue, though not always in an explicit way. Hutson and Liddiard note how some forms of accommodation offered to young people in the past became 'part of the homelessness problem and a cause of 'the revolving door' of homelessness' (Hutson & Liddiard 1994, 149). Pleace, arguing that homelessness is more than just a housing need, found 'support was needed to counteract the tendency of many formerly homeless individuals

being unable to manage in their new homes and returning to homelessness' (Pleace 1997, 163). Whilst Randall and Brown's work was about the prevention of homelessness and did not contain descriptions of repeated rough sleeping, the authors did list factors they found were associated with 'continued rough sleeping'. These were: having friends or known people on the streets; lack of commitments; not having rent to pay; and being able to drink freely (Randall & Brown 1999, 2). Fountain and Howes identified 'the move from temporary to permanent accommodation' (Fountain & Howe 2002, 25) as one source of problems for homeless people. They concluded that many participants in their research 'live a life camped outside the revolving doors of home and street, stability and chaos.' (ibid. 26), and one of their recommendations was for research to 'explore ... why move-on sometimes fails some people' (ibid. 25). Crane notes how there has been a traditional association between homelessness and itinerant workers. She notes how, in the past, unemployment and the seasonal nature of some work caused the mobility of some people (Crane 1999, 61). She observes how such people often worked in remote areas, forming social ties with one another rather than with people in local settled communities (ibid.) She also notes how such men became 'habituated' to homelessness (ibid.) Most of the participants in this project were not working on a seasonal basis and they do not fit in with Crane's analysis. Instead, their repeated homelessness occurred most often as a result of their moving between various penal and therapeutic settings.

Otto and Orford's work about small hostels for alcoholics, noted that 'hostels... seem to be serving, not as transitional or intermediate institutions, contributing to a rapid, smooth, upward path from handicap to autonomy, but rather as 'stations' on circuits... consisting of a variety of therapeutic, penal, supportive and other statutory and non-statutory agencies' (Otto & Orford 1978, 84). Their findings - that people leaving hostels were subsequently often in contact with other agencies, or even re-admitted to the same hostels - resembled in part the situation I found with rough sleepers in Oxford. Otto and Orford drew on Wiseman's work when they speculated that hostels may 'help to perpetuate impermanence' (ibid.). Wiseman's work presented an analysis about the routes taken by Skid Row alcoholics, through various agencies in the rehabilitative and penal systems available to them in 'Pacific City', USA. At an early stage of Wiseman's study of Skid Row alcoholic's lives, the author discovered that these alcoholics travelled 'a circuit from institution to institution, voluntarily or involuntarily,

seeking or having forced on them, shelter and/or therapy for their drinking problem' (Wiseman 1970 [1979], 272). Wiseman, in keeping with Skid Row alcoholics, conceptualised this circuit as a loop, with a variety of institutions ('stations') along it, into and out of which alcoholics travelled, ultimately returning to Skid Row, which was 'home territory... a sort of "central station"... in relationship to outlying public institutions' (ibid. 58). She notes how the travels to and from the institutions was known 'as "making the loop" or "making the circle"' (ibid.) by the alcoholics, who viewed making the loop as 'part of being on Skid Row' (ibid.)

Wiseman delineates the Skid Row alcoholics' 'own special brand of sense' (ibid. 57) that they make of the systems of provision and discipline they dealt with, and the links between these institutions. She argues that, because the alcoholics making the loop 'can experience many correctional and therapeutic approaches' (ibid. 61), they see a 'complicated and contradictory structure' (ibid.). From their perspective, there is a 'constellation of available institutions... linked in so many ways that a man may pass from one to another (with visits to Skid Row in between) indefinitely. Time spent in one institution very often becomes a bridge to another' (ibid. 57).

In the first part of this chapter the reasons many rough sleepers tried to obtain accommodation are examined in terms of cycles of events on the street. Regular problems of addiction and bad health, as well as various difficulties rough sleepers experienced with their peers, often appeared to have a determining effect on the travels of rough sleepers. In the chapters' second part, I explore the various forms of accommodation rough sleepers obtained, and examine their reasons for leaving accommodation.

A. How daily and periodic time frames intersected

In the previous chapter I have argued that homeless people who lived on the streets had time frames that ordered an important temporal category: 'empty time'. Empty time was hard to deal with because it was marked by an absence of events, and an absence of foreseeable events. People killing empty time undertook various activities (such as working, obtaining provisions, obtaining and using substances, finding spaces to inhabit) that sustained meaningful structures in their lives. Many rough sleepers also obtained various forms of

accommodation (but especially institutional forms of accommodation), where they stayed for varying lengths of time before returning to the streets.

In Oxford, street living was 'a battle'. Mr.U said: 'It's like this: you're fighting to sell the Issue⁵, to score⁶, to trek about the place, to find somewhere to dig⁷, to find a vein. Then the fight stops for a little while.' Mr.M agreed, 'Mum told me if I spent the same amount of energy working at a job, I'd be all right.' The hardships rough sleepers experienced in their daily lives were multi-dimensional. Chronic lack of sleep, irregular diet, rushing around made life on the streets exhausting. Physical ill health was another factor rough sleepers frequently had to contend with. The friendships they had were very supportive in many ways, but also they were volatile and frequently plagued by mistrust (this issue is discussed at length in Chapter Five). Rough sleepers had to fend off competing territorial claims, they had to learn how to avoid trouble, even sometimes at the expense of their dignity, and they had to forego their privacy each time a form about them was filled in. They also endured low social status, and its consequence of never feeling safe, threatened by potential and actual attacks by members of the general public, as well as (some claimed) the police. These factors can be seen as reasons to leave the streets and sometimes, rough sleepers cited all or some of them when they expressed the desire to obtain accommodation.

Murray argues that the most prominent kind of time on the streets is cyclical and that cyclical time has a strong association with present, rather than future, orientation. For him, two main factors contribute to the cyclical nature of street time: first is the goal of survival, which must be re-achieved each day; second is the 'cyclic schedules of the institutions which affect the homeless' (Murray 1984, 157). The daily goal of survival is repeated cyclically within the further cycles of institutional provision. Homeless people, for Murray, could gain access to shelter institutions at opening times and obtained money, from state institutions, at regular intervals. Similar cycles to those Murray observed were present in Oxford and have been detailed in the previous chapter, however, in this project, participant observation permitted a further detailing of how the cycles of daily life on the streets intersected with the desire rough

⁵ The Big Issue

⁶ To buy some drugs

⁷ To 'dig' describes the stage of injecting when one is probing for a vein with the needle

sleepers sometimes had, to obtain accommodation. When conceptualising the patterns of time that determined when rough sleepers would seek to obtain accommodation, it appeared as though rough sleepers were engaged, whilst living on the streets, in three main cycles: states of intoxication and detoxification; physical and mental health, and cycles of sociality.

1. Cycles of intoxication and detoxification

As I noted in the previous chapter, using substances provided rough sleepers with various advantages on the streets. Nevertheless, prolonged use resulted in serious problems for both drinkers and drug users. The crux of this matter is the fact that, if a person used alcohol or heroin on a daily basis, eventually their tolerance would build up and these substances ceased to be effective. This meant that a person had to increase their substance use over time in order to obtain the same effects. As Wiseman notes about the alcoholic man: ‘he finds he must drink to sober up... abstinence causes nervousness, jitters, tremors, while a few drinks make him steady and bring the world in focus’ (Wiseman 1970, 162). Similarly, heroin users told me that sometimes they needed a ‘hit’ just to avert the symptoms of withdrawal, and on such occasions they did not get a ‘rush’⁸, which, for some, was the whole point of using heroin.

The immediate solution to this problem was to increase the dose and strength of substances used. Sometimes using other substances helped to bring back the states of intoxication people were searching for; Mr.O told me he used crack cocaine in order to ‘get a buzz’ from both crack and heroin, which on its own had ceased to make him high. One way or another, substances use tended to increase, eventually leading to a range of problems the solution to which was often considered to be detoxification.

Detoxification was a process that was continuously mentioned and discussed during my fieldwork on the streets. Both the “rattle ‘n rolls” (coming off drink) and “doing a cluck” (coming off heroin) were galling prospects because these processes were considered to be both physically and mentally distressing. Whilst in either case, the worst physical symptoms could be overcome within two weeks, other distressing symptoms carried on for months to come. People also believed that it would take them between five and ten years to overcome their

⁸ A rush is the name used for the feelings of elation a person experiences when the drug hits their blood stream.

mental addictions, their addictions to the prescribed medications of detoxification and to learn how to deal with often permanent problems left by years of physical neglect and substances use⁹.

Most of the time rough sleepers did not believe they had sufficient will power to resist the temptation to use drink or drugs, even after undergoing therapeutic forms of support. Their own experiences had shown them that processes of detoxification often ended in relapse. Wiseman notes that, whilst staff members are 'limited to the confines of ...their "station" on the loop, the down-an-out drunk has mobility ...and he can experience many correctional and therapeutic approaches' (Wiseman 1971, 61). Scepticism about detoxification often derived from the knowledge of a wide variety of institutions many rough sleepers had. Despite this, I often heard conversations about detoxification; Mr.SY and Mr.B talked about a clinic Mr.SY had read about, where a person would undergo a blood transfusion that completely replaced their blood and thus, he said, they did not experience 'the cluck'. The disillusionment many people felt about detoxification meant they did not always opt for residential detoxification; Sometimes people also decided to stop using heroin without using methadone.

1.1. Cutting down, unaided detoxification and abstinence

In certain circumstances, many rough sleepers cut down their use of substances. Mr.L told me he only started to drink after he had finished work for the day. Moderate drinking and drug use was common on the streets. When people found a measure of optimism and stability, they often decided the time was right to come off drink or drugs (or, in many cases, both). This seemed to be a decision made without the advice of staff or even friends. People told me they just cut down, very gradually, in their own time. Mr.I, who had been severely addicted to heroin in the past, used crack cocaine, in small quantities, three or four times a week; he 'occasionally' would buy a hit of heroin, which he would make last for three days. This was his own, personal 'system'. Apparently everybody had a 'system'. Mr.B's 'system' is

⁹ Examples observed during fieldwork and cited by participants include: amputated limbs (result of damage incurred through use of needles), damaged internal organs (Mr.R's spleen was removed after he was beaten up one night. Mr.A's liver and stomach were damaged due to excessive drinking and he feared that he might die if he started drinking again.), scars (known as 'tracks', these are scars left from using needles and getting abscesses), limbs and facial disfigurements (sometimes due to rough sleepers' neglect of their injuries, which can consequently worsen, leaving a person permanently damaged. On one occasion Mr.C was badly beaten, and the broken bones in his jaw mended in such a way as to make his face look crooked.)

described below. Over the fieldwork period, Mr.G and Mr.I came off heroin and crack cocaine unaided. Mr.G's abstinence lasted for three months and Mr.I's for three weeks. Both returned to using drugs again but this was only in very moderate amounts.

For many people, obtaining accommodation helped them to cut down their addictions without undergoing detoxification. Both Mr.C and Mr.L managed to get rented rooms in the private sector whilst still drinking. Neither of them went through detoxification programmes but both told me their drinking lessened to a degree when they moved into a room. For others though, moving from a 'dry' hostel into a socially rented room or flat often led to loneliness and this in turn could result in a person drinking or taking heroin again. In the long-term, cutting down to a moderate level seemed far more successful than total abstinence, which was frequently associated with loneliness and institutions.

Cutting down substances use was an admittance requirement for those who wanted to undertake detoxification in one of the hostels in Oxford. This undertaking was interpreted by workers as a sign of commitment and as the first step towards solving ones problems, and without it staff members did not believe their clients could successfully overcome their addictions. Cutting down though was most often undertaken at relatively stable times.

1.2. Aided detoxification and residential detoxification

Many prescribed drugs flowed through the informal economy of street homeless people. Both drinkers and drug users often sought medical help with their detoxification. Doctors prescribed various tranquillisers to help ease the symptoms of withdrawal, many of which were sold on to other street homeless people and residents of hostels. Of particular importance to heroin users was methadone, a highly addictive heroin substitute widely prescribed by doctors. Often rough sleepers were required to take their prescribed dose at the chemists, in front of the pharmacist; sometimes though, some rough sleepers had a weekly prescription. This was the case for Mr.B, who told me what his 'system' was: In order to control his addiction to methadone, Mr.B cut down the amount of methadone he took (selling the remainder to other homeless people), whilst simultaneously regulating the amount of heroin he took. When Mr.B wanted to cut down his drugs' use, he would cut down his doses of heroin –

making each hit a bit smaller, lengthening the time between heroin hits – and take small doses of methadone to stave off the ‘cluck’. The fact that his prescription was higher than his need, gave him the power to contrive this system. Mr.B did not use his system to give up drugs altogether, but he cut down the amount he used whenever he felt stable enough.

Stability appeared to be a necessary condition for rough sleepers to undertake detoxification; one drug detoxification hostel even required that prospective clients cut down their drug use prior to admittance. However, the circumstances that led many to want detoxification were often distressing and dramatic, not conducive to the processes of controlled cutting down. Mr.V, for example, became indebted to a drug dealer. His debt had accumulated and he was unable to pay it back. He also fell out with his link up partner (Mr.X) and he had ‘skanked’¹⁰ some people. He woke up ‘clucking’, after spending a very cold and wet night worrying that he might be found by the people he had ‘skanked’. When the shops opened, he went to a supermarket and stole various items, until he was arrested and sent to prison for a short while. He explained that he had not been coping with living on the streets and that he felt going to prison would enable him to come off drugs and “make a fresh start”.

1.3. Relapse

Often a person who underwent detoxification in a residential setting was able to gain self-contained accommodation in the private or socially rented sector, as staff would help them go through the referral systems and waiting lists. However, when people relapsed, they often returned to street life, even if they kept on the accommodation where they lived. Some homeless people appeared to associate their addictions with street life, and strongly distinguished street life from domiciled life. This was the case with Mr.A, a recovering alcoholic. Mr.A undertook the “rattle ‘n rolls” in a dry hostel and his “key” worker found him a council flat where he moved to after he got “dry”. When he was not drinking, he took care of his flat, kept in close contact with relatives and took care of himself and his dog. However, he worried constantly about minute details in his everyday life. He told me he had ‘obsessive compulsion’ about housework, worrying about unnecessary details. He also worried a great

¹⁰To ‘skank’ someone is what a person does when they take someone’s money to buy them a hit, and then doesn’t return with money or drugs, keeping them for him or herself. It was a fairly common occurrence on the streets.

deal about his family and friends. Sometimes his worries would become so intense that he would relapse and start drinking again. On these occasions, he was unable to take care of his flat which became run down and so messed up that he needed help sorting it out after he was 'dry' again. Mr.A would neglect himself, letting his beard grow. He would stop washing up, using up all the crockery and then, feeling unable to face doing the washing up, he would stop eating altogether. Mr.A also would contact friends of his who were drinkers and he would get too worried to ring his relatives.

Many people went to detoxification centres but most returned after anything from a day to a few weeks. In many such cases, referral systems and waiting lists for accommodation had been abandoned, and street life embraced. Such instances often appeared to be a celebratory reunion with both friends from the street and states of intoxication.

2. Cycles of good and ill health

Cycles of good and ill health were most often associated with those of intoxication and detoxification. This was partly because actually using substances caused health problems. However, when people's addictions were very heavy, they also became more exposed to bad living conditions, such as cold or wet weather, and they became more vulnerable to aggression from passers-by.

2.1. Physical ailments arising from use of drink or drugs

During fieldwork a great deal of drugs' consumption, including the injecting of drugs, was observed. A salient factor was how getting a vein was the most time consuming part of the process of drug consumption, sometimes taking one hour to 'hit' a vein. Mr.B explained how he would try to remember which vein he had last managed to get, and then keep using the same one until it no longer worked. Then he would find another functioning vein and use that one. For him this enabled other veins, that he'd 'worn out', to recover. Injecting drug users used veins in their arms, hands, feet and legs. I once saw Mr.G ask Mr.M to find a vein in his neck, as all his other veins seemed impossible to get.

Mr.N used a large vein in his groin, which he injected every time. It was very easy to get this vein, as it was so big. However, he also had a large hole where he injected and this hole became infected quite badly, leading to his hospitalisation. Mr.B started to use his groin vein. When I expressed concern about this he told me using the vein was quick and easy to find 'every time'. He said: 'It's a blessing', for using this vein meant his arms, legs, hands and feet could recover¹¹.

Many drug users developed abscesses but they rarely sought medical attention for them. Mr.B would frequently limp, as he developed abscesses in his foot. People had large swellings, on their hands and feet in particular. One woman showed me one on her arm, and said, proudly, 'It's my first abscess'. She had been seen by a nurse who had dressed the wound but had not gone back to get the dressing changed. Instead, she had wrapped cling film around the wound, holding the old dressing in place.

Whilst the health of drug users was constantly damaged by their use of needles, drinkers also developed health problems. Mr.A developed sores and blisters all over his body; he had a burst ulcer for which he had been hospitalised and he told me he had 'run (his) body down' so that, if he started drinking again, he might lose his liver. He said he urinated blood quite frequently and also told me that his stomach lining was damaged. Mr.C told me he had blisters all over his feet and that 'each step hurts'. He also told me he felt that being street homeless had aged him and, whilst he was in his early forties, he did appear to be much older. Mr.H, who was sleeping on a meadow, would wake up each morning unable to walk straight. He told me his hips were getting very stiff from spending the cold nights outside.

Apart from the health complaints described above, street homeless people had various other health problems that did not directly impinge on this project but that I was told about. These ailments included pneumonia, stomach bugs, Hepatitis C, 'wet brain' (a term Mr.A used to describe his friend's condition, meaning saturation of a person's brain by alcohol).

¹¹ Mr.B said some other drug users had said to him 'You're one of the big boys now'. This step to using his groin vein was significant at more than just the physical level, because it deepened his 'junkie' identity.

The argument that substances' use can function as pain relief (Wincup 1998, Klee and Reid 1998) did seem to be applicable to rough sleepers in Oxford. However, it produced pain of its own. People sustained injuries that transformed their bodies. They limped, had open wounds, felt cramps and aches as they moved around.

2.2. Mental health

Various authors (for example, Snow and Anderson 1993, Carlen 1996, Desjarlais 1994, 1997) agree that being street homeless takes its toll on a person's mental and emotional well-being. During fieldwork some people told me about mental health problems they were experiencing. Complaints included: 'paranoia', anxiety, panic attacks, depression and anger. Some had been hospitalised in psychiatric wards in the past; some had been told by their doctors that they had some form of mental illness but had refused to return for treatment. Some people had attempted suicide in the past, one participant attempted suicide during the research project, one person died of internal bleeding, having drunk and taken aspirin over a prolonged period of time. Mental and emotional suffering was common amidst rough sleepers, but the official diagnosis of mental illness was avoided.

The lifestyle of street homeless people in this project frequently made them feel depressed. Mr.I told me he had been given fortnightly injections in order to help him control his anger. He said he felt he was not mentally ill, in the manner of a 'community care' person, but that his loss of temper was a direct consequence of his using crack cocaine. Many drug users distinguished between the effects of white and brown. Whilst heroin was seen as 'mellow' (peaceful), white was seen as 'manic' and, when a person regularly used it, they explained that their tempers were short and arguments frequently arose. Drug users especially considered drink as a cause for aggressive behaviour.

However, people also expressed their negative emotions in terms of personal neglect and depression. Many street homeless people told me how they found it difficult to take care of themselves when they were 'feeling down' and that they neglected their health, personal hygiene and appearance. Mr.B, complaining about the quality of his relationships, told me one night that he was angry and depressed 'because it's always the same, always junkies

taking advantage.' Mr.C said 'I hate myself, I hate being an alcoholic, I hate this way of life, ...It's a vicious circle – sell magazines, walk and wander, drink to cope and get by, getting ripped off, repeat, ...It's bloody depressing.'

Rowe (1999) noted that, whilst outreach workers in New Haven, USA, had to distinguish between rough sleepers who were mentally ill and those who were substance abusers, 'substance abuse is regarded by some clinicians as a form of mental illness' (Rowe 1999, 60). Furthermore, he noted how sometimes mental illness 'co-occurs' with substance abuse, making assessment difficult (ibid.). Both of these factors were found here in Oxford. Some 'community care' people used illegal substances. In a meeting I attended a doctor who worked with rough sleepers said that addiction was 'a form of mental illness'. There appear to be a variety of narratives (medical narratives, lay narratives) concerning the concept 'mental illness' in relation to rough sleepers. It was noted that Mr.I was prescribed medicines for his 'anger' and these medicines have side effects (twitching, drooling) that give an appearance of mental illness. Members of the general public may find it very hard to distinguish between rough sleepers who are and are not mentally ill. Mental illness is a stigmatised condition and rough sleepers share a part of this stigma. Mr.B was arrested on one occasion and he behaved in such a way that the police tried to 'section' him by calling in a doctor. The doctor felt he did not need to be 'sectioned'.

Whilst the use of diagnoses was limited, both by medical practitioners and by homeless people like Mr.L, who did not seek treatment, and the definition of mental illness not entirely clear, rough sleepers in Oxford had many instances when they endured distressing, at times disabling, mental states.

3. Cycles of sociality

Most rough sleepers had three distinct sets of social relations: those of their family and friends who they associated with their lives prior to becoming homeless, staff members who engaged in official and informal relationships with rough sleepers and their own peers, with whom they interacted both on the streets and, sometimes, inside various forms of accommodation.

3.1. Family members

On some occasions a rough sleeper might contact members of his or her family, and this often led to distress and either a relapse or an increase in substance use. Mr.B rang his mother one Christmas. She was very 'cold' towards him on the phone, refusing to chat with him. Mr.B subsequently increased his drug use and, furthermore, he committed a variety of burglary and assault offences, which he had never previously done. Ms.I, whose daughter had been placed in care, also increased her use of heroin; at the time, various rough sleepers commented to me that Ms.I was 'begging off beggars' (a practice which was frowned upon by many rough sleepers) and that she was 'in a bad way' (Mr.G) because of how she was suffering about losing her daughter. Contact with relatives often appeared to precipitate a downward spiral whereby a person would increase their substance use, become less healthy and more distressed, incur debts and lose popularity.

3.2. Friends

Some people told me they felt very lonely when they were away from the social life of the homeless lifestyle, whether on the streets or in hostels. Despite all the tensions, quibbling and mistrust, street homeless people had sympathy for each other in recognition of the hardships they endured, such as getting through cold nights or running out of tobacco, money, drink or drugs. People helped each other out in small ways. When they passed by each other and exchanged news, they interacted in a friendly and helpful way that was comforting when a person was feeling depressed. These interactions could occur between complete strangers. For example: Mr.LM appeared in Oxford one night, from a town in Bedfordshire. Mr.N and myself were preparing our cardboard bed when he saw us. About half an hour later, he appeared carrying a bag full of bottles of booze and sat with us. When he realised that neither of us were drinkers, he laughed, saying that he had gotten the booze for us. He spent the night with us. During the night we realised he was very distressed, although we did not enquire why. He cried and beat his chest and sang very loudly. When Mr.N and I discussed our impressions of Mr.LM we reached the conclusion that he had sought out our company because we were homeless and unlikely to ask him to account for himself or to judge him in a negative way.

Lovell observed that 'marginal' time was 'people oriented' (Lovell 1992, 92). Their social encounters consisted of not just the exchange of goods or information, but also of sheer sociability (in this project examples would include: friendly acknowledgement, sitting down for a brief chat, lending someone a blanket). This sociability created bonds of reciprocity and these bonds created a 'future orientation, a time when scarce goods will be exchanged or withheld, social ties expressed or denied' (ibid. 93). In this project people often gave each other small quantities of money or drugs and expected to be repaid at some later date. Pooling resources was a norm that could be invoked between strangers. However, failure to reciprocate could lead to problems with ones peers.

Whilst most of the time rough sleepers maintained their peer group relationships, occasionally rough sleepers 'skanked' each other. This issue is discussed in the next chapter, but in this section it should be noted that when a rough sleeper 'skanked' a large amount of money or drugs, he/she had to leave Oxford. As described above, this happened to Mr.V. Mr.O once stole his dealer's drug's 'stash'¹². He moved to London so his dealer could not find him. Rather than selling the drugs, Mr.O used them himself and ended up with an unsustainably large habit. His inability to sustain his addiction led him to get a referral to the detoxification hostel in Oxford, where he stayed for a few weeks.

The desire rough sleepers had to obtain accommodation was often articulated in terms of detoxification. Cutting down on substances use, though, appeared to require a level of stability and well-being that was often impossible to achieve. Factors such as rejection by family members, ill health or debts, often led people to increase rather than decrease their substance use. This increase would lead to a deepening of their other problems and, eventually, to the decision to tackle addiction. However, it seems that the circumstances that lead people to gain admittance to detoxification centres, are the least propitious for detoxification. The calmer circumstances, which lead people to successfully cut down their substance use, also appear unfavourable for total abstinence. This is because, in the absence of urgent problems, it is easy enough to carry on using substances in moderation.

¹² 'Stash' is the term used to describe a hidden quantity of some illegal substances or objects such as money.

In the next section I examine some of the reasons why those who obtained accommodation returned to the streets. In this section there are details about the histories of recurring episodes of homelessness of twenty-two participants. These details were obtained mostly through interviews and they are not comprehensive. Quite often respondents had spent just one night in an area before moving on. It is possible that forgotten details might have emerged had I conducted more interviews with the respondents, nevertheless, all of the respondents had difficulties remembering about where and when their homelessness had occurred.

B. Patterns of repeated homelessness: intersections of tenure and longer time frames

Neither 'home' nor 'homeless' were salient terms in the vocabulary rough sleepers used towards each other. 'Homeless' was an identity ascribed to them by the domiciled and by workers and other parties who interacted with them – it was during those interactions that rough sleepers used the term 'homeless' (see Chapter Six on this matter). Street homeless people in Oxford had various experiences along a homelessness continuum. Sometimes they lived in hostels or other rented accommodation and other times they lived on the streets. The quality of their homelessness ran deeper than their rooflessness because their ideals of home remained unfulfilled. Whether they were visibly homeless or not, there was little to prevent rough sleepers leaving the dwellings they did inhabit. All of the places where street homeless people stayed were temporary. This was so whether they lived on the streets, inside hostels (of various descriptions) or inside rented accommodation (supported or self contained).

Some authors (for example, Deacon et al 1995) found that sometimes long-term residents of hostels may come to call them 'home'. In this project not a single participant did. When obtaining accommodation, no-one used the term 'home'. Whilst it was understood that a person could become institutionalised, this condition was not considered to be the same as 'at home'. For Wiseman, 'once a homeless male alcoholic has made the loop, he is likely to make all or part of it again. This is due to a combination of the advantages he thinks are available to him there and the hardships he encounters in society' (Wiseman 1970, 61). Although rough sleepers had few, if any, positive expectations regarding the accommodation they obtained, they nevertheless expressed heartfelt disappointment and grievances over how their accommodation arrangements infringed their notions of 'home'.

In this section I examine rough sleepers' views about what 'home' meant to them. I then describe various forms of accommodation rough sleepers obtained and the problems they encountered when they inhabited these spaces.

1. 'Home'

Rather than seeing 'home' as a solution to their 'homelessness', rough sleepers tried to solve more immediately felt problems of addictions and ill health, as well as difficulties they may have experienced within their peer group. However, many of their grievances were expressed in terms of 'home'.

1.1. 'Home' as privacy

Looking at Sommerville's table (figure 3.1) shows that a dimension of meaning of 'home' is 'privacy' which involves the 'power to control ones own boundaries... to exclude other persons ...and to prohibit surveillance' (Sommerville 1992, 532). Homeless people do appear to have an ideal of privacy when they consider their ideas about 'home'. Many of them expressed strong objections to the surveillance, control and discipline they found themselves subject to when they ceased to be 'roofless'. I was told one house even had cameras at the entrance. In hostels it was possible to smuggle a person in at night and sometimes people with a room would smuggle in their link up partner. However this was breaking the rules and when people moved into hostels or 'supported' accommodation (houses with staff, where they could rent out a room), they complained that they were not allowed to bring back their friends or have visitors, ever. A housing association was formed during the research project that took over the running of some houses that, previously, had been rented in the private sector. This association evicted two homeless people because they had friends to visit. Whilst coping with street life was difficult, rough sleepers nevertheless appeared to be resistant to authority and rules they encountered inside the accommodation they were able to obtain.

The privacy homeless people ascribed to home life invoked a notion of freedom in two senses. In one way it was freedom from rules and restrictions. Mr.I told me that for him "home" meant a place where he could have his son to visit at weekends, where he did not have to

queue for meals, where he was not answerable to anyone and where there were no rules. For him it would be a place where people could be invited back to and where a person could do what they want inside. He said, 'if you're paying rent and you're a consenting adult, you should have freedom ... yes, you can take drugs – it's your own choice. But not dealing; also of course, no murder or paedophilia ... it's freedom to live and let live, to come and go as you please, to make a meal when you want it.' Mr.D said he could not call any place 'home' 'if you have to go outside to smoke spliff'¹³. The second sense of freedom attributed to 'home' was as a space that excluded others, especially strangers; a place to be in, to get away from stress. Mr.B said that when a person is homeless, 'if something's in your face, you have to put up with it or walk away.'

1.2. 'Home', stability and meaningful work

Mr.K was the only participant who had found permanent accommodation. He had moved into the spare room in a friend's house (after being street homeless for three years). When I interviewed him, he had been living there for two years. In reply to my question of what 'home' meant to him, he said, 'Where I am now'. He explained that he had responsibilities - a lot of work needed doing in the house he had moved into and that he liked doing it. He said he was 'getting back into normal life', however he said it was different from his 'normal' life prior to becoming homeless. This was because he had money then, and 'paid people to do things. Now it's me doing it and I appreciate it more, I've got more self-meaning.'

1.3. No home

Some people said they did not know what 'home' meant. Many participants in this project had endured abuse or other kinds of victimisation as children. Mr.Q told me that his background had caused him to grow up as a bully. He said he 'got nonced' (sexually abused as a child) by his adoptive father who also severely beat up his mother. He was bullied at school and was sent to a young offenders' institution after burning his adoptive father's house. He was in and out of prisons till he was thirty years old, when he became a drug addict. He said, 'How can you find a way when you know no way ... You don't even know what you're looking for – never been shown.' Mr.R said he wasn't sure what 'home' meant but that he

¹³ Have a cannabis smoke

thought of himself as homeless because he had 'no roots'. Mr.Q said he did not 'have a clue' what 'home' meant because he 'ain't had it yet'. For him it was 'anything where me and my dog live.' He did say, though, that he would like to live in a vehicle and work, making backgammon sets and have friends who were not drug users. Mr.S said that when he thinks of 'home', his mind shuts down. He said it was 'like a screen, it just comes down 'cos if I think about it, it's just a going and a going away and never coming back. And I can't handle it.'

1.4. 'Home' as normality

Some homeless people I met associated 'home' with 'normality'. They told me they wanted to be 'normal' and that this could be achieved if they managed to get accommodation. A vendor (who was an alcoholic) told me one day that he believed he would not be permitted to get his life 'back to normal'. He told me he had worked for the National Health Service as a surgery nurse, but that his life had fallen apart as a result of his alcoholism. He complained that, no matter how hard he worked and tried to rebuild his life, people (both staff at hostels and passers-by) would refuse to acknowledge him as 'normal'. I noted that he was dressed neatly and his appearance was indistinguishable from that of passers-by. He agreed but said that his work (vending magazines) identified him to passers-by as homeless, and his residence (in a dry hostel) meant staff members did not have faith in him. He said he could remember what it was like to be normal, that 'somewhere in (his) brain (he would) never forget how to be normal.'

2. Routes in and out of accommodation

It is important to note that, whilst long-term residents of shelters and hostels were described less as homeless than as institutionalised (this topic is discussed in Chapter Five), the rough sleepers (and 'part-time homeless' people) who participated in this project had travelled around the country. Their homelessness was not just a local phenomenon but was spatially extended to varying degrees. Six of the twenty-two participants in this section were from the Oxfordshire area but had travelled to other parts of the country. Ms.D had run away from a care home; Mr.C had travelled to look for work and accommodation elsewhere; Mr.V had travelled to flee from threatened violence he experienced when he incurred debts to drug

dealers; and Mr.N, Mr.S and Mr.T had been in prisons and, upon release, had been homeless elsewhere.

Fig. 4.1 SOME REASONS FOR REPEATED HOMELESSNESS	
Leaving/eviction from accommodation	Mr.D, E, F, L, G, P, O, M, N, H, J, Q, R, S, T, U, V, B, A, C. Ms.D
Leaving/eviction from hostel	Mr.D, E, F, L, G, P, I, O, N, H, J, Q, R, S, T, V, A, B, Ms.D
Leaving/eviction from Night Shelter	Mr.D, E, P, I, M, R, S, T, U, B, A, C
Leaving prison	Mr.D, F, G, M, N, Q, R, S, T, U, V, B
Picking area arbitrarily	Mr.E, F, M, U, A
Moving to come off drugs unaided	Mr.F, O, H, J, Q, R, S, U, B, A
Going to rehabilitation	Mr.F, I, O, M, J, T, B, A
Leaving/eviction from detoxification	Mr.F, G, I, O, Q, R, T, V, A
Leaving/eviction from rehabilitation	Mr.O, T, A
Leaving hospital	Mr.F, G, N, R, T, U, V, A, C
Going to festivals	Mr.E, O, H
Picking up dog	Mr.G, O, H, Q
Leaving traveller site	Mr.O, H, J, Q
Visiting friends/family	Mr.E, F, L, G, P, I, O, M, N, H, J, R, S, T, U, V, B, A, Ms.D
Getting or losing a job	Mr.D, F, L, H, C
Buying drugs in other part of country	Mr.F, I
Fleeing violence	Mr.D, O, N, Q, U, V, Ms.D
Fleeing debts	Mr.D, O, H, Q, U, V
Accompanying friends	Mr.E, F, L, I, H, J, Q, S, T, U, B, A, Ms.D

Figure 4.1 shows many of the reasons people cited for their journeys, both locally and more widely across the country. For many of the respondents there were certain reasons that repeated themselves various times, which is not represented in the chart. These were: leaving/eviction from private or socially rented self-contained accommodation; leaving/eviction from shelters, hostels, detoxification and rehabilitation centres; fleeing violence; accompanying friends. These factors will be considered in the following pages. The box (Box. 1) below shows Mr.B’s progression from place to place, and is fairly representative of the types and numbers of ‘moves’ rough sleepers make.

Box.1. Routes of repeated homelessness: Mr.B 1998-2003
Night Shelter (Oxford, 2 weeks) – streets (6 weeks) – squatt (4 months) – stays with family & friends (another city, 4 months) – stays with friends (another city, 2 months) – Night Shelter (Oxford, 1 week) – streets (4 months) – hostel (6 months) – bedsit (1 year) – streets (2 months) – bedsit (2 years)

3. Accommodation in private and social rented sectors.

When asked what kind of accommodation they would prefer, most of the homeless research participants expressed a preference for self-contained rented accommodation. People cited various factors they found desirable about this option: it is somewhere where other people can be excluded from ('my own front door'), a place to relax in ('chilling space', where to lie around and watch television is permitted), a place where a person can cook and choose what to cook, somewhere to invite friends back to – were all factors mentioned. However, when people did obtain private accommodation, many of these factors were missing, thus revealing a gap between the type of accommodation in fact available and the desires of homeless people. Various accommodation problems arose that led to renewed homelessness. Mr.F lost accommodation on different occasions through non-payment of rent, leaving when relationships ended and following a friend who moved to another city. Mr.A left a flat he obtained in Exmouth flat for two reasons – one was that he wanted to return to drinking and the other was that he was lonely.

