Homelessness and Citizenship: Exploring the Meaning and Negotiation of

Place, Space and Geography for Rough Sleepers

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Copyright Statement

Abstract

This doctoral thesis, drawing on a detailed ethnographic study of a small voluntary day-centre for rough sleepers in West Dorset, sets out to explore and elucidate the relationship between contemporary citizenship and 'on-street' homelessness. From this empirically grounded basis I show how the vocabulary of rights and responsibilities is profoundly intertwined in the local governance of homelessness. I situate this mode and style of governance within the contours of public policy efforts that seek to recode behaviour and lifestyles deemed to be deviant, irresponsible and, ultimately, self-excluding. In doing this, I offer a critique of the moral economy of responsibility that draws extensively on the perceptions and experiences of homeless people. Ethically, and in conclusion, emphasis is placed on the importance of pursuing critically engaged and empirically sensitive scholarship which takes homeless people's agency into account in ways that have the potential to 'subvert' political and policy judgements linking contemporary citizenship with 'on-street' homelessness.

<u>Author's Declaration</u>

In the course of collecting data and refining the ideas and arguments that underpin this thesis three journal articles have been accepted for publication. These are acknowledged where appropriate in the text and are reproduced in full in the appendices.

<u>Acknowledgments</u>

Beneath and between the printed page and the electronic typeface a diverse cast of people have brought this document into being. Its struggle from conception to maturation – and all points along the continuum – has been made possible and pushed forward by the open winds of kindness, tolerance and solidarity.

In Dorchester, I received the genuine and authentic support of the Hub Project - its management committee, staff, volunteers and service users. I am particularly indebted to Bob Matthews, erstwhile day-manager and guiding intellectual spirit. Without Bob's impassioned and unyielding support this study would most likely have runaground.

I should also add a note of gratitude to my supervisors, Paul Freedman and Rosie Read, for challenging my strident opinions and forgiving my impetuosity. It has been a rewarding if difficult journey; and one for which I am deeply grateful.

At root, though, I must reserve the most important expression of appreciation for Katherine, my wife, for her steadfast support, unrivalled faith and constant companionship. And for this and other reasons beside, I promise that we will return to the prairie grasses and corn fields of your childhood. And Ezra, our beautiful and enchanting boy, thank you for reaffirming the importance of engaging with the world as it is and how it might possibly be.

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Prologue

I barely have chance to step over the threshold of the Hub Project and take my coat off before I am accosted by Bob. Fixing me with a deliberate and determined stare Bob quickly and confidently tells me "*I've read that article by your man Higate. I haven't gotten to the bottom of his argument – I'm not even sure that really is much of an argument - but from what I see he's got it all wrong with all this talk of the armed forces, camaraderie and 'freedom of the road'. A disproportionate number of ex-servicemen on the road, I'm not convinced by that. Who says so? How many NCOs [non-commissioned officers] do you see out there on the streets or 'on the road'? No, if you think about those who join the armed forces at sixteen or eighteen years of age it's working class kids from damaged families or communities. Many of them will already be part of your 'socially excluded' even before they end up living on the street. Those guys out there are poor working class grafters. What does the army prepare them for when they come out? What skills do they have? Many will come out with broken marriages or as alcoholics. All this bollocks about 'narrative of choice', work and being presentable are all things that are part of working class culture anyway* [and therefore not reducible or exclusive to the armed services]. *I spent three years laying tarmac…Baz, you know Baz the Mancunian, out at the moment laying tarmac with a road-crew because he wants to really graft, not this camaraderie bullshit.*" Feeling slightly embattled I try to pacify Bob by suggesting "*I think you need to remember that Higate's research funding comes from the armed services and that he is a military man himself.*" My argument is, perhaps unsurprisingly, swiftly rebuffed. "*Men of the road,*" Bob promptly avers before returning in full force to his earlier colloquy, "*you need to get away from this idea of freedom and camaraderie promoted by Higate. You need to think about people like Steve Miller, who is not really a wayfarer, but moves about. Why do men like him move about? Is it really about work? You really need to critically think about what they are saying to you about work. They talk about work because they think that's what you want to hear. But do they really want to work? When they say how important*

work is to them it's always in the past tense; they probably were grafters who worked hard before things went wrong. It's that working class culture. But if it's not past tense then work for many of them is aspirational. It's therefore about future aspirations and not the here and now." I ask Bob if he believes that there is any credence in the popular and powerful view that homeless people are feckless, work-shy and self-excluded. "*Some are, but most of our service users* [accessing the Hub Project] *are on medication or have a drug depot because of all the drinking, the gear and unresolved mental health problems. It's not that they don't want to work it's just that they can't. It's the drinks, the drugs and the lifestyle* [that militates against work and other forms of meaningful activity or engagement]. *So, Steve Miller says that he wants to work and I know that he's got a mate in London but does he really want to work? Take Banjo, for example, he's waiting for his Income Support claim to come through. People like him are moving about because they don't want to be tied to signing on for JSA* [Jobseeker's Allowance] *every fortnight. The amount is too small and involves too much hassle. It means that the younger ones just move on. People like 'Old George' and Peter –real wayfarers – people who move about between religious communities and follow the Pilgrim's way* [Winchester to Canterbury] *are different perhaps. Last time Peter was passing through Dorchester and the Hub he told me that he had spent three days walking as part of the Pilsdon Community's 50th anniversary pilgrimage from West Gilding in Cambridge to Dorset. Obviously that's different. A lot of the guys* [who are homeless and 'on the road'] *can't go to Pilsdon because of the rules about not drinking there. They probably would* go [if it wasn't for the fact] *that they can't go a weekend without drink. And the street drinkers are no longer in Bowling Alley or in the town centre of Dorchester because of Section 30 and the seizure of their drink* [under an Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Designation Order]. *It's the same in Bristol and Exeter. The old drinkers are gone*. [So for our service users] *the Grass Arena* [a reference to John Healy's celebrated autobiography] *is up there at the 'office' on the platform of West Dorchester station. And that's part of the reason that they are moving on not this idea of 'freedom*

of the road' that people like you and Higate suggest.'' Before breaking away and returning to the building, Bob declaims *''you've got to decide whose side you're on?''*

It was a fair if unsettling question. As an aspiring social scientist, I was forced to confront this question on methodological, intellectual and ethical grounds. But it was also a profoundly political question. In the twenty months I spent volunteering and researching at the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, I came to watch with fascination as this small rural community struggled to respond to the 'problem' of on-street homelessness. Here, it seemed to me, were two (seemingly) incompatible and (fundamentally) irreconcilable interpretations - rough sleeping as a social problem versus rough sleeping as a problem of public disorder. At the general level, this extended case study shows that understanding larger social and sociological processes requires the study of particular empirical contexts (Murphy, 2009). At the specific level, it illustrates how representations of homeless people as 'irresponsible', 'anti-social' and 'dependent' are embedded within contemporary discourses around welfare and citizenship (Mooney, 2009). By undertaking an in-depth inquiry into the relationship between homelessness and citizenship through the prism of ethnography, I came to closely identify with the Hub Project, its ethos and its people. And so in answer to Bob's searing question, I hope that I crossed the line from dispassionate participant observer to critically engaged scholar.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Responsibility means a recognition that there is no divorce from the outside world. Social responsibility is for all…Responsibility is a shared value. If it doesn't apply equally to everyone, it applies to no one (Blair, 1994).[1]

1.1 Introduction

Much of the recent academic interest in rough sleeping has emerged in and through the politics of inclusion and exclusion (Kennett, 1999: Marsh, 2004: Pawson & Davidson, 2006). This has, in turn, given rise to a proliferation of theorising on the putative links between social exclusion and street homelessness. However, research and scholarship devoted to understanding the phenomenon of rough sleeping has generally overlooked (both in terms of ignoring and critiquing) the importance and centrality of citizenship.[2] This doctoral thesis aims to rectify this research deficit by contributing to the work of a minority of critical social theorists who have been concerned with investigating the manner in which street homelessness is – discursively and practically – related to contemporary discourses and policy initiatives which vigorously promote the twin movements of responsible citizenship and responsibilisation strategies (Dean, 1999: Tonkens & Van Doorn, 2001: Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005: Whiteford, 2008: Flint, 2009).

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[1] Speech to Conference by RT HON Tony Blair MP, Leader of the Labour Party, 4 October 1994.
[2] As Loison-Leruste and Quilgars (2009) have noted, the UK and France are the only two EU states in which homelessness is a legally specified term which confers enforceable rights. In England, the 'statutory definition of homelessness is derived from legislation (Housing Act 1996, Part VII) which entitles certain groups of homeless people to be accommodation by local authorities. Here, then, homelessness has a broad meaning, incorporating those living in emergency or temporary accommodation, but lacking in a secure home of their own. While acknowledging the complexity involved in defining homelessness, Isobel Anderson neatly and concisely notes that rough sleeping refers to 'those who have absolutely no shelter and are sleeping out doors in cars or other such locations' (2007:263). In this study, I use the terms 'rough sleeping' and 'street homelessness' interchangeably to describe the most acute and visible manifestation of homelessness.

It is a central premise of this doctoral research study that citizenship is a complex assemblage of practices, experiences and meanings articulated and acted upon by individuals and social groups, even the most marginal, the interstitial, the forgotten, the occluded. I therefore make the avowedly normative proposal of viewing citizenship as a status and performative act. Citizenship as a status becomes defined through 'membership in a polity, and inevitably involves a dialectical process between inclusion and exclusion, between those deemed eligible for citizenship and those who are denied the right to become members' (Kivisto & Faust, 2007:1). Citizenship as a performative act can be seen as an expression of personal agency in the public realm, setting in motion the political, economic and social rights of citizenship which derive from such access. [3] Speaking of citizenship as two component features is particularly helpful since it provides us with a critical telescope through which to view and interrogate the contemporary citizenship discourse on rights and responsibilities as promulgated in accordance with the neo-liberal values and priorities of New Labour (Heron & Dwyer, 1998: Ferguson & Woodward, 2009).[4] Connected to this it helps to make possible, I would suggest, a detailed and nuanced understanding of responsible citizenship and street homelessness which is sensitive to, and enriched by, a focus on the views, experiences and knowledge of homeless people.

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[3] Rosemary Sales (2007) rightly points out that while citizenship is claimed to be equal, it also reflects the experience of power and powerlessness within society. It involves individual rights but individuals have specific and different characteristics that mean that their ability to exercise these citizenship rights varies. Citizenship thus involves the universal and the particular and individual and group rights. This tension between the universal is particularly germane in relation to marginalised groups such as homeless people.

[4] Neo-liberalism, according to the Canadian criminologist Laura Huey, is the 'most abused and misunderstood political concept' (2009:265). Echoing the work of the Canadian radical journalist Naomi Klein (2007), Huey suggests that properly understood neo-liberalism refers to the ideas and practices of the Chicago school of economics, specifically, its rejection of Keynesianism in favour of monetarism. For a cogent Marxist analysis of the ambiguities of neo-liberalism see Harman (2009) while an alternative and a more anthropologically grounded discussion in which neo-liberalism is viewed in processual terms rather than through the prism of the inherent instability of global capitalism is present in Kingfisher and Maskovsky (2008).

These arguments are developed in relation to the contemporary governance of homelessness and the local contexts within which homelessness occurs and homeless people find themselves (Cloke et al., 2002:141). Brought together, I argue that these two dimensions have broader implications: specifically they show that a new 'politics of behaviour' and 'government through community' is symbolic of political rationalities and discourses that actively and increasingly promote and privilege a 'rights and responsibilities' agenda (Raco & Imrie, 2000: Burney, 2009).[5] One consequence of this vision of welfare (and therein citizenship) is that it replaces entitlement with reciprocity, and social need with availability to work – all of which establishes poverty and unemployment as the result of individual failings and a generous welfare state (Brooks, 2009:32). Related here are the observations of Barnett (2003) and Dean (2007) who suggest that opportunity for self-improvement replaces equality of opportunity as a guiding principle of 'Third Way' modes of governance. From this standpoint, 'responsibilisation entails a notion of responsibility that is both contractarian and ethical' (Dean, 2007:581). One reading of this is reflected in the more authoritarian elements of New Labour as illustrated by its preoccupation with worklessness and its aggressive approach to curbing anti-social behaviour. Clearly, within this understanding, there is a duty for the 'excluded' to activate themselves – through rehabilitation, support and guidance.

Anchored in the conventions of Chicago School ethnographic precepts and research methods, this study explores the extent to which the paradigm of 'responsible citizenship' impinges on the everyday geographies and quotidian practices of street homeless people, the forms which it

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[5] The term 'politics of behaviour' is most commonly associated with the renegade Labour MP Frank Field (2003) and his nostalgic view of working class culture. He argues that traditional values such as mutual support and organisation have been progressively eroded by the welfare state and the negation of local responsibilities. His arguments have become a more mainstream Labour argument. We see echoes here with Maurice Glasman's more recent call for a 'Blue Labour' - characterised as a deeply conservative socialism that places family, faith and work at the heart of a new politics of reciprocity, mutuality and solidarity. Glasman suggests a return to the roots of the early Labour movement, with its initial focus on the small scale and local, on old friendly societies and voluntary associations which were lost in 1945 when the party became committed to 'the nationalisation of society' (Stratton, 2009).

takes, and the challenges that such alternative understandings pose for the way in which political and policy judgements theorise and talk about contemporary citizenship. To put this into perspective, the main objective of this research is to develop a critical understanding of the following and fundamental research question: *How is the new political and policy agenda on 'rights and responsibilities' experienced in practice by rough sleepers*? In documenting these processes, I have pursued participant observation and exploratory interviews with homeless people at the Hub Project for rough sleepers in the small market town of Dorchester, on the assumption that ethnographic research techniques have the potential to assist in the production of rich and insightful accounts and enhanced understandings of complex social interactions and processes (Ward, 2008). The role of overt participant observer was adopted. Research was conducted from May 2007 to December 2008.

It is important to realise, however, that empirical material accrued over twenty months of extensive fieldwork at the Hub Project comprises only part of the research data. This being so, I was strongly influenced by the arguments of Mitchell Duneier (2002:1551) about the importance of moving beyond 'homeless places' in order to focus on how statutory organisations and community institutions, which are actively tasked with the promotion of 'behavioural changing' policies can affect the micro-settings under investigation.[6] In this spirit, I carried out interviews and 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102) with serving police officers, police community

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[6] In the article The Politics of Names (2009), Katja Guenther debates the methodological and ethical significance of using real names or pseudonyms for people, organisations and places. The act of naming, argues Guenther, is the dominant paradigm in the social sciences. But it is a decision that rarely arises within the extant literature. Recognising this, Guenther argues that the decision to obscure all potentially identifying details is at best imperfect, and at worst, disempowering. In simple terms, it limits the researcher's accountability while leaving respondents' open to further exposure (2009:418). Building on these insights, I argue for the importance of the 'politics of naming' for two overarching reasons: in deciding to 'name' organisations, policies, people and discourses (their consequences) are placed on the anvil of public scrutiny and academic critique. This feeds directly into the argument that researchers – in common with the journalistic community – have a 'responsibility to the facts'. By drawing on local newspaper articles, policy documents and official statements, I aim to create an extended piece of research that is open to verification or falsification.

support officers, local housing authority officials, street outreach workers, health care professionals, parish councillors and a community news reporter. Moreover, as a complement to this approach I have also examined official documents, media reports and 'grey literature' so as to more effectively grasp the framing of homelessness and associated interventions within this critical milieu.

1.2 <u>Responsible Citizenship</u>

Before going any further, however, it is useful to consider how the idea of responsible citizenship interweaves moral authoritarianism with neo-liberal politics in the social field. This is important because:

> Responsible citizens make reasonable choices – and therefore 'bad choices'
> result from the wilfulness of irresponsible people, rather than the structural
> distribution of resources, capacities and opportunities (Clarke, 2005:451).

Sociological research into responsible citizenship has tended to adopt the insights of governmentality, as derived from the work of Michel Foucault (2003), as an explanatory tool for grasping the complex and sophisticated processes by which formal and informal mechanisms of social control regulate human conduct towards particular ends (McIntyre & McKee, 2008). Work in this field has focused specifically on the idea that the failure to conform to 'acceptable' standards of behaviour has given rise to a stronger, more robust and punitive form of contractual governance and welfare conditionality (Rose, 2001: Nixon et al., 2007: Moore, 2008). Flint, for example, has observed that in this new politics of conduct 'the capacity and behaviour of individuals are observed and classified in a framework that explicitly links conduct to moral judgements of character' (2006:20). This is to understand that dominant moral discourses are

employed to reconstruct subjects as active members of responsible communities (Rose, 2001). In congruence, Hartley Dean (2003) has argued that the main function of the liberal welfare state relates not to the promotion of responsibility, but the governance of irresponsibility. This might result in the imposition of penalties and sanctions for irresponsible behaviour or it might generate a situation in which particular forms of irresponsible behaviour are identified and stigmatised.

It should also be recognised, however, that the vocabulary of responsibility citizenship is also entirely congruent with a materialist critique of the strong neo-liberal undercurrents of New Labour's welfare strategy. In this reframing of citizenship, consumerist and market-based approaches are prescribed so as to enable citizens to secure their own welfare (Paddison et al., 2008). Under this approach the role of the state is about creating the conditions for active and independent citizens. As the state withdraws from welfare provision there has been a concomitant drive to shift responsibility back to the individual. Given this context, the Marxist political theorist Alex Callinicos has noted:

> There is … an important sense in which New Labour authoritarianism is a consequence of Gordon Brown's version of neo-liberal economics. Unemployment in these circumstances is a consequence of dysfunctional behaviour of individuals who refuse to work, and this behaviour must in turn be caused either by their individual moral faults or by a more pervasive 'culture of poverty' (2001:62).

This awareness, however, does not detract from the point that the aggressive and pervasive mobilisation of the vocabulary of responsible citizenship reflects a desire to reconfigure citizenship. The consequence of this approach for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in society is far reaching. Such a conception of citizenship has, moreover,

led some to favour the term 'discipline' over 'responsibility'. This shift is well-observed by Paddison et al:

> Whilst not denying its disciplinary intent, the rhetorical emphasis on responsibility is also important in defining the assumed shift in the contract between the citizen and the state. Thus, 'responsible participation' requires welfare recipients to engage 'in the active management of their lives' and is portrayed as 'empowerment' (2008: 131).

1.3 <u>Background</u>

Before gaining formal entry to the 'field' and undertaking substantive empirical research, I subscribed to what I now recognise to be the rather crude if somewhat appealing notion that homelessness was an expression of 'deferred citizenship' or 'asymmetrical citizenship' (Carlen, 1994). This is not, of course, to repudiate the existence of a strong body of evidence and critical opinion which suggests that citizenship is increasingly exclusively conferred (see Mills, 2003 for an exegesis). However, it became increasingly apparent that this uncritical assumption was a reflection of my own tendency towards deterministic thinking. This is to suggest that while I may have potentially avoided the ethnographic fallacy, I was also perilously close to allowing theory to dominate data (Duneier, 1999:344).[7] In practice and time, I came to see and understand through ethnographic encounters and critical dialogue with research participants in Dorchester that the relationship between rough sleeping and contemporary citizenship was both more subtle and revelatory than existing accounts and critical commentaries would seem to allow, or indeed, even think possible.

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[7] In Duneier's conception the ethnographic fallacy refers to a situation in which a researcher simply accepts a research participant's narrative claims at face value without considering the larger political and economic forces that may or may not constraint them.

Unknowingly I had gained access to a small but febrile environment in which a perceived 'problem' of rough sleeping, aggressive begging and street drinking contained the trace elements of a localised 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972). On closer inspection, however, it was evident that there were two competing (but unequal) discursive positions and resoluble frameworks mobilised, shaped and activated within the community. Here, then, it is possible to detect reverberations of Cloke et al's (2002) vivid and sensitive description of the local governance of homelessness in the small county of Taunton in Somerset, for instance:

> While the business community tended to see the people involved *as* problems, the voluntary agencies are much more likely to see them as people *with* problems (2002:162).

In Dorchester, for example:

> We know from past experience here that if they do not get warm and dry and have nourishment in the daytime some of them will die from pneumonia and hypothermia. That happened in Dorchester in 1999 and was the trigger to make all the agencies work together to tackle the problem. We cannot achieve this alone. We need a national policy to work towards affordable accommodation for all and suitable sheltered accommodation for those who need to work at their own problems before they can cope with their own. These are urgent needs but they can only be met if the political will can be aroused (Dr. Margaret Barker).[8]

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[8] Hub Project trustee, fund-raiser and secretary.

As part of the present study, I sought to ask homeless people questions about how they understand and, in some cases, experience new institutional arrangements and discursive claims that place particular emphasis on rights and responsibilities. My fieldwork would seem to suggest that the responsibilisation thesis has developed in four significant (albeit different) ways in relation to the rough sleeping community in West Dorset. A focus on anti-social behaviour represents the first strand of this movement towards enforcing 'responsible citizenship'. My stock of ethnographic fieldwork material would seem to suggest that the deployment of anti-social behaviour orders, specifically the use and threat of dispersal orders against homeless people in Dorchester was made possible by the grammar of 'responsible communities'. Of importance here is Nixon and Hunter's (2009:119) argument that the current focus on anti-social behaviour and respectful or civilised behaviour reflects notions of self-governance and communitarian informed 'rights and responsibilities'. In this climate, I would argue that anti-social behaviour sees New Labour broadening the lens of social control where individual responsibility is given new meaning. Yet it also reflects something more fundamental. These observations, alongside others (see, for example, Millie, 2009: Moore, 2008) illustrate the point that local communities are now expected to play a key role in socialising and moralising individual members of society to the cultural values and social norms of the decent majority. Similarly Walter and Woodward (2007) have usefully argued that the notion of collective responsibility through punitive state intervention works to repackage and redefine social deprivation and inequality into 'anti-social behaviour'.

The second strand to be discussed concerns the role played by local community actors and political elites in circulating a particularly potent and culturally embedded understanding of homelessness as 'out-of-place' in the purified space of rurality (Sibley, 1995). This can be put another way. Homeless people were categorised as 'outsiders' or, more specifically, in the parlance of prevailing homelessness policy and guidance were routinely viewed as being unable to establish or secure a 'local connection'. The immediate effect of this was that 'responsibility' for

tackling homelessness and meeting housing need was considered to reside elsewhere. In a more grounded way, it became the 'personal responsibility' of homeless people (with the active encouragement of the Hub Project) to *move-on* from Dorchester and its surrounding hinterland in order to assert 'rights' to housing support and welfare provision through reconnecting with their place of origin. These overlapping strands were, as will become obvious as this discussion progresses, part of a complex echo chamber of arguments and counter-arguments about 'rights and responsibilities', 'the deserving and the undeserving' and 'welfare dependency and self-help' - all reductive binaries and all explicable as contemporary signifiers with deep historical roots (see, for example, Howe, 2009).

No less important, I will also document how the net of responsibilisation has been cast wider so as to frame debates about the efficacy and equability of charging rough sleepers for a hot meal. To be clear, I am not suggesting that the idea of charging homeless people for food is in any sense 'novel' or even radical. It is, for instance, easily identifiable in the policy and programmatic nostrums of Louise Casey - the New Labour apparatchik and former 'homelessness tsar' - and various arguments about welfare producing dependency (Fraser & Gordon, 1994: Dean, 1999). Rather, I want to highlight how the impetus for this controversial proposal came not from the Hub Project but directly from a coalition of forces, principal among them Homeless Link (the national membership organisation for frontline homelessness agencies in England), West Dorset District Council and Dorset Police. The rationale was that the provision of a free lunch was an expression of 'indiscriminate alms giving' and, it was explicitly claimed, acted as a bulwark to the development of the 'social virtue of personal responsibility'.

Fourth, and not least, I focus on work and worklessness. To lay the groundwork for a more considered understanding, I begin by unpicking the dominant image of homeless people as economically unproductive and parasitic, and go on to illustrate that *the ideology of work* is

important to homeless people (Howe, 2009). In discussing these two intersecting themes, I draw on field material to show that this group are keen, even desperate, to obtain paid employment, formal training and education opportunities. Further to this, homeless people do not celebrate their rights to welfare nor do they subscribe to a distinctive dependency culture. In connection with these issues, I show how street begging and Big Issue vending in Dorchester were inevitably ensnared within wider efforts to govern irresponsibility through the promotion of responsibility (Dwyer, 2004).

The intersections between street homelessness and contemporary citizenship, in this context, therefore opens up a path towards gaining a critical appreciation of New Labour's communitarian ethos and its drive to identify 'community' as both the location and processes of governance (Flint & Nixon, 2006: 941).[9] The use of community as a technology of informal social control is based upon the perceived ability of community processes to transmit norms and regulate behaviour and to mould compliance to dominant values of responsibility (Flint, 2002:249). Community thus becomes understood primarily in moral terms (Burney, 2000:25).

To take this further, the role of community under New Labour, according to Atkinson and Helms (2008:142), has two constitutive elements. In the first place, the new orthodoxy reconstructs community as a logical 'solution' to social and moral decline. Atkinson and Helms then proceed to locate community as the key mechanism by which policy interventions can be made.

A similar point has been made by Robinson:

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[9] 'Community is, as Julie MacLeavy (2008b) suggests, not a single uncontested entity. However, it is arguably presented as such within New Labour discourses and policy interventions.

[The] new politics of community can be traced back to the communitarianism that emerged in the 1990s, which seeks to address the perceived erosion of community life and the increasing fragmentation of society by tackling the imbalance between rights and responsibilities. The vehicle to carry us forward to this goal is 'community' [and] the corollary of this is that policy is also required to counter community forms that are regarded as undermining the promotion of some assumed notion of social responsibility (2008:29).

The strategic invocation of community when applied to homeless people is most apparent in 'No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping' (2008), the Government's fifteen point action to eradicate the phenomenon by the symbolic date of the London Olympics of 2012. This strategy document declares that 'charities, businesses and government will work more closely in new and innovative ways to help rough sleepers off the street and into employment' (2008:18). It also goes on to argue that 'we in government can and will do more. [But] there is a limit to what can be achieved through central government. Ending rough sleeping depends on communities rising to the challenge' (2008:18). Yet at the same time 'recalcitrant' support services for homeless people, as indicated, are subject to growing moral regulation and administrative oversight. In this way services for homeless people that consciously and courageously question the contemporary governance of homelessness are deemed to be intractable as much as conservative.

The implications of this are important. In this context, for example, the Hub Project was publicly admonished for its 'misplaced compassion and tolerance' towards the visible expression of drunkenness, vagrancy and begging within the folds and fabric of Dorchester (compare with Hermer, 1999). Partly as a consequence of such criticism, but also as a safety valve to ensure its continued existence, the Hub Project was compelled to alter its (**1**) physical structure; (**2**) admission policy; (**3**) restrict the number of service users able to access the service; and (**4**)

institute a much contested payment system for a hot meal service in order to cultivate 'personal responsibility'. At another level, although below the immediacy of the public radar, West Dorset District Council suspended payment of a small but significant annual grant to the Hub Project from its centrally allocated homelessness provision fund. The local authority, in this instance, argued that the working practices and institutional ethos of the Hub Project were now positioned in contradistinction to its own 'strategic vision'. It would be over-simplistic to suggest that the Hub Project openly acquiesced or explicitly challenged these externally motivated suggestions and demands. Nonetheless, these measures were identified and understood as emblematic of a broader movement to both regulate the rough sleeping community and exercise control of services for homeless and other vulnerable people in Dorchester.

In a richly textured and elegantly argued essay, the Australian scholar Rodney Fopp (2009) makes critical reference to the use of metaphors in research about homelessness. Fopp's proposition is that the excessive and deliberate use of metaphors and other such literary devices can potentially lead to academic research which does not properly accord with the experience of people who are homeless. As a result, popular and powerful discourses emerge (and embed) individual rather than structural explanations of homelessness. Clearly, within this understanding, there is an acute awareness that accounts of contemporary homelessness are neither neutral nor politically innocuous. Mindful of Fopp's passionate and prescient injunction, I cautiously want to suggest that we can work towards an understanding of how the twin movements of responsible citizenship and responsibilisation gained a narrative force and institutional purchase in relation to the conduct of homeless people in Dorchester via the utilisation of a relatively simple metaphor. I want to think of the relationship between street homelessness and contemporary citizenship in Dorchester in terms of a 'lattice of governance'. The consequence of this construction is, at base, two-fold: first, it creates a context in which to discern the specific and significant ways in which communities and individuals are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for their own self-

governance; and secondly it is a useful tool for dramatising the activist role played a constellation of forces - the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), Homeless Link, West Dorset District Council, Dorset Police and the Dorset Echo (among others) - in establishing a discursive, material and institutional landscape underscored and driven by the exigencies of New Labour's concern with the language of personal responsibility, community involvement and, that poor relation of equality, social inclusion (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009:154).

A careful reading of the Dorset Echo suggests that it had attained a key strategic position in framing discussions and debates about the Hub Project, rough sleepers and Dorchester's self-image and community ethos. Insightfully, Zufferey (2006) has noted that media representations of homelessness and 'homeless people' inform public discourses and practical responses, influencing the social and physical space people experiencing homelessness can occupy. Thus the Dorset Echo assumed 'vehicular power' in mobilising public support for the socially pernicious charge that the sight of people sleeping rough in Dorchester tarnished the character of town and contributed to a broader process of degradation and alienation. What is striking is that this perspective echoes the rhetoric of New Labour by framing the social exclusion of homelessness within a discourse that shapes public opinion along two thematic lines. On the one hand, homeless people in Dorchester have been characterised as representing a threat to social order, and homelessness as a problem of social integration. On the other hand, homeless people in Dorchester were portrayed as victims. In this representation, their role as active agents is purposefully ignored or discounted. These two contrasting representations – homeless people as, alternately, both threat and victim – function to manage public opinion and to maintain support for social policy interventions.

As we move forward and make concrete this extended case example, I do not claim that the discursive framing of the 'problem' of homelessness in Dorchester and the response of an actively

engaged and responsible 'community' is unique or exceptional, rather it simply shows that understanding larger social and sociological processes requires the study of particular empirical contexts (Murphy, 2009). Of course this is a story about homelessness in a small rural town in West Dorset and, to a significant degree, a tale of how a poorly resourced and over-subscribed voluntary service - which despite appearing to be a modal carrier for the type of 'community involvement' so lauded by New Labour (Law & Mooney, 2006) - came to be regulated and punished in and through the rhetoric and policy of 'politics of behaviour' and alongside new institutional arrangements involving technologies of surveillance and discipline (Flint, 2002:256). Yet, at the same time, it can also be read as a critical case study that opens out a space for a detailed exploration of the complex and contested links between the micro-setting of rough sleeping in Dorchester and broader and deeper macro-forces which serve to shape and sustain the new rationales and mechanisms for governing homeless people.

My aim is to draw attention to how rough sleepers in Dorchester variously accept, reject or purposefully rework the conflation of street homelessness with responsible citizenship. To anticipate the substantive discussion, let me just say that people who sleep rough in rural Dorset display a variety of responses to the profound and pervasive paradigm of responsible citizenship. But, more than this, the voices of people who access the Hub Project show a range of responses to homelessness – feelings of injustice, blame, belonging, fear, uncertainty and, perhaps most strikingly of all, hope. In recounting their experiences rough sleepers *do* reproduce the power aspects of dominant discourses and paradigms that assert that they are to blame for their homelessness. In other ways, they present alternative explanations of being socially excluded through homelessness and representations which cast them as undeserving, unmotivated or irresponsible individuals. These insights are important since they begin to problematise the discursive and policy basis on which the notion of responsible citizenship is structured by drawing attention to a more socially variegated landscape; one that is sensitive to the confluence of

material disadvantage, external labelling and the voice of people who are themselves homeless (Howe, 1998).

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is structured around five core themes.[10] The first is the social exclusion of homelessness. Here considerable emphasis is placed on academic debates and social policy reviews charting the direction of homelessness policy and practice in respect of New Labour's high profile commitment to help (individuals and communities) tackle social exclusion. I take as the catalyst for this approach two policy documents of seminal importance from the now defunct cross-departmental Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) - 'Rough Sleeping' (1998) and 'Coming in from the Cold' (1999) – before going on to situate them within the broader context of scholarly research and policy analysis of the linkages between rough sleeping, social exclusion and the contemporary discourse of citizenship. [11]

The question of citizenship and homelessness is taken up as the second leitmotif. In order to achieve this goal, I aim to present a diachronic overview of citizenship that sets out to critically interrogate (**1**) the Marshallian paradigm of social citizenship, (**2**) the welfare politics and ideology

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[10] Before I go further, I want to avoid any confusion by stating that the research questions embedded within this chapter are not the exclusive product of a detailed or exhaustive consideration of the relevant literature linking homelessness with citizenship. Rather, it is important to understand that the research questions have been filtered and refracted back through direct observations, sustained dialogue and critical exchange with research participants in the 'field'. This literature review has, in some measure, an emblematic value insofar as much of the work cited herein has been a source of inspiration or point of challenge to the overall shape of the study on ethical, methodological, stylistic and theoretical grounds.

[11] Rough sleeping was one of the first priorities for the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU). The SEU, situated within the Prime Minster's Cabinet Office, sought to tackle a series of entrenched 'social problems'. To this end, rough sleeping was selected as a high government priority and a range of measures were announced aimed at reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough in England by two thirds by 2002. A new body, the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU), was set up to take over and coordinate all of the government programmes targeted on rough sleeping under the auspices of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minster. The Rough Sleeping Unit was replaced in 2002 by the Homelessness Directorate which, in turn, was subsumed within the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

of the 'active citizen', (**3**) the construction of the responsible citizenship, and (**4**) the small body of literature that explicitly examines the complex and contested relationship between street homelessness and contemporary citizenship (Dean & Gale, 1999: Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005).

In the third part I draw on the idea of governmentality, a perspective on power and rule derived from the later work of Michel Foucault (2003), and one that has gained increasing popularity within a stratum of critical social policy in the last decade (Goodwin, 1998: Dean, 1999: Wilton & DeVerteuil, 2006: Flint, 2007: McKee, 2009a), in order to contextualise the representation of, and policy response to the particular issue of homelessness (for example, Cloke et al., 2000b). [12] Again the emphasis here is on pursuing commentaries which offer important theoretical and empirical insights into the particular social relations and policy praxis that underlain the contemporary governance of social welfare and localised responses to homelessness.

Following immediately upon this, I take up another theme – ethnographies of homelessness. In so doing I travel through time and across space to identify the roots, trajectory and impacts of sociological narratives built on the edifice of ethnographic research methods and designs (Kusenbach, 2005). An unintended consequence of this historical treatment of ethnographic research into homelessness and homeless people is the recognition that there is a paucity of extensive, in-depth participant and observation work to have emerged from within the ambit of British qualitative social research (though see Wardhaugh, 2000: Hall, 2003).[13] As we shall presently see, this is in stark contrast to the rich heritage of US ethnography, spanning from one of the pioneering studies in the Chicago School's oeuvre, Nel Anderson's 'The Hobo: The

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[12] It is arguably the case that the notion of 'politics of behaviour' has found particular favour with post-Foucauldian social theorists. More recently, however, theoretical discourses relating to behavioural expectations and anti-social behaviour have been viewed through the critical telescope of Norbert Elias (1978) and the civilising process. See, for example, recent work by Powell (2007) and Flint and Powell (2009).

[13] Recent exceptions, for example, include the work of Butchinsky (2004) and Ravenhill (2008).

Sociology of the Homeless Man' (1961:1998), to the diagnostic ethnography of Mitchell Duneier's seminal study of second-hand book sellers 'Sidewalk' (1999). My concern within this unit of analysis is to open up a potentially creative agenda for research on citizenship and homelessness by drawing inspiration from these earlier fieldwork encounters and discoveries.

The final theme draws together these connective tissues through a detailed exploration of some of the ways in 'hard-to-reach' groups are grounded in, produced by and reconstitute the discourse of social exclusion. What is at issue here is how people talk about their own experiences of material deprivation, social distancing and 'othering' in relation to the wider (moral) community. Understanding this, I refer to these kinds of strategies, tactics, procedures and processes as 'interpretive frameworks'. I will illustrate this point in some detail with particular reference to three discrete but overlapping examples of academic and applied policy research (Howe, 1985: 1998:2009: Dean, 2003:2007: Gowan, 1997:2001:2007). This is relevant for how we understand the power and effect of discursive projects which serve to label and stereotype some of the most vulnerable and dislocated people, and also for how we might productively go about empirically investigating homeless people's engagements with these moral judgements and policy prescriptions in ways that do justice to their own competencies as social actors, and not just as discursive subjects.

In developing this approach, I wish to make the central claim that there is to the best of my knowledge no single case study or extended piece of scholarship that explicitly and cogently elucidates how the twin movements of 'government through community' and 'responsible citizenship' have gained a narrative force and institutional purchase in relation to the conduct of homeless people through the specific methodological prism of detailed ethnographic fieldwork. In that sense, the ensuing literature review will seek to highlight some of the (direct and tangential) contributions made in this field of inquiry as well as some of the ground left uncovered. I therefore

contend that the discussions and debates that follow immediately below can be used as a heuristic vehicle in and through which the link between homelessness and citizenship can be analysed and interrogated. As such, it can be used to provide the necessary scaffolding for exploring and elucidating some of the ways in which homeless people make sense of, and talk about the mobilisation of the vocabulary of 'rights and responsibilities'.[14]

2.2 Contextualising

At this point let me, very briefly, recapitulate that the contemporary governance of homelessness is embodied in New Labour's view of social exclusion and the discursive and material repertoire of neo-liberalism, as outlined in the opening chapter (Wilton & DeVerteuil, 2006). As we make sense and navigate the complex relationship between homelessness and citizenship, we therefore need to locate our understanding within broader transformations in the rationalities and techniques of government which seek to activate citizens to take greater responsibility for their own governance (Dean, 2003). In this, Julie MacLeavy has observed:

> [Elements] of neo-liberal philosophy in Tony Blair's first and second terms as Prime Minster enabled a new mode of governance in which the political subject was 'framed' through the stipulation of a series of (competing) social values derived from the principles of individualism and collectivisim; rights

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[14] This focus on 'rights and responsibilities' agenda has, it has been alleged, become increasingly central to New Labour's electoral and policy making rhetoric. It has led to a renewal of the language of the 'deserving' - reluctant victims of circumstance - and the 'undeserving' for whom their situation is considered to represent a lifestyle choice – ideological categories which have long been embedded in accounts of poverty in the UK (Mooney, 2009) In a similar vein, the former English Housing Minister Caroline Flint's assertion that social housing tenants sign 'commitment contracts' requiring them to seek work when allied to James Purnell, the Work and Pensions Secretary's, suggestion that alcoholics may have their benefits withdrawn unless they agree to undergo a government treatment scheme are only the most recent and pronounced examples of the resurrection of Victorian moral reasoning about the deserving and undeserving poor (Wintour, 2009).

and responsibilities, discipline and support. These worked through the structures and strategies of government to render needy subjects (individuals and communities) as 'socially excluded' (2008a:1658).

Recognising this, there is a corresponding need to understand that 'New Labour has sought to reconstruct understandings of rough sleeping within the broader context of its approach to problems of social exclusion – focusing upon the rights but also (and increasingly) the responsibilities of people and places to confront the causes of their own exclusion' (May et al., 2005: 717). Ineluctably this new political and policy agenda is increasingly addressed through the logic and locus of 'government through community' (Raco & Imrie, 2000). Here the relationship between community, personal responsibility and citizenship is held to be contiguous. Thus:

> The use of community as a technology of informal social control is based upon the perceived ability of community processes to transmit norms and regulate behaviour and to mould compliance to dominant values of responsibility (Flint, 2002:249).

In making the above argument, we will touch upon a significant body of work that seeks to deepen our understanding of the linkages between rough sleeping, social exclusion and responsible citizenship (Warnes & Crane, 2005: Pawson, 2007: McNaughton, 2008). Concomitantly, we will also encounter a growing corpus of literature that seeks to combine theoretical insights with empirical evidence on the powerful articulation of 'community' as a vehicle in 'curing', 'controlling' and 'combating' the spectre of visible on-street homelessness (Lyon-Callo, 2003: Millie, 2007). Much of this literature has identified and articulated the co-existence of hard and soft approaches, a contradictory mix of interventions designed to help homeless people through the provision of care and promise of empowerment alongside laws that criminalise their existence and movements

(Anker, 2008).[15] This seemingly inconsistent approach reflects the central thread of New Labour's approach to social policy: that attempts to address homelessness are refracted through the lens of social exclusion and policy solutions that are typically designed to impact the individual behaviours and perceived pathologies of homeless people. Thus, softer strategies are generally received for those homeless people who are willing to comply with particular programmatic mandates, whereas those homeless people seen as non-compliant are targeted with harsher, more punitive tactics (Murphy, 2009).

The first task of this literature review is to contextualise how homelessness and homeless people have been constructed in normative public discourses and dominant policy responses. Homeless people, portrayed and understood as marginalised and out of touch with 'mainstream' and 'responsible' society, have become defined as excluded citizens and are deemed to be lacking in these characteristics of citizenship (Horsell 2006). Given the intermeshing of homelessness and citizenship, it becomes pertinent to focus on social exclusion. The crucial point to be made here is that thinking about social exclusion allows us to begin to open up parallel avenues of inquiry into the governance of homelessness and the contemporary shape of citizenship.

2.2 <u>Social Exclusion and Homelessness</u>

> Too many people are still coming onto the streets. And too many people who were sleeping rough five or ten years ago are still out there. That is why we need a new approach, with services to help people come in from the cold, and support to help them rebuild their lives. [But] we know that this approach will only succeed as part of a genuine partnership between central and local

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[15] Empowerment in this context has been promoted through the language of service user involvement and 'latent' social capital (for an accessible discussion on these points see Seal, 2008).

government, the voluntary sector, statutory bodies, businesses, community

groups and rough sleepers themselves. I believe that this strategy sets out a

way forward which can deliver our vision a vision of a society where no one

needs to sleep in doorways, and where rough sleeping has become a thing of

the past (Foreword Tony Blair, 1999).[16]

Since the election of the Labour Government in 1997, social exclusion has been the subject of

considerable interest and comment in both mainstream political debate and social theory. The

earliest and most prominent articulation of this shifting policy terrain was the much vaunted

commitment to addressing the complex and entrenched problems of some of the poorest and

most vulnerable groups in society through the auspices of the cross-departmental Social

Exclusion Unit and its focus on selective or discretionary policy endeavours (Asthana et al.,

2009:202). The main source of policy interest was channelled through a focus on rough sleepers

(SEU, 1998a), truancy and school exclusion (SEU, 1998b), teenage pregnancy (SEU, 1999) and

young people not in education, employment or training (SEU, 1999b). It has been claimed that

this flagship commitment to social inclusive policies was (and is) orientated towards preventing

individuals at risk of exclusion from becoming excluded and, where necessary, government

support should be designed with the aim of reintegrating those already excluded socially, through

the suite of New Deal schemes and the valorisation of labour market participation - as opposed to

redistribution through income transfers (Kennedy, 2005: Crisp et al., 2009). Thus the Australian

academic Chris Horsell has penetratingly observed:

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[16] Extract taken from 'Coming in from the Cold': The Government's Strategy for Rough Sleeping'. The importance of this national strategy to the wider discussion is readily apparent in its moral prescription that homeless service providers should desist from supporting (and enabling) on-street homelessness (May et al., 2005:386).

Within the British context, New Labour texts regularly construct social exclusion as more than poverty. Despite the varying definitions of social exclusion, in operational terms the concept highlights the personal and not structural features of social exclusion. In the language of New Labour, social exclusion is seen to be primarily an outcome rather than a process; it is a condition people are in, not something done to them. In the British case, although lack of paid work is seen as the primary reason for social exclusion, there is no specification of economic processes or agents that are responsible for producing unemployment; rather, the focus is on the creation of citizens fit for the work that exists (2006:216).

Continual controversy surrounds debate on social exclusion, a concept that, unlike poverty, is notoriously difficult to define and even harder to measure. In a 1999 speech the then Prime Minster Tony Blair defined social exclusion as:

a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001:10).

Notwithstanding the importance of the concept both politically and socially, agreement on what constitutes social exclusion is far from being universally accepted. At base, social exclusion is an imprecise and slippery term that invites both moral obfuscation and a socially prescriptive interpretation (Friel, 2008). This being said, Kivisto and Faist (2007:71) have argued with no small amount of elegance and economy of purpose that, even allowing for different valences in national context and sociological paradigm, victims of socially exclusion are incapable of exercising their

social rights as citizens in the same way as those who are fully included into the polity. Fundamentally, the term is identified and understood as a circumstance of being 'shut-off' from the cultural, economic and political systems deemed necessary to determine the integration of materially disadvantaged and socially isolated individuals and communities into the orbit of mainstream values and social relations (MacLeavy, 2008a:1658). It also implies that through the structures and strategies of government and increased third sector involvement, the 'socially excluded' can be radically transformed into competitive, independent, self responsible and morally autonomous individuals (Fopp, 2009).

To understand the relationship between social exclusion and homelessness in greater depth, it is necessary to outline the genesis of social exclusion in European social thought, before moving on to consider its positioning and reinterpretation within the dynamics of New Labour thinking; one that I take to be embedded in the discourse of the Third Way and the 'rights and responsibilities' agenda (Duffy, 2009). To this end, I propose to examine the work of a critical stream of scholars. Following this approach it will then be possible to cartographically illustrate the discursive, material and symbolic overlap between social exclusion and homelessness through the exploration of a critical body of work that has emerged to address this site of inquiry.

Numerous authors have traced the origins and current usage of the term social exclusion (Silver, 1994: Levitas, 1996: 1998: Marsh & Mullins, 1998: Friel, 2008: MacLeavy, 2008a). Ruth Lister (2004:75), for example, has described social exclusion as a 'travelling concept' that originated in the work of Max Weber and the concern with status groups and social closure.[17] Existing commentaries route the arrival of social exclusion into British political discourse and social policy interventions from European, particularly French Republican social thought. In this conception

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[17] However, alongside this, other political theorists and cultural commentators have noted that the concept is also adumbrated in Georg Simmel's The Stranger, Norbert Elias's The Established and the Outsiders, Erving Goffman's Stigma, and Howard Becker's Outsiders.

social exclusion refers to a 'rupture of the social bond' or 'solidarity' (Silver & Miller, 2002) and has perhaps been most clearly articulated at the European level, where the language of social exclusion has been entrenched within EU policy debates on living conditions and the 'social situation' for some considerable time (Fahmy, 2008). What is distinctive about the European discourse on social exclusion is that it promotes the inclusion of all citizens through opportunity and participation (Anderson, 2007:628). This construction of social exclusion, framed as a relational process of declining participation, solidarity and access, quickly dispersed from France throughout Europe and beyond. In the somewhat narrower and more rigid realm of the Anglo-Saxon world, particularly in the British and Australian context, social exclusion is viewed as a synonym of social dislocation from formal labour markets and dependency on welfare benefits. Simply put, for some theorists this amounts to the rediscovery of the Protestant ethic and its hostile view of the 'poor' as morally culpable for their own exclusion (Barnes & Morris, 2009:254).

To its adherents, social exclusion provides a very useful framework as Eldin Fahmy (2008) has neatly pointed out for understanding both the complex, multidimensional and dynamic nature of disadvantage itself, and the underlying process of discrimination, impoverishment and denial of rights which underpin it. In general terms, social exclusion is understood to denote a set of factors and processes that accentuate material and social deprivation. More particularly, the 'socially excluded' are usually defined by their existential location rather than by a set of rigorous criteria. Much more than 'poverty', the terms social exclusion and social inclusion invite subjective analysis. Perception is much more an integral part of the social exclusion experience, with its insider/outsider connotations. The question of what it is that people are excluded from would, according to Alex Marsh (2004), seem crucial to understanding attempts to combat social exclusion. It implies some form of mainstream society into which 'the excluded' are included/integrated/inserted. A further dimension of social exclusion that requires further theoretical and empirical development is the extent to which subjectivity is involved. Is it

important, asks Marsh, that people identify themselves as socially excluded, or can the term 'socially excluded' be applied to people as a result of their social location and regardless of their own views? In this context the labelling and stigma attached to being homeless will clearly affect how homeless people perceive themselves.

Notwithstanding the problems associated with 'social exclusion', the term has proved to be useful in focusing upon relational process, which can disrupt social bonds and lead to social isolation or lack of social integration. However, as Levitas (1998) discerns, 'social exclusion' has absorbed many of the taken-for-granted assumptions and negative connotations that were associated with its predecessor, 'the underclass', manifesting itself in moral underclass discourse (Friel, 2008). Understanding this, Axford (2008) has argued that there appears to have been a drift, at least in the UK, towards the 'weak' model of exclusion focused on the individual who is *excluded,* and away from the 'strong' model with its stress on the *excluder* in the form of broader social forces. [18]

For Julia MacLeavy (2008a) social exclusion has become installed as the primary framework of welfare policy in the UK. Drawing on the implementation of the New Deals for the Unemployed and New Deals for Communities in Bristol, MacLeavy identifies a new mode of local governance in Third Way thinking which encourages - and in some instances coerces – individuals and their communities to become active in their own government.

As MacLeavy has written:

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[18] In a further contribution to this discussion, Veit-Wilson (1998) distinguishes 'weak' from 'strong' versions of the concept by reference to the extent to which attention is given to the processes by which people become excluded. In the stronger form of this discourse, for example, emphasis is placed on the 'excluders' and therefore aims for solutions which reduce the powers of exclusion.

> As the term becomes redefined as a technique of governing, it helps to signal a new means of government in which individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their own governance and that of their families and communities. This is in contrast to the original notion of social exclusion, which is derived from French social thought and a concern for the relationship between members of society and the nation state. Social exclusion in this instance is primarily concerned with citizenship and proffers a lens through which to look at entitlement, access to resources and the decision making process in society (2008a: 1660).

In this account, neo-liberalism is embodied in New Labour's view of social exclusion. One of the central features of this policy agenda is that it provides a rationale for neo-liberal principles of personal responsibility, obligation and reduced assistance.

To cite MacLeavy, again:

> Social exclusion helped invoke a new policy framework in which issues of inequality and disadvantaged were addressed not by a redistributive welfare *per se*, but through the institution of an 'advance form of liberal rule. Amidst a language of choice, flexibility and the market, supports were put in place to invoke a transition from government to governance in which socially excluded individuals were enabled to participate in society through policy endeavours that primary sought to move them from welfare to work (2008a: 1659).

A related interest here is the recognition that while there has been a diminution in the institutional framework supporting social exclusion, the discourse is invoked in policies that seek to initiate

strategies of self-help and community development. To appreciate this fact, MacLeavy relates how the diminishing profile of social exclusion is underpinned by a number of changes in the structure of governance. The point is that these developments signal a revitalised emphasis on individual responsibility in programmes designed to tackle social exclusion through the increased involvement of individuals, communities and local organisations in the governing of social life. This identification of the 'community' as a politically active unit reinforces the notion of self-governing individuals and groups. In this sense, it helps to justify the decoupling of welfare entitlement and unconditionality (Dwyer, 1998). In this model, welfare benefits and others forms of state sanctioned support are contingent upon individual responsibility and active engagement with society (through labour market participation). Similarly, it attempts to relocate citizenship away from the domain of the state and into that of civil society (McDonald & Marston, 2002:385).

To differing degrees, Mooney outlines the changing nature and meaning of social exclusion thus:

> Such ideologies construct the impoverished poor as a group cut-off from 'normality', as the authors of their own misfortune, evidenced by claims about the disorganised, deviant and depraved lifestyles of those deemed to be part of such an underclass. Dress it up any way you wish, by all means use the term 'socially excluded' and there's no need to make reference to an underclass. ..In this approach structural factors such as class, racism and state oppression are completely neglected in favour of an attack and demonisation of public welfare as a major factor that underpins the reproduction of poverty, family disfunctionality and which contributes to wider issues of law and order, community fragmentation and breakdown (2008:14).

Under the prevailing neo-liberal order, with its turn away from emancipatory and egalitarian goals associated with traditional welfare paternalism, rough sleeping has become the iconic subject of social exclusion.[19] Although varying in degrees of sophistication and detail there is an increasing awareness that homeless people experience often extreme and entrenched dislocation and exclusion from mainstream social interactions, practices and spaces which directly affects their capacity to engage as full and active citizens.

Crane and Warnes (2005) have pointed out that policy and practical developments to tackling homelessness, particularly rough sleeping, have undergone a shift from identifying unmet needs to control and sanction. Pawson (2006), for example, has shown that New Labour's more assertive and interventionist approach to tackling homelessness is located at the centre of the drive to obviate the causes and effects of social exclusion, it is also inextricably embedded within a mode of thinking that priorities civil duty over civil rights, which have been used to support widely varying explanations of homelessness and policy prescriptions (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007). In this respect, Paul Michael Garrett (2007) has noted that New Labour's paternalism is reflected in a drive towards conditional welfare, behaviour compliance and 'remoralisation'. The point here is that such arguments have hardened as New Labour has sought to claim that their policies have lifted all but a few difficult cases off the streets and towards long-term sustainability.

The most sustained and ambitious attempt to develop an analysis of homelessness and social exclusion is evident in the work of Horsell. His argument is that the current focus on social

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[19] The Government's Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) was a funded programme aimed at curbing this phenomenon (Randall & Brown, 1999; Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005). It was set the target to reduce rough sleeper numbers in England by two thirds of the 1998 level by 2001. This was to be achieved through a national strategy involving the development of more hostel bed spaces and housing association tenancies as well as new geographically focused outreach work and expanded resettlement support (Rough Sleepers Unit, 1999). This target was, according to official estimates, met ahead of time in 2001. As noted by Fitzpatrick and Jones (2005) the strategy emphasised both the responsibilities of homeless people and the 'assertive' approach required of outreach and other homelessness service provider agencies. Subsequent evaluations judged the outreach approaches to have been successful (Randall & Brown, 1999: 2002).

exclusion within mainstream policy discussions has little explanatory power and is incapable of addressing the personal and structural components of people's experiences of disadvantage (2006:220). The central focus of Horsell's account is the thesis that where independence (or dependence on the labour market) is normative, those individuals who rely on welfare services are easily labelled as deficient and seen to be responsible for their circumstances. In Horsell's verdict, the rhetoric of social exclusion obscures structural contexts and the subjectivities or lived experience of those labelled homeless (2006, 213).

Despite these tensions, the concept of social exclusion continues to evolve and attract renewed interest. In a recent contribution to this debate, Whiteford (2007) has illustrated how the focus on social exclusion has evolved and is now characterised by a concern with the most deeply excluded 2–3 percent (calculated as being 1 to 1.5million people) under the umbrella of the Adults Facing Chronic Exclusion (ACE) programme.[20] In another illustration, Whiteford (2010) has identified the growing concern with providing homeless people with meaningful activity. Here meaningful activity is said to be any form of social or cultural activity that purposefully aims to empower people experiencing homelessness to build self-esteem, develop skills and reconnect with mainstream social networks. This approach privileges and promotes paid employment as the main driver in overcoming homelessness and welfare dependency. It also gives credence to the argument that for New Labour social exclusion is not viewed as a material consequence of inequality but rather as a problem rectified by improving access to the labour market.

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[20] The ACE Programme is a 3 year, £6million fund designed to test new approaches to tacking chronic social exclusion amongst the most marginalised people (see also www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/adults.aspx

This brings us to 'Is it Possible to Eradicate Homelessness?' (2009) – a recent ESRC research project – which is concerned with multiple exclusion homelessness.[21]   This new and exciting research programme is of particular interest, I would suggest, because it represents a shift in political and academic thinking away from the narrow and normative terrain of social exclusion towards a more nuanced appreciation of 'the excluded of the excluded' – that is acutely socially excluded groups who may be viewed through the lens of the classic deserving/undeserving binary (Fitzpatrick 2006:5). There is here, then, an important recognition of the need to know far more about homeless people's own experiences and perceptions of 'material disadvantage' and 'external labelling' (Jenkins, 1996).

In these and other ways, social exclusion has retained importance as both a tool of policy analysis and conduit for critical scholarship. From this review of the social exclusion literature in alliance with field observations and ethnographic encounters from the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, the following research question emerges: How do homeless people make sense of, and talk about acute social exclusion?

2.4 <u>Citizenship</u>

> [We will] refashion the welfare state on the basis of rights and responsibilities,
>
> with people helped to help themselves, not just given hand outs (Labour
>
> Party, 2001:3).

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[21] 'Is it Possible to Eradicate Homelessness?' constitutes a nascent research initiative that aims to inform government policy and service provision through a detailed exposition of a subgroup of homeless people who are referred to as having 'multiple and or complex needs' (Pleace & Bretherton, 2007) across four independent but interconnected case studies (for an exegesis www.esrc.ac.uk).