Street homeless life was very sociable. When a person moved into a room or flat, they wanted to invite friends back. This often led to evictions. Both drinkers and drug users liked to have visitors, and sometimes neighbours complained about their rowdiness or about their anti-social hours or other behaviours they found problematic. For example, Mr.B was evicted because his visitors were thought to be using drugs in his room. When Mr.B found another room, after a spell of street homelessness, he received a letter (during the first week of his stay) from the Neighbourhood Association, threatening to take action to evict him if drugs' use was suspected of going on in his room, and if he received many visitors. However a person who moves into a room and also tries to stop using (drink or drugs) can get very lonely and thus return to the streets. Sometimes this loneliness could lead a person to relapse, if they had given up substance use. Many people told me of times when they had unsuccessfully taken on a room. Mr.A told me that, in the initial stages, he and many others he'd known, had been unable to sleep on a bed and instead, slept on the floor. Mr.A, on one of his relapses, rang up and told me he was unable to go out to the shops. He complained of feeling totally 'paranoid'. He was 'paranoid' about walking on the street, queuing up in shops and he told me he had

'legged it' (ran away) from a supermarket, leaving his shopping behind in a panic. He explained that his feeling of 'paranoia' was like being totally exposed and it was as if people were looking at him, talking about him behind his back. Once Mr.A collapsed and was taken to hospital, as a result of his paralysing fear.

There appears to be a contradiction for some people when getting a room. Whilst rented self-contained accommodation was what most homeless people desired, when they did get such accommodation, they often felt lonely and sometimes 'paranoid'. Their strong ties with others on the streets help explain the isolation some people felt. The paranoia however appeared to be related to associations people had regarding addictions. Mr.A appeared to have a dual existence – one when drinking and another when dry. For him drinking was likely to lead to his becoming homeless, as he stopped paying bills, keeping house, walking the dog or taking care of himself. He adopted what seemed to be a 'homeless persona' even though he was still living in his flat. When he was dry his home was a cause for a great deal of worried attention; when he relapsed he neglected his home completely.

Conversely, some aspects of sharing houses with others could also lead to problems. Sometimes people obtained a bedsit in houses with other bedsits ('houses of multiple occupation'). Very often these arrangements worked because bedsits had cooking facilities in them and people were able to lock their door to exclude others. However, problems could arise if people in the house clashed with each other. This sometimes occurred when a drug-user obtained a room in a house where drinkers lived and vice-versa. Mr.C, a drinker who found a room but moved out after a week, told me the whole house was filthy and rundown and that "junkies" used it, leaving dirty needles in the toilets. Mr.B, a drug-user, lived in a room in a house where drinkers lived. He told me on many occasions that he was 'bullied and intimidated' by them. For example, one night a large group of drinkers returned to the room of the drinker who lived in the room over Mr.B's. They started beating the on the floor and chanting "junkie, junkie"¹⁴. These types of clashes may indicate that there is a shortage of available cheap accommodation, which could be shared by people with diverse practices (for

¹⁴ The division between drinkers and drug users was not permanent, nor universal but rather, arose in specific situations. This topic will be considered in depth in chapter five.

example, students, workers in the formal economy, families and others), in effect forcing people who will have conflicts with one another to share cheap bedsits.

Some participants from this project (Mr.L, Mr.I and Mr.N) succeeded in obtaining housing in the social rented sector. Mr.L was unaware of an extra charge being made for services in the block of flats where he moved. He was made aware of this charge after eight months, by which time considerable arrears had accumulated. At the time of writing, Mr.L was still living in his flat but preparing himself for becoming homeless in the following spring. Mr.N had many problems as he allowed a drug dealer to move into his flat. He believed that this would mean he could obtain free drugs in return. After two weeks though, Mr.N started to sleep outdoors two or three times a week. After six months the police raided his flat and Mr.N was prosecuted for possession of drugs.

The majority of problems respondents had staying in their accommodation seemed related to their social life. It is interesting to note that, whilst deploring the unfairness of having to pay rent when not allowed friends to visit and of being evicted consequently, many respondents were not surprised by this situation; in fact they almost expected it. In some ways this can be accounted for by reference to rough sleepers who use their friends' places. They valued these places for being out of sight of members of the general public (and their disapproval) as well as the police. Furthermore, for people who injected themselves, the warmth and seclusion of a room permitted them to inject themselves with less difficulty. Such places were also useful to those waiting for drugs from their dealer, as sometimes dealers would deliver to such places. These factors demonstrate the use rough sleepers made, of resources in the here and now, with an apparent disregard for future consequences. However, the fact that they expected to be evicted was also rooted in their knowledge that they were unwelcome in the first place. The way landlords regarded them with some suspicion, the early arrival of letters from residents associations, the stipulation of rules regarding having friends to visit, conveyed such knowledge to those taking up accommodation. This lack of welcome was no different from the reception rough sleepers had when on the streets; it was 'more of the same' (Mr.I).

3.1. Licence contracts

One advantage of the above forms of accommodation was that they were leased out on six-month assured shorthold tenancy agreements. These meant landlords were legally obliged to give at least two month's notice to quit. However, some landlords and Housing Associations offered accommodation with 'licence' agreements to homeless people. These contracts require landlords to give only 'reasonable' notice to quit (often just one week).

Sometimes a person was offered accommodation by a passer-by. The occasions when this occurred that were reported to me, ended in failure after three or four months. Mr.L told me that his landlord expected him to perform 'odd-jobs' around the house. Mr.K reported the same problem as well as having to accept his landlady's cooking rather than choose and cook his own food. On one occasion, Mr.L was expected to enter into a relationship with his landlady (whereupon he moved out immediately). For reasons like these, such accommodation agreements (which are classified as 'licences') can break down.

Some Housing Associations also offered rooms to homeless people. Places in these houses were obtained by gaining a referral from resettlement workers in shelters, hostels, advice centres and other agencies. Whilst many people chose to live in these houses, it was very common for them to leave after only a few weeks. Because their security of tenure was often minimal it was easy for someone to be evicted as a result of breaking one of many rules.

The most common complaints people reported to me were principally not being allowed to bring friends back, but people also complained about the presence of cameras and other supervision, which was felt to be a real restriction and unhelpful to those seeking to stabilise their housing situation.

Case study: Mr.J

Mr.J managed to come off drugs on his own. After a few months, in a squat, he relapsed into drugs' use again so he left to sleep rough and forced himself to stop using needles and start smoking heroin instead – he was successful in this. After a while he went to a detoxification centre for four months (out of a six-month programme). He failed to complete the programme and, after another three tries, he stopped trying. For him the rules were too hard and not always rational. So he returned to the streets of Oxford. A month later, he managed to rent a room. However, the housing association that managed the property, evicted him for having friends to visit. As his rent agreement was a licence, he was given only one week's notice. He left and slept rough again for two months.

Other problems people reported as leading to their eviction or leaving their accommodation, were using rent money for drink or drugs, trouble with dealers to whom some owed money, and an inability to adjust to living in a dwelling (for instance, being unable to sleep in a bed, feelings of claustrophobia).

4. Services and welfare/housing benefits

Of the twenty-two people interviewed, three (Mr.E, Mr.L and Mr.J) said they did not want to accept the services of agencies for homeless people (shelters, hostels, outreach services) nor did they want to sign on and claim welfare and housing benefits. They were not always able to maintain themselves outside the system of benefits because using many facilities for homeless people required them to sign on. Carlen has argued that, whilst this refusal makes it harder for homeless people to pay rent, some people nevertheless felt accepting such services would bring their "lives ... under the moral surveillance of ... workers in hostels where their 'other' problems would be addressed" (Carlen 1996, pg.40). The rules and regulations of hostels, shelters and detoxification centres, whilst necessary for the maintenance of order within the buildings (and for keeping records that were used for obtaining further funding), also contained many moral elements that highlighted the problems of addictions and, possibly, anti-authoritarian behaviours of those who used the facilities. Potential users frequently rejected this and people often left such facilities because of this. The way rough sleepers distinguished themselves from long-term residents of hostels and shelters reflects their resistance to becoming institutionalised, which they associated with people who they felt were

vulnerable, unable to take care of themselves on the streets. This topic is examined in more depth in Chapter Five, where the divisions within homeless populations are discussed.

Case Study: Mr.F

Mr.F was 27 years old and had experienced episodes of homelessness since he was 15 years old. He had spent a year in prison and, upon release, was sleeping rough in various parts of the country. He arrived in Oxford after three months and slept rough in various locations near the city centre. He was offered a place on a six-month detoxification programme but got 'kicked out' after a week, because he had been caught smoking cannabis. He returned, three weeks later, for a second time. This time he left after just two days. He expressed dismay at the attitude of staff members who, he claimed, accused him of having a 'junkie way of thinking'. He told me: 'I know I'm not always wrong' but he felt staff did not recognise this. Instead of helping him to undergo detoxification, Mr.F felt staff wanted to criticise his entire way of thinking. Mr.F subsequently cut down his drug's use unaided, even though he remained living on the streets.

There were many conflicts between staff and residents that led to repeated episodes of street homelessness. In this chapter I examine how this becomes a problem of accommodation. In the following chapters I examine other aspects of this topic (in particular, as it impinges on the social relations homeless people undertake with services providers).

4.1. Hostels

Obtaining a place in a hostel depended on either self-referral or referral by an outside organisation. In this research project, participants had used both means. When self-referring, a person had to visit the hostel in person every weekday and ask if a place had come up yet. Participants who favoured this route, for example Mr.D, were staying at the Night Shelter when they tried to obtain hostel places. Others (for example Mr.H and Ms.D) were referred to hostels by outside agencies such as resettlement workers, housing advisers and outreach teams.

Carlen (1996 pp.25-26) uses Jahiel's distinction between 'benign' and 'malign' homelessness. Benign homelessness is characterised by there being resources (social, personal or material) that a person can draw on to end their homelessness, which is therefore, temporary. Malign homelessness means there are insufficient resources for a person to come out of homelessness. As Carlen points out, this is a qualitative difference. This difference here helps to distinguish

between residents of hostels who were still homeless and those who were either moving out of homelessness or who were long-term residents¹⁵. In this project it was with those in the first group that I interacted. As I could not myself stay in a hostel, data used in this section is derived from conversations held between some residents from hostels and myself.

There were two main hostels in the city. They were divided spatially into various areas in order to keep separate certain groups of people. For example: those coming off drink or drugs away from those who still used them. Staff from the hostels, operated a number of rules/policies which residents were expected to abide by. To enter the hostels, a person had to pass through a door that could only be opened by a buzzer operated by a staff member who first would find out who you are. There were two ways to stay in a hostel – officially and ‘getting sneaked in’. This latter way usually occurred when two people, who also worked together during the day, were sleeping separately at night. If one of them had a place in a hostel, they might have sneaked in their work partner.

Some members of staff were trained to work, individually, with residents of the hostel. These workers were known as ‘case’ or ‘key’ workers. There were also staff members who specialised in helping people to find accommodation. They were known as ‘resettlement’ workers. Key workers attempted to advise and support their ‘clients’ in their searches for jobs, attempts to come off drugs or drink, or any other issue. Because the hostels were classified as “supported housing”, all residents were allocated key workers, to help people gain ‘skills for independent living’ (Oxford Network Directory, 2000, 11). Mr.O told me that his key worker was “some young Christian who doesn’t know anything”. Mr.P’s key worker accused him of dealing drugs. He told me that his worker should have known this could not be, as Mr.P was out working all hours trying to raise enough money to buy his hits. An outreach worker told me that ‘key’ workers sometimes behaved unfairly and unreasonably as they “let out their feelings” (from problems outside work) on their clients. Mr.I said ‘key’ workers could be “overzealous...they lack experience and tend to barge anywhere – you know

¹⁵ Many long-term residents had lived in hostels for over ten years and (I was told by other homeless people) were not expected to move out and find a place of their own. They were not asked to participate in this project, as they did not appear to consider themselves homeless, despite the ‘marginal’ nature of their housing. This topic is addressed by Crane (1994) pg.635 in relation to elderly homeless people living in marginal housing for many years.

– like a bull in a china shop ... but some are less than others ... some let their personal feelings affect them, picking on people”.

In order to stay in a hostel, a person also had to apply for housing benefit, as it cost over two hundred pounds per week. One hostel charged another thirty pounds from each resident. Participants explained to me that this extra charge was for the three meals provided. Participants complained vociferously about this charge. Many said they did not want the food as it was of poor quality and limited options; others complained that they had to pay whether or not they ate the meals – which many did not, preferring to work through mealtimes instead. Because the rent was already very high many people felt if they did not work (vending or begging) this charge would leave them with hardly any money at all. This was perceived to be treating them like children. Whilst it could be argued that they did not need money, as food was provided and there were no bills to pay, this was not the case for drinkers and drug users who often had problems paying the charge and sometimes were evicted for non-payment. Some people, for example Mr.L, complained that living in a hostel meant having to sign on, which they were not happy to do. Mr.L had been evicted from the hostel for not paying the extra charge. He said to me: ‘You can’t drink and pay rent. If you want to help in the long-term, why ask for rent? What’s the point?’ Mr.L said that although the hostel was not a detoxification unit, living there enabled a person to get some regularity in their lives and to then consider stopping drinking. However he said charging rent is ‘making them leave’. Many people had rent arrears (accumulated through not paying the extra charge), and one person (Mr.I) went on a rent strike. Life inside hostels was perceived to be an institutionalised kind of life that mitigated against independence.

Many said that living in a hostel made coming off drugs very difficult, as other residents would regularly knock on their door and ask for items required for drugs use – needles, citric acid, tin foil, cigarette for ash – or asking for money. Whilst one hostel forbade the use of drugs or drink both on and off the premises, and the other forbade it on the premises, both hostels had ‘sin bins’ for used needles and this was interpreted as an acknowledgement that drugs were in fact used on the premises, and that it was simply a matter of not getting caught.

Hostels provided shelter – the buildings were warm, there were eating areas and areas for leisure – a television room, a pool table. ‘Clients’ shared their rooms with one other. During the course of fieldwork, one hostel started accepting people with dogs. However, sometimes people complained about whom they were sharing a room with. For example, Mr.B’s roommate, a drinker, would arrive late at night, wake him up and call him a ‘junkie’ and other terms of abuse. Sometimes intimidation and bullying occurred, for example, Mr.N was unable to prevent Mr.Z from entering his room and threatening him until he gave his drugs to Mr.Z. For many homeless people, living in a hostel did not change their status as homeless. This was partly related to the fact that in these instances, they still worked on the streets. It was also related to the fact that homeless people knew they would have conflicts with staff and that they would then return to the streets.

The most frequent reasons for people leaving hostels were: eviction for non-payment of rent; going to detoxification centres; temporary eviction for getting caught using drink or drugs. The story of Mr.A’s homelessness shows how people can repeatedly fall foul of the rules of hostels.

Case study: Mr.A and recurring homelessness

Once Mr.A became homeless, he travelled to Swansea to visit his family. Together they arranged for him to attend a six-month detoxification programme in Bristol. He travelled there and spent just five months, leaving on account of his desire for a drink. He travelled to Cheltenham to stay with a drinking friend of his, Darren. Mr.A, Darren and Maria, Darren’s girlfriend, were all drinking heavily and many rows broke out between them all. Some weeks later, Maria kicked out Mr.A and Darren.

They went to a hostel, where they were evicted from after a week, for non-payment of rent. After a few weeks of sleeping rough in various locations, they moved into a bed & breakfast for three nights. They left without paying the rent for the last two nights and were arrested as a result. Released on bail, they returned to Maria’s but the situation there was deteriorating fast, with increased drinking and more rows. Darren suggested they stay with another girl, which they did. However this girl’s boyfriend beat up Darren, who was consequently taken to hospital.

Mr.A returned to Maria’s but due to complications there, decided to leave the area. The next day he jumped bail and left. On the first night, he found a church and slept alongside one of its walls, getting dripped on in the rain. In the morning a priest gave Mr.A some money and he hitchhiked, getting dropped off near Bristol city centre.

Mr.A decided to seek help as he was getting ill and had sores all over his body. He found a Salvation Army hostel where he stayed for a couple of weeks. Having decided to give up drinking, he was given a lift to Bath, by a staff member, where he stayed at a detoxification centre in a three-month programme.

Whilst on the programme, Mr.A made friends with Jack, and the two of them left the centre together and started drinking again. They stayed at the local Salvation Army hostel, and joined a 'drinking school' (a clique of drinkers who take turns to buy alcohol and share it between themselves). Their behaviour became increasingly rowdy and they were evicted after a couple of weeks. They went to the night shelter but also got barred from there after a few nights, for the same reason. They slept rough in the park for a week and then Mr.A decided to stop drinking again.

He went alone to Exmouth and came off the drink unaided. He stayed in a flat he'd rented there, for five months but then decided to return to Bath and find Jack. Jack had left the area, so Mr.A went to London where he had a friend, Mark. Whilst in London, Mr.A got violently mugged in a park and had to spend two weeks in hospital. When he was discharged, he began sleeping and drinking in a park. He started to feel his health was deteriorating, and decided to contact a doctor he'd met at the detoxification centre in Bath.

Mr.A did not make it to Bath. He was hitchhiking and had been dropped off on the outskirts of Oxford, when he collapsed and was taken to hospital. He spent six weeks there. After this, Mr.A stayed in Oxford. However, he spent nearly seven years moving in and out of various hostels, friends' places, and privately rented accommodation. He eventually got a flat where he has lived for over two years now, despite the occasional drinking relapses.

Mr.A's travels once homeless were influenced by his on/off problems with drinking. There is a strong link between his drinking, homelessness and his health, which was failing on some occasions. These problems continued after Mr.A arrived in Oxford.

Mr.A spent two and a half years travelling around the country, either sleeping rough, staying with drinker friends or in various agency facilities (detoxification centres, hostels and night shelters) prior to his arrival in Oxford. His homelessness during this period was very geographically unstable, punctuated with frequent periods of street homelessness. Again, this homelessness was related to evictions and voluntary departures from agency facilities (at least seven times).

Whilst in Oxford, despite recurring homelessness – mainly due to leaving or being evicted from privately rented accommodation – Mr.A made many friends (with other drinkers) and friendly relations with some professionals (such as doctors, housing advisors and "key" workers). His most concerted efforts to give up drinking came after five years, when a very good friend of his got "wet brain". Mr.A explained to me "wet brain" meant a person's

brain had become irreversibly saturated with alcohol. His friend's condition had deteriorated to such an extent that he was placed in "a home". Mr.A did not see his friend anymore.

Staying in hostels and housing associations did lead to more street homelessness (through evictions and voluntary leaving), and more qualitative homelessness (through feelings of no control, privacy, respect). Within hostels there were rules and surveillance, bullying and intimidation by other residents, and, furthermore, a person had to claim welfare and housing benefits in order to live there, thus making work practices illegal. People frequently had no tenancy agreements but instead, licence contracts, which meant they could be evicted without much notice.

The provision of services for homeless people appeared to be conditional upon their acceptance of rules and practices they objected to. For Gounis (1992), the various combinations of public spaces and public timetables, in which homeless people partake, reflect power relations between homeless populations and other groups in society. Gounis argues that shelters for the homeless embody combinations of manifest and latent functions. Their manifest function is to provide orderly public housing and their latent function is to domesticate urban marginality by institutionalising homelessness and keeping it out of the public eye, thus minimizing the social disruption caused by inequality.

Living in hostels or housing associations was ridden with conflict. Many homeless people told me they resented the fact that so much money was being spent on them – so many workers were earning a living "on the backs of the homeless" – and yet the conditions of their accommodation were so objectionable. I was told on a few occasions that the money the hostels and housing associations received would be better spent on private accommodation for homeless people. These conflicts often led to renewed homelessness as well as further feelings of exclusion derived from the adoption by homeless individuals of an anti-authoritarian stance (through, for example, going on a rent strike or by arguing with staff members).

5. Prison

Spradley found that urban tramps' identities were transformed into nomadic identities through repeated arrests and through repeatedly being sent to jail. He argued that 'our institutions perform a rite of passage... moving them out of larger society and transforming their identities' (Spradley 1970, 255). In the thirty years that have passed since Spradley's research, homeless populations have become more heterogeneous, both in the USA and UK. This heterogeneity may account for the diversity of reasons why participant's homelessness recurred and for the absence of any discernible 'rite of passage'. I return to this topic in Chapter Five, when considering the notion of 'street culture', which also appears to be very different from what Spradley found. I have shown above that institutions (care homes and foster families, armed services, prisons, hospitals, hostels, detoxification centres, rehabilitation centres, night shelters) appeared to be fairly important in the recurring nature of homelessness even though prison was not the main or only one.

Twelve people had served time in prison and a further four spent short periods in police stations, when they had been arrested, kept in cells for a while, and then either released straightaway or charged, taken to court and released. Mr.F found that his times in prison had sometimes been harrowing, for example, when riots broke out in a Young Offenders Institution where he was. However, he also told me prison could be a useful experience. He explained that some people "get their health back" in prison, often working out and getting "bulk". Furthermore, some people could develop friendships and thus raise their self-esteem.

Both Mr.I and Mr.T spent a few days in prison in order to work off fines they had received and were unable to pay off. Of those who spent time in prison only two, Mr.M and Mr.B were not homeless upon release. Mr.M spent a short while in a "dry" hostel and then became homeless when staff discovered he had used drugs; Mr.B had a bed-sit, which he returned to after some hours in the police cells. The others returned to the streets.

6. Fleeing violence

Seven respondents moved to other towns as a result of violence and threats of violence they had experienced. A further four (Mr.C, Mr.A, Mr.R and Mr.B) were assaulted without thereby leaving the area they were living in at the time.

Mr.D, Mr.O and Mr.V had incurred debts to drug dealers and consequently were being pursued by them. Mr.D and Mr.X became dealers but gradually became indebted to bigger dealers, eventually becoming entirely unable to repay them. Mr.O stole his dealer's drugs and travelled to Manchester. He planned to sell the drugs and travel abroad. However, he gradually used up the drugs himself instead.

A gang of young men violently sexually assaulted Ms.D. Mr.Q was assaulted by both drug dealers and an ex-landlord to whom he owed money; Mr.N and Mr.U were 'bullied' by other homeless people and consequently they too had moved to other areas. Mr.C and Mr.B were assaulted in Oxford though neither reported these incidents to the police, nor did they leave Oxford. The same assailant repeatedly assaulted Mr.C, and his resettlement worker managed to obtain a flat for him. Both Mr.R and Mr.A reported their assaults to the police as they had been hospitalised and visited by the police in hospital. None of the assailants were ever found or prosecuted by the police.

7. Accompanying friends

Fifteen respondents travelled elsewhere in the country accompanying friends. Mr.A's case history (see above) illustrates the manner in which some such journeys were undertaken. When in shelters, hostels or detoxification centres, it was not uncommon for homeless people to make friends with one another and sometimes leave those places together, travelling elsewhere and making a living together. Mr.I told me that, when he met a fellow drug user in a detoxification centre, he was 'tempted' to start using drugs again and he left the centre with this person. He said 'you really got to want it' (to give up heroin) otherwise 'you just give in to temptation'.

Mr.C on the other hand, travelled with a friend of his to another town where his friend was going to a detoxification centre. Whilst his friend was in the centre, Mr.C was mugged and consequently he was stranded, without enough money to return to Oxford. His friend had walked out of the detoxification centre and, by coincidence, bumped into Mr.C, whereupon they returned to Oxford.

Friendship seemed to be the reason people accompanied their friends, mutually concocted plans of new ways to earn money, or places to go. Sometimes people said they had 'wanted to make a fresh start' somewhere else.

8. From accommodation to shelter or streets

When people left or were evicted from private accommodation, they could not go directly to a hostel, as there were waiting lists. Having said this, participants did not express a desire to go to hostels at that stage. Mr.B was evicted from a bedsit. He returned to sleeping on the streets, where he had been working all along (for a year). He had contact with an ex-agency worker, who knew of a room coming up. He moved there after just a few weeks on the street. Whilst the speed with which he was re-housed was exceptional in this project, others who had been evicted from private accommodation also returned to the streets before acquiring new private accommodation. All of these did not want places in a hostel nor in a Housing Association house. Whilst fieldwork took place, participants expressed relief at having their freedom back again.

Those evicted from hostels also came back to street or shelter living. During the period of this fieldwork however, hostels were avoiding having to evict people and many 'clients' had rent arrears for which they negotiated a repayment figure. Other infringements such as bullying and stealing were given penalties internally rather than punished by eviction. Hostel provision, under pressure from central and local government, expanded during the fieldwork period (to accept people with dogs, couples and people with severe drug addictions).

9. First homeless episode

Whilst Fountain and Howes argued that moving into permanent accommodation (and thus ending homelessness) could result in further homelessness (Fountain & Howes 2002, 25), Crane found that the process of becoming homeless was ‘complicated’ (Crane 1999, 37) as well. She cites the case of a man, 59 years old, who had left his marital home several times over fourteen years. On such occasions he would sleep rough, always returning after a period away. Finally he left permanently and became continuously homeless (ibid.) Many of the twenty-two respondents were unclear about when precisely their homelessness began. Ms.D for example, ran away from her family home, fleeing violence and abuse. However, she only became homeless (according to her own reckoning) when she ran away from a care home she had been sent to. Likewise, Mr.D had often spent periods of time sleeping on his friends’ floors but only considered himself ‘homeless’ when he left prison and had nowhere to sleep (and stayed in a car-park).

The purpose of this section is to examine the circumstances that appear to distinguish those whose homelessness ended from those whose homelessness recurred. Only two people (Mr.K and Ms.A) from this sample told me their homelessness permanently ended after the first episode. The table below shows where fourteen people stayed when they became homeless as well as how long they were homeless for, on the first occasion. (Outdoor places included: car parks, elevators, bus stations, rubbish bin areas, shop doorways, fields, under bridges and near train platforms.)

Fig.4.2. Participants and where they stayed Duration of first episode

(outdoors)

Mr.K	three years
Ms.D	two years
Mr.F, Mr.E	three months
Mr.L, Ms.E	two months
Mr.G, Mr.D, Mr.P & Mr.A	“a few nights”

(night shelters)

Ms.A	eighteen months
Mr.B	two weeks
Mr.I	two nights

(other places)

Mr.O (squat)	eight or nine months

Ms.D, 14 when first homeless, returned to Oxford whereupon she was placed in foster care. She ran away after less than two weeks. Mr.F, 15, went to live in a hostel. He was arrested after a few weeks and returned to the family home for a short while. Mr.E (in his late teens) travelled for three months and then stayed for a few weeks in a youth hostel. Ms.E, in her forties, slept in a bus station until she heard of a night shelter in Oxford, and moved there for a few months. Mr.L, in his forties, spent two months in privately rented accommodation and then returned to the streets. Mr.G, in his twenties at the time, joined a protest traveller site where he stayed for one year. Mr.D, in his thirties, moved into a night shelter where he stayed for eight months. Mr.P, in his late twenties, moved into a night shelter for a few months and Mr.A, in his forties, went to a detoxification centre where he stayed for five months.

Mr.B, 27 at the time, was barred from the night shelter and moved onto the streets and Mr.I, 39 years old, left the night shelter when he was asked for money to pay for his stay there, and moved onto the streets. Mr.O, 30 years old, stayed with friends and, shortly afterwards, started sleeping rough.

Case study: Mr.K

Mr.K, 27 years old at the time, became homeless after his business partner stole all the company's money and left him penniless. Initially he stayed in a car park, before acquiring a tent. With his tent he moved to other locations in or near the city. When his tent was stolen (a problem for many homeless people), he moved back to the car park. This happened another two times. After three years Mr.K found a room. Five months later, Mr.K had problems with the landlady and moved back to the car park. After another four months, he moved into a friend's house. The house was in a very bad condition, and Mr.K worked to improve it. He still lives there and is paying rent.

When Mr.K had been in Oxford for a year, he got a full time job in unskilled labour, which he held onto throughout his homelessness. Mr.K said that the main reason he stayed in the area was his job. He felt that, so long as he had the same job, being homeless was a problem he could resolve in his own time.

He also did not take drugs and, though he did drink, he did not feel this was in excessive or problematic quantities. He said that he only moved when he was homeless, because of problems that came about in the places he stayed (for example, when his tent was stolen, or when drug dealers started using the car park where he was staying).

10. Permanent end to homelessness

Both Mr.K and Ms.A found themselves in radically different situations to those they had been in prior to becoming homeless. Mr.K had been economically well off. He told me that reconstructing his life, doing such things as shopping, cooking, rebuilding his friend's house, that previously he would have "paid someone else to do", gave him a deeper sense of meaning and appreciation. After her time at a night shelter, Ms.A moved into a bedsit with her partner and, a few months later when they split up, she moved into a hostel where she lived for 18 months. However, unlike Mr.K, Ms.A felt that her homelessness had separated her from normality. She took up activities (such as shopping in supermarkets) that, she said, 'normal' people did and she worked towards re-establishing her life as a normal person, looking for a place to live with her son, who was living with her parents.

Mr.K had a job, which he valued and did not want to lose. This may also have affected the fact that, once his homelessness ended, it did not recur. As Anderson notes, 'unemployment and low incomes were...striking indicators of social exclusion' (Anderson 1999, 163). It is also of considerable interest to note that Mr.K refused to claim benefits (in welfare or housing)

or to accept services designed to help homeless people. Mr.K did sometimes have dinner at the Night Shelter, but this was the sole use he made of those services. Mr.K though worked as a vendor for three years after his homelessness ended. His position was fairly ambiguous as other homeless people commented to me that he had a place to live and yet still took part in street life through his work. His reluctance to search for employment off the streets was not something he could explain.

Although Ms.A wanted her son to live with her and this factor may have affected the permanent nature of how her homelessness ended, she never did seek custody of him. She managed to obtain a small flat through the local housing authorities. Whilst living there her drinking became problematic and she also started taking over-the-counter painkillers on a regular basis. Distressingly Ms.A died of an overdose (which may have been accidental).

In both Mr.K and Ms.A's cases, the impact of becoming homeless appears to have had permanent, far-reaching and dramatic effects upon their lives.

Conclusion

The question of how the mobility of rough sleepers is produced and sustained has been addressed over this and the previous chapter. Whilst rough sleepers' histories suggest they may have a disrupted sense of home (both as residence and as place), findings about their travels and daily mobility practices indicate this disruption is ongoing. Furthermore, the causal nature of this continuous mobility appears to be one of mutual reinforcement. There are failures in processes of resettlement, on one hand, and, on the other, there is the viability of street life. Homelessness is a process that takes place both episodically and continuously. The transition both into and out of homelessness appears to be less abrupt than existing literature portrays it. Furthermore, whilst people are homeless, they also may spend periods of time inside various forms of accommodation.

The patterns of travel respondents in this project undertook appeared at times to contain elements of the 'narrative frames' May (2000) constructed (see previous chapter).

Respondents lacked residences but also they lacked 'place' at certain times, and their failed

attempts at constructing or recapturing a sense of home and belonging may account for some of their travels around the country. For example, Mr.G's return to places he had once been 'at home' in, Mr.C's search for work elsewhere in the country. Whilst discourses of homelessness described in Part One were focussed on social integration as the solution to homelessness as a social problem, rough sleepers had plans of their own and used hostels and private or socially rented accommodation in strategic ways.

Mobility patterns within Oxford, between forms of accommodation and rough sleeping outdoors, seemed often to have arisen from conflicts between respondents and settled members of the local community or staff within facilities providing services for homeless people. As Randall and Brown (1999) observed, not having to pay rent was one reason people gave for staying on the streets. This can be better understood when considering how restrictions are imposed upon rough sleepers in all kinds of rented accommodation. Such restrictions are not applied to their domiciled counterparts. In hostels rents are very high indeed, requiring rough sleepers to claim housing benefits. In private or socially rented accommodation rents are lower but in both kinds of accommodation, rough sleepers are not allowed visitors, are surveyed and disciplined in ways that prevent them from developing both a sense of home as residence and as place.

The space of 'home' appears to have become strongly territorialized, including notions of neighbourhoods. The home as house, is a receptacle of social relations, possessed objects but also of value. Houses accumulate value, neighbourhoods enhance this value and thus homeless people may be thought to devalue areas. Agencies who rent rooms to homeless people have rules and restrictions that appear to conform to domiciled etiquettes of neighbourliness. Social integration for homeless people who accept such rented rooms is conditional upon the exclusion of various social resources they have from the street.

Hostel provision has expanded, in accordance with research findings that argue that homeless people have 'support needs'. All but one of the twenty-two respondents had spent time in hostels in Oxford. Almost all of them had been evicted or had voluntarily left, at least once. Whilst there were conflicts over rent and rules, resentment was also expressed about how

hostels were a means of 'shoving homelessness under the carpet' (Mr.T). In some ways people used these places to recover from rough sleeping. Mr.MN commented to me that people only go to detoxification or other hostels 'when (they've) run out of ways of making raises' (making a livelihood). This comment is very pertinent and it helps to explain how daily mobility is related to periodic mobility. Whilst rough sleepers 'make places' (for work and for sleeping) by establishing patterns of permanence, their control over such places is unstable. The unpredictable nature of life on the streets meant rough sleepers could (and frequently did) run out of resources. It was mostly when life on the streets became harder, that respondents would travel away or else enter hostels (whether or not they were for detoxification). People went to hostels more because they needed respite, rather than to make plans for their future in accordance with the workers in the hostels. The prospects such plans offered were not promising.

Homeless people also told me they were afraid of becoming institutionalised in such hostels. They pointed out to me various long-term residents and said they did not want to 'end up like (them)' (Mr.O). Furthermore, Mr.S told me that when a person has stopped using heroin they experience a 'rush of emotions' that is very intense and makes a person feel extremely vulnerable. Mr.O told me that he gets a 'terrible feeling of depression and boredom. The future is overwhelming' and he feels he has a 'gigantic hole inside'. These emotions were often cited as reasons for relapse.

In some respects prison served a similar end to hostels. It was a way of paying off fines as well as providing respite from the harshness of rough sleeping. Imprisonment for more serious offences (robberies mainly) indicated that some people felt there were alternative routes to fulfilling aspirations. Fleeing violence and accompanying friends were also indicative of such alternatives to the prospects staff in hostels offered. Fleeing violence was often a result of failed plans rough sleepers made to become dealers. Becoming a dealer meant also having more money and more friends. Prospects improved considerably when a person became a dealer, but their plans were never fulfilled over the course of this project.

Rather than thinking of their failures to complete detoxification in hostels, it might be more pertinent to consider how detoxification, hostels and even the inside of privately rented accommodation, can reintroduce meaningless, incoherent time, rendering rough sleepers' personal agency powerless. Whilst 'home' is valued for its inclusive position in society, it may be that the process of re-entering the space and time orders of domiciled society leads to repeated homelessness, as this process suggests homeless people must give up not just their freedom or their friends, but their capacity to control space and time. Control over a person's well being, social life, accommodation and work practices appeared to be an elusive and yet desired factor, that determined choices rough sleepers made, both to leave the streets for alternative accommodation as well as to leave accommodation for the streets.

Dealing with the unpredictable required rough sleepers to develop coping skills, one of which was mobility itself. These coping skills diminished the surprising element of the unpredictable. Enforced mobility (getting moved on, evictions, fleeing violence, going to prison), whilst unwelcome and often unexpected in individual instances, appeared to be regarded as an occupational hazard, a predictable aspect of street life. Rough sleepers could predict to some extent, the circumstances that might result in having to move away, and to that extent turn their mobility to their advantage. Mr.V's going to prison was, for him, a means of making a fresh start, for example. This suggests that rough sleepers may view accommodation differently from their domiciled counterparts. If they expect to be evicted then they may not invest residences with a sense of 'home'. Their practices when they do obtain private or socially rented accommodation appear to confirm this suggestion.

Many respondents said that giving up drink or drugs was something a person had to really want to do for them to succeed. Going to detoxification hostels was not a necessary indicator of such a desire. As Mr.A's case study shows, meeting fellow drinkers in such places could lead them to leave and resume street homelessness together. This pattern was fairly widespread. It is interesting that, when rough sleepers managed to establish a measure of stability on the streets, they often cut down their use of drink or drugs unaided.

Being homeless posed challenges to rough sleepers at various levels. In a straightforward way, people faced material hardship and were unable to protect themselves against threats to their personal well-being, as they were rendered vulnerable to the forces of contingency. As well as managing space and time, many rough sleepers appeared to want to claim 'authorship' of this management. The way they used mobility, both daily and periodically, suggests that they wanted to keep the management of space and time in their own hands. Whilst Snow and Anderson argue that 'outsiders' have so fully adapted to street life that their future and past collapse into the present, it may be that detoxification re-introduces 'empty time', which I have shown to be something rough sleepers feared and tried to avoid.

As Fitzpatrick et al note, there is controversy about the extent of support needs amidst single homeless populations (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 37). In this chapter it was found that most rough sleeper participants did apply for welfare and housing benefits (sometimes reluctantly) and they did use facilities provided for them by voluntary sector agencies. As Hutson noted, homeless people can be 'critical consumers' (Hutson 1999, 217), and the participants in this project were very critical of staff members and the facilities they ran. It was found that staff members who tried to provide specific support (key workers, resettlement advisers, workers running groups for rough sleepers) were generally unpopular and lacking in credibility with rough sleepers. Furthermore, facilities that provided accommodation (Night Shelter and hostels) were felt to fail rough sleepers. This was mainly because of a failure of staff to make these places feel safe for their 'clients'.

The provision of 'help' was difficult for rough sleepers to accept uncritically as their life of the streets required them to be strong. A difficulty with accepting welfare and support services lay in the fact that homeless people thereby were labelled 'vulnerable' and as having 'multiple needs'. This suggests that they are 'dependent and defective people who need care and who should be encouraged to conform to certain normative conventions' (Franklin, 1999, pg.191). In the next chapter I examine the social world of homeless street dwellers and show how the values of strength and independence were fairly prevalent amidst this population, and may explain why key workers were thought of as patronizing. There appears to be a contradiction for rough sleepers, of having to accept welfare and charity and the role of helpless victimhood

in order to extricate themselves from living on the streets. The role of services providers will be examined in detail in Chapter Six

The police played a major role in the mobility of rough sleepers' daily practices. Being moved on and avoiding being moved on were important considerations for rough sleepers as they undertook their activities. Rough sleepers' behaviours are labelled 'anti social' (especially injecting drugs and begging) and they are caught up in criminality, mainly due to their addictions to drink or drugs. However, given that the police moved rather than solved rough sleeping, it is possible to suggest that it was the visibility of street life that police were seeking to evict. This factor is related to developments in urban governance and how city authorities seek to attract affluence through promoting a vision of social cohesion in their cities (see Griffiths, 1998). The need for visible social cohesion is related to the rhetorical uses politicians and others make of the term 'social exclusion'. This factor will be examined further in Chapter Six.

Finally, the fact that street life was viable also played a part in the mobility of rough sleepers. When they were evicted or when they left facilities, prisons or private accommodation, they often returned to the streets (either in the same area or elsewhere). As Randall and Brown (1999) noted, they have friends and freedom on the streets. Some rough sleepers travelled to festivals or to traveller sites, others travelled to procure jobs, to visit friends or even to pick up a dog they had been promised (Mr.G, Mr.H, Mr.O and Mr.Q in this instance). Whilst rough sleeping undeniably caused many hardships (physical, mental and social) for the participants in this project it was not an entirely negative way of life. The importance of friends, so prominent a reason for returning to street dwelling, will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIAL WORLD OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the social life of homeless people and assess how street life was made more manageable through the social relations they undertook with one another. How to conceptualise these social relations is also discussed and the approaches other authors have taken is explored.

Main arguments in existing literature

Fitzpatrick et al (2000) have noted that there is an empirical gap in research about the 'friendship networks' of single homeless people. This is important for various reasons. Firstly, homeless people appear to make use of informal resources such as friends' and family's floors. This means that when rough sleepers are counted, the figures obtained may not reflect their true numbers. It also means some rough sleepers may never have contact with institutions designed to help them, or else only sporadic contact at times when informal resources fail. Fitzpatrick and Clapham found there was a distinction between 'local and city centre homelessness' (Fitzpatrick & Clapham 1999, 188), and, because agencies that help the homeless concentrated on city centre homelessness, those whose homelessness arose near their family homes, missed out on such available help.

Secondly, some authors portray life on the streets as devoid of social support, and homeless people as lacking in social relationships. Declerck, for example, explained that he and his colleagues had 'thought that (they)... would be dealing with a sort of organized negative society, an organized underside of society with its laws, its chiefs, its organizations, its symbols, etc.; and that... there would be doors, ...procedures of inclusion' (Declerck 2003, section 4). Instead, he found that 'nothingness has no door... there was no alternative society, there was no organizing group; there was a collection of... broken men and women, desperately trying to survive, hour by hour... These were near-unconscious people... (living) in their own mental world, which seemed to be very poor, very depleted, very repetitive' (ibid. sections 4 & 5). Declerck, who studied homelessness in Paris, France, worked with homeless

people who were not just poor, but also, he found, desocialized, unable to establish and maintain relationships (ibid. section 18). These long-term homeless chronic alcoholics and drug users and mentally ill people were forced to 'play a constant game of musical chairs' (ibid. section 20) because of the inadequacy of services to help them; they were caught up in 'the hustle and bustle of the constant slavery of homelessness, ...simply surviving for the next few hours demands an immense energy'. Declerck believes that such dissipation and expenditure of energy had the paradoxical effect of 'containing ...self-destructive fantasies and ...anguish', which, he found, emerged when homeless people moved into accommodation (ibid.)

Crane reviewed some early American sociologists' theories that homelessness was associated with an absence of social relationships. Homelessness was found to be the outcome of, variously, undersocialisation (homeless men were found to have come from broken childhood homes, had few friends or sense of belonging to social groups, drifted between jobs and never married), institutionalisation (which occurred in the armed services, hospitals, orphanages, among railroad gangs) which resulted in dependency and 'disculturation', disaffiliation (defined as detachment from social relationships and ties with family, work, church and neighbourhood types of associations), alienation (which was a feeling of estrangement and unfriendliness towards society and its culture), and retreatism (a reaction some people have to acute anomie which is often brought about through a person abruptly losing their roles in life. An example could be widowhood or retirement) (Crane 1999, 11-13).

The emphasis the above authors have placed on the lack of social relationships they found when studying homelessness suggests homeless people have difficulties establishing and maintaining any kind of relationship to other people. Whilst Declerck found there were 'unstable' friendships on the street – 'there are couples, there is sexuality, there are homosexual couples, there are also men who hang out together because it's a defensive measure' (Declerck 2003, section 21), homeless people in this literature are felt to be detached from mainstream society but also from social interaction with other homeless people (Crane 1999, 17).

Other authors though (for example, Downing Orr 1996, Lee 1993, Snow and Anderson 1993, Wagner 1993), have argued that street homeless populations form communities or subcultures. Hall found that there was a fear, amidst services providers, of young homeless people getting 'caught up' (Hall 2003, 111) in patterns of 'low expectation and anti-social and irresponsible behaviour' (ibid.) partly through their friendships with a 'negative crowd' (ibid. 110). Fitzpatrick found that homeless people's friendships with each other made it 'more difficult for them to move on from their homeless situation' (Fitzpatrick et al 2000, 35).

Whilst finding social bonds amidst homeless people, authors nevertheless have qualified their findings: Snow and Anderson, for example, said: 'a way of life may develop that is... distinctive, but that does not inspire celebration and promotion... what these similarly situated individuals have in common is not a strong and recognisable set of values, but a shared fate... (that) may ... be construed as a subculture, albeit a limited or incomplete one' (Snow & Anderson 1993, 39). Hall is critical of authors (he cites Charles Murray, who wrote about the British 'underclass' in 1990 and 1994), who have used terms such as 'culture', 'subculture' or 'way of life' to describe and analyse populations situated 'at the margins' of society (Hall 2003, 111). For Hall such terms 'portray an exotic world, set apart yet too close to home, where life has settled into some reprehensible, regrettable pattern that will not easily unravel' (ibid. 8) and where such populations have become 'turned inward' (ibid. 9), closed off from mainstream society, forming an 'underclass' (ibid. 111). He argues that if 'culture' means 'something that has curled all the way back on itself such that the question why... can be answered without looking elsewhere... it does not happen all the time, if indeed it ever really happens at all' (ibid. 135).

Hall distinguishes between 'lifestyles' and 'life situations' and notes how these 'run so close (together) it is not always easy to tell them apart' (ibid. 112). He uses the term 'consensus' to explain how the homeless teenagers who participated in his research and were 'struggling to get to grips with the same difficulties', 'reach (a)... common understanding particular to their lived situation, a shared sense of how things stand and where that leaves them' (ibid.) He notes how 'some home truths about life in bedsits ... gain a momentum of sorts; an inertia, at least' (ibid. 113). However, noting the poor opportunities available to homeless teenagers,

Hall argues that there is ‘a stubborn, insubordinate streak to life in the bedsits... that sets itself *against* circumstances as much as it accommodates them’ (ibid. 114 author’s italics). Thus the ‘consensus’ he finds is one that includes resistance. Instead of viewing culture as ‘an isolate(d) lump of sameness’ (ibid. 139), Hall sees complex connections between the lifestyles and life situations of homeless youths that place them within mainstream society and not outside of it, showing how their ‘blameworthiness’ is contextual rather than derived from individual moral shortcomings.

Social life amidst homeless people in Oxford

In Oxford it was found that homeless people had an active social life and relationships of varying degrees of intensity and stability, with other homeless people. Similar to Snow and Anderson’s findings, there appeared to be times when common, shared values emerged, but there was not a time when rough sleepers came together as a community, in celebration of their communal life. Like Declerck’s findings, relationships were frequently found to be highly unstable – in fact, having unstable relationships appeared to actually be one of the cultural traits homeless people in Oxford shared. Nevertheless, rough sleepers often had very deep bonds with other rough sleepers.

The question of how homeless people are socially organised is very complex, as findings in the literature suggest rough sleepers are sometimes alone and isolated but at other times, sub-culturally together, separate and excluded from ‘mainstream’ society. Rough sleepers negotiated their identities in relation to both each other and in relation to the identities they had ascribed to them through social constructions such as those outlined in Chapter One. The following five sections of this chapter describe the classifications, spaces, relationships, conflicts and economy of rough sleepers. These are the various aspects of rough sleepers’ daily lives on the streets wherein it was possible to detect a ‘consensus’ of sorts amidst rough sleepers in relation to each other. In the next chapter I describe the relations between rough sleepers and people who were not homeless (for example, members of the general public, police, services providers). In relation to the non-homeless, there also appeared to be practices and attitudes widely shared amidst rough sleepers.

A. Internal classifications

1. Forming typologies and lack of clear-cut identities.

As a whole group, rough sleepers in Oxford were found to share overall similarities. Like those who Wagner studied in North City, USA, (Wagner 1993, 147-150) most were very sociable, and norms of mutual aid and sharing were universal. They lived in public places, 'and engage(d) in activities which people normally conduct in the privacy of their homes' (Crane 1999, 16). To a limited extent, there was also a degree of social solidarity that was usually expressed in a sympathetic mutual recognition and acknowledgement. Some instances were observed of more active solidarity and protection. For example: When Mr.B was 'skanked' (sold a bad drug deal), three other rough sleepers accompanied him in following the dealer, demanding a refund, until the dealer complied. Crane has described certain behaviours ('homelessness behaviours') common to many of those who inhabit the streets. They can include: 'lingering and sleeping on the streets; sitting on cardboard in shop doorways or in parks... picking up cigarette butts from the pavements; begging; scavenging in litter bins for food; hoarding rubbish in carrier bags or shopping-trolleys; drunkenness and causing a disturbance; lying on the pavement; muttering or shouting; and urinating in public places' (ibid.) Many rough sleepers in Oxford undertook some of these behaviours to which can be added taking drugs and dressing in scruffy clothes. Importantly though, not all rough sleepers could be recognised by such behaviours as they behaved differently and were indistinguishable from domiciled people. Identifying homeless people is therefore not a simple task, resting on both unstable definitions of the term 'homeless' and on unreliable counts of rough sleepers.

Phillimore found that external agencies' use of terms 'vagrant' and 'single homeless' differed from the 'indigenous' term (which he found was 'dosser'). Furthermore, his original category ('casual workers') was one that the 'dossers' identified themselves with 'in a restricted and fairly unimportant way' (Phillimore 1979, 30). In this project it was found that there did not appear to be an 'indigenous' term that encompassed all of the rough sleepers or participants of street life. 'Rough sleepers' was the main term participants used to distinguish themselves from people who had not slept outdoors, and I have adopted this term to describe them. Rough sleepers' identification with official categories of 'homeless rough sleeper', 'roofless'

or 'street homeless' was ambiguous. They rarely used these terms internally but instead used them to describe themselves to domiciled parties when undertaking particular activities (such as begging or vending, applying for places to live).

'Part time homeless' was a term used, in a joking way, to 'diss' (put down) someone who managed to get a room (either in a hostel or a bed sit) but who still worked on the streets in order to obtain enough money (for drugs especially). Crane argued that it is difficult to define 'an exit from homelessness' (Crane 1999, 38) because many who move from rough sleeping into accommodation do not have tenancy rights, or may be temporarily in hospital or prison, and may leave their accommodation after a short period of time (ibid.39). Furthermore, she notes how 'some people who have been rehoused do not leave the homeless lifestyle but still maintain homelessness behaviours' (ibid.) It certainly appears that Crane is discussing the same phenomena observed in Oxford that can be encompassed by the use rough sleepers made of the term 'part-time homeless'. The use of this term seems to indicate that sleeping outdoors is part of the identity of rough sleepers. Mr.L, for example, told me that those who lived in one of the hostels in the city centre were not 'homeless'. He said 'They're going to these places so they're not homeless'. He also did not consider himself to be 'homeless'. He said 'I've got a home', referring to a derelict house where he stayed each night. For Mr.L homelessness came about when a person slept outdoors, on the streets (in shop doorways, behind buildings, etc.) or in fields, under bridges or behind buildings. I asked him what name he would use to describe himself and he replied 'rough sleeper'.

Spradley, using taxonomic and componential analyses, found there to be thirteen types of 'tramp' who could be distinguished from each other by contrasts in their mobilities, modes of travel, home bases and livelihoods. Their identities, Spradley found, were primarily related to their 'nomadic style of life' (Spradley 1970, 79). Spradley, though, was writing about a population, traditionally known as 'hoboes' that existed in the USA before the emergence of a more heterogeneous homeless population, in the 1980s and 1990s. Nearly twenty-five years later, Snow and Anderson found no 'shared folk typology' (Snow and Anderson 1993, 38) among the street dwellers of Austin, Texas, and they attributed this to the heterogeneous nature of this population (ibid.) Like Spradley, Snow and Anderson used dimensions of

contrast (livelihood, range/mobility, sleeping arrangements, substance use, length of time on the streets as well as levels of adaptation to life on the streets in terms of self perception) to create typologies of homeless people. Using the length of time (diachrony and process) people had been homeless to frame their understanding, they formulated three main classifications: 'recently dislocated', 'straddlers' and 'outsiders'. 'Recently dislocated' people actively expressed a desire to get off the streets whereas 'straddlers', more accustomed to street life, were ambivalent about leaving the streets, and 'outsiders' were wholly adapted to street life.

In Oxford it was also found that there was no clear-cut 'folk typology' rendering transparent, bounded categories. However, there appeared to be divisions between drinkers and drug users and, with less conflict, between these sets of people and people with mental health difficulties and those who were 'straight' (no substance use or mental health difficulties). Livelihood, range/mobility, and sleeping arrangements did mark many contrasts, but they were primarily associated with substance use.

1.1. Mobile vs. institutionalised homelessness

The length of time spent on the streets did not appear to be a marker of identity amidst the participants of this project. This may be accounted for by the highly social life of rough sleepers. Newcomers, through 'link-ups' (see below), quickly found ways to adapt to life on the streets. The lack of procedures of inclusion fits in with Declerck's findings, as did the absence of formal organization. However, in Oxford these factors did not mean rough sleepers were also 'broken' people; the absence of formality made inclusion easier, it did not mean there were no feelings of belonging. People who participated in this project had been homeless for varying lengths of time, and some people's homelessness had been interrupted whereas others' had not. This did not appear to affect their self-classifications as rough sleepers.

Some people were considered to be 'homeless' but not 'rough sleepers' or 'part-time homeless'. Those who stayed at the Night Shelter for many months or who lived in hostels over long periods of time were seen by rough sleepers as institutionalised people whose

homelessness was qualitatively different. Whilst length of time was a factor, it was the institutionalised nature of their lifestyles that was highlighted in their classification, rather than their longer experience of homelessness. This institutionalisation was associated by street dwellers, with mental illness.

In this project, participant observation was undertaken amidst street dwellers, most of who were drug users. I did not try to be comprehensive in my coverage of all homeless people. Had I joined a group of people with mental health difficulties, it is likely that I would not have spent much time on the streets, but rather, inside hostels and day centres. My position in relation to many services providers was on the outside – of relationships and of buildings, given that I was ‘hanging out’ (see Rosenthal 1991, for this methodology) with street dwellers.

Eighner found that ‘alcohol was the organizing principle of the street life [he]... saw’ (Eighner 1993, 163). The use of substances was also very important in Oxford. It marked identities on the streets, but it is necessary to qualify this statement. Firstly, I am not suggesting that substance abuse caused or sustained the homelessness of the participants. Wagner argues ‘thousands of residents of North City are alcoholics ...and they are not ...homeless. Thousands of people are labelled mentally ill, and most will never become homeless’ (Wagner 1993, 149). Likewise, Carlen notes ‘drugs are easily available to young teenagers and older people whether they are homeless or not.’ (Carlen 1996, 130).

Secondly, sometimes the terms below were used in derogatory ways, rather than as descriptive terms of identity. Phillimore noted how ‘dossers’ sometimes relegated someone to the category of ‘jake-drinker’¹⁶ (Phillimore 1979, 30), which ‘carried distinctly pejorative implications’ (ibid. 31). In this project terms such as ‘junkie’ or ‘alkie’ were only sometimes pejorative. People did not reject them as self-descriptions (as those labelled ‘jake-drinkers’ did in Phillimore’s findings) but only did if they were used in a derogatory way. The use of all identity terms appeared to be entirely contextual.

¹⁶ Phillimore found ‘jack-drinkers’ (also called ‘jake-drinkers’) were those who drank ‘jack’ or ‘jake’ which was an indigenous term for ‘crude spirits’ (Phillimore 1979, 32).

There now follow descriptions of the four main classifications that homeless people used in relation to each other. These were: 'straights', 'community care people' (also called 'mental health crew'), 'drinkers' (also called 'alcoholics', 'alkies') and 'drug users' (also called 'junkies', 'crackheads', 'gear-, smack-heads', 'needle users').

2. Drug users – 'dark' and 'white'

Twenty-eight of the forty four participants discussed in this chapter were drug users. All but two of them used 'brown' (heroin) and 'white' (crack cocaine). Mr.D was addicted solely to 'white' and he did not use needles. Only two others, Mr.I and Mr.J, did not use needles and smoked their drugs instead. All the rest used needles at least for 'brown' and often smoked and injected 'white'.

2.1. 'Brown'

There were many different names for heroin – smack, gear, brown and dark, being the most common. Over a period of time, a person's 'habit' (level of addiction) would gradually increase. As described in Chapter Three, people would realise this when their normal dose stopped working when it did not give them a 'rush' (the high that the drug induces when first hitting the blood stream), and did not prevent them from having the beginnings of withdrawal symptoms (sweating, feeling ill). In order to use heroin, people required equipment – a syringe, a spoon or some other metal container for mixing the powder and water in, some citric acid or vitamin C powder, to mix with heroin and water, in order to help the heroin dissolve, some water, some foil if a person is smoking heroin and a lighter to heat up the water/drug mixture or else to burn the drug to smoke. Acquiring these objects often led to meeting other street homeless drug users and sometimes led to people joining forces and using together.

2.2. 'White'

Again there were many different names for crack cocaine – rocks, storm, stone, and white being the most common. Whereas heroin has a mellowing effect on a person once the rush was over, rocks generally had an awakening effect on a person. Mr.N, who used both brown and white, would use white all night long. He told me that the effect of white is to make a

person want more of it, straightaway. When I was with him we worked very long hours to keep his white habit satisfied. Many brown addicts also used white but none as much as Mr.N.

When I asked Mr.B and Mr.O why they used both, they explained that 'white gives you an extra buzz' and that, when the brown is not working as strongly (because their tolerance levels had risen), using white helped them to still feel high. The effects of white however are short-lived and many participants told me that the withdrawal from white (known as 'prang') was softened by the use of brown. Ms.D said 'you need the brown if you're pranged'.

2.3. Levels of addiction

There appeared to be an association between the socialising activities of drug users and the amount of drugs they were taking at any given point. It seems likely that this link reflected the difficulty of being close to other drug users when a person was trying to quit. A few participants made no effort to stop or reduce their drug consumption during the project. Mr.B said he did not try partly because he loved drugs but also because he knew he could not succeed in quitting in his circumstances of life (no regular job, no 'clean' friends, no family or girlfriend).

Eight people attended a detoxification centre in Oxford. Some of these had tried it three times and not succeeded in quitting. All of them returned to drugs again. One individual (Mr.P) underwent detoxification unaided and subsequently left town, so it is not possible to ascertain whether or not he stayed off drugs. Another individual (Mr.D) had a crack cocaine addiction, which had been interrupted by periods in prison.

'Giro Junkie' was a term (used in a joking but disrespectful way) applied to someone who had managed to cut down their heroin habit to such a low level as to only need to buy heroin when they got their giro-cheque, once a fortnight. I only ever heard this term used about people who had left the streets. On the streets, four individuals cut down on their consumption on their own and, whilst none succeeded in coming off altogether, all of them succeeded in keeping their habits down to very low levels. Mr.I cut down to one ten-pound hit per day or so; Mr.G

managed to cut down to a ten-pound bag per three days. Mr.J managed to stop using needles altogether and Mr.F also did this, as well as cutting down to less than a ten-pound bag per day.

3. Drinkers – ‘functional alcoholics’ and ‘alcoholics’

In Oxford drinkers outnumbered drug users on the homeless scene, even though most of the participants in this project were drug users. Interviews and participant observation were undertaken with only six drinkers, so further research is needed because various groups were observed and various levels of drunkenness as well, which may be important when distinguishing between different groups of drinkers. The drinkers I did spend time with told me there were two main types of drinkers: ‘alcoholics’ and ‘people with a drink problem’. ‘Alcoholics’ were those drinkers who drank large amounts, often spirits as well as strong ciders and beers. These people experienced the shakes unless large amounts of alcohol were consumed. ‘People with a drink problem’ were those who were addicted and experienced ‘the rattle and rolls’ (the shakes – withdrawal symptoms), but drank less and only rarely spirits.

3.1. ‘Social drinkers’ and ‘Functional alcoholics’

There were two ‘people with drink problems’ who I spent time with, Mr.K and Mr.L. Mr.K did not consider himself to have a problem with drink and he pointed out to me how other drinkers in the pub were drinking a great deal more than he was, and this was indeed the case. However I have included him in this category because he was widely considered to be a drinker, by other rough sleepers. Neither Mr.K nor Mr.L drank on the streets but rather preferred pubs (which were more expensive). Both individuals worked as vendors but also picked up odd jobs, sometimes from the managers of pubs in which they drank. As opposed to ‘alcoholics’, they did not need ‘breakfast’ (an early morning can of strong lager), but rather they would only start drinking once their work was finished, usually in the early afternoon or later. However both experienced the shakes if they did not drink every day.

Neither of them socialised with ‘alcoholics’. Instead they spent some time together (as they were friends), and most of their time alone. Both Mr.K and Mr.L had spent many months sleeping in various street locations, in and out of town, before getting a room in a house. In these periods of rough sleeping, both Mr.K and Mr.L reported that they had made friends with

other rough sleepers. However, they were selective in their choice of friends. Mr.K made friends with other 'people with drink problems' whilst staying in the car park. He explained to me that they all helped each other in small ways and that they all shared a desire for stability and peace. For Mr.K it was 'needle users' who caused problems for rough sleepers. He told me that when he was sleeping in a tent, 'junkies' had stolen his tent two times as well as 'trashing' (destroying) his property. In the car park, it was when 'needle users' appeared that the small group of people he was with dispersed and went their separate ways.

Mr.L was alone for the duration of the project. He told me however, about a friend he'd made upon arrival in Oxford, when he came off the coach and saw a man sleeping on a bench. Mr.L and this man paired up and would drink together each day. Mr.L's friend died of pneumonia. Mr.L said his friend had 'given up' and had been sleeping without a sleeping bag or blanket, in the cold of winter nights. After this event, Mr.L, whilst he did have other friends, only spent the odd weekend or evening with them. Mr.L was however, not critical of 'needle users' and although he never worked with them, he did spend time with those who had moved in to the car park.

3.2. 'Alcoholics'

Whilst individuals with drink problems did not feel they had a problem that warranted them going to detoxification and they referred to themselves as 'social drinkers' or 'functional alcoholics', many 'alcoholics' were caught up in cycles of detoxification and relapse. Mr.A's narrative (see previous chapter) exemplifies this on/off relationship that 'alcoholics' have towards drink and the 'rattle and rolls' that detoxification forces them to undergo.

The 'alcoholics' who took part in this project paired-up with other drinkers for work and socialising activities. However they also spent time in groups where various people would band together. I did no participant observation with these groups and so the data obtained was second-hand. More detail is needed to clarify the group dynamics as well as to distinguish between 'alcoholics' and other individuals whose drinking appeared to be even heavier still – I was told they drink 'jack'. These very heavy drinkers were once described to me as

'community care people' but whether they are generally seen as being in that category or in a separate one, I was unable to ascertain.

4. *'Community care' people*

'Community care' people were identified by other homeless people as people who had mental disorders (such as schizophrenia), or else as people who had become institutionalised and were long-term residents in overnight shelters and hostels. They were regarded as unable to cope with street homelessness and described as vulnerable and weak, needing protection.

Phillimore found the term 'nutter' was used, in a pejorative sense, to dismiss mentally ill 'skid row' people or generally as a term of abuse (Phillimore 1979, 33). Participants in this project also used this term but the pejorative sense Phillimore noted did not appear to be present.

Some homeless people regarded alcoholics to be in the category of 'community care'. Many non-community care homeless people complained of mental problems of depression and/or overwhelming anger, but despite this commonality between homeless people, a distinction was nevertheless drawn between them. Mr. I related how he started having problems with anger and was given injections, the same medications that are administered to people from the 'mental health crew'. These injections were administered on a fortnightly basis and produced the side effects of twitches and drooling, visible characteristics associated with 'community care people'. I therefore asked him how he classified himself in relation to them and he replied that his problem with anger had arisen as a result of his using crack cocaine. For him, although the side effects of medication (drooling, spasms, twitches) might give the surface appearance of mental problems, it was a combination of mental problems and long term institutionalisation that made 'community care people' what they were.

'Community care' people like straights, did not often participate in the activities of street homeless people, but their presence in shelters and hostels was more conspicuous than that of 'straights'. As mentioned before, they were particularly vulnerable to intimidation and people reported a number of incidents when they had witnessed a 'community care person' handing over their money to a known bully. A worker from a health centre told me that this practice was known as 'taxing'. However I did not hear this term used. Intimidation tactics will be

considered below, but for now it should be noted that when bullying did occur, witnesses turned a blind eye. Street homeless people felt they were strong, because they managed to survive living on the streets. Mr.R., commenting on this situation, said that 'the mental health crew should not be on the streets. Most of us can do something about it, but they can't.' Mr.Q explained that 'community care people' are 'too much responsibility' and, whilst there was no detectable antagonism towards them (on the contrary, people seemed to feel worried about their vulnerability), for street homeless people they were nevertheless not considered to be ideal companions.

The link rough sleepers made between institutionalisation and weakness, vulnerability and dependency indicated the high value they placed on strength and self-sufficiency. Mr.L cited lines from a poem written by Robert Service, called 'The Law of the Yukon':

'This is the Law of the Yukon, that only the Strong shall thrive;
That surely the Weak shall perish, and only the Fit survive'

Source: R.S.Sexton The Law of the Yukon

5. 'Straights'

There were very few homeless people in this project who did not either drink or use drugs. Those few who did not, were referred to as 'straights' by other homeless people. 'Straights' did not socialise very much with other homeless people. One individual, Mr.AB, had been a drug user in the past and, whilst he stayed at the night shelter, he left town after two weeks. Another individual, Mr.BC, had managed to give up drinking shortly before I met him. He found a place to live and a job, and left the homeless scene after just one week. Ex-drinkers and drug users who become homeless are in close proximity to drinkers and drug users, and their desire to not drink or use drugs again, may be the main cause for them to move away as soon as they can.

When I asked Mr.I (a drug user who was coming off drugs unaided), if it was possible to be street homeless and 'straight', he explained that yes it was possible but that there were problems of loneliness, being accepted by others, belonging. He said that some people liked

the life of the streets and were happy to be there with or without drugs. To an extent, many other participants confirmed this view. Mr.O, a drug addict, complained that drugs spoilt 'the good life of street living'. Mr.J likewise explained that street living in itself was good, healthy both physically and mentally. Mr.U explained that he used to travel around with his guitar and that people were really friendly until 'rocks' (another name for crack cocaine) came along and caused street people's values to lower.

As a whole group, rough sleepers shared in common, a lifestyle of mobility, lack of shelter or uncertain accommodation, mutual aid, sociability and values of strength and self-sufficiency. However their use of the term 'homeless' was mostly in contexts where domiciled parties (such as politicians, workers in the voluntary sector, for example) were concerned. Their categorisation as 'homeless' is 'imposed ... by contestants who appear to be fighting the homelessness battle way above their heads' (Carlen 1996, pg.72). In Hall's study, the youths who lived in hostels and bedsits also did not consider themselves to be 'really homeless' (Hall 2003, 79). For them the 'really homeless' were 'winos' who fitted a stereotype of rough sleeper and they 'distance(d) themselves from a label they (found) to be disempowering and stigmatising' (ibid.)

The use of the term 'part time homeless' by those who had no accommodation, implied that being 'really homeless' required toughness that declined when people found places to stay. Like the term 'giro junkie', the use of the term 'part time homeless' seemed to imply, jokingly, that a person was less strong. As shown in Chapter Four, fear of institutionalisation was one factor that led people to leave hostels. The division of rough sleepers and part-time homeless from 'community care' people reflected this even more clearly.

Whilst sharing many similarities, rough sleepers developed patterns of association that reflected divisions. These patterns were primarily distinguishable by their basis in the uses of different substances. A further feature that appeared to mark a contrast was the different use of space each set made. This has been considered in Chapter Three. I now return to this matter in the following section.

B. Meeting in outdoor places

In interviews I asked people about how they meet others when they are newly arrived in a town and, in participant observation, it was possible to see how encounters between homeless people took place on a daily basis. There were two main types of places where homeless people met each other – on the streets or in facilities for homeless people such as shelters, day centres and hostels.

Within night shelters and day facilities, people explained to me, drinkers and drug users would keep to themselves in separate groups, often using separate areas of the buildings. When he entered a day centre, Mr.D said he found ‘junkies were using the back room, drinkers were all in the front room and there was a group of shoplifters standing and talking in a group together’. To an extent these divisions reflect the poor opinion drinkers and drug users sometimes have of each other, but exchanging information and making arrangements also account for them.

As Wiseman noted, ‘Skid Row alcoholics have friends in almost all institutions on the loop and every reentry is accompanied by a reunion of some kind’ (Wiseman 1971, 61). Mr.F met an old friend of his in a hostel. They formed a link-up that lasted three years. Often people also made new friends. Mr.A met Mr.VA, a fellow drinker, in the medical centre for the homeless, and they linked up and regularly drank together over the following five years.

On the streets, when a person arrived in a new place, with needs for food and shelter but, if they were a drug user, also for drugs, people said they tried to find their way around first. It was possible to ask the police for information about facilities for the homeless and a few respondents told me that they had done this in the past. Most people however, told me that they searched out other homeless people and asked them for their help.

Other homeless people were recognised mainly by noticing their activities such as begging or vending magazines, as well as by their appearance (scruffy) and their rowdy behaviour. The signs that permitted this recognition were the same for homeless and non-homeless people. There appeared to be no special or different criteria used by homeless people. It was the

public, visible nature of homeless spaces (streets) and activities that led them to be identifiable as homeless.

Mr.F arrived at 6.30pm by coach. He saw two men who 'looked' homeless and asked if there was a night shelter. They told him about the medical centre for homeless people. Mr.F was on his way there when he bumped into a homeless couple he had known from a town he had stayed in previously. Mr.F and the couple went to a facility that offered homeless people sandwiches. There they met another of Mr.F's friends who introduced him to 'Bob' who was a dealer. As Mr.F was broke, he went to beg in the doorway of a shop. Not having made enough money to buy a hit, he slept in that doorway. When he got up in the morning, he went to the car park to see if he could find his friend who he'd heard the previous night was staying there. His friend showed him around – where to sign on, where day centres were – and they went to a day centre for breakfast. Mr.F was 'sick' (getting withdrawal symptoms) and he bought some methadone (prescribed heroin substitute) from someone in the day centre.

For many new arrivals, it took less than twenty minutes to 'score' (buy) a hit. Mr.B, who hitchhiked in to Oxford, went up to a beggar when he arrived, and within ten minutes had 'scored' a hit. Mr.L arrived by coach from London and spoke to a rough sleeper man he saw, laid on a bench nearby. They became friends and 'paired up', drinking together and sleeping in a car park for six months. Incorporating newcomers appeared to be a quick and easy process, undertaken in the course of reciprocal and sharing arrangements.

It was also found that on a day-to-day basis, homeless people would stop and chat with any other homeless person about routine, mundane topics (such as the weather, staff at facilities, the police, dealers and their deals, etc.) when passing by each other on the street or, for example, when bumping into each other when the office that distributes magazines to street vendors was open. Phone boxes were also a point of contact for many drug users who used them to ring dealers and arrange to 'score'. It was not exceptional to encounter various people around the same phone box and these encounters often led to a joining up so that sometimes a group of drug users would walk together to 'score' drugs. News exchange, gossip, and mutual aid (such as lending someone a 'hit' or an amount of money, sharing food with someone,

giving tobacco/cigarettes, giving someone a clean needle, citric acid or foil), were frequent occurrences in the everyday existence of street homeless people.

While most of the participants in this project socialised publicly with one another, it is also true, (as noted before), that most were at the same time involved in drugs use or drinking, and this factor accounted for the division in the social world of homeless people between drinkers and drug users. It is interesting that people reported this division mostly in conjunction with inside spaces – shelters, hostels, daycentres, medical facilities and houses of multiple occupation where people had bedsits. Public space, it seemed, was a space where homeless people, with whatever kind of habit, could meet one another. It was *open* space. The group-like features of street homeless people were most strongly reflected in this openness. As Snow and Anderson suggest: ‘the essence of the subculture of street life ... resides not so much in a distinctive set of cherished values as in a shared fate and the adaptive behaviours and routines the homeless fashion in order to deal with that fate’ (Snow & Anderson 1993, 109). The open nature of outdoor space also meant it was easy to avoid areas where there may have been groups or individuals a person did not want to associate with.

Staying outdoors implied equality. It also implied strength and independence as the uses of the labels ‘homeless’ and ‘part-time homeless’ suggest. Over the course of this project, however, many homeless street dwellers were found places in supported accommodation, hostels and detoxification centres, as the result of the employment of a new outreach team and the development of extra services facilities. Whilst street homelessness continued to exist, all street dwellers spent increasing amounts of time in these places. This warrants further research, as the dynamics that develop indoors are likely to be changing.

C. Social life

1. Street relationships

There were various reasons for the highly sociable nature of street homelessness. Firstly, as Carlen noted, homeless people had ‘a desperate need to pass the time’ (Carlen 1996, 112) and sought the ‘society of others to help them get through the day’ (ibid.) Hall likewise found this to be the case (Hall 2003, 80). This was also the case for rough sleepers in Oxford. Many

homeless people tried to get to know as many other homeless people as they could, as quickly as they could, because 'in this game, friends come in handy' (Mr.U). Not knowing others was cited as a distinct disadvantage when it came to buying drugs or working, activities that required at least some co-operation.

Secondly, as Snow and Anderson explained, street 'peer groups' provided a 'nonstigmatizing reference group and a source of interpersonal self-validation' (Snow & Anderson 1993, 173). This held true of street dwellers in Oxford. It was often found, in participant observation, that homeless people felt stigmatised by many domiciled parties.