In conventional terms the apparent link between 'on-street' homelessness and contemporary citizenship is explained in two principal ways. In the first of these it is suggested that the exclusion of homeless people combines several interrelated dimensions, exclusion from the labour market, from social citizenship rights, ideological and housing exclusion (Stephenson, 2006). In the second, the focus is on the relational, rather than the substantive, manifestations of homelessness. This discourse of citizenship, in part, rests on a negative and imagined image of homeless people as foundationally 'othered' and as exemplars of anomie. In these and other ways, homeless people are conceived - discursively and symbolically - to exist on the margins in opposition to the values and everyday social relations of 'respectable' society (Powell, 2007) Drawing on social and sociological responses, the ensuing discussion aims to bridge the gap between the way citizenship and homelessness are thought about, and the way people who are homeless perceive and act as citizens.

Kivisto and Faust (2007:51) have perceptively judged that within the contemporary discourse of citizenship, specifically the focus on the rights of citizens and the obligations of citizens, a febrile argument is underway about the eviscerated status of social citizenship brought about by the rise of neo-liberalism and its effects. This is particularly important since it signals the advent of a significant attack on the welfare state and a corresponding shift towards punitive notions of individual responsibility. By focusing on the discourse of rights and responsibilities, we will touch upon Marshall's conception of citizenship; the ideology of the 'active citizen'; the politics of communitarianism and arguments about creeping conditionality in welfare policies and programmes (Dwyer & Heron, 1998: Dean, 2007).

The chrysalis from which most debates and discussions about the contemporary character of citizenship can be traced is the work of T.H Marshall, particularly the seminal essay Citizenship and Social Class (1950). Marshall's thesis documents the evolution of civil, political and social

citizenship in Britain. These were broadly assigned to the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. An empirically informed analysis, it examines the associations between the institutions of citizenship and social class from a historical and comparative perspective. For Marshall, citizenship is thus conceived as an evolving institution.

Marshall developed a model of citizenship that he regarded as both socially progressive and politically moderate, believing in the possibility of justice and rights in a mixed capitalist economy. In this regard, Marshall takes the tension between the equality of political status and the inequality of economic conditions as the starting point of his analysis (Kivsto & Faust, 2008:52). Perhaps the key understanding here is that concerning the extension of citizenship as the principle means for reversing these contradictions. His distinctive contribution was to introduce the concept of social rights to the vocabulary of citizenship. He claimed that a citizen is only a full citizen if they possess all three kinds of right, and that this possession of full rights is linked to social rights. Civil citizenship rights are defined by Marshall as those rights that are necessary for individual freedom, such as the right to liberty of the person and the right to equality before the law. Marshall defined political citizenship rights as those rights that guarantee the exercise of political power. Social citizenship rights were defined by Marshall as the whole range of rights delivered by social services that ensure the economic welfare and security of citizens and their ability to 'live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society' (1950:8). It is this that leads him to conclude that: 'Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of the community', adding that 'all who posses the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed' (1950:18).

Of crucial importance was Marshall's argument that the development of citizenship allowed for the partial amelioration of the corrosive effects of capitalism. In such an understanding, Marshall links the advent of social citizenship with the rise of the welfare state. The inevitable outcome is that

social citizenship promotes policies aimed at 'class abatement'. The role of the welfare state is 'not a classless society, but one in which class differences are legitimate in terms of social justice (Marshall, 1964:106). Unsurprisingly this assertion has enacted considerable criticism and comment, both from the right and the political left. It is based on the assumption that the welfare state is a fixed and durable part of the socio-political landscape. At the same time, Marshall contended that the three types of citizenship would become institutionalised and not subject to reversal. Clearly, the rise of neo-liberal economic and social policies have rolled-back social citizenship and increased social inequality.

Several other factors inherent to Marshall's analysis gave rise to critical scrutiny and repudiation, beginning in the UK in the 1970s. It was here that the contemporary idea of the active citizen – as distinct from a 'passive' welfare dependency was first applied. This point is succinctly summarised by Kivsto and Faust 'not a particularly conspicuous feature of Marshall's thesis, but there nonetheless, is a view of citizens in contemporary liberal democracies as essentially passive' (2008:51). A further criticism of the Marshallian paradigm is its neglect of the gendered nature of citizenship. This is important because it gives a sense in which Marshall, while extremely important and influential in theorising citizenship, welfare state and social class, failed singularly to attend to the gender dimensions of citizenship.

In terms of theoretical approach, Mann (1987) has criticised Marshall for advancing an evolutionary and ethnocentric analysis. Similarly, Giddens (1982) has criticised Marshall for developing an evolutionary perspective in which social rights appear to be the effect of a broad and imminent development in society. For Giddens, Marshall's theory is not only evolutionary and ethnocentric, but is also analytically vague. Clearly, Giddens is quite correct to draw attention to the teleological dimension of Marshall's citizenship theory. This is significant because it represents an important challenge to the contention that the historical emergence of citizenship is an irrevocable process within contemporary society. This in turn enables a clearer understanding

of the way in which welfare is now a site of 'symbolic struggle', that is subject to revision and attack.

We should remember, however, that Marshall was aiming to elucidate the rise and significance of citizenship as both a historic and contemporary project. In considering his case and coming to the above conclusions, Bryan S. Turner (1990) defends Marshall against Giddens' main criticism. Turner does, however, argue that Marshall is insufficiently alert to the reality that contestation in the form of social struggle is the motor driving contemporary citizenship. Turner is, it seems, primarily interested in demonstrating that citizenship is important as both a practical political question concerning access to welfare, but also to theoretical debates over the conditions of social integration and social solidarity. He argues that any attempt to defend the principle of welfare requires a far deeper sociological, historical and philosophical inquiry into the social membership and political participation, namely an inquiry into the extent and character of citizenship. In establishing his position, Turner not only acknowledges, but more importantly, also attempts to reformulate the analytical value of Marshall's contribution to further our understanding of citizenship. Here, Turner is principally concerned with articulating the importance of social rights within a broader typology that sees citizenship as being processual rather than as a single entity.

There are, moreover, on the radical side notable challenges from a number of feminist theorists to these perspectives. To begin with, Walby (1994) criticises both Marshall and Turner for failing to comprehend that citizenship is, and should be, a broader concept than class-based rights. In particular, Marshall's analysis has been attacked on the basis that citizenship has traditionally only conferred rights on certain classes of individuals within society. That is, it has failed to properly account for the relationship between gender and citizenship. The argument here is that perceiving of citizenship narrowly in terms of economic independence gained through waged employment conceals the myriad ways people contribute to their communities and society.

In short, we can clearly see that Marshall's analysis of citizenship remains a significant and enduring object of academic enquiry and social policy debate. This is partly because it continues to promote the importance of community membership over and above individualism. It is also due in part to the development of social exclusion discourse, with its renewed focus on broadening the notion of material disadvantage to encompass themes such as marginalisation and participation.

Critics of the welfare state have increased focused on the powerful and popular distinction between 'active' citizenship and its cognate 'passive' citizenship (Levitas, 2005; Tonkens & Van Doorn, 2001). This focus on citizenship was part of a wider ideological struggle that attempted to emphasise a new doctrine of competitive self-interest, individual responsibilities and 'active' rather than 'passive' citizenship. The logic of the 'active citizen' was initially articulated by the Conservatives in the early 1990s. Symbolically and operationally, it reached its zenith in the 'Citizens Charter' which was launched by the Prime Minister, John Major, on 22 July 1991. This renewed interest in the language of citizenship aimed to promote the importance of personal responsibility, individual choice and 'community' by reformulating the relations between citizens and the state as well as the relations among citizens. However, as Lister has observed, this represented an essentially consumerist and depoliticised view of the state-citizen relationship (1999:313). This can be contrasted with Marshall's model of citizenship, which is generally held to be a passive, rather than an active in its orientation.

The literature relating to duty and rights, and to responsibility, is often split between those who are committed to free market principles and those on the left who deplore any discussion of responsibilisation as being an attack on the very fabric of Keynesian welfare state. In common with this understanding, Peter Dwyer (1998) has advanced the claim that access to welfare benefits and services is now *conditional* on the principles of individual rights and responsibilities. Corresponding to this process, we see the progressive erosion of the welfare entitlement of citizenship in favour of a moral authoritarianism that has sought to portray individual fecklessness

rather than government policy as the causal factor in an increasingly hostile, suspicious, antagonistic and unequal society. Here, neo-liberalism has rendered obsolete the notion that certain welfare provisions are not only impenetrable to commodification but also enduring.

2.5 **Constructing the Responsible Citizen**

Today, citizenship remains a key term for 'New Labour' and draws increasingly on the lexicon of obligations rather than rights (Roche, 1992). Central to the 'Third Way' project, according to Dean (2003), is a conception of citizenship in which there can be 'no rights without responsibilities'. 'New Labour' has made it clear that it consistently willing to invoke the language of citizenship in order to inform and justify its welfare policy. Integral to such an approach has been the promotion of a particular type of moral community in which citizens earn access to their social rights through a combination of hard work, responsible behaviour and personal contributions (Dwyer, 2002: 274). Dwyer points out that, in spite of the retrenchment of recent decades, access to welfare rights continues to be regarded by many as a centrally important aspect of effective citizenship. Meanwhile, Clarke (2005) has highlighted four of the dynamics that have appeared central to New Labour's politics of citizenship: activation, empowerment, responsibilization and abandonment. Clarke locates New Labour's conception of citizenship as emanating from the discourse of welfare reform (and its conception of the active citizen) that has been such a salient feature of contemporary US anti-welfare politics. Clarke's critique is an important one because it views New Labour's ideal citizens are moralized, choice-making, self-directing subjects, while the 'excluded' become objects of intensified surveillance, criminalization and incarceration.

In a short but stimulating discussion, Brian Lund (1999) argues that New Labour has reconstructed welfare as a mechanism that reconnects the 'socially excluded' to mainstream society via character improvement. In making this argument, Lund claims that the dominant characteristic of New Labour's approach to social policy is the bonding of duties to rights. He

traces the path on this stress on individual rights and community obligations to the era of the 'progressive alliance' between New Liberals, Christian Socialists and elements of Fabianism. As Lund points out members of the so-called 'progressive alliance' denied the existence of 'natural' rights outside society and placed particular emphasis on the fulfilment of obligations as a justification of rights. For Lund, though, New Labour's rhetoric on rights and obligations is held to be more reminiscent of the Charity Organisation Society, which was determined to enforce obligations by maintaining the 'less eligibility' and social control of the poor law. [22] At the same time, Lund argues, it shares New Labour's conception of the corporate nature of society and the interdependence of its members. New Labour has therefore linked obligations to rights in a way that attaches receivers to givers via the 'contract' that assistance is owed only if 'character' is enhanced.

Lavalette and Mooney (1999) have described the way in which 'New Labour' has used the instruments of social welfare policy to assert a new moral agenda that aims to articulate the view that *all* welfare developments are both positive and new. This ideology, based on a communitarian ethic of guaranteed citizens rights obtained in return for responsibilities, is predicated explicitly and implicitly, with linking individuals to their wider community. One source for this conception of community has been communitarian thinking. For proponents of communitarian ideas, these appear to rest on both a rejection of the market-led ideology of the 'New Right' and of paternalistic and centralised approaches of the 'Old Left'. It is in this sense advocating a 'third way' between unfettered markets and the overarching state (Etzioni, 1999).

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[22] The Charity Organisation Society (COS) supported the concept of self-help and limited government intervention to deal with the effects of poverty. The charity's core narrative, according to the radical social work academic Iain Ferguson, was the need to coerce the 'poor' to behave morally by assuming a greater sense of personal responsibility (2008:40).

Much has been written about the communitarian strand of responsible citizenship pioneered by New Labour. Indeed, as work by White (2003) and Pawson and Davidson (2008) suggests, the moral economy of New Labour presents an interpretation of citizenship where access to certain services should be earned, rather than made available by right. In mobilising the basic principles of responsible citizenship a significant body of work has arisen in respect of the housing-welfare state relationship and anti-social and irresponsible behaviour. However, the impact of responsible citizenship on homeless people has been discussed only indirectly with the exception of Johnsen and Fitzpatrick (2008) and Whiteford (2008). At best, this work indicates that anti-social behaviour is the avatar of this tendency. To a large extent, then, there is increasing recognition that the prevailing assumptions that shape and underpin responsible citizenship can be a significant factor in exacerbating aspects of social exclusion.

2.6 Homelessness and Citizenship

Although it is important to acknowledge that the resurgence and visibility of homelessness has become a significant social and political issue, very little detailed attention has been paid to the concept of citizenship and its relationship to homelessness. Homelessness and citizenship are, however, inextricably linked. Paul Cloke (2003) has argued that the 'homeless' cannot be reduced to a housing problem but rather constitute a significant and complex group of people experiencing (often extreme and entrenched) dislocation and exclusion from mainstream social interactions, interactions and spaces. What does exist, however, is a small corpus of literature that is highly abstract and legalistic in its focus (Neale, 1997: Feldman, 2006). It also apparent that despite the ubiquitous and urgent nature of the questions involved, there is also a scarcity of research within the homelessness literature that explicitly locates the subject of homelessness and citizenship within an extensive ethnographic framework.

A paradigm of the homeless has been formulated through the confluence of media, academic studies, policy and public perception. The effect of this is to discursively position homeless people vis-à-vis societal norms as 'other' or 'deviant'. Understanding this, Takahashi (1996) has argued that contemporary representations of homeless people are defined by perceptions regarding their productivity, degree of dangerousness and personal culpability for episodes of homelessness. Thus, it is important to recognise that homelessness is a social condition which exists through processes of stigmatisation and social exclusion. This is to say that people 'become' homeless because they are, as Talmadge Wright (2000) has explained, socially constructed as unworthy of the rights of citizenship that others enjoy, because their very existence is defined as an existence at the economic, social, cultural and political fringe.

In a highly stimulating and original account, Roy (2003) has provided a cross-cultural account of the meaning of propertied citizenship in respect of homelessness. Within this context, Roy is concerned with critically exploring the way in which homelessness, as a category existing outside of propertied citizenship, is rendered marginal in the discourses and practices of citizenship. Roy identifies how, when measured against the norm of propertied citizenship, homeless people have been seen as particularly aberrant, requiring disciplinary action (2003: 471). This is to understand that the paradigm of propertied citizenship only recognises formal rights of property, thereby marginalising the claims of the poor and other vulnerable social groups.

In trying to show the agency of homeless people, Roy introduces the Third World tradition of squatting as an example of an alternative paradigm to propertied citizenship. As Roy points out this amounts to a highly symbolic and dynamic expression of 'socio-spatial resistance'. This in turn leads to a consideration of the paradigm of citizenship within the context of shelter activism as practised by the American squatter collective 'Homes Not Jails'. The point here is to demonstrate how the use of vacant and abandoned buildings can be seen as a paradigmatic challenge to the notion of propertied citizenship through the strategy of reclaiming a living space.

More than this, it allows for the construction - spatially and politically - of 'sites of insurgent citizenship'.

A full citizen, the American political theorist Kathleen R. Arnold (2004) argues, receives the entitlements, protections and rights of citizenship and can participate politically. By contrast, homelessness denotes economic dependency and a perceived unfitness for citizenship. With economic dependency the homeless cede civil rights. For Arnold homelessness is itself the result of exclusive criteria for citizenship. The key here is to understand that homeless people are viewed as an embodiment of the '*other*'. Thus homelessness signals an asymmetrical power dynamic insofar as homeless people are not only physically and spatially isolated, but also culturally stigmatised and politically disenfranchised. Homeless people are not merely a forgotten population, but are in fact the subjects of myths and half-truths, which they are then forced to live out.

A more grounded analysis is apparent within a strong current of Australian intellectual inquiry that highlights some of the ways in which the social citizenship of homeless people is infringed as a result of over-policing and the existence of laws that criminalise the state of homelessness (Walsh & Klease, 2004). There are, as Walsh and Klease note, two main ways in which to view and understand citizenship**.** In the first place, the term is often used to denote a legal status. Here, citizenship is bound-up with a sense of belonging and an emphasis on social connectedness. Reflecting further, we can also see that this conception of citizenship is both narrow and exclusionary in its scale. In the second instance, however, citizenship is a normative category that encompasses concepts such as social membership, substantive equality and inclusion. Its scope is wider than the formal legal notion of citizenship. It is taken to refer to a status category in which certain rights or entitlements with respect to civil, political and social life are held to be necessary for full community membership and participation.

Embracing this analysis, Walsh and Klease note that homeless people are generally excluded from participation in a wide variety of socio-political activities that other citizens take for granted. There are a number of reasons why these rights generally remain unrealised with respect to homeless people. These can include difficulties in being placed on the electoral roll or the privations associated with a very low level of income which restricts homeless people's ability to exercise their civil and political citizenship rights. Walsh and Klease stress that a lack of access to private space means that homeless people are forced to conduct behaviours in public that most people carry out in private. The intended consequence for the homeless is that the law criminalises many of these behaviours, thereby resulting in the routine denial of their civic citizenship rights. Unable or unwilling to assimilate, homeless people increasingly become subject to authoritarian and punitive measures. In this way, homeless people are punished for their status rather than any criminal act, and thus become divested of citizenship.

Extending this debate, Walsh and Klease suggest that social policy research that aims to explore the links and discontinuities between homelessness and citizenship can make a real contribution to understanding and alleviating homelessness. On the one hand, the focus on citizenship is important because it draws attention to notions of 'community' and marginalisation and, on the other, reasserts the criticality of social rights in ensuring that the barriers preventing homeless people from enjoying their civil and political rights are to be overcome.

In the broad purview of the existing homelessness literature in the UK there is a scarcity of research that explicitly raises the subject of homelessness and citizenship. There is, to the best of my knowledge, a relatively small corpus of academic accounts which explicitly examine the theoretical and practical links between homelessness and citizenship against the backdrop of New Labour's drive to obviate social exclusion (see, for example, Kennett, 1999: Dean, 1999: Tonkens & van Doorn, 2001: Mills, 2003). These contributions are, for the most part, aridly intellectual and crucially devoid of direct empirical content. In response to this scholarly

inattention, Tonkens and van Doorn have addressed the broader implications of attempts to turn rough sleepers into 'responsible' citizens by exploring the points of connection and comparisons between 'third way' policies on homelessness in England and the Netherlands. Elsewhere Jordan (2000) has described how the mere existence of rough sleepers violates what he describes as a 'negative right of citizenship', this being the expectation that payment of taxes buys citizens freedom from unsolicited reminders of the problems endured by others.

However, a broader notion of citizenship is exemplified in several theoretical studies, which serve as a corrective to highly legalised and abstract conceptions of political citizenship. Such a tendency is apparent in Mills' work that represents an elaboration of Kennet's (1999) account of homelessness, citizenship and social exclusion. This is achieved by incorporating the insights offered by Chantal Mouffe's (1992) model of Radical Democratic citizenship. The issue of citizenship is central to this project, as Mouffe's aim is to provide a theory of citizenship that stretches beyond a minimal conception of the citizen as a passive bearer of rights and provides a forum through which social and political inclusion can be negotiated. The starting point is a critique of both liberal and communitarian models of citizenship, which are held to be insufficiently inclusive. In the light of these insights, Mouffe defines citizenship not primarily in terms of rights, but rather as a 'form of identification, a type of political identity; something to be constructed, not empirically given' (1992: 231). Specifically, the Radical Democratic model of citizenship sees values existing on a terrain that is characterised by the existence of conflict and difference. As such, it conceptualises citizenship as a set of practices that allow different groups and individual to negotiate their position. Crucially, Mills shows that people who have experienced homelessness have – like the rest of the population – diverse and shifting identities, and that culture, class, age, gender, sexuality and context influence these identities. This is to suggest that the experience of homelessness is not homogenous, because individual stories are both unique and commonplace. Mills goes on to argue that the social position occupied by homeless people,

as an excluded and disenfranchised group, is an inevitable process in the construction of identity formation vis-à-vis settled and dominant conceptions of citizenship. This means that citizenship *is* a shared political identity, but one that does not deny, but instead makes possible, the expression of a plurality of specific identities by different social groups. What is more, this inclusive and plural notion of citizenship allows – and indeed requires –active participation in the pursuit of political strategies that challenge relations of domination.

From this review of the citizenship literature in alliance with field observations and ethnographic encounters at the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, the following research question emerges: How does the experience of on-street homelessness impede the practice of citizenship?

I now want move forward in order to engage with debates and discussions about the contemporary governance of homelessness. This focus on the contractual forms of governing brings out particularly sharply the contradiction between the 'care' and 'control' aspects of welfare entitlement and conditional citizenship (Flint, 2008:88).

2.7   <u>Contemporary Governance of Homelessness</u>

On taking office in 1997, a number of scholars have alleged that New Labour sought to implement a Third Way in social policy that aimed to roll out neo-liberalism, rather than rolling back welfare (Peck & Tickell, 2001: Anderson, 2004). Within this expanded field, New Labour posited its desire to increasingly deliver homelessness services through the competitive 'social welfare market' and its emphasis on competitive contracts and centrally driven frameworks (Milbourne, 2009). This shift in welfare delivery is underpinned by the devolution of responsibility for planning and purchasing homelessness services from national to local government, before then filtering down to frontline service providers (Anderson, 2007). Amid these transitions, homeless service

providers have been charged with tackling shortages in welfare provision that (local and central) government is unable, or unwilling, to provide.

Sutton (2005) has shown that the transposition of a statutory service into the voluntary sector has clearly had far reaching consequences for the way in which homelessness service provision is delivered. In this regard, homelessness charities, traditionally viewed as a sphere outside of the state, now find themselves engaged in various types of 'compacts' with both the state and the business community. This has had the effect of redrawing the boundaries between the charitable voluntary sector and the state. The impact of this has been to force charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises to embrace market orientated principles such as competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness in welfare delivery. In one sense, homelessness organisations have now received official recognition by government as *de facto* representatives of the socially excluded.

Recently, Buckingham (2009) has written perceptively about local homelessness services being reconfigured through the Supporting People programme in ways which sometimes sit rather uncomfortably alongside government discourses regarding the voluntary sector's civil society role. Within this broader context it is therefore important to add that the 'third sector' has experienced a diminution in autonomy and independence as it is increasingly forced to vie and compete for funding and government patronage. The importance of this changing landscape cannot be underestimated. Jennifer Wolch (1989), for instance, has drawn attention to the potential dangers of a 'shadow state'. In this conception the shadow state refers to the tendency for voluntary organisations to increasingly assume responsibility for social service delivery and community development while being controlled in both formal and informal ways by the state (Milligan, 2007).

In discussing broader trends, Jon May and colleagues (2006) contend that the history of emergency services for homeless people challenges orthodox accounts of the development of the British welfare state with the provision of accommodation and care for single homeless people being the default responsibility of voluntary sector and community-based organisations. As a result, single homeless people have routinely been exposed to poorly resourced, extremely basic and largely inadequate levels of welfare provision. Under the ambit of New Labour's 'activist state' central government has taken the 'lead role in designing welfare, and the local state (re) assuming responsibility for the funding and monitoring of front-line providers' (May et al., 2006:714). In talking about the way in which social welfare responses for homelessness have been downloaded to the local level, Wolch and DeVerteuil (2001) go so far as to identify the concept of 'urban poverty management'. This refers to a situation in which state institutions and local elites regulate poor people, including the homeless, through strategies that are deployed and embedded within larger rationales that range from more supportive measures to decidedly punitive ones (DeVerteuil, 2006:111).

2.8 <u>Localism</u>

Having outlined the relationship between central government and voluntary sector organisations it is now important to discuss the governance of homelessness in rural spaces. Initially, this task leads us to the theoretical terrain, specifically Cloke et al's (2000a:2002) important case study of Taunton. I do so because its focus on the interconnections between 'homelessness' and 'rurality' resonates powerfully with my own ethnographic fieldwork in West Dorset.

In the endeavour to illuminate how local communities respond to homelessness, Cloke et al have produced a comprehensive and compelling critique of 'partnership' and 'policy networks' in the rural service centre of Taunton. Cloke et al describe how the confluence of local business, political

leaders and townspeople reacted to the perceived 'problem' of rough sleeping and street-level activity. As such, the authors are concerned with documenting how it is that inter-agency partnerships emerge as the dominant vehicle through which governance occurs in the context of representing and responding to homelessness issues. Such a focus highlights some of the ways in which new forms of partnership are enmeshed within existing discourses and practical policy issues. In important respects, though, strong pre-existing discourse of homelessness in Taunton reinforced interpretations and representations of homeless people as 'beggars, vagrants and drunks' (2000a:111).

The empirical focus of this detailed examination derived from critical discourse analysis of local government minutes, official publications and archival stories and letters carried in the local newspaper – the Somerset County Gazette – to illustrate the discursive representations of homelessness in Taunton. In this way, we see the way in which newspaper articles and letters frequently blamed the 'homeless' for problems associated with drunkenness and aggressive begging. Cloke et al observe that the editorial policy of the Somerset County Gazette was loaded in favour of key actors who were promoting discourses which problematised homelessness within the town centre of Taunton. And it is here that key actors in local policy networks emerged as 'discourse formers'. The letter pages, however, demonstrated a much greater appreciation of, and attention to, the causes and circumstances leading people into (and also hindering their exit from) begging, homelessness and substance misuse (2000a:119). What is perhaps most significant at this juncture is the realisation that the local media was therefore conscripted as a 'discursive arena' between those who see the 'beggars, vagrants and drunks' as problems, and those who regard them as people with problems. This distinction served to render homeless people as 'outsiders' socially, morally and geographically (2000a:121).

The unfolding of this agenda generated a discursive terrain in and through which the 'problem' of homelessness was mediated by arguments that sought to define and problematise homelessness in very specific ways. Cloke et al justify this assertion in three ways. In the first, it is assumed that homelessness is an urban phenomenon and thus rendering homeless people invisible in rural spaces. The second is that the invisibility of rural homelessness may be compounded by socio-cultural barriers which prevent or hinder people from receiving the services that they require. In the third and final instance, the notion of the rural idyll serves to keep the problem of homelessness in rural areas hidden. Discourses of rural life, then, screen out antithetical problems such as poverty and homelessness which challenge these popular constructions of rural life as a problem-free living environment.

In practice, two contrasting moral convictions animated the media coverage of homelessness in Taunton. First, as expressed by concerned individuals and representatives from various voluntary bodies, there was a sense of moral outrage. It is useful to note that the second, as expressed by the key actors, particularly Conservative politicians and business leaders, was the articulation of a sense of moral outrage about the threat begging posed to both the commercial interests and self-image of the town. It was, we quickly learn, the second perspective that gained ascendancy within political and public debate. What makes this particular significant is that there was no recognition that these seemingly divergent aims were in fact compatible rather than contradictory.

Far from contributing a remedy, the 'problem' of homelessness in Taunton had already been formed and negotiated in terms of 'unacceptable' street behaviour. Moreover, dominant discourses also pointed to a *regulation* of the problems (that is a stricter 'policing of public space') rather than responding to the *social needs* of homeless people and street beggars. These concerns led to the publication of a 'six point charter', although as Cloke et al relate homeless people were excluding from the local policy process:

This emphasises their position as 'other' with the exclusion of homeless and other vulnerable people from mainstream society reflected and indeed reinforced through their exclusion from the political process. In addition, it could be argued that such exclusion from may lead to incomplete or inadequate understanding of the needs and requirements of homeless people and consequently may result inappropriate strategies for dealing with the problems (2000a:124).

This clearly points to the fact that 'partnership' cannot be divorced from a consideration of who is included and who is excluded, but also by the power of particular voices. Partnership in Taunton was, in a fundamental sense, a shibboleth. Indeed, this to recognise that:

However 'honest' the brokerage' is, it will inevitably be influenced both by pre-existing discursive characterization of 'issues', and by the unevenness in the distribution of resources and regulatory powers which can be brought into partnerships (2000a:131).

The importance of this contribution will become clearer. However, the value of the Taunton example is essentially twofold. It shows how understandings of homeless people are communicated through the local media and public policy agenda. Related to this, and indeed central to my own research concerns, it is a very useful example of how 'strong' communities are mobilised to discipline homeless and other vulnerable people (Johnstone & Macleod, 2008: 86). Although rich in its empirical insights and theoretical complexity, homeless people are an 'absent presence'. These reservations are, however, secondary to my recognition of its underlying importance.

To this contribution to should be added the work of Joe Hermer (1999). Drawing on Foucault's governmentality writings, Hermer describes how the decline of Winchester's commercial centre was attributed to the visible and disreputable presence of 'professional and aggressive beggars'. Into this context a multi-agency committee was established in an effort to 'divert giving' and thus reconfigure the idea of public charity. For its proponents, the initiative was justified on two intersecting fronts: In the first place, it was suggested that 'deserving and 'worthy' beggars would no longer solicit donations and instead seek the help and support of social services. This was to be effected through actively diverting donations away from beggars to local charities. In the second place, the 'undeserving' and 'professional beggar' would simply move-on. Against these suppositions, critics of the initiative argued that it represented a rather crude and ultimately divisive attempt to sweep the streets of beggars while also tackling the perceived 'problem' of public compassion and tolerance (1999: 205).

Hermer further illustrates how the police were able to instigate a 'crackdown' on begging. Thus the decision to introduce charity boxes, it is shown, served to give the police greater moral authority to move on beggars. Yet, as Hermer notes, it simply displaced begging to a park south of the city centre. In simple terms, this short but critical study adroitly shows the influence and power of local community actors in generating a moral schema which recasts beggars according to the classic 'deserving and 'undeserving' binary. As with the present Dorchester case example, Hermer's work highlights how the language of public tolerance and compassion are reworked into the vocabulary of cultural dependency and community decline (1999:205).

In a recent essay, the social work academic Stephen Moore (2008) lightly and incisively touches upon exclusionary policies in relation to 'street people'. In this contribution, Moore is explicit in detailing how a responsible and strengthened 'community' was able to shape crime control agendas, pursued in turn by government agencies keen to meet their community participation

goals (Atkinson & Helms, 2008:236). In this sense, Moore goes on to explore the punitive tendencies of a largely middle-class community towards a marginalised group – 'street life people' – or properly understood 'those who choose to live out the majority of their waking hours (and sometimes sleeping ones too) in the company of others; they perform the whole range of social and physical activities in public places [and] are generally unwaged and dependant on drugs and alcohol' (2008:193). [23]

The research material through which Moore's main themes are interrogated was gathered over a three year period. It consisted of a review of grey literature, interviews and discussions with local council officials, members of organisations working with street life people and with police officers charged with organising and enforcing new regulatory powers. Here Moore is highly critical of what he sees as a strong link between a 'punitive community' and new institutional arrangements that emphasise security and safety.

Moore explains that while street life people have been present within the 'city' for a number of years, there visibility has rarely generated concern or comment. Growing intolerance towards 'street people' and the perception of criminal and anti-social intent manifested itself in local public and political debate. In this circumstance, concerned citizens made representations to the local police and statutory authorities demanding action to tackle environmental disorder and anti-social behaviour (Paskell, 2007). As a result of this, the local community was reconstituted as a responsible co-agent in the governance of crime and disorder. This drive had three obvious outcomes. Most immediately, it exposed how highly visible punitive solutions to urban problems are encroaching upon, and indeed, relegating more nuanced and divisive understandings of social need. Allied to this, it enabled active community members to override the views of police officers

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[23] Although virtually all rough sleepers tend to be street life people, according to Moore's formulation, a significant majority of street life people have some form of accommodation – either in supported hostels or some form of social housing.

and local authority officials - who it is suggested often hold more lenient views of street people based on their direct interaction and knowledge - and to shape how the allegedly irresponsible should be controlled (Johnstone & MacLeod, 2008:88).

Strongly influenced by New Labour's exhortation to identify and remove perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, Moore argues that an embattled and eviscerated local government and police force submitted to calls for a hard line reaction to the 'problem' of street people. Criticisms and concerns soon emerged. Thus, Moore details how it became increasingly apparent to the police that the imposition of anti-social behaviour legislation engendered a number of unforeseen, negative consequences. First, the use of dispersal orders confirmed to the street life people that they were seen as outcasts by the wider community, and this awareness served to entrench existing divisions. Second, it meant that begging opportunities were restricted. This, in turn, lead to an increase in petty theft as people sought to find new ways to obtain money for drugs and alcohol. Third, street life people were pushed out to other areas of the town. The use of enforcement, as demanded by the public thus resulted in the problem worsening and widening in its impact to surrounding neighbourhoods. Consequently, the police and local authority recognised that far from remedying the situation the use of criminal sanctions served only to displace the problem from one area to another (2008:196). Prior to this, the response of the police was to seek alternative social inclusionary approaches, which ran counter to the views of the public and, in the process, the police felt that their experience and expertise was being denied and misrecognised.

On this reading, Moore introduces the notion of the 'eliminative ideal' first suggested by Rutherford (1997), which refers to a desire for problematic groups to just 'disappear'. Moore suggests that when dealing with marginal groups, the eliminative ideal is effectively the 'default position' of a threatened community. As Moore convincingly argues:

Given that government targets imposed on the police require a decline in the perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour, police officers and local authority officials find it preferable to follow the wishes of the public, even where they know that what is being done is ineffective, and possibly even harmful. The outcome of handing power to the community then becomes one where punitive voices are heard above others and rather than drawing marginalised people into the community as government policy seeks to do, a process of social exclusion takes place (2008:201).

Out of this discussion it is clear that New Labour has seen 'community' as the answer to both resolving problems of crime and anti-social behaviour and of the democratic legitimacy of the police. In this particular study, the community demanded a punitive response to the perceived problem of street people. The insights and observations advanced by Moore will shortly reoccur, albeit in a slightly different guise in Dorchester. The central message behind this contribution is that through such disciplinary and authoritarian approaches the 'community' is expected to play the key role in socialising and moralising individual members of society (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009). It thus becomes crucial to recognise that New Labour's widely quoted commitment to be '*tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime*' has resulted in various crackdowns against some of the most vulnerable and dislocated people.

Working at the margins of these debates, Phelan and Norris (2008) have drawn attention to the connection between the evolution of homelessness policy and provision and broader and more punitive efforts to 'responsibilise' homeless people. At its most fundamental and immediate level, Phelan and Norris describe how the changing governance of homelessness is associated with a foundational realignment of understandings of the causes and consequences of homelessness from the structuralist to the individualist, thus reducing the responsibility of the state (as the main

provider of structural solutions to homelessness), whilst expanding the role of the voluntary and community sector (which mainly provides individualistically orientated services for homeless people). In part, this process has led to an overemphasis on the individual causes of homelessness and, in turn, the targeting of the behaviour of homeless people. In many important respects, homelessness organisations have - increasingly and willing – embraced policy initiatives which neglect insights into the structural causes of homelessness in favour of focusing on the perceived pathologies of people experiencing long-term homelessness. Critically, this has translated as an imperative to 'control', as well as 'care for' disadvantaged groups (see Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005: 391). Furthermore, it presents an interpretation of citizenship where access to certain services should be earned, rather than made available by right.

Recognising this, Phelan and Norris argue that this increasingly assertive approach has resulted in a minority of rough sleepers, with high and complex needs, being excluded from access to day-centres and night-shelters on the basis that they represent 'challenging' and incorrigible' behaviour. A key strand here is the active management of individual homeless cases and targeted use of 'behaviour contracts' through which service users *agree* to comply with certain standards of behaviour in return for continued access to on-going support and ancillary services. What is less apparent is the effect that the combination of minimal exposure to mainstream social institutions and the limiting gestalt of localized voluntary activity around homelessness means in terms of physical movement and the ability to entrench the effective extension of citizenship rights (Pawson & Davidson, 2008).

There is a voluminous literature on an increasingly regulated urban environment. Much of this research output is directly connected to capturing some of the aspects of geographies of exclusion for those 'problem' groups within society, including the experience of people who are or have been homeless. As Geoffrey DeVerteuil and others (2009) have argued the dominant trend

within the literature - based mainly around the US experience - has largely been framed in punitive and legalistic terms, terms that describe the progressive collapse of homeless spaces under the weight of measures that criminalise homeless survival tactics and clear homeless people from prime urban areas. Scholars like Smith (1996) and Mitchell (2003) have described revanchist urbanism - taken from the French word revanche (revenge) – to refer to the drive to reclaim city spaces from 'degentrification' through greater privatisation and more aggressive policing (DeVerteuil, 2006: 110). The general logic of this leads inexorably to the creation of sanitised spaces and the displacement and marginalization of homeless people from the urban realm.

The same sensibility is applied by Rowland Atkinson (2003) in order to explore to what extent, if at all, Smith's vision of a vengeful and revanchist urban environment has found expression within the Britain context. Atkinson's arguments unfold in three parts. It is, however, elements of the third part that are of interest to us here (the first explores the notion of public space while the second is concerned with the growing ubiquity of CCTV technology). In critically investigating the supposition that socially intolerant and unaccountable modes of coercion and control are permeating policies which deal with the regulation or urban spaces, Atkinson introduces what he terms the use of the 'extreme case' method (2003:1835). It is the 'extreme case' of zero-tolerance of policing in Glasgow and the more helpful and compassionate counterexample of begging in Edinburgh which frames his discussion within the contours of earlier fieldwork undertaken by Fitzpatrick and Kennedy (2000) with people begging in both cities. [24]

The crux of the argument reads something like this: In Glasgow begging was subject to very different modes of policing than in Edinburgh. Drawing extensively on Fitzpatrick and Kennedy's

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[24] In discussing attempts to re-criminalise begging by City of Edinburgh officials in the late 1990s, Hermer and MacGregor (2008:223) have explained how the 1824 English Vagrancy Act was extended to Scotland in 1871 before being repealed by Scottish authorities in 1982.

work, we are told that beggars in Edinburgh were rarely hassled or removed from the Scottish capital's pavements. In Glasgow, a very different picture emerged with beggars constantly moved on, arrested or even marched to the nearest charity collection point where they were forced to hand over all of their money. This divergence can, it is somewhat weakly suggested, be attributed to the absence of zero-tolerance policing in Edinburgh and the convergence of neo-liberal politics with a progressive local civic culture – which is said to promote 'liberal licensing laws and a booming financial, tourist and property market comparable to that of London' (2003:1838). In this sense, Edinburgh is able to tolerate visibly indigent beggars and associated street-level social problems. Conversely, the circulation of a popular and pernicious 'place myth' (Girling et al., 2000) about Glasgow as a 'problem place' of endemic anti-social behaviour and aggressive street drinking has created a critical space for a more authoritarian stance to develop and embed itself. As Atkinson writes 'governing a problem in itself is suggestive of a lack of a remedy for its causes. It can also be argued that the Strathclyde programme of Operation Spotlight has an economic motive. The cleaning-up of Glasgow's image is linked to three things: motivating investment, a future characterised by improved financial security and the removal of social problems' (2003:1839). There is, of course, a sense of banal truism to these remarks. Indeed, it is important to recognise that in this translation Atkinson is unable to make a definitive statement about the strength of revanchist policies as both a distinctive and retributive response to social disorder in British cities. Analytically, such a perspective would seem to suggest that punitive state interventions repackage and redefine social deprivation and inequality into 'anti-social behaviour'. However, as Atkinson argues, an alternative reading is that such programmes act as an empowering influence for local communities to help them deal with the crime and problems that cluster in their public spaces. But what it does crystallise in very concrete terms is the way in which the governance of public spaces – when viewed through a coda of dangerous places and groups - is embedded within a much broader politics of behaviour and responsible citizenship (Atkinson & Helms, 2008:243).

An interesting epilogue to the theoretical ground covered by Atkinson's is to be found in Hermer and MacGregor's (2008) short essay on the contested legality of begging in Scotland. Interestingly Hermer and MacGregor genuflect towards Leonard Feldman's (2006) evocative 'citizens without shelters' before going on to argue that ''*demands for the removal of people begging from city pavements have become a tired cliché of urban politics today*''. This preoccupation with 'disorderly behaviour' and 'zero tolerance' is unmistakable global in character. Yet, as Hermer and MacGregor perceptively remark, cities such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen have initiated processes of gentrification and commerce which actively eschew politically expedient and socially deleterious crackdowns on 'aggressive begging' (2008:219).

In tracing the attempt to resuscitate the recriminalisation of begging in the late 1990s, the authors draw extensively on policy statements and public pronouncements issued by the then Scottish Office. It is perhaps worth quoting Hermer and MacGregor at length in order to better illustrate this point:

> In arguing for a new begging offence, Edinburgh officials exercised familiar tropes in depicting those begging as a public nuisance: vague appeals to public safety and 'community', the protection of tourist and consumer dollars, and aspirations for a 'world city', cosmopolitan city where visitors are not distracted by unpleasant reminders of poverty and social inequality. What is notable about this case, is how the response of Scottish Office (now the Scottish Executive) represented an unusually position when compared to other jurisdictions (2008:219).

In this respect, Hermer and MacGregor identify four core arguments that were mobilised to stymie the introduction of a begging byelaw: (**1**) adequate criminal law currently exists to deal with

genuine threats to public safety; (**2**) it was recognised that anti-begging legislation is dependent on a person's status and/or appearance; (**3**) byelaws that criminalise and marginalise those who beg were felt to be incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights[25]; and (**4**) that public feeling and opinion about begging encompasses a wide range of reactions (including sympathy). This argument, according to Hermer and MacGregor, was orientated around the persuasive suggestion that attempts to reactivate anti-begging ordnances were incommensurate with a new political emphasis on 'social exclusion'. From under this canopy 'the refusal of the Scottish Executive to re-criminalise begging stands as an important and enlightened example of resistance' (2008:229).

The direct connectivity of this contribution lies not so much in its concern with begging (since in my own research in Dorset this facet of the homeless experience appears only in the most cursory fashion) but rather for the way it lays bare the contradictory principles underscoring contemporary approaches to homelessness. This point is astutely made by Amin and Thift in their focus on 'the local micro-cultures of inclusion and exclusion' (2002:291). Only at this level is it possible to understand how inclusion and exclusion works in daily practice. This acknowledgement is crucial in challenging the notion of community as a narrowly defined entity (Atkinson & Helms, 2008:145).

In a wide ranging analysis, Doherty and others (2008) provide a thoughtful exploration of the relationship between homelessness and the regulation of public spaces in European cities. What demarcates this mode of analysis from those we have previously encountered is that it draws its impetus from an extensive body of literature and empirical evidence from across the European Union, with particular attention being paid to the case study countries of Finland, Germany,

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[25] Two Articles of the Human Rights Act were cited. Article 10 enshrines a right to freedom of expression while Article 14 that states that rights and freedoms are to be secured without discrimination on various grounds including status and property.

Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. However, for the purposes of this overarching discussion, the article's perceptive remarks on the surveillance and deterrence of homeless people in Westminster is particularly germane since we will encounter an explicit reference to the 'killing with kindness' campaign in subsequent chapters – an initiative that ostensibly targets welfare producing dependency among rough sleepers – and in a diluted form was taken up by Dorset Police, West Dorset District Council and applied to rough sleepers in Dorchester.

In this example, the authors are moved to provide a brief historical overview of urban regulation before going on to place the current study within the context of a 'new phase of regulation'. This regulatory environment is characterised by the 'shift away from the 'planned city to the 'entrepreneurial' city or to what others have labelled the post-industrial society – during the last quarter of the 20th century' (2008:290). In making this argument it is suggested with force and clarity that the present phase (of regulation) is characterised by an unprecedented degree of surveillance, control and regulation through the explicit use of monitoring devices such as CTTV and foot patrols by privatised security forces and public policing initiatives. In addition to the increased use of surveillance technology, control over access to public space is accompanied by the disciplining of behaviour. Moral overtones are especially strong here in respect of perceived behavioural inadequacies and concerns with anti-social behaviour of homeless people. These hostile narratives are underpinned by national legislation and local byelaws. Part of this articulation is premised on the need to generate and reproduce safe and sanitised public or quasi-public spaces of consumption. Such arguments serve to construct homeless people as emblems of defilement and despoilment and, in the same process, the consuming and respectable citizen is rendered 'in place' in urban spaces of an entrepreneurial kind (Millie, 2009).

As Meert et al (2008) state, these quasi-public spaces though privately owned are theoretically accessible to all, are underlain by the increasing deployment of 'panoptic' monitoring by

technological devices that operate to 'socially sort' and 'exclude' homeless people and others who do not adhere to normative 'rules of engagement'. The process of exclusion is further promoted by an assortment of deterrence devices linked to the spatial arrangement of public space particularly in the deployment of architectural infrastructure (2008:293). Unchecked this has important implications for homeless people as they become relegated to small, often heavily regulated pockets of the inner city or 'pushed out' towards less visible and potentially more dangerous spaces (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010).

In the contested politics of urban regulation there is evidence to suggest that while discourses and practices of surveillance are sometimes conceived and enacted with homeless people as the 'proper objects', they are infrequently the explicit target. It is interesting to note that limitations and restrictions on access to public space are identifiable across all European societies, the extent and depth varies from place to place and is a reflection of different and shifting attitudes to marginalised and disadvantaged groups and individuals. For example, the authors describe how prohibitions against begging are unconstitutionally in Germany while in England and Wales it is actively discouraged and remains illegal under the Vagrancy Act of 1924. Notwithstanding these tendencies there is, it is suggested here, a genuine and strong sense that the revanchist city is generally speaking less a feature of the European urban landscape than its North American counterpart. To a certain extent, it is possible to see two positive developments at work. It is noted that throughout Europe there are clear examples of punitive legislation and disciplinary strategies being repealed in the face of popular opposition and a concurrent recognition of their limited effectiveness. Alongside this, attempts to introduce legislation that explicitly targets homeless people have been unsuccessful as a result of constitutional traditions and policy ethos (2008:301). However, the importance of this account is evidenced in its engagement with the contrary and contested criminal justice terrain in the UK in regard to the phenomenon of begging. Indeed, this process is explored with reference to two examples.

The first examples relates to government proposals in 2003 to criminalise begging – later downgrounded to a recordable offence - in the Police National Computer (2008:303). The second discussion focuses on the critical case example of Westminster City Council's 'Killing with Kindness' campaign. This is seen to be emblematic of a more punitive stance towards homeless people in the UK as opposed to their continental cousins. In the words of Doherty and colleagues:

> While the attempts to curtail begging were nominally linked to concerns about the welfare of begging, in practice the fate of the beggars seems to have been the least of the worries of the council in that the stated aim of the campaign was '[t]o create a cleaner and safer environment for the general public across Westminster by taking action to reduce begging' (2008:304).

Coupled with earlier observations, it is clear that the cultural and spatial regulation of homeless people is an increasing feature of the contemporary city. As Doherty et al elaborate on this point:

> The surveillance, on the streets and in shelters, of those who are homeless is a distinctive feature of the contemporary city; homeless people are today among the most surveyed and scrutinised of marginal groups. We should, however, be mindful that the homeless have historically been subject to surveillance and regulation: they have been variously contained in workhouses, casual wards, skid rows, hostels and shelters, had their mobility restricted under vagrancy and trespass laws, and their strategies of survival criminalised. Variability in the degree of regulation and surveillance from one period to another - and indeed from place to place - is explained by changing social relations, political practices and cultural traditions and by the intensity

of the application of regulatory and surveillance techniques (Doherty et al., 2008:307-08).

There are parallels to be made here in relation to the work of Mitchell (2001) and Katz (2001) whose useful analyses of the increasingly controlled and surveilled nature of public environments intersects with a detailed consideration of the various forms of socio-cultural policing of the performances and practices of homeless people. This is useful in thinking more broadly about the way in which homeless people are routinely excluded from prevailing notions of 'community'. It also points to some of the ways in which 'responsible communities' target both the involuntary status of being homeless and the supposed failure of homeless people to conform to the normative standards of a more 'active' and self-disciplined conception of citizenship (Anker, 2008).

From this review of the contemporary governance of homelessness literature in alliance with field observations and ethnographic encounters at the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, the following research question emerges: To what extent, if at all, is the contemporary governance of homelessness characterised by punitive attitudes and responses to homeless people?

2.8 <u>Ethnographies of Homelessness</u>

Contemporary accounts of ethnography as a research method usually cite the Chicago School of Sociology as the starting point for urban participant observation ethnographic encounters. Echoing this viewpoint, Martin Blumer (1984) has observed that from the First World War to the mid-1930s the study of urban life provided a focal concern for sociology at the University of Chicago. In this regard, the Department of Sociology was unique in the history of American

sociology and indeed the history of international sociology up to that point in embodying a wide-ranging programme of empirical sociological research carried out within a single institutional setting which was unusually integrated and cohesive. [26] In contrast, Bowden (2008) has argued that the Chicago School defies such description on the grounds that the predominant focus has oscillated from ethnography to symbolic interactionism or, more generally, the importance of context as opposed to the articulation of a shared conceptual viewpoint. However, over the long-view the development of ethnographic fieldwork privileging face-to-face interaction and detailed investigations embedded within local, distinctly urban social settings and cultures has become inextricably tied to the heritage of the 'first' Chicago School of Sociology.

'The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man' (1961:1998) is noted as an early, major study of the Chicago School – pioneering the study of urban marginality, the 'natural areas' of the city thesis, personal narrative (later to be 'rediscovered' as an early exemplar of auto-ethnography) and the use of mobile ethnographic techniques – but rarely read.[27] The study was the first field-research monograph to emerge under the tutelage of Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess and the findings of which inaugurated the University of Chicago Press's Sociological Series. Anderson (who was in fact a 'hobo' for more than a year 'beating' his way across the country on freight trains before studying with Park and Burgess) departed from the conventions of inter-war sociological theory that defined the world of homeless men as dysfunctional through the development of a rich and vibrant piece of ethnographic work that was grounded in participant observation as a research method (Deegan, 2007:15). Combining sociological insight with

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[26] Emerging in the 1980s as a vibrant group of young scholars, the so-called Los Angeles School of Urban Studies (most closely associated with the work of Michael Dear, Edward Soja and Mike Davis among others) is sometimes presented as the 'legitimate' success to the Chicago School.
[27] 'The Hobo' was originally published in 1923.

genuine sympathy Anderson was motivated by the desire to find a solution to the precarity and poverty that enveloped the life of the hobo in the 'urban jungle' and slums of Chicago. [28]

Although 'The Hobo' quickly established Nels Anderson's place as both an astute urban observer and an architect of the Chicago school tradition, the text built upon an already well-established legacy of journalistic and social scientific reportage by investigators posing as 'down and out' (Brown, 2008). However, it is certainly the case that Anderson's own experience 'on the bummery' served to provide the hobo with a culture and personality that they had lacked in earlier representations. 'The Hobo' ('a man who works and wanders') commences with Anderson taking a room in a workingman's hotel on Madison Street, the heart of Hobohemia, before going on to undertake interviews and field observations over the course of a single year.[29] Adopting a spirit of independence and contrariness, Anderson subsequently described the methodological foundation of the study in less scientific and formalised terms:

> I did not descend into the pit, assume a role there, and later ascend to brush
> off the dust. I was in the process of moving out of the hobo world. To use a
> hobo expression, preparing the book was a way of "getting by," earning a
> living while the exit was under way. The role was familiar before the research

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[28] In a similar spirit, Charles Berry Ackerman's elegant and evocative 'Gentleman of the Road' details the author's experience of foregoing the comfort of retirement and middle class respectability to endure the hardships and humiliations of being 'on the road'. Drawing inspiration from George Orwell's social reportage (1933:1937) 'Gentleman of the Road' poignantly captures the spirit of nonconformity and social diversity which was a hallmark of vagrant life in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although it directly eschews the application of distinctly anthropological concepts and methods, it can be seen to constitute an important and insightful account of the experience of urban/rural marginality among a largely ignored class of transient and unsettled men.

[29] Chicago's Hobohemia was one of several well-known 'main stems' in the Midwest states. Anderson described how Hobohemia operated as an informal labour market where the hobo spent or lost his earnings, and was also the site of the main railroad terminus in Chicago.

began. In the realm of sociology and university life I was moving into a new

role (1998:26).

It was a commitment to direct participation and observation that enabled Anderson to create such an intimate portrayal of the life of the hobo on the road, in lodging houses, on the 'main stem', at work selling the 'Hobo News' and at Hobo College in Chicago. Moreover, Anderson keenly appreciated the utility of employing direct methods of description, a reinterpretation of Park's injunction to "write down only want you see, hear, and know, like a newspaper report," would provide a conduit to better grasp the cultural mores and social relations of the hobo. But, more than this, Rauty (1998) makes a compelling argument that Anderson's work on hobos and homelessness not only lead the way in establishing the method that came to be known as participant observation but also the collection of personal documents and life histories.

'The Hobo' vividly depicts the social life of the hobos and the inherent contradictions in the hobos identity. Underpinning this observation, Anderson argues that the hobos "were a class of men apart from other workers … [They form] a society with a culture" (1998:10). At the same time, though, they are individuals 'without community'. Anderson goes on to reveal a set of relations between this unusual homeless subculture and prevailing social dynamics (read the three movements of Americanisation, industrialisation and mobility) of the United States in the second part of the nineteenth century. The importance of this theoretical analysis lies in the fact that it provided a focus upon which to counter the prevailing notion (both at the time and increasing in the present context) that "there homelessness was…pathological in a society which assumes as axiomatic that every individual must belong somewhere, must have family, must have economic roots" (1998:3). As the American frontier and the need for temporary and peripatetic labour was rendered increasingly anomalous, the era of the hobo ceased to exist in any significant form. Within a very short period of time the hobo, the tramp and the bum had attained an almost

mythical status and were, in any account, rapidly superseded in the popular imagination by the haunting spectre of families, forced west by the collapsed economy and the Dust Bowl further east, to live in makeshift camps and the Hoovervilles of the Great Depression (Burkman, 2009:27). [30]

The methodological and empirical relevance of Nels Anderson's inclusion should by now be clear. Mary Jo Deegan (2007), for example, has pointed out that Anderson's accumulated understanding of the hobo generated methodological innovations and ethnographic insights that were integral to Park and Burgess' social mosaic of Chicago. The influence of 'The Hobo' is also apparent in Zorbaugh's 'The Gold Coast and the Slum' (1929) and the systematic use of data provided by Hull-House, the famous social settlement, which gave social and educational opportunities for unemployed and destitute European migrants, a method first pursued by Anderson and later by a small coterie of Chicago School luminaries.[31] To elaborate further, I would suggest that the significance of 'The Hobo' is not reducible solely to its pioneering use of participant observation or autobiographical techniques. Rather, and this is a fundamental point, Anderson persuasively challenged popular stereotypes of hobos by deconstructing the potent imaginings and discursive strategies that framed these men (and occasional women) as lethargic, unhygienic, workshy and parasitic. In doing so Anderson was able to tackle the misconceptions and stereotypes associated with hobos and the unattached migrant and give a different perspective that problematised the American dream and the limits of government indifference.

It is obvious, then, that 'The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man' represents a vital contribution to the historical development of modern qualitative sociology. It announced and

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[30] Hoovervilles were shantytowns named after President Herbert Hoover who was widely blamed for the Depression, and quickly spread across the United States in the early 1930s.

[31] Harvey Zorbaugh's (1929) study 'The Gold Coast and the Slum' refers to The Drake Hotel, an elite residential hotel in the wealthy 'Gold Coast' area. It immediately bordered the slum, 'Little Hell, where the greatest concentration of poverty in Chicago was to be found.

symbolised, perhaps even unknowingly one might argue, a seismic shift from the rigidity of quantitative social science to a more nuanced, reflexive and empirically satisfying research tradition. Nels Anderson achieved this by exhorting us to focus our gaze on the interchange between the everyday practices of a marginalised homeless subculture and the moral classifications of the wider society. However, it equally apparent that 'The Hobo' has retained its relevance for the simple reason that it explicitly and expertly tells us something significant about how homeless people are positioned as geographically, discursively and practically distinct from 'settled society'. We only need look to the emergence of contemporary homeless encampments known as tent cities in California (see echoes here of the semi-permanent 'urban jungles' of the hobos) that have grown in the wake of global recession and the consequential rise of a pernicious division between the 'deserving' - victims of foreclosures and redundancies - and those who have been homeless for longer, and for other reasons, who are now being (re)constructed as 'undeserving'.

Urban ethnography continues, and has become more sophisticated. Beginning with the work of Teresa Gowan (2002), we can discern a commitment to the basic ethnographic methods – participant observation fieldwork and qualitative interviews – while also pushing it into hitherto unknown territories. To Gowan, urban ethnography operates as a means for critically accounting for the relationship between specific 'everyday' narratives and practices and large-scale configurations of social control (2002:501).

The empirical basis of Gowan's work derives from five years spent as a street ethnographer with homeless men in San Francisco together with an intensive seven month period of study in St Louis. In both cities the research involved extensive time working, hanging out, and moving through various institutions with bottle and can collectors (2000). The street ethnographic component was supplemented by participant observation and interviews undertaken in shelters

and drug rehabilitation facilities. A key aspect of Gowan's research is an overriding concern with analysing 'ground level' discourses and experience of homeless men. Closely allied to this is the idea advanced by Gowan that ethnography should be seen as an analytical tool which allows for the 'stretching' of a small piece of everyday life to the big picture of social structures and discourses of power. In this respect, Gowan is following of the 'extended case method' that was originally pioneered by the Manchester School and popularised by the American Marxist sociologist Michael Burawoy (2000).

Gowan incorporates John Irwin's (1986) conceptual insight of 'rabble management' to explain the process by which homeless people are routinely jailed for minor offences ostensibly in the interests of public order. The practical effect of this kind of policing on the homeless is to continually circulate them through the penal system. This leads Gowan to observe that while street homelessness is experienced by some as a space of relative freedom from what was felt to be illegitimate authority, for many others street life reinforced their isolation from mainstream social institutions. Of importance here is an understanding of the various pathways from incarceration to homelessness and from homelessness to incarceration. Gowan's premise is that the dynamics that inform and recreate the cycle of homelessness and incarceration are present in both San Francisco and St Louis. The principle point of Gowan's contribution to this debate is to show that while the men entering the homeless and incarceration nexus each share certain characteristics regardless of the actual city, the actual experience of homelessness varies significantly because of the different economic and social configurations presented by the two cities. In this sense homelessness is situational.

In the UK context it is possible to identify a significant body of research that captures some of the complex and contested ways in homeless people utilise public space, engage in (in)voluntary mobility strategies and are, simultaneously and significantly, embroiled in poverty management

strategies (Atkinson, 2003: Huey, 2007: Huey: 2009: Whiteford, 2008). In particular, these studies amplify how homeless people are directly implicated in new local regulatory spaces and 'entanglements of power'. Within this body of work critical attention, specifically in the UK context, has focused on the deployment of an increasing range of legal powers such as anti-social behaviour orders (henceforth ASBOs), dispersal orders and alcohol free zones, which seek to regulate behaviour and deter homeless people from engaging in 'street activities', such as begging and street drinking (Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005: Moore, 2008: Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2008).

There is a growing corpus of ethnographically informed work concerned with how the interpretations and actions of people who sleep rough or otherwise lack settled accommodation shape and sustain the culture of homelessness (Butchinsky, 2004:2007: McNaughton, 2008: Ravenhill, 2008: Whiteford, 2009a). This field of inquiry is, for example, concerned with teasing out the biographical, structural and behavioural factors that lead to homelessness on the one hand, and the circumstances and decisions that can lead to exit routes from homelessness on the other. These contributions and discussions seek to feed into academic debates around 'actually experienced' housing exclusion and street homelessness into local and national debates around the possibility of developing and delivering successful programmes to help rough sleepers move off the streets and into secure and sustainable accommodation.

In this spirit Megan Ravenhill's The Culture of Homelessness adopts a multiperspectivist approach through which to begin to critically untangle the influence of the 'homelessness industry' on movements into and through homelessness.[32] The research edifice on which Ravenhill is able to vividly describe the 'homeless culture' consists of 'life story interviews', 'depth interviews','

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[32] For an exegesis of multiperspectivist analyses see Kellner, D. (1999) Theorising/Resisting McDonaldization: A Multiperspectivist Approach, in Smart, B. (ed) *Resisting McDonaldization*. London: Sage.

informal interviews and long conversations' - plus 'covert observation on the streets', participant observation in homelessness organisations and 'life-story scenarios of homeless people used in promotional literature' (2008:82). However, at times, the strength of the empirical data is substantially impaired by an absence of intellectual rigour and analytical clarity. The Cultures of Homelessness provides a useful qualitative, ethnographic investigation which is both insightful and interesting, but is ultimately untethered by a somewhat shallow and rather muddied grasp of the complex intricacies of the theories of structuration, ethnomethodology and social constructivism.

We can identify a number of closely related but discrete elements in Chantal Butchinsky's work on the identities of rough sleepers in Oxford. Butchinsky's anthropological study of repeated homelessness is grounded in extensive participant observation with 200 rough sleepers over a sustained three year period. In essence the suggestion made by Butchinsky is that public perceptions, and the prevailing practice of professionals, discursively and materially construct and reproduce 'street dwellers' within models of need and pathology (2007:11). Again we find parallels with Lyon-Callo's discussion of the medicalisation of homelessness. It is important to note here that Butchinsky's priority is to problematise popular discourses and professional interventions through a detailed examination of the types of identity work and 'discursive narrating' routinely and tactically undertaken by rough sleepers on the streets of Oxford. Such an approach leads Butchinsky to advance the notion of the 'doubling' of reality. This 'doubling' of reality has two dimensions. One immediate implication of this is that rough sleepers in Oxford are acutely aware of, and sensitive to, public accounts that view them as aggressive, chaotic and dangerous. A second element here is apparent in the suggestion that 'street dwellers' and the 'part-time homeless' are simultaneously engaged in the creative production and maintenance of their own spatial and temporal structures that, despite being grounded in materially discomfort and public opprobrium, ensure both physically and mental survival (2007:24). Such strategies Butchinsky

argues, strongly evidence a capacity for self-sufficiency and expressions of independence. This, in turn, serves to challenge arguments that conceive of homeless people as morally deviant and passive recipients of welfare, as Butchinsky puts it:

> Many rough sleepers are perfectly aware of their 'dependence' (on welfare, on charity, on drugs, on drink) but this does not mean that they are not able to control and determine, to an important extent, the effects of these processes (2007:21).

Nevertheless, such open and covert displays of inventiveness and acts of self-reliance are, in large part, unable to destabilise socio-cultural imaginings that work to produce homeless people as 'criminal' and 'sick'. This is, in short, as Butchinsky tells us an argument for the development and diffusion of new policy and working practices. It is not, however, a particularly sophisticated or robust analysis. Indeed, we learn little about how the growing tendency to psychiatrise social issues, problems and deviant behaviour is inextricably linked to recent changes in public policy and the retraction of social welfare. The two can be seen as related developments which are part of a broader trend to individualisation in both analysis and practice in social care and government policy (Beresford, 2009). It is therefore an account that illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of ethnographic fieldwork. This is to say that while Butchinsky's detailed narration is as precise and evocative as a novelist, her ability to contribute significantly to evolving intellectual debates is fatally weakened by an inability to provide a more convincing articulation of the political and cultural construction of social need and, thus, to move critically and liberally beyond the micro-setting of the 'street'.

Now I wish to consider two more recent examples of US urban ethnography that deserve critical attention. Here I want to focus on the work of Mitchell Duneier (1994: 1999) and Vincent Lyon-

Callo (2008). I aim to show that Duneier's exploration of the intersections of race, class and morality and Lyon-Callo's fierce critique of the individualisation and medicalisation of the American homeless shelter industry offer important insights and potential prompts for my own concern with understanding some of the ways in which people who sleep rough variously accept, reject or purposefully rework the conflation of street homelessness with personal irresponsibility. In immediate terms, Lyon-Callo's contribution suggests that the contemporary governance of homelessness in the neo-liberal state is underlain by 'techniques of governmentality', designed to both regulate the operating practices of voluntary service providers and to induce homeless people to assume responsibility for governing their own conduct. In light of this, practices intended to resolve homelessness contribute to its maintenance (2008:19).

In two classic examples of urban ethnography, Mitchell Duneier skilfully illustrates what is common and what is distinctive about unhoused black men on the streets in 'Sidewalk' (1999) and poor working class men who frequent an inner-city cafeteria in 'Slim's Table' (1994), and accounts for the distinctions and similarities in light of history, situation, and structure. In trying to understand contemporary urban life, Duneier argues that the balance of difference and commonality adds up to what he sees as a moral order created by a group of virtually destitute men, in which there is strong pressure to conform to societal norms. Particularly moving and powerful is the fact that Duneier shows, with compassion and analytical insight, that the world of the sidewalk is a highly complex socioeconomic sphere with its own rules, hierarchies and sense of order, which does not just reflect (or perpetuate) disfranchisement from mainstream society, it shapes basic presumptions about the wider world. Indeed, as Duneier avers, the standard and oversimplified image of these men as irredeemably and intractably cut off from contact with mainstream culture indicates the on-going importance of a public sociology, which looks beyond folk images and symbolic freighting and strives to yield nuance. In such circumstances a focus on commonality helps us transcend the dichotomy between marginalised social groups and 'settled'

society, since it provides an important antidote to the pervasive and pernicious tendency among theorists of both the right and an increasingly calcified left to depict such people only in abstract terms, devoid of a moral base and their basic humanity (2002, 1575). As Duneier eloquently puts it, almost all who are making their livelihoods on the sidewalks of Greenwich Village through scavenging or panhandling or in the ghettos of Chicago are trying 'to live better' lives within the framework of their own and society's weaknesses.

Duneier places his investigation into the social construction of decency within a theoretical framework that draws heavily on earlier observations made by Jane Jacobs (1961) in her own neighbourhood, Greenwich Village. In the 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' Jacobs emphasised the social contact of the urban sidewalk takes place within a context that both facilitates and reinforces mutual respect for appropriate limits on interaction and intimacy (Duneier, 1999:8).[33] For Jacobs, it was because local denizens, storekeepers and businesses were actively engaged in casting their 'eyes upon the street' and positively contributing towards a sense of sociality, that Sixth Avenue was experienced and perceived as a vibrant and safe urban community in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Her postulate is that the life of the sidewalk is a miniature of and template for urban civility (Wacquant, 2002:1482). Reflecting on this and his own research interests, Duneier noted:

> [At] some distance from Sixth Avenue, I realised that I might make use of
> Jane Jacobs study to do a loose comparison of today's sidewalks and those
> of a few decades ago. Something had changed in this neighbourhood and
> my recognition of this change was the start of a research design (1999:341).

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[33] The Death and Life of Great American Cities represented a strong critique of the urban renewal policies of the 1950s, which Jacobs claimed, destroyed communities and created isolated, unnatural urban spaces.

And in a similar vein:

> I also found that the sidewalk was in some ways quite different than it was when Jacobs described it, when "eyes and ears upon the street" were presumed to make sidewalk life safe and comfortable. In Sidewalk, I enter into a dialogue with her theories of public space under the new conditions of social inequality and cultural difference (1999:341).

In following Jacobs' focus on Greenwich Village, Duneier asks *how* the sidewalk has changed over the intervening decades. Duneier goes about this endeavour with regard to the lives of the poor (mainly) black men who work or live on an area of just three city blocks. He gained entree into this social world first as a customer at Hakim's book-sale table and latterly at work as a "general assistant, book vendor and magazine scavenger". It was in this context that Duneier was able to address his two core research questions: How do these people live in a moral order? And how do their acts intersect with a city's mechanism to regulate its public spaces? (1999:9). Or, as Duneier describes it:

> From the beginning of my time as a sociologist I've been interested in the struggle of human beings to live in accordance to moral worth. And one of the reasons that Sixth Avenue was a strategic site for me was that the challenges of living a moral life there were greater. Here was a setting where you had people coming out of prison with felony convictions and no ability to get jobs or housing. So the question was how do you survive in these circumstances and still struggle to live in accordance to standards of moral worth? How could a homeless person construct these standards of moral worth in the shadow of society's standards and definitions? (2006:661).

'Sidewalk' is strongly embedded within the architecture of the Chicago School of ethnography. As a graduate of its prestigious doctoral research programme this is perhaps unsurprising. On the more substantive point, however, Duneier has argued that ''my primary goal as a scholar is to carry on some of their traditions in order to illuminate issues of race and/or poverty as found in American cities in the current era'' (1999:352). This link to the intellectual heritage and stylistic conventions of the Chicago School was reinforced by Duneier in a conversation with the British sociologist Les Black when he remarked that the study was ''an old fashioned community study'' grounded in *direct* participant observation (2002:551). It would be a mistake, though, to merely view 'Sidewalk' as a facsimile of the influential ethnographies of Louis Wirth (1928), William Foote Whyte (1943), Elliot Liebow (1967) or Howard S. Becker (1963) for example. While it is clearly the case that 'Sidewalk' occupies similar thematic ground as Whyte's descriptive case study 'Street Corner Society' and Liebow's examination of the lives of black 'street-corner' men 'Tally's Corner' as well as an approach to narrative non-fiction inspired by the 'plain style' of writing advocated by Becker (2007), it differs in three specific and substantial regards.

The first point of departure concerns the methodological basis of 'Sidewalk'. The use of appendices or endnotes has come to be seen as a standard device in published ethnographies and monographs, so much so that it rarely generates comment or controversial. However, Duneier breaks with conventional protocol by including a thirty page appendix that is dedicated to explicating and justifying the methods pursued within the contours of the study. This allows Duneier to deal at length with issues as discrete and as diverse as fact checking, appropriate uses of quotations, social position, ethnographic authority, the use of the tape recorder, linking micro and macro, disclosing names of locations and subjects, obtaining informed consent, and making interventions into the lives of subjects (2002: 1552). Given these conditions, Duneier claims that in regard to the issue of anonymity and disclosure 'Sidewalk' approximates many of

the hallmarks of print journalism rather than qualitative social science. This is a deliberate ethical statement. Thus:

> It seems to me that to disclose the place and names of the people I have written about holds me up to a higher standard of evidence. Scholars and journalists may speak to these people, visit the site I have studied, or replicate aspects of my study (1999:347).

Duneier's concern with factual accuracy and ethical transparency amounts to the second (albeit intersecting) issue. This is perhaps best illustrated with reference to Duneier's relationship with the main participants and protagonists. 'Sidewalk' contains an 'Afterword', written by Hakim Hasan, an African-American male in his mid-thirties, evocatively and generously described by Duneier as a 'book vendor and street intellectual' (1999:3). After observing Hakim for two years, Duneier submitted his initial manuscript to his publishers. He made the decision to allow Hakim to read the manuscript prior to publication, and Hakim suggested that it was profoundly narrow and distorting in its treatment of the other vendors working in and around Sixth Avenue. In openly accepting this critique, Duneier returned to the sidewalks of Greenwich Village in order to experience renewed ethnographic encounters with those street vendors and magazine scavengers who had previously been viewed as marginal or insignificant. A close reading of 'Sidewalk' further suggests that Duneier is concerned with redistributing ethnographic authority and therein democratising the research process. On this theme, Duneier has remarked:

> I think that Hakim did me give the opportunity, to be recognised as someone outside of the grid of my race, my class, my gender, and I think that part of my job as an ethnographer, too, is to give my subjects the same opportunity that Hakim gave me, to be recognised as complex human beings, to unfold in

that way, to develop as characters as people, which is the issue of 'showing

the people' (2006:554).

The third point relates to Duneier's pursuit of an extended place method approach. This strategy involves critically exploring multiple sites that can be said to shape and sustain the original research locus through political and institutional configurations of power (1999:334). Using the case example of 'Sidewalk' we can see how working as a magazine scavenger and street vendor on and off over a five year period enabled Duneier to gradually 'extend out' the focus of his fieldwork from the sidewalks of Greenwich Village to incorporate larger social institutions and broader political and economic forces in the construction of Sixth Avenue as a contested and regulated urban environment. In concrete terms, the extended case method provides a critical prism through which Duneier can begin to explain how the street vendors are able to create and maintain space in which to sell books, negotiate 'zero tolerance' policies or negotiate projects of gentrification and commerce. In theoretical terms, the extended place method represents an alternative to Burawoy's 'extended case method' (1991). Burawoy's stated aim is to reconstruct social theory in the light of engaged participant observation and historical and geographical contexts while, crucially, Duneier's 'diagnostic ethnography' starts with observing patterns of interaction, typically in an urban milieu, and then proceeding to integrate field data with existing social theory.

In an extended essay published in the American Journal of Sociology, the French urban ethnographer and amateur pugilist Loic Wacquant (2002) offered a sustained and excoriating critique of 'Sidewalk'. [34]   Under the provocative subheading 'The Saints of Greenwich Village:

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[34] The full official title of the article was Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography (2002). It amounted in practice to a fierce broadside against three coeval ethnographic studies devoted to understanding the 'morality of poverty': Mitchell Duneier's 'Sidewalk' (1999), Catherine S. Newman's 'No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the

Duneier on Homeless Sidewalk Vendors', Wacquant inveighs against Duneier on six particular fronts. However, at its most basic and powerful, Wacquant claims that fundamentally Duneier offers up a very one-sided and truncated description of the New York book vendors and magazine scavengers, showing us 'Kodak moments' but failing to show us a well-rounded picture of either their particular sector of the informal economy or their lives as homeless men (2002:1475).[35] This leads Wacquant to suggest that the emphasis on morality in 'Sidewalk' is an artefact of Duneier's own neo-romanticism. Perhaps the most apposite criticism is that for all the 'persistence, sensitivity and assiduity in the field' (Wacquant, 2002:1475), Duneier is guilty of failing to significantly or meaningfully elucidate the illegal or anti-social aspects of his subjects' lives, while claiming that some of the homeless men, at least, are living 'decent' lives and promoting values of honesty, hard work and self-help. Duneier's mistake, Teresa Gowan (2001:22) argues, is not that he highlights the moral claims of the street vendors, but that he fails to situate their self-presentation within its broader social context. Wacquant attacks Duneier for "blaming the victim" and abdicating the professional and political responsibility of the contemporary urban ethnographer to analytical interrogate the material constraints and discursive practices that dominant the experience of homeless street vendors, magazine scavengers and panhandlers. In reply, Duneier mounted a strong defence against such charges within the same volume of the journal. He argues that Wacquant's review of Sidewalk quotes selectively and misleadingly and systematically misrepresents the work as a whole (2002:1551). He emphasises that the issue of morality and decency is not introduced by the ethnographers but emanates from all of their subjects actions and beliefs.

Inner City' (1999), and Elijah Anderson's 'Code of the Street: Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner City' (2001).

[35] 'Sidewalk', while not explicitly presented as an example of visual ethnography, is a work of portraiture in the sense that it is suffused with detailed vignettes and vivid photography. The so-called 'Kodak moments' were provided by the Pulitzer Prize winning and long-standing collaborator Ovie Carter.

In Inequality, Poverty and Neo-liberal Governance (2008), the American cultural anthropologist Vincent Lyon-Callo draws on six years of ethnographic fieldwork studying the homeless shelter industry at the Grove Street Inn, a 20-bed emergency shelter in Northampton, Massachusetts, to explore the subject-making effects of routine, everyday working practices. Lyon-Callo's lucid and succinct exposition is indicative of the present tentative shift within the discipline of anthropology to go beyond its introspective writing 'culture phase', and return to a more materialist and political approach.[36] In light of this, Lyon-Callo outlines in a fairly short but impassioned methodological discussion the need for a politically engaged, activist ethnography and methodology, which focuses on the material and discursive effects of neo-liberal policies and practices. Within this particular frame of reference, Lyon-Callo explains how he came to occupy a multi-positioned status as an academic researcher, shelter staff member, local activist for economic justice and social change and advocate for the rights of homeless people. It is this methodological and moral commitment, argues Lyon-Callo, which has the potential to creating a forum for new understandings and possibilities to emerge and become visible (2008:21).

From this underlying framework, Lyon-Callo outlines how the structural context of homelessness has been largely obscured while its causes have been both individualised and medicalised. Drawing on Gramsci's theory of 'Hegemony' Lyon-Callo describes this as a 'Hegemonic hypothesis of deviancy'. The conventional response to homelessness, Lyon-Callo asserts, is thus predicated on detecting, diagnosing, and treating the understood shortcomings or deviancy among individual homeless people. Thus:

> [The] well-meaning efforts in this self-proclaimed progressive community focused almost exclusively on the liberal goal of 'developing' homeless people as human capital through counseling, training, or medication. Possible

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[36] For an example of 'active, engaged ethnography' in a British context see Mathers (2007).

collective resistance against inequality was marginalized as unrealistic, while popularized preconceptions of pathologies within homeless people were reinforced…Perhaps most troubling, I found that routine practices of the shelter trained many homeless people to look for and treat disorders within themselves as the appropriate response to their homelessness (2008:4).

And:

The strength of this discourse to mask structural inequality is not restricted to the 'centre', those viewing 'the homeless'. I found that those on the streets are also bound up in this discourse which engages them in a reflexivity urging them to look inside themselves for the 'cause' of their suffering (2008:4).

This leads Lyon-Callo to posit the argument that individualised discourses interact with the politics of neo-liberalism within the homeless sheltering industry to produce understandings and practices that privilege and promote a medicalised hypothesis of deviancy (2008:51). These practices, Lyon-Callo suggests, produce subjects who come to understand reform of the individualised self as the most 'reasonable' and 'realistic' way of resolving homelessness. Homeless people are thus produced (and reproduced) as political subjects who are more likely to engage in self-blame and self-governing than in collective work against systemic inequalities. As Lyon-Callo explains:

Through my work, I have come to agree that systematic inequities contribute to the production of many behaviours that are commonly read as pathological disorders among people without permanent shelter. Reading these behaviours as individual disorders certainly plays a role in silencing work against exploitative social conditions. Something much more subtle and

insidious than simply mystification takes place when homelessness is medicalised. Routine, everyday practices undertaken by shelter staff and guests to resolve 'diseases' actually reproduce and reinforce dominate imaginings about homelessness and homeless people and thus contribute to produce particular subjectivities, experiences, self-images, and behaviours among homeless people (2008:52).

Drawing together both Gramscian and Foucauldian insights, Lyon-Callo focuses on the role that everyday, hegemonic shelter language and practices play in the discursive production of homeless subjectivities.[37] It is also a strategy that allows for a more nuanced exploration of the interrelationships between structural violence, social imaginings, discursive practices and the possibilities of resistance under neo-liberal governance (2008:13). Lyon-Callo argues that the root causes of homelessness are de-industrialisation, unemployment and employment in service jobs where wages are too low for workers to afford their own housing, and to borrow the vernacular go '*without benefits*'. At the same time homeless shelter staff, whose primary function is defined within the narrow parameter of 'being helping professionals' with specialised expertise in governing and managing homeless people, blame residents and actively try to train them to apply for work and 'govern themselves'. One straightforward consequence of this is that the emergency shelter industry is conceptualised as an apparatus that reinforces and reifies discursive understandings about homelessness and homeless people.

More explicitly, Lyon-Callo goes further and points out that neo-liberalism works to produce the systemic conditions leading to homelessness. Even more powerfully, neo-liberalism works to displace attention from structural violence and onto the individualised bodies of homeless people.

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[37] For a short but instructive overview of the inherent challenges posed by the convergence of neo- Marxian narratives of neo-liberalism and Foucauldian theories of advanced liberalism see Barnett et al (2008).

Neo-liberalism thus works to produce not only homelessness, but also the rhetorical support for such conditions. Such a perspective views hegemony not as a virtual synonym of ideology as evidenced in the work of the cultural historian Raymond Williams, but rather as an analytical category for grasping the complex and practical ways in which power is exercised and is underpinned by dominant discursive strategies. It can be derived from this that his concern here is to deliberately shift the focus of attention away from an exclusively state centric analysis towards a conception of homeless people as active, reflexive social agents entangled within the wider material and discursive webs of capitalism and the welfare state.[38]

Lyon-Callo quite legitimately argues that discursive and material conditions limit the range of permissible understandings and activities of both homeless people and people working in emergency homeless shelters. In such a fashion, shelter staff use a combination of insights derived from the 12-Steps abstinence and recovery tradition, self-help programmes and New Right thinking on the 'culture of poverty'. Such arguments, Lyon-Callo claims, have come to embody the conventional view. In this way, homeless people are afforded a key role in their own self-government. Yet it also reflects something more fundamental. Namely, that homeless people come to blame themselves for their situation because the deviance hypothesis of homelessness has become the dominant part of the conceptual space in which their daily lives and interactions are ordered. This is to suggest that the deviance concept has considerable influence and profoundly shapes the way in which homeless people think and act as social agents. Moreover, this focus on the deficiencies and pathological behaviour of homeless people is reinforced and recycled by a corresponding emphasis on a process of 'retraining, reforming, empowering and caring of the homeless subject' (2008:72). Under these conditions, then, Lyon-Callo detects a shift away from punishment to an emphasis on self-governance and the elusive search for social

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[38] In this regard, Lyon-Callo draws heavily on John and Jean Comaroff's (1992) influential Ethnography and the Historical Imagination.

capital. Homeless people thus learn to look *within* for the cause of their homelessness. As a result of these repetitive narratives and practices the exploitative social processes that create homelessness go unchallenged.

Clearly, there is a great deal to admire in the work of Lyon-Callo and much that has the potential to inspire renewed attempts to refashion mainstream anthropology on the basis of a new commitment to a more explicit and politically engaged ethnographic and activist methodology. Positively, he provides a critical tool for reading the degree to which a new welfare rationality has given rise to behavioural rather than economic explanations of entrenched social problems (McDonald & Marston, 2005:376). This approach directs us to examine how the role played by community-based organisations working with the most marginal groups are centrally implicated in reproducing homelessness and unequal social relations. Notwithstanding these important caveats, I want to briefly outline what I consider to be four salient weaknesses in Lyon-Callo account of the interplay between neo-liberal governance and the homeless shelter industry.

First and foremost, Lyon-Callo is right to stress how support services have been weakened by pressures to medicalise and individualise homeless and vulnerable people as emphasised by ascendant case management approaches that are, in turn, underpinned by the moralistic discourse of roll-back neo-liberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002). The fact that some, although by no means all, homeless people passing through the Grove Street Inn are substance dependant or suffer with mental ill-health is conveniently erased. Poverty is both the corrosive cause and destructive consequence. To think otherwise is, for Lyon-Callo, simply an expression of 'bad faith' or 'false consciousness'. I, for one, would argue that this type of analysis is essentially meretricious. It is absolutely right that Lyon-Callo highlights a renewed urge within public policy to morally transform the poor in and through an unyielding commitment to 'target' deviant behaviour and lifestyles, though, to conceive of homelessness as the reductive outcome of political

structures is increasingly untenable as a significant body of qualitative social research attests (see, for example, McNaughton, 2008:24). Indeed, there is a growing consensus within the literature that homelessness is the result of the complex interplay between structural factors, especially a shortage of affordable housing, and individual 'risk factors' and 'triggers points', such as family breakdown or experience of custodial care (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000). To return to the substantive criticism here I want to suggest that an awareness (even critical opposition) of the former does not negate the importance of the latter. A counter-example is clearly apparent in my own ethnographic research from rural Dorset, where rough sleepers and community activists have consistently argued for the establishment of a local, integrated and holistic alcohol, drug and mental infrastructure, which is both tied to the provision (or promise) of secure and sustainable housing, and free of the 'tough love' policing of excessive conditionality and overweening morality based narratives of personal failure and potential redemption. This is to recognise that transitions out of homelessness appear, as Carol McNaughton has pointed out elsewhere, to require more than the provision of housing but also specialist and structured support (2008:4).

Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, we learn little of substance about the homeless shelter as an example of a localised response to market failures and reduced public services. The trouble with such a diagnosis is that it ignores the wider social welfare landscape. He provides only the most cursory sketch of the way in which non-profit homelessness organisations in the United States operate within an entrenched political culture that valorises community solutions to social problems based on the philanthropic impulse of individual donors or federal social programmes short-term competitive contracts. These issues go largely unexplored. As a result, we are unable to determine the extent to which Bill Clinton's agenda to 'end welfare as we know it' and the corresponding erosion of the distributive policies of the welfare state have transformed the culture of the homelessness sector and its ability to be a genuinely independent and critical voice within civil society.

A third potential limitation is apparent in Lyon-Callo's unwillingness to discuss to any great extent the relationship between the shelter industry and the impulse to care for homeless people. We are, for example, casually informed that those who work at the Grove Street Inn describe and define their work as 'helping professionals'. This is both empirically and analytical unsound. By the same token Lyon-Callo conspires to avoid developing a theoretically informed understanding of the pragmatics of political orientation or ethical action in the service of homeless people by investigating the organisational ethos of Grove Street Inn. Helpfully, however, a potential counterpoint is apparent in Rebecca Anne Allahyari's study of volunteerism and homelessness in Sacramento, California. In this study, Allahyari (2000) compares two distinct approaches in her study of the Salvation Army and Loaves and Fishes, a Catholic Worker movement, which makes no distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor, treating guests as ambassadors of God (2000:211). It contrasts markedly with the hierarchical, masculine, and militaristic model of the Salvation Army that stresses social control and behaviour modification to encourage self-respect and a work ethic (2000: 31). These connections go unexplored in 'Inequality, Poverty and Neo-liberal Governance', thus weakening an otherwise timely analysis.

In combination, these three points give way to a more serious analytical problem. There is an overwhelming sense, even to a sympathetic reader and ideological ally, that for all the hours and years devoted to undertaking ethnographic fieldwork at Grove Street Inn the general arguments and specific conclusions that undergird 'Inequality, Poverty and Neo-liberal Governance', have been arrived at in an *a priori* rather than *a posterior* sense. Central to Lyon-Callo's critique is the argument that prevailing discursive projects and popular imaginings sustain established power relations and social norms. In particular, he is rightly concerned with showing that such ideas and discourses are deleterious because they focus exclusively on behavioural and individualist understandings and rarely make reference to the wider socio-political context. At the core of Lyon-Callo's anthropological account is, therefore, a vision of the shelter industry which

challenges the irreducible logic of neo-liberalism and the dead weight of utilitarian and paternalistic thinking. On this reading, alternative voices and counter-hegemonic tendencies can lead to more just welfare settlements. In other significant ways Lyon-Callo relies on the principles and positionalities of heterodox political economy as if it were self-evident. His prescription is to challenge the economic orthodoxy and moral economy that works to silence and resist the development of insights into the structural causes of homelessness in favour of a focus on the perceived pathologies of vulnerable and destitute people through the development of stronger, more engaged community networks and expressions of localised protest. However, such ways of thinking are crucially undermined by the privileging of political praxis over sociological insight and empirical scope.

From this review of the ethnographies of homelessness literature in alliance with field observations and ethnographic encounters at the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, the following research question emerges: How useful is ethnography in writing agency back in to accounts of homelessness?

Before going further a major issue remains to be discussed, and it is this: How can we begin to make sense of the ways in which homeless people experience and explain the moral and evaluative criteria that evoke notions of rights and responsibilities or the classic deserving/ undeserving binary? The rationale for pursuing this line of inquiry is that in my own ethnographic encounters in West Dorset I have heard very clear echoes and crude approximations of this particularly powerful and persistent discourse. It is to this issue that we now turn.

2.9 Interpretive Frameworks

There is a great deal of literature dealing with some of the ways in which marginalised communities and individuals experience and negotiate the sentiments and values that have been identified as underpinning contemporary discourses and social policy interventions which seek to correct undesirable behaviour and enhance self-reliance (Parker & Fopp, 2005:111). However, there is very little in the literature that connects street homelessness to responsible citizenship; the emphasis is not generally on the perceptions and experiences of homeless people to the circulation of ideas and representations of 'responsible self-conduct' (Flint, 2003:612). Rather the academic literature has focused on strategies of responsibilisation and policy initiatives which seek to enforce and secure respect (for example, Millie, 2009:8). As a result, homeless people have – practically and theoretically - been black-boxed from engaging in a process of creative dialogue about the importance of personal responsibility and respectful behaviour. At a less elevated level, insufficient attention has been given to the meaning that homeless people give to themselves as moral actors, and their social obligations to the broader community and their role within it (Andrews, 2004). For this reason it will be helpful to return to the work of Teresa Gowan (1997: 2007) in an effort to understand some of the ways in which homeless people speak about the close interconnections between externally inscribed norms and societal expectations and their own frames of moral and practical reasoning.

Before engaging in a detailed consideration of Gowan's intriguing and challenging contribution in this arena, I want to shift slightly the focus of attention towards empirically and conceptually informed research that has identified and expressed some of the ways in which disadvantaged and stigmatised groups relate to the interpenetration of the contemporary politics of personal responsibility, social obligation and welfare dependency. It is salient to note that the concrete examples that follow serve not only to illustrate the potent and emotive distinction between the

'deserving' and 'undeserving' (in which I will later go on to argue rough sleepers in Dorchester were enmeshed) but, just as importantly, to show that while homeless and vulnerable people are on the economic outcrop of society, it is not the case that they exist on the periphery of morality (Duneier, 1999).

In a quietly devastating critique, Leo Howe (1999) has described how long-term unemployed men in Northern Ireland resist and embrace a dominant discourse of welfare 'scrounging'. Howe shows how these men justify their own unemployment by reference to the lack of jobs, and thereby adopt the dominant discourse of 'scrounging' to account for unemployment of others. The point here is to show how the discursive strategy followed by unemployed men involves resisting the application of representations which cast them as 'scroungers' and 'cheats'. As Howe observes 'there is rarely a single orientation towards dominant representations, and rarely an outright rejection or acceptance of them' (1998: 532). What is at issue for Howe, then, is the argument that while subordinate groups may be influenced by dominant images, they also develop strategies which manipulate them in a variety of ways. It provides, Howe suggests, a cultural armoury to be used against others in objectively the same position as themselves.

Narrowly read, it illustrates the material structure of working class employment and the informal economy in both Catholic and Protestant communities in Belfast. More broadly, it constitutes a particularly vibrant and illuminating ethnographic account that powerfully deconstructs the widespread diagnosis of unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, as the result of an over-generous welfare system, which subsidises scrounging and laziness. In that sense, the economically inactive are reconstituted as morally deviant, feckless and undeserving. In general, and with good reason, claimants are fearful of being branded as 'benefit cheats' and 'welfare dependant'.

Howe's agenda is ambitious. He sets out to refute widely held beliefs about welfare dependency and the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland. As Being Unemployed in Northern Ireland develops Howe begins to throw light on the cultural, psychosocial and material effects of cultures of worklessness. From this it is clear that employment is absolutely fundamental in the way it shapes and gives meaning to social relations and everyday life. This means, according to Howe, that the unemployed man has powerful motives to prevent his old identity and old relationships from being completely and irrevocably altered (2009:164). A crucial point here is that the unemployed are just as strongly committed to the ideology of work as the employed. Thus:

> Material deprivation is a burden the unemployed have to endure, but it is a burden that is experienced by many within the terms of an ideological discourse that appears to magnify its impact (2009:220).

Two important arguments are at work here. On the one hand, Howe wants to show how cultural distancing unfolds in the relation to these men, their families and their communities. What is interesting about this process is the way in which people seek to draw distinctions between themselves and others. Such strategies and tactical manoeuvres are, in Howe's view, underpinned by 'traditional' ideologies of the deserving and undeserving poor. The evidence presented by Howe is that welfare benefits do not induce a psychological or cultural dependency, but rather stigma and humiliation (2009:235). In these cases, popular stereotypes and discursive sorting of the 'deserving and undeserving poor' conceal the real cause of disadvantage. On the other hand, Howe's intelligent bricolage of community-based ethnography and rigorous analysis of government statistics on the Belfast labour market leads him to conclude that the causes of unemployment are large scale socio-economic factors rather than personal deficiencies. While this does not mean that joblessness becomes easier to tolerate, it does imply that those who

reject dominant labels such as scrounger and malinger are the most successful in sustaining a positive identity.

In brief, Howe provides profound insights into the representational accounts and cultural practices of a particularly vulnerable and isolated group, without in any sense diminishing their experience of broader social processes that are exerted on them. As I will show, this analytical framework has the potential to open many fields of inquiry vis-à-vis street homelessness and contemporary citizenship. The value of research of this kind is that it conceives of homeless people, and other socially excluded groups, as actively involved in efforts to remain connected to, and part of society, despite the wider context of 'material disadvantage' and 'external labelling' (Jenkins, 1996).

Focusing particularly on the implicit and explicit moral calculus of homelessness, Teresa Gowan has produced a series of short ethnographically infused articles on San Francisco's informal homeless recyclers and scavengers. Look closely and we see analogies with Mitchell Duneier's work. Like the homeless book and magazine vendors in Sidewalk, many of the recyclers talked about work as a moral enterprise as well as an economic one. Such continuity, if it exists, suggests a further portal for appreciating how it is that homeless people make sense of their lives; how they connect their present condition to the lives and identities they had in the past; and how they interpret the impact of the contemporary discourse of homelessness that emphasises individual characteristics and responsibilities (Zufferey, 2009).

In a relatively obscure but empirically elegant article entitled American Untouchable: Homeless Scavengers in the Informal Economy (1997), Gowan describes how scavenging for cardboard, paper, plastic bottles and aluminium cans has become a primary source for people excluded from entry into the formal economy - in a city with one of the highest per-capita rates of homelessness

in the US - and one that has historically relied upon punitive and legalistic measures to both manage the presence of homeless people in public spaces and their own ostensive behaviour. It is a study, as Gowan carefully explains, in the making of meaning, in the ways in which 'a veneer of dignity can be draped over a disparaged activity by treating it as 'real' work, surrounding it with routines and self-imposed discipline' (1997:162).

Gowan empirically documents with remarkable clarity and analytical comprehension how this homeless subculture views itself as socially engaged and morally reflective agents. A central thread in Gowan's work is the contention that homelessness has become a critical battleground in the systematic dismantling of the American welfare and the imposition of urban poverty management strategies and mechanisms. In this context, Gowan traces the rise of recycling, at least in part, as a direct product of the political economy since the 1970s. According to Gowan, homeless recyclers do not resent this badly paid, stigmatised, and dangerous work. On the contrary, as Gowan relates, these men enthusiastically embrace it as a way to prove their 'worth in a society which has reduced them to the status of 'bum' (1997:171). This move is a response to being homeless and the need to 'make the best of it'. That is, a practical solution to extreme financial hardship and to the indignities of their condition. Thus, argues Gowan, even for men on the street recycling is a choice, although it is a choice within severe constraints.

Gowan cogently elucidates this process through two dominant strands. The exclusion discourse and the social welfare discourse. The exclusion discourse sets up homelessness as a representation of fundamental and threatening 'outsiderness'. The social welfare discourse, meanwhile, attacks homeless people as a threat to the shared values of the wider society. For Gowan the social welfare discourse is profoundly individualistic. What unites these two alternative but interconnected discourses is the assertion that homelessness is but an extreme representation of a profound internal difference from the rest of society (1997:172). The

responses of homeless recyclers in San Francisco is to argue that they are neither strange nor evil nor incompetent, but just 'decent men down on their luck' (1997:172). Thus, they assert their normality, hard work, competence and self-sufficiency. This self-representational account is based on work, argues Gowan, rather than the criminality of the exclusion discourse and the pathology and vulnerability of the social welfare discourse. It therefore constitutes the reconstruction of a blue-collar identity.

For Gowan, it is important to understand that the move into recycling reflects is a particular reaction to being homeless – one that is embedded and articulated through the notion that physical labour is part of life: past, present and future. From this observation emerges the contention that the most committed and hard working recyclers are men who previously held long lasting and decently paid semi-skilled or skilled jobs in the formal economy. This allows Gowan to go on to show that recyclers respond to the close connection between homelessness and recycling in two ways. First, some try and escape from the imputation of a homeless identity by working all the time and not socialising with other homeless people. Second, others accept that they will be seen as homeless and consciously use their work to asset a 'positive' homeless identity which contradicts dominant discursive accounts. In doing so new lines of exclusion are drawn vis-à-vis other homeless people.

All in all, recycling is used as a vehicle for presenting an image of competence and industry to settled society. Moreover, it is an image that powerfully and consciously contradicts culturally embedded representations of homelessness and homeless people. Alongside the socially constructed stigma of homelessness, there is also a sense that people who are homeless are not disaffiliated or anomic but, in actuality, are engaged in moments of resistance which challenge the degraded and diminished positions - structurally and discursively – ascribed to them. It is of especial interest to Gowan that:

Work becomes a cultural project and thereby transforms the fault lines which separate homeless people from everyone else, making the implicit (and often explicit) argument that the 'problem' of homelessness is not created by the differences and deficiencies of homeless people themselves, but is both part and product of the wider society (1997:178).

In the 'New Hobos: Identity and Morality among Homeless Recyclers' Gowan shows how these men create an unusual homeless subculture which drew them close to the hobos of the late 19th and early 20th century. As state laws added redemption taxes to the cost of beverages, recycling became an important source of income for poor people. Gowan highlights how the recycling boom coincided with an explosion of on street homelessness. Recycling, we learn, functioned as both chief source of money and central organising principle, both practically and discursively. In the process of spending a large proportion of their days on the jobs, the men saw themselves as 'doing' rather than 'hanging' and earners instead of supplicants (2007:13).

Gowan describes how homelessness was still the taken for granted master status, but within the realm of the street, they came to define their lives primarily to the work they were doing. As they struggled to explain their identity and public role, many were drawn to the image of the Hobo. Indeed, Gowan describes how references to hobos were activated as moral anchoring points for the 'pro recyclers' and 'dumpster divers'. In one of many illuminating passages where affectionate objectivity gives way to concise contextualising, Gowan writes:

Sleeping on the hard ground became a sign of strength and resilience, of closeness to nature, while their very isolation from mainstream society, was evidence, they claimed, of their iconoclastic pioneering spirits. Recycling, above all, was a vital proof of independence and resourcefulness in the face

of difficulties…The new hobos claimed the danger and hardship of street life

as a principled choice over the ignominy of the shelter (2007:14).

The significance of Gowan's contribution is that it provides a very clear and vivid illustration of the way in which this homeless subculture offers a piecemeal getaway from both the humiliations of the shelter system and the mutual destruction of skid row.

As an endnote to this it is perhaps worth reflecting on the work of Hartley Dean (1992: 1999:2003:2007) who over the last two decades has been disputing particularly crass *moral assumptions* about the politics of welfare obligation and personal responsibility. Dean shows that these claims are unsustainable in the light of overwhelming empirical evidence to the contrary. For example, work by Dean and Taylor-Goodby (1992) demonstrates that long-term social security claimants do not subscribe to a distinctive dependency culture, but to mainstream values, aspirations and beliefs. Further to this, welfare claimants do not celebrate their rights to welfare; on the contrary, they typically regard welfare as a last resort and the state as an adversary. The key point here is that that while research respondents did not necessarily engage with the concept of citizenship, they did talk about the relationships between individuals and the state in terms of rights and responsibilities. Thus, Dean notes that prevailing discourses of responsibility are complex, diverse and contested. These insights were revisited in a recent and much discussed essay (2007), where Dean introduces and interrogates a taxonomy of moral repertoires that allows us to discern the way in which the Third Way conception of citizenship sees dependency and responsibility as incommensurate. Of particular importance is the recognition that the combination of greater conditionality and the ethic of self-governance prioritise an essentially individualistic ethic of responsibility and fails to meet people's non-material needs.

In short, the work of Teresa Gowan, Leo Howe and Hartley Dean undoubtedly represent an important resource for expanding and relocating our awareness of how popular discourses and moral assumptions are embedded and articulated through processes of social negotiation and forms of moral rationality. This is a vital intellectual bridge. From this review of the literature on interpretive frameworks in alliance with field observations and ethnographic encounters at the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, the following research question emerges: How is the new political and policy agenda on 'rights and responsibilities' experienced *in practice* by rough sleepers?

2.11 <u>Summary</u>

To reiterate, the aims and objectives of this research project will be met by investigating the following research questions:

1. How do homeless people make sense of, and talk about acute social exclusion?
2. How does the experience of on-street homelessness impede the practice of citizenship?
3. To what extent, if at all, is the contemporary governance of homelessness characterised by punitive attitudes and responses to homeless people?
4. How useful is ethnography in writing agency back in to accounts of homelessness?
5. How is the new political and policy agenda on 'rights and responsibilities' experienced *in practice* by rough sleepers?

More pertinently, it is the ambition of this doctoral thesis to unpick these research questions through the critical introduction of observations and insights acquired over twenty months of ethnographic fieldwork with homeless people in rural West Dorset. As we move forward and make concrete this extended case example, I do not claim that the discursive framing of the

'problem' of homelessness in Dorchester and the response of an actively engaged and responsible 'community' is unique or exceptional, rather it simply shows that understanding larger social and sociological processes requires the study of particular empirical contexts (Murphy, 2009). Of course this is a story about homelessness in a small rural town in West Dorset and, to a significant degree, a tale of how a small, voluntary organisation - which despite appearing to be a modal carrier for the type of 'community involvement' so lauded by New Labour (Law & Mooney, 2006) - came to be regulated and punished in and through the rhetoric and policy of 'politics of behaviour' and alongside new institutional arrangements involving technologies of surveillance and discipline (Flint, 2002:256). Yet, at the same time, it can also be read as a critical case study that opens out a space for a detailed exploration of the complex and contested links between the micro-setting of rough sleeping in Dorchester and broader and deeper macro-forces which serve to shape and sustain the new rationales and mechanisms for governing homeless people. In probing the frontier of this subject, I seek to take proper account of the ways in which homeless people and homeless service providers make sense of the contemporary governance of homelessness and architecture of citizenship in new, exciting and insightful ways.

CHAPTER 3- METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodological standpoint adopted in this study is qualitative and interactive in its approach.

It is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork with homeless people at the Hub Project for rough

sleepers in Dorchester between May 2007 and December 2008. Ethnography, it is argued here,

can lend vital insights and lead to the emergence of crucial knowledge on the perspectives and

experiences of those often regarded as 'hard-to-reach'. In advancing an ethnographic approach,

this critically engaged investigation places itself in contradistinction to the view that research

participants are merely 'subjects' upon who research is 'done', and instead conceives of homeless

people as active social agents. This is particularly important in order to challenge the way in

which homeless and other vulnerable people are defined simultaneously by public scrutiny and

efforts to dissimulate about their existence. By pursuing ethnography within this context we can

begin the task of giving 'voice' to homeless people's accounts while enabling the academic

community to encounter *otherness* through the potential of dialogue (Hodgson, 2000).

I place this doctoral research project within the methodological tradition of the Chicago School of

Sociology and its privileging of first-hand experience and protracted investigation of a particular

social or cultural setting (Coffey, 2007:5).[39] Some commentators have claimed that ethnography

does not produce objective or verifiable knowledge. However, this project assumes that the

ethnographic method is valid in 'its commitment to seeking to understand the perspectives of

others rather than simply judging them as true or false' (Hammersley 1991: 45). As such,

participant observation is an approach that deliberately avoids some of the structure and control

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[39] For a discussion on the methodological basis of the Chicago School of Sociology, see Mary Jo
Deegan (2007) and Lee Harvey (1987).

of some of the other research strategies, attempting instead to engage with social life on its own terms. As Karen O'Reilly explains:

> Ethnographic research is a special methodology that suggests that we learn about people's lives from their own perspectives and from within the context of their lived experience. This involves not only talking to them and asking questions but also learning from them by observing them, participating in their lives and asking questions that relate to the daily life experience as we have seen and experienced it (2005:84).

The primary means of data collection was through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Participant observation is a qualitative research technique that usually guides ethnographic fieldwork, and has been succinctly described by Lofland and Lofland as:

> The process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing a scientific understanding of that association (1995:18).

Insights grounded in field experience were developed through a recursive process whereby data from participant observation was recorded as field notes, written in a journal format and continuously expanded, refined or discarded via the process of subsequent field visits, writing and discussion with key informants and gatekeepers (Emmel et al., 2007). Once the field had been exited interview material and research commentary was formally transcribed and thematically coded using a combination of manual and computer assisted methods, notably *NVivo 8* programme for qualitative data analysis (QSR International, 2008).

In focusing on the relationship between street homelessness and responsible citizenship, I am strongly influenced by the arguments of Mitchell Duneier (2002:1551) about the importance of moving beyond 'homeless places' in order to focus on how the problem of homelessness and responses to those problems are framed within the wider community. [40] Thus, in an effort to comprehend the social ecology of homelessness in Dorchester and the increasingly active role by significant and powerful actors in the production of a discourse of 'responsibilisation', I conducted fourteen in-depth interviews with individuals and organisations critically positioned within the fabric of the town or else actively tasked with working collaboratively with the Hub Project to move people *off the streets* and towards supported housing and social welfare. This project follows the standard techniques for semi-structured interviewing, such as open entry questions followed by more thematic follow ups (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). One important advantage of the semi-structured interviews is that it is much easier to cover all aspects of the research agenda. This approach also has the intrinsic advantage of making it possible to identify patterns and make effective comparisons. In this regard I have held 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1981:102) with (**1**) Dorchester Section Commander Dorset Police; (**2**) the town councillor for the Dorchester North Ward; (**3**) West Dorset District Council's Housing Needs manager; (**4**) Shelter outreach advice worker for the Hub Project and Dorchester Prison; (**5**) local reporter from the Dorset Echo; (**6**) Dorset Service Users Forum; (**7**) homeless outreach worker; (**8**) Police Community Support Officer assigned to the Dorchester Safer Neighbourhood Team; (**9**) NHS nurse practitioner; (**10**) Supporting People outreach worker; (**11**) Communities and Local Government specialist adviser; (**12**) the Hub Project manager; (**13**) standing trustee of the Hub Project and (**14**) a government adviser from the Department for Communities and Local Government. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. [41]

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[40] Duneier's 'diagnostic ethnography' starts with observing patterns of interaction, typically in an urban milieu, and then proceeding to integrate field data with existing social theory.

[41] Further to undertaking direct face-to-face interviews, I have accumulated a considerable body of detailed information in relation to homelessness in West Dorset via email correspondence.

As an adjunct to this, I make extensive use throughout of policy documents, internal memos and newspaper articles. To foreshadow some of what will follow I trace the development of a vigorous media campaign against rough sleepers in Dorchester through a focus on a series of articles and letters that were selected for publication in the town's daily newspaper, the Dorset Echo. In this way, I hope to give dramatic expression to the way in which local media reporting became a significant tribune for public concern and political anxiety about the perceived 'problem' of visible on-street homelessness. As such it constituted a significant medium for the discussion of local issues and, although subject to editorial control, its letters page and online message board functioned as an open forum for hostile and distasteful comments. I am not suggesting that these comments went uncontested by the inhabitants of Dorchester or, for that matter, that the newspaper's readership absorbed these opinions uncritically. Rather, it is sufficient for our present purposes to simply note that the Dorset Echo was a powerful voice in shaping a 'politics of rejection' (Takahashi, 1997) and in attempts to 'sanitise' Dorchester. To offer a more nuanced and finely grained account of the construction of homelessness and the representation of homeless people in Dorchester, it is, however, necessary to go beyond text-based analysis and draw attention to a more grounded focus on the empirical world and the behaviour of local actors via ethnographic methods (McKee, 2009b).

One of the guiding assumptions in conventional discussions about the ethics of undertaking qualitative social inquiry is that all research participants will remain anonymous unless they provide explicit permission to be identified (Halse & Honey, 2007). Informed consent is, as Heath et al. (2004) note, a central element of ethical research practice, particularly where potential research participants are commonly viewed as 'vulnerable'. According to Heath et al. informed

These include, for example, Dorchester Prison, Dorchester Salvation Army, Dorset Police, Homeless Link, West Dorset District Council Housing Needs and West Dorset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. In addition to this, I sought but failed to obtain permission to interview representatives from the Big Issue South West, British Transport Police (Wales and Western) and Ensors Market Management Company.

consent is commonly understood as providing sufficient information to study participants to enable them to know what participant in research will entail. However, the use of consent forms can unnecessarily colour ethnographic situations, transforming encounters that are routinely more informal and exploratory into unnecessarily official and legalistic exchanges. This is to recognise that decisions about the appropriate ways to gain informed consent are always context specific. To a large extent this critical objective depends on breaking with the notion that consent automatically remains valid both during and after the research process has been completed. In the context of undertaking participant observation with homeless people in Dorchester, I envisaged activating the notion of process consent (Ramcharan & Cutliffe, 2001: Miller & Bell, 2002). Here the term is used to describe the idea that consent is an ongoing concern within the research process. The explicit reason for operationalising process consent is that it is important to ensure that people understand that they can withdraw from the study at any time and that consent should be negotiated as an ongoing concern, and should not be assumed on the basis of initial consent only.

Taking McKenzie's (2009) understanding of the blurring of the covert and overt roles in qualitative research, I quickly became aware of the rapture between the principle of informed consent and the reality of working in a research setting undergirded by complexity and uncertainty. This is to recognise that the types of research roles that are adopted seem to vary from complete participant to complete observer, with most researchers occupying a position between these two extremes. In respect of the socio-spatial configuration of the Hub Project, the usual conventions of seeking permission to conduct observations became, if not impossible, then certainly problematic (Wardhaugh, 1996). In common with McKenzie it became increasingly apparent that research participants did not fully understand the extent to which my investigations and record keeping extended beyond ethnographic encounters and qualitative interviews. Reconceived in these terms, I have taken the step of generating pseudonyms for the Hub Project's service users

who appear in this study. In so doing I have attempted to accord these people as much anonymity as possible, balancing questions of fairness and privacy with the need for accuracy. However, I have taken a different track in regards to the management committee of the Hub Project (as well as with the volunteers with whom I worked alongside) having gained their approval for their names to be used.[42] In following the arguments of Mitchell Duneier, I have taken the additional step of inviting all interested parties to review the manuscript and to suggest changes for the purpose of accuracy. To Duneier, this is a deliberate ethical statement:

> It seems to me that to disclose the place and names of the people I have written about holds me up to a higher standard of evidence. Scholars and journalists may speak to these people, visit the site I have studied, or replicate aspects of my study (1999:347).

My concern here, then, is to uphold the concept of ethical research while focusing explicitly on rough sleeping and responsible citizenship in Dorchester. The means being sensitive to the marginal status of homeless and other vulnerable people who appear throughout this study, combined with the need to retain an authentic and critical edge grounded in 'fact'. Such practices, of course, are neither new nor unique. Such an approach will, most likely, result in an academic account that is particularly open to intellectual challenge and public scrutiny.

With these preparatory statements in mind, it will be helpful now to turn to Dorchester as a discursively and materially constructed setting and, at a more immediate level, the research strategy that led to protracted investigation and field ethnography being undertaken at the Hub Project.

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[42] Unless drawing on archival material in the public domain or on interview material with a public figure (speaking in an official capacity), I make direct reference via the use of generic titles or positions.

3.2 <u>Why Dorchester?</u>

From the outset, this doctoral study was committed to undertaking qualitative social research in Dorset. This was influenced by two fundamental considerations. The first was purely logistical while the second related more directly to a desire to contribute to the development of research on homelessness in Dorset – a largely rural and notionally affluent county – which beyond the immediate gaze of Cloke et al's (2007b) small but otherwise critically informed exploration of Hilfield Friary, a Franciscan community set up in 1921 for homeless men walking the roads of England in search of work, has remained stubbornly resistant to detailed academic engagement. [43] Indeed, much of what has been written about homelessness in Dorset has been commissioned – independently or collectively - by the six local borough or district councils (although often produced in concert with external research bodies or university level institutions) with a particular focus on Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) or surveys of homelessness service provision (See, for example, Cutts et al, 2003). [44]

In a pragmatic sense, it seemed to me that the decision to pursue fieldwork in Dorset offered the inherent benefit of suspending the need to commute or relocate. It also appeared more appealing to locate my research in as short as possible distance to the academy and my existing academic commitments. Add to this, I rather earnestly and somewhat simplistically believed that my accreditation as a research student with Bournemouth University would lend a greater sense of

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[43] Although Hilfield Friary has now officially ceased to provide statutory support to homeless men, I am aware from my own fieldwork encounters in Dorchester that rudimentary and informal care is given to longstanding visitors. In a short Email exchange I was told that 'Hilfield Friary stopped its work with wayfarers in Dec 03 due to many and diverse reasons, the main two being lack of personnel to look after them and be responsible for them at this end, and the fact that we were ending up with more and more mental health patients which we were finding very difficult to move on' (24/04/07).

[44] The six borough of district councils that comprise Dorset County Council are (**1**) Weymouth and Portland (**2**) West Dorset (**3**) North Dorset (**4**) Purbeck (**5**) East Dorset and (**6**) Christchurch. The conurbations of Bournemouth and Poole (unitary authorities) are no longer part of the administrative county.

credibility and purpose to my research agenda; say in opposition to a scenario in which I allowed myself to be parachuted into a research setting or service context from afar. In reality, though, this was only marginally true. Critical here was the recognition, and one that I only fully appreciated and rightly learned once immersed in the 'field' was that credibility, confidence and trust were to be diligently earned rather than erroneously assumed. It was a crucial if obvious lesson.