Thirdly, some people were very threatening to street dwellers (for example, drunk pub-leavers, sexual predators) and other homeless people were also a source of protection.

Fourthly, as Snow and Anderson note, sharing and pooling of resources was a general characteristic of street relationships (Snow & Anderson 1993, 176). This was certainly the case in Oxford. For Hill and Stamey the patterns of consumption, sharing and exchange formed the basis of a street homeless people's 'community' they studied (Hill & Stamey 1990, 315). In Oxford though, relationships on the streets were often very fraught and unstable. Carlen noted how 'it's difficult to trust any person' (Carlen 1996, 113). It is therefore necessary to be careful when considering the degree to which the term 'community' can be applied to street homeless populations.

2. Link ups.

The most common grouping found in street homeless populations was a partnership of two. Forty-one individuals were in partnerships of two for at least some of the time during the research. The others had been in the past.

Three partnerships lasted the entire duration of the project – Mr.V and Mr.X, Mr.Y and Ms.F (a couple), and Mr.S and Mr.T (brothers). Mr.V and Mr.X finally dissolved their partnership at the very end of this project and Mr.V linked up with his brother, while Mr.X has gone to

Manchester. The duration of the many other link ups observed during fieldwork, ranged from less than two days to as long as six months.

Some people would link up with just one other person, whereas others would pair up for short periods of time with a series of different individuals. Sometimes people would 'chuck in together' (split the cost of a hit) without forming a link up (beyond that transaction).

2.1. Nature of link ups.

Ideally, when two people linked up they became a unit, like a team. This was because the aims both partners had were the same (to earn money for buying drugs or drink) and a link up was the most efficient way of achieving those aims. However, people explained that a link up was a friendship as well as a practical arrangement for survival. Ms.D explained that in a link up, 'you sleep together, buy together, eat together, beg together, hit up together, everything', and that 'you become friends because you pool resources'. For Mr.U, 'you become quite close 'cos you're spending lots of time together. When you're not grafting and trying to make money, you get to know each other. You talk and find out about each other'. For Mr.U, even once a link up breaks down, 'you still know each other and that counts.' Mr.J explained that a link up is both a friendship and a means of survival but that if his partner 'pinched' from him, then 'the friendship's over'.

When two people were working together, the value of their earnings increased. There were two main reasons why this was so. Firstly, dealers almost always gave a 'sorter' (an extra free hit) to those who bought five hits of either white or dark (and most refused to buy off dealers who refused 'sorters'). One person, working alone, was less likely to be able to work the time it took to get enough money for five hits (one hundred pounds), as their addiction meant their need for a hit in the immediate term interrupted their working day. Secondly, street workers' earnings were highly irregular, varying from hour to hour, day to day, as well as from season to season. On a bad day, two people may still not have earned enough, despite working longer hours, to satisfy both their needs.

An important factor that emerged when considering how efficient link ups are, was that partnerships could sometimes protect both partners from feeling terrible: 'you're in it together' was a frequently used expression in relation to link ups. A single person was vulnerable on a bad day, and might not have been able to earn enough. This meant they would have to find other ways of obtaining money or drugs (or drink). These other means ranged from prostitution (in this project there was anecdotal evidence of both women and men taking this route), to asking someone else to help out (in which case a debt was incurred).

During the project I was told about friendships that outlasted link ups, in one case, between Mr.A and Mr.VA, for years. However, evidence of this in participant observation was mixed and ambivalent. There were not any specific names used by street homeless people for link ups. People would say 'link up', but also 'we paired up' or 'they linked up'. However everybody could describe two basic rules of a partnership. One was that everything be shared 50:50; the other was that honesty should prevail between partners. These rules were not always strictly adhered to and partnerships could be unstable and/or short term, as a result of variations in the tolerance partners had towards each other's misdemeanours. This matter (how link ups break down) is revisited later.

2.2. How link ups were formed

When asked about how link ups arose, people said link ups were easily formed and easily broken up. Mr.B explained that there were two different circumstances in which he linked up. One way was by working with someone, sharing the money, scoring and using together, after which a link up may be formed. The other way, Mr.B said, was that, if someone appeared in the night-time, in the morning 'you might decide to link up'. Mr.J said that when he was thinking of linking up with someone, he tried to ascertain if he could trust him or her. He said 'I hang around them, tell them things, watch and see if they blab about it.' If they do not then he forms a link up with them.

As mentioned above, link ups could easily break down. However, they could also be restarted later. Mr.B and Mr.W formed a link up three times during this project, and, even when their link ups fell apart, they still remained on good terms and spoke well of each other. This is an

important factor that shows a willingness to forgive and forget, often displayed by street homeless people towards each other.

2.3. Breakdown of link ups

There were many reasons given to explain why link ups broke down. However, when asked, people most commonly said that their link ups had broken down because their partner was 'sneaking off and having extra hits' (Ms.D) or because their partner was not contributing enough. On some occasions link ups broke down because the partners had fights and on others, because one partner found the other one 'too bossy' (Mr.N) or unable to deal appropriately with non-homeless people (thus making street living more hazardous than necessary).

Ms.D said that her partner 'would come back fucked out of his head' (high on drugs). They split up a few days after this as Ms.D felt things were not going to improve. Mr.J told me that, when he was paired up with Mr.R, Mr.R would score behind his back. He recognised this because, when he'd earned enough money to score, he'd go and find Mr.R and ask: 'Have you had anything?' Mr.R would reply 'no' when Mr.J could see he was 'not desperate' and had clearly used drugs behind Mr.J's back. This problem was compounded by Mr.R's denial to his face. Whilst Mr.R did not deny what Mr.J said to me, he told me that he preferred being on his own because he could not 'find anyone to trust' and that, in his link ups, his partners expected him to protect them, due to his being physically very tall and big.

Mr.B linked up on three occasions with Mr.W. On the first two occasions, their link ups broke down because Mr.W, despite being a drug addict, drank a lot as well. When very drunk he became quite aggressive and tried to fight Mr.B, injuring him on the first occasion and getting a black eye off him on the next. Despite this they remained friends. On the third occasion, their link up ended after Mr.B got arrested. When Mr.B came out of the police station, he found that Mr.W had used their money for himself and had not kept either money or drugs aside for Mr.B. On all three occasions Mr.B and Mr.W had big arguments but they still 'had a lot of time for each other'.

Mr.I's link up with Mr.DE ended after Mr.I found out that Mr.DE had been backstabbing him to members of staff in the hostel where they had managed to obtain a room. Mr.I explained that Mr.DE had also been quite aggressive to passers-by, spoiling the friendly relations with them that Mr.I had built up over time. Mr.I told me that, when deciding to finish a link up, a person should confront their partner with their complaints but that they should then 'forgive and forget'.

Mr.G and Mr.N formed a link up that lasted for three months. Mr.G was accepted in a detoxification hostel and started to cut down on the drugs he was using, in preparation for his entry there. Mr.N started complaining behind Mr.G's back, that he was not contributing enough. This complaint was echoed by other homeless people who joined in the backstabbing, despite having themselves not had link ups with Mr.G. Mr.G told me that he could tell Mr.N was gossiping about him but he said he did not care as he was going to the detoxification hostel and would 'soon be out of all this'. Mr.G in turn, complained that Mr.N was obsessive about white and always wanting 'more, more, more'. One morning, a few days before Mr.G was due to go to the hostel, Mr.N left, having made no arrangements to meet up later in the day. This marked the end of their link up. Mr.G went to the detoxification hostel (but left after two months and linked up with Mr.J when he came out).

The link ups considered so far, were those between drug users. Though one drinker told me of link ups he had formed in the past, there was only one link up between drinkers (Mr.C and Mr.JK) that I observed and was told about during this project. While this probably reflects the predominance of drug users in this project, it is also possible that link ups between drinkers are indeed less frequent.

Mr.C and Mr.JK met each other in a 'dry' hostel, from which they were both evicted after having been caught drinking. They got a room to share in a hostel, but Mr.JK got thrown out and barred for life, after attacking a member of staff, and Mr.C accompanied him. They went to the Night Shelter and, after working (Mr.C vended magazines and, occasionally so did Mr.JK), and putting their giros together, they bought a tent. Unfortunately, their tent got stolen after less than a week. They went to Birmingham, where Mr.JK was going to a

detoxification centre. Mr.C got beaten up and his possessions stolen whilst alone in Birmingham and he was unable to return to Oxford. While wandering the streets, though, he bumped into Mr.JK who had left the detoxification centre, and they returned to Oxford together.

Mr.C worked on an irregular basis because of the travels he undertook with Mr.JK. He told me that his loyalty to Mr.JK was 'holding (him) back' from both working and finding a room, which he wanted to do. However, this was not the reason their link up broke down. Shortly after another journey, to Gloucester, where they were kicked out of a 'dry' hostel for drinking, they returned to Oxford, where Mr.C became involved with Ms.H, a fellow drinker. Mr.JK fell out with Mr.C and beat him up, as, according to Mr.C, Mr.JK himself had wanted to be with Ms.H and this caused such problems between them that their friendship came to an end.

When Mr.C explained how their link up worked, he emphasised that being with Mr.JK made him less vulnerable to physical attacks from passers-by. This did appear to be confirmed by his experiences as, when he was on his own, he did get beaten up. He also told me that it was less lonely when he was linked up with Mr.JK. However, their drinking eventually led to uncontrolled fighting between them and this ended their link up.

3. In groups and alone

The majority of participants and those observed, had been in link ups for at least part of the time whilst research took place. However, there were other kinds of groups too. Also some individuals expressed a preference for being alone.

3.1. Groups.

There was a difference between drinkers and drug users. With drinkers there appeared to be more groups than link ups. Whilst I often encountered single drinkers or pairs of drinkers, they were usually part of various groups of drinkers. I did no participant observation within drinker groups and no interviews on the matter. I was told, by individual drinkers, as well as by staff from two agencies, that groups of drinkers formed 'drinking schools'. Drinking schools operated a pooling system whereby each member would finance the entire group's

drinking in turn. I was also told that there were rules pertaining to these 'schools', for example, that members should not wipe the bottle when it was passed to them.

It may be that group drinking can be associated with heavy drinkers ('alcoholics') given that the individual drinkers I spent time with (who were mainly 'functioning alcoholics') spent most of their time alone. Mr.C and Mr.JK were heavy drinkers, though, and Mr.C did tell me of time he had spent drinking in groups. Ms.A also was involved in a group of drinkers, when she lived at the Night Shelter, and she told me that her drinking increased considerably at that time. The groups I briefly and marginally observed, drank and slept together outside the city centre. Sometimes I heard of groups meeting regularly in bedsits rented out by individual drinkers. An important factor that may explain why there were more drinker groups than drug user groups is that the financial needs of drinkers were lower than those needed to sustain drug habits and therefore work was not as big a part in the practices and lives of drinkers. Given the rowdy behaviour and perceived aggression of drinkers, their presence in out-of-town areas is best explained by reference to council edicts to move drinkers out of areas where they were conspicuous, such as the city centre.

During this project there were no drug user groups who spent all of their time together. Various people, however (both in link ups and on their own) used the same sleeping places. For example, when doing participant observation with Mr.F, we went to sleep in a large doorway behind a theatre. Apart from the two of us, Mr.G and Mr.N arrived with Mr.G's dog and slept there. Another three people joined us as the night progressed. In the morning they dispersed and went their separate ways. During the night much news was exchanged. People also shared their food and tobacco with each other but this did not mean they were a 'group' – it was more the result of being in the same place.

On another occasion, Mr.B and myself stayed in a car park for a week. Late one night five people and two dogs joined us. Whilst also not a 'group', nevertheless, it was observed that, in the preparation and consumption of drugs, these people divided the labour between themselves. One person would collect ash for crack pipes, another would clean out pipes, another two would prepare the heroin hits (mixing water, heroin and citric acid on spoons),

whilst the last one would hold the lighter to heat up the hits and help divide them equally into syringes. Furthermore, because they all used their hits at the same time, whoever finished injecting first would help the others (tightening their tourniquets or holding something for them), and they all got high at the same time. This 'rush' would create an animated atmosphere where all five were chatting and laughing in a very friendly manner together. Then, as their 'rush' subsided, they all went quiet at the same time.

Whilst there were no permanent drug user groups, there were occasions such as these where drug users would come together. It seems likely that this group activity arose from chance encounters (when scoring or when finding sleeping places). The casual encounters that took place between people on these occasions were good opportunities to exchange news, gossip, and small favours as well as to express friendly feelings for each other, especially during the 'rush' produced by heroin.

3.2. Three-people link ups.

I observed only two link ups that involved three people and both were short lived. One was between Mr.V, Mr.X and Mr.IJ, who had joined Mr.X and Mr.V. Mr.V explained to me that three-people link ups worked well although hits had to be shared three ways and therefore were smaller. This was compensated for by the speed with which three people were able to earn money. In other words, in a three-person link up the working day is more interrupted by using drugs. There was another three-person link up that I was told about that did not work out: one member of the link up seemed unable to earn money. The other two would leave him with magazines to sell and come back to find he had not sold them. On one occasion he put in one pound towards a twenty pound hit, leaving the other two partners to make up the nineteen remaining pounds. When this happened, the two earning partners decided to cut down the amount of drugs they gave him out of the shared hit. This caused the link up to split, with the two who earned money leaving the non-earner alone.

3.3. 'Loners'.

Eight street homeless people claimed they were 'loners' although only one (Mr.L) in fact was not in a link up for the duration of the project. It was not clear, in the early stages of the

project, what the differences were between 'loners' and those in link ups. This was because all the 'loners' had been in link ups either previously (Mr.L) or during the project. As time passed by, though, it became increasingly apparent that, whilst most street homeless people felt a degree of dependency on link ups, 'loners' felt more aware of the imperfections of partnerships and utilised them either for specific purposes or for only a short while.

For example: Mr.O formed many very short-lived link ups that lasted no more than a few days each. Mr.O at times was quite aggressive towards individual street homeless people, though he was not considered a bully. I noticed that he was quick to condemn people who let him down in small ways. For example, he said he'd been 'ripped off' (robbed) by a fellow drug user. However, later on the same day, he explained that he had not really been 'ripped off' it was just that he had lent some money to an individual (and shared the drugs bought from this money). This individual's giro failed to show up the following day and he was therefore unable to pay Mr.O back at the agreed time. Mr.O's link ups always seemed to end in this way, with him using very strong terms and then softening later and making friends again (though not linking up again).

Mr.B explained that street homeless people often 'chuck in together' (share the costs of a hit) on a one-off basis. Whilst he also had link ups during the project, he was happy on his own and, when his partner in a link up failed to contribute or share equally, he was happy to dissolve the partnership without rancour.

The comments of one 'loner' (Mr.R) indicate that trust is an important and yet elusive quality in link ups. Mr.R said he had difficulty finding someone to trust. He said that life is easier when you are in a link up because two people can get more money, quicker than one. Whilst this is helpful, he also said he was happier on his own. Mr.Q said that, whilst he liked to 'hang out' with various people (drinkers or drug users), he nevertheless was 'a bit of a loner'. This was confirmed in observation.

'Loners' seemed happy to be on their own, more relaxed as to whether or not they were part of a link up and more inclined to form short term link ups for specific, one-off purposes. The

difficulties that link ups ran into were no different from the difficulties street homeless people experienced generally – losing out in deals, giving without receiving in return. It may be that link ups become less attractive as a person becomes increasingly able to manage alone. However, this does not mean that, the longer a person is homeless, the more isolated from other homeless people they become. Many of those who had been homeless for a long time (for example, Mr.A, Mr.F) were usually in link-ups when they were living on the street.

4. Quality of relationships on the streets

Many of the participants in this project complained about the quality of their relationships with other rough sleepers. Particularly when considering leaving the streets and going into a detoxification or rehabilitation centre, people said they wanted to leave behind the dishonesty and harshness of their friends. Mr.O complained about a ‘lack of community’, which he felt contrasted badly with places where he had stayed in London.

Whilst in the field, I always linked up with someone else or I formed a threesome, joining a pre-existing link up. Either way, I was frequently privy to gossip and backstabbing both between partners of a link up and between street homeless people generally. It became apparent over time that, in the dynamics of a link up, people became aggrieved over small things and these grievances built up over time, giving the impression that they might destroy the link up. Hall found that amidst the youths who resided (episodically) in a hostel ‘the social dynamics (were) fickle’ and ‘petty disputes (were) ... commonplace, starting up, simmering on and fizzling out’ (Hall 2003, 35). On the streets the grievances people had were usually not brought out into the open. Backstabbing and gossiping seem to help air issues without direct confrontation between two partners. This way of managing conflict had the advantage of sustaining a link up; it also meant that street homeless people were aware of the problems all the others were having. Hall found that ‘hearsay and drugs (were) the staples of bedsit sociality’ (ibid. 66). In a similar way it might be argued that the gossip that helped manage conflict also provided entertainment for rough sleepers.

On Eighner’s travels as a homeless man, he observed that some homeless people went about in pairs. He found that ‘when there was a pair, one of the pair was the star and the other was the

sidekick' (Eighner 1993, 163). This was also observed in Oxford. Mr.I explained to me that, despite an appearance of equality, many partnerships were not equal because one partner ('grafter') worked harder than the other one ('canny'). However, the canny one would try to convince the grafter that they were working equally. The canny partner would make decisions and 'dish out the orders' in relation to where and for how long they worked, when they scored, which of them collected the hit. The canny partner may also be in charge of dividing the hit and, according to Mr.I, (but also in participant observation it was observed), may take more than half, disguising this by adding extra water to the grafter's hit or else by claiming that it was a small 'deal' (amount).

Phillimore observed that 'where social identities are manipulated for the purpose of projecting a superior status a dosser cannot carve out for himself an enduring status, but for the most part only advantages which are limited to the situation at hand' (Phillimore 1979, 44). When people spoke of their link ups, they upheld ideals of honesty and equality, which they knew to be unrealistic over a prolonged period of time. They remained tolerant of each other for as long as their partnership was sustaining their needs, after which time they would split. This suggests that rough sleepers did not envisage long-term relationships and were therefore able to take advantage of each other in the short-term. Randall and Brown suggest that, whilst for rough sleepers 'belonging to a community seemed to be important, ...not having to be committed to it, perhaps reflect(ed) a loss of established relationships' (Randall & Brown 1999, 7-8). This may be the case although it is arguable the extent to which some rough sleepers ever had 'established relationships' in their past, particularly when background factors of family breakdowns are understood. In any case, their situation suggests that an easy, flexible approach, combined with being able to call off a link-up at any time, was prevalent and was accepted.

I have described the types of groupings homeless people formed with one another. There were many relationships amidst street dwellers but these were fairly unstable and frequently plagued by suspicion. On one hand this can be accounted for by the transience of street life – interpersonal problems could best be resolved by separation rather than by confrontation. On the other hand, people's feelings about themselves and street life, vacillated between

embracing street life and rejecting it. In this regard, as Snow and Anderson note, 'street friends helped them get by from day to day, but ... they could also prevent them from getting off the streets' (Snow & Anderson, 176).

D. Internal conflicts

The conflicts that arose between rough sleepers were not limited to the breakdown of their link ups but also came about between people who used different substances, in particular between drinkers and drug users. Many rough sleepers appeared to have preconceived ideas about either drinkers or drug users, and used these ideas to differentiate themselves from each other. In this section I examine how pervasive the animosity between drinkers and drug users was as well as instances of crossovers between different substances users.

1. Drinkers and drug users: negative perceptions of each other

Given that there was already a division between drinkers and drug users when this project began, it was not possible to ascertain the origins of this division. There are factors that suggest explanations though. For example, homeless drinkers have existed historically for longer than homeless drug users and it may be that their co-existence produced conflict. Furthermore, the emergence of crack cocaine use, which has increased over the past eight to ten years, has been associated (by heroin users) with a lowering of 'morals'. Mr.R said 'it makes you do things you shouldn't do that go way below what's right' and Mr.U's comments about how street life has changed for the worse over the past ten years, are pertinent here.

It may also be that the arrival of new homeless people with different needs produced conflicts when services were being sought. Mr.A, a drinker, complained to me on one occasion that he could not get a seat in the doctor's waiting room as it was 'full of junkies' waiting to attend a 'group session'. Many drinkers told me about the presence of 'sin bins' in hostels where drugs were not permitted, implying that drug users were less likely to get caught than drinkers, and this may have bred resentment.

1.1. Trading insults.

Drinkers claimed to have a camaraderie that drug users did not. Mr.E said: 'a drug addict looks out for himself, but alcoholics look after their own.' Both Mr.C and Mr.A warned me to 'look out' for myself when undertaking participant observation. Mr.C was concerned for my safety, believing that I would be ripped off and hurt by drug users. Drinkers claimed 'needle users' or 'junkies' were socially destructive in their ruthless pursuit of money for drugs. Mr.K told me that it was the arrival of 'junkies' that spoilt the car park as a sleeping place. He explained that there were too many of them and that they got involved in dealing and thus caused problems involving the police and security guards, making it impossible to have a peaceful night's rest.

Drug users on the other hand, claimed that drinkers did not care about themselves, and were out of control and paying no heed to whether they vomited or urinated all over themselves. Mr.J told me that he would not stay overnight at the Night Shelter because many 'aggressive drinkers' went there and 'they want to fight you... they want to take on the world.' He explained that they would pick an argument over anything small and escalate it into a fight. In participant observation it was often observed that drug using beggars would get worried by the way drunk people begged. Whilst I saw no face-to-face confrontations, beggars often complained that drinkers' way of begging was intimidating, even if unintentionally so, because passers-by were confronted with a drunk person, out of control.

When Mr.B was staying in a hostel, his roommate, a drinker, would come back very late at night and shout at him, calling him 'a fucking junkie'. For Mr.B drinkers were aggressive and, furthermore, they 'begged beggars' a practice which was frowned upon by other drug users. He told me that drinkers ('pissheads') 'don't give a fuck about disrespect' as they are too drunk to care. The problems Mr.B had in his bedsit, (Chapter Four), led to him losing his room as a result of the drinkers in the house complaining about his drugs use to the letting agents.¹⁷

¹⁷ Mr.A, who knew Mr.FG, told me that some drug users had beaten up Mr.FG two months prior to Mr.B's occupancy of the room downstairs. This may account for his subsequent hostility towards Mr.B.

2. Crossovers

Whilst there were divisions between drug users and drinkers, interviews and participant observation also revealed a crossover between these groups, which indicated that the division was not always and everywhere absolute.

2.1. Crossover link ups?

The rule that everything be shared equally between partners made link ups easiest to form between people who used the same drugs or who both drank, because their expenses were the same (and, roughly, the amount of work required too). Whilst sometimes there was conflict between drinkers and drug users, the fact that they did not form link ups can be best explained on practical grounds, namely that their ways of life differed and were incompatible.

Even between drug users, link ups did not work unless their needs were the same. Mr.D, who was addicted to white but did not use dark, formed a link up with Mr.HI, who used both white and dark. This link up did not last because, whilst they had been honest with each other, they disagreed about how to spend their money. Mr.HI started to feel that Mr.D was getting a better deal than him as Mr.D only bought white and therefore was getting more of a hit for his money. Because Mr.HI also had to buy dark, he felt that he was subsidising Mr.D.

There was one exception to this which concerned Mr.I (a drug user) who formed link ups on two separate occasions, with 'community care' people (Mr.DE and Mr.EF). When I commented on how unusual this seemed to be, he explained that he had some advantages that enabled him to undertake link ups that were not strictly equal. Whilst he and both Mr.DE and Mr.EF worked together and shared their earnings, they worked fewer hours than most drug user partnerships. Mr.I told me that, due to a chronic serious illness he had, his state benefits were substantially higher than those of other homeless people, and he was able therefore to sustain his own needs and those of his working partner, with considerably less work. He also told me that he had got his addiction down to just one small heroin hit every other day and each day a few pipes of white – he did not need more than twenty pounds per day to sustain his drug habit.

Nevertheless his link ups did not conform to the equality people had described as being fundamental. He explained that these link ups ended because the individuals in question either became too aggressive (Mr.DE) towards passers-by, thus prejudicing his ability to earn money or else were not willing to work every day (Mr.EF), preferring to stay inside their hostel places instead. He told me that he felt protective towards both Mr.DE (a young schizophrenic) and Mr.EF (also a schizophrenic). Mr.I told me Mr.EF had been ripped off frequently and that he liked to help them as well as other homeless people, especially those younger or more vulnerable than himself (he was in his forties and one of the oldest drug users in the project).

2.2. Substances crossovers?

Whilst there were very few crossovers when people formed link ups, nevertheless many drug users drank and many drinkers used drugs. This fact may mean there were fewer conflicts between these sets of people than there otherwise might have been as it led to some socialisation between them. For example: whilst I was staying out with Mr.F, I observed very cordial relations between him (a drug user) and a group of drinkers who smoked cannabis, like he did. Although a male drinker was shouting very aggressively, Mr.F joked along with him and I realised that the aggression was part of a joking exchange.

Drinkers who used drugs did not use needles. The most prominent aspect of drinkers' prejudices against drug users was their use of needles, and the strongest insult they had about drug users was 'needle user'. They also appeared not to use brown; However, Mr.I told me that in Oxford many drinkers used white. He knew of a drinker couple that had spent eighty pounds on rocks, very recently. He did say though, that he'd not come across this in other towns and found it unusual how in Oxford so many drinkers used white. I did not observe drinkers using white but I did observe them using cannabis, benzodiazepines¹⁸ and hallucinogens.

Whilst I observed some drug users (Mr.B, Mr.W, Mr.LM) drinking for pleasure and to 'get a buzz', most of the drinking I observed by drug users, was undertaken in order to help them fall

¹⁸ Drugs in this category include Valium, temazepam, Mogadon, Librium, Ativan (Source: Fountain & Howes 2002, pg.6). There was a thriving informal trade in these drugs, which were prescribed to both drinkers and drug users at various times.

asleep. Mr.Y and Ms.F (a couple) were heroin addicts but, when they stayed at the Night Shelter, they would go to a park nearby the city centre and drink with the group of drinkers who every night would drink in this park. I asked them why they drank and they explained that they got on well with this group of drinkers and that getting drunk was the only way they could get to sleep in the disrupted atmosphere of the Night Shelter. Mr.H, also a heroin addict, started drinking very heavily in the evenings when he was evicted from a hostel and went to sleep on a nearby field. He explained to me that he was extremely cold at night and, despite increasing his use of heroin, was unable to fall asleep and found that alcohol was the only drug that helped him to sleep.

Whilst drug users felt 'white' had brutalised the drug scene, the fact that many drinkers used white suggests that they did not share this perception. For them it was the use of needles that made drug addicts brutal and anti-social. These crossovers suggest that the perceptions these sets of people had of each other were less deeply felt than they were vocalised. The practical basis of link ups (obtaining money for drugs or drink), may not be reflected in the social solidarity rough sleepers in fact felt towards each other.

3. Bullying and intimidation.

Many people complained that the homeless scene was rife with bullying and intimidation. Mr.Z, who was known by homeless people as a bully, instigated by far the worst cases of intimidation (Mr.Z has already been mentioned in Chapter Four, when he stole from Mr.N inside a hostel). Mr.Z, a drug addict, was known to steal off beggars, to harass other drug users for their drugs and to bully 'community care people' into handing over their money to him. I first observed him in a day centre where homeless people could get sandwiches and hot drinks in the early evenings. The reason he was so noticeable was that he was the only person sitting alone. No one spoke with him or sat at his table. When I asked why he was alone, I was told he had stolen money from beggars over the previous few nights.

Over the following months I regularly saw Mr.Z and frequently heard stories about his bullying activities. People explained that he would watch other homeless people and then try to steal from them when they were unable to defend themselves. In mornings, when

community care people cashed their state benefits in the post office, he would be in the post office and he would 'clock them' (spot them getting their money) and then harass them for money, which they often handed over to him. I was told he watched beggars and would harass them when they had earned enough money. On a few occasions when I was vending during participant observation, he would beg, aggressively, up and down the street. Usually a vendor would ask someone doing this to move away due to pitch agreements (not working someone else's pitch), but with Mr.Z I was told to try to ignore his presence, as he was liable to cause trouble for me otherwise.

I asked homeless people how people like Mr.Z fared amidst other rough sleepers. People told me that no one would confront him directly, preferring to gossip about him behind his back. I was told how 'everyone would love it if he got done over' but no-one was prepared themselves to 'do him'. At the very end of my participant observation, one vendor called the police and pressed charges, after Mr.Z stole from him, using threats. This vendor (Mr.GH) though, worked and lived just outside the city and was therefore not a part of the everyday street scene. Furthermore, he was older than most street homeless people (in his fifties), and his drinking was not very serious. These factors suggest that Mr.GH was in a better position than most to take action against Mr.Z. No day-to-day contact meant he was less vulnerable to future intimidation or reprisals and his lack of dependency on drugs, meant he would never need to buy drugs from Mr.Z or need him to 'chuck in with' him.

Whilst there were conflicts between drinkers and drug users, they differed according to whether they took place in or outdoors. Outdoor conflicts were often related to pitch disputes (see Chapter Three) and were usually resolved quickly, whereas indoor conflicts appeared to relate to clashes between people who used different substances and who invoked derogatory images based on these differences in relation to each other. Drinkers and drug users held prejudices against each other at a conceptual or ideological level but in practice these prejudices arose only in particular circumstances. These two groups seemed divided in practical terms as a result of differing survival requirements.

Bullying (and intimidation) appeared to be just as common indoors as outdoors. It did not mark a group division but rather, individuals undertook it. These individuals appeared to become fairly isolated as a result.

E. Economy

In this section I explore the various ways in which street dwellers engaged in survival practices. These practices have been labelled variously 'shadow work' (Wardnaugh 1996, Snow and Anderson 1993), or 'economies of makeshift' (Hopper, Baxter and Conover 1985). Almost all of the participants in the project were claiming welfare benefits, but additionally most of them also 'grafted' (worked) in order to earn extra money, needed for the purchase of drink or drugs, or as a way of structuring and passing the time of day, or both. The informal, semi-legal and illegal work practices of rough sleepers, was a factor that contributed to their sense of belonging. This was so partly because their work practices were not recognised or given legitimacy in mainstream society.

Some commentators have argued that participation in the labour market is central to New Labour's social policy (Holden 1999, 529), and that social integration is currently felt to 'come only through paid work' (Levitas 1996, 5). As Dean and Taylor-Gooby note, 'the market is the standard source of income for those of working age, either through direct employment or indirectly through family dependency on someone who is employed. The resulting social construction of dependency defines wage-labour or family relationship as independence... The use of state welfare is understood as dependency' (Dean & Taylor-Gooby 1992, 2). Lund further notes how 'New Labour has linked obligations to rights in a way that attaches receivers (of welfare) to givers (tax-payers) via the "contract" that assistance is owed only if "character" is enhanced (Lund 1999, 458). In France too, Declerck argued, that homeless people are condemned: 'Apart from the Christian or the lay versions of Christianity that speak of brotherhood, love, or help for everyone, I think homeless people are by and large harassed, left to themselves, and condemned to horrific suffering - because we hate them. We hate them because they won't work... because they mock everything we hold dear... they are a living insult to our narcissism and to our aspirations' (Declerck 2003, section 2). Sanctioned forms of work are constructed as morally superior to claiming welfare benefits

and the forms of work rough sleepers adopt are often condemned. Begging is felt to be intimidating, beggars often classified as aggressive, and claimants of welfare are condemned for being 'scroungers'. This topic is explored further in the next chapter, when relations between rough sleepers and members of the general public are discussed. For now it should be noted that rough sleepers shared common work practices which were widely condemned and this had the effect of strengthening the bonds between rough sleepers, who had no other ('legitimate') means of earning money. These bonds are derived from the fact that rough sleepers are 'drawn into close relationships ...not simply because they are (all)... defined as criminals by society, but because they have helped to satisfy one another's needs in a time of extreme deprivation' (Spradley 1970, 240).

1. Financial differences between different homeless people

The financial needs of street homeless people varied according to whether or not they had addictions. Community care people, on prescribed medications, were practically absent from street working activities. Both Mr.DE and Mr.EF, who had worked with Mr.I, did work on the streets in order to buy drugs. However they worked short hours and took very small quantities, on an occasional basis. Likewise there were no 'straights' working to buy drink or drugs. Of the only two straight homeless workers I met, one, Mr.AB, vended magazines for two days and left the area shortly after, while the other (Mr.BC) worked as a beggar for three weeks and then found a room and a job in a car maintenance workshop. Mr.CD, the only other straight I met, passed through Oxford, looking for accommodation. He was sleeping in his car and never begged or vended on the streets.

1.1. Drinkers.

As already mentioned before, in this project there were many more drug users participating in this research than drinkers (though there were more drinkers than drug users in the homeless population). Of the seven who directly participated (via interviews and by permitting me to be a participant observer), two, Mr.K and Mr.L, worked almost every day in the mornings till early afternoon (usually around 3 – 4 pm). Both were able to work later hours if need be but neither would start drinking until after work. Their financial needs were mainly for money for drink although Mr.K had obtained a room and, as he claimed no benefits, he also needed to

pay his rent. Ms.A, also a drinker, did not work at all. She claimed income support (as well as housing benefit but that was for the Night Shelter). The same situation applied to Ms.E, a heavy alcoholic. However, Mr.C and his companion Mr.JK worked as vendors (as well as claiming benefits) though neither were involved in stealing in order to obtain extra money. Mr.A was struggling to stay off drink throughout this project, and he never worked while the project took place.

Even if a person were to drink large quantities of cider, beer and sherry all day long, it is likely that fifty to seventy pounds would satisfy their needs, with enough to provide for many friends. Less than half of that would suffice to keep the 'rattle and rolls' at bay. Whilst both Mr.K and Mr.L drank in pubs, which were more expensive, Mr.C and Mr.JK would buy cans and bottles to drink in other places. Mr.C told me that he is content if he can earn twenty pounds a day, so long as there are no unexpected emergencies (eg.being robbed)

1.2. Drug users.

There were four main variables in the financial needs of drug users. 1)If a person was on 'juice' (methadone), 2)if a person used white and dark or just one of them, 3)if a person was staying in a hostel or on the streets, and 4)if a person was or was not trying to come off drugs.

Someone who used both white and dark, was not trying to give up, had not got a prescription, and slept on the streets, needed to work practically all hours of the day in order to earn enough money to sustain his or her drug habit. Mr.N, for a few months, exemplified this type of working addict. In addition to sustaining his dark habit, that required him to have at least three hits (at twenty pounds each) per day, he also used white as much as he could. The minimum amount he required was four 'bags' (a bag is a name for the wrap in which white is sold at twenty pounds for one bag), which he took in smaller but more frequent doses. White users usually split one bag into eight portions but some users injected white and this required a larger dose, in which case a bag would be divided into four portions – a large one for the injection and three smaller ones to smoke.

Mr.N never bought food although he did buy cigarettes in order to obtain ash, which was a necessary element in smoking pipes. Mr.N also injected white, which he mixed with dark – this was called a ‘snowball’. There were no other expenses in his life. Occasionally he would shower and change clothes, but these were free at the day centre. His rucksack contained just a sleeping bag and drug using paraphernalia. Mr.N worked immediately upon waking up. He slept in a doorway close by to one of his pitches near a cashpoint machine, and he would start begging straightaway (or once he’d injected his last remaining hit). As soon as he earned enough, he would go and phone a dealer and then buy his hit. Then he’d find a place to inject himself and start working again. This pattern would carry on for the whole day and for much of the night. Mr.N worked this way even when he was in link ups, because he said he ‘loved’ white and wanted as much as he could get.

In contrast, Mr.I was coming off drugs. He was on a ‘script’ (methadone prescription), which he would pick up each morning when he left his hostel. He also used street heroin two or three times a week, in addition to white, which he smoked (irregularly) most days. Mr.I had moved into a hostel and spent a great deal of his time there. He, like many who were on a script, found that he did not need to work very much as his drug needs were lower. Furthermore the hot and stuffy atmosphere inside the hostel made him feel ‘lazy’ and there were some days when he did not come out to work at all.