By way of backdrop, I initially considered Bournemouth as a potential research site, both because of its immediacy and its extant rough sleeping community. Certainly in Bournemouth there was the visible and visceral sight of 'on-street' homelessness. It was clearly apparent in the town's carefully manicured public parks, its commercial thoroughfares and sunken underpasses – those places traditionally associated with homelessness - but also on the placid seafront and under the ornate architecture of church spires. Alongside this, rough sleeping in Bournemouth was clearly embedded within an established homelessness service infrastructure that incorporated emergency day-centres, night shelters, soup-runs and wet houses. There was a definite sense that for all its beguiling mix of genteel affluence and hedonistic night-time economy the clustering of hostels and support services exerted a 'pull' on homeless and other vulnerable people and remade Bournemouth into a 'homeless place' (Cloke et al., 2007a: Haydock, 2009). These tactical mobilities by homeless people both shape and are shaped by the cultural 'scenes' of homelessness experienced in particular places. Reflecting on this, I was conscious of the charge that in focusing on Bournemouth as a potential research setting I would simply reproduce many of the insights of earlier discussions on the relationship between homeless migratory routes, coastal towns and service hubs (see, for example, May, 2003). Of course such a generalised quest is given definition by the characteristics and conditions of particular places.[45] Yet, even allowing for

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[45] Such arguments align with DeVerteuil et al's (2009) recent plea for critically engaged scholars to focus upon the production and responses to homelessness in different places. Laying out the broad outlines of a new framework of 'poverty management', the authors highlight four factors (path-dependent restructuring, different welfare regimes, processes of cultural signification, and

this important caveat, I ultimately reasoned (perhaps mistakenly) that a smaller town or service environment was more likely to generate research data and illustrative material that was rich, rounded, local and specific (Mason, 2007:89).

I thus began a scoping exercise on homelessness and homelessness service provision in Dorset. This approach confirmed Cloke et al's (2003) influential and widely cited construct about the absence and unevenness of provision to counter the problem of single homelessness and rough sleeping and rural morphology. I quickly learned that outside of the Bournemouth-Poole conurbation there were three distinct but deeply interrelated and connected services for homeless people in Dorset: The Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, the Soul Food soup kitchen for homeless people in Weymouth and the Pilsdon Community in respect of wayfarers in Bridport. At this juncture, I gave considerable thought to the efficacy of pursuing a multi-sited ethnographic study based on extended case studies across two of the three sites. [46] Choosing to compare the seemingly affluent market town of Dorchester with the seasonal, tourist dependant setting of Weymouth, I thought would create a context from which to work towards an understanding of what citizenship actually represents in two places, albeit only nine miles apart, with very different configurations of culture, economy and politics (Gowan, 2002: 503). This comparative strategy, I suspected, held out a potential pathway for establishing valuable insights into the ways in which place matters to citizenship and in turn how citizenship matters to place. This vision inevitably fell away as I began to focus on Dorchester and actively excavated the discursive positioning of homelessness and the role of what Cowan and Hunter (2007) have termed the 'regulatory community' in responsibilising homeless people.

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locally contingent variation), which seek to provide a more measured and deliberative understanding of geographies of homelessness.

[46] I have, for the record, written about wayfarers (2009a) and the Pilsdon Community (2009c) elsewhere.

I have to admit a longstanding relationship with Dorchester. I first encountered the town through the eyes of a child. For me this small town in West Dorset was a place of warm sunshine, accumulated history and the charming bustle of a slightly antiquated outdoor market. Dorchester was 'Mai Dun', Durnovaria and Max Gate. [47] It represented a calendar event during a long and leisurely week spent holidaying on the Jurassic Coast. Then as an adolescent I was made to read of Hardy's imagined pastoral landscape of South Wessex. Dorchester, as a result, was irrevocably recast as Casterbridge. It was, thus, a place (and landscape) of rural hardships, stultifying deference, moral ambiguity and bleak romance. Later as a self-styled militant undergraduate student, I became reacquainted with a different, more radical version of Dorchester and its surrounding hinterland. The story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, six local men who were sentenced at the Dorchester Assizes to transportation to Australia in 1834 for swearing an oath to the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers, resonated with my developing interest in history from below. In my mind Dorchester was now tied to the London match-girls strike of 1888, the mass trespass of Kinder Scout in 1932 and the Battle of Orgreave in 1984 as a key touchstone in working class history and the British labour movement. On learning that the county seat of Dorset was home to an emergency homelessness service provider the patina changed once more. I therefore felt, in short, an irresistible draw to Dorchester and the Hub Project for rough sleepers. Clearly, then, the logic and rationale for pursuing ethnography was guided by the conjunction of emotional and intellectual impulses.

From the conceptual and empirical work of Cloke et al (2003:2007a) and Robinson (2006) it is possible to begin to understand the distinct properties of rural homelessness. Through the selective introduction of ethnographic fieldwork from the Hub Project, I will aim to substantiate the

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[47] Mai Dun refers to Maiden Castle, a Neolithic settlement abandoned by local Celtic tribes shortly after the Claudian invasion of A.D. 43. The survivors of the assault were moved to the new town-site of Durnovaria, the basis for modern Dorchester. This Iron Age hill fort is evoked in The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) and again in the short-story A Tryst at an Ancient Earthwork (1893). Max Gate was the house designed and lived in by Hardy on the outskirts of Dorchester.

claim that Dorchester is an exemplary site for understanding the contemporary governance of homelessness.

3.3 **'Getting in, Getting By'**

In the empirical domain, I pursued participant observation at the Hub Project and qualitative interviewing in Dorchester over a time-consuming and research-consuming twenty month period between May 2007 and December 2008. I first made contact with the Hub Project via email correspondence with Dr. Margaret Barker the day-centre's secretary, grant raiser, trustee and public face. In that original message I somewhat falteringly outlined my interest in the possibility of conducting fieldwork into homelessness in Dorchester thus:

> …For the purposes of my research, I am particularly keen to benefit from the insights and experiences of homeless people and service providers in Dorset. My starting point is that homeless people are knowledgeable 'experts' and that the only effective and ethical way in which to understand the homeless experience is to undertake participatory research. With this in mind, I was very interested to learn of the existence of the Hub Project and wonder whether it would be possible to visit in order to gain a fuller picture of your work and the needs of homeless people in Dorchester. [48]

The response was encouraging and made an indirect reference to the perceived 'problem' of homelessness in Dorchester. As Dr. Margaret Barker put it:

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[48] Personal email sent 26 February 2007.

Certainly you will be welcome to visit. However, as we have only one paid

worker and he has been overwhelmed with extra jobs and duties recently, as

well as a flurry of public interest, so I wonder what your time scale might be? I

was one of the founder trustees and know a lot about anything to do with the

administration of the project but it [is] Bob the Manager and the Hub users

themselves that you need to talk to to get a proper perspective. [49]

I was subsequently invited to undertake a direct place visit to the Hub Project shortly after

initiating Email exchange with Dr. Margaret Barker. On this occasion I reiterated the principal

focus of my research and determination to situate it with the contours of homeless service

provision within Dorset.   More particularly, I vividly recall approaching the Hub Project on an

unseasonably warm morning and being confronted by the sight of twenty or so people desperately

waiting for the service to open its doors. In those fleeting moments leading from the street to the

forecourt I became acutely aware of how a prevailing sense of chaos and confusion collided with

an unmistakable undercurrent of bravado and intimidation. As I stood there waiting for the doors

to open I found myself being accosted and regaled by a septuagenarian Welshman by the name

of 'Wilhelm'. I listened with interest to a meandering and exhaustive narrative on the hardships

and pleasures of 'life on the road' only for his account to unexpectedly give way to an

impassioned recital of old Welsh hymns such as Cwm Rhondda and Pererin.

Throughout the morning I was politely introduced to a small coterie of service users and casually

made to explain the purpose of my visit. As I struggled to succinctly articulate the parameters of

this embryonic research project and floundered to generate interest among potential research

participants, I was rescued by Bob, the Hub Project's manager, who knowingly and helpfully

commented ''I am not sure about the link between homelessness and citizenship, nor your use of

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[49] Personal email received 27 February 2007.

ethnography for that matter… But of course you will have to return and get to know the users and volunteers, although it will probably take some time. [And] that's fine with me.''

This short conversation, as should now be obvious, was a defining point in the advancement of this doctoral research programme. Closely entwined here, as Lee has argued, is the acknowledgement that 'social access crucially depends on establishing interpersonal trust' (1993:123). It would, though, be wrong to simply suggest that obtaining access to the research setting was a seamless and effortless endeavour. My entrée does, however, reveal much about the commitment to openness and hospitality of those responsible for overseeing the daily operation of the Hub Project and responding to the local welfare needs of visible and hidden forms of homelessness within Dorchester. What is worth emphasising here is that the use of gatekeepers is a well-established method of gaining access to a research cohort within qualitative social science, particularly in ethnographic research (Emmel et al., 2006). The gatekeeper is someone to whom the researcher can explain the research and, in turn, the gatekeeper can be instrumental in facilitating access to the identified research group. As part of that, Hammersley and Atkinson remind us that the gatekeeper or 'sponsor' may steer the course of a piece of research, 'shepherding the fieldwork in one direction or another' (1983:65). Cohen et al (2007) take a more critical view and suggest that the gatekeeper may block access or seek to exercise surveillance over the research. Either way, the relationship that develops between the gatekeeper and the researcher is often a complex and complicated choreographed dance suffused with distinct and interweaving personal, practical, emotional and ethical dimensions.

As a result of making initial contact and undertaking a direct place visit representations were made on my behalf to the standing management committee of the Hub Project in addition to my own written and verbal request to pursue ethnographic fieldwork. Consequently, official endorsement led to direct access to the day-centre and an accompanying invitation to attend

public meetings convened by local community actors and statutory authorities. Such events were viewed – within and outwith the Hub Project - as an important and necessary vehicle for initiating dialogue and mobilising support for homeless and other vulnerable people in Dorchester and across West Dorset. It was envisaged that my presence on such occasions would provide an effective tool for collecting data and a critical entry point for exploring the Hub Project's strategic position within the context of the broader community. This in turn gave rise to a dynamic exchange of ideas and powerful insights into how the issue of street homelessness in Dorchester was a component within a far bigger and intimately connected picture.

Having gained physical access to the research setting, I was forced to work hard to elicit the support and trust of homeless people in Dorchester. 'Getting by' at the Hub Project was, initially at least, contingent upon adopting a careful and unobtrusive demeanour (Mason, 2007). I found myself gravitating towards the amiable and the garrulous while meekly avoiding the rowdy and the unruly. I allowed myself to 'hang out' and 'soak up' the ambience of the day-centre, its rhythms and its ethos; I desperately sought to build a sense of rapport with the gently cajoled and the self-identified. What is fair to say is that in those first few weeks of undertaking participant observation I was acutely aware that my presence at the Hub Project engendered feelings of acceptance, indifference and, above all, scepticism. For Tom Hall (2003) and others constructing or excavating ethnographies of homelessness, sustained engagement with people living in difficult circumstances has prompted the reflection that an outsider's curiosity might be viewed as patronising and suspicious. As Hall summarises:

> Fieldwork research with people who are having a hard time of it, whose difficulties and daily frustrations are grist to one's mill, is a morally awkward business. At least I expected to be. I fretted a good deal about this sort of thing before I got started. Once under way, these anxieties dwindled; I had

other things to be getting on with and was glad to have my more abstract

anxieties pushed aside by other, more immediate dilemmas. For the most

part, I let an everyday and personal ethics inform my relationship in the field,

as I would anywhere else (2003: 12-13).

Ethnography as a method relies heavily on the personal experiences and perceptions of individual researchers. As Harrington (2002) points out, the inquiring social scientist must demonstrate an ability to be both immersed in a group and separate enough to view it critically. Throughout this research project, questions of ethical and moral conduct have been abiding concerns. Indeed, as Jenni Ward remarks:

> The life changing impact of the research process, on the researcher's world
> cannot be underestimated. This is not to advocate avoiding research which
> hinges on risk situations, but it is to note the importance of being mindful of
> the complex dynamics that are an inherent feature of ethnography and the
> longer-term impacts research of this nature can have (Ward, 6.2: 2008).

Despite these conflicting emotions and sentiments, the tactics of *slow penetration*, practical assistance and a genuine sympathy to the plight of homeless people did help to facilitate the research endeavour (Howe, 2009:39). Julia Wardhaugh (1996), for instance, argues that that our capacity as qualitative researchers to enter the social world of homeless people is contingent on acknowledging the material and social differences that exist between the 'researcher' and the 'researched'. As we have already seen, this will necessarily place limits on the way in which we negotiate 'our' entry into 'their' world. While mindful of the fact that my attendance at the Hub Project might generate contradictory and ambiguous feelings, I resolved to become immersed in the daily routines of the Hub Project and threw myself into discussions and debates with service

users and volunteers alike. In simple and unadorned terms, it was a vastly challenging but profoundly transformative experience.

Throughout my time at the Hub Project, I always actively sought to identify myself as a doctoral student carrying out research into homelessness in Dorchester. My appearance, coupled with the way in which I easily and confidently interacted with the staff, often led service users' and visiting social welfare professionals to assume that I was, in fact, a volunteer. As I came to spend more time at the Hub Project I found myself silently but surely moving from occupying the position of a detached observer to that of 'researcher-volunteer'. It started with making tea and coffee and grew to washing up and peeling vegetables; taking in, sorting out and distributing food packages and clothing donated by the public and culminating in filling out JSA and Housing Benefit claim forms. This shift in role and perspective served to cement my identification with the day-centre while – concurrently and crucially– enabling me to 'give something back'.

On other occasions I was formally introduced to potential research participants as 'a PhD student from Bournemouth University researching homelessness.' Armed with this knowledge the standard reaction appeared to oscillate from genuine interest to mild curiosity to complete indifference. If interest was piqued I was often invited to pull-up a chair or beckoned to the forecourt to 'have a chat and a fag'; or else I was lightly admonished and casually forced to account for the absence of a costly tape recorder or cheap notebook and pen. As Leo Howe observes, writing in the context about unemployment in Northern Ireland, 'it was precisely frequent visits that allayed suspicions about my credentials and motives' (2009:35) and this was certainly the case in my own ethnographic encounters with rough sleepers and wayfarers in West Dorset. Another aspect of this is that as I became a regular visitor and recognised face, trust developed and the simple task of asking homeless people questions about how they understood and, in some cases, experienced new institutional arrangements and discursive claims that place

particular emphasis on rights and responsibilities was made slightly easier by the forward march of time and a growing sense of familiarity. The experience of undertaking ethnographic fieldwork in Dorchester was only possible by establishing credibility by articulating an explicit commitment to bringing to the foreground the standpoint of homeless people and solidifying trust on the basis of 'moral deference'.[50] It is in this way, according to Michael Burawoy, that ethnography becomes a collaborative enterprise of participant and observer (1991: 291).

It is worth further emphasising that I am able to recall (from memory and the archaeology of field-notes) only one notable occasion when my actual presence at the Hub Project was a source of public rebuke. But there were other, briefer sequences of impact, which left an indelible mark. This particular episode however was exacerbated by a fierce debate unfolding within the day-centre about the efficacy and equitability of introducing a payment system for its hot meal service. Into this context my self-declared interest in homelessness and homeless people in Dorchester, in the words of Mackem, was both misplaced and unhelpful:

> What's the point? It's people like you and day-centres and hostels that are not helping. You should come together [the homelessness sector] and sort it out. It's not right, it's a bloody disgrace.

Ward (2008) has spoken eloquently about the freedom of the ethnographic enterprise. While not wanting to completely dissent from what is clearly an attractive and persuasive statement, it was my experience in Dorchester that the 'economy', 'informality' and 'looseness' offered by extensive participant observation was flanked and buttressed by the need to engage in personal, emotional and identity work (Coffey, 1999:1). In the simplest terms this is be *alive* to the discomfort and

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[50] For Lawrence Thomas (1992), the notion of 'moral deference' is about how it is possible to understand those on the margins. Consequently, moral deference is owed to the person in a diminished social category because of their experiences.

difficulty – ethical, political, practical – of doing fieldwork. This can be put another way. By engaging in 'ground level' analysis I made good (and enduring) friendships with both staff and volunteers struggling to respond to the needs of homeless people while also developing a strong affinity and sense of respect for many of the regular and intermittent service users. Taken together, these strands touch upon some of the specific and singular emotional entanglements, which can be seen to underscore sustained immersion and participant observation in the 'field'.

Hall (2000) has spoken powerfully and perceptively of how the ethnographer of poverty experiences a sense of strangeness and anxiety upon entering the field. In considering these issues, Hall is able to link a concern with 'home' and 'homelessness' into a wider and more profound discussion into how the ethnographic enterprise is shaped by relations of distance and familiarity. This being so, Hall makes clear that the ethnographer is not afforded the personal anonymity of profound cultural and social difference, and so part of the task of participant observation becomes one of working through familiar differences, rather than of negotiating unfamiliarity (2000:131). Thus, the ethnographer is never a complete stranger in a completely strange land. [51]

At the other end of the spectrum, I became increasingly aware that not living in Dorchester or its immediate environs (both because of the needs of my family and the nature of my research focus) served to limit access to the Hub Project and the distinct milieu of Dorchester. The relevance of this is that I often felt as if I was being a 'research tourist' or flaneur' in the course of undertaking fieldwork (Jenks, 1995). That is, someone who voyeuristically enjoys their time spent as an observer without having any substantial contribution. In fact there are good reasons to suppose that the distance from the research setting to the academy was an important intermediary space through which to critically explore the links and connections between the experience of sleeping

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[51] See also Michael Ager's (1980) formulation of the ethnographer as a 'professional stranger'.

rough in West Dorset and the different ways in which the contemporary vocabulary of citizenship is a force of both inclusion and exclusion. As it was, my presence at the Hub Project was restricted to Tuesday or Wednesday mornings, spending three or four hours in Dorchester during each visit. All of this suggests the need to be cognisant of the physical, spatial, temporal and social dimensions of the ethnographic enterprise (Mason, 2007:85).

3.4 'Getting Out'

There is a tremendous literature within ethnography and related qualitative research on the specific challenges as well as unforeseen difficulties of negotiating access to the research setting. As a result, it is arguably the case that insufficient attention is given to what Iverson (2009) would refer to as 'getting out'. Thus, as Lofland and Lofland argue, 'the handling of these voluntary departures probably deserves more careful thought and pre-planning than fieldworkers have traditionally given to it' (1995:62).[52] Moving beyond a critique of 'getting out', I want to reflect (albeit briefly) on some of the ethical dilemmas and practical problems I encountered and navigated in the process of completing ethnographic fieldwork in Dorchester.

Before ethnographic fieldwork commenced, I submitted a 'Research Plan' detailing specific methods, health and safety concerns, ethical issues and a research timetable to my academic school's Research Ethics Board. Although this study received official endorsement from the Hub Project, I did not provide (nor was I asked) to outline ending practices and endpoints. Rather than demarcating lines of entry and withdrawal, I was mindful of the fact that time spent in the 'field' was very much dependant upon ensuring the support and active cooperation of my 'sponsors'. In important respects, this was a continually negotiated, collaborative enterprise. At a less grounded

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[52] For a considered exploration of the difficulties associated with exiting the research setting, see Snow, D.A. (1980) The Disengagement Process: A Neglected Problem in Participant Observation Research, *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 3 No. (**2**) pp. 100-122.

- but no less important level – I felt certain that the decision to exist the 'field' to a very significant extent would be determined by the quality (and quantity) of empirical material. This duality, in a sense, led to twenty months of fieldwork in Dorchester. However, and importantly, in the slipstream were two further considerations. In becoming emotionally entangled in the fabric of the Hub Project I strongly identified with its principled determination to respond (however imperfectly) to the problems of street homelessness in Dorchester. As such, I was acutely troubled by the thought that my departure had the potential to impact negatively on a support service heavily reliant on a combination of private philanthropy and public donations to fund and staff its day-to-day existence. This feeling was given added poignancy by the following email message:

> …What with you coming to the end of your research it really is the end of something. We already miss you at the Hub, especially me as your presence has always been stimulating and despite a successful recruitment drive we are often short of a pair of hands.[53]

Additionally, I was also slightly unsettled by the thought that once I had formally departed from the research setting I would miss out on significantly new, exciting and valuable insights. As it was, time intervened and I was forced to leave the 'field'. In the current context, however, I remain a keen reader of the Dorset Echo, member of the 'Friends of the Hub' and, above all, have retained friendships and relationships forged in the crucible of pursuing ethnographic fieldwork. [54]

While not initially intended as an adversarial document, at times it was difficult as intimated to remove myself from the material. Such moments were clearly important. This is especially so

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[53] Personal email received 16 March 2009.
[54] The Friends of the Hub functions as a support group to raise funds and publicise the problems of homelessness in Dorchester and the work of the Hub Project.

because it implies that the ethnographic study of homelessness is, at base, both an intellectual and political activity. We discuss this below.

3.5 **Ethics and Politics**

> Homelessness is evil. Sometimes it does arise as a result of malevolent or malicious action, but more often it is an effect of more ordinary evils by which individuals, families, landlords, public sector departments, charities and governments are bound together in social relations which produce and reproduce the harmful effects which we construct as homelessness. (Cloke, 2002:598).

Understandably, the perception that homelessness is a deleterious social phenomenon, suggesting as it does the need to do something about it, is constantly invoked within the extant literature on the social exclusion of homelessness. Consequently it suggests that academic homelessness research is a self-conscious moral and political act, and cannot be understood in isolation from political pressure, public perception and societal reactions. Yet, at first sight, to position oneself as a socially engaged researcher who articulates the viewpoint that homelessness is a pernicious injustice requiring urgent policy redress is to invite suspicion, mistrust and accusations of impartiality (Cloke et al., 2005:2). To assume and advocate a clear and explicit political position is perceived to be inimical to rigorous and robust scientific inquiry. There are many reasons for this, some of them understandable, and some related to the prescriptive nature of contemporary ethical governance. This is due at least in part to the prevailing academic environment itself. Third (2003), for instance, has highlighted that homelessness and housing-based research accounts for a significant proportion of income for academic institutions. Here, then, socio-cultural research that seeks to explicate the lived

experience of homeless people is unavoidably connected with the professional need to attract research funding, and publication will be about fulfilling the requirements and expectations of a research career. In practice, I would suggest that it is possible to detect an abstract, intellectually fascinated, but often uncommitted to the people and issues concerned. As these comments should make clear the desire to connect discussions on local character of homelessness in Dorchester to wider debates about contemporary citizenship must be framed within a broader social, political and historical context.

My thinking on this point has been informed by Paul Cloke's (2002) assertion that researching homelessness cannot be seen as a politically neutral undertaken. As Cloke usefully reminds us, homelessness is about competing notions of social justice, and within such a framework, the possibility of rethinking and reimagining social relations. Thinking about the study of homelessness and it interdependence with research ethics, I have been forced to question my own relationship to and position within the so-called 'homelessness industry' (Whiteford, 2007: Ravenhill, 2008). In a very elemental sense I have been forced to confront and critique potential research methodologies and practices that do not, as Doyle (1999:239) has forcefully remarked, exploit the homeless people I 'research' or the agencies I work through. This task is not an easy one, partially because it is speculative but also because, if I am to be perfectly candid, I feel as if I do not as yet possess the experience or vocabulary to sufficiently capture my feelings and thoughts.

Winchester and Costello (1995) make sense of the complexity and ambiguity of academic researching youth homelessness:

> We do not and cannot claim to speak for the street kids. Although we can use
> their words, we cannot enter their worlds, except as limited and invited

visitors. Our observations of events and relationships are coloured by our status as academic outsiders… [We] benefit from our own academic knowledge, but we are also encumbered by our own cultural baggage. We recognise the limitations of objectivity and validity in representing groups defined as 'other' (1995:333).

There is, I would submit, a contradictory impulse at the centre of my engagement with the study of homelessness. It would be disingenuous of me not to concede that my interest in homelessness lies on a continuum between academic curiosity and moral concern. To be sure, I recognise that by engaging in the academic study of homelessness I am in effect advancing my own professional status and repertoire of economic and cultural capital. I realise, moreover, that this makes for an interesting juxtaposition. Even allowing for the fact that my interest in homelessness as a form of critical engagement is infused by a commitment to political action directed towards shifting the social balance of power, it begins from a position of differential power. That is to say that in the course of attempting to make sense of the experience and responses to street homelessness in Dorchester I have acquired skills and forms of knowledge that will enable me to advance – symbolically and instrumentally – within academia. This insight, originally advanced by Bourdieu (1998), brings to the foreground the asymmetrical nature of social research. Despite being armed with this understanding I remain troubled by the thought that this doctoral research project, as with all forms of research with marginalised communities, is ineluctably oppressive and exploitative and that truly ethical research is impossible (Patai, 1991).

Following Bernard Williams (1995), I see ethnographic fieldwork as a means to illustrate and illuminate the complex ways that street homelessness and responsible citizenship are discursively and materially entwined. In such circumstances, ethnography allows for the development of a two-way relationship between 'researcher' and the 'researched' rather than an exploitative situation in

which only the researcher gains from encounters in the 'field'. Developing such a dialectical account enables a broader and deeper understanding of the way in which qualitative social science is implicated in the lives and spaces of the 'hard-to-reach'. However, as David Seddon (2009) has made abundantly clear:

> But this is only the case if the anthropologist is predisposed to 'see' the structures of inequality that permeate all levels of society, from bottom to top, in the contemporary world. It does not automatically follow, as many seem to believe, that fieldwork, and 'paying attention to the lives of ordinary people' result in critical and committed analysis, let alone activism and advocacy.[55]

This criticality does not detract from the essential argument that the ethnographic spirit can help to construct new understandings of the relationship between rough sleeping and the politics of responsible citizenship. Fundamentally this is to recognise the importance of giving narrative space to homeless people to voice their views, experiences and knowledge; but also to give 'space' to the complex and varied positions adopted by housing authorities, local businesses, the police, the media and emergency services for homeless people in responding to the 'problems' of homelessness in a particular place and in a particular context (DeVerteuil et al., 2009:17). This is therefore the territory I intend to chart through the use of a series of vignettes, extracts from field journals, excerpts from formal interviews and other more disparate and discrete forms of documentary evidence. [56]

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[55] Taken from 'Starting at the Bottom', Posted online 25 June 2009, www.isj.org.uk [Accessed 05/07/09].
[56] All of the representational accounts herein are derived from conversations and encounters that I have personally witnessed or participated in.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH CONTEXT

Last year you will remember there were significant problems, which lead us to review our service and make some significant and difficult changes. Thanks to great efforts by everyone, we have now turned things around. Not that we are without our critics, but we are also receiving renewed support and encouragement. The service is now designed for three groups: (**1**) Homeless people who are working on their problems; (**2**) Wayfarers who are just passing through (they are expected to only stay for a few days), and (**3**) those who have recently re-settled. The latter group is a growing band who will take what housing is offered to them, sometimes very sub-standard, just to get off the streets, and begin to address their often multiple problems. However, until our councils have a larger supply of suitable housing, and are in a position to offer them to all those who want to get off the streets, then we have little choice. We see it as the highest priority, to get someone into housing when they are motivated, and not to miss the chance. Since last year we have had a restriction on people from traveller sites at the Hub, in an attempt to restrict numbers, but this policy is continually under review (Annabel Broome, 2008). [57]

4.1 Introduction

In this section the focus is twofold. On the substantive level, I set out to introduce the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester as an institutional setting and performative space. It will shown that the emergence and consolidation of the Hub Project is analogous with the contemporary focus on community involvement and voluntary action, the two cornerstones of the 'New' Labour government's overarching social inclusion and public citizenship agendas (Wells, 2008). This

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[57] Taken from 'Welcome by the Chair': Hub Project Annual General Meeting, May 2008.

would appear to be a useful starting point in relation to understanding the organisational ethos of the Hub Project. The policy focus is posited on the assumption that neo-liberal reforms have led to the erosion of comprehensive welfare settlements and a corresponding rise of voluntarism and self-help - a movement that is understood by some with reference to growing 'welfare pluralism' and by others as evidence of a growing 'shadow state' (Milligan, 2007: Wolch, 1999). The shift is towards more explicit ways to define and promote the social interventionist state (Rodger, 2008) through the fostering of self-governance, deregulation, marketisation, increased involvement of the voluntary sector in public services and the radical realignment of the relations between state and civil society.

Co-existing and allied to this interest it also seems particularly important to map out the importance of ethical citizenship together with some of the ways in which organisational ethos and the impulse to give and volunteer are stretched and transformed by a confluence of individual ethics, charismatic leadership and overt political posturing (Allahyari, 2000: Cloke et al., 2005: Lyon-Callo, 2008: Toynbee, 2009). A particular focus is placed on the geographies of care and responsibility (Lawson, 2007). That is, the ways in which contemporary societal shifts are implicated in the urge to care. Unpacking this moral landscape—pointing to the construction of the Hub Project as an important source of material resource and refuge for a highly stigmatised group and the recursive relationship between the Hub Project and the wider community —helps us see how rough sleeping came to be constructed as a 'problem' in Dorchester.

By drawing linkages between the Hub Project and the public perception of homelessness in Dorchester also requires cognisance of the complex interconnections between policy discourses and strategies that highlights issues of criminality, anti-social behaviour and other forms of 'challenging behaviour', rather more than the targeting of resources towards marginalised communities and 'excluded' spaces and away from the principles of universalism and social justice (Stenson, 2008). Central to this concern is the drive to recruit 'active citizens' to police

themselves, monitor their neighbours and reinforce responsibility. On a theoretical level, the aim here is to draw attention to how 'responsibilisation' gained force and institutional purchase in Dorchester while also capturing important ethnographic insights into how citizenship is constituted and contested. To begin this process, I will now turn to outline the historical and institutional context in which rough sleeper in Dorchester needs to be viewed.

4.2 <u>The Hub Project in Context</u>

In order to give context to the empirical focus of this study, I will provide a brief overview of the development of the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester. Such an exploration must, however, acknowledge both the local past and the local present if it is to develop into a finely grained and critical analysis of on-street homelessness and responsible citizenship in Dorchester. In approaching this task, the reader will be taken systematically through the organisational and policy backdrop, before being sequentially led through the complex and dynamic interface between the principles and logics of 'personal responsibility' and the overriding strategy of 'responsibilisation' in relation to rough sleepers in West Dorset. Here the overarching context is one in which the promotion of 'responsiblisation' reflects a desire to reconstruct the meaning of citizenship (Ferguson, 2008). A predominate, but not exclusive, focus will be placed on how community governance is played out in practice on the ground. It will therefore provide a portal through which to critically examine how homelessness service providers and homeless people are activated and engaged in governance processes.

Dorchester is a market town in west Dorset, on the River Frome at the junction of the A35, southern coast trunk road, and the A37 road to Yeovil and the North, 20 miles west of Poole and 8 miles north of Weymouth. Dorchester has been the county town of Dorset since 1305, and is also the town of Casterbridge which featured in several of Thomas Hardy's novels and short

stories.[58] It was also the departure point for the six men known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs who, in 1834 were deported to Australia and later pardoned. Dorchester Prison was constructed in the town during the 19th century and the Category B prison is still in use today, holding convicted and remanded inmates from local courts (HM Prison Service, 2009).

As a place of historical curiosity and criminal infamy, Dorchester is indelibly marked by its association with Judge Jeffreys (1645-1689) – perhaps better known as the 'Hanging Judge' - who became notable during the tumultuous reign of King James II, rising to the position of Lord Chancellor (Draper, 1992). Jeffreys presided over the 'Bloody Assizes' at which harsh sentences were given to the supporters of the Duke of Monmouth following the failed attempt to dethrone James II during the Pitchfork Rebellion. The rebellion ended with the defeat of Monmouth's forces at the Battle of Sedgemoor on 6 July 1685. Monmouth was subsequently executed for treason, and many of his supporters were transported to the 'Bloody Assizes', which were held in the Oak Room (now a tea room) of the Antelope Hotel in Dorchester. The sobriquet 'Hanging judge' refers to the barbarity with which a total 74 people were executed, 175 were transported and 29 pardoned (in surrounding towns and villages).

In 2001 the town had a population of 16,171 and a catchment population of approximately 40,000. The town has a busy shopping centre and a flourishing market, which is held on Wednesdays. It has long been recognised as the administrative centre of the County. The town has two railway stations. Dorchester South railway station on the South Western Main Line to London, Bournemouth and Southampton and Dorchester West railway station, serving Yeovil, Bath and Bristol via the Heart of Wessex Line. Major employers include Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Hospital.[59]

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[58] For elaboration see 'Visit Dorchester' – www.visit-dorchester.co.uk
[59] See www.dorestforyou.com for more information about Dorchester and West Dorset.

Dorchester is the largest town in West Dorset (the local government district and parliamentary constituency). West Dorset covers 418 square miles and has a population in excess of 96,000, making it one of the sparest districts in England. Half of the residents live in the six towns, with the remainder in the 132 rural parishes. The population structure reflects the rural nature of the district. West Dorset is not widely appreciated as being an area exhibiting deprivation. However, scattered across the district there are still pockets of deprivation, often located adjacent to affluence. Ranked by income and house price, the district is the 26th least affordable in the country (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2003). On average over 2007, the unemployment rate for West Dorset was 0.8 per cent of the residential working age population with 427 claimants. At July 2008, claimant unemployment in West Dorset was 0.7 per cent with 361 registered for Jobseeker's Allowance (Dorset Research & Information Group, 2008). In the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 West Dorset was ranked 210th out of 355 Local Authorities in England (1st being the most deprived) while its immediate neighbour Weymouth and Portland District Council ranked 127th (CLG, 2007).

Housing in West Dorset is expensive and the demand for social housing is high. The Survey of Housing Need and Demand undertaken by Fordham Research in December 2007 estimated there are around 43,545 households in the District, of which 74% are owner-occupiers, 14% live in the social rented sector and 13% rent privately. The latest Land Registry data suggests that the average property price in West Dorset is around 25% higher than the average for England and Wales and slightly above the average for the whole of Dorset, and outstrips average wages by a ratio of 11:1. The sale of rural housing and the invasion of villages by wealthy in-migrants have increased property values and pushed out the poorest households. Second holiday homes account for 4.6% of the total (net) dwellings of March 2007 (while the % for England and Wales was 0.7%). This particular form of gentrification and leisure related investment (Paris, 2008) has served to embed and exacerbate housing inequality in rural Dorset. Accordingly, the local

housing market in Dorchester and the surrounding area is such that supporting new ways to deliver affordable housing was identified by West Dorset District Council as its main priority actions. This is, in part, attributable to the chronic shortage of affordable housing, the low level in new social build, the steady reduction in local authority housing through Right-to-Buy sales and rising land prices.[60] It is also linked to the nature of the private rented sector. Here we see a strong and self-reinforcing constellation of availability, accessibility and affordability effectively preventing many from entering the sector. Even when accommodation is available within the district it is recognised that:

> Those who have recently re-settled [will] take what housing is offered to them, sometimes very sub-standard, just to get off the streets.

And similarly:

> We can not achieve this alone. We need a national policy to work towards affordable accommodation for all and for suitable sheltered accommodation for those who need to work at their own problems before they can cope with their own home. These are urgent needs but they can only be met if the political will can be aroused (Dr. Margaret Barker, 2007).

Anecdotal evidence would seem to suggest that housing associations are sometimes reluctant to accept statutory single homeless people because of fears that such individuals would present significant management problems. Relevant here is the perceived association with rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2007). Add to this, there is an acute awareness

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[60] First introduced in 1980, the Right-to-Buy scheme gives eligible council tenants the right to buy their property from the council at a discount.

of the difficulties associated with persuading private landlords to accept benefit recipients as tenants, which is neatly and succinctly captured in the following admission that 'the problem we have here [in West Dorset] is that landlords will not touch people on benefits' (Housing Needs manager, 2008). Changes to the housing benefit system would also appear to have deterred some, though by no means all, from accessing the private rental market or the social housing sector. The Local Housing Allowance seeks to promote personal responsibility and reward consumer choice and incentivise people to work.[61] Evidence from discussions with service providers and ex-rough sleepers in Dorchester however indicates that vulnerable tenants, particularly those who are financially illiterate and substance dependant, to have fallen into significant arrears and associated debt having received the benefit directly. Accordingly, many single homeless people simply decide against approaching the local Housing Need office in order to access the allowance while others, precariously housed and struggling to adapt to conventional demands, abandon accommodation in the face of growing debt or the threat of eviction.

4.3 <u>Housing Need</u>

> In a prosperous and wealthy area, people on low incomes can find life particularly hard. For tourists and people new to the area, they can't believe that Dorchester has a problem with poverty. But it's much harder for people living on the breadline when they are surrounded by wealth. The dilemma is that if we house 11 or 12 people as we have done in the past few months then people are surprised that there are still homeless in Dorchester. But there are always people who become homeless. There are so many sofa

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[61] The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) calculates Housing Benefit (HB) for tenants renting from private landlords. It does not therefore apply to council tenants, or those renting from a housing association. In most cases, LHA is paid directly to the person who claims it. In some instances, however, payment can be made direct to landlords – see www.england.shelter.org.uk for more information.

surfers' who are vulnerable. It isn't a case of new homeless people coming

from elsewhere it's a case of maintaining vulnerable people who are here (Dr.

Margaret Barker).

The picturesque rural idyll cultivated by expensive and well crafted tourist campaigns, the bucolic

charms of River Cottage HQ and most recently by the critical acclaimed and commercially popular

BBC dramatisation of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* have created an image of Wessex that is largely

inattentive to the pockets, threads, and hotspots of deprivation, crime, physical and mental ill-

health, unemployment, illegal drug and alcohol abuse and housing need. It is in this way that rural

imaginings and social and material realities exist, then, in a strange symbiosis. These two

significant dynamics, in turn, both shape the experience of homelessness and the production and

consumption of services for homeless people in rural Dorset. In Dorchester, as with other small

urban towns with a large rural hinterland, homelessness has been a recurrent if largely

overlooked social reality. Historically, homeless people and wayfarers (men of the road) have

been drawn to the town by virtue of its symbiotic relationship with Dorchester Prison, its proximity

to the Pilsdon Community, Hilfield Friary and the Dorset coast. This critical milieu can therefore be

seen as a crucial nodal point in the wider geographies of homelessness provision. On this point, a

long-standing volunteer has observed:

Dorchester is a central part of the old trading ways between London down to

the West Country, and people expect there to be services here for the

homeless. Some people start coming down this way during March and April

on their way down to Devon and Cornwall, looking for cash-in hand jobs

during the summer, then go back to London and the Home Counties

(O'Donovan, 2008).

Local authorities, through their legal duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, have to provide accommodation for some homeless people, namely those in priority need who are not intentionally homeless and have a local connection. Where there is no duty to house the local authority still have a duty to give advice and assistance. There is, however, evidence from Dorset Citizens Advice Bureaux (2007) and the Fordham Group (2007) that West Dorset District Council is in some way denying applicants their statutory rights, and thus 'gatekeeping' and trying to hide the true nature of the problem. West Dorset District Council has refocused their services towards homelessness prevention and housing options in line with the government's policy direction. In broader terms, local homelessness prevention in England has seen levels of statutory homelessness acceptances decline in recent years (Pleace, 2008) There have been widespread falls in street homelessness as well, though significant doubt remains as to the methodological validity underpinning the new 'homelessness prevention regime', with many academics and activists accusing the government and local authorities of massaging the figures for political reasons (Pawson, 2007). However, the number of people sleeping rough in Dorchester and its immediate environs has been a source of conflict and contestation. The following email correspondence is a case in point:

West Dorset District Council carried out a Rough Sleeper Count in March 2000. At this time there were 2 rough sleepers identified, although it was suspected that there could be up to 4 more they were not present on the night. As per [Communities and Local Government] CLG (formerly ODPM) guidance to LAs with less than ten rough sleepers, numbers of rough sleepers were monitored in subsequent years by consulting local agencies offering services to rough sleepers. [In] order to continue to monitor the number of rough sleepers in the district and ensure that significant changes are noted the council carried out voluntary Hot Spot checks, concentrating on

Dorchester as the county town. It was agreed to carry out a Hot Spot count in September 2005 in Dorchester. There were a total of 4 rough sleepers identified and recorded on Form A, and another 2 rough sleepers identified and recorded on Form B. There was also evidence of 1 further rough sleeper location on Form B. The council carried out a further Hot Spot check in March 2007, which gave a result of 10 rough sleepers in the area. However this result was not seen to be a true representation of the local situation and reflected a specific set of circumstance – just before the count a number of people were evicted from a flat being used as a squat, who were thought to be remaining in the area temporarily in some cases [to] adhere to police bail conditions, and in other cases attend the local funeral of a fellow rough sleeper. [62]

By December 2008 West Dorset District Council was able to reflect on progress made in reducing the number of rough sleeping in the area and confidently assert that:

> Current estimates are [that there are] 2 Rough Sleepers in West Dorset District Council, through the summer it was around 4 with a maximum of 6, numbers began dropping off from October. Police reports confirm 2 for December 08 they are both enduring Rough Sleepers who have been in our area for some years sleeping in a tent. The street homeless outreach team (SHOT) worker is making sustained efforts to engage with them with some success with 1 at the moment. [63]

The distinct milieus of the Hub Project and its sister service, the Soul Food soup kitchen in Weymouth, generate an alternative response:

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[62] Personal email received 2007.
[63] Personal email received December 2008.

The situation in Weymouth and Dorchester is different. It seems like people pass through Weymouth, more particularly so in the summer than the winter months. The district council here in Dorchester reckons, according to their most recent spot check, that there are no rough sleepers in the town. You just have to look around [the Hub Project] to see that that is not true. And in Weymouth [the District Council claim] the figure is four, just four!

The landscape of services for homeless people in Dorchester is both modest and disjointed. It has a single day-centre, the Hub Project, which welcomes anyone over the age of 21 years who sleeps rough in and around Dorchester. There are no emergency night shelters or soup runs in the town, although the Hub Project does provide discounted meal tickets to a Saturday and Sunday morning breakfast service. The nearest open access hostels are in Yeovil, Exeter, Taunton and Southampton while the Pilsdon Community allows a one night stay (two nights at weekends) once every 6 weeks (so as to provide for a range of different people and to discourage dependency on the service).[64] These are complemented by three short term supported tenancy accommodation projects. Provision consists of six self-contained one-bedroom flats over two locations for homeless people with enduring mental health needs together with a ten bedroom semi-supported scheme for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness in recovery from alcohol or drug addiction. All the hostels are run by Bournemouth Churches Housing Association and are funded by rental income (mainly Housing Benefit) and contracts with Supporting People. The Supported People programme – an auxiliary support service to help vulnerable tenants to retain their tenancies - is provided by Southern Focus Trust (SFT) which offers a generic floating

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[64] The Pilsdon Community is a 'caring community' set deep in the Dorset countryside between the towns of Bridport and Crewkerne (Smith, 1999). It was established in 1958 in order to provide an environment where people can rebuild their lives after experiencing a crisis, whether sudden or progressive. Today, the Pilsdon Community occupies a large sixteenth century manor house that is at the very heart of the community's concern with meeting the material, emotional and spiritual needs of its guests. The main building is flanked by a series of renovated stables and outhouses that exist to give shelter and sustenance to wayfarers seeking 'a rest on their journey's way'. All in all, Pilsdon has eleven temporary beds which are exclusively reserved for wayfarers.

tenancy support service across Dorset to over 400 clients. Typically, help is provided with claiming benefits, budgeting, furnishing accommodation, accessing health and other services, and finding 'purposeful activity' (Busch-Geertsema & Fitzpatrick, 2008:13).

Emergency services for homeless people in Dorchester are a relatively recent phenomenon, with no direct or targeted support being offered until 2002. There is evidence that the 'problem' of street homelessness and the paucity of appropriate responses to these concerns within Dorchester only became visible towards the end of the 1990s. This growing realisation was subsequently reinforced when, Graham Burden, a local rough sleeper died of hypothermia in a Dorchester toilet in 1999. Within this febrile environment a small cadre of community and religious activists set out to respond to the immediate and identified needs of 'local' rough sleepers. Prior to this the Baptist Church had endeavoured to undertake a soup run in 1992, during the winter months. A year later, Dorchester Poverty Action Group, a sub-committee of Churches Together in Dorchester, set up a meal ticket system given free by the church leaders in the town. This underlines, *inter alia*, the fact that the provision of services to homeless and destitute people is one of the longest-standing means by which faith communities have sought to contribute to the welfare of society (Johnsen, 2005).

In a moment of synchronicity, central government significantly revised homelessness legislation and thus established a new duty for local authorities to produce homelessness strategies (Pleace, 2008). Within this approach, there was a new emphasis on preventative initiatives. The 1999 strategy to counteract sleeping was perhaps most explicitly articulated in Prime Minister Blair's introduction to In from the Cold: The Government's Strategy on Rough Sleeping*:*

> In the long term, we can only make a lasting difference on the streets by
>
> stopping people from arriving there in the first place. That is why prevention is
>
> a key part of the strategy, and why more will be done to address the reasons

why particular groups such as care-leavers, ex-servicemen and ex-offenders are disproportionately likely to end up on the streets. This strategy sets out support for new temporary and permanent beds, better help in finding jobs and a more focused approach to helping people off the streets (Rough Sleepers Unit, 1999).

Thus West Dorset District Council formally issued a *Homelessness Strategy* that recommended that a day-centre be opened and sited in Dorchester to offer advice and support to homeless people.[65] There was, however, no apparent means of opening such a centre – no funding or premises or manpower to steer it. Consequently, local church representatives decided that *they* were going to make this happen with Dorchester Poverty Action Group agreeing to lead the fundraising drive. It started in 2002 as an experimental single session one morning a week at the Quaker Meeting House, run by a volunteer from the Spirit of Hope Church. Then an interdenominational group began to offer food, hot drinks and clothing for two, then three mornings a week at the Salvation Army Hall, with a paid part-time coordinator, a team of volunteers and a steering group.

Reflecting on the genesis of the Hub Project, Dr. Margaret Barker a founder trustee commented:

> The only person [actively campaigning for the establishment of services for homeless people in the years preceding the emergence of the Hub Project] was Penny with the Salvation Army. She at that time worked in the shop and was very conscious of it. I was the chair of Poverty Action at the time, where [some in the local community] were still seeing them as drunks on the bench as there was an awful lot of them. My first awareness that they were actually going to have to do something was the government initiative that said that

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[65] West Dorset District Council Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008, Dorchester: Housing Needs Services.

every council must have a rough sleeper strategy, and that was for the millennium. So, West Dorset very reasonably and sensibly invited all the charities, including the church representatives, to talk. So that was the end of 1999-2000. The chap had died in the toilet in 1999 and the police inspector at the time said 'I do not want my men to have to deal with that again.' So he was hugely supportive. We had this strategy that had to be ready for April 2000 and it was agreed that high on the list, top of the list would be a day-centre for people because we felt that we couldn't cope with a night-shelter but that we should start off with a place where people could go for a meal and things. So that was part of the strategy.

And further to this:

It was led by [West Dorset] District Council. But then it became clear that as it got towards April that it was only ever going to be a written strategy. No one had the slightest intention of setting to and creating a day-centre. So these charitable people and the police say that we need a day-centre...so we'll put down a day-centre without any intention to do something. So that was when Penny and one of the church ministers who was also on the committee said 'unless we do something about this it isn't going to happen.' So that's when they got the Rough Sleepers Action [Group]. But it only fell into my lap when they realised that they had to have a registered charity status and that [Dorchester] Poverty Action was already registered as a charity with a remit to set-up projects. The preceding thing was that when Dorchester Poverty Action Group had been set-up in 1989-90 we had been saying, well Penny had been saying again, that there is absolutely nowhere for homeless people to go. And in '93 we set-up the meal ticket system with the cafe. So there had

been awareness with the churches and the meal tickets had been administered through the churches right through until the Hub had opened in 2002. So we had been aware that there was nothing but there hadn't been any thought that 'we the churches' would have to do something about it.

The campaigning which led to the establishment of the Hub Project demonstrates how local churches and community activists can contribute to the emergence of local and specific services for homeless people. Within this context, moreover, we plainly encounter the suggestion that in Dorset local authorities have historically refused to recognise homelessness as a genuine local issue. Here the lack of facilities for homeless people in rural environments would seem to suggest that homeless people are all too often rendered invisible in local political and socio-cultural consciousness (Cloke et al., 2003:26). Notwithstanding some important and significant developments in recent years, there is a clear recognition that the extent and nature of support services for homeless people in Dorchester remains a cause of serious concern. In particular, there is a growing tide of support for a wet-house for rough sleepers offering primary treatment - intense three-month therapy to help substance users to the next stage of finding accommodation – thus conceived such a service or resource would keep people housed rather than on the streets. Recognising this, Bob Matthews has urgently pointed out:

> There's a wet house in Bournemouth that's very successful. They're not cheap. But dry-houses don't work for some people. [They are more] likely to relapse if they went straight from de-tox to permanent accommodation. There are people who are never going to be able to stop drinking or drugs. They say it's a lifestyle choice because they don't know what else to say.

By exposition rather than implication Dr. Margaret Barker has commented:

We need increased services in Weymouth, as we certainly inherit some 'drift' up here. We also need increased private accommodation for rent in Dorset; services designed for people with both addictions and mental health problems and a local 'wet' house.

Local inter-organisational networks that link different parts of the social housing sector with other welfare providers and which aim towards the establishment of greater co-ordination between statutory and non-statutory services has evolved slowly and unevenly in Dorchester and across West Dorset. There are, however, two main drivers at work here. In the first place, it is possible to identify how a small battalion of 'serial volunteers' and community activists attached or loosely associated with the Hub Project actively set out to provide services for those in acute need, in a place that hasn't always offered support for people sleeping rough, long before 'official recognition'. On this theme, a founding volunteer and organiser has remarked ''I think The Hub is very important - Dorchester is a central part of the old trading ways between London down to the West Country, and people expect there to be services here for the homeless. [And] if you rub the surface of any town you'll find a homeless person. And it isn't always someone with a drug or alcohol addiction'' (O'Donovan, 2008). Such philanthropic efforts have, in time, enabled the Hub Project to become the nucleus around which targeted housing, health and welfare benefit advice work has (slowly but steadily) evolved. The importance of this is apparent in the increased appreciation of the local geographies of homelessness and the accompanying need for other organisations to respond and facilitate the development of appropriate support services. In Dorchester, ancillary and integrated support services for homeless people have not emerged holistically but in fragmentary and unexpected ways. In this regard a nurse practitioner employed, mentored and supported by a local GP surgery reflecting on her involvement with homeless people in Dorchester has observed:

I was doing some locum work at the Prince of Wales surgery and overheard a conversation involving an elderly woman who was made to feel unsafe after being confronted by a group of homeless men outside the surgery the previous evening whilst they waited for a friend. I simply asked why we made the homeless attend the surgery; could we not take the medical provision to them. I was given the go ahead to do just that. Originally my work was funded by Pfizer drug company as the PCT [Primary Care Trust] only had the official count which implied that there was only one or two rough sleepers and therefore not a need. After a year, I submitted my stats to show that there is a need [for targeted healthcare] and so now am employed by the surgery but funded by the PCT.

In the second place, and in contrast to the soft paternalism of the Hub Project and other partner agencies, it is possible to identify how West Dorset District Council and Dorset Police have sought to address the 'problem' of entrenched rough sleeping and street culture as part of a concerted drive to combat anti-social behaviour, with begging and street drinking especially being targeted for enforcement interventions (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2008). Once rendered visible, though, attempts have been made to both 'export' homeless people from Dorchester and to criminalise and clear homeless people from prime urban areas within the town centre (Whiteford, 2008). In this, there is an explicit expectation that the Hub Project will join together with statutory authorities to promote community cohesion and civic participation by enforcing a social contract defined through strict behavioural requirements and motivational engineering of those who sleep rough as well as those who have recently been re-housed by continue to use the day-centre in order to access advice and support. An engaged local community has, in essence, sublimated the Hub Project to the contemporary policy discourse of responsibilisation. For reasons explained more fully below, the increased emphasis on personal responsibility, obligation and self-activation –

guiding principles institutionalised by New Labour through the logic of its social exclusion agenda – can also be mobilised in order to progressively transform attitudes towards small-scale welfare institutions, from the prevailing assumption that local voluntary organisations are the best (and in some cases the only) answer to the '*broken Britain'* thesis towards a more punitive approach that emphasises the increased powers of local communities to influence and reshape local affairs.

As Buckingham (2009) has noted the responsibility for planning and purchasing homelessness services has been devolved from national to local government. Not only does this necessitate a recognition that homelessness organisations now compete for increased (but short-term funds) but that this development has also transformed the culture of the homelessness sector and its ability to be a genuinely independent and critical voice within civil society. In this regard, homelessness charities, traditionally viewed as a sphere outside of the state, now find themselves engaged in various types of 'compacts' with both the state and the business community. This has had the effect of redrawing the boundaries between the charitable voluntary sector and the state. A specific concern is that during the New Labour period homelessness charities and pressure groups have become positioned as 'docile', and thus effectively reconfigured as subservient state agencies. Seddon (2007) refers to this process as 'mission drift' as large voluntaries give less attention to their organising principles and more to the 'contracts' which express the government's agenda. Under these circumstances, charitable voluntary organisations are less inclined to criticise statutory agencies or the tenure of prevailing social welfare policies (Whiteford, 2007).

However, in some important respects, the Hub Project has benefited little from these initiatives, partly because of a desire to remain institutionally autonomous and distinct. This would seem to reflect a commitment to a less bureaucratic, more personalised service; one that is able to respond with a great degree of creatively and flexibility to local need. This view suggests that being institutionally separate from government has the potential to afford a greater sense of

closeness to the communities they serve and a real sense of mission and values (Sampson, 2009).

It is perhaps worth reiterating at this juncture that the Supporting People programme and the Places of Change agenda have been the two principal funding streams available to local authorities and voluntary sector service providers working within the housing and homelessness arena. The Supporting People programme provides housing related support to prevent problems that may otherwise lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness while Places of Change is a capital investment programme which aims to transform hostels and day-centres in such a way as to enable vulnerable people to gain the skills and confidence to break the cycle of homelessness (CLG, 2006). These twin mechanisms emphasise both the responsibilities of homeless people and the precariously housed and the 'assertive' and 'interventionist' approach required of service providers (Pawson, 2008). In both respects the Hub Project has decided to assert its independence and has opted against applying for funding. With the notable exception of a small (but comparatively significant) grant from West District Council Council's homelessness prevention fund - which was suddenly and inexplicably withdrawn in April 2008 despite having been allocated since the financial year 2003-04 - the Hub Project's daily operating budget of £150 comes from small grants from charitable trusts, local donations and an ongoing funding arrangement from Dorset Primary Care Trust.

It is also important to emphasise that within the Hub Project there exists a critical wing of opinion which views part of its ultimate 'mission statement' to be its own obsolescence. This is succinctly captured in the following comment: "I am not sure it has a long-term role, unless this present economic downturn results on desperate people losing their homes and livelihood, and taking to the streets" (Annabel Broome, Hub Project chairman and trustee). This impulse is, at the same time, buttressed by a recognition that in common with most small charitable day-centres for homeless people the Hub Project is subject to 'severe funding constraints, fragile staffing bases,

inadequate buildings and, often, in the face of public opposition' (Johnsen et al., 2005:792). However, the importance and influence of the Hub Project's ability to provide material support to was frequently remarked upon by auxiliary social care professionals. Thus:

> It's obvious that they're very together the people who run the Hub. They seem to be professional, competent and capable in what they do. And I think that they now provide a service that is worthy of a much bigger town. I think that they present to the council as [being] quite formidable. I think that they have to be careful not to make that fait accompli in terms of the struggle that they're in with the council (Street Homeless Outreach Worker).

4.4 'Impulse to Care'

> Our group of clients is very needy, often hard to reach, and hard to manage. They are often funny and insightful but can also be very disorganised, occasionally threatening and often difficult. These are the people who often have not been helped by mainstream services. We pride ourselves on our independence and finding creative ways to meet their needs when other statutory services don't. [66]

The Hub Project is located on the outskirts of Dorchester town centre and occupies a small plot of land on a light industrial estate.[67] It is immediately bordered by a builders merchants and a DIY and gardening centre. It also sits in close proximity to Dorchester West train station and Dorchester Market - two sites that while being generally viewed as 'public spaces' are also identifiably 'homeless places' (a term used to denote both those service networks that often form

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[66] Abridged extract from Trustees' Report 2007/08.
[67] The Hub Project is open five mornings a week for regular service users and wayfarers, and certain afternoons for appointment with visiting professionals – Shelter outreach worker, a Nurse practitioner, Community Drug and Alcohol Services, probation and mental health team.

the core of a place for homeless people and the creativity deployed by homeless people in negotiation and transforming marginal spaces) - within the broader social fabric of the town. Equally and explicitly, for homeless people in Dorchester the Hub Project is co-constituted as part of a cartography of mobility, the contours of which are shaped by institutional (and some non-institutional) spaces (Cloke et al., 2006). Conceived in this way, the Hub Project can therefore be viewed in terms of rough sleepers' everyday routes and mobilities, punctuated by nodal service spaces such as the probation service, jobcentres and GP surgeries, but also by less formal but still regulated places such as parks (Healy, 2008), public toilets (Adcock, 2007a) and public libraries (Casey et al., 2007). Other rough sleeping sites involve homeless people moving beyond these marginal areas in to the prime spaces of the town. For example, the Fairfield market site has – both historically and contemporaneously – represented a key site for rough sleeping. In these and other ways it is possible to discern how movement participates in how place is made through performance, we can also see how different voices can create place in different ways and from different perspectives (Pink, 2008). It should now be clear that practices of rough sleeping are intimately interconnected with the micro-architecture of the town and, in a concomitant sense, inextricably bound up with where they can 'be' and 'do' homelessness, and the legitimacy of their claims to being in public spaces and buildings.