2. *‘Making raises’*¹⁹

‘Making raises’ was the phrase many street homeless people used for ways of raising money or other items such as food. The term ‘hustling’ was used by Spradley to describe the way imprisoned homeless alcoholics procured resources. He argued that ‘one learns far more than a set of terms and actions... (a tramp) learns the underlying logic and principles which organize the knowledge shared by those who live by this culture’ (Spradley 1970, 247). There are various different ways to make raises and what follows is a description of the most common practices people told me about or that were encountered during participant observation. Finding ways to raise money was essential for drug addicts as drugs were very

¹⁹ This phrase may originate from the North of England.

expensive. Drinkers in this project were considerably less engaged in working and, those who were, appeared to limit themselves to vending, busking and, occasionally, begging.

2.1. Giros.

Almost all participants received state benefits. Some received weekly amounts in the form of a book of money orders, which they cashed at the post office, but most received giro cheques on a fortnightly basis. To receive it people had to go to the Job Centre to sign on in person and receive the cheque, which they would take to the post office to cash. Many homeless people knew when each others' giros were due because people borrowed money or drugs from each other, stating the day their giro was due and repayment could be expected. Quite often a person would accompany someone to the post office in order to make sure they received their money before it got spent. The post office in the city centre was the main one used for cashing books and giros and many social encounters (as well as some intimidation – see above) would take place there. On giro day people still worked however, although the pressure to earn was usually less strong and people often started later in the day.

2.2. Begging and vending.

Begging (also known as 'ham an' egging') and vending were the main working activities people undertook on the streets. When passers-by gave money, purchased a magazine or gave food, cigarettes or other items, these were called 'drops'. For example, a person might say: 'I made a fiver drop today' or 'he dropped me a tenner'. A drop can take place, though, even when someone is not working. For example, when I was in the market lanes with Mr.G, one night, some loud and drunk students came past. One of them noticed us and apologised for waking us up. He then produced a ten-pound note and gave it to us (and he also stayed for a short while, chatting with us).

As noted before, having pitches from which to beg or vend was very important and the subject of much dispute. Ms.D regularly used to beg in the afternoons and evenings outside a bank. However, Ms.I became street homeless and started using Ms.D's pitch. Although both Ms.D and Ms.I carried on working there (sitting a few yards apart), they argued over who should have the pitch. Ms.I started to shout to passers-by 'don't give her anything, she's not

homeless'. After a few days they negotiated a deal whereby they would use the pitch on alternate days. Both found other pitches to use on their other days.

Many homeless people had more than one pitch. This was especially the case for those who begged (some of whom also vended at different times of the day). The main reason for this was that the police often told beggars to move. Frequently people would move, wait for the police to go away, and then return. However, depending on how friendly their relations with the police were, they might move to a different pitch if need be. The other main reason for having more than one pitch was diurnal. In the daytime, shops were open and shoppers might agree to make drops. At night, theatres, pubs, clubs and restaurants yielded more business. Cashpoints were popular pitches in both day and night times, and their 'owners' were very protective of them. However, they were also the pitches where someone was most likely to be moved on from by the police.

When people were in link ups, they generally worked at the same time, from different pitches. Frequently these pitches were near each other and the partners could look out for each other, call over to each other as well as exchange news. This provided an element of protection, particularly at night, from both the violence of passers-by and from getting caught by the police (if they were begging). However, sometimes partners' pitches were out of sight from each other. This was sometimes because nearby pitches were taken by someone else. For example, at night Mr.I and Mr.N who were not partners, worked on each side of a bridge that was nearby some pubs and clubs. Despite exchanging many small favours, they were both linked with other people or on their own. When they had partners they would be out of sight, and sometimes relatively far away. Sometimes it was not possible to have two pitches in the same area and this was another reason for working out of each other's sight. For example, Mr.B worked at a cash point down a small lane where there were no other pitches.

Partners would arrange to meet up over the day (or night) and often one of them would go to score whilst the other one continued to work. On one occasion I met a couple that moved off the streets into a hostel and started working in shifts. Mr.H would vend magazines in the morning and Ms.D would beg in the afternoons, and they would both beg in the evenings.

There were two different types of begging practices. The most common was sitting-down begging. People who begged this way sat on the ground, usually wrapped in their sleeping bag, sometimes with a piece of cardboard to sit on. Some people put a hat or some other container, in front of them. One individual also held a cardboard sign that read 'hungry and homeless', but this was not common. Frequently people used no props and collected their 'drop' by stretching out their hand. Most people would ask: 'please, do you think you could spare me some change?' or words to that effect. It was most important to say 'please'. However, people begging were frequently ignored by passers-by and would sometimes mumble nonsense that no one could hear, or suddenly break out into singing for a brief moment. Some beggars remained silent, either through embarrassment or because they believed it yielded better drops.

The other form of begging was called 'spot begging', mentioned earlier. When begging in this style, a person would be standing up, walking a stretch of a busy road, and going up to passers-by and asking them for money. The most frequent request was for 'two pounds so I can stay at the night shelter' but other stories could be told. For example, that a person has lost their return ticket home or that a person is saving up for a deposit for a room.

Both styles of begging required people to adopt a humble stance in relation to passers-by. The more common mode of sitting whilst begging helped to maintain low visibility and the usually quiet manner of asking for money kept beggars less audible. Those who begged in this passive way were giving the formal appearance of dependency, in their silence, humble manner, role of beggar, but simultaneously, they were 'grafting'. This type of practice resembles what Willis has called 'doubling'. Rough sleepers, like the working class labourers Willis describes, 'experience a double ability to recognize formal reality and its codes and expectations, on the one hand, but also, on the other, to recognize the informal plane beneath' (Willis 2001, 212). Rough sleepers knew that begging was a form of work despite the fact that passers-by often called them lazy, and told them to 'get a job'. Within the gap between formal 'reality' of unemployment and their own informal work practices, rough sleepers could adopt a variety of stances.

The humble and quiet approach customarily adopted for begging was not held to be necessary for vending magazines. Vendors who had a good 'sales patter' were considered to be successful at their work. Those who were quiet explained to me that they were too shy (Mr.C, Mr.L), or 'not very good' at vending (Mr.G, Mr.N). This indicated that vending was seen as an activity that passers-by would find more legitimate. Various vendors told me that vending was seen by passers-by as 'the homeless helping themselves' (Mr.JK) and thus more deserving of respect.

2.3. Other ways to make raises.

During the project I was often told about other types of work that some people specialised in. There were four work-type activities – 'dipping' (pick-pocketing), shoplifting, 'tricking' (a way of confusing till operators into giving a person change for twenty pounds), and 'serving up' (dealing drugs). People also told me about times in their past when they had committed robberies and armed robberies, but there were no known incidents of these crimes amidst the street homeless populations whilst this project took place.

Whilst people said 'dipping' was a form of work, I heard of no one being actually engaged in this practice. I did meet and hear about shoplifters though. They were reputed to earn upwards of one hundred pounds a day. Most would steal to order and one individual sold all his merchandise to a shop owner just out of town. I heard of only one person who did 'tricks', and he was much admired and spoken of amidst the homeless populations. Mr.B had a brief link up with him and tried to learn the art of tricking. He told me that this practice was highly profitable, yielding at least one to two hundred pounds per day.

2.4. 'Serving up'

Sometimes drug dealers would take on homeless individuals as 'runners'. A runner was someone who was provided with drugs to sell to drug addicts. Dealers would pay them in the form of drugs. Mr.V and Mr.X became runners when a dealer, who was dissatisfied with his runner, complained to Mr.V about it. Mr.V offered to work for this dealer. The dealer gave him and Mr.X (his partner) fifteen bags of dark to sell (worth twenty pounds each). Of these,

they had to sell twelve and give the money to the dealer. As payment they were able to keep three bags for themselves.

Because the quality and quantity of the deals was very high (in the initial stages of this arrangement), Mr.V and Mr.X were soon taking sixty bags at a time from their dealer, and selling them very quickly. Naturally they both acquired much bigger habits themselves as a result of their dealing. Slowly things started to go wrong. As Mr.V was very well known amidst homeless populations, it was not long before it became widely known that he was dealing. In order to minimize risks, Mr.V and Mr.X decided to 'stash' (hide) the drugs. This meant that, in the eventuality of their being stopped and searched by the police, there would only be a small quantity of drugs on their person. However, on three separate occasions their stash disappeared. This meant they accumulated a debt towards their dealer. The dealer carried on using them as runners. However he cut down on the number of bags they could have as payment. Furthermore, the quality and quantity of the deals started to decline and they therefore took longer to sell. This meant there was a higher risk for them, as they carried more drugs on them, for longer periods of time. They stopped running for their dealer when they owed him over two thousand pounds. This debt was mainly made up of the missing stashes. However, their increased levels of addiction meant they also used more bags than their dealer had allowed them.

Mr.V had managed to get a room but, because of these debts, Mr.V and Mr.X were not always able to use the room, in case the dealer turned up or waited for them outside. Whilst Mr.V was reluctant to give up his room, he stayed in the hope that his problems would blow over. Mr.X, though, was dissatisfied with not being able to use the room and, after he ripped off two people who had given him money to score for them, he left Oxford and his link up with Mr.V ended temporarily.

There were various instances of street homeless people dealing as runners for bigger dealers. Most of the people who became runners also found places to live, in rented self-contained accommodation, even if for very short periods of time. However, this was not universally the

case. Mr.D dealt white from his room in a hostel, and Mr.KL dealt dark whilst he was street homeless.

A common practice amongst runners was 'piecing the bags'. This meant someone had taken a small hit from their deal, prior to selling it to them. Most deals were 'pieced'. This was especially so in Oxford which lies far from the ports of entry where drugs first arrive in the country. So many dealers and runners have pieced the deals that they are quite small by the time they reach here. When a dealer (or runner) is piecing the bags too much, street homeless people react badly. Mr.F told me that when Mr.KL was 'serving up' (dealing) he was doing very small deals. Word spread throughout the street homeless drug users that Mr.KL was piecing the bags, and people decided collectively to stop buying from him. Mr.F said to him 'It's boycott-you day today'. After just one day of this boycott, Mr.KL offered much better deals for a short while.

There were two other ways to make raises. One was stealing from other homeless people. Some of this was considered above, in the section on intimidation and bullying, but not all stealing was accompanied by intimidation. I once witnessed Mr.B steal Mr.R's magazines while Mr.R was distracted. There were many accusations between people of stealing. However it was impossible to verify whether or not these accusations were well founded.

2.5. Scavenging.

Lastly, an important and practically universal way of making raises was by scavenging. I noticed that street homeless people were always on the look out for anything useful. The main items people scavenged were cigarette ends ('dog ends'). This activity was ongoing, as a background feature of walking along streets. People collected dog ends either in their pockets or in containers, such as old tobacco tins, and they would make roll-ups from them.

Scavenging for any useful items was continual. A homeless man appeared in the market lane where I was sleeping, at 2am, carrying a large black bin liner that was filled with popcorn. He had acquired it from outside a cinema. Mr.A took me on a 'skip run' at 5am one morning, to show me the various places he would scavenge for small change, clothing and other items.

We looked in telephone booths for small change, in discarded paper bags on the off-chance of finding something useful, around the back of night clubs for money or coats that may have been left behind, and in wheelie bins, which we climbed into and scavenged for saucepans and other useful items. Mr.Y and Ms.F (a couple) found shoes and clothing, and also gave me a found scooter to give to my son. They noticed that scavenging in Oxford yielded very good items (including designer gear) when students left town and they commented to me that 'up North', people would have thought they were rich if they'd worn their scavenged clothes and shoes there. Mr.J told me he often scavenged for food and explained that 'if it don't taste right, don't eat it'. He found various edible items such as beer and cheese.

Making raises was very important for street homeless people. While drug users worked more systematically and for long hours, drinkers also worked making raises. One drinker told me that, regardless of whether a person is a drinker or drug user, going to detoxification units was something a person did when they had 'run out of ways of making raises'. Making raises also was a source of pride and people who managed to make lots of money were admired amidst the street homeless. Spradley noted that begging meant foregoing or modifying the value of self reliance (Spradley 1970, 257). Here in Oxford, despite the 'charitable' nature of 'drops', or the illegitimate nature of shoplifting or tricking, it was those who obtained the most money through these means who were considered the most self-reliant. Many people took pride in their ability to spot an opportunity for making raises and in their consequent sense of self-sufficiency. Whilst in the face of passers-by, rough sleepers often adopted a stance of humility that implied neediness and dependency, the result of this was an increased sense of self-sufficiency and independence.

3. Money.

To many of the street homeless money had a quality of artificiality. Some would refer to it variously as 'funny money', 'toy money', 'temporary money'. Mr.L associated funny money with the nature of the work itself. For him the types of work street homeless people engaged in was not 'proper' work and yielded money that was different from other types. Funny money passes very quickly from passer-by to beggar/vendor to drug/drink trader who ends up with it. It is temporary because of this and it has no value for anything except when drink or

drugs are purchased. The process takes place over just a few hours. Many street homeless workers believed that passers-by have spare change and they seem to regard it as a waste product they could utilise. Mr.B jokingly said the spare change passers-by had 'wore holes in their pockets'.

During one (week long) episode of participant observation, I worked for thirty-five hours as a vendor and as a beggar. Vendors must buy their magazines before selling them at a higher price. For this reason I earned less vending than begging. I worked for eighteen hours vending, which yielded ninety-nine pounds, and seventeen hours as a beggar, which yielded one hundred and twenty pounds. This meant that, on average, I earned six pounds and thirty pence per hour. On this occasion I was working with Mr.B who was known to be a high earner who worked long hours and, furthermore, this episode took place during a November, which was a time when people earned more than in the summer months. These advantages were never repeated and in future episodes of participant observation I never earned that much again, with one exception when I worked over the three days leading up to Christmas.

On ethical grounds it is difficult to report on the actual earnings of rough sleepers as they needed to sustain the belief that passers-by have of them, that they need food or a hot drink. Rough sleepers believed, with some justification, that passers-by would not want to give them money if they knew it would be spent on drugs or drink. However, drugs and drink were not entirely negative features of street life. In part they gave structure to time, and enabled rough sleepers to avoid 'empty' time; they also, albeit ironically, enabled mobile rough sleepers to feel strong and to distinguish themselves from institutionalised residents of hostels, who were considered vulnerable and weak.

I have described the income generating work of street homeless populations. The artificial character of money is interesting to note. It chimes with the tricks used to obtain it as well as with the drug or drink induced high it is spent on. Its fluidity is structurally compatible with the mobility and transience of street life. Wealth is not accumulated on the streets. It is instead, quickly and directly used up. Because rough sleepers' forms of work are considered to be illegitimate, they are classified and socially constructed as 'dependent'. This

dependency is reinforced by the notion of addiction to substances. It may be that their use of the terms 'funny', 'temporary' money reflects both the illegitimate way money is earned and spent by rough sleepers.

Conclusion

I have attempted to ascertain the principles underlying the internal social world of homeless street dwellers. My argument has been that the main patterns of association were based on two factors: substance use and whether a person lived in or outdoors. Link ups or group activities had instrumental functions such as protection, mutual aid, pooling resources, keeping company, and were personally self-validating relationships (see Snow and Anderson 1993, pg.173). However, as Wagner observed, 'people face limited structural alternatives' (Wagner 1993, 149). A drug user with a heavy habit would have found it very difficult to sustain a link up with a drinker, whose financial needs differ.

It is interesting to note that there did not appear to be a social divide between people recently made homeless and those with more experience of living on the streets. Whilst there were practical reasons for this (survival needs, limited alternatives), it is possible that there may also be some form of cultural continuity between some housed citizens and homeless people. Collison's paper (1996) explores links between youth masculinity, consumption, drugs and crime and shows how there may be sub-cultural formations amidst members of the 'underclass'. Likewise Martin's papers on New Age Travellers (1998, 2000 & 2002) show links between travellers and homeless people. Unfortunately, for reasons of time and opportunity, I was unable to investigate this further.

Street homeless people shared a common alienation from mainstream society although there did not appear to be rituals of alienation such as Spradley(1970) described ('making the bucket'). Living outdoors and being poor, with few possessions, appeared to guarantee the recognition and solidarity of other homeless people. To some extent the survival activities of homeless people led them to endow values held by mainstream society (self-sufficiency, endurance, honesty) with a slightly different meaning. They required honesty from their link up partners and from their dealers, but practiced a degree of trickery in relation to domiciled

parties; they valued self-sufficiency and independence but derived their material wealth through charity and unrecognised, 'illegitimate' means; they valued mobility, because it enabled them to be more self-sufficient. However, the main, or most tangible, alternative to their mobility appeared to be institutionalisation. Their addictions also seemed to make them less independent or self-sufficient but this was only the case when they experienced a 'cluck' or the 'rattle'n' rolls'. Whilst intoxicated they felt strong, optimistic and in control.

In Chapter Three I contrasted 'empty' time with time spent working. Time spent working and being intoxicated were both considered to be good. People wanted these types of time. On the other hand, 'empty' time and time spent experiencing withdrawals were viewed in negative terms. 'Killing time' often led to addictions. People killing time were sometimes waiting to gain access to services facilities, thus viewing their time in the terms laid out by domiciled people. Undergoing withdrawals also led to a loss of control – people told me their bodies would shake, they would feel sick, their mental states would turn profoundly negative (feelings of depression and boredom would set in). In order to undergo such an experience, people sometimes felt they had to enter into a hostel of some kind and thus live their lives in the stipulated manner laid out by staff in those hostels.

Working and rushing around helped people to feel strong, self sufficient and independent. These feelings make better sense when the alternative – entering institutional living – is considered. Rough sleepers felt akin to part-time homeless people, most of whom had themselves slept rough. They distinguished themselves from 'community care' people mainly on the grounds of their institutional living, which was associated with mental weakness and general vulnerability. They had a kind of fusion/fission relationship insofar as they were closer to institutionalised homeless people than they were to domiciled members of the general public, but this general solidarity was only apparent occasionally. An example of it occurred when a street busker, who was classified as a 'community care' homeless person, was invited to perform for a party of students in a college. Many rough sleepers expressed strong disapproval of the students, some even threatened to 'go to the press' and expose them because it was felt they had invited this man only in order to mock him.

In Oxford successfully 'making raises' was something rough sleepers often boasted about. In one sense making raises confirmed the *independence* of rough sleepers. They did not interpret their reliance on charity and found items as 'dependency'. Rough sleepers' survival routines were undertaken with the non-homeless in mind. Begging involved passers-by, police, council workers and others; addictions involved drug dealers, drink traders, doctors (for prescribed medicines); getting accommodation both on the streets and off them involved many different parties – outreach workers, hostel and shelter workers, landlords, neighbours. The need to keep some things out of sight (illegal activities especially) and the need to emphasise aspects of visibility (for example, when begging in the cold weather), was a result of the relationship between rough sleepers and the non-homeless being conditioned by a discourse of deserving and undeserving-ness.

Rough sleepers' earning capacity depended on their ability to fit in the category of 'deserving' or 'genuine' homeless person. Herein lay the importance of the term 'homeless'. It was a term that the non-homeless imposed upon rough sleepers and used as a criterion for their charity. The way rough sleepers disputed the homeless status of each other ('not really homeless' 'part-time homeless') reflected their preoccupation with whether or not they could be perceived as deserving, genuine people and thus earn money. Howe investigated the manner in which unemployed people in Belfast would sometimes use the term 'scrounger' to describe each other. He argues, with reference to Ortner's 1995 paper, that this use of the term reflected an ambiguity in the resistance of unemployed people. Claimants, he argues, who 'exploit the system for their own ends' and who 'choose to remain jobless', were felt to 'stigmatize by association those who are 'genuinely' unemployed and who are truly eligible to claim state assistance' (Howe 1998, 534). This interpretation can be used to understand some of the conflicts that arose amidst rough sleepers when they had pitch disputes and conflicts over the appearance of an aggressive manner used by some whilst begging. As members of the general public only tolerated a limited number of beggars, there was consequently an degree of competitiveness for the resources they brought.

The question as to the extent to which rough sleepers create a 'culture', 'subculture' or are separate from mainstream society can only be answered in a very complex manner. There are

aspects of rough sleepers' lives that were shared in common with each other – mobility, use of outdoor spaces for living, unrecognised work practices, stigmatised identities, substances use. Protection, companionship and pooled resources were important resources available to rough sleepers as they jointly and individually crafted themselves into strong, self-reliant and streetwise people, able to cope with the hardships of living outside material comfort and social acceptability. The need to earn money but simultaneously to fit in with social constructions of 'dependency' was an important 'doubling' of reality that created a distance between rough sleepers and the non-homeless, as rough sleepers created humble, needy identities the non-homeless could accept.

CHAPTER SIX: ROUGH SLEEPERS IN RELATION TO THE WIDER SOCIETY: DISCURSIVE FRAMES/CONSTRUCTIONS AND PRACTICES

Introduction

When inquiring as to the extent to which domiciled parties and individuals were separate from rough sleepers and the manner in which relationships with the non-homeless were viewed and negotiated by rough sleepers, attention has been paid to the question of how social distances were produced and maintained between these parties, who were often geographically close. This question merits attention as, empirically, the material resources homeless people made use of, in daily and periodic practices, derived from the domiciled, through processes of negotiation over the various boundaries that separated these populations. Also, the kinds of places rough sleepers were encouraged to move to (hostels, supervised accommodation) were indicative of how rough sleepers were regarded by domiciled parties.

The influences that affected domiciled parties and individuals in their interactions with rough sleepers can be conceptualised in terms of a variety of discourses, at both national and local levels, expressed in the interactions between rough sleepers and the domiciled. It has already been argued in Chapter One that New Labour's communitarian discourses influenced social policies directed towards the integration of 'vulnerable' people in society including those who, as a result of research findings that identified support needs of rough sleepers, were classified as socially excluded. Central government has also been concerned with making agencies provide more professional, accountable and effective welfare and public order services. Both funding and links between agencies in voluntary and public sectors have been affected by such concerns, causing changes in the practices of workers who interact with rough sleepers.

Changing discourses that emphasised the good of 'community' have also affected penal policies. The need to address 'anti-social behaviour' was promoted by central government and activities that previously were considered to be minor, victimless crimes, have been re-conceptualised as damaging to the 'community'. This has led to new practices within police forces but also in neighbourhoods, where residents were able to articulate a rejection of

homeless people from their areas in terms of their alleged anti-social behaviours. The notion of 'community', it is here argued, articulates a discursive boundary, separating rough sleepers (in this case) from other members of society.

This chapter is in two sections. In the first, I examine changing discursive contexts of public order and welfare, and how these contexts affect practices of various parties in relation to rough sleepers. These parties are: the Street Scene Task Force, some staff from services provider agencies, ex-members of staff and volunteers in the voluntary (third) sector and police officers. As noted in Chapter Two (methods), fieldwork was undertaken (in a variety of roles) within four voluntary and independent organisations that worked with homeless people. This helped me to understand that members of staff from agencies were working within national and local discourses but also within discourses that were specific to their own organisations. However, whilst this provided a useful understanding of processes undertaken in the provision of services, as well as about the links between voluntary sector agencies and those in the statutory sector, the main research undertaken was with rough sleepers. My understanding is therefore limited in many areas to a one-sided appreciation. To an extent I addressed this by undertaking informal interviews and chats with staff from voluntary sector agencies, though this was not possible with members of the police force because, as noted in Chapter Two, working with the police might have led rough sleepers to mistrust me.

In the second section I explore aspects of how rough sleepers interacted with members of the general public: (1) how the presence of rough sleepers and part-time homeless people caused local residents to articulate notions of community and of anti-social behaviour, and (2) the interactions between homeless people and passers-by that took place on the streets.

For reasons of time and opportunity, it was not possible directly to explore the influence of other parties, such as urban planners, estate agents, local traders and other businessmen or women, car park attendants, cleaners, private security guards, upon the ongoing situation of street homelessness in Oxford. The importance of such parties should be noted however, particularly as there was a bid, made by a conglomerate of council and business leaders, for Oxford to be the European Capital of Culture 2008 as this project was underway. The bid

failed, but it may have given more impetus to the various 'sprucing up' campaigns taken on in various areas of the city. Some of the 'cleaning up' involved proposals to redesign spots where design features enabled 'well-known homeless havens' (Oxford Mail, June 30th 2003, pg.5) to exist. Such 'havens' were associated with anti-social behaviour where rubbish and drug user paraphernalia have been found 'infesting' (Oxford Mail, October 30th 2002, pg.1) such places, where beggars and drug dealers can gather (Oxford Mail, July 7th 2000, pg.2), and where street drinkers create 'no-go areas' (Oxford Mail, January 8th 2003).

A. Public order and welfare

1. Changes in approaches to public order

Garland has argued that as the welfare state grew, in the economic boom years following the Second World War, 'crime and delinquency could be viewed ... as a... relic of previous deprivations' (Garland 2001, 48). Rather than a purely punitive approach, correctionalist, rehabilitative practices were seen as 'feasible and desirable' (ibid.). Many people who broke the law were found to have come from deprived backgrounds, unable to bridge the gap between their expectations and achievements (ibid. 43). Greater social provision and opening access to 'legitimate routes to upward mobility' (ibid.) were felt to be the cures for crime. Collective social responsibility was assumed for the difficulties that led people to commit crimes.

Since the 1970s this approach, called 'penal welfarism', has come under attack. This attack originally came from right wing politicians and academics. More recent examples of such attacks can be found in John Major's 'back to basics' campaign and his statement that there should be 'less understanding and more condemnation' and Charles Murray's analyses and condemnation of welfare dependency. New Labour politicians have also expressed such views. Crime has come to be seen as 'a problem of indiscipline, a lack of self-control or social control, a matter of wicked individuals who need ... to be deterred and who deserve... to be punished' (ibid.102). The interests of offenders and victims are seen as being 'diametrically opposed' in such a way that to have concerns for the needs of offenders 'signals a disregard for the victim' (ibid.180).

Notions about 'the community' and its 'quality of life' have changed approaches to minor offences and what was perceived to be 'victimless' crime. Now offences such as loitering, vagrancy, begging and sleeping rough are felt to be crimes against communities and their well being, as well as being gateways to more serious crime (ibid. 181). Security, economy and control have replaced social solidarity in their dominance of the rhetoric of penal policy (ibid.199).

In Chapter One it was also observed that successive Conservative governments made cuts in welfare benefits for some members of society. Whilst some politicians used a right wing rhetoric of 'dependency cultures' and 'welfare scroungers' to characterise people claiming welfare, there was a further rhetoric, of 'rolling back the state', that was used to justify the cut backs in welfare services. New Labour's electoral successes have not seen a restoration of previously held welfare rights. Communitarian discourses associate welfare rights with social obligations, in particular with the social obligation of inclusion.

It has been noted that many New Labour politicians have condemned many rough sleepers' actions. In addition to this, members of the general public who give money to beggars have also been condemned. The 'homelessness tsar' Louise Casey claimed, in 2001, that giving money to beggars was bad for them, helping to keep them on the streets. John Bird, founder of The Big Issue and himself an ex-rough sleeper, has condemned giving to beggars, arguing that 'No one has ever been improved by handouts. Feeding homeless people on the streets isn't even a good solution in the short-term – they become just like pigeons' (The Independent 8th December 2001, Special Supplement pg.7). Campaigns and statements such as these blame domiciled members of society for helping to perpetuate visible homelessness. Simultaneously the Social Exclusion Unit expanded services provision for rough sleepers in areas where their numbers were high.

Such rhetoric promotes a discursive isolation of rough sleepers from other members of society. The desire to stop rough sleepers' ability to gain resources from members of the general public, simultaneously promotes the idea that rough sleepers pose a social problem that should be dealt with by specialist staff from agencies providing welfare and public order.

Furthermore, expanded welfare services and the extended meaning of crime in penal policies can now be more effectively used to target rough sleepers and pose to them the idea that they have social obligations. However, the main alternative to street homelessness is institutionalised or supervised living indoors, which is often associated by rough sleepers, with vulnerability and weakness. For rough sleepers, there is a risk that leaving the streets will result in dependency rather than social inclusion. For various workers who interacted directly with rough sleepers, there was ambivalence about what their jobs were about, where they stood in relation to New Labour discourses and how these affected the more local discourses within their workplaces and in the connections between their work organisations and other agencies in Oxford.

1.1. Homelessness and citizenship: links between public order and welfare

Some authors (Carlen 1996, Fooks & Pantazis 1999) have recorded how rough sleepers are highly likely to have been victims of crimes. Those who commit crimes against them frequently have gone unpunished. Carlen argued that many homeless youths felt they were being 'punished for not fulfilling their citizenship obligations even though the state fails to fulfil its duties of nurturance and protection towards them' (Carlen 1996, 2). For Carlen, this relationship between the state and some of its citizens, is one of asymmetrical citizenship. She argues that the state 'deliberately excluded certain young people' (ibid. 124) from citizenship rights and duties and the criminalization of their behaviour must be understood as part of this devaluation of their citizenship.

Dean (1999) considers the links between begging and citizenship and his examination has application here. For Dean, beggars find themselves outside the state's control. This is because social policy fails to work for them, leaving their needs unmet (Dean 1999, 15). Beggars by-pass the state welfare system and thus may appear to be sidestepping their obligations as citizens, for example: to seek work whilst claiming benefits (ibid. 16).

In existing literature (for example, Carlen 1996, Dean 1999), authors have tried to ascertain whether rough sleepers have anti-social values or whether they aspire to mainstream citizenship values. This debate is part of a wider concern about conceptualisations of an

‘underclass’ or a ‘dependency culture’. Authors argue these terms have been used rhetorically, to symbolically mark poor citizens (Dean 1999, 17) as different and less valuable in society; to keep open the explanation that their poverty is a reflection of their own moral failures rather than failures of social structures and policies.

For Carlen, the crimes of homeless youths should be understood as forming a part of their ‘survivalist lifestyles’ (Carlen 1996, 124). Their economic activities of begging, prostitution or property crime, were their main, or only, sources of income; avoiding trouble was impossible as it was ‘all around them’ (ibid.), in the harassment they experienced from various non-homeless parties, and in the presence and difficult consequences of drink and drugs. Furthermore, young rough sleepers were ‘loath to give up addictions that eased the pain of destitution by providing instant buzz, occupation, community and a consumerist lifestyle’ (ibid. 125). The illegality that forms a part of many street dwellers’ lives leaves many theorists ambivalent (for example, Hopper 1985, Wardhaugh 1996). This is because their crimes may be necessary for their survival and may be related to welfare needs, rather than public order. For example: addictions are often considered to be problems of health, requiring support services rather than police action.

1.2. Welfare. Voluntary sector agencies: past and present

Various authors (for example, Mort 1999, Kendall 2000, Geddes and Martin 2000, Maille and Hoggett, 2001) have commented on how New Labour’s electoral successes have brought about changes in the funding and delivery of welfare services. In contrast to the dichotomy of market vs. state that Conservative governments focussed on during the 1980s and 1990s, New Labour’s attempts to distance itself from ‘old’ Labour were helped by its replacement of a ‘monothematic ideological attachment to the state’ (Kendall 2000, 550) with a politics that granted a primary role to the notion of ‘community’. New Labour ‘distanced the party from “statism”’ (ibid. 551) and advocated a strengthening of civil society, emphasising the state’s role of ‘enabler’. Voluntary sector agencies have consequently gained a high profile, as they are examples of civil associations New Labour has been anxious to become connected with.

1.2.1. Funding and bureaucracy in voluntary sector organisations

Mr. WX, a manager at an advice centre for people with accommodation problems, told me that funding for voluntary sector agencies had been changing. Conservative governments in the past had made cuts to funds for Local Authorities and these authorities had started to fund voluntary sector agencies through 'partnership agreements' that contained various clauses and restrictions in them and that demanded consultations. Since New Labour's electoral successes funding contracts had become more numerous and complex. All funding bodies had time limits to their contracts and many, for example the National Lottery's 'community fund' required projects to fit in with their criteria. Voluntary sector organisations gradually found they had to meet a variety of different criteria as they signed contracts with various different funding bodies. Each contract required onerous, time-consuming bureaucracy to administer in order to meet requirements, in particular audits, which were vital to the continued provision of funds.

Mr. WX said, 'the more contracts you sign, the more you play the game. Attending loads of meetings etc. It all adds up and can smash your core values'. Furthermore, funding bodies (such as for example, Local Authorities, the Probation services) themselves were going through changes, in particular the requirement to 'outsource' services. These larger bureaucracies had many functions and those they contracted out, they controlled through contracts. Voluntary organisations, for Mr. WX, became 'sucked into the process' and lost skills, such as campaigning skills, through not practising them, for fear of losing funding. Ms. WD, a housing adviser, said that 'the conflict now, the way I see it in just basic terms, is the amount of paperwork and the amount of time that we... have to spend to administer that paperwork. It's devalued our clientele group... During an interview the client doesn't want me to ask them questions that are listed on a sheet. They just want to talk to me and say to me "This is my problem".'

Whilst Davies' article describes processes of managing and funding a Drugs Action Team in Bristol, its findings resemble the complaints workers from Oxford's voluntary sector expressed. This funding situation is one that reflects how 'the government is so determined to

control every aspect of the delivery of policy that the control itself becomes the object of the project' (Davies 2003, 5). Davies found there were '44 different funding streams, each one with its own detailed guidance and micro targets from the centre, each one with its own demand for a detailed business plan and quarterly reports back to the centre; the endless services agreements... sign(ed) with every local provider with their own micro targets... nine planning grids with 82 objectives... the funding announced too late for planning and then handed over too late to be spent... staff hired and trained and then suddenly sacked when funding or targets were switched' (ibid. 1-2).

The increased management and funding issues affecting voluntary sector organisations have caused increased social distances between workers and their clients. Many of the workers I met from voluntary sector agencies in Oxford, told me of struggles their organisations had experienced during the previous fifteen or so years, when Conservative governments had made cuts in public spending that, in their view, had caused poverty and homelessness but also had made their own existence precarious and threatened. Such agencies had worked 'against the odds' (Mr.WX) both to provide assistance to homeless people, and to remain in existence themselves. As a result of the embattled condition of their organisations, the workers had felt close to the homeless people they were assisting because they felt they were both facing the same problem (namely, Conservative policies of cutting public spending which affected both their clients and their main funding bodies). This closeness was expressed in views workers had held about homeless people (normal, ordinary people) and about governments (distant, ignorant and self-serving). Ms.WD said, 'Then, and certainly now, people are disadvantaged for lots of reasons... I saw it as, rather than blaming them as an individual... it's the way that various bits of legislation have been drafted... from the standpoint of not knowing what the problems are'.

Mr.WY, also a housing adviser, commented to me that he worried about the amount of information he had to obtain from his clients²⁰. He worried about the use such information

²⁰ When I worked in a shelter, I had to fill in 'gate sheet' (attendance) forms as well as filling in various forms with each new client over the first hour or so of arrival.

might be put to, and his role in potentially exposing their semi-legal or illegal activities. For example: obtaining clients' national insurance numbers might expose those who were 'doing the double' (claiming benefits whilst also working). For Mr. WY, 'doing the double' was acceptable, as he considered the levels of benefits to be too low, and available jobs to be badly paid. Ms. WD told me that there was only one form she had to fill in when she started working for her organisation (in 1987). What clients were asked for at that stage was: their name, their ethnicity, a contact number, their address (if they had one) and the nature of their problem. This information was for the organisation's funding bodies (who were local councils and a national charity). It also enabled the organisation not only to monitor how many people

-
- 1. Initial contact interview: upon entry/at the door: physical description, name (s), age, recent housing history (last few nights), any other information.
 - 2. Entrance interview: this took place in an interview room. It was quite long and included lots of questions – age, national insurance number, previous convictions, schedule 1, arson or violence convictions, previous address, next of kin, contact with other agencies, social history (family, school, jobs), housing history, name of doctor, medical and psychiatric history, substance and alcohol misuse, self-identified goals and needs.
 - 3. Initial risk assessment: done at the same time as entrance interview. The questions here were about violence and harm to others, self-harm/suicide, severe mental illness, treatment for mental health problems, prescribed medication, street drug use, alcohol use, motivation regarding using support for substance abuse detoxification, housing history (again), long term goals and plans, ability to use support, profile in the community.
 - 4. Rules sheet: copy issued and explained.
 - 5. Luggage rules: ditto.
 - 6. Crisis winterwatch monitoring form: age, sex, ethnicity, referral source, care details, probation details, last month's residences, length of stay at shelter, reasons for leaving, place where going to.
 - 7. Staff also had to keep individual record sheets commenting on client each time he/she used the shelter.
 - 8. Daily record sheets to say how many and who used the shelter, any incidents, atmosphere and anything else.