On one level, the absence and unevenness of statutory support for homeless people in rural Dorset means that the Hub Project constitutes a nodal point linking homeless migratory circuits with basic but vital support services. In this regard, then, it acts as a mediating force in relation to wider social welfare agencies and custodial bodies, which all too frequently arouse suspicion and concern among the rough sleeping community. This does not mean that homeless people are unaware or apathetic to the stigmatised and degraded status of the Hub Project within the local community or, for that matter, insensitive to the perception that they themselves are viewed as being *separate* and *distinct* from the social order and standards of conduct of 'settled' society. On

another, more experiential level, the Hub Project is a place to 'be' and to 'belong'. This is especially pertinent in relation to the organisational ethos of the Hub Project which is committed to the values of social justice, community and personal growth. Accordingly:

> I see myself as providing a professional service to a marginalised group who can clearly see that they are being valued by the provision of a service which they have some input into. I hope also to represent the approachable and accepting side of medical care which is sometimes not too accommodating. By addressing someone's immediate physical and mental needs, we can also begin to help them look at long-term changes and re-engagement in society (Nurse Practitioner).

Faith based and secular ethics of generosity and service represent significant markers in the moral landscape of caring for homeless people. The Hub Project is not unique in this regard. It is indubitably the case, though, that this small, local voluntary emergency service for rough sleepers is underscored by a clear and strong Christian ethos which reflects a diversity of ecumenical positions and faith traditions: Anglican, Evangelists, Quakers and Roman Catholics. It therefore serves to corroborate Cloke et al's assertion that 'churches remain a fertile ground for volunteers but also encourage such networks to initiate, encourage, valorise and even organise individual and group involvement in the provision of service for homeless people' (2007b:1093). However, it is important to note that the daily rhythms and political outlook of Hub Project is, simultaneously and significantly, energised by progressive secularism. We can thus see how a strong faith that advocates altruism and secular ethics that promote symbolic valence are the foundations on which the Hub Project rests.

There are four (distinct and cross-cutting) underlying rationalities and motivating forces as to why 'ethical citizens' identify and serve homeless people in Dorchester. In the first pillar, Eric views his

role as a volunteer at the Hub Project in the context of a Christian response to the needs of others:

> Christianity for me is about being active in your local community. It's also I think about acting locally and thinking globally. Certainly social justice [is a critical motivation], helping those who are less fortunate, fighting the terrible pain and suffering that so many people feel or experience in life.

In the second pillar, we see the coalescence of personal friendship and personal ethics:

> My friend was very stressed with all the work she was having to do, in setting up the Hub and then staffing and managing it, so I offered my help, and then became chair, after a few months. My involvement with the Hub is not religious, but humanitarian.

The third pillar is underpinned by notions of self-esteem, empathy and some form of personal rehabilitation.

> I would accompany Pearl because of her confidence and her OCD [as] she was often the only woman [in attendance]. I would drink lots of coffee, make small talk and make a small donation [at the end of each session] until one day one of the volunteer's who has since left said "rather than giving 50p here and there why don't you donate a jar of coffee or buy a box of tea bags," which I did - and in time I actually became a volunteer…I'm sure that it helps that I've slept out, but I also know that [being involved with the Hub Project] has helped me.

Fourth, and related to the previous pillar:

> I lived in a Breton village in France for a number of years with my husband and two children, before we returned to England. I [soon] started volunteering at the Hub because I once worked for Shelter (for the UK campaign for the 1987 UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless), and I like working with homeless and disadvantaged people. It has been good to help out at the Hub – I learn a lot.

To be sure, the very existence of the Hub Project amply demonstrates the way in which small, local voluntary organisations have emerged to plug gaps in local services and resources for homeless people. This critical example shows how community activists - often guided by a strong moral framework that advocates altruism – purposefully set out to tackle shortages in welfare provision that local government is unable, or unwilling, to provide. In this way, it also serves to highlight the increasing spatial complexity of welfare provision in particular places. There is, though, a further point that needs to be made here. The picture that emerges is one in which the profound 'urge to care' is contiguous with the profoundly unsettling array of measures designed to regulate and manage homeless people (DeVerteuil et al., 2009).

4.5 <u>Institutional Focus</u>

The Hub Project is a registered charity and operates under the auspices of Churches Together in Dorset (an interdenominational group), and was originally conceived to function as a 'survivalist' agency providing hot food and drinks, shower and washing facilities. It also offers clothing and sleeping bags in co-operation with the Salvation Army (Sainsbury, 2008). Financially the Hub Project is reliant on national and local (statutory) grants, charitable funding and small acts of private philanthropy. Further to this, it also receives small but significant donations of tinned food from churches and local ecumenical groups. This being so, donations offer clear evidence of a broader charitable impulse within Dorchester. Overall, the Hub Project functioned on an

operational budget of £44,000 in the financial year 2007/08. For many, these spaces and facilities represent an essential resource in the absence of (appropriate) service provision.

The Hub Project is housed in a single storey building and consists of four main rooms - a galley kitchen, washroom, dining room and admin office. The volunteers spend most of their time is spent in the kitchen cooking and washing-up or else standing at the kitchen hatch serving tea, coffee and dry toast. The dining room also serves as an informal meeting space where service users' are able to hang out, listen to the radio, peruse a small collection of donated books and discarded magazines or make use of the washing machine and tumble dryer facilities. People make use of the space to rest, sleep, change clothes and recharge mobile phones and to shelter from harsh or inclement weather. In this room small groups sit together at particular places within the room, and others who are not part of any one small social group and who usually remain alone. What is interesting here is the way in which the Hub Project, as a 'homeless place', can also be experienced by some as a place of inclusion and exclusion. That is to say, what for one person is a 'space of care might, for another, be experienced as a 'space of fear' (Johnsen et al., 2005:787).

After serving lunch at 11:30 volunteers generally gravitate to the dining room in order to actively deploy ethics of care. As they move around this space volunteers strike up conversations with service users and respond (practically) to a particular request or (emotionally) to an outstanding concern. It is in this way that the dining room becomes an interactive space between volunteers and services users – one that is underlain by an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect - and one that clearly demonstrates that as an organisational space of care the Hub Project is performatively brought into being (Johnsen et al., 2005). In a more elemental sense it is clear that volunteers see their entry into the dining room as providing a context in which to offer, however fleetingly, a degree of companionship, camaraderie and sociability. Here the process of giving and receiving becomes profoundly and powerfully entwined (Conradson, 2003).

'Bob's office' provides the main locus for undertaking one-to-one or small group work. It provides a discreet and bounded space in which to establish contact or make referrals to statutory agencies, social welfare organisations and local charitable agencies. It is also a small social place for volunteers and staff to convene and engage in private discussion and debate. This backstage area can be filled with gossip, quiet rage, heartfelt concern and acerbic humour. In addition to this, a large concrete forecourt has become an increasingly important space, both formally and informally, for establishing initial contact with service users and to embed active forms of engagement. From the perspective of service users, this interstitial place is suffused with associational and territorial importance. Indeed, it is a micro-social space in which particular meanings and social relations are articulated (Parr, 2000:229). Here, conversations and interactions unfold. Cigarettes are cadged, knowledge is exchanged, warnings are issued and relationships are established. It is a place of humour and camaraderie. It can also be a site of rancorous debate, subtle intimidation and emotional outpouring. In this context individual and group identities are made and remade, against the backdrop of wider power relations and material realities. That this is, in part, a staging post between the street and the explicit rule regime of the Hub Project is well understood. However, it would be wrong to view the forecourt as a liminal space in which services users are able to abnegate personal and collective responsibility. Rather, it is an arena that is bound up with specific notions of norms and transgressions which are negotiated by and between staff and users. This is clearly apparent in the following notice:

> All service users are requested to respect the rules of the Hub. Bans will be
>
> imposed when necessary. The Hub gets great support from the people of
>
> Dorchester. Please treat them with respect.

This edited information sheet provides a useful overview of the Hub Project and its ancillary services:

Most people in Dorchester have heard of the Hub. Not all of them know what it is except "it's that place for the homeless." In fact the Hub is a day-centre, hidden away between the Build Centre and Focus, on the way to the West Station that offers friendly practical help to those who sleep rough. It has both an open access and an appointment service and it aims to work with each person individually to help them tackle their problems and work towards a more settled lifestyle.[68]

The staffing body consists of both unpaid volunteers, paid workers (a full-time manager and part-time assistant manager), health and social care professionals (a nurse practitioner and a community drug and alcohol adviser) positions funded by Dorset Primary Care Trust who are available on a limited appointment based system and (more recently) a street homeless outreach team (SHOT) worker funded and appointed by West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough District.[69] These services, taken together, reflect the Hub Project's commitment to addressing the health and housing needs of homeless and other vulnerably housed people by developing strategies that, however partially and imperfectly, have the potential to contribute towards breaking the cycles of poor health and housing exclusion.

In a similar spirit, the Hub Project has successfully forged links with Dorset Service User Forum in an effort to embed user-responsiveness within its structure:

I honestly believe that homeless people want to be actively involved [in shaping policy and provision] as nearly every service user at the Hub has been very helpful when completing questionnaires. The questionnaire is [then] returned to the Hub for their action and files…We hear good things about the Hub through anyone who has ever used the service. In addition, we

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[68] See www.dorsethub.org.uk
[69] The manager and assistant are employed for a total of 44 hours.

also attend the operational management meeting on behalf of the service

users. [And] we do talk about the Hub in various meetings, for example, we

explain that the Hub is part of the solution [in order] to get them included into

the system more as the Hub can be isolated. We would love to see it [service

user involvement] go from strength to strength; we are also realistic and know

that this can take a long time (Dorset Service User Forum co-ordinator).

The composition of service users accessing the Hub Project oscillates. Within this eclectic field it is possible however to identify three core groups or homeless sub-cultures (Ravenhill, 2008) that regularly or intermittently access the Hub Project: (**1**) Rough sleepers and the precariously housed - those living in bed and breakfast accommodation, hostels, caravans, squats, skippers or sofa surfing; (**2**) recently re-housed and (**3**) wayfarers (here understood as 'men of the road' following seasonal migratory routes). Add to this, an uneasy alliance existed between the Hub Project and Irish and New Age Travellers, as this vignette indicates:

The Travellers

Standing idly at the kitchen hatch I am approached by Graham unmistakably pissed and pissed

off. He rapidly enunciates my name and proceeds to boorishly demand a strong black coffee

with one sugar and a milky tea with three and a half sugars for " *my friend.*" I quickly make

drinks for Graham and (I soon gather) Rob before becoming distracted by the sudden rise and

clash of completing voices emanating from the office. From what I am able to deduce (and from

what I am subsequently told) Dorset County Council and Dorset Police 'successfully' broke-up

an illegal Travellers encampment on the edge of town yesterday afternoon. Voyeuristically we

eavesdrop from a safe distance as voices are raised, emotions become frayed and blame is

freely and wildly apportioned. Once a semblance of order is restored I listen with interest as

Maeve (matriarch and self-styled leader of the community) sprints from the office to the main room and abruptly announces to all those gathered within its small shell that "the *police arrived on site and removed caravans and mobile homes,* [and] *probably scrapped as much as possible the bastards.*"

Much later I watch as 'Big Dave' (Hub volunteer) leads Maeve and Jennifer to the local Salvation Army shop in an effort to obtain clothing and footwear, particularly school items for the young children from the 'site', to replace what was lost during the eviction process. Following on from this, I nervously find myself attempting to hold down a swaying ladder as Bob desperately tries to locate bedding and blankets for Maeve and her extended family from the small attic. Despite the effort that Bob and I are expending, Eve sees fit to rush up to me in order to protest against "*the ruthless treatment meted out to the Travellers.*" Evidently incensed I now hear Eve remark to Bob as he inelegantly clambers down from the ladder "*and what will come of the children and their schooling, Bob? It's absolutely rotten. We really must do something for them. Will the Travellers now be welcome back and allowed to use the project again?*"

4.6 Gatekeepers and Guardians

As an institutional and private space of homelessness the Hub Project can be understood as a rich mosaic of people, place and policy. However, its day-to-day management and 'public face' reflected the considerable influence of two particular individuals - Dr. Margaret Barker (secretary, grant-raiser and trustee) and Bob Matthews (manager).

Bob Matthews is fifty three years of age, an avowed autodidact and saturnine by disposition. He is motivated by a profound sense of social justice. In this his commitment to homeless people is both a reflection of political persuasion and personal experience. Such engagements are not

viewed as a passive or pejorative task. Rather, and this is important, the aim is to empower individual service users' and to tackle shortages in welfare provision. In this way, Bob is acutely sensitive to accusations that the 'homelessness industry' subjects both service users and providers to bureaucratic forms of authority and experiences of disrespect (Hoffman & Coffey, 2008). On a more personal level, Bob's approach to homelessness and homeless people is fortified by his own, albeit extremely short, experience of sleeping rough. The intersection of these two conditions is fundamental to understanding the peculiar rule regime that prevails within the Hub Project as well as its direct and day-to-day relationship with external agencies and authorities.

Bob is contracted to work twenty three hours a week. He is adamant that regulatory oversight has significantly impaired opportunities for the emergence of a holistic and integrated approach to emergency support and resettlement work. In simple terms, Bob sees his role largely in terms of fire-fighting. It is a reasoned philosophy to which Bob holds firm unless provoked by perceived incompetence, suspected dissembling or actual desperation. On such occasions Bob is known to casually litter conversations or brief asides with oblique references to the work of the Welsh cultural theorist Raymond Williams, the French philosopher Michel Foucault and the Slovenian post-Marxist critic Slavoj Žižek. An expertise acquired through years of 'close reading'. These comments rarely feel forced or affected. Rather, they are offered up in order to dramatise or unmask how the particular rhythms of the Hub Project and the experiences of on-street homelessness are striated within particular economic, social, cultural and political configurations.

In pursuit of a supportive and effective working relationship, Bob interacts with service users by appealing to their material concerns and immediate psychosocial needs. He suggests, he encourages, he prods and he pleads. This approach often yields success. In the event that things fall apart or stubbornly refuse to proceed as intended or as he would have hoped, which is an all too frequent occurrence, lessons are drawn and filed for future use. In response to these

experiences and encounters service users clearly and emphatically value their relationship with him. A further aspect to this is evident in the way in which he interacts with volunteers with a natural and uncomplicated sense of collective endeavour. It is a genuine response animated by feelings of mutual respect and authentic gratitude.

If Bob Matthews is the defining personality within the Hub Project on a day-to-day basis then Dr. Margaret Barker is its 'public face' and guiding fulcrum.

Dr. Margaret Barker is sixty six years of age, a retired paediatrician and indomitable local activist. Her commitment to marginalised groups, as articulated in and through her involvement with the Hub Project, is informed by Quakerism and its immutable sense of egalitarianism and 'fair-dealing'. This religious impulse is reflected in the calling to serve the needs and interest of local people. Dr. Margaret Barker's involvement in charitable endeavours in West Dorset extends out from the institutional structure of the Hub Project to encompass other, complementary and socially vital enterprises: Dorchester Poverty Action Group, Second Chance Furniture and Dorset Credit Union. From the perspective of Dr. Margaret Barker, long-standing involvement with these small, local voluntary agencies signal important efforts towards a caring society. To be sure, these three organisations are distinct and autonomous entities that are nevertheless interwoven into the fabric of rural West Dorset. It is, though, in the context of defending the work of the Hub Project against its critics while simultaneously advocating the strong belief that it is *Dorchester's* social responsibility - rather than being a personal, discretionary matter - to help combat rough sleeping and housing need (Eckstein, 2001).

We can now turn to consider how the explicit link between street homelessness and responsibilisation gained traction in Dorchester.

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS

Definitely, definitely we had a responsibility to the local community. And I think that was the problem Mr. Cunningham (Communities and Local Government specialist adviser) identified when he said 'you have an inner city day-centre in rural Dorset.' People don't want that that's why they live around here and not in Kentish Town or wherever because they like rural Dorset. People do definitely feel intimidated by groups of homeless people with dogs and people drinking, although that has been grossly amplified [here in Dorchester]. There is a real fear from a lot of people. There are a lot of parochial attitudes. I think people who work in housing have those prejudices; they're no different from anyone else [in arguing] that we should be helping local people, not people who've drifted in with drug and alcohol addictions into this area and [now] we're putting them into accommodation (Bob Matthews).

5.1 Introduction

We can now begin to attend to the main empirical thrust and ulterior analytical purpose of this study (Wacquant, 2008). The primary empirical aim is to draw together, sketch out and simply present ethnographic material from the 'field' as it pertains to street homelessness and responsible citizenship. This is illustrated in four steps through a focus on (**1**) anti-social behaviour; (**2**) reconnection strategies; (**3**) payment for food and (**4**) work and worklessness. With debates and dilemmas such as these swiftly filling my field journal and digital recorder, I set out to engage in an extensive meditation of these substantive themes on the basis that - individually and collectively – they most succinctly and significantly telegraph how the new political and policy

agenda on 'rights and responsibilities' is experienced in practice by rough sleepers in West Dorset. In the shortest possible terms: I hope to give substance to the relationship between responsible citizenship and on-street homelessness through a series of vignettes, extracts from field journals, excerpts from formal interviews and other more disparate and discrete forms of documentary evidence. To do so, then, is to embrace a commitment to illuminate the empirical reality through which policy rationales and discursive formations play out in particular places and in particular contexts (McKee, 2009b).

Our opening focus on enforcement measures conceived to tackle incivility and low-level offending, specifically the use and threat of Dispersal Orders and the imposition of an Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Designation Order against rough sleepers and street drinkers in Dorchester, would seem to echo Andrew Millie's (2007) contention that homelessness has become a strategic site for intervention in the governance of anti-social behaviour.[70] Thinking critically in this way allows us to see how dealing with the perceived problems of rough sleeping, aggressive begging and street drinking became a major preoccupation for Dorset Police and West Dorset District Council. It thus pertains productively to an understanding of how the regulation of the anti-social subject has been left to a range of bodies: the police, local authorities, registered social landlords (Cowan & Hunter, 2008).

As a critical corollary to this, Dorset Police mobilised a complementary discourse that framed rough sleepers and street drinkers as both 'outsiders' and 'perpetrators' of low-level disorder. Street homelessness, in this rendering, was associated with the emotive and persuasive idea of community decline. In making this argument I suggest that Dorset Police (with the active support of British Transport Police) and West Dorset District Council were highly appreciative of the power and promise offered by the innovation of ASBOs. I then go on to show that this ostensive

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[70] Section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001

crackdown on anti-social behaviour was an attack on homeless people that weaved together the contemporary appeal to personal responsibility with the now infamous *Broken Windows* thesis, a zero-tolerance approach to policing (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

At its most basic, I offer evidence to suggest that the coupling of on-street homelessness and anti-social behaviour draws attention away from the multiple and complex support needs of rough sleepers, and directs it into a threat to societal norms and community cohesion. Under these circumstances it is the specific responsibility of 'engaged citizens' to police themselves, monitor their neighbours and reinforce responsibility. This point is central to Sadie Parr's argument that the contemporary governance of conduct coalesces around a notion of 'responsibility' (2009:366). The aim is, as Parr perceptively remarks, to remake the 'anti-social subject into [a] self-governing, responsible citizen in accordance with the stated norms attributed to the wider community' (2009:368). Parr is not alone in this contention. Specifically, it is argued herein that the language and instrumental use of ASBOs sees New Labour broadening the lens of social control where individual responsibility is given new meaning. We can further observe how such reactive and punitive technologies can lead to the further exclusion and marginalisation of homeless and other vulnerably housed people. In an effort to understand and work in sympathy with the local, grounded and immediate milieu, I propose to pay particular attention to the perspective and experience of the Hub Project and rough sleepers who were inevitably embroiled in efforts to tackle perceived expressions of anti-social behaviour.

What I wish to draw from the second example is the way in which local statutory partnerships and networks actively collaborated in order to enjoin the Hub Project to 'reconnect' homeless and other vulnerably people to areas outside of West Dorset. Through this example we will see how assertive and aggressive efforts were made by the local housing authority to 'export' homeless people from Dorchester and its immediate environs. This was made possible through a

particularly narrow and prescriptive reading of the overarching homelessness legislation and guidance. It was, in turn, discursively backed up through a direct appeal to notions of 'belonging' and 'identity' on the one hand, and the valorisation of 'rights' and 'responsibilities' on the other.

This narrow and almost exclusive equation of rough sleeping with personal responsibility gave rise to the responsibilisation of both the Hub Project and homeless people. This had two important effects. First of all, I will show that the immediate effect of this was that 'responsibility' for tackling homelessness and meeting housing need was considered to reside elsewhere. In a more grounded way, it became the 'personal responsibility' of homeless people (with the explicit prompting of West Dorset District Council) to *move-on* from Dorchester and its surrounding hinterland in order to assert 'rights' to housing support and welfare provision through reconnecting with their place of origin. A secondary – although no less important effect - was that rough sleepers and other vulnerably housed people who were deemed to have no connection to West Dorset were denied access to the prevailing housing system and local statutory welfare regimes. But it went further than this. It led in part to people remaining on the streets or striving to create private spaces within the neglected folds of Dorchester. Some sought refuge and a degree of invisibility as part of fragile but entrenched encampments orbiting the outer fringes of the town. Others simply drifted away. And still others were cajoled – with the reflexive but unenthusiastic support of the Hub Project – into what become characterised locally as the 'slum' rental market. Arising from this, many undertook the short journey from Dorchester to Weymouth and towards the gravitational pull of its established enclaves of poor quality HMOs – Houses in Multiple Occupation – bedsits that offer no security and arguably compound the effects of marginalisation (see, for example, Minton, 2009:108).[71]

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[71] It is important to recognise that the Hub Project successfully rehoused over forty people in the period under observation.

These insights are then taken a further step forward. This involves analysing the interplay between official discourses on housing entitlement and a more grounded focus on narrative accounts that blend and overlap homeless people's identification with people, places and policies. Following up from the previous point, this opens out to a critical proscenium on which to see how citizenship claims are framed through the symbolic language of exclusion and inclusion.

The third example I wish to draw upon relates to the controversial and contested policy to introduce a payment system for its lunchtime meal provision. A discussion about the efficacy and equitability of providing rough sleepers with unconditional support services – *pace* Westminster City Council's unsuccessful attempt to ban soup kitchens - is not entirely new.[72] In charting this territory, I want to make two fundamental points. The first is to make the sustained argument that pressures from the wider environment were instrumental in the Hub Project's decision to begin charging for food. My second concern is to show that the logic of 'responsibilisation', which I suggest aims to ensure that difficult and troublesome individuals are made to accept prevailing social norms, draws its sustenance from a more fundamental concern with obviating a perceived culture of dependency. The strategic policy and moral impulse by the Hub Project to provide free services – for instance a hot meal and sleeping bags and camping equipment to rough sleepers and wayfarers - came under intense scrutiny and robust challenge from West Dorset District Council, Dorset Police, Homeless Link and the Department for Communities and Local Government because it was narrowly equated with the negation of personal responsibility. As such, this critical example usefully illustrates how the desire to cultivate 'active' and 'responsible' citizens is experienced and perceived by people who are affected by homelessness.

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[72] Westminster City Council unsuccessfully attempted to ban soup kitchens in what was a highly public and much contested campaign in 2007. The idea was based on the premise that the distribution of free food on public land caused 'public order issues' – attracting violent and intimidating behaviour (see, for example, Dugan, 2007).

To this contribution should be added an exposition on work and worklessness. My main focus of concern in this foray is to attempt to dramatise how homeless people make sense of, and talk about the ideology of work and the culture of dependency (Howe, 2009). This intervention seems particularly apposite in light of the recent shift in government thinking away from preventing homelessness and rough sleeping through assertive outreach and towards an abiding concern with promoting and enabling opportunities for homeless people to break out of worklessness (CLG, 2008).[73] Here it is assumed that homeless people will grasp every opportunity, be competitive, self responsible, hardworking and morally autonomous individuals. Clearly, within this understanding, homeless people have a 'duty' to transform themselves from the shackles of economic marginality and status of economic burden. Part of what I want to do is to suggest that the fundamental problem with this notion of economic inactivity is that it diminishes our capacity to recognise the forms of work that some homeless people engage in – such as busking or selling the Big Issue – as work. In a slightly different vein, I set out to show how street begging and Big Issue vending in Dorchester were inevitably ensnared within wider efforts to govern irresponsibility through the promotion of responsibility (Dwyer, 2000).

My principal claim is that work is important to homeless people. It is particularly important to wayfarers who follow established migratory routes in search of seasonal and sporadic employment and temporary accommodation (for an exegesis Whiteford, 2009a). In a similar fashion, work is important to older homeless men and was regularly evoked as a biographical fact in order to reinforce a connection – albeit severely broken – to settled society. It was also raised in discussions as a means of projecting a sense of self as hardworking and honourable. In so doing these men are, I suggest, concerned with articulating mainstream aspirations, law abiding behaviour and conventional morality (Gowan, 2009). From this perspective, we will see that for

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[73] This strategy must be seen within the context of the government's ongoing welfare reform programme, which aims to achieve 80 per cent among the working population. (CLG, 2008: 33).

many older homeless men younger rough sleepers are regarded as being workshy, habitual drug-users and potential perpetrators of crime and incivility. Contrary, to this view, younger homeless men and women *do* speak eloquently of its importance. It is, though, commonly framed as an aspirational value. By drawing on field material I will endeavour to show that this group are keen, even desperate, to obtain paid employment, formal training and education opportunities. Further to this, homeless people do not celebrate their rights to welfare nor do they subscribe to a distinctive dependency culture. This engagement is, in short, an entry point through which we can begin to better appreciate how homeless people in Dorchester speak and explain their own current predicaments and future aspirations in their own words.

These four examples aside, the ethnographic record is suffused with other small but significant interpretive accounts and field observations that powerfully illustrate some of the ways in which an engaged (moral) community can regulate or exercise control over services to homeless and destitute people. Responsible citizenship, as promoted through the aegis of the local governance of homelessness, perceptibly changed the contours and direction of the Hub Project. At a minimum, concrete measures and direct actions were conceived to actively and effectively stem the flow of rough sleepers apparently making their way to Dorchester by rendering the town a less 'appealing' place to be homeless (May, 2003:44). In this way the tentacles of the local governance of homelessness were spread widely and its influence was made explicit, for example, in the demand that the Hub Project erect steel gates across the front of the premises to stop people sleeping on the site overnight. [74] Enveloped within this call was a further demand that it restrict the number (and type of group) of service users able to access the service. This movement was underpinned by a concern to refashion the role and influence of the Hub Project by drawing it

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[74] In a small article published in the Dorset Echo entitled 'High Gates Plan for the Hub', PC Kevin House, Dorchester's Safer Neighbourhood Leader, argued in support of the introduction of two-metre tall gates to close the site off overnight. Reflecting on the use of temporary panels, PC House commented: 'They would hang around 24-7 waiting for the Hub to open again. They would sleep there and it caused a lot of anti-social behaviour.'

away from a position of institutional autonomy and toward the ambit of neighbourhood partnerships and community policy networks. Two main issues are readily apparent from these developments. The first relates to the way in which new forms of partnership and collaborative working serve to accelerate and exacerbate existing power relations and pre-existing discourses of local social need (Cloke et al., 2000a:111). This argument is summarised by Linda Milbourne, as follows:

> The rhetoric of collaboration and partnership suggests something open, equal and democratic; however, power to determine the rules of engagement continues to reside with mainstream agencies, effectively marginalising the interests of small community organisations. [Rather] than encouraging possibilities for co-constructing relationships, new commissioning processes are re-emphasising the power of the market-driven policy governance visible in other Western liberal democracies, and relegating community organisations to roles as state agents or sub-contractors (Milbourne, 2009:290-291).

A second, related, issue speaks more directly to the social policy implications of the twin movements of responsible citizenship and responsibilisation strategies. As the tide retreats, I suggest that the critical example of on-street homelessness in Dorchester allows us to discern some of the ways in which government rhetoric oscillates between claiming it seeks to support rough sleepers and promising local communities that it will discipline and deter them.

At the crosscurrent, I will endeavour to highlight how homeless people in Dorchester view both the moral judgements and actual *interventionist practices* which serve to oxygenate the responsibilisation thesis (McKee, 2009b), so bringing the voices of the people I have met to the

fore and placing their experiences and perceptions centre stage. In mining the ethnographic record in this way, we find that homeless people articulate a more intimate and expansive conception of the links, connections and flows between rough sleeping and contemporary citizenship than the current preoccupation with social inclusion through paid employment and personal responsibility as manifest in New Labour social thought and policy practice. The secondary analytical purpose is to critically account for the new rationales and mechanisms for governing homeless people through studying the particular in order to illuminate the general. In this sense, it offers a means to approach and address the complex and subtle ways in which a diverse constellation of institutional and community forces are increasingly entwined within a series of structures that directly and indirectly impact upon homeless and other vulnerably housed people. It is therefore important to understand that this new system of governance is characterised by the 'politics of behaviour' where people are held responsible for their own actions, and coerced or assisted to act in certain ways (McNaughton, 2008).

To give the narrative shape and momentum it is first necessary, however, to properly diagnose the local representation of, and policy responses to the 'problem' of street homelessness in Dorchester (Cloke et al., 2002:111).

5.2 Homelessness in West Dorset

> There is no doubt that there are too many people who are homeless. The impression that the number of [homeless people] is increasing is correct, and not just here in [Dorset], but everywhere. Local voluntary and statutory agencies working together are making every effort to control the numbers here, with some success, but it is not easy. It is often said that the Hub is attracting them here. But if having somewhere to go for just two-and-a-half

hours a day is an attraction it would show how poor the services for them are everywhere else and that is not so. Most counties have more help available than can be found in rural Dorset. These are urgent needs but they can only be met if the political will is aroused (Dr. Margaret Barker).

The presentation of homelessness as a distinct urban phenomenon has been the focus of considerable scrutiny within geographical inquiry in recent years (Higate, 2000a: Cloke et al., 2003). For the most part, these discussions have contributed positively towards uncovering a different dimension to our understanding of rurality through a critique of the narrative force of the 'rural idyll'. Such a view points to the ongoing need to recognise how the scale of rural homelessness is significantly underestimated in official discourses as a result of the discursive and practical decoupling of 'rurality' and 'homelessness' (Cloke et al., 2000b).

In a delicately crafted analysis, Robinson has pointed out that the invisibility of rural homelessness in local and national political discourses has had a powerful and persuasive influence in shaping the social construction of homelessness among rural residents (2006:97) Recognising this, I want to suggest that in this context rough sleepers in Dorchester are perceived to represent a significant transgression of socio-spatial expectations and, as such, reifies the distinction between where homelessness is in, or out, of place (Cloke et al., 2001). Abutting this particular construction of homelessness in rural settings, however, is a further recognition that the socio-cultural image of homeless people (positioned here as a potential threat to the apparent spatial purity and collective values of rural communities) can give rise to the emergence of local policy responses that are at best, indifferent, and at worst, exclusionary and divisive. In light of this, Paul Milbourne and Paul Cloke (2006) have urged critically engaged scholars to pay greater ethnographic attention to the cultural, social and political dimensions of local discourses about rural housing and rural homelessness. This is an edict I set out to follow.

In Dorchester, as with many support services for homeless people serving rural environments, the Hub Project stands uneasily between containing the perception of a homelessness 'problem' and the wider 'place image' of the town which is predicated on a sense of gentility, entrepreneurial spirit and, above all, its desirability as a tourist destination and gateway to the imaginary world of Wessex. As such, the issue of street homelessness in Dorchester provides a useful example from which to seek to understand and critique the way in which a diverse constellation of forces have mobilised in order to reproduce boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

At the centre of this new spirit there has been a determined effort to characterise homeless people, socially and geographically, as 'outsiders'. In this regard, Rahimian et al. (1992) have described how contemporary representations and perceptions of homeless migrants are used as a common political strategy by local authorities attempting to avoid obligations to provide support to homeless individuals on the basis of their transiency. However, in Dorchester the effect is as much economic as it is symbolic. This emerges in the comments that follow immediately below:

> I have to say that they are not aggressive and I suppose they are not doing anything illegal. But they stop our customers and pester them for things like cigarettes. It certainly doesn't give a good impression.[75]

> The arcade is actually private land so people don't have the right to beg or busk there. They should be walking through or going there to shop. There's a feeling that some shoppers are intimidated by these people and that it could be affecting trade. [76]

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[75] Adcock, D. (2007b) Crackdown on Rough Sleepers, *Dorset Echo*, 21 June 2007.
[76] Adcock, D. (2007c) New Police Patrols set to Tackle Beggars, Dorset Echo, 20 August 2007

The number of tramps and homeless who sleep rough in and around the market remain a constant problem. This is now a major problem and it is usual for litter and mess to have to be cleaned up when the market is opened and vagrants woken and moved out. [77]

I've heard that people are being intimidated because of people drinking on the streets. This is going on at the same time as the chamber is trying to promote the town. You could ask what's the point of promoting this town as a place to visit when these people are discouraging visitors from coming here…If homelessness stops visitors coming here and affects business then it's something we must deal with.[78]

I provide these extracts merely to illuminate how the issues discussed so far feed off each other. Moreover, it usefully illustrate some of the ways in which marginal and reviled social groups such as homeless people are portrayed as existing outside the norms of the dominant culture, a threat to the social order and, therefore, to established aesthetic cues (Millie, 2008).

One way to understand the 'problems' of rough sleeping in Dorchester is to draw on the notion of 'uneven geographies of homelessness' as developed by Cloke et al (2003) in respect of small, localised emergency relief services to homeless people in predominately rural locations. This has a number of serious implications. It makes it possible, for example, to appreciate how previously existing, though overlooked social welfare need of homeless and precariously housed people, became visible. Thus:

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[77] Adcock, D. (2007d) Vagrants Damaging our Trade, Says Market Firm, *Dorset Echo*, 17 January 2007.
[78] Adcock, D (2007e) Intimidating Beggars to be Tackled, *Dorset Echo*, 03 January 2007.

I believe there have always been 'rough sleepers' or their equivalent in the county town. For many years the issue was left to the few whilst many just hoped that it would go away. Whilst not viewing the Hub as a magnet, the Chamber, like many other groups in town, would like to see the facilities and services it offers replicated in as many market towns as possible (Alistair Chisholm, President of Dorchester and District Chamber of Commerce).

This is especially important because it then provides a critical focus through which to see emerging patterns of welfare delivery and their consequences (Melville & McDonald, 2006). Against this backdrop the Hub Project was reconfigured as a 'service magnet'. It therefore became a focal point for homeless people in Dorchester and Weymouth. These two towns, although material and social antipodes, are inextricably entwined through the dispersal of social welfare providers, healthcare services, criminal justice bodies and community support networks. To complete the picture, friendships, relatives and fictive families similarly contribute to the 'push' and 'pull' of homeless people between Dorchester and Weymouth as part of exchanged based relationships (Pippert, 2007). In this context, the Hub Project can be seen as a crucial nodal point in the wider geographies of homelessness provision; one that is undergirded by a local homelessness 'scene'.

Much of the criticism aimed at the Hub Project centred on the contention that it was ill-equipped to deal effectively and meaningfully with the pressing – and sometimes long-term - support needs of particularly vulnerable rough sleepers. Under a tidal wave of pressure the Hub Project was saturated by the sudden influx and competing expectations and conflicting demands of rough sleepers, wayfarers and Travellers. Support for the view, from within as well as outwith the Hub Project, as to its ability to effectively cope with the increased demands placed on the service gave rise to a significant realignment of its relationship to the wider community. Such concerns were

associated with the notion that the highly visible presence of people sleeping rough on the streets of Dorchester symbolised a challenge to the locally hegemonic 'spatial code' as well as to what Halfacree has described as the 'spatiality of the imagination' (1996:45).

In an attempt to dispel popular misconceptions about homeless people and to foster a greater sense of community understanding as to the deleterious consequences of homelessness the Hub Project organised a high profile public seminar with Oliver Letwin, Conservative for West Dorset MP, which was attended by over sixty-five people (Adcock, 2007f).

The MP sensibly argued for more investment in drug and alcohol treatment programmes on the strength of anticipated benefit savings:

> I think it's a matter of urgent social necessity. Countries like Sweden and the Netherlands and the USA spend ten times as much treating people with addictions and alcoholism. We're only scratching the surface. It would make abundant sense to invest in that - we could save money. I think it would make a colossal difference. It's only through flexibility and human to human contact with people who understand the situation that we can tackle these problems. [79]

In response, Dr. Margaret Barker was moved to note:

> We need increased services in Weymouth, as we certainly inherit some 'drift' up here. We also need increased private accommodation for rent in Dorset; services designed for people with both addictions and mental health

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[79] Adcock, D. (2007g) Call to Provide Rough Sleepers with More Help, 24th February 2007.

problems and a local 'wet' house. Recent publicity in the press has shown that we haven't got everything right. However we do not accept that we are responsible for our attenders' total behaviour when they are not with us.

According to a common narrative, the homeless people we see on the streets often come from somewhere else and hold very different values to 'us'. Broadening the focus, Jon May (2003) argues convincingly that popular understandings of homelessness are cemented within stereotypical images of homeless people as 'unusually' and 'extensively' mobile, and of homeless people's movements as following particular pathways and routes.[80] Properly understood:

> Such ideas having a long history, reaching back at least as far as the early 16th century and possibly further. Certainly they framed understandings of homelessness and single homeless people in the early 20th century, when popular accounts of 'tramps' and other 'men of the road' reached a wide audience (2003:33-34).

The Dorchester and Sherborne Section Commander (Dorset Police) concisely captured something of the ebb and flow of homelessness in West Dorset:

> I originally came to Dorchester 4½ years [ago] and at that time there was a rough sleepers' action group because of problems [associated] with rough sleepers. As a result of having no rough sleepers in Dorchester, genuinely no rough sleepers, that group folded and went away. There were some homeless people about, and sadly that was a reflection of the lifestyle we live.

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[80] The stereotype of the 'old bag lady' is, as Kisor and Kendal-Wilson (2002) correctly remind us, equally as powerful as the image of transient 'men of the road'.

So there was always a few passing through, particular because Dorchester is the hub of the county. We are on top of the hill before the slide down to a nice sunny seaside resort. We are also at the crossroads of traffic from Bournemouth and Poole and to Yeovil. So there are lots of reasons and a lot of transient people moving through on the way to Pilsdon or other places.

Before going on to conflate the movement of homeless people with a culture of criminality and dependency:

Our arrests for shoplifting and theft show that people are coming from all over the country to Dorchester. I can prove that – and when I ask 'Why have you come to Dorchester?' – Quite a few will say because of the [existence of the] Hub. Providing them with a hot meal and a shower is fine but the Hub is facilitating them to sleep rough on the street.

A superficially more plausible interpretation was advanced by a police community support officer (PCSO) from the Dorchester North Safer Neighbourhood Team:

I think that what happened is that the Hub used to exist on a part-time basis, then it was very low key, a couple of times a week in a local church in the Salvation Army, and then suddenly they moved up to new premises and people got wind of it from Bournemouth to London and all over the country. And the Hub itself would have to admit that with only a couple of staff it was pushed to deal with the matter. It was so overwhelming that they couldn't deal with the response. As time has gone on things have calmed down. But for a year or so things were pretty hectic.

Starting in the winter of 2007 and running through to the summer of 2007, the sight of literal and visible rough sleepers in the community gained particular prominence as a matter of intense public debate. As was well documented at the time (Adcock, 2007b), there was an emerging public consensus that attributed the rise of homelessness and homeless people within the locality to the existence of the Hub Project. There were to two key dimensions to this unfolding process. In the first place, there was a strong and credible argument that the Hub Project served to attract in-migrant homeless people. In the second place, the 'problem' of homelessness became subsumed by arguments about the enforcement of laws controlling public drinking, begging and intimidating dogs. This situation gave rise to fervent and impassioned debate which, in turn, divided along the lines of popular ire and public support. These diametric positions are much in evidence in the following letters to the Dorset Echo, thus:

As could have been expected, its existence has drawn in many homeless people from all over Dorset, there now seen to often be about 12 there, with their dogs. When the Hub is not open these people hang about in the area, often on the seats in the walks nearby. At night it seems that bedding is produced and the people doss down in various shop doorways or in the market nearby. Those in charge of the Hub cannot control the activities of the homeless, who are unfortunately indulging in much anti-social activity, shouting, swearing, drinking, urinating in the street, vomiting, and abusing passers by. This starts early and goes on all day until late. The west station is considered an industrial estate, but it is on the edge of a respectable residential area where the vile activities I have outlined above are much

disliked by the inhabitants, many of whom are now scared to walk past the area. Are the police happy with this situation, which is rapidly deteriorating?[81]

And a countervailing opinion is offered by a prominent parish and town councillor for the Dorchester North Ward:

> There are two camps over the day-centre – one that wants to close it down and the other that wants to put it on a proper footing The Hub, if it is to do this people a favour must do the job properly – or not at all. We all have to confront the issue (Cllr Black, 2007).

And on this theme:

> It was close enough that if [Dorset Police and West Dorset District Council] had a means of closing us down, then they would have. But when I actually spoke to a lawyer it was clear that there was not a way for them to do so because there was hardly any funding from them. But they informed the Environmental Health that we hadn't had an inspection and that we weren't looking after the premises or the area outside. So that rang alarm bells that they're trying to get Environmental Health to have a go at us. But Environmental Health was very helpful. They clearly hadn't twigged on to the fact that their colleagues wanted to close us down (Dr. Margaret Barker).

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[81] Anonymous (2007) Shouting, Swearing and Drinking in the Street: Not What We Want Here? Dorset Echo, 15 May 2007.

Amid growing public anxiety and political pressure, West Dorset District Council carried out a voluntary hot spot survey in March 2007, which gave a result of 10 rough sleepers in the area. A senior housing officer argued that the figures should be seen as anomalous:

> [The] result was not seen to be a true representation of the local situation and reflected a specific set of circumstances – just before the count a number of people were evicted from a flat being used as a squat, who were thought to be remaining in the area temporarily in some cases [to] adhere to police bail conditions, and in another case [to] attend the local funeral of a fellow rough sleeper. [82]

Against a growing tide of public opprobrium and media scrutiny that strongly suggested that the Hub Project was acting as a 'magnet to outsiders', the Hub Project's standing committee issued a public statement through the pages of the Dorset Echo noting that:

> In response to recent letters and reports in the press, we feel the need to add some balance into the debate about the Hub. We do recognise that there have been some serious problems in the two years we have been open, and we admit we have made some mistakes.
>
> This facility exists to provide a safe place for homeless people to come on week-day mornings, where they can get clean and dry, and they are helped to face their problems. It is not there to provide free handouts', but to help people get off the streets and settle into housing.

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[82] Personal email received 18th June 2007.

Even in this past week, two people have been found homes, not in Dorchester, and both within the private sector, and that sort of work is going on all the time, week in and week out. Sometimes it can take a few weeks for a person to trust anyone enough to speak openly and address their problems, yet, once expressed we find some problems have been relatively easy to sort out, and they then have a chance to find a rightful place back in society.

In Dorchester, we have been accused of attracting people from far and wide. This may have an element of truth, but if there were similar day facilities in neighbouring towns (like Weymouth and Blandford etc) then people would not migrate to the Hub for the support and help they need. Just to offer a few facts: the Hub is open each morning for three hours, and recently we have begun to open on three afternoons a week, not for the whole group of people, but for one-to-one appointments with specialist housing, health and drug and alcohol professionals. We have tried to publicise this good work and the local press has encouraged that, but when things go wrong, the achievements seem rapidly forgotten. Only the problems are seen.

In early March a tragic event sparked off a whole series of difficult circumstances, and this coincided with the alcohol ban in the town coming into effect. It meant that gatherings of people reduced in town, but they drifted to the Hub forecourt. For a period of three weeks there was some totally unacceptable and anti-social behaviour around the Hub premises, mainly in the afternoons, when the Hub was closed. This has now been brought more under control and the Section 30 order that comes into force early in June will help.

We meet regularly with the police and district council, where we all struggle to find acceptable solutions to the difficult human issues that are presented. We also receive a huge amount of support from the public, including generous donations, and we are very dependent on a large pool of volunteers who give their time so willingly.

We hope your readers will understand that some of the problems we are faced with often don't have obvious solutions. We would like to express our real gratitude for all the tolerance and practical and material support Dorchester people give us, people who recognise the worth of the Hub and its aims (Barker, Broome & Culliford, 2007).[83]

The claim that homeless people will sometimes move in an attempt to access support services is, as May (2003:33) notes, well-documented. What seems to be unmistakably true, though, in this context is the clear and simple fact that throughout much of 2007, the volume of people accessing the Hub Project grew exponentially. This direct rise in footfall as well as the emergence of an increasingly visible street drinking culture in and around Dorchester West train station, Borough Gardens and the Fairfield Market site was, according to Bob Matthews, attributable to the confluence of people coming to the Hub Project via:

Travellers' sites, some rough sleepers from West Dorset (Dorchester, Blandford, Bridport and Sherborne) and Weymouth, and a number of wayfarers passing through. These were supplemented by others already vulnerably housed including some who came to purchase the Big Issue which we were then distributing. By the summer of 2007 we were seeing up to 30 a

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[83] The Hub – Yes We Have Made Mistakes but Please be Tolerant, *Dorset Echo*, 31 May 2007.

day at the Hub over half of whom were on the Lomand Homes development site very close by. [84]

As a consequence of this:

> The increased numbers of people sleeping out was immediately seen as a problem and a moral panic ensued. Complaints about the behaviour of a few of homeless people in town were amplified in the local press and supplemented by those from people in the locality of the Hub, the latter in response to letters from the police asking if they were experiencing any problems. The increased number of homeless (some of whom argued that they preferred Dorchester to Weymouth initially, as there was no exclusion order) resulted in a government count of rough sleepers locally, which was higher than many of our cities and which brought us to the attention of the office of Communities and Local Government. [85]

Further insight is given by a local Housing Needs manager on the issue of the statutory response to the perceived 'problem' of visible on-street homelessness in Dorchester:

> [The] encampment was soon broken up by the builders and the police, and we have never had those numbers since. But it was enough to bring us on to

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[84] In a fairly balanced and measured article entitled 'Homeless Anger at Clearance of Camp', the *Dorset Echo* reported on counter-claims concerning the forced eviction of ''20 or so rough sleepers'' from the Edward Road site. It was noted that homeless people claimed that they were manhandled and had their possessions damaged while a spokesperson for Lomand Homes commented ''nobody was manhandled and nothing was spoilt. Everything was packed up in boxes apart from one tent which broke as it was taken down. I went and bought three tents for them from Argos as a gesture of goodwill.'' Dorset Police, in turn, were moved to remark ''this is not a police matter. This is between the rough sleepers and Lomand Homes'' (Adcock, 2007h).

[85] Matthews, B. (2009) Evaluation of the Hub's Policy to Charge for Food, from April 2008.

the radar of the Rough Sleeper's Unit and it was really the catalyst for everything that has happened since. We had a lot of advice from Homeless Link and a [specialist adviser] from the Communities and Local Government [with regard to] all the problems we had with rough sleepers and the wider street culture that was building-up in Dorchester. We had an audit last March, and while the auditor was here we chose to do a rough sleepers head count. We were due one and it seemed like a good idea. And [as a result] we identified ten people rough sleeping. We think that we had an encampment on a building site that was a horrendously high figure for a small rural authority…The figure of ten was a reflection of very peculiar local circumstances.

Building on these insights to provide a more textured evaluation, the same local authority officer continued:

I always felt the Hub could not cope with the numbers that it was getting at that time. [But] I'm not sure that they were under siege. I would certainly agree that they were being besieged at that time. For instance, they had problems with the local business community because of the physical condition of the local environment. I think that there was certainly a perception that the service users' were responsible and that the Hub didn't have the resources to work with people. It was getting out of control and they have taken steps to really address that and now we are back down to manageable numbers. The public vilification has seemed to have receded. Correspondingly they have worked hard [but] we think that there is more they can do. When it comes to public attention is when they see lots of people

drinking in Bowling Alley. We see lots of mess. We get comments from people in the street when it becomes visible. That is when it becomes a public issue. Most people are impervious to it as an issue when it is just seen as locked away in the Hub [then] it's not seen as an issue. I think last year when it become an issue it was because it was more visible.

Following on from this, a Communities and Local Government specialist adviser was dispatched to the town in the aftermath of a hot-spot survey into street homelessness revealed significantly higher numbers of people sleeping rough than had been expected.[86] While the Government adviser was initially tasked with reviewing the provision of services offered by the District Council to people in acute housing need significant attention was also given to the role played by voluntary organisations and community groups, principal among them the Hub Project, in responding to needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Reflecting on this visit, Dr. Margaret Barker was moved to comment:

He just looked and he didn't want to talk or listen to us because he had seen it all before. He knew that it was a long running street party twenty four hours a day, of which the homeless were the nub...and it was a street party and generated by alcohol.

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[86] Official 'hot-spot street counts' were superseded by 'street-needs audits' in 2008. Under the previous system, local authorities regularly carried out street counts at the behest of the Communities and Local Government. In June 2007 when the government produced figures on rough sleeping, 271 local authorities did not carry out a count, and of those 271, 2 did not make an estimate (Shapps, 2007:14).

At some time and distance removed from Dorchester and the inner workings of the Department for Communities and Local Government, Richard Cunningham observed:[87]

> The Hub reminded me of a place where some people were ruling the roost and other vulnerable people weren't getting anything as a result. They were being victimised, terrorised or simply not coming to the service. So that the mission of helping those in need was fundamentally failing straightaway because those in need weren't getting anything. So that was my sense of the Hub on first encountering it.

And taking a wider perspective:

> I think that the [local statutory partners] were supportive. They were balancing the need to support this organisation with vulnerable people, and possibly wondering how effective it was working with vulnerable people, particularly against the backdrop of local complaints. In Dorchester there was genuine cause for concern. There was a sense that there was a group of characters around the Hub who were causing genuine fear and distress and criminal damage to the local population. They were also generating a certain level of street level activity that was acting as a catalyst for other people to gather around. [As a result], young people and other vulnerable people were drawn into a negative lifestyle.

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[87] Comments made to the author during a telephone interview conversation while on secondment with the Homes and Communities Agency (national housing and regeneration body for England).

This exercise resulted, in part, in the reactivation of a long dormant homelessness forum and a fact-finding mission to Westminster City Council, the most populous area of rough sleepers in London, in order to visit the Passage (London's largest voluntary sector day-centre for homeless and vulnerable people) and Cricklewood Homeless Concern (a voluntary sector charity comprising a day-centre and a residential unit) in the Borough of Brent by three members of the Hub Project's management team, two county police officers and a representative of West Dorset District Council's housing department to learn about the 'killing with kindness' campaign.[88] The visit was promoted and sponsored by Homeless Link and the Communities and Local Government. It is no accident that Westminster City Council's model of street and building-based services is now one of the most visible and lauded recipients of government patronage. Arguably, this reflects its avowed commitment to inculcate responsibility through institutional forms and core narratives which have become emblematic of the contemporary governance of homelessness. In an important sense, then, this reflects a convergence in support of the strength and validity of subjecting homeless and other vulnerably housed people to disciplinary regimes aimed at transforming them into responsible, sober and law abiding individuals. But in so doing it evokes the question: are rough sleepers delinquents who should be disciplined, or are they a marginalised and disenfranchised group needing practical support and genuine empathy?

To begin with, the 'killing with kindness' campaign is supported by Westminster City Council, Thames Reach, The Big Issue, Home Office, Metropolitan Police and the London Borough of Camden. Much more important, though, is its normative message that has steadily and relentlessly leached its way into contemporary debates and the popular imagination: that rough sleeping, aggressive begging and drug dependency are self-producing and mutually reinforcing. This doctrine is encapsulated in the core argument that '*we believe giving to those who beg does*

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[88] According to a report in the Police Review, 1,400 rough sleepers pass through Westminster each year (Bebbington, 2007:13).

more harm than good. Giving to people who beg is not a benign act; it can have fatal consequences'.[89] At the heart of the campaign are three interconnected concerns.

1. To divert people from giving to street beggars.

2. To reduce anti-social behaviour and substance 'misuse'.

3. To charge service users (or customers in the parlance of Cricklewood) for services with a view to encouraging homeless people to 'responsibility' for their own welfare.[90]

Explaining the background to the visit, Richard Cunningham went on to say:

> The reality was that I went down there and I was frank. Seeing what was happening at the Hub reminded me so much of the past. I think that there was a complete failure to recognise – and I think that they thought that I was one of Tony Blair's minions coming down to interfere in their work – the reality is that I have worked in this business for twenty years now. Actually some of the stuff that I said might not be palatable, but it is based on the belief that if we genuinely try to help people then there are certain ways of doing it. We tried. The police and the local authority were very responsive. And we organised through Homeless Link a trip to London to visit other day-centres to see how they managed; to look at the journey that other organisations had made and the changes they had made, and their experience of being in very similar situations. My impression was that the management committee was deeply resistant and suspicious of what we were saying. I think that they saw us as the severe arm of government.

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[89] See www.killingwithkindness.com for a detailed explanation.
[90] It was a revised version of this model that was taken up by Dorset Police and West Dorset District Council, and ultimately led to the introduction of the payment system at the day-centre.

Striking a more conciliatory tone, Dr. Margaret Barker remarked:

> The trip to London on the whole was worthwhile. We really listened to other
> people about how they made changes to their services. But Bob came back
> spitting feathers about the police first contact and the outreach unit and how
> very Soviet it was. [For him] it was just a terrible way to deal with people. On
> the other hand, I thought at least the police are working with people and with
> the Passage. He felt that there was far too much exchange of information
> [and] of informing other people and staff.

It should be noted that the phrase 'killing with kindness' is increasingly used as a shorthand term
to describe 'naïve' faith-based organisations that purport to help rough sleepers. It presumes that
these service providers are unhelpful, because by offering assistance to rough sleepers, they
encourage the practice of on-street homelessness.[91] As one critic in Dorchester stated:

> You ask if there is a culture of dependency and I think that there is a danger
> of that. Let me give you an example: people who have been rough sleepers
> and who have been rehoused the Hub is still working with them. The Hub is a
> rough sleeper service. I would argue that there must come a point where the
> Hub say ' you were a rough sleeper, you are no longer a rough sleeper; you
> may need help and support but there are other agencies who should be

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[91] A recent independent and authoritative study of soup runs in Westminster by Laura Lane and
Anne Power (2009) has given considerable weight to the importance of emergency food provision
for homeless and other vulnerably housed people. The authors challenge the casual notion that
the existence of soup runs support and sustain street lifestyles, rather than helping homeless
people address their 'problems'. Against this simplistic argument, Lane and Power convincingly
argue that for some of the most vulnerable people soup runs provide an invaluable safety net by
making available much needed food and social contact.

helping you and not us.' I have a worry that the Hub feels that it needs to help.

Notice that in questioning the work of the Hub Project, Dorset Police, West Dorset District Council, Homeless Link and the Communities and Local Government actively brought into being a similar discourse. As if to cement this consensus, it conspires to project an image of homeless people who beg – regardless of choice or necessity - as pathological and undeserving.[92] It amounts, in practice, to the downsizing of unconditional welfare and the upsizing of surveillance and control. Contrary to the exaggerated claims of Westminster City Council and its acolytes, research shows that the result has been simply to displace begging activity to other areas (Leeds Simon Community, 2006).

An excoriating critique of the 'killing with kindness' campaign is offered by the Christian charity Housing Justice:

> Although there are those who regard the phrase 'killing with kindness' as archaic, it is one in current use by local governments and homeless charities across the city. Originally it referred to the practice of giving money to beggars, who would then use the money on self-destructive and anti-social habits that actually help nobody. However, increasingly this phrase is now being employed to describe the help that some churches, charities and businesses offer homeless people. Any who attempt to engage with homeless people in a way that does not fit into the two-dimensional,

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[92] According to Homeless Link most people who beg are not street homeless; although some may be living in hostels, many people who beg are housed. Westminster Council found that less than 40% of people arrested for begging in 2005 were of no fixed abode.

technical, measurable strategies of government must be branded as a hindrance rather than a help. This, in turn, means that those who attempt seriously to listen to homeless people, to hear their stories, to treat rough sleepers as human beings rather than statistics, have to be described as making the entire homeless situation worse (2008:13).