All the information was kept in files at the shelter or sent to appropriate places. Some forms had guidance notes explaining that the information was necessary to get a detailed picture of who used services, where they come from and go to. Much of the information was for funding agencies and the government (this is mentioned in guidance notes) to plan services and direct future resources.

were 'coming through the door', but also, if many clients were reporting the same problem, to 'pick up' on this. For Ms.WD the 'ethos' of her work was 'not to pre-judge, not to make judgements about individuals... you accept what you are told by the client at face value'. It would not affect the statistics obtained through forms if, for example, clients provided a false name or date of birth.

2. Multi-agency partnership: The Street Scene Task Force

During the fieldwork for this project, Oxford City Council set up a partnership called the Street Scene Task Force. In this section I briefly describe the Task Force's composition and history. Of special interest to this project are comments some of its members made to me in interviews as well as some of the language used in its reports. This is because the workers from the Task Force appeared to have a different approach towards rough sleepers from many workers in voluntary sector agencies, and the significance of this difference will be assessed here.

In April 2001 a new Chief Executive had taken office in the council and was 'faced with anti-social behaviour from street drinkers, drug users/dealers and begging along with a high number of rough sleepers some of whom were responsible for these problems' (Street Scene Task Force Paper, pg.3). Two weeks later Louise Casey and Paul Boateng (a Home Office minister) visited the council and the decision was made to target rough sleepers and reduce their numbers to below 17 by the following autumn. 1000 nominated members of the general public had also been consulted by phone, through the council's 'Talkback Panel', about 'areas of concern' in the city. They identified street drinking, begging and related issues as problems needing attention. The Chief Executive set up the Task Force in order to achieve the target agreed with Louise Casey and to address the concerns of the 1000 people of the panel.

In the progress report, distributed in November 2001, it was stated that an aim of the Task Force was to deal 'with rough sleeping and other aspects of anti-social street culture... (by) target(ing) persistent offenders and simultaneously provid(ing)... support and rehabilitation packages for rough sleepers' (Intro. Street Scene Task Force: Progress Report). Another of its aims was to prevent rough sleepers from elsewhere coming and staying in Oxford. The Street

Scene Task Force was a team composed of a worker from the Rough Sleepers' Unit (who for some years had been in charge of counting rough sleepers), the Contact and Assessment team (who were from a charity in Brighton called Crime Reduction Initiative and who bid for the contract from the Rough Sleepers Unit; this team will be referred to as CAT), a policeman who specialised in homelessness issues and an outreach nurse. It was overseen by a co-ordinator, from the Oxford City Council. When the progress report was produced, funding for other posts had been secured.

During fieldwork, the 'homelessness' police officer was introduced into Oxford to 'tackle...anti-social behaviour' (Street Scene Task Force Paper, pg.7). Rough sleepers told me this officer was a member of the 'begging squad', and they appeared to not have any knowledge about the Street Scene Task Force. The officer approached street homeless people like other officers did but, additionally, he made liaisons between rough sleepers and CAT. The homelessness officer tried to encourage rough sleepers to accept the services of CAT or else to leave Oxford, if they refused. He also had to liaise with residents in neighbourhoods in the city centre, where dealers were known to operate and he made his presence noted by homeless people. He once said to Mr.S that he was going to visit residences by a nearby river, to talk with residents who had complained about dealers. Mr.S acted indifferently in the officer's presence but commented to me later on that the dealers would have to move away from the area. The Task Force also formed liaisons with 'key personnel' from the council, such as car park attendants, crime and anti-social behaviour teams and others, in order to identify and target sites where, allegedly, 'street cultures' had arisen in the past.

CAT outreach team had contacts with members of staff from the hostels of Oxford (Night Shelter, English Churches Housing, Walton Street Drug Recovery Project and Simon House). Through these contacts, and with funding they had been provided to help pay for accommodation for rough sleepers, they filled all the remaining vacancies in the shelters and hostels. Rough sleeper numbers were lowered (although, as noted in the Introduction to Part Two, there have been disputes about the extent of this reduction). CAT workers offered to get their clients places immediately or as soon as they became available. A CAT worker, Mr.WZ, explained to me that he might be told to 'fuck off' forty times before a client accepted his

help. But, through 'horrific perseverance', CAT could obtain places for clients who 'showed an openness to change' (Mr.WZ). They also offered to send clients away – to hostels out of Oxford or back 'home', using travel vouchers. Worker Mr.WA described the offer of travel vouchers as a 'positive way forward' which 'provided choice' to clients.

In the early stages when CAT started (and was still recruiting staff), some rough sleepers were very mistrustful of them and believed they were working for the police. Mr.G said, 'they reckon they're the homeless team. I reckon they're cops'. Mr.B, hearing the police talking about CAT to someone they had stopped and were searching, said, 'Well, they don't say Sally Ann (old outreach team) ... they must be working with the cops'. Mr.H, who had been found a place in a hostel by CAT, said he had 'fobbed them off' for two weeks, saying 'yeah, I'll see you tomorrow'.

Mr.WA told me that two hostels changed the criterion for accepting new residents. One started to take in younger clients, some with dogs, more women and couples. The other hostel started working with recovering addicts rather than just recovering drinkers. A new hostel was set up (Drug Recovery Project), with funds from the Rough Sleepers' Unit, which offered detoxification help specifically to 'entrenched' rough sleepers ('entrenched' was an adjective used in the literature about rough sleepers to describe those who have slept rough for over four months).

Rough sleepers expressed diverse views about the Drug Recovery Project. Mr.I had lived in the centre for seven weeks and enjoyed his stay. CAT had referred him there and, after he 'messed up' (had a relapse) he was appreciative of the staff because they kept his name on the waiting list in case he wanted to go back. Mr.J lived in the hostel four times. The longest period was for four months. He said he fell out with the staff because they would not allow him to drink or smoke cannabis. He said they 'tret (treated) him like a baby' because he felt that kicking heroin and crack addictions would be aided by drink and/or cannabis. He also said he had wanted to attend Stonehenge summer solstice celebrations, and felt the staff were unfair not to permit him this. Mr.F had two stays in the detoxification hostel. One of these only lasted a few hours. On the first occasion, Mr.F left because he was caught smoking

cannabis, which he found was 'good for keeping down the craving' (for heroin). On the last occasion he left because he found the rules had changed 'now it's really heavy and deep', he said, referring to how things were forbidden that might 'trigger' someone else's addictions. He said he kept on being reprimanded for having a 'junkie way of thinking'. He disputed this saying, 'I know I'm not always wrong.' When I asked Mr. WB, an outreach worker, about the detoxification centre, and what was meant when its workers accused clients of having a 'junkie way of thinking', he said that 'IV (intravenous) users... had an addictive headspace ...(that was) regressive' characterised by 'tantrums, instant gratification, impatience'.

When people were caught using cannabis or if their urine tests were positive, they would have to leave the detoxification hostel. Frequently they were told to leave but to come back at a later date. Sometimes this meant staying outdoors, either on the streets or with friends, and keeping drug consumption as low as possible. Mr. O was kicked out and told to return when a vacancy in a rehabilitation centre became available. This would have enabled him to stay in the detoxification house in the run up to going to rehabilitation. Staying out on the streets though made it hard for him to keep his drug consumption low, and it was some months before he returned to the hostel (where he did not complete the programme in any case).

In interviews with various workers in this agency partnership, I was told there were two 'types' of rough sleepers – those who were 'entrenched' and those who attached themselves to the 'entrenched'. When this happened, there then occurred a sharp rise in rough sleeper numbers congregating in certain spots. These rises could take place in 'a matter of days' (Mr. WA). It was one aim of the Task Force to break up these larger groups, who were seen to be creating a 'culture' of rough sleepers. In the plan for the following six months, the Task Force Progress Report set out its aim to 'tackle the negative anti-social street culture' in Oxford. In its prevention programme, one of its aims was to 'de-glamorise rough sleeping and homelessness' by informing 'a new generation of potential rough sleepers' about 'the realities of this lifestyle'.

The language used by workers and in both the reports about the Task Force shows that its members believed rough sleepers not only were part of a 'culture' or 'lifestyle' but that their

way of life was glamorous to young people. One worker (Mr. WB) told me that the Night Shelter was 'seductive' to young people. An outreach team that had previously worked with the rough sleepers in Oxford had their funding from the council cut as a result of Louise Casey's comments against giving sleeping bags and hot drinks to rough sleepers. Mr. WB told me he approved of this and that he believed services providers in Oxford had become 'stagnant' because they perceived their work to be solely that of giving support and charity to rough sleepers. For him, Louise Casey's visit had 'shake[n]... them up', forcing them to be more confrontational towards rough sleepers who (he felt) should be made to take responsibility for their situation. The use of terms such as 'street culture' and 'anti-social behaviour' mobilised some workers into changing their practices (stopping giving to beggars, feeling differently about their needs, comparing their needs to those of other, domiciled members of the community, such as old age pensioners) and encouraged them to take a harder view of rough sleepers.

Workers in the partnership appeared to have ambivalent feelings about rough sleepers. Mr. WA told me that he was not against rough sleeping but that he strongly objected to violent, abusive, drunken behaviour that he felt some rough sleepers displayed. Mr. WB's approval of 'shaking up' services in Oxford was not a condemnation of rough sleepers but was based on his honest belief that this would help them. These workers appeared to be concerned with the agency of rough sleepers because they believed that rough sleepers were capable of solving their problems with addictions and homelessness if they were given the appropriate support. The wording of documents they produced also suggested that, unless rough sleepers were dispersed, and thus prevented from creating social bonds that would make street life more viable, they would be discouraged from solving their own personal problems, with unhappy consequences for the rest of the 'community'.

The Task Force was 'seen as a model of good practice attracting new funds from the RSU [Rough Sleepers' Unit] due to the senior level multi-agency ownership and joint working' (Street Scene Task Force: Progress Report). Maille and Hoggett's paper about central government's introduction of 'best value' as a 'management tool' (Maille and Hoggett 2001, 510) in local government, describes how there is an 'emphasis on consultation with a range of

interested parties' (ibid.). However, the appearance of 'an approach which was local, bottom-up and committed to the engagement of a diversity of local stakeholders' involved simultaneously, a re-casting of citizens as 'consumers and taxpayers' (ibid. 513) and of local authority executives and local politicians as 'market researchers, who must busily collate subjective opinions about services' (ibid. 517), thus depoliticising 'some of the highly political and fundamental contradictions of the welfare state as it undergoes repeated reconstructions to satisfy economic demands' (ibid. 518). For Maille and Hoggett, central government's 'prescriptive and mechanistic' (ibid.) approach, exemplified by 'the currency of performance indicators... [which] becomes an imposition to which one has to conform [because of the rewards and sanctions attached to it]' (ibid. 516), means that 'discretion and the role of judgement in street-level welfare governance' (ibid. 518) are undermined. This difficulty, already outlined in the above sections, seems also to arise in the perceptions that workers and their 'clients' have of each other.

3. Work procedures and rules within buildings accommodating rough sleepers

Other workers from voluntary agencies expressed various attitudes towards the rules they were bound by in relation to the services they provided for rough sleepers. I learnt about the professional rules when I obtained temporary employment in night shelter in a nearby town. The training I underwent was concerned with three main factors: safety, professional boundaries and the issue of drugs being sold and consumed on shelter premises. The procedures and rules described here may vary from hostel to hostel and from shelter to shelter. Nevertheless they are likely to be representative of the kinds of issues (safety and bureaucratic monitoring in particular) such organisations had to confront when accommodating rough sleepers.

Training to manage safety required an awareness of both one's own and one's colleagues' safety as well as that of the clients. This was the main priority in training and was the rationale for most of the rules I encountered. To this end I was told there could be no lone working, alarms worn at all times and that staff had to carry a pager that responded to (and located the source of) an alarm anywhere in the building. Keys had to be carried at all times as many regularly used places, such as linen cupboards, food storage rooms, laundry rooms,

the office, and sometimes the shower and bathing facilities, were kept locked. All objects were to be considered as potential weapons. During training the example of a tea urn was used, to demonstrate that, if angry, clients were capable of turning any object into a weapon. As regards the safety of clients, the shelters where I was trained and where I worked had separate dorms/rooms available for those whom staff felt were most at risk of being intimidated by other, stronger clients.

There were clear guidelines about professional boundaries as well. No big gift exchanges were allowed as this was considered to be a sign of favouritism with the potential to cause jealousy and resentment, compromising the safety of all staff as a result. It was not permitted to divulge one's own address or that of colleagues, nor any other personal details, such as birthdays, marital status or age. Friendships were not permitted and, when I asked why this rule existed, I was told it was preferable for clients to 'look outwards' for their social life, as there was a risk they might develop an inappropriate dependency within the unequal terms of relationships between workers and clients.

Different shelters had different rules about whether a person could enter under the influence of drugs or alcohol or not. At the places where I worked, if staff caught someone drug dealing they had to call the police. If they caught someone using drugs or alcohol on the premises they would tell the client to leave, and they would bar their re-entry for a certain period of time; entry 'under the influence' of drugs or alcohol was a matter of judgement. In training the recent case of the 'Cambridge Two'²¹ was cited to explain why, in both the shelters where I worked (and in a day centre I attended) the tops and bottoms of the toilet doors had been cut off in order to facilitate the monitoring of an area commonly agreed to be the most likely to be used by those who wished to deal. In practice staff did look (I was shown a discreet niche from which to peer). Despite these efforts though, the use and dealing of heroin within hostels appeared to be occurring, if accounts of rough sleepers (see above in Chapter Four) are to be believed.

²¹ The 'Cambridge Two' refers to the case of two workers from a drop-in centre called 'Wintercomfort' in Cambridge who were jailed in 1999. They were found guilty of permitting heroin dealing to take place on the premises, after two police officers attended the drop-in centre disguised as homeless people over a two-month period and found there was dealing taking place which, they claimed, the workers failed to take steps to stop.

In the shelter where I worked, staff had to cook a meal each night for the clients. Tea and coffee were available all the time, and clients could use the kitchen. Catering practices varied considerably in the hostels and shelters. Some hostels had hot drink vending machines and some had external caterers. These differences may be important as the staff I worked with valued being able to cook for their clients, and said they did not feel clients should be charged for food and hot drinks. I also found that workers in two shelters undertook lone work frequently. When asked about this a worker (Mr. WN) said he felt the rules were there so that organisations could 'cover their backs'. In practice he said rough sleepers were 'normal people' who had been given 'a rough deal' and there was no need to rigidly follow rules. Mr. WN's comments about rough sleepers differed from the opinions expressed by Mr. WA and Mr. WB. For Mr. WN it was important to offer friendship to rough sleepers using the shelter, so that they could tell him if they needed anything and talk problems over with him. Mr. WN also objected to the use of the term 'clients'. 'They're just people', he said.

Sticking to the rules varied partly because workers had their own ideas about rough sleepers. MrWN felt they were 'normal' whereas Mr. WB felt they 'needed help'. Workers in the same shelter also had different approaches from each other. Mr. WO was a colleague of Mr. WN, but he stuck more rigidly to the rules, although he too undertook lone work. Mr. WN would joke about how he found Mr. WO 'uptight', but he also noted that Mr. WO had less experience than he did and felt this accounted for Mr. WO's more rigid approach. Mr. WN's approach, however, suggests that he resisted the imposition of rules and only paid lip-service to them. His approach was similar to those articulated by Ms. WD and Mr. WY, which placed greater emphasis on their own discretion and judgement. In this way these workers exemplify Maille and Hoggett's notion of 'street-level welfare governance' (Maille and Hoggett 2001, 518).

Another factor was that, over time, the same member of staff might have differing feelings, and therefore relationships between clients and workers could change. Hall described how workers in Lime Hostel would go through periods when they would 'get tough with the residents' (Hall 2003, 44) because they sometimes felt residents were "using" the hostel without really taking advantage of the help that is on offer there' (ibid. 43). However, the

workers would relax their approach after 'a week or so' (ibid. 44) because they were 'not at the hostel just to order the residents around. They are there to help...[which is] an open-ended, collaborative exercise...[taking] trust, time, humour and reciprocal understanding' (ibid.44). I did not work long enough in a shelter to experience such variations and so do not have direct knowledge of them. However, it does seem likely that staff in shelters and hostels in Oxford might have experienced a similar situation.

3.1. Other workers and ex-staff from agencies in the voluntary sector

Some ex-workers maintained friendships with rough sleepers they had met when working. One morning Ms.WA, who had been an outreach worker in the past, showed me a 'goodie' bag that she had made up for Mr.B, who had recently been made homeless. All the items were paid for by her and included sweets and other items she knew he liked and needed. Ms.WA visited Mr.B long after she finished working in the outreach team. When he got a room she would go round in the mornings, on her way to work, and wake him up. When he was homeless she asked for my mobile phone number so that she could stay in contact with him when he was not working on his pitch. When I asked Ms.WA about her views on the professional boundaries I had learnt about in training, she told me that she felt boundaries should only be invoked when problems arose. Ms.WA also told me that she had rented out a room in her house to a rough sleeper she met, and that she then funded his attempts to start up a business. These actions contravened the rules of professional conduct.

Sometimes though, the breaking of professional rules had unhappy consequences. One worker, Mr.WK, took advantage of Mr.A on one occasion. While Mr.A was travelling, he left the keys to his flat with Mr.WK, with whom he had what he felt was a friendship. Mr.WK used Mr.A's flat for his own purposes and, when Mr.A returned, he found his flat was messed up. Mr.WK lost his job over this matter, which was serious for Mr.A, who was struggling to stay off the drink and felt very disrupted by this occurrence. Whilst Mr.A was angry that Mr.WK had not shown him any respect, he also felt very sorry that Mr.WK had lost his job. Over two years later Mr.A still looked out for Mr.WK and expressed sadness at the way he had lost his job.

However, sticking to the rules was often felt to be just as bad. Mr.B, who was very suspicious of CAT and refused to talk with them (saying he would contact them if he needed anything), confided in Ms.WB that he would hit any CAT worker who approached him. Ms.WB, in conformity with the rules, passed this information on to other agencies and, when Mr.B realised she had done this, he shouted at her and her colleagues. He told me it was good that he had found out about Ms.WB's telling other agencies, because that way he knew he could not trust her as 'she's no friend of the homeless'. He explained that he had thought of Ms.WB as a friend because they had known each other for some years and she had appeared to be a friend. Mr.B was sent a letter by the council that he would be prosecuted if any further trouble occurred and that a copy of the letter had been sent to all the other voluntary sector agencies in Oxford. Mr.B, expecting tolerance and discretion, had expressed himself aggressively but in confidence to Ms.WB who, rather than measuring Mr.B by her own knowledge of him (that he was not a fighting man), followed professional procedures instead. For Mr.B this demonstrated a lack of personal commitment on Ms.WB's behalf.

Boundaries were routinely and knowingly transgressed by some staff and by homeless people. Often these boundaries did not appear to be strongly felt. Transgressions appeared to strengthen the bonds of friendship formed between workers and homeless people, as they were displays of a worker 'putting themselves out' (Mr.B) on account of the homeless. Some workers had memories of a recent past when discretion had played a much bigger part and many workers had maintained personal contact between themselves and their client groups encompassing out of office hours. Mr.WX told me he frequently would accompany rough sleepers when they visited landlords trying to obtain accommodation. Mr.WY told me he used to frequent the same pubs as various rough sleepers and thus socialised with them outside the workplace. This kind of sociality reflected a limited, small social distance between some workers and rough sleepers, which may have been semi-institutionalised in the past.

When I asked Mr.WX to comment on the views I had encountered from members of the Task Force, he told me he was shocked at their intolerance of rough sleepers, and that he would never have expected Mr.WB or Mr.WA to believe rough sleepers were anti-social. Both Mr.WX and Mr.WY said they expected more workers to resist rhetorical stances that

characterised rough sleepers as anything other than normal people who should not be condemned. It may be that, prior to New Labour's electoral successes, agencies had been concerned by their perception of government's abandonment of homeless people, who experienced neglect and ill health. New Labour policies reflected a rhetoric of getting tough with homeless people. For example, Louise Casey condemned the old outreach team's practices of giving coffee and sleeping bags to the homeless.

In practice getting tough may sometimes be counter-productive. The case of Ms. WB and Mr. B shows that, whilst a loss of trust occurred unnecessarily, neither Ms. WB nor Mr. B benefited from the breach of confidentiality. Mr. B, feeling alienated, was angry until he was officially reprimanded and he remains hostile to outreach workers. Furthermore, the notion of getting tough in practice means being less tolerant of the misdemeanours of homeless people. However this is perceived by homeless people as a display of softness on behalf of workers. Rough sleepers argue that outreach workers should be tough enough to deal with difficult situations without alerting all the other agencies. Being less tolerant also indicated to rough sleepers, a lack of commitment. Homeless people often commented on the laziness of workers and appeared to imply that, whilst suspicion and mistrust is to be expected from most people, outreach workers should not be prejudiced against homeless people.

It should also not be forgotten that, whilst many rough sleepers went to the detoxification house, a very high proportion of these came back to the streets. Whilst they were given more than one chance at detoxification (sometimes three or four), the majority of participants from this project who undertook detoxification, still went back to the streets shortly after. Declerck argues, in relation to alcoholics, that 'relapses ... are part of what is accepted in all medicine... [but] are seen as insults and as moments of aggression by the patient. ... When one's clientele is ninety-five percent alcoholics, one must expect that they will get drunk once in a while. It seems... paradoxical that these things, which we know will happen, are held against the patients themselves' (Declerck 2003, paragraph 18). Whilst the new team's policy of getting people places in hostels (sometimes at a reduced rate) appeared to be more successful, people complained that they were 'stuck' in their hostel and they feared they might become institutionalised.

There appeared to be many different attitudes occurring between members (and ex-members) of voluntary sector agencies and rough sleepers. This may have been a healthy thing, as it provided a range of options to rough sleepers. When they fell out with staff from one agency, there were workers from other agencies who they could still turn to. This suggests that social distances between rough sleepers and some workers in voluntary sector agencies were often small thus enabling friendships to develop. Such social resources may have had the effect of making rough sleepers feel less socially excluded. However, the attitudes and views expressed in the two reports and by workers in the Street Scene Task Force raise the question of whether discursive changes occurring at higher levels of society, in this instance New Labour's communitarian discourses about welfare rights and claimants' responsibilities, might be, as Maille and Hoggett suggest, eliminating the flexible and diverse views held locally. Setting targets for agencies to achieve and tying these in with funding, confronting rough sleepers with notions of 'responsibility', give a more normative purpose to the work of agencies and it is questionable the extent to which this is needed. Ironically it is New Labour theorists and politicians who have embraced the multidimensional explanatory value of the concept of 'social exclusion' and created policies to address this, and who have also promoted practices that appear to result in an increased social distance between workers and rough sleepers, and possibly, a more emphatic social exclusion.

Rough sleepers expressed a variety of views about the services and staff they had access to. In some instances their ambiguous views may have reflected the stages they found themselves in, within cycles of addiction, sociality and health. When Mr.O was staying in the Drug Recovery Project, he managed to complete his detoxification. I met him one day and he told me how staff had been helping him obtain his war pension and to find a place in a residential rehabilitation centre. He spoke enthusiastically about how the staff were 'really caring'. A few weeks later though, after Mr.O had 'crashed' (had a relapse), he explained that he had been missing his friends from the street and had started using small quantities of heroin prior to being found out and asked to leave the hostel until he had stopped using again. Over this point Mr.O questioned the staff's motivation because he knew that he was unable to sleep

outside without rapidly increasing his heroin intake; for Mr.O the staff were 'trying to flex their muscles' (display their power) in their treatment of him.

4. Relations with police officers

From the beginning of my fieldwork it was clear I had to learn how to deal with the police. This was primarily because many of the activities street homeless people undertook were either semi-legal or illegal and, naturally, people did not want to get caught. However, homeless people were also highly conscious of the role police were expected to play in transforming visible street homelessness into invisible, institutionalised homelessness. One Christmas, two policemen (I was told they were the "begging squad") woke up Mr.B, Mr.LM (who came from a nearby town) and I. Mr.LM was searched and an identity check was carried out on him. He was then told 'There's no rough sleeping in Oxford' and was offered a ticket to return to the town he had come from. Mr.B later commented to me that he believed there was a 'Christmas clean up' going on. He said he thought the offer of a ticket out of Oxford was 'shunting homelessness around' rather than solving it. Mr.J on the other hand, told me there was 'more crackdown in the summer because of tourists', while Mr.Q, commenting on the police, said 'well, they go through stages from being right arseholes to being alright – it just depends on the tourist season.'

4.1. Sleeping

Being woken up and moved on by the police perhaps most strongly illustrates the belief that the police were encumbered with the job of making homelessness invisible. During participant observation it was not uncommon to be woken up by police officers. Whilst I would keep quiet and pack up my things, most homeless people I stayed out with would talk with the police as they packed up. Usually people kept calm and were cooperative, enquiring about various matters. Mr.B, having been told that the council was cracking down on rough sleeping, enquired more about it whilst packing up his things. When the police woke people up, they would firstly show up and talk very loudly saying 'You have to get up now' or 'Come on, get up'. Once sure that people were awake, they would wait a short while. Sometimes they would say, 'You've got five minutes' and then wait a few steps away. If they knew the rough sleepers concerned, they might say their name; if they did not know someone, they

would check their identity. Sometimes they performed a search as well. It should not be forgotten that these procedures took place in public spaces whilst rough sleepers were sleepy. Both these factors may have contributed to a tension, often apparent in such encounters. Whilst rough sleepers were putting their shoes on, packing their things, tidying up cardboard, the police were watching over them and passers-by would pick their way through the scene.

Sometimes rough sleepers complained about getting moved on in this manner. When I was out with Mr.G and Mr.N we were woken by the police who had been called by a cleaner from the Covered Market. The police (one man and one woman) stood over us and said loudly 'Move, right now'. Mr.N jumped up, as if to attention, but then lay down again on top of his things, displaying an attitude of playful defiance. Meanwhile, Mr.G started complaining loudly, saying that the policewoman had a 'whiny voice, every morning' that he was fed up with. The police said we had five minutes and then stood with the cleaner at a short distance. Mr.G shouted at the cleaner (that one day he would 'punch (his) face') and the cleaner called back 'I'm only doing my job'. The police came back over and threatened to arrest Mr.G. We had all finished packing our stuff but we had not tidied the area. The policeman said, sarcastically, 'I take it you won't be clearing up this cardboard' and, as we were walking away, we heard him saying that gates should be put up to stop us getting in. Whilst this incident was unique in my fieldwork, I was told of other occasions when individual rough sleepers clashed with police officers (see below). In this case, Mr.G and Mr.N, who were linked up, had been getting moved on every morning, so there was a familiarity between them and these particular policemen. Mr.G said he had to stand up for himself because the police were harassing them and that he was doing no harm by sleeping on the streets.

The fact that sleeping is not an illegal activity may add to the feeling many rough sleepers expressed that the police were behaving illegitimately, when waking up and moving people away. Mr.B said, 'I don't go to their house and wake them up and tell them to go some place else'. Feelings of victimisation by the police were often expressed in relation to such encounters. Many rough sleepers moved to areas outside the city centre as a result of their feelings that the police were 'harrassing' them. At the time of writing it has been noted that new sleeping spots have been opened up in areas outside the city centre. Whilst there is not

the time to verify how many rough sleepers there are in such areas, it appears as though they are not occupying spaces as groups, but rather as single people.

4.2. Begging

When I started to beg, old hands recommended that I pay attention and try to spot the police before they spot me. At the initial stages, like some homeless people, I laid my hat out for passers-by to put 'spare change' in. Mr.B told me to hide the hat if the police arrived. He explained that if they saw a person's hat, they would move that person on; if they heard someone begging, then they would 'nick' (arrest) them. When out with Mr.G, I was told to make a signal if I spotted the police – to touch my nose and shout 'on top'. Ms.D told me that, when she got moved on, she would go nearby her pitch until the police had gone away and then return and carry on. She also had other, fall-back pitches where she could go if moved on. Another trick I picked up was to carry a couple of copies of The Big Issue so that, if the police passed by, I could say I was vending rather than begging. This activity, though widespread in Oxford and nationally, went against the ethos of The Big Issue (that vending is a 'step up' from begging) and was prohibited in their code of conduct. During fieldwork it became much harder to do because, after liaisons between The Big Issue and the police, vendors were told they should not vend sitting down or appear to be begging (for example, by wrapping themselves in blankets).

These types of action exemplify what Lee conceptualises as 'trickery'. For Lee such tricks demonstrate not only that rough sleepers gain the means of survival through knowledge of their spatial and social environments, but also an active resistance on their part which can be understood as 'a means of subversion, and as a critical undermining of the establishment' (Lee 1993, 176). Lee argues that the constraining effect the police have upon street dwellers' ability to earn money is one of the forces that 'translates into a unified feeling of "us" and "them"...that serves to forge a strong bond between them against a "common foe"' (ibid. 154). In some respects this may be true of rough sleepers from this project, as there were common practices of avoiding and deflecting the control the police had. Also there were many instances when the police were referred to as 'them'. However, rough sleepers also

formed judgements about individual police officers and situations in which they had interacted with rough sleepers.

Perceptions of the police were tempered both by an assessment of the legitimacy of their actions (making homelessness invisible was illegitimate but dealing with illegal activities was 'their job' and therefore legitimate) and by an understanding of the constraints imposed upon the police themselves. Whilst people were careful not to get caught by the police, many people also acknowledged that the police had to warn them, move them on or arrest them. Mr.B said that hiding the hat 'saved them (the police) the trouble...' of having to move me on. He told me I should tell the police that 'I'm just sat here 'cos I've nowhere to go. It's true I need a little money for buying something to eat and drink, but I'm not begging. Maybe passers-by choose to give, but I'm not asking'. Whether or not the police actually believed my story, they would thereby not have to arrest me. Mr.J told me that police officers get into trouble if they do not take action against beggars, as they are on surveillance cameras themselves. Mr.G told me the police used to turn a blind eye to his begging activities. He said some officers even brought him hot drinks! A few other people told me that the police had also not troubled them when they were begging. Mr.O, Mr.T and Mr.V told me that the police do not arrest people if 'they know your face' and have friendly, cooperative relations with them, causing no trouble to passers-by.

4.3. Main police actions

In the most common encounters between the police and street homeless people, police performed 1.identity checks ('getting id'd'); 2.stop and search; 3.warnings and arrests ('getting nicked').

4.3.1. Getting id'd. Various rough sleepers told me that the police check the identity of anybody who they do not recognise, in order to find out their 'previous' (convictions) and if there are any warrants out on a person. The police take a person's full name, where they are from, their date of birth and a 'home' address (for example, family residence). They put this information through the "PNC" (Police National Computer). Whilst I was 'id'd' the police took the opportunity to remind me that 'there is no rough sleeping in Oxford' and that I should

leave Oxford and go back home. Sometimes people gave a false identity if they were worried about warrants, but mostly people gave their real name. Mr.A was caught out one time when in Swindon. He had been found drinking in a dry hostel and the police had been called. When they ran an id check, they found a warrant was out on him for a small motoring offence in Dunfermline. Police officers came down from Scotland and took Mr.A in handcuffs on a plane. The police officer who sat with Mr.A was drinking lots of whisky and permitted Mr.A to as well. Mr.A said it was 'like the blind leading the blind'.

4.3.2. Stop and search. I only witnessed one stop and search (described above). However, as people carried drugs on them, they had ways of hiding drugs in case they were stopped and searched. Most people carried their drugs in their mouths, lodged under their tongue. It was explained to me that, if a stop and search happened, a person could swallow their 'wraps' (drugs wrapped in cling film) and either vomit or defecate it later. (The cling film was wrapped very tightly and in many layers so the drug could be recovered intact).

4.3.3. Warnings and arrests. The police often warned people or moved them on and took no further action. Sometimes rough sleepers complained about this because they felt it was on account of their homelessness that their behaviour was scrutinised. Mr.C complained that students were allowed to walk the streets carrying and drinking from bottles of champagne whereas he was always getting stopped with cans of lager and being made to empty them in the drain.

In their accounts of past arrests rough sleepers expressed the view that the police were engaged in a wasteful activity when arresting beggars. Some street homeless people invoked other institutions, which they felt were against treating activities such as begging as crimes. For example, Mr.G said that, when he was arrested, the courts frequently felt the police were 'wasting tax payers' money'. He said, 'I don't think the court really wants to know, to be honest with you. They're getting fed up with it, I think. It's a waste of their time. They're not even holding previous convictions. It's just wasting court time. Basically the police are wasting the court's time.'

Begging, though the most frequent cause for arrest during fieldwork, was not the only offence for which participants were arrested. Mr.V was caught shoplifting and, because he was 'of no fixed abode' and there was a warrant out on him, he was kept in prison on remand. An important factor people considered when discussing arrests was that time spent inside police or prison cells could be counted against outstanding fines. Mr.T spent forty-five minutes in custody and had thereby cleared his warrants for unpaid fines of nearly one thousand pounds. Mr.I spent a day and a night locked up and reduced his two thousand pound fines to just over one hundred pounds. In cases such as these, rough sleepers appear to be engaged in what Lee (1993) describes as 'reappropriat(ing) the conditions of their constraint' (Lee 1993, 176). In these cases the police were not berated for their illegitimacy, but rather the availability of police and jail cells as accommodation was turned to the advantage of rough sleepers.

Mr.B was arrested when a dispute arose about his pitch. Four vendors were shouting at each other on the street and somebody called the police. Whilst in custody Mr.B 'kicked off' (behaved wildly) in the police cells, threatening to urinate and defecate on the floor of his cell and shouting non-stop. Mr.V was in the police station at the same time and told me that a police officer had said to him they had 'a manky loony' in the cells. The story of Mr.B's arrest became common knowledge with rough sleepers over the following days and was the subject of much laughter. Mr.B, who had not been in trouble with the police for the previous five years, said he felt 'like a wanker', as he suspected he could have dealt with his arrest in a better way; nevertheless, his actions were thoroughly approved of by other homeless people because he had succeeded in bewildering the police.

4.4. Being a 'grass'

Like in many institutions, such as prisons, care homes and schools, homeless people were fearful of being thought of by their peers, as a 'grass'. I was told by Mr.F that if someone accused him of being a 'grass', he would go round all the other street homeless people and tell them that he was not a 'grass'. He said people must defend themselves against this accusation as it could lead to a person getting ostracised. This would lead to difficulties when working and buying drugs because other people would not respect a 'grass's' pitch nor would they want to give them dealers' phone numbers or 'chuck in' with them for a hit. Mr.V said he

worried because he was never in trouble with the police and other homeless people might think he was a 'grass'. Mr.G explained to me that if a homeless person gets arrested and experiences withdrawals in the police station, they may be offered a small sum of money if they denounced dealers and crimes by other street homeless people.

In relation to the police rough sleepers constantly made assessments as to the legitimacy of their activities. Rough sleepers cooperated with the police partly when they assessed them to be behaving fairly, within the constraints of their own jobs, and partly as a means to soften the police action that might arise. Rough sleepers also felt they could save the police the trouble of arresting them, believing that the police may share their own feelings that minor crimes such as begging should not be prosecuted. Nevertheless, the police were also deemed to be acting illegitimately, particularly in their role in making homelessness less visible. Mr.Y told me he came to Oxford because the police had been 'persecuting' him in Birmingham. Mr.G likewise felt the police 'had it in for' him in Newcastle, where he lived before coming to Oxford. Furthermore three rough sleepers (Mr.B, Mr.R and Mr.I) complained that policemen had beaten them on occasions.

When considering homeless youths' accounts of their relations with the police in London, Lee (1993) found that they were regarded as 'an obstruction' (Lee 1993, 221) but offered 'little opportunity for exploitation' (ibid.). In Oxford rough sleepers did appear to regard the police as an inevitable hindrance within their daily activities. In relation to minor crimes (particularly begging) rough sleepers seemed to know they were unable to get the better of the processes both they and the police were engaged in. For rough sleepers the best thing to do was avoid stimulating the power of the police, as the police themselves were obliged to follow through their inquiries. Though rough sleepers were critical of their legitimacy, they nevertheless were able to negotiate the outcome of encounters with the police by cooperating with them, even if only on a temporary basis. Their main preoccupation was not getting caught.

It is interesting to note that whilst homeless people tried to keep their illegal activities out of sight from the police (by not letting their reactions show, by withholding information or giving

false information and by hiding drugs), the police also turned a blind eye to illegal activities sometimes. This behaviour made it possible to share in cooperative and friendly relations. Relationships between rough sleepers and the police did not however, develop beyond this level. The problem of being, or being thought of as, a 'grass' prohibited this.

It is possible that officers regulated themselves, trying both to not be too unfair and to not create more unnecessary work for themselves. After all, people did move off the streets but frequently came back. The extent to which individual police officers knew that sometimes their warnings were no more than mere formalities cannot be verified as these exchanges could never be openly undertaken. On one occasion a policewoman approached me to warn me against begging. When I told her I was doing research, she expressed the view that dealing with rough sleepers was not 'a job for the police'. For her rough sleepers 'need(ed) help'. This suggests that some police officers may feel the criminal justice process is an inappropriate route for rough sleepers to take.

However, despite this possibility, the police have had a major role in making visible homelessness disappear. After fieldwork had been completed, three beggars in Oxford appeared in court and two of them were issued with anti-social behaviour orders that forbade them from entering certain areas of the city (Oxford Mail, November 14th 2003, pp.1-2). As noted above, some rough sleepers have started using sleeping spots in areas away from city centres. The focus of police control upon city centres, which, as Wright notes, are 'areas associated with consumption' (Wright 1997, 192) seems to mark such areas as 'prime' spaces, in which rough sleepers are 'out of place'. The interests of economy, as Garland suggested, are thus served. Rough sleepers are also closely surveyed when they enter shops. Mr V told me that security guards in large shops have photographs of rough sleepers who enter these shops, obtained from surveillance cameras. The issuing of anti-social behaviour orders came about through the joint efforts of the police and the council. As interagency cooperation has been increasing, it may be that the role of the police is changing, despite attitudes expressed by some officers.

B. Relations with the general public

The relations between rough sleepers and members of the general public are examined in this section. The concept of 'general public' is vague. Because so many encounters between these two groups (rough sleepers/domiciled citizens) were fleeting, it is not possible to here describe the general public in great detail. Here I conceptualise members of the general public in two specific ways: as passers-by and as local residents. Finding out all the different forces that may have affected the way members of the general public viewed rough sleepers is clearly not possible. Some factors though are suggestive. As well as the unquantifiable effect of the media (see below) it is likely that, as home ownership has grown, and the value of houses has boomed in Oxford, home-owners are likely to be concerned to maintain the value of their homes and their neighbourhoods, and thus they may not welcome the presence of rough sleepers. Alternatively, some passers-by may disagree with government policies about homelessness and therefore they may give to beggars as a critical gesture, or as an act of social solidarity. Also, members of the general public may have unstable views about rough sleepers, sometimes wanting to give to them and sometimes not. Nevertheless, it is in the name of the general public and of the 'community' that policies are formulated and enacted, so this area is important to explore.

1. Images of homelessness and the media

It is likely that the media has some effect on the relations between these parties. A detailed assessment of the role of the media in relation to homelessness is beyond the scope of this enquiry. However, newspapers, television and radio regularly contain stories about rough sleepers, government policies about rough sleepers and concerns of charity directors about both rough sleepers and government policies. The media cannot be discounted as having some influence upon the attitudes of members of the general public, though the nature of this influence may not be easy to assess.

Liddiard discussed the impact of the media on the general public's attitudes towards homelessness. Whilst rough sleeping was considered to be a 'good story' (Liddiard 1999, 79) by many journalists, the approach taken by journalists often resulted in simplistic stereotypes of rough sleepers (ibid. 80). This can contribute towards the stigmatised nature of homeless

populations as well as depoliticising homelessness (through a focus on the personal problems of homeless individuals).

However, the relationship between representations in the media and public attitudes is not necessarily a direct one. Liddiard explains how the media is 'just one of many varied influences on public opinion'. People are also influenced by 'a myriad of other stimuli' (ibid.) such as their personal experiences or that of friends or family. Furthermore, rather than directly and passively being affected by the media, the public is 'highly *active* in their interpretation of media messages and images' (ibid. 81. Author's italics). Liddiard cites research that showed how the most successful media messages were those that 'reinforced what individuals already believed' (ibid.).

Studies by Fitzpatrick and Kennedy (2001) and by Erskine and McIntosh (1999), reveal that, in relation to homeless people, members of the general public are concerned about the deserving or undeserving, legitimate or illegitimate nature of individual homeless people they encounter. Such concerns are reflected in the national press, where stories are published that convey negative images of homeless people (for example, both *The Sun* and *The Daily Mirror* reported on a beggar who, they claimed, earned £1,200 per month, £14,000 per year, and labelled him a 'super-scrourger'. *The Sun*, October 19th 2002, pg.17. *The Daily Mirror*, October 19th 2002, pg.27). Sometimes more positive images are conveyed. For example, *The Sun* collated the names of celebrities who had slept rough in their pasts ('Supertramps: Celebs who slept rough like Blair. March 1st 2004, pg.8); the *Daily Express* reported on Prince Charles' concerns about the 'plight' of ex-servicemen who had become rough sleepers (*Daily Express*, December 27th 2000, pg.27).

The broadsheets also have stories about rough sleepers, though these use less emotive language. For example, *The Observer* reported on the Government's announcement of its intention to prioritise action against beggars (*The Observer*, October 12th 2003, pg.3). Some charities are reported on as a means of conveying criticisms of government policies. For example, the *Daily Express* reported criticisms of the Rough Sleepers' Unit by directors of charities who accused the government of using 'bullying tactics' to reduce rough sleeper

counts. (Daily Express, January 8th 2001, pg.27). On the other hand, The Independent produced a special supplement 'on behalf of' the Rough Sleepers' Unit, in which various 'stories' about rough sleepers were presented, and the contribution of the Rough Sleepers' Unit highlighted (The Independent, Special Supplement, December 8th 2001).

In Oxford homeless people were aware of negative representations of them in the national media and they commented on the effects these images could have in their lives, particularly in their relations with the general public. Many rough sleepers told me about how stories about beggars earning vast sums of money frequently appeared in tabloid papers and, in their opinion, led to aggression from some passers-by. Mr.G was interviewed by a television crew but later told me the journalist had 'conned' him into the interview, by agreeing to present Mr.G in a positive light. The interview had gone well but at the editing stage the interview was not shown and the comments of the journalists were negative (focussing on anti social behaviour). On the other hand, when New Labour launched their 'Change a Life'²² campaign, that explicitly asked the general public to not give money to beggars (but to services providers instead), it appeared to have no noticeable effect. Homeless people told me that their incomes from begging were the same as before.

Rough sleepers made few comments about how local newspapers referred to them, though throughout this project there were regular articles about rough sleepers, begging, drinking on the streets, anti-social behaviour of homeless people and other related issues (some of which are cited below). Rough sleepers were aware of the substance of many of the stories that appeared in local newspapers but they seemed to have obtained such information from other rough sleepers, staff in voluntary agencies and from the police.

2. Local residents and homeless people

As noted in Chapter Four, rough sleepers who managed to get bedsits in houses of multiple occupation sometimes experienced difficulties with their neighbours. Individuals and

²² This campaign was 'ditched' (The Observer, 3rd March 2002, pg.17) because it raised only £10,000 despite having spent £240,000 on advertising.

Residents' Associations have complained, directly or indirectly, about instances of homeless people's behaviours. On a larger scale local residents have articulated objections to the proportion of rented accommodation in their area. Students, asylum seekers and homeless people use such accommodation. In east Oxford residents' associations and the East Oxford Parliament have provided a forum for such complaints.

The East Oxford Parliament members have argued that East Oxford should be designated an 'area of restraint', which means there should be a limit to the amount of rented properties in the area. Local newspapers reported that 'long-term residents ...claim communities are being destroyed because too many properties are let to short-term tenants'(Oxford Mail March 30th 2002, pg.1). Councillor Ellise Benjamin, chairman of the Parliament, was quoted as saying 'It's not that we don't want students or vulnerable people in Oxford, but that the burden for housing them should be shared across the city' (ibid. 2). Whilst in this case complaints were voiced about how short-term residents can be rowdy whilst also failing to look after their gardens and clean up their rubbish, Iffley Road Residents' Association complained specifically about the presence of homeless people. David Barton, from the association, voiced the complaint that 'anti-social behaviour had increased' (Oxford Mail, September 20th 2003, pg.5). Drug dealing and prostitution were increasing, residents claimed, as a result of a property being used for homeless people. Bill Baker, representing the protests of local residents, said, 'the spread of HMOs (houses of multiple occupation) is ...making it difficult for people to live in the community. It's causing a lot of unrest, a lot of violence and a lot of resentment' (ibid.).

It is hard to assess the extent to which residents' feelings about the presence of homeless people affects policies in relation to them. However, some rough sleepers who found bedsit accommodation during this project were evicted on occasions as a result of complaints made about them by their neighbours. It appears that the presence of drugs, drug dealing, street drinking and rowdy behaviour in residential areas is felt to have a detrimental effect on the 'community'. However, it is unclear who is being referred to by the term 'community'. Whilst the presence of drugs, drug dealing, street drinking, (alleged) prostitution may cause problems for various groups in society (for example, the presence of drug users may cause

parents to worry about their children's safety, pensioners may feel intimidated by rowdy behaviour some drinkers might display), this does not mean they are not a part of the community. Sibley (1988) argues that social and spatial homogeneity are highly valued qualities of some neighbourhoods and can lead people to take collective action to exclude those with different lifestyles.

The presence of facilities providing services to homeless people is also something some residents find objectionable. An example of this came about when proposals were made to refurbish the Night Shelter. The new Night Shelter was going to change from offering fifty 'emergency' beds (for short-term stays) to only five. The remaining vacancies would house 'semi-permanent' residents. In the letters page of the Oxford Mail, objections were raised against this, on the grounds that this would lead to calls for a new overnight facility, which would 'just extend the invitation to others and encourage them to make a beeline to Oxford' (Oxford Mail, April 18th 2002, pg.6). As the Night Shelter had to close down whilst refurbishment was underway, its temporary site also caused there to be objections from local residents, who argued they were 'quite frightened by the plans to put the night shelter so close...(and they) just want a quiet life' (Oxford Mail, October 17th 2002, pg.2). The fears of these residents appeared to have been confirmed when it was reported that rough sleepers had been using 'their corridors and doorways and people (had been) urinating in the building' (Oxford Mail, January 19th 2004), when they had been unable to enter the temporary Night Shelter.

Whilst providers of services to rough sleepers are engaged in a process of eliminating alternatives to street sleeping, by encouraging rough sleepers to accept services or be faced with criminal prosecution, the provision of such services is not welcome by residents in areas where such facilities are located. Shelters and hostels (and supervised accommodation in bedsits) are considered to be the appropriate places for rough sleepers but the location of these places is disputed by local residents' notions of their 'community' and its quality of life. Insofar as local residents' views are held to be those of the 'community', there would appear to be irreconcilable differences between them and the views of politicians who encourage the

provision of services to rough sleepers in order to remove them from the streets. This is ironic as it is in the name of the 'community' that politicians promote these policies.

3. Passers-by

An important influence upon the relations between passers-by and rough sleepers was the visibility of homeless people in everyday, mundane public spaces that members of the general public passed through routinely, while carrying out their activities (shopping, going to and from work, lunch hours, going to pubs, clubs, theatres, and so forth). When I first undertook participant observation, I felt extremely exposed and other homeless people told me I would get used to this (which, to a degree, I did after some time). Homeless people have no idea if someone passing by will treat them well, indifferently or badly.

3.1. Givers

When learning to beg and vend on the streets, I was told that I should try to be deferential and humble. This was especially the case when spot begging as this activity interrupts passers-by in a manner that could be interpreted as confrontational or aggressive and threatening. Those beggars considered aggressive by other homeless people, were those who begged standing up. The sitting down position was considered naturally more humble and, whilst a person is just as exposed, they can be ignored by passers-by and treated as if they are invisible.

When asking people for money ('spare change') I was told to always use phrases like 'thank you', 'please', 'excuse me', 'sorry for interrupting you'. If a passer-by enquired about my circumstances, I was told to come up with a story that fulfilled their idea of a genuine beggar. This meant not disclosing criminal activities such as taking drugs. It also meant emphasising my bad luck and victimhood.

A well put request for money (or when vending magazines) could make passers-by change their minds about whether to give or not. I was often told of instances when someone would walk by, apparently ignoring a beggar or vendor, only to turn back or return later saying 'I didn't mean to ignore you' or similar phrases. These instances could lead to chats and the forming of relationships.

Passers-by gave money, tobacco, cigarettes, food (either new or partially eaten!), hot drinks and even, occasionally, cannabis. On one occasion Mr.F was given a necklace by a refugee; on another occasion, Mr.B was offered a bed for the night by a gay man, in exchange for sex. Mr.B did not accept the invitation but was appreciative of the gentleman who was very friendly.

Of the many passers-by who gave to beggars or who bought magazines from vendors, some would build up relationships with homeless people. These were known as ‘regulars’ and were an important source of both income and emotional support. Regulars were one important reason why people were territorial about their pitches. It was vital that a beggar or vendor stick to the same pitch so that they could build up regulars. Regulars usually gave bigger ‘drops’ and they often also gave items that were relevant to the person concerned. For example: Mr.G had a dog. Two elderly ladies who were his regulars, used to buy him dog food twice a week. Furthermore, as relationships with ‘regulars’ built up, homeless individuals found themselves increasingly able to tell them the truth about themselves – in particular about their past (in which they may have suffered abuses) and their addictions or feelings of responsibility about their predicament.

3.2. Non-givers

There were two main types of non-givers – those who ignored beggars and those who behaved aggressively, when asked for spare change or when passing vendors. Homeless people did not condemn those who ignored them, but the manner in which they were ignored led to frequent comments. People told me that when a passer-by ignored someone, they appeared to be ‘uptight’. Frequently their hand would move to their pocket. When I first observed this I thought the passer-by was getting money to give me, but instead he walked on by. Mr.Q laughed with me about this, saying that a few times he had thanked people in anticipation of a drop, only to realise the drop would never come. Some people played games on passers-by who tried to look away. Mr.G would say nonsensical or absurd phrases such as ‘Chinese eat dogs’, rather than ask for spare change. He said those who ignored him had judged him before hearing him and that it made no difference what he said.

An interesting factor to emerge in discussions about non-givers, was the way street homeless people regarded religious representatives. Although religious institutions do much charitable work for homeless people, some rough sleepers said that passers-by in religious outfits (priests, nuns) never gave to them. In fact both Mr.O and Mr.G said they looked down on beggars as if in anger. On the whole, although appreciative of passers-by who gave, street homeless people appeared to feel that Oxford, being a wealthy town, was a rather snobbish place where the friendliness of passers-by was limited.

Aggressive non-givers differed from those who ignored homeless people in that they would turn around and face a beggar or vendor and shout at them. I experienced only a few incidents of this nature. On two occasions passers-by shouted 'Get a bloody job' at me. Most homeless people told me I should answer back because aggressive passers-by had a 'bad attitude towards the homeless' but that I should be careful also not to aggravate their temper. Some beggars were unable to always uphold this rule themselves. For example, Mr.R told me that on two occasions he offered to fight with aggressive passers-by saying 'Let's step over here'. Mr.I also did this and tried to arrange a fight for later in the evening. In neither case however did fights come about.

Beggars' need to appear non-threatening sometimes compromised their desire for at least a minimal sense of dignity. For example, Mr.N never defended himself. Once, when I was linked up with him, a passer-by started to urinate right next to the pitch where he was sitting. Feeling bothered on his behalf, I confronted this passer-by. Mr.N appreciated my intervention but warned me that standing up to passers-by could get me into trouble with the police, who invariably believed a passer-by before believing a beggar.

Most aggressive passers-by were drunk men. I was told of and observed hardly any incidents of this nature with women. There was one occasion when I was vending, when a woman started shouting at me that she did not want to buy a magazine and that I was being aggressive. Since I thought I was not being aggressive at all, I could only conclude that she found street homeless people to be threatening simply by their presence.

3.3. Unsolicited attention

Homeless people told me that the most harrowing aspect of being street homeless lay in the exposure a person had to dangerous individuals. Mr.DE had an argument with some drunk passers-by who threw him into a canal. Mr.DE was saved by another passer-by as he had banged his head whilst being thrown and was knocked out. Mr.C was mugged whilst in London and he got beaten up in Oxford. When he was beaten up he was so injured he needed two 'plates' to be put inside his face bones, stitches in his neck, and his teeth were wired up as his assailant had broken his jaw.

Sexually, homeless people were also very vulnerable to attack. Ms.H got raped whilst in a park, and Ms.D was gang-raped in the early stages of being street homeless when she was living in London. When begging one night, a man approached me, wanting sexual favours from me. Luckily another passer-by saw him off.

It is in the relations between homeless people and members of the general public that the visibility and exposure of street homeless people is most felt. Mr.K told me that his personal pride stopped him from begging. Mr.L told me that he never used a sales patter when he worked vending magazines. This was because he did not want to attract people, who might stop and 'ask too many questions.' He said he just wanted to be left alone. As he was a drinker, and not a heavy alcoholic either, his financial needs were smaller and this meant he could keep quiet when vending. In fact he told me some passers-by preferred those who kept quiet and he did have regulars too. He also used to go to sleeping spots out of town and when he travelled to and from them, he tried to do so in cover of darkness at night, and avoiding the rush hour in the mornings, so that less people would notice him.

Just the appearance and presence of rough sleepers was often enough to cause unwelcome behaviour from members of the general public. Mr.C told me that he was barred from six pubs for no other reason than his appearance. During fieldwork I dressed fairly scruffily in order to fit in with homeless people's appearance. On one occasion, when I went to a fast

food outlet hoping to use their bathroom, I was told they had no bathroom (which they did). It was not uncommon to overhear passers-by discussing homeless people in unfavourable terms.

Nevertheless, the majority of the exchanges I was told of or observed were positive and friendly. Mr.I said, 'when you become homeless you lose your self respect' and that the friendships he built up with his regulars, helped him sustain his self respect. He said 'people are not sort of giving up on everyone if they can recognise genuine sincerity I suppose'.

Conclusion

The discursive context in and through which street homelessness exists, is currently dominated by an 'ideology of conformity' (Franklin 1999, 191-92) that seems to be intolerant of rough sleepers' individuality, self-determination and choice to be different. Agents delivering non-statutory welfare services have been formally linked with the police and other bodies as a result of New Labour's 'joined-up' multi-agency approach and decision to get rid of rough sleeping altogether. Social distances between workers and rough sleepers have expanded and continue to expand as many staff members who have values that pre-date New Labour and who regard rough sleepers as 'normal', are leaving. As well as individual staff members leaving their jobs, the old outreach team was disbanded. At the time of writing, it seems probable that some staff from the dry hostel in Oxford will lose their jobs, as the hostel is changing hands. Rough sleepers' relationships with voluntary sector agency workers tend to develop towards friendships and this necessarily involves degrees of transgression of the rules of professional conduct. Both parties to these relationships resist the professionalisation of their conduct, and it is in these circumstances that rough sleepers find workers to be of real, memorable value. In the new, 'joined-up' environment of services provision such informal relationships may be harder to establish. However, whilst the official numbers of rough sleepers have diminished, the repeated nature of rough sleeper participants' homelessness in this project continued.

Findings suggest that workers' perceptions of the needs of rough sleepers are varied. Some workers, particularly those who worked with homeless people prior to New Labour's electoral successes, appeared to regard rough sleepers' needs from within discourses of 'crisis' or

'emergency'. For these workers, successive Conservative governments had both caused homelessness and failed to make enough provision for rough sleepers. These workers saw their role as helping rough sleepers to survive in the absence of access to shelter, food and clothing. Workers with this approach appeared to have a discourse of respect for rough sleepers' autonomy. They tried to accept at face value what rough sleepers told them because they believed rough sleepers were 'normal' people. Such workers appeared to favour rough sleepers' work in the informal economy, as evidence of both their needs (of survival) and their independence. The old outreach team exemplified this approach in the practices its workers had of giving out sleeping bags and hot drinks. It was the short-term emergency needs of rough sleepers that dominated their perceptions of the needs of rough sleepers, rather than their long-term dependency.

The Task Force exemplified a new approach to rough sleepers, with a discourse of 'street culture' and 'entrenched' rough sleepers. In some respects, this newer approach signals a willingness, at the political level, to address the needs of homeless people more fully than previous approaches. The category of 'entrenched' rough sleeper has been used to conceptually highlight rough sleepers who appear to be unresponsive to short-term, emergency care and who, in their persistent rough sleeping, seem to demonstrate their needs for expanded welfare services that target their specific 'problems'. For example, the setting up of a detoxification residence that is only for 'entrenched' rough sleepers who have problems of addictions appears to be a response to their specific needs. However, many more domiciled members of society have problems of addiction, and the separation of 'entrenched' rough sleepers from their domiciled counterparts sets up a differentiation between the two, which might be unhelpful to processes of social inclusion as well as diverting attention away from the shortage of cheap rented accommodation rough sleepers lack. Eighner made the observation that 'If there were no alcohol, society would still have no use, no job, no home for the men... who sit on street corners with brown paper sacks. If cities were filled with sober homeless people, I doubt that the comfortable would find the results much to their liking' (Eighner 1993, 162). Whilst Eighner's comments are part of his autobiographical record of the experiences he had when he and his dog became homeless, and therefore are not based on academic research, he does raise a pertinent issue. As noted before, some rough sleepers

undertake detoxification unaided but they cannot move into accommodation because it is simply not available.

Rhetoric about the quality of life of 'the community', justifies the use of anti-social behaviour orders. The notion of a 'negative street culture' composed of people who attach themselves to 'entrenched' rough sleepers, conveys the idea that rough sleeping is an irresponsible and criminal practice. Anti-social and asocial representations of homeless people, obscure from view important social resources street dwellers themselves develop. This is not to deny that there are anti-social consequences of some of street dwellers' actions, nor that they lack social relations in the mainstream institutions of society. The narrowing down of debates about street homelessness to a problem of individual pathologies rather than to that of global economic forces and other macro difficulties, results in a technical, specialist and administrative approach to welfare that does not recognise the needs of homeless people who may be stuck in a revolving door cycle of recurring episodic homelessness. Whilst New Labour's policies have reduced the visibility of homelessness this does not mean homeless people are less socially excluded.

For rough sleepers, resisting the authority of the rules and practices they encountered within facilities and within their interactions with outreach teams, was often an indicator of their ability to be independent. Many rough sleepers swayed between wanting to accept services that would help them to find accommodation or solve their addictions and rejecting the rules and authority they encountered in hostels. Rowe (1999), who studied workers from outreach teams in the USA, cited a homeless man's comments that 'there are homeless people who feel independent despite the fact that they're being fed at a soup kitchen, being housed in a shelter, getting entitlements: "I'm my own man. I'm doing my own thing. I'm making the decisions. I choose to be at a shelter..."'. But when you get connected to a case manager, there's a dependency that's created on another person because of the personal relationship that forms with the person, as opposed to going to soup kitchens [where] there's no *one* person that's helping you' (Author's italics. Rowe 1999, 107-8). The provision of services for rough sleepers does not constitute the only resources they have. Many rough sleepers survive periods when they received no services, such as when there is some bureaucratic mix up and

their welfare payments do not come through, or if they get barred from shelters and hostels. Findings suggest rough sleepers transform relations between themselves and workers providing services to them, into friendships, in which the application of professional practices that enhance the dependent role of rough sleepers is undermined.

When interacting with the police, rough sleepers seem to adopt a more formal stance. They do not expect police officers to be friendly, nor do they try to transgress rules of professional conduct. Instead, rough sleepers try to not get caught – sleeping, begging, using substances – because they acknowledge the professional duty police officers have been given, to remove homeless people from visible places and to stop them from begging and undertaking other illegal activities. Some police officers turned a blind eye to some of the activities rough sleepers undertake, but this did not appear to lead to any expectations on rough sleepers' part, of friendship or transgression. Whereas in relation to services providers, rough sleepers expected and wanted rules to be disregarded, this was not the same in relation to the police. When the police did bend the rules, this was taken as a lucky event rather than an obligation.

Rough sleepers were cast, locally and nationally, as socially excluded individuals who were dependent and at times anti-social. Rough sleepers drew upon these images in order to obtain important resources. Images of dependency helped them create social bonds with both workers in the voluntary sector and members of the general public ('regulars' especially). These images helped rough sleepers to confide in workers or members of the general public, about their drug or alcohol dependencies in particular. Being labelled as anti-social reinforced images of rough sleepers' 'social exclusion', by making them appear to be intimidating people and 'communities', and thus as separate, different from members of 'mainstream' society. Both 'vulnerable' and 'anti-social' discourses clashed with an historically older discourse of rough sleepers as 'normal' people. Rough sleepers could draw on the image of themselves as 'normal', partly in order to resist their labelling as anti-social by passers-by in particular. In this sense, 'discourses and practices (are treated by rough sleepers)... not as indicators of essential features of... selves or culture, but rather as the media... around which socially and historically positioned persons construct their subjectivities' (Skinner et al 1998, 4).

It is for rough sleepers to learn, alone and from their homeless peers, how to negotiate their encounters with discursive practices. Some are more skilled than others at making friends with non-homeless people and at negotiating with authority figures. Instances when discourses simply fail to be effective are produced by both homeless people and the non-homeless and such instances appear to encourage rough sleepers to feel better, not only about themselves as individuals but also about their homeless friends and homeless people generally. Whilst often rough sleepers encounter discourses as constraints, this has a double effect: not only do rough sleepers accept their low social status and even, at times, lose a degree of personal dignity, but they also react against such feelings and thus develop further tactics of resistance.

CONCLUSION

This study is about the various different ways that those who were classified as 'street homeless' participated in the many processes that both created and resulted from repeated homelessness. Rough sleepers, upon becoming recognized as homeless, occupied a socially degraded category that currently is signified by the umbrella term 'social exclusion', but that can be traced back, in various guises, to the origins of statecraft. How rough sleepers coped with their low social status and why they were transient has been the focus of the ethnographic work undertaken here.

The presence and activities of street homeless people has been analysed in this study using Holland et al's concept of 'history in person'. These authors describe two 'constellations' of relations: firstly, the 'struggles of individuals and groups to forge self-understandings within local relationships' and secondly, the relations between local practices and 'larger sociohistorical and political contexts' (Skinner et al 1998, 4). Whilst I have explored the relations between local practices and a broader historical context (mostly in Chapters One and Six), more emphasis has been laid upon the 'relations of local struggle to identity and subjectivity' (Holland & Lave 2001, 6).

In Chapter Three I made the argument that rough sleepers, in the absence of common structuring conditions of home and work, were faced with a fundamental problem of (what I have labelled) 'empty time'. This term has been used to describe a situation defined by not only a lack of events, but also a lack of a predictable succession of events. Empty time is distressing because, for stretches of time, no 'events' happen but also it conveys incoherence and fear, as rough sleepers are exposed to life-threatening circumstances, which they cannot foresee and about which they can do nothing or almost nothing. Rough sleepers therefore must create meaningful events and sequences of linked events out of the resources available to them and so safeguard themselves against the dangers they encounter on the streets.

This argument, derived from participant observation undertaken with rough sleepers over a prolonged period of time, leads to a reformulation of the commonly acknowledged feature

previous researchers had found, which is the notion that street populations are 'present-orientated'. The necessity rough sleepers faced, of creating events and sequences of events, suggests that on their own temporal terms they became precisely the opposite of 'present-oriented'. A preoccupation with 'killing time' involved rough sleepers in various sequences of events: work practices, social activities and using alcohol or drugs provided not only an important justification for spatial and temporal structuring but also a means of mediating both physical and mental states.

This creativity though is not the same as 'freewheeling' unmediated agency (Skinner et al 1998, 4) because to be a rough sleeper is to be both condemned and pitied, inescapably cast in a complex 'homeless' social identity that portrays street homelessness as a problem of anti-social behaviour (towards other members of society) and vulnerability (of the individual rough sleeper), and poses challenges to rough sleepers' legitimacy and entitlement to welfare benefits.

The history of social constructions about poor people, outlined in Chapter One, suggests they have traditionally been perceived within the dichotomous terms of order/disorder. Within social constructions about poor people there have always been constructions about a small minority of poor people (for example, 'paupers', 'lustie beggars') whose behaviour is deemed to make them unworthy of assistance. Specifically, the undeserving poor are usually those who are felt to be capable of work but who do not have formal employment. Their alleged 'undeserving' nature is linked to the idea that providing welfare to the undeserving will provide incentives to other, 'deserving' poor people to adopt similarly 'undeserving' behaviours. There has therefore also been present a vigilance about the social lives of 'undeserving' poor people and a discourse about their 'culture' that is portrayed as separate from mainstream society and is felt to be 'contaminating'.

The fact that street homelessness was a condition endured mostly in public places meant rough sleepers were constantly facing their own degraded position in society, as it was reflected back to them by members of the general public, services providers, legal and penal authorities and others. Their low social status was also reflected in the marginal nature of the spaces they

occupied or in their lack of entitlement to occupy less marginal spaces for very long. When rough sleepers were living on the streets, they were frequently moved away. Their place-making activities (for sleeping and for working, mainly) were constantly interrupted.

There was a plethora of statutory and non-statutory agencies designed to help, contain and control street homeless individuals, and rough sleepers both approached and were approached by such agencies, which formed an integral part of their lives. Both in hostels and in rented rooms, rough sleepers were faced with a variety of challenges that made them feel ambiguous. For example: the respite of living in a hostel could be outweighed by the fear many rough sleepers expressed of becoming institutionalised; the prospects of a future without drug or drink addictions was undermined by the encounters they sometimes had, with drinking or drug using friends in such facilities; such encounters could lead to departure; when finding a bedsit to live in, neighbours sometimes complained about their social lives; when living in supervised hostels they could not have friends to stay.

In a similar way to Wiseman's 'down-and-out drunks' from 'Pacific City', most rough sleepers in Oxford who participated in this project had experiences of a multitude of different facilities. This provided them with the grounds for inter-agency comparison as well as a perspective of facilities that resembled Wiseman's account of how Skid Row alcoholics perceived 'the loop': a circuit of institutions and rented accommodation through which rough sleepers could travel for years, with some periods spent back on the streets.

The processes surrounding rough sleepers' transience and their use of various forms of accommodation show that in a myriad of different ways, they reappropriated the conditions of their constraint (Lee 1993, 260) and, whilst reproducing the social order, nevertheless 'infected' it with critical meaning (ibid. 259). For example: on occasions a passer-by might shout at a rough sleeper who was begging, angry comments (such as 'Get a bloody job!') that implied rough sleepers were lazy and dependent. However, for rough sleepers, not only was begging a form of work that helped them to be self-sufficient (comparatively); managing the difficult lifestyle of living on the streets was in itself a sign of strength and independence. Taking insults from passers-by was felt to be a part of the 'job' – being seen to be a dependent

beggar was the whole point. The insulting aggression of a passer-by to an extent confirms the success rough sleepers had in maintaining the appearance of dependency whilst earning money and gaining self-respect by being self-sufficient. A negative, restricting discursive environment could thus be symbolically subverted, yielding opportunity rather than constraint.

Power structures, in this study, have been conceptualised as processes whose outcome is not guaranteed. An important process observed throughout the study was the transition many statutory and voluntary sector agencies were undergoing from a position of resistance against central government policy to one of acceptance and even promotion of central government policies. The link between local practices and central government policies was deeply affected by the change from Conservative to New Labour. Some of the workers I encountered had developed professionally under Tory governments, whose commitment to cutting welfare provision was renown. As well as rising numbers of street homeless populations, the period of Conservative government had also been marked by an insecure funding environment for the kinds of agencies working with homeless populations. Opposition to Tory governments had been a focal point for many voluntary sector agencies. Their workers had subscribed to the view that, rather than being individually responsible, homeless people were victims of central government's cuts. Many workers had very close relationships with rough sleepers, and viewed their professional rules of conduct as guidelines to be applied only sometimes.

New Labour politicians radically changed this anti-authoritarian environment, by expanding services provision and linking agencies, using funding as a lever, in partnerships designed to address the perceived multi-dimensional problems of individual rough sleepers. New Labour's rhetoric of rights and responsibilities, their argument that the homeless should be obliged to accept services and that giving money to beggars was unhelpful, affected the discursive environment of agencies. For this reason, the structures of power which acted as constraints in rough sleepers lives were themselves differentiated, as not all workers subscribed to New Labour's views.

Empty time and repeated homelessness

In Chapter Four I outlined the various cycles rough sleepers often found themselves to be engaged in. Knowledge of a rough sleeper's levels of addiction, state of physical health and peer relationships may make it possible to estimate when a rough sleeper might decide to take up the offer of services and it also might be possible to estimate when someone might decide to return to the streets. These cycles at times rendered rough sleepers in urgent need of help, at other times they led rough sleepers to be drawn back to the lifestyle of the streets.

However, the issue that has concerned me is that of reckoning to what degree coping with empty time whilst living on the streets resulted in patterns of temporal and spatial practices that differed fundamentally from those required of them when they occupied forms of accommodation.

Unstructured time was a constant threat to rough sleepers whether they lived on the streets or indoors. To a degree, rough sleepers also linked it with institutionalisation. For example: although working long hours to obtain enough money to sustain a heavy drug addiction had many unwelcome features, those who started taking methadone and in particular those who also moved into hostels expressed dissatisfaction with how they were no longer busy. Many rough sleepers told me they became lethargic in these circumstances and they compared some hostels to prisons, partly because the routines they lived out previously appeared to reach an abrupt halt.

Wiseman wrote a paper about the problems Skid Row alcoholics experienced when they gave up the routines of their drinking lifestyles. She notes that, as a person increases their drinking, they simultaneously spend progressively more time talking, socialising with other drinkers and obtaining alcohol. The skills, commitments and relationships outside of the activities associated with drinking, atrophy (Wiseman 1972, 165). For Wiseman this poses immense problems for the alcoholic who stops drinking. In order to stay sober, the alcoholic must avoid his or her drinking companions. This may mean he or she has no social contacts, and thus may suffer from 'an absence of identity' (ibid. 166). Furthermore, she notes how the daily routines of alcoholics differ from their sober counterparts, and the 'sudden change to sober

time causes a feeling of being at loose ends' (ibid.) Wiseman posits the notion that the 'tension and stress resulting from attempts to cope with sober time may be an important cause of recidivism' (ibid.) and further, that the ability to structure time when sober atrophies from disuse (ibid. 167).

In this project many rough sleepers passed repeatedly in and out of various forms of accommodation. An important aspect of this mobility was how, each time a rough sleeper moved, he or she also had to adjust to different spatial and temporal routines. Rather than, as Wiseman argues, having lost their 'time-handling ability' (ibid. 167), rough sleepers lived in a world whose time horizons constantly changed. On the streets activities were undertaken at a fast-moving pace; inside bedsits and hostels the tempo was slower.

Repeated homelessness and social life

Various authors have explained rough sleepers' multiple experiences of various forms of accommodation as being related to the desire rough sleepers had to be with friends back on the streets (for example, Randall & Brown 1999). The Street Scene Task Force's report specified the potential existence of a 'negative street culture'. Wiseman's argument that sober time entailed a loss of identity because of the loss of social contacts sober alcoholics sustained, is applicable in this project but in a modified form: rough sleepers' identity seemed to be constantly on the surface, less related to interiority and individuality so much as to the multiplicity of different relationships they developed and invoked at different times. Rough sleepers were constantly moving between various forms of identity whilst simultaneously moving between transformed spatial and temporal orders and very different sets of social contacts. They could be said to 'lack... stable form' (Desjarlais 1997, 66).