The multi-agency reconnaissance trip to the Passage and Cricklewood day-centres followed immediately upon an earlier visit to the Metropolitan Safer Streets Homelessness Unit in the City of Westminster by the Dorchester and Sherborne Section Commander and the town's Safer Neighbourhood Team leader. Commenting on its practical value, the Section Commander stressed:

> There's a significantly bigger problem in London but I'm optimistic that we can learn from what they're doing there. The City of Westminster council has a new strategy for rough sleepers - published last week - and we'll be studying that to see what good practices we could apply to Dorchester. [93]

Before commenting:

> The situation in Dorchester has improved significantly recently but there are peaks and troughs. Some days we have real problems with rough sleepers and other days no problems at all. We need to work with the Hub to make sure issues are kept to the minimum.

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[93] Adcock, D. (2007i) Police Officers on Fact-Finding Trip to London, *Dorset Echo*, 10 October 2007.

This helpfully brings us to the Metropolitan Safer Streets Homelessness Unit. It is a dedicated unit that polices the City of Westminster and is, it argues, principally concerned with both protecting and policing rough sleepers on the streets of Westminster (Homeless Link, 2009).[94] In fact, the formal objectives of the unit are essentially threefold. The first is to carry out 'welfare checks'. This involves an assessment of an individual's mental and physical health, before referring them to any services that they might be deemed appropriate. The second focus relates more specifically to the policing of rough sleepers and associated anti-social street activity (including aggressive begging and street drinking). And in the third place there is a concern with reconnecting homeless people through the introduction of an 'invest to save' scheme whereby officers can give people the means to return 'home'.[95]

The underlying logic of the Metropolitan Safer Streets Homelessness Unit is problematic at every point. Fooks and Pantazis (1999) show, for example, that despite claims that the unit eschews conventional policing methods in pursuit of a welfare-based approach, it is indeed an activist police force for the homeless. Thus even with a social care dimension, an overriding concern with policing aggressive begging and street drinking remains intact, and provides the justification for high levels of arrest and charge. Secondly and in relation to this, Fooks and Pantazis note that the unit is especially intrusive by virtue of the high ratio of police officers to homeless people. This argument works to suggest that 'despite the unit's expressed repudiation of zero-tolerance, its policy on begging bears a close resemblance to the basic premises of zero-tolerance' (1999:149).

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[94] The plain-clothes unit comprises three sergeants, twelve PCs and four community support officers. It should be noted that in addition to its core focus on rough sleepers, the unit also searches for children, sex offenders, indigent A8 nationals and high risk missing persons.

[95] The actions of the City of London Corporation, in partnership Metropolitan Safer Streets Homelessness Unit and the homelessness charity Broadway, have become the focus of intense criticism and overt challenge from eight charities working Charities such as the Simon Community and Liberty have highlighted the continuing practice of 'wetting down' doorways or other places where people sleep alongside the growing use 'stop and search' techniques under the guise of 'welfare checks'. In response the City of London Corporation has argued that its tactics are not excessive nor is it the case that 'no one needs to sleep rough within the City of London as we have pledged to provide appropriate accommodation for all who wish to access it' (Gould, 2009:3).

Operationally this is reflected in the growing use of the ASBOs, Public Drinking Exclusion Zones and the targeted enforcement of the Vagrancy Act 1824, in ways reminiscent of the situation in Dorchester (Bebbington, 2007:14).[96] Overall, then, the justificatory rhetoric of working with difficult-to-reach rough sleepers becomes an ideological tool for obscuring the 'tensions in care and control of homeless people and the difficulty of knowing where care end and control begins' (1999:149).

As should now be clear, these two visits to the City of Westminster became defining moments in respect of the policing of rough sleepers and street drinkers in Dorchester as well as the moral regulation and administrative oversight of the Hub Project. On one level, Dorset Police and West District County Council were exposed to new practices and discursive formations that gained strength – both explicitly and uncritically – from the catechism of 'personal responsibility' and 'killing with kindness'. On another level, these statutory partners embraced with alacrity two very specific policy considerations and moral judgements which, I would strongly suggest, clearly illustrate the logic of the 'killing with kindness' campaign: the imperative to charge homeless people for services and the obligation to pursue a more assertive and aggressive approach to reconnection.

The influence of Westminster City Council and Metropolitan Safer Streets Homelessness Unit's punitive and populist response to the 'problem' of rough sleeping in central London and its perceived applicability to rural West Dorset was neatly summed up by the Dorchester and Sherborne, Section Commander:

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[96] The Vagrancy Act 1824 specifies that begging is an arrestable offence, but is no imprisonable. Begging has been a recordable offence since 2003, such that the details of people convicted are recorded on the Police National Computer.

I have been to Westminster to see how things are done there because I want to get things done right. I've got open eyes and ears and I'm prepared to learn. I have been to Westminster, Cardiff and a few other places and it is very easy to 'kill with kindness'. All these people have incomes – benefits – and what are they doing with their money? What I am talking about is people on the streets who beg and inject it and drink it, [which] is quite a few of them…The Hub is facilitating some of them and I can think of a few who are being kept on the streets and kept on the drugs. Some of them are going to the Hub who have been going for two years or more, three maybe. You should engage with them at a much earlier stage when they come into Dorchester and that is why West Dorset [District Council] intends to have a proper worker who will engage with these people. We should be giving them all the support they need and relocating them back to where they come [and] where they their services are. People move and some people aren't ready for drug addiction work, and they have to be ready for that. If you don't give people the easy option they will run because they can't face the hard options.

This is a good point to pause and consider some of the other ways in which the Hub Project and (by extension) rough sleepers in Dorchester were caught within the capacious and capricious dragnet of responsibilisation. It seems to me that the most effective and economical way in which to gain a better appreciation of this fluid movement and uneven landscape is to review the Trustees' Report issued by the Hub Project in the autumn of 2007.[97]

At the Annual General Meeting on May 31st the Hub Management Committee promised to overcome the difficulties which had led to bad publicity during

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[97] Welcome to our Friends! Newsletter: November 2007.

April and May. This arose from a surge of people, not all of whom were homeless, creating problems in the town and around the Hub.

It has been an important exercise but very painful especially for the front line staff who have had to turn away some people who previously were finding help and support at the Hub. It has required courage and persistence on their part, tolerance and understanding on the part of the Hub users and resilience on the part of the trustees but out of it the Hub has gained strength and order.

The changes that have been introduced since May

I. Travellers can no longer make full use the Hub's services, though they can still use at a postal address. They still have no running water nor electricity and no laundrette anywhere near here so this has been hard on them but the Hub had to take the view that it was set up to serve only those who sleep rough.

II. Those people who have been rehoused through the Hub for a while are now encouraged to use the Hub facilities by appointment e.g. to help them sort out a specific problem.

III. The Hub forecourt has now been fenced and can be locked when the Hub is closed. This prevents unacceptable behaviour when the Hub is not open.

IV. People coming into the area and sleeping rough now are welcomed and their needs assessed immediately but on the understanding that they move on again soon unless they are prepared to work on their problems and consider their

situation. Those that have significant support or accommodation elsewhere are assisted to return to that area.

As we have discussed, the working practices and institutional ethos of the Hub Project fell under the direct gaze of a strong and seemingly impregnable flotilla of community voices and statutory actors. This quite clearly led to important changes in policy. In some cases, the Hub Project was able to resist pressures, while in other cases compromises were reached. Perhaps the clearest and most emphatic expression of subversion was realised in its determination to reject the demands of local police officers that it institute 'case management' and 'personal achievable action plans' (CLG, 2008), whereby service users' agree to conform to certain standards of behaviour in return for continued access to the service. Outwardly and on the positive side of the spectrum, it was asked to play a central role in the District Operational Group, the Homelessness Prevention Forum and the Rough Sleepers Action Group. This was not, however, experienced as a wholly inclusive or collaborative enterprise. Thus the opportunity to establish new, more positive and constructive understandings of homelessness and homeless people based on social need and personal experience was, dispiritingly and decisively, overshadowed by the moral economy of responsibility.

Turning now to the equally important issue of how this shifting terrain was viewed from within the Hub Project, I offer up ethnographic data from qualitative interviews and participant observation which, in the first instance, suggests that a tropism to quietly resist or challenge the new order became an established part of the rhythm and routine of the local governance of homelessness.

Keith, an entrenched rough sleeper, captures the prevailing mood well when he states:

For years people used to sleep in the market under the barns. Now it's about moving on and as quickly as possible. But where do they expect us to go? We're seen as aggressive and as a nuisance, rather than as people. Do they think we're just going to vanish?

While Barney passionately averred:

This place used to be about getting a hot meal, hanging out with your mates and standing up for rough sleepers. Now it's all about being re-housed, making an [homelessness] application or talk about going into rehab.

Keith and Barney's observations are fleshed out in this long fragment taken from field-notes:

Journal Extract 14/11/07

On arriving at the Hub I am greeted by Jamie. Looking around a barren forecourt we are moved to ask in unison "*where is everyone*?" As Bob walks out on to the forecourt I good naturedly ask him "*what have you done with all the service users*?" Bob responds by telling me that the Travellers have now been banned, others have been re-housed or informed that they are no longer able to access the day-centre because of unruly or disruptive behaviour.

I move into the kitchen and am told by Eric that "*we are the volunteers today.*" While Eric focuses on preparing lunch I am charged with making tea, coffee and toast. As I take the milk from the fridge I overhear Bob inform Jamie that "*regrettably you will no longer be able to use the Hub Project now that you've been accommodated with on-site support and your own key-worker.*" Jamie simply accepts this and thanks Bob and quickly departs. Immediately thereafter

Bob enters the kitchen and announces to Eric and I that "*it felt really awkward telling Jamie that he was no longer welcome.*" Bob goes on to explain that Jamie has moved from a bedsit in Weymouth into a self-contained flat in Dorchester. Bob is quick to observe that this move represents a positive development for Jamie, but then strikes a cautionary note that in the absence of structured support there is a very real danger that he could falter and find himself homeless once again. He is already, Bob discloses, experiencing difficulties in distancing himself from his "*friends, acquaintances and assorted hangers on*" who are all part of the street drinking culture in town. Failure to do so will possibly result in eviction and most likely rebound on his chances of successfully completing an accompanying alcohol reduction programme.

Shortly thereafter I am directed to the office by Bob eager to show me a "*hateful letter from a member of the public.*" I open the envelope and find two pieces of paper. The first sheet consists of a small leaflet on the Emmaus Community. The second sheet of paper consists of a short handwritten letter. Taking the letter with both hands I read that "*homeless people should work and contribute to society rather than accept hand-outs.*" The letter stimulates debate with Eric who is quick to opine that there is considerable merit in engaging with, and encouraging homeless people to work. Bob and I both suggest that the notion of 'meaningful activity' cannot be so effortlessly or uncritically applied to rough sleepers without taking into account the multiple levels of social exclusion associated with homelessness.

Later I watch with interest as Bob begins to remove a series of notices that have festooned the walls and the windows over the past couple of weeks and months. Taking down details of the anti-social behaviour legislation Bob tells me that the 'dispersal orders' have now run out and that I am welcome to take the aforementioned literature. I ask Bob if he thinks that the Section 30 orders will be reintroduced again in Dorchester. "*It's unlikely because the most entrenched*

and problematic rough sleepers have been moved on or re-housed.'' What is perhaps most surprising is Bob's candid admission that Dorset Police together with the local business community have *''finally worn me down.''* I ask Bob what he means by this and he begins to relate how at a recent neighbourhood meeting he was asked to ban any homeless person or rough sleeper charged with shoplifting or any form of public nuisance offence within Dorchester. This leads Bob to explain to me that while he was unwilling to introduce such a punitive and regressive policy within the broader context of the town, he nevertheless felt significant pressure and need to appease local traders' by agreeing to the demand that anyone committing an 'offence' within the area adjacent to the Hub Project would result in exclusion.

There is a further dimension to this process which relates more specifically to the idea of the 'exclusion of challenging users' or what Pat Carlen (1996) refers to as 'agency maintained homelessness'. However, the exclusionary potential of such an approach is complicated by the following statement:

> I think that it is really difficult because the Hub ended up with all those people sleeping outside who didn't really want to do anything partly because there was a party on that site every night. You had the Hub enabling them with food and sleeping bags and clothing and the use of telephones to sort out their benefits. I think that it did shield people from the reality of their situation. And we had the CLG who said that these people don't want to be rehoused. So when I said "*you have a choice now we can help you into accommodation or I'm not going to work with you any more – I will give you six weeks now – because we're going to lose the Project otherwise and it will close down*." So people started working with me and we did resettle quite a few people, but we put did put them into awful accommodation. A lot of them went into crap,

scum landlords. Most of them are still there, that's the thing [they're] still doing heroin and alcohol. They're just as bad as they were when they were on the street. A lot of them would still be doing it on the street but are now going back to their grotty flat; or perhaps not. But people even then did see that it couldn't continue. Their experience was that it didn't happen in other places and if it did (I think Bath had a problem like that) then something had to give and it can't continue like that. The state won't allow it and the day-centre can't really manage it. And I think for a day-centre you have to move people-on and people have to be seen moving through the service or otherwise you won't be able to bring new people through (Bob Matthews).

Bob Matthews rightly points out, in comments about the links between service provision and service consumption in Dorchester, that the Hub Project struggled to balance the needs of homeless people with the wider expectations of the local community. As a consequence, it was seemingly foretold that different arms of government (at the local and national scale) would intervene and introduce a new regime of policing and regulation of rough sleepers in Dorchester. The inevitable outcome, it is suggested, was reactionary and punitive in scale and scope. He is therefore adamant that the social problems experienced by homeless and other vulnerably housed people in West Dorset were effectively obscured and displaced by the ''*louder, more powerful voices of political and economic elites*'' (Cloke et al., 2000a:112). This point will be readdressed in the concluding section.

Let us now move on to consider the first of our four thematic concerns. I do this by linking anti-social behaviour to wider debates about the 'politics of behaviour' and 'government through community' (Burney, 2009). In this way, it goes someway to providing empirical material and

analytical insight that is so essential to gaining a fuller understanding the relationship between street homelessness and responsible citizenship.

5.3 <u>Anti-Social Behaviour</u>

> We have been increasingly concerned about the behaviour of a few people in the town who are causing considerable harassment, alarm and distress to those around them. All our officers will be fully aware of the new order and will be utilising it when appropriate. What we do not want to do is to prevent those genuine people who are out enjoying themselves from having a good time. This order is all about dealing with unacceptable behaviour (Inspector Les Fry, 2007).

In the foregoing discussion I suggested through a bricolage of ethnographic material and documentary evidence that the dominant reaction to the sight and sites of visible rough sleeping in Dorchester was driven by the moral imperative to regulate and control behaviour. As explained, rough sleepers and street drinkers were portrayed as 'intimidating', 'disruptive', and 'irresponsible'. In due course, and without significant contestation, this stigmatising discourse gave rise to a stronger emphasis on tackling anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. This brings us to the introduction of Dispersal Orders, the imposition of an Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Designation Order and the controlled policing of begging (with potential recourse to the Vagrancy Act 1824), all of which can be seen to have cut across the main arteries of the everyday geographies of homelessness in Dorchester.

Before we proceed, however, it is necessary to outline the political and sociological trajectory of the contemporary concern with anti-social behaviour. In so doing we are able to consider the

processes by which local communities have come to assume an increasingly pivotal role in doubling-down (through surveillance and control) of groups perceived as marginal and troublesome. This focus is important because it shows that while central government has provided the 'tools' to enable enforcement action to address street culture, it was local rather than national pressures that led to the use of these measures in Dorchester.[98] This is a crucial point. Local people have, from the outset, been urged to use the powers provided.

Elizabeth Burney (2005:2009) has admirably described the genesis of anti-social behaviour as an organising principle in the New Labour philosophy. As early as 1995 Jack Straw, then shadow home secretary, published *A Quiet Life: Tough Action on Criminal Neighbours*, a policy paper which proposed a new legislative framework conceived to help victims of nuisance neighbours on 'poor estates' through the innovation of what was then called a 'Community Safety Order', but was quickly refashioned as an 'Anti-Social Behaviour Order' (a previously unprecedented legal construction), and was almost the first legislation New Labour passed on the back of its landslide electoral victory in 1997. This points to how the mainstreaming of anti-social behaviour – as a distinctive combination of discourse, strategy and technologies - emphasised not so much the community itself, as the censured activities of individuals (Prior, 2009:29).

Anna Minton (2009) makes an important additional point when she argues that New Labour's anti-social behaviour agenda blends together the politics of communitarianism and zero-tolerance policing in an effort to 'legislate for good behaviour'. Again, as Burney points out, the momentum to manage conduct and enforce civility came as much from local politics as from communitarian

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[98] The anti-social behaviour caseworker for the Western Dorset Crime and Disorder said: "We are working closely with Dorset Police to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour. The Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meeting has identified anti-social behaviour as an issue for local residents and this order will help Dorset Police to deal with the problem. Local residents voted tackling anti-social behaviour as a priority issue at the Dorchester North PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meeting held in April. Dorset Echo Archive, (2007) Dispersal Orders Brought in for Town, 04 June 2007.

values of community cohesion, moral decency and civic renewal (2007:26). To this end enthusiasm for sanctions for low-level offences has perhaps become most closely associated with groundbreaking initiatives adopted by Coventry City Council, efforts to pursue and promote community safety in Straw's own constituency in Blackburn and the influential lobby group, the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group (SLNG), policy and practice proposals in respect of the governing of anti-social behaviour.

When transferred to the realm of social policy intervention, the idea of strong, cohesive communities has given rise to a series of instruments and quasi-legal sanctions, which aim to tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce crime (Nixon et al., 2008). In terms of outcome, the use of dispersal orders and drinking exclusion zones has led to the emergence of aggressive policing tactics around public and marginal spaces traditionally associated with, and used by, homeless people. At this point, we should also note that this unfolding logic of increased regulation, surveillance and punishment is sedimented within a dominant mode of social control. It is from within this environment that current interpretations of anti-social behaviour draw upon negative stereotyping and rhetorical narratives that undermine the social status of marginalised groups (Jacobs, 2006:12).

Anti-social behaviour orders were the flagship of Tony Blair's 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' approach, introduced in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. Here, anti-social behaviour was defined as behaving:

> ...in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself.

Anti-social behaviour can involve the misuse of public space (e.g. using and selling drugs and prostitution); disregard for community or personal well-being (e.g. noise, rowdy behaviour and nuisance behaviour such as urinating in public); acts directed at people (e.g. intimidation or harassment, aggressive begging). Actions within the definition included harassment, verbal abuse, noise nuisance, writing graffiti and smoking or drinking alcohol while underage. As a result, non-criminal activities which might previously have been seen as nuisance, mischief, selfishness or just bad manners were enshrined in statute and subject to action from the state through courts and police. The National Audit Office (2008) looked at 1,000 ASBOs between 1999 and 2006, and found that 35% were breached five or more times. For 15,000 ASBOs issued up to December 2007, breach rates were 61%. Given that most ASBOs are breached, it has been argued that the orders have effectively criminalised thousands of people who may never have been convicted of any other crime.

In March 2003 the Home Office White Paper *Respect and Responsibility – Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour* stated:

> There are places for rough sleepers to sleep at night; there is support and
> treatment available for their health needs and drug habits, and there are
> benefits available to pay for food and rent. The reality is that the majority of
> people who beg are doing so to sustain a drug habit, and are often caught up
> in much more serious crime. When members of the public give them money
> on the street it does not help them to deal with their problems.

The concentration on low-level offending borrows heavily from the 'broken windows' thesis, which was first articulated in an influential and much quoted article by James Q. Wilson and George L.

Kelling in Atlantic Monthly in 1982.[99] The article argued that incivilities - such as broken windows – make an area visually unappealing which, if allowed to remain unfixed, will signal decline and lead to fear of crime. This in turn is reflected in the behaviour of its citizens and will attract other, less desirable individuals, and therefore acts as a catalyst for community and moral decline:

> Consider a building with a few broken windows, if the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside.[100]

By cracking down on minor disturbances, the thesis insists, law enforcement agencies can help prevent larger ones. Broken windows policing was adopted by elected officials and police chiefs across the United States, but is perhaps most clearly and emphatically associated with the Republican Mayoralty of Rudy Giuliani who adopted the strategy under the rubrics of 'zero-tolerance', 'quality of life' and 'reclaiming the public realm' (Millie: 2007:117). Under the remit of New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton the broken windows thesis was put into practice and led to a sequence of acts – removing graffiti from subway cars, apprehending fare dodgers and crackdown on squeegee cleaning, begging and homelessness. The outcome of such efforts, it has been argued, contributed to rates of both petty and serious crime falling suddenly and significantly, and continued to drop visibly over the following years. The broken windows thesis has since found popularity and resonance outside of the US. Its appeal, writes Minton, is that 'it offered a straightforward and logical explanation of how to tackle to crime' (2009:147), and

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[99] It is possible to make the argument that that the broken windows thesis can be traced back to the famous experiment conducted by the Stanford University psychologist Phillip Zimbardo (2007), who invited two seemingly abandoned cars – one in Palo Alto and one in the Bronx – to be stripped and smashed up in order demonstrate that at a small deviation from the norm can set in motion a cascade of vandalism and criminality.

[100] No pagination available.

served to influence and shape New Labour's approach to managing conduct and enforcing responsibility.

Anti-social Behaviour strategies, according to the British criminologist Lynn Hancock, derive considerable moral freight for an uncritical acceptance of Wilson and Kelling's 'broken windows' thesis, and the rather flawed direction of causality – disorder leads to neighbourhood decline (2008:59). [101] Drawing explicitly on the language of broken windows, the White Paper argued:

> If a window is broken or a wall is covered in graffiti it can contribute to an environment in which crime can take hold, particularly if intervention is not prompt and effective. Environmental decline, antisocial behaviour and crime go hand in hand and create a sense of helplessness that nothing can be done (Home Office, 2003:14).

The anti-social behaviour agenda reached its zenith during the 2005 election campaign and, at the Labour Party conference later in the year, when Tony Blair suggested his third consecutive election victory was down, in part, to his approach to anti-social behaviour. He told his party:

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[101] The broken windows thesis and zero-tolerance policing have been the source of considerable debate and controversy. Malcolm Gladwell famously endorsed the thesis in Tipping Point, where 'trivial' problems are shown to be tipping points- broken windows- that invite far more serious crimes. Elsewhere critics have pointed out that major crime also dropped in many other U.S. cities during the 1990s, both those that had adopted 'zero tolerance' policies and those that had not. As a counterpoint to these politically infused arguments, the moderately interesting but phenomenally successful Freakonomics (2007) suggested that the legalisation of abortion – and thus demographic change – was the main reason for falling crime in New York.

> Respect is about more than crime. It's about the loss of a value which is a
> necessary part of any strong community: proper behaviour; good conduct; the
> unselfish notion that the other person matters.[102]

This was followed, according to the home secretary Alan Johnson, by two years of government 'coasting' on the issue under Gordon Brown's initial stewardship. This stance was given ballast by Ed Balls, the children's secretary, declaration that he hoped to live in "*the kind of society that puts ASBOs behind us*" (Squires, 2008). Its waning popularity was moreover held to be a reflection of an emerging consensus within criminal justice and social welfare circles that the iridescent glow of ASBOs had effectively burnt itself out.

In the interregnum the language and deployment of the powers associated with the anti-social behaviour agenda found enthusiastic support in Dorchester. Its passage was hastened by the local media spotlight on 'beggars, tramps and vagrants'. In this respect alone, a strong discourse and moral conviction was mobilised in order to provide the political ammunition needed to bring into effect tougher measures to curb and control rough sleepers and street drinkers. This puts us at a critical juncture.

The targeting of anti-social behaviour has arguably become the litmus test of New Labour's efforts to dethrone the Conservative Party as the natural party of law and order. It is perhaps not surprising that the current, though increasingly moribund Labour administration, has saw fit to resuscitate the language and use of anti-social behaviour orders. What is perhaps even more striking is that the recent revival of the anti-social behaviour agenda ignores the verdict of experience. But it is, at base, wholly consistent with the 'rights and responsibilities' rhetoric underpinning the communitarian model to the extent that it prioritises social cohesion over social

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[102] Prime Minister Tony Blair's Keynote Speech to the Labour Party 2005 Conference in Brighton.

justice (Fitzpatrick & Jones, 2005). As a political and moral project, the notion of 'anti-social behaviour' is therefore open to the accusation that it is both authoritarian and persecutory in its nature and impact.

5.4 **Crackdown on Rough Sleepers**

Let me clearly assert, to avoid any ambiguity, that in the weeks and months of the spring and summer of 2007 a highly visible and fairly concentrated street culture – as I have attempted to document –became firmly embedded within the striations of Dorchester town centre and its immediate periphery. It would be naïve to imagine that the association between rough sleeping and incivility was not without foundation. There is no question that some (although certainly by no means all rough sleepers and their euphemistic 'associates') binged on drink, openly fought and argued, swore, urinated and defecated in public sight and engaged in aggressive begging. On the face of this, a PCSO from the Dorchester Safer Neighbourhood Team recounted:

> We were busy. We had a lot of calls. A lot of time it's the perception. It can be young people, it can be older people. But when you see a group there by the Walkway people get intimidated. We had a lot of police calls [and] we had a lot of complaints. Various things were happening, so we were quite busy.

He continues arguing again:

> I think that what happened down in the Walks is that you used to get a lot of people gathering. Say out of fifteen people two or three would be abusive and very intimidating. People walk by and feel very intimidated - 'give us 50p' could be quite intimidating and threatening - even something like that. And

when they didn't give them any money and were told where to go…well that did happen and someone knew someone who that happened to. So I guess it spiralled from there.

The extent and intensity of the problem should not be underestimated. People did indeed report feeling intimidated and fearful. Echoing this, market traders and small business owners openly voiced concern about the potential dangers posed by street drinkers and aggressive beggars to the physical and economic well-being of the town. This was a recurring feature of the media news reports, and was strongly supported by the British Transport Police, Dorchester Town Council, Dorset Police and West Dorset District Council. At a narrower but still resonant level, the Salvation Army sought to recalibrate its working relationship with the Hub Project on the basis of its explicit concern about the 'difficult' behaviour of some of the day centre's service users in the context of its Dorchester charity shop. The following text captures something of this:

We are also having the problem of folk sleeping in front of the shop and trying to move them on in the mornings. We have had to enlist the help of the police. We then had to wash down the front of the shop of urine and empty bottles and cans.

Further:

There is also the problem of intoxicated clientele bringing in their dockets anywhere from two weeks or two months after the Hub has given them. The clientele can be very mouthy, using foul language and disrupting the shop. They feel that they have the 'right' to take want they want, regardless of the price, and if we haven't an item that they want then they insist on two or

something else. My volunteers can be very intimidated by them and worry for

the safety of our customers, themselves and the shop. We are not here to

enable their habits. We are here to help those people that find themselves in

a difficult situation and want to get help.

Over and above this, the representation and interpretation of Dorchester as a unified and

homogenous environment free of the deep markings of deprivation, despair and disorganisation

began to unravel. As a consequence, a significant and voluble train of political comment, public

anxiety and moral consternation was set in motion which, ultimately, led to the responsibilisation

of both homeless people and the Hub Project.

An emerging sentiment was the need to introduce formal controls and specific sanctions to

regulate behaviour based around the impact of a 'problem street culture' by making use of civil

order containing conditions prohibiting 'offenders' from entering defined areas (geographical

conditions). This resulted in the introduction of a localised dispersal order. But as Millie has

documented dispersal orders can apply to 'presence' in order to prevent possible anti-social

behaviour, as well as actual 'behaviour'. (2008:1690).[103]

The order means they must disperse, so they can't move off as a group, and

they must not come back within 24 hours. They are given a map to make it

clear where they are to stay away from unless they have a specific reason

like an appointment. It's given us some teeth to deal with these issues. It's

given us the power to warn people and if necessary move them on or arrest

them before it becomes a serious problem.

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[103] More pertinently, individuals who refuse to comply with a direction to disperse, face arrest and conviction.

Reflecting on the need to enforce 'responsible behaviour' through the use of a localised Dispersal Order, the Dorchester and Sherborne Commander observed:

> But it is when it gets loud, it gets abusive, it gets aggressive and they start to fight amongst themselves [that] the public gets concerned and different agencies get involved. And [in this context] you have to say that they have spoiled the situation for themselves. It's about finding a balanced approach; policing with consent and with the community. But I don't think that they all take responsibility for their actions.

The populist discourse and dominant imaging that took centre stage in discussions about rough sleepers and street drinkers went unchallenged. As a result of this debate, the proposal received the conflicted support of the Hub Project, as this vignette suggests:

'The Regulars'

As I go about making teas and coffees I note to Bob that the Project appears to be relatively quiet and less chaotic this morning. Uncompromisingly and bluntly Bob explains that ''*a number of the regulars were issued again with Section 30s after the Project had closed the other day*.'' Motioning me to one side I am invited by Bob to the forecourt where he signals the arrival of extra fencing surrounding the perimeter of the Hub. Bob further explains that the decision to heavily fortify the Project was taken on the basis that it would deter service users' from congregating or sleeping on the forecourt when the day-centre is closed at night or over the weekend. ''*On Monday some of the users decided to camp out over there* [signalling towards an adjacent car park] *under the snooker hall*.'' This 'move' from the Hub's forecourt to the small car park across the road elicited a furious phone call to Bob. ''*I said that I was sorry but that I*

> *couldn't intervene to move the group on. Anyway, they* [the snooker hall] *called the Police who arrived and set about issuing 'dispersal orders'*."

Elsewhere similar sentiments were voiced:

> Yes we were [in support of the introduction of the Dispersal Order] because at the time we couldn't see how else we could stop the sleeping around the Hub, by the electricians or on the station [platform], and as soon as the Section 30 came in all of that stopped…I really do think that it made a difference because the no drinking order couldn't be implemented on the electricians' grounds whereas the anti-social behaviour that was created could (Dr. Margaret Barker).

These moral threads and discursive chains, as we have already seen, served to portray rough sleepers as problematic and pathological. But homeless people were not the only subject interpreted and represented as disorderly, dangerous and anti-social (Cohen, 1972). In this setting, young people and 'boy racers' were similarly a topic of concern and debate for local moral guardians.[104] But in acknowledging this triptych, a broader question is raised: why was it that rough sleepers in Dorchester were discursively and materially embodied as avatars of anti-social behaviour, when the application for a local dispersal order was based on collated evidence (police incident logs, letters of complaint, results from monthly anti-social behaviour case management meetings and maps of *hot spot* zones) that, in the words of the divisional lead for the local Safer Neighbourhood Team, was brought in to deal 'with a cross section of problems, not just rough sleepers?' Or more precisely:

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[104] Personal email received 5 February 2008.

SUPERINTENDENT'S AUTHORITY

SECTION 30 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003

I, Colin Searle, as Superintendent of the Dorset Police, give authorisation that groups of two or more people in the 'relevant locality' may be given directions to disperse in accordance with Section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Over the past 6 months there have been incidents of anti-social conduct by groups of youths; groups of young adults; rough sleepers and their associates and car enthusiasts. I consider that members of the public have been intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed by these groups and that anti-social behaviour is a significant and persistent problem in the locality.

A constable in uniform, or a police community support office in uniform, who has reasonable grounds for believing that the presence or behaviour of a group of two or more persons in any public place in the relevant locality has resulted in or is likely to result in any members of the public being harassed, alarmed or distressed may give one or more of the following directions:

- A direction to disperse
- A direction to leave the relevant locality
- A direction prohibiting their return to the relevant locality in a period not exceeding 24 hours

Arguably the answer to the troubling question as to why rough sleepers became the iconic signifier of deviant behaviour and particular focus of moral amplification is that it powerfully reinforced existing social anxieties and societal reactions. So, for example, homeless people were constructed as disrupting deeply held and taken for granted norms – of sociability, economic well-being and personal aesthetics (May, 2009). This emerging sense of fear and misrecognition contributed to the stigmatisation and labelling of rough sleepers as 'deviant' and 'anti-social'.

For my part, I witnessed numerous small acts of kindness and common courtesy – both from the public in the form of donations and among homeless and other vulnerably housed people in the form of shared empathy and understanding. It was not, for instance, uncommon for an individual service user to gift a friend, acquaintance or unknown stranger a fifty pence piece so as to enjoy lunch at the Hub Project. Take another example. I distinctly remember feeling an unyielding sense of paralysis as I watched from the window as a female service user moved quickly and forcefully across the forecourt and on towards a younger (and unrelated) rough sleeper who had collapsed dramatically on an outlying pavement. As a small group of concerned and confused spectators hurriedly gathered around, the woman calmly asked for room, punched in three digits into a mobile phone while cradling the young man with a cool assurance and something approaching maternal concern for five long minutes before the ambulance arrived. I say this not to exculpate the anti-social aspects of the street culture or romanticise the morality and ethics of homeless people, but to bring a degree of balance to the overarching discussion (Wacquant, 2002: 1521).

One important aspect of this is the argument that homeless people in Dorchester, sited at the social and economic margins, had no choice but to occupy public space. Understanding this, Blomley (1994) has pointed out the urban environment both shapes, and is shaped by, all those who inhabit it, including homeless people. However, efforts to both shape and change the physical landscape of Dorchester resulted in rough sleepers being deemed problematic on the

grounds that homelessness is 'out-of-place' because it partly stands in opposition to normal rules of propriety (Cloke et al., 2000b). This repressive turn towards the language and use of anti-social behaviour orders exists to provide a degree of symbolic reassurance to 'respectable' society that effective action is being taken against crime and incivility and, therefore, has a disciplinary effect on the behaviour of rough sleepers.

Tracking the contour lines of the broader preoccupation with 'tackling anti-social behaviour', we see how the early focus on dispersal orders segued effortlessly into a later concern with restricting the consumption of alcohol in designated areas by the use of Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Designation Order. The terms of this regulation denote that while it is not an offence to consume alcohol within a designated area, the police can require a person to stop drinking, and can confiscate the alcohol of anyone who is either drinking in the designated area or whom they believe intends to do so. The logic underpinning this punitive regulation was, it was strongly asserted, to safeguard and protect the 'decent majority' from problematic behaviour:

> There are orders in Weymouth and we decided it's about time we had this here. It's not an alcohol exclusion zone. People will be able to drink alcohol, but not if they cause problems. We've been trying to deal with problem behaviour caused by drink under by-laws in various places but this order would be much better. There are various causes such as the homeless, youngsters who get together and birthday parties that get out of hand and this order would help us deal with all of them. It would cover places like the Borough Gardens and Maumbury Rings where you can enjoy a drink as part of an event. But if anyone or a group started causing a problem we could

target them more easily with this order. It's not creating a police state. It's a means of stopping people from making other people's lives a misery.[105]

A more grounded analysis emerges in comments made by the same PCSO from the Dorchester North Safer Neighbourhood Team:

> We had this very old-fashion byelaw around Borough Gardens that didn't really carry any weight. Then in 2007/08 we had a law that came in that stopped drinking all around the town centre. Within the radius of the town centre you weren't allowed to drink. Basically you were asked by a police officer or a PCSO to stop drinking as you were carrying out an offence, an arrestable offence. It went in stages. We might have three or four weeks where we might seize a lot of alcohol, and then it might quieten down. But at the time it was quite crucial to be honest.

With the forward march of time Dorset Police argued:

> There are still some places where people beg or sit and drink, but we deal with them as soon as we hear about it. There don't seem to be as many rough sleepers about. I think some have moved on, especially to Weymouth. And the Hub are doing their best, such as banning people who cause problems.[106]

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[105] Adcock, D. (2007j) Town Calls Time on Boozers, Dorset Echo, 26 January 2007.
[106] Adcock, D. (2007k) Boozers and Beggars are 'being dealt with', *Dorset Echo*, 4 August 2007.

While the example immediately below illustrates the impact on members of the rough sleeping community in Dorchester:

> Last summer I was charged for drinking a single car of beer. I was supposed to go up in front of a judge. But could I be bothered? So then weeks later I was drinking again in town and the same officer who caught me first time says to me '*I know you don't I*?' I go up in front of a women judge and she says '*how old are you*? '*Fifty three*,' I reply. *No previous crimes I see and you were drinking from a can of bee*r? '*Yes*' I reply and the case was thrown out. Waste of time and taxpayers money the judge says.

The above quote demonstrates that the Alcohol Consumption Order was experienced as being discriminatory and exclusionary in nature. Reinforcing and underpinning this, it was viewed by some rough sleepers as creating a climate in which interactions with police officers and PCSOs were characterised by a growing sense of mutual suspicion and resentment. Interestingly, it also begins to hint at a sense of unease among criminal justice practitioners as to both appropriateness effectiveness of 'soft' enforcement.

Two themes emerge here that are worthy of note: the way in which enforcement was identified as the dominant strategy for responding to aggressive and persistent anti-social behaviour:

> Public order offences might not be appropriate. We can give them a Section 5 but we can't arrest them. So we give them a public order warning and we leave. Then they're loud and your girlfriend or wife is petrified. The kids won't go into the garden to play. What would you do? Would you want to go to court against the rough sleeper who swore at your wife? They know where

you live. It is a tool to be used [for the benefit] of people in the Waitrose or Somerfield car park in Trinity Road going to work [who] have to put up with rough sleeping behind the skips there. As you say there might be four or five arrests in the whole of the six months when that order was in place. We make more arrests then that in a week for other offences. What we are saying is that a group has been loud and abusive and the community finds it unacceptable 'now please move on'. Two or three people are generally OK. We visit them and ask them to move on [and say] 'this is an official warning can you stop'. Their destiny is in their own hands (Inspector Les Fry).

The second theme relates to the way in which the argument was overlaid with the imagery of social and moral decline.

We are trying to work with [the Hub Project] to reduce the rough sleeping figures, and they [tell us] that they have rehoused thirty people. So [now] we don't have thirty rough sleepers in Dorchester. A lot of the people who have been rehoused go back to the Hub for meals and they have contact with other people. When they were sleeping in the market we had real concerns because there was drug taking going on there and young girls from the local community were going there for sexual activity. When you have a group of people like that you will have such activity.

These remarks indicate an anxiety on the part of Dorset Police that was evoked in justificatory terms as well as a means of making an important distinction between personal irresponsibility and the law-abiding and civilised majority:

We get more complaints in the summer about people causing a problem through drinking and behaving in an anti-social manner. It has started again with the good weather we've had recently. We had a Section 30 order in place last year to cover the town centre and we are considering doing that again. It's a useful tool for the Police to deal with problems and does not affect people who are enjoying a drink with a picnic in the Borough Gardens, for example.

These processes presupposed that rough sleepers' presence in specific locations was problematic or unacceptable. Far from being free, open or 'unrestricted' public space is in fact highly controlled space. It is layered with rules, regulations and bylaws and practices which govern its occupation and use. Some of these rules are explicit and obvious, but most are well hidden. Many are revealed or evoked only by the absence and exclusion of those who might transgress them (Winford, 2006:55). The same logic is clearly evident in this very short vignette:

Back on Civvie Street

Standing in the middle of the room I am approached by a grey haired and middle aged Mancunian who asks if I can get him a plastic bag for his hand, which is covered with a slashed black bin liner. "So w*hat happened to you*?" I ask. "*I've broken two fingers*." I then ask 'Phil' about his current situation and am interested to learn that "*I've just done twelve years inside and I came out and I was given a Section 30 in Weymouth*." "*Why was that*?" "*The copper said it was because I wouldn't move on. But I didn't even have anywhere to move on to*." "How come," I keenly ask. "*Just done a twelve year stretch. I didn't even know what one was until I started complaining.* [So I've] *been sleeping out in the market with Gaz. It's all right if it's not like*

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this [referring to the wind and rain].''

In the above example, we see how blanket enforcement measures can negatively impact on the most vulnerable individuals. However, for the most part, homeless and other vulnerably people in Dorchester were acutely aware of the existence of the Section 30 Order. Indeed, the following vignette perfectly captures both knowledge of its existence and insight as to its potentially harmful consequences.

And moreover:

'Rozzers'

After depositing my belongings in the office, I return to the forecourt and stand with Chris and Alex. I listen with interest as Alex pauses between deep intakes of coarse tobacco leaf and describes how this morning he had stumbled across a startlingly dazed and confused Graham who, it would appear, was sprawled across a busy intersection in Dorchester town centre. I quickly learn that Graham ''*has been drinking non-stop since Monday*'' and was found by Alex lying in a foetal position clutching a two litre bottle of Special Brew with such force that Alex was unable prise it free from his hands. From there on, I ask Alex if he was concerned that Graham was in danger of being hit by a car. Curiously, I watch and listen, as Alex weighs up this question before confidently announcing that ''*my first and only thought was to get him off that bloody road before the rozzers arrived.*'' Alex adds that had a police officer or a PCSO found Graham incapacitated by drink, belligerent and displaying a stubborn refusal to move-on then it is almost certain that the super strength lager would have been confiscated and Graham would have been issued with a 'dispersal order' or even arrested as ''*it's market day and the police*

> *and traders' don't want to see homeless people loitering about the streets in town or drinking in Borough Gardens."*

In this ethnographic example, the new regulatory regime does not prompt reflection and change or, concomitantly, engagement with appropriate support services (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2008:198). Rather, it succinctly highlights the disconnection between potential 'sanctions' and available 'incentives'.

The situation was complicated and deepened by repeated referral to dispersal orders in neighbouring Weymouth. In this case, 'hard' enforcement was justified on the grounds of the urgent need to remove rough sleepers from the town's esplanade and 'binge drinkers' from its commercial centre so as to uphold the town's appeal and viability as a tourist destination. The consequence of this populist and punitive response impacted most negatively on rough sleepers:[107]

> I think in terms of rough sleepers the police do whatever they want to do. They're such a marginalised portion of society that if they want to move them on or whatever their perceived to be…a nuisance…then they just do it. When the Section 30 is in force they use it, and when not they just move them on anyway. It doesn't make a difference (Street Homeless Outreach Worker).

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[107] In the management of anti-social behaviour has extended out from Dorset Police to incorporate street pastors. This consists of a group of 23 Christians who meet every Friday evening picking up broken glass, making sure vulnerable-looking people get safely into taxis, handing out blankets to stop clubbers getting cold and checking on people sleeping on the esplanade or the beach. For an overview of the street pastor urban initiative see www.streetpastors.co.uk

But it also created a ricocheting effect between the two towns, as Dorchester's Safer Neighbourhood Team leader noted:

> We have had a significant decrease in the number of homeless people sitting around drinking or begging in the town centre. It's definitely an improvement. We have noticed fewer complaints from people in the town generally and particularly the areas where people would gather to sit round and drink such as Bowling Alley Walk and South Street and in the Borough Gardens. There are still some places where people beg or sit and drink, but we deal with them as soon as we hear about it. There don't seem to be as many rough sleepers about. I think some have moved on, especially to Weymouth.[108]

This contradiction is most obvious in the following observation:

> It must have given the police so much more [power]. I think that it was well done in Dorchester. There were a lot of occasions when the PCSO (Police Community Support Officers) used it as a potential weapon [together with] the non- drinking order. Tipping people's drinks out and that is enough to move anyone on. And [as a result] Borough Gardens got completely cleared up. What I don't like is that they can get moved on, but where are they supposed to go? (Dr. Margaret Barker).

In a wide ranging review, Geoffrey DeVerteuil (2003:63) has argued that mobility represents the ability of people experiencing homelessness to exercise some measure of autonomy. The key to

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[108] Adcock, D. (2007k) Boozers and Beggars are 'being Dealt with', *Dorset Echo*, 4th August 2007.

making sense of this process is not to see homeless people as merely the passive 'consumers' of institutional settings but, rather, as actively engaged in mobility strategies for the purposes of survival. As DeVerteuil notes, mobility depends heavily on the national and local welfare system, local housing conditions and attitudes towards homelessness. Yet, in many important respects this unit of analysis is, I would strongly suggest insufficiently attentive to the ascendancy of the contemporary concern in public policy efforts with recoding behaviour and lifestyles deemed to be deviant, irresponsible and, ultimately, self excluding. Without wishing to completely abandon these earlier insights or judgements on the grounds of being empirically anaemic or intellectually meretricious, this extended case study has endeavoured to bring focus and clarity to some of the ways in which the (in)voluntary movement of homeless people is coupled to the contemporary process of contractual governance. The effect is to further reinforce the exclusion of those groups who need the most assistance.

5.5 <u>Transforming Citizenship: Public Spaces, Private Troubles</u>

There is no smoking gun that proves unequivocally that the use and threat of dispersal or the imposition of alcohol exclusion zones – *with a trained eye on rough sleepers* - makes for responsible citizens. In the six months in which the Section 30 Order was in operation between June and December 2007, Dorset Police issued eighteen dispersal orders while pocket notebooks of all PCSOs for Dorchester town recorded there being forty eight occasions where alcohol had been confiscated.[109] Can this therefore be read as a sign that enforcement strategies were successfully? My research suggests that one very clear outcome of the policing of aggressive and persistent incivility was to 'push' street activity into areas that were not subject to the same level of surveillance and control. In these and other ways, homeless people viewed the potential use of enforcement measures in a negative light. In a rather different vein, there was also a current of

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[109] Personal email, *Freedom of Information Request*, received 05 February 2008.

thinking among some police officers and police community support officers that the legal powers constituted a crude and blunt instrument. Thus: '*Section 30 is a difficult one to police. Officers don't like it because if you warn someone then after twenty fours they can just come back. So now we give them a Section 27.*'[110] But where does this leave us? What we can say with a degree of certainty is that there is a significant and resonate body of circumstantial evidence which – in cumulative terms – points to the deleterious consequences of seeking to exert leverage over individuals' behaviour through potentially coercive and draconian social policies and legal sanctions. This complex and contested landscape has, as I believe, three constitutive elements.

At the immediate level, punitive enforcement action in Dorchester served to further marginalise rough sleepers by conflating on-street homelessness with anti-social behaviour. It thus rendered homeless and other vulnerably housed people 'out-of-place' through the repositioning of popular understandings of the legitimate use of public space. This example suggests that prevailing discourses, strategies and technologies associated with anti-social behaviour can lead – although this not a linear or automatic outcome - to the displacement of rough sleepers and 'othered' social groups. Here, again, the attitudes and dispositions that were classified as 'anti-social' did not simply evaporate or mutate as if by some alchemic force; much less the underlying 'discourse of need' that was said by some to have contributed towards the fuelling of the 'problematic street culture' in the first instance. In effect the drumbeat of disorderly behaviour and the projection of the 'anti-social' subject constricted the rapidly diminishing public spaces available to homeless people, but also served to overtly criminalise poverty and homelessness.

At the intermediate level, 'soft' and 'hard' enforcement measures were consistently promoted and privileged over the possible efficacy of pursuing early prevention and intervention strategies (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2008:2001). In this context criminal justice was elevated above social

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[110] Section 27 dispersal orders give police the power to move individuals from a public place.

need. In many important respects this approach stood in contradistinction to existing government guidance and more recent academic findings. As Richard Cunningham pointed out:

It's about disrupting behaviour – street drinking. The partnership between the police and social services is very important. One thing doesn't often work. You need to have a social care approach. In Lambeth we created a space in a park where people could drink and reduced ASBOs to zero. And we also managed to house a majority of homeless individuals and to provide interventions for the other ones. And it was a big success even among councillors who were dead against it. But the point was that it was OK to drink but not at the expense of other people. So by all means drink here but do so respectfully. And if you need help we will help you. It was very good because it enabled us to pick out those who were preying on the homeless such as loan sharks and drug dealers. And I think six or seven arrests came out of people selling cheap booze, fags and other things. It was a success but it was based on a firm partnership and [the recognition] that enforcement alone will not work, but a combination of both will.

One is reminded here of 'Hamsterdam' (or sometimes Hampsterdam), a term popularised by the critically acclaimed HBO TV series *The Wire* set in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.[111] It relates more specifically to the potential positive effects of establishing drug tolerance 'free zones' whereby urban spaces are ignored by the police. The experiment is portrayed in the fourth episode of the third season as being successful in reducing street crime and clearing drug dealing of residential streets. But *The Wire* does not present Hamsterdam as a simple answer. The free zones

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[111] The title 'Hamsterdam' is, of course, a corruption of the Dutch city that is most closely associated with liberal drug laws.

themselves, while largely violence-free, are shown encouraging addiction and promoting disease and prostitution. This leads in turn to a radical shift in policy towards targeted health and social services outreach to *at-risk* populations. Of course, rural West Dorset is – metaphorically and figuratively - a long way from the city of Baltimore or the London Borough of Lambeth, but the principle still holds. As Johnsen and Fitzpatrick have noted '*positive responses to enforcement (i.e. desistence from begging/street and engagement with support services)* [are] *most likely where enforcement measures* [are] *integrated with intensive support and where there* [is] *genuine 'interagency working' between the police, local authority and support providers*' (2008: 199).

At the higher level, on-street homelessness may have disappeared from the 'prime spaces' of Dorchester, but it will inevitably resurface because as Coleman has perceptively remarked 'the city is, and always has been, constituted as a contest over space – over its production, representation and regulation; over who is authorised to be in it and who is kept out; over what constitutes an unpolluted space and what constitutes transgression of space' (2005: 143). Through this prism we can discern the homeless experience as a struggle against socio-spatial marginalisation. This is a crucial point because it proposes that rough sleepers in Dorchester are engaged in spatial struggles that serve to resist preconceptions about their identity and against processes and spaces of increased regulation, surveillance and punishment. What seems especially important is the recognition that homeless people are constantly embroiled in power struggles which serve to make and remake the urban landscape and experience. This gives cohesion and a unifying perspective to the fact that while criminal justice, policing, housing and other social welfare policies fail to address the critical and troubling dynamics associated with social exclusion, homeless people themselves are active in their own situations, continue to make decisions and take action (Pain & Francis, 2004).

We now turn to consider our second substantive theme, reconnection policies, and how they impacted on homeless people in Dorchester by tracing this policy discourse through three linked and increasing intertwined contextual threads. The first thread is concerned with the highly contested interpretation of the 'local connection' criteria and the subsequent statutory and symbolic representation of homeless people and other vulnerably housed people as 'outsiders' and 'undeserving'. The second thread is concerned with the powerful argument that 'responsibility' for tackling homelessness and meeting housing need was considered to reside elsewhere. The common thread running throughout is contained within the assertion that homeless people were driven to Dorchester by the existence of the Hub Project and its self-perpetuating homelessness scene. This emphasis on local connection should thus be viewed as an attempt to limit pressure on local resources by stemming (and removing) the flow of homeless people accessing support services within the town (May, 2003:42).

5.6   <u>Reconnection Policies</u>

> Reconnection is a helpful response to rough sleeping when an individual wishes to return to an area and can be supported to do so and linked to appropriate services. However, as the guidance states, "the policy must also identify and agree the outcomes for clients who refuse either to engage with the reconnection process or who refuse to accept a referral." In these instances services should be offered locally as part of an authority's strategy to tackle rough sleeping (Homeless Link, 2008).[112]

Paul Cloke and his interlocutors (2000b:2003) have powerfully illustrated how reactions and responses to homeless people in some rural areas can give rise to the morally encoded label of

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[112] Personal email received 10 March 2008.

'other' in terms of their connection to the local community but also in terms of their lifestyle and apparent non-conformity to societal norms and expectations. I employ this understanding to show how homeless people and other vulnerably housed people who were both associated with the Hub Project and identified as part of the 'problem street culture' in Dorchester became categorised as 'outsiders'. This crystallised a particular narrative. Rough sleeping, at least in part, was viewed as an unacceptable lifestyle and form of anti-social behaviour, rather than as a housing and welfare issue. This, in turn, influenced the type of assessment as well as the type of solutions provided by local statutory partners. Importantly, this example demonstrates how the conjunction of the labels 'outsiders' and 'undeserving' with the policy rationality of local connection and reconnection can be interpreted as exemplifying 'conditional welfare' where social need is sublimated to questions of morality, character and location. In so doing, it renders visible the way in which West Dorset District Council adopted a stricter interpretation of the legislative test. On this analysis, it represents a rolling-back of the rights-based approach to welfare (Pawson, 2007).

To explore these issues more fully requires a few points of background.

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) sets out the legal obligations a local authority has to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in accordance with the following five criteria:[113]

- The applicant meets the legal definition of homelessness

- The applicant is eligible for assistance

- The applicant is in priority need

- The applicant is not intentionally homeless

- The applicant has a local connection

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[113] For details of the above criteria see www.legislation.gov.uk/acts.htm

When it has been established that the applicant is homeless and eligible for priority accommodation, the local authority is only responsible if the applicant has a local connection, as follows:[114]

- The applicant has lived in the area for six months out of the last year, or three years out of the last five years
- The applicant has family connections in the area
- The applicant has permanent employment in the area
- The applicant has a connection with the area for another special reason

In England and Wales, under Section 193 of the 1996 Housing Act, local authorities have discretionary powers to refer the applicant to another authority with which the applicant has a stronger local connection. The local connection rule is voluntary – local authorities are not compelled to establish a local connection. It is, though, important to make note of the fact that there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the 'local connection' clause is increasingly exercised by local authorities as a means to filter out applications before determining eligibility on the basis of the four core conditions (see, for example, Twinch, 2008).[115] As a consequence of this, rough sleepers are often forced to continue sleeping out, further exposing themselves to risk and exacerbating any vulnerability. Or they are arrested for vagrancy and detained, while vital assessments may be missed.

Reflecting on local conditions in rural Dorset, a Shelter outreach worker commented:

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[114] Local connection has now been amended by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. The change was conceived to improve the prospects of getting social housing for people who have served in the Armed Forces.

The way I often see West Dorset working, and this is probably documented all over the country, is that you have to bring down the [number of homelessness] applications. So you get pressure from central government 'bring down your homelessness statistics as we do not want to see so many homeless people in your area'. So [it seems that local authorities are saying] 'we can reduce homelessness applications by having Housing Needs interviews'. [Now] rather than making a homelessness application Housing Needs tell you your options – fair enough – but they're reducing their homelessness applications by offering an interview and some information, and often that will be enough. [But] for the average person who doesn't understand the law or understand what their rights are I think "hey, wait a minute!" [that's not fair or right]. And lots of people are told that they don't have a local connection – despite have friends and support in the area. And after a bit of pressure won't actually make a homelessness application. It can be frustrating. What happens if you say I'm going to be homeless in two days is that they will say 'let's get you to Bournemouth or we can give you money towards a rent deposit scheme.'

This emphasis on local connection is significant, for it highlights how different social actors and institutional arrangements came to articulate competing and contradictory conceptions of rights and responsibility and the constitutive social processes of belonging and identity. A strong theme to emerge from qualitative interviews was the powerful view that the Hub Project was responsible for exerting a 'magnet effect' on homeless people's movements *into* Dorchester. One important aspect of this was an explicit recognition of the uneven provision of emergency service for homeless people while simultaneously critiquing the work of the Hub Project and its small battalion of volunteers:

We haven't got anything like it in Blandford, Weymouth or Sherborne. Wherever you look there is nothing like it [the Hub Project]. The result is that it has attracted attention. But I am not sure that the Hub is there for its users or the people who run it (Inspector Les Fry).

Thus, Dorchester was a place of unexpectedly high levels of rough sleepers and the Hub Project was held responsible for attracting a disproportionate number of rough sleepers from elsewhere. By contrast, rough sleepers and wayfarers articulated a deep and enduring attachment to West Dorset. For some, this was expressed in terms of the complexity of biography, existing social relationships and a strong sense of *rootedness.* For others, this was embodied within the physical, affective and performative contours of the town (Cloke et al., 2007). Inscribed within this rough sleepers and wayfarers who claimed to identify most strongly with Dorchester and the Hub Project were also most likely to voice concern about 'outsiders', as this very short journal extract shows:

'Life's a Lottery'

Stephen picks out a lottery ticket from deep within his pocket and casually announces *"might've won the lottery. I could be a multi-millionaire. Someone told me that a large win has gone unclaimed. That would be ironic 'Homeless Lottery Millionaire'*." Stephen expands on this sense of wish fulfilment and says "*If I won the lottery I would buy this place and build a hostel upstairs.*" To this Ann explains that West Dorset District Council wouldn't countenance much less sanction any form of building or extension on the existing site but suggests that the unoccupied snooker hall across the road would be an ideal building for such a project. This leads Stephen to opine "*imagine if there was a large hostel for the homeless across the road, you would have people coming all over for accommodation. And since I really like Dorchester,*

> *always have, I am not sure if that would really be a good thing.*"

Moving the focus specifically to reconnection, it is perhaps worth briefly considering that since 2006 the Communities and Local Government has encouraged local authorities to develop and implement reconnections protocols. The purpose of reconnection is, it is suggested, to allow rough sleepers, particularly new arrivals, to return in a planned way to an area where they have accommodation, support networks or some other connection.[116] However, official guidance states that reconnection policies should be part of a wider rough sleeping policy and not used in isolation. But the reality is that more local authorities are implementing reconnections policies as their rough sleeper numbers rise as a result of increasing insistence on local connection in other areas (Homeless Link, 2008).

Shelter, the leading housing and homelessness charity, has raised serious concerns about the current emphasis on reconnection strategies. Rather, it has suggested that an important step change would be to enforce a new right for those sleeping rough to be accommodated while their full housing and support needs are assessed. On this theme, the charity has argued:

> Although these guidelines reflect Government concern that some policies adopted by local authorities could deny vulnerable people access to hostels and support services, at the same time they encourage some of the practices criticised in the 1960s and 70s, such as returning homeless people to other locations. The Government guidance recommends that those referred to other areas should have accommodation, if appropriate with support, available when they arrive, to prevent rough sleeping in those areas. However, it falls short of recommending how those working with rough

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[116] Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) *Getting Connected*, London: CLG.

sleepers might determine for whom reconnection is appropriate. In fact, reconnections policies vary from authority to authority and therefore the criteria against which a rough sleeper is assessed will depend on where in the country they come into contact with outreach teams (2008:18).

Against this backdrop, it became the 'personal responsibility' of homeless people (with the active encouragement of the Hub Project) to *move-on* from Dorchester and its surrounding hinterland in order to assert 'rights' to housing support and welfare provision through reconnecting with their place of origin. Outwardly West Dorset District Council rationalised this approach by arguing that fiscal responsibility was co-terminus with personal responsibility. As a local Housing Needs manager explained:

> The last thing that we want to do is move people on and make them transient. But we have services with limited budgets for local people. It might be that there are other areas where their support networks, roots and chances are. It might [then] be more appropriate to reconnect them.

Before going on to acknowledge:

> I think that it is more about whether you would be better off receiving services here or would your life chances be better at your point off origin. But straight away I would hope that we were not saying 'you don't belong here and never darken our doors.' There is support and advice that we can offer them but we should be offering the advice and support at the point that they contact us. But there is the conversation to be had about whether your long-term choices are better here or better there. There are people who are not local but have

been here so long that in the rough sleeper street culture they have established that local connection. But I'm also thinking about people who are here and in the best will in the world we are not going to reconnect them because their roots and their support networks are stronger here than at their point of origin. But I think that there is an important delineation between those people and people who are just accessing the Hub's services. It is important that we all work with that group to see where their best options [and] supports are. If we do our job properly we should make sure that we contact the services first and have a pathway.

Contrarily:

The problem for housing and the police is that the homeless are a set of figures. [For them] there are officially eight, ten or fifteen who meet in the gardens. For the Hub they are all individuals. The idea is that they don't come from here [so] send them back [is rejected by the Hub]. It's not about from where they're from because if it was they wouldn't be here. For Bob the fact that they are here means that it is our problem - ours to look after. For others they are a statistic to be sent back.

The town councillor continues:

No [it hasn't been resolved], and it won't because you have two fundamentally different positions. They are taking about two different problems. Les is talking about figures [while] Bob is talking about individual histories and stories.

Against this prevailing moral landscape, the Hub Project critically challenged the drive to 'reconnect' people in the face of sustained and significant pressure from the combined force of the Department for Communities and Local Government, Dorset Police, Homeless Link and West Dorset District Council. As a result of this, Bob Matthews argued that:

> The CLG says that day-centres should work with homeless people on a person-centred basis, which is what we try to do here. What West Dorset doesn't seem to realise is that people will only work with you if you demonstrate that you're concerned with their immediate needs regardless of where they're from.

More specifically:

> [We] did want to help people reconnect if that's want they wanted. Obviously people would say: 'No, I don't want to go back there.' But you need to explore that. 'Why is that? What are the problems? Perhaps we can help find solutions to those problems and help you go back.' And for one or two people that did work. I think it's that change agenda again – how assertive do you get and how quickly?

But, within the limits of this compassionate approach, efforts were made to discipline roughs sleepers and the Hub Project, as this vignette indicates:

'Lackeys'

Walking between the kitchen and the main room I become entrapped by Bob who appears to be in a fairly garrulous and expansive mood. He begins by relating how together we had somehow conspired to upset the regional coordinator for Homeless Link by asking a series of difficult questions and making repeated reference to the contested notion of 'meaningful activity' as well as the proposed payment for food system. Finding his stride Bob argues that in his considered opinion Homeless Link is little more than an uncritical apostle for the CLG's 'social inclusion' agenda. In turn, Bob relates a meeting organised by the Hub Project and attended by West Dorset Housing Needs and Dorset Police in which the Hub was openly criticised for placing ex-rough sleepers in private accommodation in Weymouth. In response, Bob was moved to contend that in view of the fact that West Dorset Council had recently and unilaterally decided not to accept homelessness applications on the specious assumption that many of those who use the Hub and sleep rough do not in fact have a local connection to Dorchester. Thus it was both absurd and unfair to castigate the efforts of the Hub Project in helping people off the street and into settled accommodation. As Bob explains "*for people who are homeless and move eight miles* (the distance between Dorchester and Weymouth) *the concept of local connection is meaningless anyway."* However, and this is perhaps the most interesting point, Bob also confides that the current focus on local connection will almost certainly have repercussions on who will be able to legitimately access and continue to use the services provided by the Hub Project. More concretely, in the near future the Hub will follow the Pilsdon Community and only allow 'wayfarers' to visit every three-to-six weeks so as "*to ensure that support is actively targeted towards established service users from the Dorchester and Weymouth area.*"

5.7 Dorchester and Weymouth

For homeless people the official boundary line separating West Dorset District Council from Weymouth and Portland Borough Council was perceived and experienced as being both arbitrary and discriminating. For service providers – both within and outwith the statutory sector – there was a growing realisation that the intractability of rough sleeping and housing need in Dorchester and Weymouth necessitated a co-ordinated response. Thus:

> I think that the other issue that we have is that our rough sleeper community is very transient between Weymouth and Dorchester. People don't recognise local authority boundaries. I would say that we have the hospital and the prison [while] they have the courts and the seaside. We both have rough sleeper services and there is a very fluid movement between the two areas so that it is very difficult to say how many rough sleepers there are in the area (Housing Needs manager).

The traffic of homeless and other vulnerably housed people between Weymouth and Dorchester ultimately led to West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough District agreeing to co-fund a street homelessness outreach worker in August 2008. This innovation was facilitated by the decision to suspend a small grant to the Hub Project, and was justified on the grounds that it would result in a greater focus on 'local need' and 'reconnection pathways'. One line of challenge to West Dorset District Council efforts to ostracise the Hub Project manifested itself in its announcement to extend its geographical influence through the creation of a similar advice and support service for rough sleepers in Weymouth. However, the journal extract that follows immediately below problematises the working assumptions of the two local authorities:

Journal Extract 20/08/08

I am introduced to the new rough sleeper outreach worker by Mark. ''*So, what is your current remit?*'', I ask. ''*I've got a twelve month contract to work with rough sleepers in Dorchester and Weymouth. The idea is that I link people with services or act as a bridge, a recognised face or someone that people simply feel comfortable approaching. The post is only funded for a year by both district councils* [West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland]. *But really it is too early to say whether there is the commitment – financial or otherwise. The money comes from central government so* [it means] *that the councils' need to be seen to be responding to the issue of homelessness and the needs of rough sleepers* ''*It* [rough sleeping] *is clearly a problem in Weymouth, particularly on the seafront. You can see a dozen or so hanging out there or in town, although Weymouth and Portland Council don't really understand the true scale* [of the problem]. *I would think that there are as many as twenty or so people sleeping out in Weymouth each night.*'' And elaborating further: ''*the situation in Weymouth and Dorchester is different. It seems like people pass through Weymouth, more particularly so in the summer than the winter months. The district council here in Dorchester reckon, according to their most recent spot check, that there are no rough sleepers in the town. You just have to look around* [the Hub Project] *to see that that is not true. And in Weymouth* [the Borough Council claim] *the figure is four, just four!*''

Before lunch is served-up and money taken from the service users' Mark tells me ''*I went out with him in Weymouth last night. It was really interesting. I had the feeling that he's got a real conscience and is finding it difficult to manage the expectations from the council. You know I applied for the job and I'm glad that I didn't get it because I'm not sure I could do what is expected of him. He's been doing a lot of work with one of the older, more entrenched rough*

> *sleeper's, and has managed to get the British Legion to pay for two weeks accommodation that's a great result. But after that? I'm not sure what will happen. He reckons that there are twenty-to-twenty five people sleeping out in Weymouth. And I don't think that the council will want to hear that."*

But even allowing for this shift in emphasis significant differences remained, as Bob Matthews recounts:

> I think that they got the [outreach worker] to reconnect rather than to rehouse people. He's done a great job of getting some [of the most entrenched rough sleepers] off the street. I did want to reconnect people if that's what they wanted. Obviously people would say 'no I don't want to go back there.' But you need to explore that: 'Why is that?' 'What are the problems?' or 'perhaps we can help find solutions.' And for one or two people that did work. I think it's about that change agenda again. How assertive do you get and how quickly?

Similarly for those able to demonstrate a local connection the outlook was often equally as bleak, as these two extended vignettes suggest:

Natalie's Story

Natalie approaches the kitchen hatch and hands Shelia (Hub volunteer) a barely eaten plate of food. By way of apology Natalie notes "*that was really nice, no really. I'm just finding it difficult to hold anything down.*" I ask Natalie if she is feeling OK and both Shelia and I are somewhat taken aback to learn "*most people suffer with morning sickness but I seem to have day*

sickness. I know that I need to eat but it's not always easy being out [sleeping rough]. Shelia sympathetically comments "*when is the baby due*?" To which Natalie casually replies "*December I think. But I will find out definitely tomorrow when I go for a scan with the midwife.* I am, in turn, moved to ask Natalie about her housing situation and we are told:

"*Pearl and me are sleeping out together tonight on the market…I've been out since I fell out with a mate.*"

"*Do you have an outstanding homelessness application*?"

Natalie quickly details how "*I went to Housing Needs and they said that I made myself intentionally homeless after I left the* foyer. *What do they expect? It was a fucking shithole.*"

'*So,*" I say, "*the situation doesn't look too good at the moment.*"

"*Well,*" Natalie begins, "*the council should do something because I'm not only pregnant but I have depression and a history of self-harm. The council will have to do something when I take a letter [to them] from the midwife tomorrow. I was told that a doctor's letter was no good but confirmation from a midwife 'would be sufficient proof'. Until then I'm out on the street with Pearl.*" Natalie adds with a sigh "*they will probably place me in a shity sixteen pound a night B&B on the seafront in Weymouth.*

Shelia simply replies "*really they should find you somewhere in Dorchester so that you can get to your GP, midwife and the Crisis Pregnancy Centre.*" I follow up by asking Natalie if she feels that the Hub Project together with her friends have been a good source of support. "*Yeah,*

everyone seems to be looking out for me. Friends have been telling me that I need to eat and stop smoking, fat chance of that."

Some weeks later I am again standing at the kitchen counter, on this occasion with Mark when Natalie walks up and spontaneously announces to us that "*I'm moving up North tomorrow.*" "*I know,*" Mark replies before quickly adding, "*good luck.*" As Mark pleads with Natalie to enjoy lunch – "*if only a small plate*" – Natalie abruptly declares that "*if it doesn't work out I'll come back to Dorch.*"

Just over a week later I mention to Bob that earlier that morning I had seen Natalie struggle through Dorchester town centre with an assortment of bags and belongings. "*Yeah, she came back [it] only lasted three or four days. We always knew that it was unlikely to work out. I blame the Church.*"

"*So poor Natalie's homeless again?*" asks Shelia.

Bob responds by stating that "*we [the Hub Project] are hoping that the council will pick her up. But at the moment they are saying that she made herself intentionally homeless after leaving the foyer. We are working on it and hopefully it will be resolved.*"

Prompted by Bob's remarks I counter by arguing "*that surely it will become an issue for the Social Services rather than Housing because of the pregnancy.*"

Over the next three or so months Natalie's housing situation remains stubbornly resistant to change until one day in late September she is able to optimistically reveal that "*I've got a viewing for a flat on Friday and Mark says that if I am successful he will set up the baby's cot for*

me as I'm no good with anything like that.''

''*That sounds excellent,*'' I say before moving on to ask ''*so, how far along are you now*?'' Natalie proudly comments, ''*the baby's eleven weeks away now.*''

Despite having known Natalie for almost a year now I still feel that our relationship is rather tentative. ''*Well I'm pleased that things are moving forward and hopefully in the right direction. Have you had much help from Housing Needs?*'' I somewhat rather self-consciously ask Natalie.

''*Yeah a bit I suppose. It's mainly been the staff here. And the Social Services have been good; they've got lots of money.*''

'*Do you have a good social worker?*''

''*Yeah, she seems all right. I was surprised that they even paid for me to visit my parents and my sister,*'' Natalie brightly notes*.*

''*That's great,*'' I say. ''*And how did it go*?''

''*It went really well considering that we haven't seen each other for over a year.*''

As Mark steps out onto the forecourt and begins to fashion a 'roll-up' from loose tobacco and cigarette papers, Natalie playfully announces ''*I was just saying how you promised to put up the baby's cot.*'' To which Mark gently replies *''If I can help.''* With a certain deftness Natalie is quick to retort *''and babysitting.'' ''I'm not so sure about that.''*

Once Mark has finished his cigarette and we step inside I am told that ''*you know that Natalie's*

got a temporary B&B and is looking at a flat on Friday. The B&B's all right, surprisingly. But *it's not right that there is no bed. You can't honestly expect a pregnant woman only to sleep in a sleeping bag…Finally things are happening for Natalie, although to be honest it's only Social Services involvement and their concern for the baby. What kind of society lets a pregnant woman sleep rough?* Or [for matter] *makes anyone sleep out? And I think it's been much harder on Natalie than she would openly admit. She's still cutting herself, even eleven weeks before the birth of the baby. I know that she's had it tough – but a flat is the most important thing for her and her future – and I think that it's so important that we, and everyone else, continue to support Natalie."*

Jack's Case

I strike up conversation with Jack, who has spent the better part of the morning waiting for an opportunity to speak with Bob or Ann, and is quietly and evidently agitated by the wait. Standing there I am able to discern that Jack is clutching an application form for housing with North Dorset District Council. As I engage Jack in discussion about his current housing situation I am quick to learn of the difficulties he has encountered in attempting to complete the lengthy and intimidating form. Jack is also contemptuous of having been asked to indicate on the form his sexual orientation. This leads Jack to acerbically remark "*what does my being heterosexual have to do with the fact that I am homeless. With applications to West Dorset and hopefully North Dorset I should stand a better chance* [of being accommodated]. *Until then I'll be on the sofa at Nan's."*

Two weeks later I am about to make my leave when I am approached by Jack, who on this occasion appears relaxed and sanguine, and goes on to tell me that he has made plans to view

a flat with a reputable social housing landlord. During our conversation Bob rushes over and hands Jack an official letter from Shelter detailing the advice given to him during a recent interview. Turning away from the letter Jack dryly remarks "*I'm not sure what all that is about.*" Handing me the letter to read I attempt to reassure Jack that it simply reiterates the advice given to him by Shelter. With more care and thought I comment that the letter claims that he made himself homeless by voluntarily vacating his council flat. This leads Jack to counter by saying "*I moved out because of the fear and intimidation. Of course I didn't want to leave my flat, but when your neighbours forcibly enter and then hang around… and you're worried that they will put petrol through the letterbox… well, what would you do?*"

Four months later Jack remains a constant, if somewhat depressing figure, at the Hub Project. Nonetheless I am surprised by the focus of our exchange.

"*Things are much the same I'm still at Nan's. Although Housing gave me an application form for housing in Exeter.*"

"*Why,*" I ask.

"*Apparently there's loads of housing in Exeter.*"

"*Do you have a local connection to Exeter?*"

"*No. I've worked there plenty of times but I've never lived there.*"

"*So what are you going to do?*"

"*Well,*" returns Jack, *Bob helped me fill out the forms, and to be honest I'd go anywhere as long as it's not Chickerell or Weymouth.*"

5.8 A Proxy War

In a very basic sense arguments about *local connection* and *reconnection* and the vernacular forms of *rights and responsibilities* can be viewed as a proxy war. At root, it is essentially a debate about financial resources and housing stock. But it is also a debate with a significant moral dimension. Having spent twenty months embedded within the fabric of the Hub Project I became familiar with the unexpected passing away of service users - all tragic deaths hastened by the ravages of life on the street. I was also aware that many sought to *avoid* or *escape* from the privations and dangers of the street by accepting the most inappropriate and easily obtainable accommodation in the 'seaside slums' of Weymouth. This point is evidenced in the following extracts:

> There's only eight miles between the towns but Weymouth is a very different town with lots of temporary accommodation [while] it's expensive to get private accommodation in Dorchester. The area around the [train station and seafront] has got a lot of temporary accommodation that West Dorset uses to put people there. So sometimes West Dorset will say ''why don't we consider looking at private rented accommodation in Weymouth, apply for housing allowance through Weymouth and Portland [Borough Council] and the rent deposit from West Dorset.'' That's what they do. But I am very concern about it because of the [quality of the] property and [the severity of] people's needs (Supporting People outreach worker).

And similarly:

> West Dorset didn't like the amount of people who we were sending down to housing putting in homelessness applications. We had ten go into RSL (registered social landlords) accommodation in that bad year. That was always their problem resettling people who weren't from around here…obviously because of the limited stock of housing available. People had gone into RSL accommodation who weren't from around here. The guy, Harry who died in Weymouth, was from around here but they just didn't want to rehouse him. So whose fault is that? (Bob Matthews).

The Dorchester – and by extension the English and Welsh - example compares unfavourably to Scotland's progressive stance, where it is understood that homeless people are more likely to resettle successfully, and avoid repeat homelessness, if they are living in an area of their choosing and which supports other elements of their lives. [117] This is significant because it empowers homeless people. It thus represents a cultural shift in the way in which homeless people are treated - from a system based on rationing to a system based on rights (Pawson, 2007).

Let us know now move on to consider the payment for food proposal.

5.9 **Payment for Food**

> Should we be changing for food or was the ethos that everything should be freely given? And to be honest we never got to the bottom of that. They wanted to charge for food and they wanted to make a charge for sleeping

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[117] The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act suspended this clause in Scotland to avoid local authorities sometimes filtering applications before they are made.

bags and rucksacks. [But] I think that within the Committee they didn't really want to charge for food because there was always the problem that the food was donated. I think that it went against a lot of people's beliefs in terms of what they were doing at the Hub in the first place (Bob Matthews).

At first sight it might appear that the decision to ask people experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness to pay for a hot meal has little, if any, direct sociological significance. However, I want to suggest that there are three distinct, yet overlapping reasons, why this specific case example is deserving of critical attention. First, it reveals the elasticity of the term 'responsible citizenship'. Second, it provides a concrete illustration of how 'community' can be reimagined as a mechanism for social control, and a vehicle for disciplining and regulating behaviour (Ferguson, 2008: 44). In the third and final place, my ethnographic example critically undermines the morally suspect and empirically unsubstantiated assumption that there is a clear division of values and norms of conduct between homeless people and the wider 'settled society'. Instead, my research findings do not provide evidence to support this contention.

Through this ethnographic example, I am not suggesting that the idea of charging homeless people for food is in any sense 'novel' or even radical. It is, for instance, easily identifiable in the policy and programmatic nostrums of Louise Casey – the New Labour apparatchik and former 'homelessness tsar' – and various arguments about welfare producing dependency (Fraser & Gordon, 1994: Dean, 1999). In that sense, I want to reiterate that the impetus for the proposal came not from the Hub Project but directly from a coalition of forces, principal among them Homeless Link, the district West Dorset District Council and Dorset Police. Embracing the 'Third Way' emphasis on community governance, we can begin to discern some of the ways in which the responsible citizenship discourse is employed in relation to homelessness (both service providers and service users). Two broad areas of concern here focus, first, on the ways in which

the 'problem' of homelessness is reduced to a concern with a deficit model of personal responsibility and social obligation; second, on the ways in which community actors seek to incorporate the voluntary sector into their political strategies.

From the very outset, Bob Matthews was an outspoken critic of the proposal on the basis that it was part of a wider drive to enmesh the Hub Project within a 'statutory discourse'. This interpretation is elaborated in this lengthy colloquy:

> [The] idea of our charging for food was first floated by the police. Their argument for charging centred on the concept of "enabling". It was argued that the increased numbers of homeless in Dorchester was because the Hub offered food, clothing, facilities and equipment all free to those attending. The Police argued, somewhat simplistically, that if the homeless were charged for these services, they would have less to spend on alcohol and thus the associated problems would diminish.

Moreover:

> Following a visit to the Hub by Richard Cunningham of the CLG, Trustees and management were invited, along with the police and representatives from West Dorset District Council, to a visit to Westminster. We were given a tour of the Passage Centre and had meetings with local police there and also with the Manager of the Cricklewood Day Centre. Although those at the Passage Centre spoke officially of the merits of charging for the midday meal (in terms of "empowerment") in answers to private questions I noted some hostility to this innovation. There was a sense that by accepting funding from the CLG to

modernise their premises, charities were expected to relinquish some autonomy and innovate in ways that were in opposition to their charitable ethos. At The Passage this resulted in a two-tier system where those who could not pay were offered soup and bread for no charge and where long term employees became alienated to the point of leaving.

Furthermore:

At this time it was felt that if the Hub did not do something to reduce the numbers of those attending we would be likely to lose the project. It was recommended by representatives from Homeless Link (an organisation funded by the CLG to support organisations working with the homeless) that I attend a leadership program sponsored by the CLG and administered by the Chartered Institute of Housing. Here the innovation of charities charging for food was again promoted. The rationale was that as there is no such thing as a free lunch, we were insulating our service users from the realities or norms of commodified relationships prevalent in the 'real world'.

Against the foregoing critique, with its genuflections to the work of Marx and Foucault, Dr. Margaret Barker offered a more sober assessment:

It is not only preparing them for when they are housed, but also they ought to be contributing to the Hub's well-being as well. It has been fantastic. Wouldn't it be nice if we could take the 50p and put it in the credit union for them so that when they move into the flat they have a lump sum? Dorset Poverty Action Group had a scheme like that with the dry house at one time when the

credit union first started. Anyone who was going to get re-housed would save with the credit union and the Poverty Action Group would match what they had saved so that they could pay for their own removals and furniture. It was a great scheme, except of course, that one or two drew out all of the money and drank it. They wrecked the scheme and their own prospect of housing. If you're right that [rough sleepers] are responsible, have normal morals, moral attitudes then we don't need to charge them for food but we do need to be stopping them from drinking. As it is 50p covers the cost of the food and is not much taken off them. I think that it's been a great success after three false starts of trying to introduce it in which Bob hadn't the courage to see it through and the aggro that went with it and [the] dissent from volunteers.

The Dorchester and Sherborne District Commander was a particularly enthusiastic supporter of the proposal:

Yeah I do think that they should pay. Now in this life you get nothing for free. And I think that the people who use the Hub should realise that they've got a responsibility when they use it. The vast majority of them do get, or should get or could get benefits. I think that a lot of them do get benefits there. Why should they then get their food for free? What we want is for them to become responsible for their own lives. For many reasons they have slipped on the slope of life. They have lost responsibility. A lot of the skills – well how are they going to get a flat – If Bob finds them a flat how are they going to look at that flat if we don't make them responsible. [They need] those skills to be able to look after themselves.

This response is infused with the language of personal responsibility, but it also suggests that the attitudes and behaviour of rough sleepers is the underlying 'problem'. The following quote, again taken from the District Commander, illustrates how the issue of free food is identified as a decisive factor in reinforcing substance misuse:

> If I suggest that you open a café and give free meals to everybody you will soon have a pretty high turnover. I have been to Westminster to see how things are done there because I want to get things done right. I've got open eyes and ears and I'm prepared to learn. I have been to Westminster, Cardiff and a few other places and it is very easy to 'kill with kindness'. All these people have incomes - benefits - and what are they doing with their money? What I am talking about is people on the streets who beg and inject it and drink it, [which] is quite a few of them…The Hub is facilitating some of them and I can think of a few who are being kept on the streets and kept on the drugs.

There are strong echoes of this in the following remarks:

> There are ways that you can help people without maintaining the lifestyle that they have got into… I think that if you have a service that provides services to all comers…there was an element that 'if I have a free lunch at the Hub I can spend my money somewhere else.' Well, what are you going to do? I would not call them a magnet but I think that the way it was offering services it was inevitable that more people would use their services (Local Housing Need Manager).

The secondary commentary illustrates how the Hub Project and its service users were viewed through a common prism and accompanying narrative. It is a construction and representation underpinned by an individualistic and moralistic view of homeless people as a distinctive group apart from 'mainstream' society.   Such an understanding pointed to the need to disrupt the existing institutional arrangements v*is-à-vis* the Hub Project and rough sleepers.   So embedded was this relationship that the gift of free food was to 'kill with kindness'. Here the idea of homeless people as dependent and parasitic features strongly. It is clear that food was identified as a decisive factor in generating a culture of dependency. Thus:

> [There is] sometimes a failure to appreciate that people do have choices to make and sometimes that you've got to help people makes those choices and that purely giving to people isn't always the best approach. So you need to put people in a position where they evaluate their choices and actions, and basically make people take some responsibility to enter into a contract whereby if you get a service it is dependent on how well you use that service. Of course it is dependent on need. I am not talking about just charging people. If people are using the service 'what are you hoping to achieve?' 'What are we going to offer to you and what are you going to offer us to make that offer worthwhile?' (Richard Cunningham).

In this statement responsible citizenship is viewed as a moral assessment.

The desired outcome was, according to Richard Cunningham, to 'discipline' the worst offenders while 'supporting' the most vulnerable to assume a greater sense of personal responsibility:

Basically with the Hub it was what are we trying to do? Try to establish some rules of engagement with people and how they engage with you. Certainly, they were being abused because they were proving everything for free. And if they were presented with a choice they could possibly fend for themselves to a greater degree. They were basically being given a free ride and using the money not to buy food but drinking and everything else. They were supplementing their income by abusing the largess of the charity – free food – which was provided by individuals who thought that they were providing help. But for the most part they were helping a select bunch of individuals, although I shouldn't typecast them all because there is complex needs here. The reality was that the most needy and the most vulnerable couldn't access the service. So what's going on there?

5.10   <u>What Choice?</u>

Charging for food can be beneficial for some clients in order to enhance their budgeting skills and to appreciate the operation of the service they are accessing. However, in some cases – such as for clients with no resources to public funds – charging may not be appropriate (Homeless Link, 2008).

Driven by curiosity I accepted the invitation to participate in informal consultation exercises with volunteers and service users to determine the efficacy as well as the equitability of the proposal. From the outset, I became aware of a critical body of opinion within the day-centre that openly challenged the moral and practical dimensions of this recommendation. For their part, volunteers articulated concern that this model of 'tough love' would be counterproductive insofar as it would

lead to fewer to service users accessing the day-centre and, by degrees, exacerbate food insecurity among a population known to suffer from chronically poor nutrition (Booth, 2006).

A typical comment was:

> I know the management committee seems keen to introduce charging for the lunch. It will be interesting to see whether they [service users] decide to pay, go without lunch or stop attending [the day-centre] altogether.

Faced with this situation, and driven by an ethos to serve those in need, it became increasingly evident that there was considerable unease that the initiative would marginalise notions of altruism and caring (Baines & Hardill, 2008). There are two further dimensions worth noting here. First, the core argument was viewed as a threat to the relational and intrinsic rewards conferred on volunteers. Second, the proposal to introduce a payment system for hot food was seen to be coterminous with the wider movement to reconfigure welfare provision in terms of determining need to one of changing the behaviour of recipients. One reading of this situation is the notion that the day-centre exists outside the market oriented exchange. These two moments – food insecurity and the perceived threat to relational and intrinsic rewards – are pivotal to understanding the symbolic and contested nature of mobilisation of the vocabulary of responsible citizenship.

This statement, from a volunteer, reflected the feelings of many:

> It will probably change how the project feels and operates. I, for one, am not persuaded. It might actually act as a deterrent and create a sense of shame and embarrassment among the users who are unable or unwilling to pay each day.

While agreeing with the sentiments expressed above, one particularly prominent volunteer remarked on the important role played by the day-centre in sustaining homeless people by providing points of contact with the wider community:

> People tell me that they support the proposal but I worry it's because they think a decision has already been made. People want us to understand their situation; to be flexible I guess. My fear is that if people are unable to pay or think that they will accumulate debt it will mean that they might not feel comfortable coming or asking for help or advice.

This statement raises the issue of the degree to which homeless people can actively choose whether or not to patronise the day-centre. This theme was particularly strong. One reading of this is that it would give rise to an environment that is uncomfortable or at worst, exclusionary.

Reflecting on this, Bob Matthews noted:

> Our proposal to begin to charge for food has convinced me that questionnaires and interviews coming from the volunteers and service users project views that are coloured by the dynamics of power. I recently interviewed a group of half a dozen service users over a free lunch who reckoned that charging £1 for a meal was a good idea. They suggested that they could pay in advance when they received their giros.

And going further:

> Two weeks later and two of that group informed me that the idea that we were going to charge for the 'crap' we served at the [day-centre] was outrageous. I was [in the process] of asking them to leave as they were too drunk to attend the centre that day. *In vino veritas* perhaps. Or maybe, as they had nothing to lose, they felt that they could say what they really thought. Same with the volunteers. They mostly agreed with the idea when asked individually but when I introduced group discussions, with a strong character speaking first against the idea, others who had previously been in favour, including a champion, were now against [it].

Central to this response was an awareness of the exclusionary potential of the proposal. This perspective would also appear to echo Leo Howe's (1998) observation that socially excluded groups do not express explicit opposition to the prevailing social because it is perceived that the power of the latter makes this too dangerous, and thus engenders a forced acquiescence on the part of the weak.

As the payment system become emplaced within the daily rhythms of the Hub Project it was not uncommon to hear humorist remarks such as Gus's often repeated refrain "*do you have change for a fifty quid note*?." It was also not entirely unusual to come across a service user who had hitherto delighted in an omnivorous diet suddenly announce that they had 'converted to veganism' or else to make known a previously undiagnosed 'allergy to pasta'. At the same time, it became increasingly evident through carrying out participant observation that some service users would set aside part of their giro and purchase meal tickets ahead of time on a weekly or fortnight basis, which was then deposited with the Hub Project so as to ensure ongoing access to a hot meal. There was also a recognition that charging for food are most effective in these terms when the service user is working towards taking responsibility in other areas of their life such as addressing

drug or alcohol use, mental health problems, housing status, physical health and training and education.

Closely linked to this, some of the most chaotic and chronically entrenched rough sleepers consistently failed to make a regularly payment. Under such circumstances service users were provided with a hot meal while receiving a line of credit of say £5 or £10. There was also, concurrently, a deep and intractable unwillingness among a small but significant group of volunteers to collect money from service users. This could be read as indicative of embarrassment, disaffection or, perhaps most strikingly of all, a form of quiet subversion.

As the following journal extract indicates, even the harshest of critics was prepared to reassess the merit of the initiative:

After lunch I watch as Simon and Graham openly complain about Eric's cooking. While Simon stabs violently at the undercooked potatoes on his plate, Graham sardonically observes "*I've eaten softer pebbles on the beach than those carrots.*" Attempting to suppress laughter Ann (the assistant manager of the Hub Project) remarks "*although I was one of those most opposed to charging for food, I have to admit that so far it seems to be working. There is no real sense that people are not coming in or not eating the food. I think that the fact that we have not been strict has helped people accept it.* "

And somewhat differently:

Vignette – Christmas Donation

Positioned at the kitchen sink Hannah somewhat diffidently asks "*do you know how this payment book works?*" To which I rather unhelpfully reply, "*no, not really. Ask Mark.*" Once Mark has explained how the payment system operates, I go on to ask him "*is it really worth it?*" "*Well,*" Mark begins, "*you know that I didn't agree with it when it was first floated and, to be honest, I don't think that it's ever really worked. I get the impression that Bob's still against it. And if the idea was to encourage a sense of responsibility among these guys then I don't think it's been much of a huge success. Some people pay, some avoid paying and some people are never even asked. I can only think of one of the users', Stuart, who has possibly benefited from it. But is it really fair that he pays in advance when the others don't contribute at all? That seems unfair to me. Although, to be honest, Stuart might pay on a Monday and by the Wednesday he can't even remember if he's paid or not because of his memory, the drink and the really powerful* [prescribed] *drugs that he's on at the moment. It's then up to the volunteers or the staff to remind him and to be honest.*" In response, I simply comment to Mark that "*I have noticed that when you're away the money normally goes uncollected. Possibly I guess because people still disagree with the scheme or they simply feel embarrassed to ask homeless people for the money.*" This leads Mark to observe "*Well, I don't agree with it* [on principle] *but I am straight with people* [that paying for lunch is currently one of rules of the Hub]. *But I also know that it's not really working. 50p is such a small amount that it's not going to change people's behaviour. People are still going to drink. If you're an alcoholic and desperate for a drink you'll club together* [with other street drinkers] *or you will walk into a shop and steal. I still think it's unfair* [when you] *look at the food that was donated this morning. We don't make any money* [by charging] *and it can't be right that we charge for food that's given to us for free anyway. I'd be interested to know if the churches* [who provide donations] *think that it's fair that these guys are asked to pay for free food.*" "*Do you think that it will fall away or fall apart in time?*" "*Yeah, I really hope so.*"

In a quiet moment in-between scrubbing saucepans and washing dishes, I ask Eve about the boxes of food and clothing kindly donated to the Hub Project this morning. " *Yes it was donated by the church that I attend. On the final Sunday in October and again in November we ask* [our congregation] *to contribute to the 'Hub, grub and kit' fund. And it really does work. People are so kind. Tinned food, old clothes and blankets just seem to flood in. We then* [run the scheme] *every second month for the remainder of the year."* Feeling suitably emboldened by this explanation I then ask Eve '*'is your church aware that service users at the Hub are expected to pay 50p for their lunch?"* Calmly and assuredly she replies*, "I don't really know. That is rather a good question. They* [church congregants] *are realists, so I don't suppose that they would be entirely surprised or shocked. I am on the church organising committee and I will ask them for you.*

From the beginning, reaction among service users was divided. One outspoken and dissenting voice argued:

> It's not fair and it's not right. It might be happening elsewhere but it can't be
> right that we're expected to pay for the crap that's served-up. Making money
> out of the homeless, it's bloody outrageous. What's fucking next?

A similar point was made by an ex-wayfarer as he described how charges in day-centres and hostels were becoming the norm and stated sadly that "*it's all about money now*."

And again:

> 50p or a £1 makes no fucking difference. It happens elsewhere so it was only
> a matter of fucking time that they introduced charging here.

You're expected to pay for your dinner in Torquay. It kind of seems like most places do now, which is fair enough I suppose. The only thing is that it shouldn't be too expensive [because] then it becomes unfair and people are forced to make tough choices.

I'm sorry Mark, I don't have any money. Well, not until I start begging later on.

An alternative reading of the situation:

Most people agree that we should pay. It's not necessarily about being made to feel responsible but [recognising] the food is donated and cooked by those who give of their own time. 50p for a hot lunch is the cheapest meal in [town]; you can sit down and not feel like you're being watched or judged.

The following remarks were fairly standard:

Yes it is important to make a contribution, and I'm happy to do. If you can, then you should absolutely. What if you can't? That's different, isn't it?

Implicit in this comment is a sense of *personal responsibility*. What it does not suggest, however, is that responsibility can be imposed or reduced to New Labour's emphasis on morality or the *active* remoralisation of homeless people. This is especially important because it contests some of the core ideological assumptions of the responsibility discourse and, equally, critiques prevailing assumptions about homelessness and homeless people. But it also seems to indicate that responsibility is negotiated within a perception of choices and constraints. Given the social and psychological pressures facing homeless people, there is a need to recognise that homeless people encode citizenship with cultural meanings which reflect both common and discrete experiences of social exclusion. It is this experience of existing on the outer edges of society,

which enables us to the grasp how the experience of social exclusion has strong material as well as relational circumstances and consequences.

5.11 <u>Manageability</u>

> The 50p charge becomes a token of their ability or otherwise to manage their affairs, rather than a measure of improved manageability (Bob Matthews).

This ethnographic example has illustrated how the impetus to levy a small charge for hot food, in the words of Bob Matthews, '*came from forces in the macro environment within which the Hub Project operates, rather than having grown organically from within*.' This is a crucial point. It can be seen as in keeping with New Labour's communitarian emphasis on delegating greater responsibility to individuals while at the same time consistent with the broader conception of an 'activist state' (Pawson, 2007). In essence, it shows how far the responsibilisation thesis permeates contemporary social policy and criminal justice thinking. This is about managing homeless people through the establishment of a new moral order based on personal responsibility and respectful behaviour. In practical terms, however, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent, if at all, homeless people were propelled from the ranks of passive recipients of charity into activated and self-governing citizens. The fact that the system wasn't derailed by mass protest or silent subversion does not necessarily speak of its efficacy or equitability. On one level, people accepted the new regime out of a sense of deference. On another level, people agreed to pay out of a sense of collective responsibility. In this way, the Hub Project was interpreted as representing one of the few institutional spaces in and through which rough sleepers and wayfarers were able to enact conventional social interactions and express aspirational values without censure, disparagement or indifference.

We can now consider our fourth, and final theme, work and worklessness.

5.12 <u>Work and Worklessness</u>

The complex dynamic between work and worklessness is much in evidence in debates about reducing social exclusion.[118] In the social housing arena, this debate has played out most significantly against the backdrop of the Hills Report (2008) and the controversial speech by Caroline Flint, the former Minister of State for Housing and Planning, which floated the idea of conditional social housing tenancies dependent on residents finding, or at least actively seeking, employment or training opportunities.[119] This argument – though widely derided and intensely criticised at the time – feeds directly into contemporary discourses around welfare and citizenship. Thus:

> Work is the best route out of poverty. It strengthens independence and dignity. It builds family aspirations, fosters greater social inclusion and can improve individual's health and well being (DWP, 2006:2).

In the homelessness arena, the Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) have been instrumental in supporting the Transitional Spaces Project and the Spark Challenge

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[118] John Flint (2009:256) has highlighted the pre-eminence of paid employment and financial employment as the primary characteristic of legitimate citizenship. Outside of the Department for Communities and Local Government perhaps the most vocal supporters of the contention that 'work is the best route out of homeless' is the social enterprise Business Action on Homelessness (BAOH). In placing homelessness within an economic frame, BAOH (2009) claims that each homeless person on benefits who could be considered 'ready for work' costs the government approximately £26,000 per annum while encouraging homeless people into work would deliver a cost saving of £1.7B over 4 years.

[119] According to the Hills Report, the proportion of social tenants in paid employment (32%) has reached an all-time low.

initiative.[120]   The first is a work first model to support homeless people access sustainable employment and private rented sector housing while the second aims to promote social enterprises (2008:35).[121] Here, as above, we can clearly discern the contemporary concern with 'rights and responsibilities'.

With the exception of a few notable academic accounts, the literature (in the British context) that links homelessness to work rarely ventures beyond a close engagement with begging (Wardhaugh, 1999: Hall, 2005) or Big Issue vending (Doyle, 1999: Hibbert et al., 2002). This focus stands in opposition to the North American tradition of urban ethnographies and cultural theorisation such as Snow and Anderson's (1993) model of homeless people as bricoleurs; Duneier's (1999) investigations into the micro-setting of book scavengers and magazine sellers; Gowan's (2009) insights into the world of 'pro' recycling and Lakenau's (1999) analysis of panhandling.[122] These studies, among many other insightful contributions, have sunk inquiring shafts into the underlying soil to excavate the survival strategies and economic niches that homeless people struggle to construct, maintain and reproduce. Yet, and this is perhaps most striking, the ethnographic record remains remarkably silent about how homeless people make sense of, and talk about the ideology of work and the culture of dependency (Howe, 2009). We might go further and ask: how do homeless people perceive work and worklessness through the prism of the rights and responsibility agenda?

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[120] The Communities and Local Government stated goal is for the majority of adults who have slept rough to move into work within a year of coming off the streets.

[121] The Spark Challenge Initiative is a public, private and voluntary sector strategy to tackle social exclusion. Its main focus, according to Teasdale (2009), is a concern with providing homeless people with employment advice and training opportunities.

[122] The term 'bricoleur' is invoked by Snow and Anderson to give expression to the way in which homeless people responding to particular circumstances with different 'adaptive repertoires' for acquiring money.

Through this focus on work and worklessness, we can discern that the vast majority of homeless people *do* want to work. The clear driver here is the recognition that benefit levels are so low that worklessness automatically translates into poverty. But it also goes beyond over-familiarity with a relatively ungenerous and increasingly punitive welfare system. The experience of homelessness and unemployment germinates, isolates, and perpetuates feelings of alienation, humiliation and resentment. In such accounts there is a strong sense that the process of becoming homeless and the experience of homelessness forcefully erodes employability and fundamentally constricts social networks.

In grappling with the multiple and reinforcing barriers that impede movement from the street to sustainable accommodation and paid employment, homeless people in Dorchester spoke clearly and emphatically of wanting to build their confidence, skills and hope through formal education, training and volunteering opportunities. Under these circumstances, a commitment to paid work or voluntary labour was mobilised in order to project a positive self-identity and continued attachment to mainstream values and cultural norms. Out of these discussions it is particularly clear that homeless people identify with the ideology of work.

That said, a small minority of homeless or vulnerably housed people expressed a distinct lack of interest in paid employment or the prospect of welfare-to-work projects. One way to understand this kind of reaction is to see it as a symptom of a deep lack of entitlement and confidence felt by homeless people, structured in large part by a combination of powerlessness, poverty and stigmatisation. Another explanation is evident in personal testimonies that succinctly described work as exploitative and demeaning. Dan comments thus:

> I was offered labouring work…four quid an hour. So I said "I might sleep out
> in a tent but I'm not a monkey."

While Jay admits:

> I'm too busy on the roundabout [homeless circuit] to think about work. I've done that. If I need money I can always juggle [busk].

Such comments can be seen as a rational response to experiences and expectations of low paid and chronically insecure employment (Fletcher, 2009:775). And from an intriguing and oblique angle, Roger remarked:

> People live beyond their means. People are too materialistic and concerned with being consumers. It's greed. There is nothing wrong with austerity. There should be more austerity. I get £8 a day in benefits. I used to get £12 [before the imposition of a penalty sanction]. But even £8 is more than I need. [I] get my food from here and I haven't really got any outgoings other than fresh fruit and beer. But I suppose if I had a room or a flat I would really struggle [on such a limited income].

These negative perceptions of work were buttressed by explanatory accounts that cited unfairly competitive and cheap migrant labour as barriers to employment.

Homeless people in Dorchester *did* work. However, this should not be overestimated numerically. As such, work was concentrated in informal and illicit spheres of activity and was underpinned by local economic opportunities and cultural and practical dispositions (Gowan, 2009: 234). Such activities included, for example, stripping lead from rooftops, selling cheap and illegal cigarettes and manual labour. In this respect, Baz relates a compact narrative:

Following the Harvest Festival, I find myself putting away donated items in the clothing trunk when I am approached by Baz. "*Do you think I can have a towel, mush?*" As I begin searching for a clean towel I take the opportunity to engage Baz in conversation by making reference to the fact that he is wearing fluorescent trousers and an equally striking tabard.

"*Have you been working?*" I ask.

"*Yeah, I've been grafting.*"

"*What are you doing?*"

"*Tarmaccing. Gang of four of us doing streets in Dorchester and some of the [surrounding] villages.*"

"*How's it going?*"

"*It's all right mush. Only been doing it for four days now but it is good honest work like. It's money in the back pocket and can be a good craic with the lads.*'

Pointing to his arm as if drawing a syringe from an abused vein Baz observes "*it's stopping me doing that and the drink.*" Now lifting an imaginary pint glass to his mouth Baz comments "*I'm still drinking a few but not as many as I would if I wasn't grafting, like. Straight-up*"

My reasoning for emphasising this short example is that it recasts work as a mundane, everyday activity through the lens of physical labour and social contact. In its starkest form, it suggests that homeless people, despite facing considerable hardships, *do* want to work. In a basic sense, it matters little if that is formal employment, undeclared work or volunteering. In any case in this example work is not expressed or exhibited as a moral virtue or social good. It is a rational response to a specific set of individual circumstances that shows that the value of work is that it provides (albeit tentatively) a sense of structure and association.

For others, particularly wayfarers, the licit-illicit line was often blurred. But it also pointed towards a more fundamental tension, which is concisely captured in the following vignette.

'On the Road'

Robert, 48, has been 'on the road' since 1993 and expresses no particular desire to return to 'settled society' or the 'formal economy'. As Robert explains to me ''*I travel the circuit all around England, Ireland and even the Channel Islands. I work my way around on farms in the summer picking strawberries, peas and potatoes and winter* [can be spent working] *in hotels or kitchens normally as a KP. Moving about you learn about jobs and possible places where you can stay*, [although] *I try to avoid day centres like this if I can help it*.'' So, I ask, ''*is wayfaring getting harder to sustain as a way of life*?'' In response Robert emphatically announces that ''*there are certainly fewer jobs because of mechanisation and the Eastern Europeans, although It's not so bad in Devon and Cornwall but in parts of the Midlands and the North all the work is done by Lithuanians, Poles and Estonians*.'' Expanding on this theme Robert notes that ''*if I'm lucky and find work I'll often get some kind of accommodation with it. It might be a shared caravan, tent or sometimes a converted stable block*.'' What is most striking about Robert is the way in which he passionately and critically comments on what he regards as a fundamental distinction to be made between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' and the 'genuine homeless' and ''*those who have access to flats and cooking facilities*.'' I have heard this commentary elsewhere, most notably among wayfarers at the Pilsdon community or those who simply pass through Dorchester as part of the 'circuit'. At root it seems to relate to the powerful and prevalent idea that 'authentic wayfaring' is informed by a willingness to engage in paid work – in both the formal and informal economy – and the corresponding suggestion that the urban on street homeless consciously set out to avoid economic activity. I also learn from Robert that a critical

corollary of this 'lifestyle' is the sometimes explicit refusal to draw on state benefits (unless related to long-term illness or disability). For Robert and other 'men of the road', it would appear then that work is regarded as an inevitable and unavoidable dimension of the wayfaring experience.

And now take the example of Graham, a phlegmatic Yorkshire man with over twenty years experience of working on oil rigs in the North Sea. What sets Graham apart from many of those who avail themselves of the support services provided by the Hub Project is his insistence on combining rough sleeping with agency work as a forklift driver. As far as Graham is concerned, paid employment – however fragile and poorly remunerated – provides a context in which to enter into an affirmative relationship with wider society. Graham's perception of this positive link to the values and norms of mainstream culture cannot be separated from a disposition to act in accordance with standards of his generation and background (Duneier, 1994: 20).

The consequence of declining traditional industries and the growth of service industries on the one hand, and disability and addiction on the other, are perceived and experienced as significant obstacles to (re)entry into the formal economy. We can see examples of this in the three vignettes below.

Vignette 1 – 'Hopefully'

On a very quiet and wet Wednesday morning I find myself drinking coffee and enjoying 'broken biscuits' with ''Rocky' and Craig. Rocky eagerly falls into conversation and proceeds to spend the next ten minutes or so recounting his recent journey from HMP Exeter to Dorchester and the Hub Project. As I begin to think that the conversation is researching its inevitable climax,

Craig begins to fill the void.

Craig is twenty-two years of age and refers to himself as a 'Dorch local'. I soon learn that Craig is a sporadic visitor to the Hub Project but happens to be here this morning in the hope of receiving some help completing ''*these bloody hard and confusing forms.*'' With this Craig furiously motions towards a small pile of papers that occupy the far edge of the table, which from my slightly restricted position appear to be Income Support forms. Craig elaborates further when he comments ''*although I left school at sixteen with a clutch of GCSEs I wanted to get out and work* [so I] *did an apprenticeship and ended working on building sites in and around Dorch and Weymouth.*'' Unprovoked and with striking honesty Craig reflects on his journey from paid employment to statutory homelessness and comments ''*it started when I was laid off from work and then I really hit the bottle. Sometimes I was lucky and found a bit of work, mostly casual like, but it was never really enough. In the end I ended up in the nick doing a short stretch and then out on the streets.*''

By degrees I come to understand that Craig now finds himself cut adrift from family and friends. In this context the Hub Project has assumed importance for Craig as both an associational and institutional space ''*to talk to people, apply for benefits, try and sort out a room and hopefully find some work.*'' I ask Craig about the possibility of finding work as a bricklayer and he expresses optimism what with the proposed multi-million pound redevelopment of the old Dorchester brewery site. In the meantime he notes ''*I might get work by word of mouth or the Jobcentre in town, although that's due to close down soon and move to Weymouth, so I guess I'll probably go out on to the sites and ask if there is any brickwork or labouring about.*''

Vignette 2 - 'The Gear'

I am asked by Bob to assist Marcus in completing his applications for Income Support and Incapacity Benefit. "*I wouldn't normally ask*," Bob begins, "*but I've got a queue of people waiting and wanting to speak to me about this, that and the other.'*" Reaching the table Marcus presents me with a stack of slightly tea stained official papers. It quickly becomes evident that Marcus is functionally illiterate. I also sense that Marcus is 'coming down'. Understanding this, I begin to read back to Marcus the comments and information that he earlier provided to the Jobcentre via a short telephone conversation. In the small moments of clarity Marcus tells me that "*I haven't worked since I was about eighteen or nineteen I reckon. And to be honest mate, I didn't really work much then either.*" Intrigued by this I turn once again to the front sheet of Marcus's Incapacity Benefit form and am slightly taken aback to learn that Marcus will shortly celebrate his twenty-sixth birthday. Feigning naivety I ask Marcus "w*hy is that*?" and listen without surprise to the reply "*because of the heroin…chemical dependency, mate. I've been on the gear for years, in-and-out of rehab though it doesn't seem to make much difference.*" Returning to the form, I ask Marcus to confirm the veracity of the following statement "*other than claiming benefits I sometimes derive an income from begging.*" I say to Marcus "*is that right?*" To which Marcus simply replies "*yeah mate, although I wish I didn't. But what else can I do. But Mate, trust me when you're desperate you do what you have to do.*" Bob will subsequently tell me that he has known and worked with Marcus since he was eighteen, first as a drug support worker at a detox facility in Weymouth, and more recently over a sustained three year period as the manager of the Hub Project. Wistfully Bob observes "*people can't help but like feel Marcus. Yes he's immature for his age, not to be trusted around the donation box, but really you can't but warm to him. He's suffered and had plenty of hard knocks. But If I am honest I think that he will need support for years to come. Poor Marcus is more likely to die of*

an overdose then move out of his caravan and find some kind of 'meaningful activity' any time soon.''

Vignette 3- 'Banjo's Story'

Proffering a firm handshake I am introduced to Banjo by Hannah. By way of an opening gambit Banjo asks *''are you a new volunteer here?''* *''No,''* I reply, *''I've been attending the Hub on a regular basis for over a year now.''* To this Banjo simply notes *''I just can't remember seeing your face.''* Since thus far I have only been able to detect an easy swagger and genuine friendliness about Banjo I return by asking him *''so have you been moving about in the past couple of months then?''*

''No, I've just been inside [doing] a six month stretch.''

''What here in Dorchester?'', I quickly inquire.

''Yeah I spent the first three months in Dorchester and then I was shipped off to Exeter.''

''So you found your way back to Dorchester.''

''Yeah, Dorch.''

I then turn to Banjo and ask if his decision to return to Dorset was influenced by having family or friends in the area. *''Yeah I've got mates, no family though. I'm from up north, Crewe. A long way from here.''*

Hannah returns and the conversation continues to unfold at a leisurely pace. At one point I am minded to ask Banjo upon learning that he is sleeping out with only his French bulldog for company if he had received any preparatory support or advice in relation to accessing housing

or welfare benefits while incarcerated.

"*When I got inside one of the first things I asked for was help with housing* [to make a homelessness application], *but they just said wait until you come to the end of your sentence and we'll help you sort it out then…But what use is it to wait until just before you're released? It's too bloody late by that point*."

"*When I came out I was given a discharge cheque of sixty-seven quid, which didn't last too long. And I received it a month late* [after being released] *by which time it was out-of-date, and I couldn't cash it. So I sent it to Bristol and they said that they would send a replacement. How long do you think it took? Just under a week. But surely it should only take a day to sign off a new cheque and put it in the post*."

"*How were you able to cope without any money?*", I ask.

"*I had a bit of cash left but I was also begging like*."

"*What here in Dorchester?*"

"*Yeah in Dorch town centre. It's all right but you have to be careful with the police like. They can try and nick you or move you on. Do you know PC House? He fucking hates me. He would do anything to see me back inside*."

To this I ask Banjo if this is a fairly standard response from the police in Dorchester. "*Most of them are all right. If I'm sat there begging they will just come up to me and ask 'has anyone complained to you today Banjo?' And if I say no they either leave me alone or move me on*."

In response I say *"what about the public?"*

> *"What Joe Public?" Yeah, they're all right. Some are friendly and some are not.*"

Another theme that resonated strongly in fieldwork encounters was the difficulties homeless people experienced in establishing small economic niches in the face of public disapproval, official oversight and police interest, as the following extract indicates:

I attempt to initiate conversation with Phil by signalling to an official looking badge hanging from his neck proclaiming the words 'authorised performer'. I somewhat stupidly ask Phil if he 'performs' in Dorchester town centre. To this he rather predictably replies '*what do you fucking think*?" In an effort to redirect the conversation I ask Phil what he plays and he shouts back that he's a multi-instrumentalist before elaborating "*I play stuff like the Kooks, Kaiser Chiefs and crap like that that the public like and expect. Really easy stuff that anybody could play.*" I learn that Phil was fundamental in initiating the 'performance spaces' in Dorchester and proactively and independently approached the local council to ask that only 'authorised performers' be allowed to play in the town centre because "*most of those busking in town are shite and give the town a bad image. They finally agreed after a lot of pressure and persuasion.*"

Elsewhere:

Having made and distributed tea and coffee, I fall into easy conversation with Vincent. I ask him about his current housing situation and his use of the Hub Project. "*Well, I don't sell the Big Issue on a Wednesday. Normally Monday to Saturday [that is] if I still have copies left that long.*" "*But not on a Wednesday?*" I ask. *"No, the old dears come in from the surrounding villages and they don't seem to like us selling on a Wednesday. I fucking hate it. They just ignore you. Walk past you as if you don't even exist. I would prefer it if they told me to fuck off rather than just blanking us.*"

In important respects Phil and Vincent successfully carved out a space and niche to transcend economic activity; others were less fortunate and became embroiled within wider debates about the need to explicitly govern irresponsibility. As a PCSO relates:

> We don't tolerate begging in Dorchester at all. We will talk to them and give them a friendly warning. But we are clear that we can arrest them for begging. Nine times out of ten it doesn't happen again. If you get caught then potentially you get arrested which has happened.

And similarly:

> We work closely with the Big Issue …we have a small town with two pitches [for street vendors] but we were getting six or seven people all around Dorchester selling it, which wasn't healthy for those making a living out of it. Some people who shouldn't have been got copies [to sell]. So we had to stamp down on that. Really it was to help the Big Issue sellers. Some of the Big Issue sellers who have been there a long time are actually approaching us. [And] I have spoken to our Inspector and other colleagues [and there is agreement] that the town is just not big enough for anymore spots. I think that two is ample to be honest. But having two posts means that it's manageable and it doesn't seem to cause too many problems. It's not like they're fighting over the spots anymore.

Clearly, in issues such as these homeless people in Dorchester struggled against the material consequences of homelessness and the psychological damage of worklessness. As I have attempted to document, homeless people *do* identify with the ideology of work. However, some

individuals actively seek to establish *distance* and *difference* between themselves and others by endorsing the language of 'personal irresponsibility' and 'workshy scroungers' (Howe, 2009:18). The irony of such cultural distancing is that 'responsibility' is cast in terms of individual pathology rather than as a wider and deeper process of cultural contestation.

5.13 <u>Debating Responsibility</u>

> We would like to think that it is in the past. We had a rough patch with some very strong individuals who were leading [the community and attendant street culture]. Some have obviously gone away. Some…one or two have passed away [while] some have gone to prison. It's something that we understand. It's going to be an ongoing thing. But at the moment things are quit steady. We realise that it's still an issue and the problems are still there. But the problem just isn't as bad as it was (PCSO Dorchester North Section).

This critically engaged inquiry into the relationship between citizenship and homelessness has unfurled across the broad canvas of the contemporary concern with 'rights and responsibilities' and the need for a two-way relationship between the individual and the state. Its dramatic and ethnographic force has pulsated through four case examples, which strongly reflect notions of self-governance and communitarian informed 'rights and responsibilities'. The consequence so far as social policy and the provision of welfare are concerned, it has been argued, is that rights are now increasingly conditional on the acceptance of attendant individual responsibilities and conformity to the virtues of collective obligations. Properly diagnosed this new ferment and complexity requires the individual behaviour of citizens to be re-shaped, and the relationship with government to be re-thought.