Friendships that had been developed on the street were important because they provided rough sleepers with membership, albeit of an excluded, socially degraded class. As well as friendships, which were intense and quick to establish, rough sleepers also manifested solidarity for one another, in their encounters on the streets. Mutual acknowledgement, information exchange and, to an extent, recognition of unity was observed on many occasions. This belonging, I suggest, was also valuable to rough sleepers because 'empty time' was so

detrimental – it signified exile, a loss of social significance altogether and it was experienced sometimes as misery and other times as mortal danger.

Belonging to an excluded group was sometimes manifested in attitudes of ‘us’ and ‘them’. To some extent the relationships rough sleepers developed with workers and sympathetic members of the general public provided a source of self-validation, which may also have led indirectly to their higher valuation of other homeless people. As these relationships changed or were lost, rough sleepers had fewer social resources they could use in their own friendships too. Attitudes of ‘us’ and ‘them’ were observed to occur as responses to situations where rough sleepers felt they were being victimised. However, discourses of anti-social behaviour cast rough sleepers in a role of victimiser, and this also appeared to have damaging effects in the relationships rough sleepers were able to develop with one another. The degraded meanings associated with rough sleepers appeared to lead them to have low expectations of one another and frequently their relationships were unstable, sometimes lasting no more than a few hours.

In Chapter Five I examined these relationships and found that they were constrained by various factors. When examining the uses rough sleepers made of alcohol and drugs, I was initially impressed with the way these substances were part of a repertoire of techniques for managing empty time. They provided a rationale for the structuring of time each day, and they also appeared to be a means whereby social bonds were formed. Using substances was also indirectly associated with rough sleepers’ self-perceptions as independent, tough and capable people. Their ability to earn money and to survive the extreme environment of the streets helped homeless substances users to distinguish themselves from long-term residents of hostels and shelters of the homeless, who they felt were vulnerable. Furthermore, the capacity rough sleepers had to undertake unaided (and unacknowledged) detoxification seemed to suggest that the discourse of addiction had been unnecessarily applied to people who were using substances in a creative and positive way.

However, whilst substances provided rough sleepers with these advantages and made empty time manageable, they also had a tragic and devastating effect upon the relationships rough

sleepers could develop. As well as there being a discursive and often, practical separation between drinkers and drug users, which at times was manifested in violent disagreements, the use of substances also seemed to be expressive of a disregard for relationships, rough sleepers' own well-being and that of their best friends. Especially for drug users (who I spent more time with than drinkers), obtaining and using drugs was a process fraught with dishonesty, betrayal and contempt. It is true to say that the principle of 'forgive and forget' was active on the streets, but this made no difference to the fact that rough sleepers frequently expressed a very low opinion of each other and of their own capacities to help, love and care for one another, because often they believed themselves and their friends to be 'the lowest of the low' (Mr.U). Lee found that 'homeless livelihood' was 'characterised by a determination to escape from living the lives of their own misrepresentation, by staunchly maintaining standards providing them with an identity they regarded as respectable' (Lee 1993, 264). Rough sleepers in Oxford did not appear to regard themselves as having a respectable identity.

Whilst some authors have found there to be a sense of community amidst rough sleepers, they were writing either in different countries (for example, Wagner 1993, Wright 1997) and/or at different periods of time (for example, Downing-Orr 1996). Some rough sleepers had memories of previous times, when it seems there were stronger feelings of community. It is possible that such feelings were related in the past not only to the unity between rough sleepers and workers, which has since diminished, but also to the higher numbers of homeless people that there used to be. Furthermore, the New-Age traveller scene, protest sites and free parties, which many rough sleepers had been involved with in the past, have also diminished. As Lee noted however, the convergent experiences of homeless people that may unite them is 'built on the random contingencies of urban life' and is characteristically fragmented. What rough sleepers share is 'a very fragmented life' (Lee 1993, 264) and their manner of sharing is 'fleeting and unstable' (ibid.)

Crafting repeatedly homeless selves

Rough sleepers were unable to escape the varying reflections of them because they were engaged in processes of place-making and work in public places and in roles that featured in political and popular discourses. Travelling across many sites, managing constantly changing

spatial and temporal orders, facing many differently situated strangers and acquaintances took a great deal of skill and attention to detail.

Some of the practices of rough sleepers could be interpreted as dishonest; for example: Mr.B hiding his winter coat whilst begging in case passers-by thought he did not really need their spare change. Nevertheless, members of the general public also practiced deception in relation to beggars. Many rough sleepers told me about how a passer-by might pretend to be on the mobile phone, or keep looking at their watches as they pass by. Mr.Q said ‘they always try to ignore you’. Dishonesty happens in both directions. It is necessary to acknowledge that ‘role behaviour cannot be read as role compliance, and role compliance cannot be read as role commitment, which in turn cannot be read as role belief’ (Willis 2001, 212). Lee, citing Giddens, suggests there is an important distinction between self-identity and performance (Lee 1993, 263). Telling ‘sob stories’ and assuming the socially constructed roles, of ‘homeless’, of ‘victim’, of ‘good person’, were actions undertaken in order to achieve something. They did not necessarily reflect the ‘self-identities’ of rough sleepers.

However, given that there was no place rough sleepers could go where they could drop their ‘homeless’ roles, as they actually were homeless, and given that time not spent in a ‘homeless’ role was frequently spent in a drug or drink induced oblivion, rough sleepers appeared to have few opportunities to assume and practice any kind of ‘self-identity’. I am not suggesting that rough sleepers’ ‘changing performances’ may lead to a loss of identity (ibid.); instead I am arguing that self-identity may not always be a prominent feature of all people in general, and in the pressing circumstances of living on the streets, rough sleepers may prefer not to have a strong sense of self.

Rough sleepers’ personal histories also appear to weigh against having a strong self-identity. As May noted, homeless people may be ‘punished for revealing aspects of ... (their) biograph(ies)’ when seeking to obtain access to services (May 2000, 743) because, for example, the use of drink or drugs may render a person inadmissible. In a discussion I had with Mr.Q, I asked him about practices of deception between rough sleepers and other parties. He said to me: ‘they can’t take the whole truth’. Mr.Q explained that when passers-by ask

him about his circumstances they want him to tell them a 'sob story' and not the story of his life, which contained gruesome details of childhood abuse and many years of homelessness, crime, drugs and prison. In this project homeless people's life histories were long, painful and complex stories that took a long time to relate. Respondents sometimes claimed it was good to have someone they could tell their stories to but this did not mean the process of recounting did not hurt.

May's paper, in which he reconstructs the biographical narratives of homeless respondents, shows many of them to have been socialised, at various stages in their lives, into feelings of exclusion from both home as residence and home as place. He notes how for some people, 'feelings of disorientation and isolation... continue even once a person has found shelter... Such feelings contribute to ... a "hollowed-out" sense of place and... may lead to a powerful sense of (dis)placement' (ibid.755). With others, 'whose early years may have been spent moving through the interlocking spaces of the welfare system and juvenile courts' (ibid. 756), May found that a sense of home had never been enjoyed.

It is possible that the limited nature of the roles and friendships rough sleepers engage in when travelling and when place-making help them to avoid and escape pain. It is also the case that their lack of access to more fulsome social roles and relationships contributes to their repeated homelessness, by making indoor spaces only a little less temporary than the places rough sleepers move around outdoors. Inside facilities rough sleepers are also expected to play their 'homeless' roles. Jointly, rough sleepers and the people who they encounter, despite their best intentions, help to preserve a situation whereby rough sleepers remain excluded from permanent accommodation.

Recommendations

In this ethnographic study I have foregrounded the spatial and temporal processes of repeated homelessness. I have used participant observation as a means of getting to know the manner in which rough sleepers' daily and periodic routines are linked to social constructions of 'homelessness' generated at many levels of society. In some respects 'homelessness' is the term given to the difference between rough sleepers' and the domiciled' management of space

and time. But it is also an unstable concept because shelter is not the same as 'home', which has additional meanings. Finding accommodation is not always a solution to the homelessness of rough sleepers. When they move indoors, they do not always leave rough sleeping in the past, but return. There is even a term, 'part-time homeless', that points towards the temporary and uncertain nature of their accommodation. Whereas 'home', in its conventional association with houses, conveys images of permanence and continuity, rough sleeping is an activity that appears to continually break up links with a person's past and with other people.

There is a lack of acknowledgement of the positive and healthy aspects of street life. Rough sleepers are very resourceful and brave, skilful manipulators of space and time, capable of converting other people's rubbish into useful objects, able to undertake detoxification unaided and to endure pain and fear. Whilst engaged in difficult and at times, destructive relationships, they nevertheless create feelings of companionship, however short-lived, with complete strangers. They are cast 'as objects of contamination' (Snow & Anderson 1993, 200) and they are avoided and shunned, but still they are capable of generosity, humility and courage. Their capacities, as Brandon et al note, 'would have ...merited a Duke of Edinburgh's gold award or achieved a single-handed Atlantic crossing' (Brandon et al 1980, 193).

Solutions offered by social policy makers seem to encourage a diminishing of their resourcefulness and capacities, which workers appear to associate with a 'junkie way of thinking' (Mr.F). They also fail to recognize the importance of what I might term 'genuine' friendships between workers and rough sleepers, and how, in the absence of such friendships, rough sleepers have less respect for services providers. Rough sleepers usually accept the services on offer because their own resources have run out and it is demeaning to them sometimes. This can only be counteracted by genuine unity between workers and their clients. As workers are trained to be increasingly 'professional', the negative social constructions about rough sleepers are automatically emphasised.

The institutional nature of available services can and does yield sentiments of cynicism in rough sleepers, who often display an attitude of lip-service, despite also acknowledging their needs. Outdoors, earning a livelihood depends on being visible and visibly excluded. When

indoors, rough sleepers are acutely aware of how they have been made invisible. Their homelessness, as they often see it, has been 'shunted around' (Mr.B). Whilst the problem of addictions to substances is very serious amidst rough sleepers, it is also pertinent to point out their own capacity for detoxification. Being capable of detoxification is no guarantee against relapse and on the streets relapse is hard to avoid. However, within the facilities on offer to rough sleepers, drugs and drink may also be available, surreptitiously if need be.

Instead of blaming rough sleepers for their anti-social behaviour, their achievements in survival and skill could be encouraged and applauded. Interestingly a tabloid newspaper, upon hearing that the British Prime Minister Tony Blair once slept on a park bench, published an article called 'Supertramps: Celebs who slept rough like Blair', in which they listed Pete Waterman (music industry mogul), Heather McCartney (wife to Paul McCartney), Shane Richie (actor), Hugo Speer (actor), Margot Kidder (actress), Irvine Welsh (author), Benny Hill (comedian) and Howard Eastman (boxing champion), describing them as 'dossers who went on to become famous' (The Sun, March 1/2004, pg.8). If, as I have argued, a sense of self-identity is frequently surrendered by rough sleepers then maybe a focus upon their achievements in redefining themselves should be encouraged, to help them appreciate their extraordinary talents.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrahamson, P. (1997), Combating poverty and social exclusion in Europe. In: Beck, W. et al (eds) *The Social Quality of Europe*, pp.145-176. Bristol: The Policy Press
- Anderson, I., Kemp. P. & Quilgars, D. (1993), *Single Homeless People*, London: HMSO
- Anderson, I. (1999), Social Housing or Social Exclusion: Housing for Single Homeless People. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds), *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.155-172. London: Continuum
- Archard, P. (1975), *The Bottle Won't Leave You. A Study of Homeless Alcoholics and their Guardians*. London: Alcoholics Recovery Project
- Archard, P. (1979), Vagrancy – A Literature Review. In: Cook, T. (ed.), *Vagrancy: Some New Perspectives*, pp.11-28. London: Academic Press
- Bachelard, G. (1958), *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at how we experience intimate places*. (1994 Edition. Translated by: Maria Jolas) Boston: Beacon Press
- Barham, P. & Hayward, R. (1991), *From the Mental Patient to the Person*. London: Routledge
- Barham, P. (1992), *Closing the Asylum: The Mental Patient in Modern Society*. London: Penguin Books
- Baxter, E. & Hopper, K. (1981), *Private Lives/Public Spaces: Homeless Adults on the Streets of New York*. New York: Institute For Social Welfare Research
- Beacock, N. (1979), Campaigning for the Homeless and Rootless. In: Cook, T. (ed.), *Vagrancy: Some New Perspectives*, pp.119-140. London: Academic Press

- Beier, A.L. (1985), *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640*. London: Methuen
- Bird, J. (2002) 'Don't Give Money to Beggars'. *The Sunday Times*, 22/12/02, pg.1
- Bowring, F. (2000), Social Exclusion: Limitations of the debate. *Critical Social Policy*, Vol.20 (3), pp.307-330
- Brandon, D., Wells, K., Francis, C., & Ramsay, E. (1980), *The Survivors: A Study of Homeless Young Newcomers to London and Responses Made to Them*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Breakey, W.R. & Fischer, P.J. (1990), Homelessness: The Extent of the Problem. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol.46, No.4. pp.31-47
- Byrne, D. (1999), *Social Exclusion*. (Issues in Society Series. Editor, Tim May). Buckingham: Open University Press
- Carlen, P. (1996), *Jigsaw: A Political Criminology of Youth Homelessness*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Carlise, J. (1997), The housing needs of ex-prisoners. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.123-131. London: Routledge
- Carsten, J. (1997), *The Heat of the Hearth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Clapham, D. (1999), Conclusion, In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds), *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.226-234. London: Continuum

Cloke, P., Milbourne, P. & Widdowfield, R. (1999), Homelessness in rural areas: an invisible issue? In: Kennett, P. & Marsh, A. (eds), *Homelessness: Exploring the New Terrain*, pp.61-79. Bristol: The Policy Press

Cloke, P., Milbourne, P. & Widdowfield, R. (2000), Change but no Change: Dealing with Homelessness under the 1996 Housing Act. *Housing Studies*, Vol.15, No.5, 739-756

Cloke, P., Milbourne, P. & Widdowfield, R. (2001), Making the homeless count? Enumerating rough sleepers and the distortion of homelessness. *Policy and Politics*, Vol.29, No.3, pp.259-279

Collins, H.M. (1984), Researching spoonbending: concepts and practice of participatory fieldwork. In: Bell, C. & Roberts, H. (eds), *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*, pp.54-69. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Cook, T. & Braithwaite, G. (1979), A Problem for Whom? In: Cook, T. (ed.), *Vagrancy: Some New Perspectives*, pp.1-10. London: Academic Press

Craine, S. (1997), The "Black Magic Roundabout". Cyclical transitions, social exclusion and alternative careers. In: MacDonald, R. (ed.), *Youth, the "Underclass" and Social Exclusion*, pp.130-152. London: Routledge

Crane, M. (1993), *Elderly People Sleeping Rough on the Streets in Inner London: An Exploratory Study*. London: Age Concern Institute of Gerontology, King's College

Crane, M. (1994), Elderly Homeless People: Elusive Subjects and Slippery Concepts. *Ageing and Society*, 14, pp.631-640

Crane, M. (1999), *Understanding Older Homeless People*. (Rethinking Ageing Series. Editor, Brian Gearing) Buckingham: Open University Press

Cresswell, T. (2001), The Production of Mobilities. *New Formations*, No.34, pp.11-25

The Daily Express January 8th 2001

Davies, N. (2003), How Britain is losing the drugs war. *The Guardian* 22/05/03. Retrieved on 25/06/03 from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,3604,960963,00html>

Deacon, A., Vincent, J. & Walker, R. (1995), Whose choice, Hostels or Homes? Policies for Single Homeless People. *Housing Studies*, Vol.10, No.3, pp.345-363

Dean, H. & Taylor-Gooby, P. (1992), *Dependency Culture: The explosion of a myth*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf

Dean, H. & Gale, K. (1999), Begging and the Contradictions of citizenship. In: Dean, H. (ed), *Begging Questions*, pp.13-26. Bristol: The Policy Press

Declerck, P. (2003), *On the Necessary Suffering of the Poor*. Oxford Amnesty Lecture. Delivered 27/02/03 in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford (publication forthcoming), as part of the Series Divided Cities

Desjarlais, R. (1994), Struggling Along: the Possibilities for Experience Among the Homeless Mentally Ill. *American Anthropologist*, 96 (4), pp.886-901

Desjarlais, R. (1997), *Shelter Blues*. Philadelphia: Penn Press

Digby, A. (1989), *British Welfare Policy: Workhouse to Workfare*. London: Faber & Faber

Donnison, D. (1987), Poverty, Power and Stigma: The Case of the Single Homeless. In: Turner, B., Kemeny, J., & Lundqvist, L.J. (eds), *Between State and Market: Housing in the Post-Industrial Era*, pp.107-115. Goteborg: Almqvist & Wiksell International

Douglas, M. (1991), The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space. *Social Research*, Vol.58, No.1 Spring, pp.287-307

Dovey, K. (1985), Home and Homelessness. In: Altman, I. & Werner, C. (eds), *Home Environments*, pp.33-64. New York: Plenum

Downing-Orr, K. (1996), *Alienation and Social Support*. Aldershot: Avebury

Drake, M., O'Brien, M. & Biebuyck, T. (1982), *Single and Homeless*. Department of the Environment, London: HMSO

Driver, S. & Martell, L. (1997), New Labour's Communitarianisms. *Critical Social Policy*, 52, Vol.17, pp.27-46

Duncan, J. (1979), Men Without Property: The Tramp's Classification and Use of Urban Space. *Antipode*, 11, No.1, pp.24-34

Edwards, J. (1994), Idioms of Bureaucracy and Informality in a local Housing Aid Office. In: Wright, S. (ed.), *Anthropology of Organizations*, pp.196-209. London: Routledge

Eighner, L. (1992), On Dumpster Diving. *New England Journal of Public Policy, Special Issue: Homelessness*, Vol.8.

Eighner, L. (1993), *Travels with Lizbeth. Three Years on the Road and on the Streets*. New York: St.Martin's Press

Fitchen, J.M. (1996), Poverty and Homelessness in Rural Upstate New York. In: Dehavenon, A.L. (ed.), *There's no Place Like Home*, pp.1-17. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey

Fitzpatrick, S. & Clapham, D. (1999), Homelessness and Young People. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds), *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.173-190. London: Continuum

Fitzpatrick, S., Kemp, P., & Klinker, S. (2000), *Single Homelessness: An overview of research in Britain*, Bristol: The Policy Press

Fitzpatrick, S. & Kennedy, C. (2001), The Links Between Begging and Rough Sleeping: A Question of Legitimacy? *Housing Studies*, Vol.16 No.5, pp.549-568

Fooks, G. & Pantazis, C. (1999), The Criminalization of Homelessness, Begging and Street Living. In: Kennett, P. & Marsh, A. (eds), *Homelessness: Exploring the New Terrain*, pp.123-159. Bristol: The Policy Press

Ford, J. (1997), Mortgage arrears, mortgage possessions and homelessness. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.88-108. London: Routledge

Fountain, J. & Howes, S. (2002), *Home and Dry? Homelessness and Substance Use*, (Hidden Homelessness Series. Editor, Oswin Baker, Vision 21), London: Crisis

Franklin, B.J. (1999), More than community care: supporting the transition from homelessness to home. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds), *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.191-207. London: Continuum

Gigengack, R. & van Gelder, P. (2000), Contemporary street ethnography: different experiences, perspectives, and methods. *Focaal*, No.36, pp.7-14

Gill, T. (2001), *Men of Uncertainty*.

Glasser, I. (1996), The 1990 Decennial Census and Patterns of Homelessness in a Small New England City. In: Dehavenon, A.L. *There's No Place Like Home*, pp.19-33. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey

Glasser, I. & Bridgman, R. (1999), *Braving the Street: The Anthropology of Homelessness*, New York: Bergham Books

Gounis, K. (1992), Temporality and the Domestication of Homelessness. In: Rutz, H. (ed.), *The Politics of Time*, pp.127-149. American Anthropological Society Monograph Series, no.4. Washington D.C.: American Anthropological Association

Greve, J. (1964), *London's Homeless*. London: The Codicote Press

Greve, J. (1991), *Homelessness in Britain*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Greve, J., Page, D. & Greve, S. (1971), *Homelessness in London*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press

Greve, J. (1997), Preface. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.xi-xvii, London: Routledge

Griffiths, R. (1998), Making Sameness: Place Marketing and the New Urban Entrepreneurialism. In: Oatley, N. (ed), *Cities, Economic Competition and Urban Policy*, pp.41-57. London: Paul Chapman Publishing

Guerney, C. (1990), *The meaning of home in the decade of owner occupation: towards an experiential research agenda*. SAUS Working Paper 88 – Bristol: School for Advanced Urban Studies, University of Bristol

Guerney, C. (1999), Pride and Prejudice: Discourses of Normalisation in Public and Private Accounts of Home Ownership. *Housing Studies*, Vol.14 No.2, pp.163-183

Hall, T. (2003), *Better Times Than This. Youth Homelessness in Britain*. London: Pluto Press

Hall, Tim & Hubbard, P. (1996), The Entrepreneurial City: New Urban Politics, New Urban Geographies? *Progress in Human Geography*, 20,2, pp.153-174

Harrison, M. (1999), Theorising homelessness and 'race'. In: Kennett, P. & Marsh, A. (eds), *Homelessness: Exploring the New Terrain*, pp. 101-122. Bristol: The Policy Press

Hawes, D. (1997), *Older People and Homelessness: A Story of Greed, Violence, Conflict and Ruin*. Bristol: The Policy Press

Hebdige, D. (1992), Redeeming Witness: in the Tracks of the Homeless Vehicle Project. *Cultural Studies*, pp.173-223

Higate, P. (1997), Soldiering on? Theorising homelessness amongst ex-servicemen. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.109-122. London: Routledge

Higate, P. (2000), Ex-servicemen on the Road: Travel and Homelessness. *Sociological Review*, 48(3), pp.331-348

Hill, R.P. & Stamey, M. (1990), The Homeless in America: An Examination of Possessions and Consumption Behaviours. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.17, pp.303-321

Holden, C. (1999), Globalization, Social Exclusion and Labour's New Work Ethic. *Critical Social Policy*, 61, Vol.19 (4), pp.529-538

Holland, D., Lachicotte Jr., H., Skinner, D. & Cain, C. (2001), *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

Holland, D. & Lave, J. (eds) (2001), *History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practice, Intimate Identities*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press

Hopper, K., Susser, E. & Conover, S. (1985), Economies of Makeshift: Deindustrialization and Homelessness in New York City. *Urban Anthropology*, Vol.14(1-3), pp.183-236

Hopper, K. (1990), Public Shelter as “a Hybrid Institution”: Homeless Men in Historical Perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol.46, No.4, pp.13-29

Hopper, K. (1991), A Poor Apart: The Distancing of Homeless Men in New York’s History. *Social Research*, Vol.58, No.1, pp.107-132

Hopper, K. (1996), Prologue: Azdak Lives. In: Dehavenon, A.L. *There’s No Place Like Home*, pp.xi-xiv. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey

Humphreys, R. (1999), *No Fixed Abode: A History of Responses to the Roofless and the Rootless in Britain*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

Hutson, S. (1999), The Experiences of Homeless Accommodation and Support. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds) *Homelessness – Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.208-225. London: Continuum

Hutson, S. & Liddiard, M. (1994), *Youth Homelessness: the Construction of a Social Issue*. London: Macmillan

The Independent. Special Supplement. December 12th 2001

Jacobs, K., Kemeny, J., & Manzi, T. (1999), The Struggle to Define Homelessness: a Constructivist Approach. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds) *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.11-28. London: Continuum

Jones, A. (1999), *Out of sight, out of mind?* University of York: Crisis

Kemp, P.A. (1997), The characteristics of single homeless people in England. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.69-87. London: Routledge

Kendall, J. (2000), The Mainstreaming of the Third Sector into Public Policy in England in the late 1990s: whys and wherefores, *Policy and Politics*, Vol.28, no.4, pp.541-562

Kennett, P. (1999), Homelessness, Citizenship and Social Exclusion. In: Kennett, P. & Marsh, A. (eds), *Homelessness: Exploring the New Terrain*, pp. 37-60. Bristol: The Policy Press

Kibreab, G. (2000), Revisiting the Debate on People, Place, Identity and Displacement. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol.12 No.4, pp.1-45

Klee, H. & Reid, P. (1998), Drug use among the young homeless: coping through self-medication. *Health*, Vol.2(2), pp.115-134

Kumar, K. (1997), Home: The Promise and Predicament of Private Life at End of the Twentieth Century. In: Weintraub, J. & Kumar, K. (eds), *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, pp.204-236. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Leach, J. (1979), The Evaluation of a Voluntary Organisation Attempting to Resettle Destitute Men: Action Research with the St.Mungo Community Trust. In: Cook, T. (ed.), *Vagrancy: Some New Perspectives*, pp.49-74. London: Academic Press

Lee, A.K. (1993), *Making Do in the City: The Survival Tactics of London's Young Homeless*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Faculty of Social Anthropology and Geography, The School of Geography, Oxford University

- Levine, D. (1979), The Issue of Rehabilitation. In: Cook, T. (ed.), *Vagrancy: Some New Perspectives*, pp.75-93. London: Academic Press
- Levitas, R. (1996) The Concept of Social Exclusion and the New Durkheimian Hegemony. *Critical Social Policy*, 46, Vol.16, pp.5-20
- Liddiard, M. & Hutson, S. (1991), Homeless Young People and Runaways: Agency Definitions and Processes. *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol.20(3), pp.365-388
- Liddiard, M. (1999), Homelessness: the media, public attitudes and policy making. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds), *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.74-88. London: Continuum
- Lovell, A.M. (1992), Seizing the Moment: Power, Contingency, and Temporality in Street Life. In: Rutz, H. (ed.), *The Politics of Time*, pp.86-107. American Anthropological Society Monograph Series, no.4. Washington D.C.: American Anthropological Association
- Lovell, A.M. (1992), Classification and Its Risks. How Psychiatric Status Contributes to Homelessness Policy. *New England Journal of Public Policy, Special Issue: Homelessness*, Vol.8, pp.247-263
- Lowe, S. (1997), Homelessness and the law. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.19-34. London: Routledge
- Lund, B. (1999), "Ask not what your community can do for you" Obligations, New Labour and Welfare Reform. *Critical Social Policy*, Vol.19(4), pp.447-462. Retrieved on 6/04/02 from: <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/issue/sample/a010314.pdf>
- Marcuse, P. (1983), What's so new about divided cities? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.17, No.3, pp.355-365

- Martin, G. (1998), Generational Differences Amongst New Age Travellers. *Sociological Review*, 46(4), pp.735-756
- Martin, G. (2000), New Age Travellers. *Sociological Review*, 9(4), pp.2-5
- Martin, G. (2002), New Age Travellers: Uproarious or Uprooted? *Sociology*, Vol.36(3), pp.723-735
- Marsh, A. & Mullins, D. (1998), The Social Exclusion Perspective and Housing Studies: Origins, Applications and Limitations. *Housing Studies*, Vol. 13, No.6, pp.749-759
- Marvasti, A.B. (2002), Constructing the Service-Worthy Homeless Through Narrative Editing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol.31, No.5, pp.615-651
- Masters, A. (2000), 'The cold shoulder'. *The Guardian, (Society Supplement)*, November 29th
- Maxwell, A.H. (1996), A Home by Any Means Necessary: Government Policy on Squatting in the Public Housing of a Large Mid-Atlantic City. In: Dehavenon, A.L. (ed.), *There's no Place Like Home*, pp.67-79. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey
- May, J. (2000), Of Nomads and Vagrants: Single Homelessness and Narratives of Home as Place. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol.18, pp.737-759
- McVeigh, R. (1997), Theorising sedentarism: the roots of anti-nomadism. In: Acton, T. (ed.), *Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*, pp.7-25. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press
- Melrose, M. (1999), Word from the street: the perils and pains of researching begging. In: Dean, H. (ed.), *Begging Questions*, pp.143-161. Bristol: The Policy Press

Mitchell, D. (1992), Iconography and locational conflict from the underside – Free Speech, People's Park and the politics of homelessness in Berkeley, California. *Political Geography*, Vol.11, No.2, pp.152-169

Morley, D. (2000), *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*. London: Routledge

Mort, V. (1999), *Control, Empowerment and Change in the Work of Voluntary Organizations: An Ethnographic Study of Agencies Working with Single Homeless People in Oxford*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Brookes University

Murray, H. (1984), Time on the Streets. *Human Organization*, 43, pp.154-161

Neale, J. (1997a), Homelessness and Theory Reconsidered. *Housing Studies*, Vol.12, No.1, pp.46-61

Neale, J. (1997b), Theorising homelessness: Contemporary sociological and feminist perspectives. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.35-49. London: Routledge

The Observer. March 3rd 2002

Ortner, S. (1995), Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37, pp.173-193

Orwell, G. (1933), *Down and Out in Paris and London*. London: Penguin Books

Otto, S. & Orford, J. (1978), *Not Quite Like Home. Small Hostels for Alcoholics and Others*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons

The Oxford Mail. July 7th 2000

December 4th, 8th, 11th 2001

March 30th, April 18th, October 17th & 30th 2002

January 8th, June 30th, September 20th, November 14th & 29th 2003

January 19th 2004

Oxford Network Directory (February 2002) Compiled and circulated by The Elmore Team, 23 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HU

Pannell, J. & Parry, S. (1999), Implementing joined-up thinking: multiagency services for single homeless people in Bristol. In: Kennet, P. & Marsh, A. (eds), *Homelessness: Exploring the new terrain*, pp.239-266. Bristol: The Policy Press

Passaro, J. (1996), *The Unequal Homeless: Men on the Streets, Women in Their Place*. London: Routledge

Phillimore, P. (1979), Dossers and Jake Drinkers: The View from One End of Skid Row. In: Cook, T. (ed.), *Vagrancy: Some New Perspectives*, pp.29-48. London: Academic Press

Pleace, N. (1997), Rehousing Single People. In: Burrows, R., Pleace, N. & Quilgars, D. (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, pp.159-171. London: Routledge

Pleace, N. (2000), The New Consensus, the Old Consensus and the Provision of Services for People Sleeping Rough. *Housing Studies*, Vol.15, No.4, pp.581-594

Polanyi, K. (1944) *The Great Transformation: the political and economic origins of our times*. (1957 edition) Boston: Beacon Press

Procacci, G. (1991), Social economy and the government of poverty. In: Burchell, G., Gordon, C. & Miller, P. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, pp.151-168. Chicago: Chicago University Press

Randall, G. & Brown, S. (1995), *Outreach and Resettlement Work with People Sleeping Rough*. London: Department of Environment

Randall, G. & Brown, S. (1999), *Prevention is better than cure: New solutions to street homelessness from Crisis*. London: Crisis

Rose, M.E. (2nd edition 1986), *The Relief of Poverty 1834-1914*. (Studies in Economic and Social History Series, Editor: L.A. Clarkson). Basingstoke: Macmillan

Rosenthal, R. (1991), Straighter from the Source: Alternative Methods of Researching Homelessness. *Urban Anthropology*, Vol.20(2), pp.109-126

Rowe, M. (1999), *Crossing the Border*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Ruddick, S.M. (1996), *Young and Homeless in Hollywood: Mapping Social Identities*. New York: Routledge

Saraceno, C. (1997), The Importance of Social Exclusion. In: Beck, W., van der Maesen, L. & Walker, A. (eds), *The Social Quality of Europe* pp.177-185. Bristol: The Policy Press

Service, R. *The Law of the Yukon*. Downloaded on 13/10/03, from:
<http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/poetry/TheSpelloftheYukon/chap5.html>

Sibley, D. (1988) Purification of Space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol.6, pp.409-421

Skinner, D., Pach III, A. & Holland, D. (eds) (1998), *Selves in Time and Place. Identities, Experience and History in Nepal*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Smith, N. (1996), Spaces of Vulnerability – the Space of Flows and the Politics of Scale. *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 16 (1), pp.63-77

Snow, D. A. & Anderson, L. (1993), *Down on Their Luck. A Study of Homeless Street People*. California: University of California Press

Somerville, P. (1992), Homelessness and the Meaning of Home: Rooflessness or Rootlessness? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.16 (4), pp.529-539

Somerville, P. (1998), Explanations of Social Exclusion: Where does Housing fit in? *Housing Studies*, Vol.13, No.6, pp.761-780

Somerville, P. (1999), The Making and Unmaking of Homelessness Legislation. In: Hutson, S. & Clapham, D. (eds) *Homelessness – Public Policies and Private Troubles*, pp.29-57. London: Continuum

Spradley, J.P. (1970), *You Owe Yourself a Drunk. An Ethnography of Urban Nomads*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company

The Sun, 'Supertramps: Celebs who slept rough like Blair'. March 1st 2004, pg.8

Tani, S. (2002), "Whose Place is this Space?" Life in the Street Prostitution Area of Helsinki, Finland. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol.26.2, pp.343-359

Third, H. (2000), Researching Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in the Scottish Context. *Social Policy & Administration*, Vol.34, No.4, pp.448-464

Tomas, A. & Dittmar, H. (1995), The Experience of Homeless Women: An Exploration of Housing Histories and the Meaning of Home. *Housing Studies*, Vol.10, No.4, pp.493-515

van Doorn, L. (2000), From begging to dealing. The stock of income strategies of the homeless. *Focaal*, 36, pp.31-49

Veness, A.P. (1993), Neither homed nor homeless: Contested definitions and personal worlds of the poor. *Political Geography*, Vol.12, No.4, pp.319-340

Veness, A.P. (1992), Home and homelessness in the United States: Changing ideals and realities. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10, pp.445-468

Wagner, D. (1993), *Checkerboard Square: Culture and Resistance in a Homeless Community*. Boulder: Westview Press

Wardnaugh, J. (1996), Homeless in Chinatown: Deviance and Social Control in Cardboard City. *Sociology*, Vol.30, No.4, pp.701-716

Watson, S. (1999), A Home is Where the Heart is: Engendering Notions of Homelessness. In: Kennett, P. & Marsh, A. (eds) "*Homelessness: Exploring the New Terrain*", pp.81-100. Bristol: The Policy Press

Watson, S. & Austerberry, H. (1986), *Housing and Homelessness: a Feminist Perspective*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Weiss, M. (1994), Nonperson and Nonhome: Territorial Seclusion of Appearance-Impaired Children. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol.22, No.4, pp.463-487

Weppner, R.S. (ed.) (1977), *Street Ethnography. Selected studies of crime and drug use in natural settings*. London: Sage

Whelan, R. (1996), *The Corrosion of Charity: From Moral Renewal to Contract Culture*. (Choice in Welfare Series. No.29) London: Institute of Economic Affairs, Health and Welfare Unit

Willis, P. (2001), "Tekin' the Piss". In: Holland, D. & Lave, J. (eds), *History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practice, Intimate Identities*, pp.171-216. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press

Wilson, D. (1970), *I know it was the places fault*. (2nd edition October 1970), London: Oliphants

Wiseman, J.P. (1970), *Stations of the Lost: The Treatment of Skid Row Alcoholics*. (1979 Phoenix edition), Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

Wiseman, J.P. (1972), Sober Time: The Neglected Variable in the Recidivism of Alcoholic Persons. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual Conference of National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Washington, USA

Wolch, J. & Dear, M. (1993), *Malign Neglect*. San Fransisco: Jossey Bass Publishers

Wolch, J., Rahimian, A. & Koegel, P. (1993), Daily and Periodic Mobility Patterns of the Urban Homeless. *Professional Geographer*, 45(2), pp.159-169

Wright, T. & Vermond, A. (1996), Suburban Homelessness and Social Space: Strategies of Authority and Local Resistance in Orange County, California. In: Dehavenon, A.L. (ed.), *There's no Place Like Home*, pp.1-17, Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey

Wright, T. (1997), *Out of Place: Homeless Mobilizations, Subcities, and Contested Landscapes*. (SUNY Series: Interruptions, Border Testimony(ies) and Critical Discourses. Henry A. Giroux, editor). State University of New York, Albany, New York

APPENDIX

List of organisations where training, interviews with staff, and participant observation with rough sleepers took place

Oxford Housing Rights Centre

The Big Issue

Oxford Street Scene Task Force

Salvation Army Homeless Outreach Project

The Bridge

The Gap

Orchard Lodge

The Gatehouse

Luther Street Medical Centre

Simon House

Lucy Faithful House

Contact and Assessment Team