This is a narrow path trodden by mainstream politicians. Consider the following statement:

> [Preventing] crime for me means all of us as a community setting boundaries between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour – with clear penalties for stepping over the line. Boundaries that reflect the words I was taught when I was young – words upon which we all know strongly communities are founded: discipline, respect, responsibility (Gordon Brown, 2007). [123]

The same logic is at work here:

> Why is our society broken? Because government got too big, did too much and undermined responsibility. We are going to solve our problems with a stronger society. Stronger families. Stronger communities. A stronger country. All by rebuilding responsibility. Recognising that what holds society together is responsibility, and that the good society is a responsible society (David Cameron, 2009).

There are obvious overlaps between the two positions. It is striking that these two short examples freely evoke *responsibility* while completely neglecting its normative equivalent *rights*. This populist narrative is, in essence, asymmetrical. As Elizabeth Burney (2009:36) has pointed out, it is suggestive of a civilising mission, and not a farsighted political vision which rebalances the moral economy of responsibility so as to better reflect the needs and aspirations of the very poorest and most marginalised.

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[123] Brown, G. (2007) 'Prime Minister's Speech to the Labour Party Conference, 25 September.

Clear examples of this moral and political positioning were evident in Dorchester. This is certainly the case, for example with Dorset Police. As an authoritative public institution – charged with maintaining order - the 'problem' of street homelessness was powerfully embedded within established cultural norms and expectations (Westmarland & Clarke, 2009:176). This occupational culture was, crucially, further reinforced by public and political opinion. This is best illustrated by the Dorchester and Sherborne District Commander, who argued:

> My everyday aim is to make Dorchester safer and for the Hub that involves changes. I can use legislation and criminal law when it is appropriate. But my aims and objectives are always there, but I'm not sure with the Hub that their aims and objectives are clear. Our aims are [always] to reduce violent crime and to reduce anti-social behaviour. My responsibility is to the community and to the town and every person in this town whether worker or rough sleeper. They're all my responsibility and I have to take a balanced approach. If I get it wrong then we have a real problem – how will the town look if crime goes up? 'Rough sleeper comes into and burgles five or six shops and then leaves.' I've had that happen shoplifting, stealing alcohol. Crime goes up but not as much as society thinks it does. They [rough sleepers] like every part of the community have their bad apples. No more, no less. But society's perception is 'what do they look like and how do they act.'

Thus, as we have seen, the co-production of the local policing of incivility in West Dorset embodied a particular understanding of problematic behaviour and homelessness. On the one hand, anti-social behaviour was seen as being analogous to crime and therefore viewed through the prism of crime control (Prioir, 2009). On the other hand, rough sleepers and street drinkers were problematised as morally deficient and wilfully irresponsible (Parr & Nixon, 2009). Clearly

the answer to the 'problem' of anti-social behaviour and homelessness, it followed, was to inculcate a sense of conventional responsibility and standards of respectability through the active use of enforcement measures. This was an example of policing homeless people's moral behaviour. To be sure, the portrayal of homeless people in terms of crude distinction between the 'decent majority' and a 'deviant and anti-social lumpenproletariat' often served no other purpose than to hide many of the real causes of homelessness.

A similar feedback loop was at work in the policies and practices adopted by West Dorset District Council. Under the carapace of local connection, the local authority routed the notion of 'responsibility' through complex and shifting debates as to the correct reading of statutory regulations and official guidance. This interpretation contributed to the labelling of homeless people as 'outsiders' and 'undeserving'. As a result, the practice of citizenship became unmistakably tethered to wider and deeper questions of morality, character and location.

But there was another aspect to this. In focusing on the politics of responsibility, local statutory actors (and national partners) were able to responsibilise both rough sleepers and the Hub Project. Importantly – as we have seen – such strong arm tactics were underpinned by the language of 'killing with kindness' and 'cultural dependency':

> I would never question its ethics, but I think that the aim of every rough sleeping service should be about eliminating rough sleeping and not to perpetuate it. I hesitate to say 'are they validating themselves by what they are doing?' because that makes them sound terribly self-interested. But I would be happier if they concentrated on eliminating rough sleeping. I feel that they have an agenda about 'helping' people while we have an agenda

about 'empowering' people. There is then a slight difference in how we work

(Housing Needs Manager).

But it did not have to be like this. The *Dorset Echo* was central to setting the public policy agenda and to politicising homelessness. It fostered a moral environment in which debating responsibility was made possible. Arguably it abdicated its responsibility to look beyond folk images of homeless people to capture something of the social and economic conditions within which homelessness in West Dorset is embedded. [124] The language used was often anachronistic and hackneyed, perpetuating stereotypes and popular myths about homeless people. It contributed to shaping and sustaining the powerful cultural message that rough sleepers and wayfarers were 'out-of-place' amid the gentility and affluence of the county town. Certainly, homeless people were very rarely – if ever – given voice in these accounts. Had such voices been given more prominence, it would arguably have brought the reality of rough sleeping into view.

In contradiction to this, the Hub Project articulated a conception of responsibility that combined post-secular ethics of care with quotidian experience of responding to acute (and sometimes chronic) need.[125] More generally, of course, the Hub Project argued that it was *Dorchester's* responsibility - as a caring and proud community - to improve the lives of 'beggars, tramps and vagrants'. In making this argument 'community' was exposed as a vessel for competing and conflicting claims as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour and social responsibility. Finding this balance was not easy, and the Hub Project was certainly overwhelmed by the turning of deeper tides, as Bob Matthews concedes:

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[124] As Zuffrey (2008) notes, media representations of homelessness are strongly influenced by conservative welfare reform agendas that emphasise individual responsibility, construct deserving and undeserving dichotomies based on victim-criminal discourses and tend to be silent around structural causes of homelessness.

[125] For most people homelessness is episodic. It is commonly defined by relatively short periods spent in hostels or on the street (May, 2003).

We wanted to encourage people to change, but we were quite prepared to accommodate people who didn't want to change or even had no intention of changing. [But] it's actually being in the centre, seeing us and establishing trust on a daily basis that we were able to help with practicalities [such as] a sleeping bag or a rolling mat or the money for a bus fare to a funeral when one of your mates dies. These things build up trust and then a person believes that we might be able to help them. Whereas before [their experience of day-centres] is to be told to disappear immediately because they're drunk or aggressive or both. And at the Hub we were prepared to put up with a bit of that, but I don't think that the 'Places of Change' agenda allows for that…It comes back to that ethos again…I just felt that it was giving people stuff without asking anything of them. But the police always came from the point that 'give people stuff but they've always got to give something back', and that was in terms of behaviour. [The police] wanted contracts of behaviour with everyone. Eventually I think that got translated into money. And their argument was that if they have to pay 50p for a meal then that's money they haven't got to spend on alcohol. It's that mentality: ''they get something they have to give us something.'' And I think ultimately that is to come off the streets. We want them to come off the streets. But I didn't want to charge them for food, a sleeping bag or a rucksack.

To bring this discussion back to how homeless people understand responsible citizenship and view the moral judgements that underpin the responsibilisation thesis – the basic point is this - the arguments made through the selection of ethnographic observations and qualitative interviews point to the limits of viewing the social exclusion of homelessness through the limited horizon of self-help and self-governance. On-street homelessness in Dorchester is constructed and

reproduced as a condition of being 'shut out' from the cultural, economic and political systems deemed to underscore and engender social inclusion. In these and other ways, a similar theme is apparent in Slim's Table Mitchell Duneier's sensitive and engaging portrait of working class African Americans on the South Side of Chicago, when he writes:

> Unlike most Americans, ghetto dwellers cannot - by virtue of the power they exercise, the material objects they posses, or the institutions to which they belong - take for granted their membership in the larger society' (1994:159).

The point is that homeless men and women in Dorchester powerfully articulated a sense of isolation from mainstream institutions and conventional relationships. They also acknowledged feelings of shame, confusion and anger about their 'status' and 'identity', and concern about their ability to withstand and transcend it. Fatalism was not however the sole reaction. It was counterpoised by acts of resilience and narratives of determination. But in accessing the Hub Project, most of these men and women expressed a strong desire to participate in the wider society through the enactment of self-esteem, personal responsibility and, above all, social rights.[126]

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[126] At the same time, others (wayfarers notwithstanding) argued that they were homeless by choice, even when this is contradicted by biographical fact. The most influential answer to this seeming conundrum is provided by Kim Hooper (2003) who has argued that the 'vocabulary of volition' is, for those living on the street, the last refuge of self-respect. For my part I did anticipate encountering the idea that homelessness is a 'voluntary' choice but within the first few months of finding myself in the *field* it became increasingly apparent that some, albeit by no means all rough sleepers, articulated micro narratives which were sited in opposition to constructions in both the public sphere and academia (Andrews, 1999)

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

When we walk down the street and see a figure in a sleeping bag huddled in a doorway, it reminds us that there is much to do. I know that it can be done and working together we shall achieve our goal. We can all do our bit, and whether we get involved on the ground or simply show more compassion for those in need, we can look back at rough sleeping as something that used to happen, not something that does happen (Homelessness Minister Iain Wright, 2008).[127]

6.1 Introduction

This doctoral thesis has attempted to critically account for the concatenation of homelessness and citizenship through the prism of the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester. I constructed my investigation and analysis around the salience of the image of the 'responsible citizen' (Barnes & Prior, 2009) and, linked to this, 'government through community' (Burney, 2009). Responsible citizenship, it has been suggested, aims to mobilise active and engaged communities to promote and promulgate discourses and practices that place increasing stress on moral cohesion, self-regulation and the balance between 'rights and duties'. In this way, I have explored the contours and workings of the contemporary governance of homelessness in an effort to identify and articulate how a small-scale, faith-based organisation came to attract the direct attention and explicit interest of different arms of government (at the local and national scale) as well as powerful community actors involved in shaping the everyday conduct of homeless people. Within this unit of analysis, I have illustrated the discursive velocity and material consequences of the

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[127] Department for Communities and Local Government (2008) Press Release: New Goal to End Rough Sleeping, London: 18 November 2008.

current concern with 'duty, responsibility, and respect for others' (Brown, 2006) and how, in turn, such arguments and policy prescriptions are refracted and amplified through the logic of community and contractual governance (Flint & Nixon, 2006). This is to understand that the problems of homelessness and responses to those problems are embedded in the particularity of time, place and culture (DeVerteuil et al., 2009:9).

For the purpose of empirical directness and analytical clarity, we have explored the links between street homelessness and responsible citizenship through a detailed focus on (**1**) anti-social behaviour; (**2**) reconnection strategies; (**3**) payment for food and (**4**) work and worklessness. This flow of events and strategies dramatises the interaction and interdependence of local settings and broader changes to governance practices at the macro-level (Parr & Nixon, 2009:106). The consequence of this fourfold movement has been a recognition of how particular forms of behaviour and particular groups and individuals are identified and stigmatised as 'potentially subversive and therefore justifying specific corrective policies and interventions' (Barnes & Prior, 2009:193) for failing to adhere to the behavioural norms and expectations of the 'decent majority'. This is an argument for paying attention to the complex and subtle ways in which statutory and voluntary sector agencies have pushed forward the notion of responsible citizenship.

Against the powerful tale of how an engaged (moral) community disciplined the Hub Project for failing to articulate the *right* institutional and cultural approach to the problems of homelessness, I have drawn purposefully on ethnographic encounters and qualitative interviews with the 'real authors of the geographies of homelessness' – that is to say local political elites, street level bureaucrats, community activists and homeless people themselves (DeVerteiul et al., 2009:19). These two steps were advanced in unison and mutually reinforce each other. However, it was through the act of personal participation in the routines and rhythms of the Hub Project in pursuit of the ethnographic spirit that I have been able to extend the analysis out in advance of a more

considered, developed and detailed exploration of the views, experiences and knowledge of homeless people: to listen to their stories about homelessness and to chart the numerous and inventive ways in which homeless people have responded to the discourses and practices outlined above.

To gain a sense of this complexity, I return to the metaphor of the 'lattice of governance'. Through it, we can see the ways in which local mobilisations and extra-local alignments to borrow Barnes and Prior's evocative formulation 'act as citizenship's gatekeeper - to control which social groups can legitimately claim the title 'citizen' and what kinds of behaviour are to be associated with good citizenship' (2009:193). To capture something of this, I have highlighted how in Dorchester and in the popular imagination street homelessness became conflated with subversive behaviours and values. Into this context Dorset Police and West Dorset District Council were emboldened by government legislative and policy guidance to introduce restrictive legal actions. [128] As I have documented – alongside others - this process has irrevocably resulted in a strengthening link between the social welfare and criminal justice systems as, for example, encapsulated in the tableau of anti-social behaviour interventions and through the evolving landscape of the Respect Agenda.[129] In that sense, I have tried to suggest that in Dorchester the dominant symbolic representation and political treatment of rough sleeping was to view it as a problem of public disorder and nuisance rather than as a social problem experienced by homeless people (Cloke et al., 2002).

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[128] Under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act there are statutory arrangements between local authorities, the police and other local agencies.

[129] The Respect Agenda, as Atkinson and Helms (2008) note, extended debates about anti-social behaviour and civic pride. Hence, respect was classified as ''a duty and a responsibility on the citizen to respect the rights of others; a duty on the state to protect the vulnerable from significant harm and a duty to uphold the rule of law in a system that is efficient and far'' (Blair, 2006).

6.2 <u>Anti-Social Behaviour</u>

Three main issues can be drawn from this critical marker and concrete example of the relationship between street homelessness and responsible citizenship. The first relates to the way in which Dorset Police and West Dorset District Council zealously and uncritically embraced the promise of corrective policies and interventions. The second issue arises inevitably from the first. In the reckless and ill-liberal drive to enforce standards of behaviour a self-activated 'community of interests' abrogated its responsibility to cultivate pro-active and early intervention approaches to the perceived expression of undesirable conduct – favouring instead a crude and exclusionary understanding of the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour and rough sleeping (Parr & Nixon, 2009:116). This is important because it served to reinforce government rhetoric while directly feeding into public anxiety. As Evans (2008) has argued, social and cultural prompts such as these also serve a very clear political purpose in allowing the 'state' to place the responsibility for anti-social behaviour wholly with the individual or identified group.

More broadly, the situation in Dorchester contrasts unfavourably with Johnsen and Fitzpatrick's (2008) qualitative evaluation of the use of enforcement to combat begging and street drinking in five case study areas. Johnsen and Fitzpatrick describe how 'in many (though not all) parts of England, enforcement actions are tightly integrated with intensive support interventions' (2008:201). Add to this, Johnsen and Fitzpatrick (2007) have commented upon the inability of some local authorities to increase the number of ASBOs served on those involved in street culture activities – particularly begging and street drinking - following the refusal of local police to enforce criminalising technologies unless tied to a more obvious and well-publicised package for the individuals concerned. As such, this is to suggest that local responses are more complex, and

less punitive, than the claims of orthodox accounts of urban homelessness.[130] My work, though, offers a rather different reading to the one outlined above. In tracking the official statutory response over an extended period of time, and even allowing for the introduction of a specialist outreach worker and a more balanced emphasis on 'street need audits', an approach that seeks to gain a better understanding of the needs of people on the street (CLG, 2008), I would argue that the language and instrumental use of enforcement measures such as Dispersal Orders and Public Drinking Exclusion Zones remained the pre-eminent weapon of choice. [131]

Such thinking is clearly evident in the comments of the Dorchester and Sherborne, Section Commander:

> If you make life uncomfortable with the appropriate support dangled [they] will come off the streets. So there is a role to be played by enforcement [and] if we go through the courts we can bring in other agencies and bring in support based on conditions. So [for example] the magistrate says that they take this or that course. To be arrested is not a nice thing and I am aware of that, but how else do you get support to these people. This is where we can use the carrot and the stick approach. But if we give them all the carrot then there is no incentive to get out of rough sleeping if you're given everything. If you're given a tent or meal tickets every day [then] come the weekend you've got your mates in a tent around the corner and you've got your money coming in.

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[130] It is difficult to ascertain to what extent, if at all, Johnsen and Fitzpatrick's findings remain relevant. Recent work by Millie (2008) and Minton (2009) would seem to support the argument that the full panoply of anti-social behaviour legislation is used disproportionately and discriminating against homeless people. However, Johnsen and Fitzpatrick's commentary about resistance among local constabularies to the use of enforcement controls is weakly mirrored in my own fieldwork. The point of departure however is that in Dorchester hostility was articulated in terms of overweening bureaucracy rather than as a moral imperative or social need judgement.

[131] 'Street Needs Audits' have been introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It is an approach that was developed to supplement Rough Sleeper Counts, and aims to develop more information about people.

But what is the incentive to get out of it? I know it's a rough lifestyle, I know that it's tough. I wouldn't want to do it myself. I know that the lifestyle [life expectancy] is short. I know that you need to give people support but you also need to make it as unattractive as possible. How else do you get them to engage with services?

This contrasts markedly with the everyday ethics of care espoused by the Hub Project. This is evident within the following journal extract:

From the window I see Graham struggle towards the table nearest to the road. It is not long before I hear his distinctive and booming Yorkshire voice infused with a string of furious expletives as he falls ungainly from a plastic chair to the concrete floor. At this point I casually mention to Bob that Graham appears to be extremely inebriated. "*Yeah I can see that,*" before ruefully commenting, "*I don't know what to do with Graham and his drinking…Of course we have an exclusion policy, but each incident and user requires a different response. We have excluded people in the past, one for up to three months, but it tends to be counter-productive as most incidents are one off episodes and it only deprives access to* [what is for many service users'] *the only support service that will actively engage with their 'problems' and needs*."

Third, and perhaps occupying a more rarefied intellectual standpoint, it is arguably the case that exclusion from public space is one of the most potent and obvious forms of spatial exclusion and conditional citizenship (Flint, 2009:88). In seeking to purify public space and uphold existing aesthetic properties, we bear witness to an emerging asymmetry between public rights and public duties. Understood in these terms, homeless people are removed from prime public spaces, criminalised if necessary, for their involvement in street culture activities (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2008:194). Such an understanding, according to Bannister and Kearns (2009), suggests that we

privilege cold and sterile urban environments while objecting to visible signs and reminders of social difference and material adversity. In an important sense, then, insecurity and intolerance shade out the potential for the establishment of a culture of mutual respect and reciprocity (Millie, 2009).

6.3   Reconnection Polices

Amid this tangled web homeless and other vulnerable people were constructed as 'outsiders' – supposedly drawn to the town by the magnetic 'pull' of the Hub Project and its correlative 'street party'.[132] In this way homeless people were discursively constructed as coming from somewhere else and being something else – as strangers and interlopers. The immediate effect of this was that 'responsibility' for tackling homelessness and meeting housing need was considered to reside elsewhere. In a more grounded way, it became the 'personal responsibility' of homeless people (through assertive outreach) to *move-on* from Dorchester and its surrounding hinterland in order to assert 'rights' to housing support and welfare provision through reconnecting with their place of origin. Critically, I have tried to show that the focus, both discursive and practical, on 'local connection' was enveloped in a powerful ideological and material cloak. It was ideological insofar as West Dorset District Council consistently ignored or under-emphasised the scale and scope of homelessness (both in its visible and hidden manifestations) in Dorchester and outlying villages. [133] It was material embodied through completing expectations and conflicting interpretations about the nature of just and appropriate welfare settlements. For homeless and other vulnerable people it was closely associated with the availability of social housing and long-term affordable

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[132] Comment made by Margaret Barker in response to the visit to Dorchester of Richard Cunningham, CLG Rough Sleeper Adviser. "He just looked and he didn't want to talk or listen to us because he had seen it all before. He knew that it was a long running street party twenty four hours a day, of which the homeless were the nub…and it was this that was based on the street party and generated by alcohol."
[133] The Hub Project's 'signing book', based on self-disclosure, consistently indicated a far higher number of people sleeping rough than local authority 'returns' would seem to suggest.

accommodation in the private sector. But from a local policy perspective, it was linked with the 'green-belt' and agricultural land use as well as the difficulties associated with enjoining local landlords to accept benefit claimants. [134]

In narrow, practical terms, this would appear to be a simple procedural or legal question. However, as I have attempted to suggest the process of making a homelessness application (and its corresponding success or failure) offers a very clear example of the way in which people both make and make sense of citizenship. In so doing, homeless people are forced to confront their marginal status and the material realities of their situation while attempting to negotiate the complexity and vagaries of a residual safety net. Out of this, citizenship claims were framed through the symbolic language of exclusion and inclusion.

But it also links to a larger intellectual and political orientation towards the question of citizenship. On the surface, it would appear that West Dorset District Council – in common with many other small and predominately rural authorities – was simply forced to play with the hand that it had been dealt by the complex and contested interpenetration of top-down modes of surveillance and sanction and the full force of the wider economy (Pawson, 2007). However, in the context of being embedded in Dorchester as a participant observer, I heard countless recitations of people approaching the local housing department and being told that they were entitled to a 'housing options' advice interview without then being informed of their corresponding right to make a formal homelessness application. These savage and searing micro-accounts only served to reinforce the widely held view that the local authority was guilty of 'gatekeeping' – rationalising housing support and provision rather than assuming a responsibility to actively promote and enforce rights to

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[134] In an area of acute housing need, it is somewhat striking that Poundbury is expected to be completed by 2025, by which time it will have added 5,000 to Dorchester's population (Morris and Booth, 2009). Four phases of development will create 2,500 properties of which just 20% is earmarked for social housing (both social rented and shared ownership.)

social citizenship (Marshall, 1950). In a supplementary interview with a Shelter outreach worker I was casually informed that, at a particularly fragile moment in community and institutional relations, West Dorset District Council unexpectedly announced that it was no longer prepared to accept homelessness referrals from the Hub Project. Here, again, I would suggest that we can see a further illustration of how homeless people and homeless service providers are disciplined and responsibilised according to the unfolding logic of the contemporary governance of homelessness. But, more than this, it pertinently and powerfully exposes the ideological and material force of the contemporary concern with responsibility. The net effect of this is that the responsibilities of local authorities to respond to the *thin* claims to social entitlement and welfare need of the 'socially excluded' are sublimated to questions of morality, character and location. However, something is missing. And this leads to a final point.

The ethnographic record reveals a further layer of complexity to the local governance of homelessness and housing need. It clearly shows how propinquity is negotiated. To elaborate further, it reveals that the terms 'local connection' and 'reconnection' are intimately bound-up with a sense of community, belonging and identity. At base, this is to understand that 'place' is a symbolic construct, a fluid concept, with boundaries that are continually being negotiated (Sherlock, 2008). Useful here is the work of Cloke et al that details how within dominant social and cultural constructions homeless people do not 'belong' in the idyllic or problem-free rural environment (2000a: 113). To this I would suggest that the discourse of 'local connection' negates the many and varied ways in which homeless people identify with people and places. If we discount wayfaring with its romantic attachment to 'freedom of the road', I would strongly suggest that homeless people are much less mobile than is commonly assumed in local media and political accounts.[135] In relation to my research, the majority of homeless people I encountered at

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[135] Upon closer examination the quixotic notion that wayfarers are the embodiment of 'rootless' homelessness is open to debate. Wayfarers passing through Dorchester, for example, display a

the Hub Project and on the streets of Dorchester were deeply woven into the temporalities and cartographies of this small part of rural Dorset through affective bonds (personal history, family ties and enduring friendships) and institutional links (Dorchester Prison, Dorset County Hospital and Weymouth Magistrates' Court and Jobcentre Plus).

For homeless people the official boundary line separating West Dorset District Council from Weymouth and Portland Borough Council was perceived and experienced as being both arbitrary and discriminating. It was thus for homeless people an argument about urgent and acute need. For the two local authorities the Ridgeway – the traditional trading route and contemporary walking trail that divides Dorchester from Weymouth – was viewed as a porous channel through which people freely and unobtrusively moved. [136] It was thus for the local authorities an argument about the need to act as guardians of the public purse. As should be clear, the example of 'local connection' and 'reconnection strategies' vividly captures the longstanding tensions between the vocabularies of rights and responsibilities and the popular understandings of identity and belonging.

6.4 <u>Payment for Food</u>

Making, and sustaining connections to the copulative term 'rights and responsibilities', I set out to trace the decision taken by the Hub Project (with considerable cultural and institutional pressure within and outwith the community) to introduce a payment system for its popular and previously

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strong attachment to rural Dorset and its 'outsider' communities: Gaunts House, Hilfield Friary, Monkton Wilds, Othona and the Pilsdon Community.

[136] There is a splendid irony in relation to the 'Ridgeway'. It is currently the site of much contestation as the so-called Olympic Highway (Weymouth and Portland will host all sailing events at the 2012 Games) a £87 million relief is being built to improve the local road infrastructure and to contribute to the economic prosperity of the wider area. On a related front, there is every reason to believe that the Olympic Games of 2012 will confirm to the post Montreal example (1974) and will fail to break even while also leading to the forceful displacement and expulsion of homeless people from key strategic sites.

free lunch-time meal service. In so doing I suggested that the proposal was justified by an appeal to the narrow and almost exclusive focus on personal responsibility. This played into the 19th century meme of self-help and the stigmatisation of dependency (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). It emphasises that individuals not only are the subject of domination by external actors, but are also active in their own government. More specifically, I suggested that homeless people accessing the Hub Project rejected the casual stereotype of cultural and psychological dependency. On the contrary, the majority of service users accepted without comment or complaint or conflict the rationale and thinking behind this policy change on the basis of having moved around and about and thus having direct experience of paying for services elsewhere and, perhaps more importantly, because of an expressed feeling of identification and an authentic sense of gratitude to the staff, volunteers and trustees of the Hub Project.

Talking about a sense of responsibility towards the Hub Project through the meal proposal, Richard commented:

> Most people agree that we should pay. It's not necessarily about being made
> to feel responsible but [recognising] the food is donated and cooked by those
> who give of their own time.

Richard's understanding of responsibility is quite different to the ethic of responsibility located within the political discourse of New Labour. Underpinning Richard's response is the recognition that the work of the Hub Project is animated by an ethos of acceptance, care and trust. What I wish to draw from this that people reject the assumption that homeless people are passive recipients of services. Moreover, and equally important I think, there is a sense here that 'responsibility' grows organically from respect and reciprocity rather than through the imposition of a conformist moral discourse of self-responsibility (Dean, 2003). The point to underscore is that

responsibility as a social meaning and cultural code is deeply embedded within a protean but permanent landscape of emotionality, materiality and sociality. Doreen Massey (2004) would add to this that responsibility derives from those relations through which identity is relationally constructed and spatially enacted. Arguably this is tied to a conception of responsibility and political change 'which looks beyond the gates to the strangers without' (Massey, 2004:17).

6.5   <u>Work and Worklessness</u>

Co-existing with this approach I have attempted to understand how homeless people make sense of, and talk about work and worklessness. This tentacular stretching of the link between street homelessness and responsible citizenship to embody the portmanteau of worklessness is vital insofar as it is the edifice and leitmotif of New Labour's 'rights and responsibilities' agenda. Through ethnographic examples, we have seen that work is crucially important to homeless people, particularly wayfarers who seek to construct their own safety net by working informally or in lieu of accommodation. As we have already seen, homeless and vulnerably housed people in Dorchester spoke about employment in the past, present and future tense. It is certainly true, though, that some homeless people express a distinct lack of interest in paid employment and of a lack of self-esteem, or a combination of the two. A more refined examination reveals that homeless people talk about work as a way in which to forcefully articulate identities, values and relationships which are suggestive of an enduring but fragile link to mainstream culture. Drawing on this thesis, homelessness is explained by reference to the lack of jobs or the perception of unfairly cheap and competitive migrant labour from A8 states. [137] Work is, finally evoked, as the definitive waymarker in the long and winding road that leads from *social exclusion* to *social*

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[137] Nationals from the so-called Accession 8 (A8) countries: Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Research indicates that while the majority of Eastern and Central European migrants successfully obtain employment and accommodation in the UK, a significant minority find themselves homeless in Britain (see, for example, Homeless Link, 2006).

inclusion. It should thus be clear that, for the most part, homeless people *do* identify with the ideology of employment and the work ethic (Howe, 2009).[138]

And yet, work (or rather a traceable history of paid employment) was often invoked and mobilised by older homeless men against younger, seemingly chaotic and firmly entrenched rough sleepers. According to the general logic of this position a lack of interest or desire to work was confirmation of personal inadequacy, fallibility or chronic addiction. Again, we see very clear echoes of Teresa Gowan's interesting discussion on the way in which the culturally reified notion of 'work ethic' is used by some to suggest that they are straightforwardly 'decent men down on their luck' (1997:172). Consequently, homeless people who have no direct or sustained experience of work are positioned as somehow standing outside of the accepted norms of social interaction and behaviour.

A less cynical but no less critical position was advanced by Mackem:

> It's not right all these sixteen and seventeen year olds in day-centres and
> night-shelters who have not and will never work. Do you reckon that he has
> ever grafted or worked a single day in his life?

Importantly – as we have seen – homeless people are acutely aware that job opportunities (if they exist) are increasingly precarious, temporary and poorly remunerated. This is particularly the case for a younger generation of men and women buffeted by the strong winds of job insecurity, a lack of formal education and a sparse employment record. Related to this, and echoing the work of Hartley Dean, there was a clear recognition – often based on direct experience of spinning

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[138] This contention resonates with findings from Homeless Link (2008), which suggest that 90% of homeless people want to work.

between low pay and no pay – that work does not always pay and is sometimes viewed as being less attractive than claiming benefits however meagre and insufficient (Russell, 2009:32). Thus as Howe (2009; 235) notes 'without jobs poor people are forced to depend on benefits; they have no other choice.' But it is important to note that homeless people are often strident critics of an antiquated and conditional welfare system. In light of this, homeless people in Dorchester were acutely aware of the stigma and humiliation of being dependant on the *economics* of welfare benefits. To be sure, these men and women are profoundly sensitive to the destructive consequences of a delayed giro, the withdrawal of jobseekers allowance or the denial of a crisis loan claim. In such cases, paid work was often expressed as an aspirational value.

These observations have a number of series implications. In an effort to tackle the social exclusion of homelessness, the Communities and Local Government funded 'Places of Change' initiative has attempted to establish support services 'of engagement and empowerment with a focus on activity, employment, education or training' (2007:5). Outside of the 'Places of Change' agenda, evidence is emerging of the restorative potential of work in pursuit of permanent resettlement (Homeless Link, 2008).[139] This brings me to the notion of the 'shadow state' and its place within the context of emergency service for homeless people (Wolch & Deverteuli, 2001). In this conception the shadow state refers to the tendency for voluntary organisations to increasingly assume responsibility for social service delivery and community development while being controlled in both formal and informal ways by the state (Milligan, 2007).

A cautionary note to this effect is struck by Bob Matthews:

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[139] Places of Change is an £80m capital improvement funding programme managed by the Homes and Communities Agency (previously Communities and Local Government), which seeks to improve services for people who are homeless. It aims to identify, encourage, engage and release their potential to enable them to move on with their lives. It encourages service users to get involved in services that will help them turn their lives around.

What is happening all around the country is that the most desperate and the most needy can't get in the day-centres because they're too drunk normally and they've got bad reputations…It's because you have to be a Place of Change now.

What emerges from this is that money tends to follow service providers willing to adopt a particular approach – 'support' and 'rehabilitation' regimes that place increasing stress on behavioural contracts and shifting levels of conditionality. Support services which recognise the fact that some people, particularly those with experience of entrenched homelessness are on a longer journey towards employment – like the Hub Project for instance – are rarely provided with funding. Whilst the very existence of the Hub Project is recognised as vital in filling gaps and meeting unmet local need, the satisfaction of citizenship claims are fundamentally constrained by its dependency on external funding and its limited organisational capacity. Given this context, rough sleepers become doubly disfranchised: transferred from the state to the shadow state that is itself unable to respond to citizenship claims due to structural and contextual constraints (Lake & Newman 2002:118).

Changing gear, it is possible to see the Green Paper 'Written Off: Reforming Welfare to Reward Responsibility' as a continuation of the government's modernisation of public services to reflect a system of welfare that is active (rather than inactive) and stresses the virtue of 'more support, more responsibility (DWP, 2008). It is animated by the guiding principle that welfare support should increasingly be tied to contractual obligations. Claimants who fail to meet these conditions may face sanctions and a reduction or loss of benefits. According to Crisis (2008), this will lead to increased conditionality, compulsory work trails and drug users' benefits being contingent on taking steps to stabilise their drug use. Homeless Link (2008) and the Scottish Council for Single Homeless (2008) have argued that the proposed choice between 'work for your benefit' or loss of

benefits runs counter to a significant body of research, which suggests that it is support and not compulsion which proves most effective for those farthest from both the labour market and settled accommodation. Conditionality works like a corrosive acid. The looming inevitability of a rightwing Conservative government, enamoured with the Wisconsin welfare experiment, will simply reinforce a return to the punitive and deserving culture of the 19th century as the dominant social policy discourse. [140] Clearly, then, greater emphasis on personal conduct and welfare conditionality is likely to lead to increased poverty and exclusion for the most vulnerable.

In mapping out this terrain, this extended case study gives legitimacy to the proposition that rights are now increasingly conditional on the acceptance of attendant individual behaviours (Dwyer, 1999). Having thus rehearsed the discursive and material consequences of the responsibilistaion thesis, the issue now becomes one of whether we should view Dorchester as a 'punitive community' (Moore, 2008).

6.6 **The Antinomies of Community**

> The Hub was one of the first issues to be raised at the PACT [Police and
> Communities Together] meeting. With something like this it's like saying
> 'there's not enough affordable housing in Dorchester.' But what can PACT
> do? They can sympathise, but there is only so much that they can do. It [the
> Hub Project] hasn't been discussed at the last three or four meetings to be

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[140] This refers to the welfare-to-work programmes initiated by the State of Wisconsin in the 1990s. It is predicated on the principle that those who refuse work should be denied rights to welfare (Dwyer, 2008:212).

honest. Now it is dog fouling, more drop curbs, graffiti…more community

issues (PCSO Dorchester North Section).[141]

In a provocative and pugnacious article, the Anglo-American cultural geographers Geoffrey

Deverteuil, Jon May and Jürgen von Mahs (2009) provide a critical counterpoint to what they

perceive to be the rather narrow accounts of homelessness of the 'revanchist city' found in the

geographical literature, which have come to dominate understandings of homeless people and

their geographies. Through this lens it is claimed that the paradigmatic thinking on homelessness

is framed within a US metric of knowledge that describes the progressive collapse of homeless

spaces through increasingly punitive and legalistic impulses and tendencies. This exalted

triumvirate is critical of reading the standard narrative account of a dyspotic vision of

homelessness and a politics of homelessness, whereby the local state and business community

seek to 'exterminate' homeless people (2009:9). Of particular importance here is the need to

move beyond a critique of the 'punitive turn' and in its place cultivate a renewed sense of interest

in the varied and complex experiences of and responses to street homelessness in the UK. This

has two crosscutting dimensions. It is an approach that places as much importance on how the

'state' seeks to contain and control 'the homeless' as on the ways in which the state, and others,

may also be seeking to 'care' for homeless people. Thus:

A more visible street homeless population may help induce a more punitive

response to homelessness, for example, such visibility is as likely to produce

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[141] Police and Communities Together (PACT) is a mechanism whereby issues identified through neighbourhood meetings. After the meeting, a smaller group called a PACT partnership panel decides on how they will work together to resolve the neighbourhood priorities. The panel will commonly consist of local authority/district council representative; representatives from Housing associations; environmental officers; faith group representatives; residents' association members, Police and the business community.

an upsurge in charitable giving and in the activities of third-sector organisations (2009:12).

Recognising precisely this involves developing a more delicate and complex picture of contemporary homelessness; one that gives equal weight to 'regressive policies' and 'spaces of care'. On this theme Jon May (2009) has observed:

> Too often the suggestion is that welfare cutbacks, coupled with more aggressive attempts to 'reclaim the streets' by introducing, for example, new police powers and no-drinking zones, have left homeless people with no where to turn. And, when they do turn to homeless services, they often have to conform to increasingly strict rules and regulations that may not be helpful to them or may not be able to access those services at all.[142]

We need to be careful, then, not to read off from this detailed empirical exploration that Dorchester is a 'bad place to be homeless'. This would be to misunderstand and misinterpret the substantive argument developed herein. Of course it is inescapably the case that homelessness is both a synonym of acute social exclusion and symptom of profound social injustice. Certainly, it appears to be relatively straightforward to locate rural Dorset as an embodiment of Cloke et al's (2003) lucid and influential notion of the 'uneven geographies of homelessness'.[143]   But Dorchester is not, as the urban theorist Neil Gray (2009) has commented in the context of contemporary Glasgow, a characteristically punitive, selective and heavily policed neo-liberal urban terrain.

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[142] Taken from 'Geographies of Homelessness, Hopelessness…and Hope', public lecture given at Queen Mary, University of London, 03 June 2009.
[143] ESRC research project 'Homeless Places': The Uneven Geographies of Emergency Provision for Single Homeless People (Award R000238996).

As observed earlier, it is clearly evident that West Dorset District Council and Dorset Police were highly effective in mobilising a negative discursive regime which demonised homeless people and, concomitantly, sited the Hub Project through a highly moralistic and paternalistic lens. It is in to these spaces that rough sleepers and street drinkers in Dorchester were criminalised and designated a pariah group. It was indeed reactive and draconian. Perhaps this is not surprising. For as Roger Graef (1990) reminds us the police perceive themselves as the guardians of law and order. A similar process can be identified in relation to statutory responses to the perceived problems of homelessness where, as Cloke et al (2000a:124) point out, local authorities are under pressure from the public and business community to show that something is being done to tackle rough sleeping and street culture activities.

To continue, it was the case that a vigorous media campaign unfolded in the leading pages and through the message-boards of the Dorset Echo successfully framing homelessness as 'out-of place' and rough sleepers as both a physical and economic threat to the fabric of the town. This campaign gained considerable momentum as it percolated through Dorchester and was quickly absorbed into similar debates and discussions in its larger but less prosperous neighbour, Weymouth. There is an additional point, and one that feeds into the more general understanding of the concept of the moral panic. If the media play a crucial role in the creation of moral panics, they also require a receptive audience that is prepared to embrace that panic and to recognise the stereotypical offender. This contestation involved an image of Dorchester, supposedly underpinned by a moral consensus on behaviour expectations, which actively sought to recast the town's material, sensorial and cultural appeal to rough sleeper, wayfarers and gypsies and travellers. If we are to take this literally it might appear that Dorchester is an avatar of the 'punitive community' (Moore, 2008). As depressing as this picture is, it is only partially true.

Disputing these hyperbolic claims, the existence of the Hub Project constitutes one of the most significant and most dramatic examples of the depth and wealth of civic spirit that exists in Dorchester. It illustrates the increasing role that voluntary and faith-based groups now play in rural politics and welfare in redressing redistributive failures and inequalities in their own community. Indeed, it ably attests to Jon May's (2009) assertion that 'many deeply caring and compassionate people working in voluntary organisations are helping to improve the lives of homeless people in numerous ways.'

This is vividly evoked by Bob Matthews:

> For me, I've always been pleasantly surprised by the goodwill towards the Hub. Not just from the churches who were obviously raising the money, but people just walking off the street and giving you a donation [perhaps] a few items that they've bought in the market for homeless people. And again you've got that fear around the dogs yet people bringing in dog food all the time – huge stacks of it and tins of the Best Butcher's Choice stuff. And when the Police set up the Section 30 they had to write to everyone in Alexander Street, the road nearest to the site to get complaints. No-one complained. And there was that women who let them in to come and have a shower one at a time and made them cups of tea and the like.

And perhaps more surprisingly:

> As long as we continue to recognise the reality of the problem and work to manage specific issues when they arise, I think that we can cope as well as any, if not better than most market towns. There will always be narrow-

minded bigots in society and we can never hope to please all the people all the time. However we do have a duty of care and need to continue to put this into practise at every opportunity. The county town of Dorset should continue to lead the way in addressing the challenges that are associated with a varied group of people who, at any one time and for a variety of reasons find themselves 'outside' in every way (Alistair Chisholm, President of Dorchester and District Chamber of Commerce).

The risk here is that the rhetorical force and emotional appeal of the 'punitive community' does little more than reinforce traditional binary divisions at the heart of political sociology (McKee, 2009). If, however, we look beyond these completing discourses and institutionally practices we can perhaps detect a more ambivalent landscape. Perhaps one of the clearest strands of this is apparent within West Dorset Rough Sleepers Action Plan (2007) – a 'forum' brokered by the local authority in order to bring together voluntary and statutory agencies with an interest in rough sleeping. It is perhaps noteworthy that rough sleepers did not play an active role in this process. Underpinning the whole approach was a contradictory mix of approaches, some were designed to help homeless people through the provision of care and promise of empowerment, and others were conceived to prosecute policies that would lead to the forceful removal of homeless people from both prime and interstitial spaces in Dorchester. More precisely:

> The action plan has been produced under three section awareness, support and enforcement. All three aspects of the action plan will compliment [sic] each other and produce results across all key areas.[144]

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[144] West Dorset Rough Sleeper Forum (2007) *West Dorset Rough Sleeper Action Plan*. Dorchester.

In starting from the position of 'awareness' the forum outlined its commitment to:

Change the perception of stereotypes e.g. winos, drunks – and to encourage Rough Sleepers to contribute to their community and to get people involved in socialising and understanding people who find themselves living on the street.

Under the umbrella of support the action plan positively identified the need to:

Increase and improve services available in the borough to provide consistent services for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

This particular discussion was to fade under the vast popularity of the use of enforcement measures. Take, for example, the following strategies:

Enable effective enforcement in a specific area with consideration to Section 30 (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) and alcohol consumption in public places orders (Criminal Justice and Police Act 2002).

Encourage the public to report instances of begging and therefore effectively prosecute beggars and discourage further begging.

Continue to liaise with the Big Issue and other relevant organisations re the issuing and sellers badges and the conduct of those distributing the magazine.

The contrast between the focus on support and awareness on the one hand, and enforcement on the other is instructive. Here, there is a contradiction in the way in which homeless people are constructed as social actors, simultaneously as 'vulnerable' and 'irresponsible'. The above picture clearly emphasises the existence of two broadly incompatible discursive and strategic positions in respect of the 'problem' of homelessness in Dorchester. However, the main outcome as we have seen was a concerted drive to combat visible 'on-street' homelessness and anti-social behaviour, with begging and street drinking especially being targeted for enforcement interventions (Johnsen, 2007). This mentality was, in time, translated into a preoccupation with assertive reconnection strategies and the efficacy of the payment for food proposal. In Dorchester, despite the apparent concern to tackle homelessness in a positive and constructive manner, the progressives in this debate were overwhelmed by a tumultuous tribune of external oversight and punitive inspired interventions. Dorchester is, arguably, to some extent a victim of circumstances, in particular the tension between central government policy and the lack of financial support available to local statutory actors. It is clear that the town – like other communities – is the focus of contested claiming making (Newman & Clarke, 2009:69). But it is also a place where a *politics of compassion* and a corresponding *politics of hope* are much evidenced. Ultimately, Dorchester is a proud place that rightly draws on its rich historical associations with the radical politics of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and its literary connections with the Victorian realism of Thomas Hardy and the rural dialect poetry of William Barnes.[145] It is also revealed through extensive ethnographic engagement as a complex assemblage of people with an intense loyalty to this rooted locale: its commitment to progressive cultural initiatives, its forgotten corners and 'seldom seens'. [146]

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[145] William Barnes was a poet, writer and philologist. He is best known for the collection 'Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect (1844).

[146] Dorchester was the first official 'Transition Town' (a community response to the challenges of peak oil and climate change) and Fairtrade Town (committed to products that meet agreed environmental, labour and developmental standards) in Dorset. On 30th August 2009, Dorchester held its first ever Gay Pride event.

6.7 <u>The Responsible Citizen</u>

The language of 'responsible citizenship' empurples so much of the contemporary governance of homelessness. It discursively elevates some while sending others to the margins. However, we have seen that rough sleepers display a variety of responses to the profound and pervasive paradigm of responsible citizenship. Indeed in my ethnographic encounters with rough sleepers at the Hub Project I have heard very clear echoes and crude approximations of this particularly powerful and persistent discourse. In recounting their experiences rough sleepers *do* reproduce the power aspects of dominant discourse which asserts that they are to blame for their homelessness. In other ways, they present alternative explanations of being socially excluded through homelessness. This is to recognise that discursive practices are important because they contain moral judgements which, in turn, may justify action or inaction. They are also important because they help to construct the actual experience of being 'homeless' or 'socially excluded'.

Upon close and methodical observation, I have become cognisant of some of the ways in which rough sleepers in Dorchester and wayfarers passing through West Dorset internalise discursive formations that dominate the public imagination and public policy, and the stigma associated with such constructions, such as 'personal responsibility' while still managing to argue their exceptional nature. A sense of this 'exceptionalism' is apparent in the following vignette:

Sitting with Graham discussion falls on Bournemouth and I am slightly surprised to be asked ''*how is college going*?'' ''Fine'' I quickly reply before turning the conversation towards him and asking ''*have you been in Bournemouth lately to any of the day-centres or night-shelters?''*. This question elicits the following response: ''*I'm always passing through. Although I hate it it's a right dump with too many smackheads and wasters. I go to St. Peter's and it's full of them.*

Smackheads everywhere, always talking shit or dying every couple of days because they've overdosed. Is it any bloody wonder you walk in and there is a big banner on the wall saying 'Free Needles' and then they wonder why people are dying [those] lazy smackheads with their needles. Best avoided if you ask me.'' Returning to this theme, Graham notes ''*I only go there in Bournemouth for a coffee. I'll go early, say 07:00 before the smackheads arrive. Get what I want and then get out again. I only use day-centres or soup runs when I want. See people think that I'm like the rest of them (rough sleepers) but I'm not. I don't hang about with them. I go to these places because I'm liked by the staff. I never cause trouble or problems like some. I've no malice in me I just have a chat and a laugh and move on. No trouble at all. These people* [other homeless people] *are wasters. You have smackheads, the barmy army* [homeless ex-servicemen] *and twenty year olds. Right, he'll be on a park bench drinking and complaining about his life and how unfair it is. But will he get off the bench and find a job or sort himself out? No, because he's lazy and doesn't want to work or even help himself. I'm not like that and have never been. When I had my girls* [ex-wife and daughter] *it was fun to work and provide for them. Now I work when I want and move around when I went.''*

While not overtly acquiescing with dominant representations, Billy, 50, a skilled tradesman who became homeless upon being deported from the Channel Islands having been unable to secure employment contrasts the demeaning status evoked by being homeless with the culturally powerfully valorisation of 'paid employment':

> With the new flat soon and catering college, it's a new start and chance to make a real change. I want to work and not to feel stigmatised because I am homeless and claiming benefits. I suppose I want to feel a sense of self-respect and social worth.

By contrast, Paul, a street musician while recognising his own degraded position embraces 'received and conventional wisdom' to denounce others.

> Housing aren't prepared to take a homelessness application because I am not a junkie, piss-head or bloody foreigner. I don't scrounge. I'm prepared to work, and work hard, unlike most of the homeless wasters.

Counterpoised to more formal and fixed landscapes of citizenship I want to focus, albeit briefly, on the way in which homeless people experientially define and employ alternative standpoints vis-à-vis 'settled' society. By this I mean to suggest that in certain respects some homeless people resist a shift of identity arising from their homeless status while others seem to accept, although not uncritically, contemporary representations which divest homeless people, and other socially excluded groups, of their citizenship. In interviews with rough sleepers in Dorchester I have found that people explicate their current situation and social status by rejecting the past, and by insidiously critiquing accepted social norms and hegemonic discourses.[147] In speaking of their own deep acceptance of their condition, rough sleepers sometimes refer to their initial unhoused condition as a choice, sometimes blatantly contradicting biographical facts. These two aspects are, I would suggest, constitutive.

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[147] In the process, it is commonly asserted that housing departments and benefits agencies deliberately discriminate against homeless people. For the most part, however, this prevailing sense of institutional distrust does not extend to the Hub Project or similar small-scale homeless projects across Dorset. To the contrary, the Hub constitutes an associational space that gives rise to communication and companionship and, significantly, acts as a mediating force in relation to wider social welfare agencies and custodial bodies, which all too frequently arouse suspicion and concern among the rough sleeping community. This does not mean that homeless people are unaware or apathetic to the *stigmatised* and *degraded* status of the Hub Project within the local community or, for that matter, insensitive to the perception that they themselves are viewed as being - separate and distinct - from the social order and standards of conduct of 'settled' society.

The example of Dave is illustrative:

> Do I consider myself to be excluded from society? No, I've been married, worked hard and had a house. Do I miss it? No, not in the slightest. I enjoy wayfaring and I stay in contact with my daughter. Sure it can be hard, particularly in the winter when it's cold and wet. I suppose one day I will come off the road…the legs will go and that will be tough.

Again and again, my research participants returned to this theme:

Thus Rob comments:

> I have freedom to come and go. Just pick-up that rucksack and walk out. I pity those 9 to 5ers. I worked on building sites all over the country, proper hard graft. But I would rather do my own thing now than to work for a mortgage to a house which is never yours, a new car or a flatscreen TV. What kind of life is that?

Unwilling to submit to authority, Dave, Rob and Graham carve out small areas of autonomy. It reveals some of the ways in which people both adapt to, and resist a homelessness identity, by engaging in identity work that enables them to negotiate the (practical, emotional and ontological) impacts of insecure housing. This line of thought suggests that homeless people are vigorously engaged in debates about the nature of society that are expected to fit into. However, I believe that we should approach such assertions with some caution. Rather, and this is a crucial point, we need to fully engage with the diversity of experiences and different responses to being homeless

and also to understand that the projection of choice and 'freedom' as a rationalised response to personal and social marginalisation.

In-depth participant observation and dialogue with rough sleepers and wayfarers suggests that the notion of the 'responsible' citizen as both an analytical category and organising tool has very little resonance in the everyday geographies of homelessness. This highlights the more general and important issue that while the language of citizenship is rarely used by rough sleepers, research participants did speak of issues which can be identified as relevant to the citizenship of people who are homeless. These accounts are, crucially, tied to everyday experiences and perceptions of the egregious inadequacy of welfare and housing support, as well as less visible but equally as compelling exclusions. Thus as Aaron comments:

> Tony Blair said a couple of years ago that he was going to end homelessness. But you know that even though there might now be more services [for the homeless], there are still lots of homeless people. Places like this wouldn't exist if no one was homeless. There's always been homelessness and probably always will be. It's only going to increase with this credit crunch thing and that new Housing Benefit – Housing Allowance – Isn't it? The idea of giving alcoholics and addicts the money upfront for their accommodation is just mad. It's asking for trouble. If you give them a couple of hundred quid and they need a fix or a drink, well, what are they going to do? No, it's complete madness… So, it's about making people responsible is it? It sounds like in Stoke where you can only sign on if you have an address. It's not really about helping people. There it's about moving people on.

This inversion of the idiom of responsibility is captured in the following journal extract featuring Graham and Peter:

Quite unexpectedly I find myself engaged in a fairly caustic debate with Graham regarding the merits of trade union activity. As Graham becomes supremely animated and bellows out "*the unions, the unions, the best thing that happened was 1979 when that great woman from Grantham came to power. Now this country is going backwards again*." This idea that Britain is a broken nation is, in turn, taken-up with gusto by Peter, although much to my surprise and no small amount of relief in an entirely new direction: "*Anyone can become homeless. It might be that you get divorced or lose your job and end up on the street*. But this [current] *government doesn't understand this. It's like that new Housing Minister* [Caroline Flint] *only been in the job a few minutes and saying that people should be kicked out on to the streets*. What kind of answer is that?"

Allied to this, I have witnessed at firsthand counter-discourses which challenge the dominance of a contractual and individual model of rights and responsibilities. If there is a vernacular discourse among homeless and other vulnerable people in respect of the idea of responsible citizenship, then it is one which is finely attuned to the multiple injustices that inhere within the phenomenon of homelessness. There can, for instance, be no doubt that homeless people are acutely aware of the (material, discursive and corporeal) distance separating them from the rest of society. The coupling of street homelessness and responsible citizenship opens-up a critical space through which to explore the links between 'public issues' and 'private troubles' (Wright, 1970) and, thus, helps us to understand the experience of multiple exclusion homelessness (Fitzpatrick, 2006). On the denotative level, it can be used to reveal the *cordon sanitaire* of the 'inverse care law' (the idea that while the needs of homeless people are demonstrably greater, their access to social welfare is generally poorer than that of 'settled' society). On the connative level, it can be used to

strip away the impersonal force of such terms as inequality and poverty to reveal the psychosocial damage associated with 'on-street' homelessness. Indeed, I have repeatedly listened to the most eloquent and voluble descriptions of social dislocation and material dispossession.

To begin and end with 'responsible citizenship' is a metaphor and punitive description of real people (Higbie, 1997). In respect of which, there is an acute awareness that the strategy of 'responsbilisation' involves a moral distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor; but also works to *present* homeless people in terms of pathology and deficiency.

> I've begged, I've done crime. I hate it – it's degrading. I go to court and then it's in the paper – homeless man back in prison. But that's not my story. My story is what's behind all that. I can't see a way out of it except to keep committing crime and getting locked up. I'm fed up with living rough – more than fed up.

And:

> People say probation is the answer but it isn't for me. I'm homeless, I haven't got a watch, got no money for a bus and I find I've missed an appointment. Then probation do me for a breach. It doesn't help. It doesn't do me any good sitting in prison doing nothing and it costs taxpayers about £700 a week to keep me there. Years ago a bloke could come out of jail and get a flat - not now.[148]

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[148] Comments made by Steve Miller, Hub Project service user, to the Dorset Echo in the article Adcock, D. (2008) *Longing for a Job and a Proper Home*, Thursday 13 March 2008 p. 3.

What it does not suggest, however, is that responsibility can be imposed or reduced to New Labour's emphasis on morality or the *active* remoralisation of homeless people. Rather, it seems to indicate that responsibility is negotiated within a perception of choices and constraints. Given the social and psychological pressures facing homeless people, there is a need to recognise that homeless people encode citizenship with cultural meanings which reflect both common and discrete experiences of social exclusion. It is this experience of existing on the outer edges of society, which enables us to the grasp how the experience of social exclusion has strong material as well as relational circumstances and consequences. All of this suggests that there can be no *simple* or *neat* account here of a unified or collective response to the discursive construction of responsible citizenship and street homelessness, the processes being described are too complex. There may be no truths, only moments of clarity, passing as answers.

6.8 <u>An Ethnography of Homelessness</u>

> There is a danger that the voices of particular groups, or particular forms of knowledge are drowned out, systematically silenced or misunderstood as research and researchers engage with dominant academic and public concerns and discourses (Ribbens & Edwards 1998:2)

It is hardly surprising that the most vivid and vital accounts of homelessness and homeless people are embedded within the rich canon of ethnographic research and reportage. Here I am thinking of Charles Ackerman Berry's elegant and evocative 'Gentleman of the Road' (1971), John de Hogg's revealing 'Skid Row Dossier' (1972), John Healy's lucid portrayal of the 'The Grass Arena' (2008) and Mitchell Duneier's nuanced account of the 'Sidewalk' (1999). None of this is to suggest, of course, that my own academically laden inquiry deserves to sit alongside such exalted company. Nevertheless, I would suggest that several parallels can be drawn. In the first place,

each is immersive and descriptive in character. In the second place, each displays a sensitivity to both time and place. And finally, they all embody a moral dimension, for they seek to explore the ways in which previously hidden and unheard 'social actors interpret the world and their place in it' (Lawler 2002:242). To put this more succinctly, the strength of ethnography is that it as much an intellectual and moral stance, a constructive and interpretive mode, as it is a relational exercise.

This has, admittedly, been a partisan account. How could it be otherwise? In seeking to understand the relationship between homelessness and citizenship, I have attempted to convey by degrees the social and political significance of the responsibilisation thesis as it played out through the critical portal of rough sleeping in West Dorset. Ethnography, in this light, both shapes and is shaped by a strong emotional attachment to people, place and principles.

The people were those with whom I was fortunate enough to work alongside as a 'volunteer-researcher'; the rough sleepers and wayfarers in whose company I was privileged to have spent many challenging but ultimately rewarding hours, weeks and - in some instances months - observing and interviewing; and the day staff and management committee of the Hub Project who were brave enough to welcome an intrusive (and potentially critical) research student at a defining moment in its short but complicated history when it was the focus of intense public scrutiny and punitive statutory interventions. It was unclear where, exactly, my investigations and observations would lead. But throughout this relatively long period of ethnographic engagement, I always felt a great sense of acceptance, support and encouragement.

That place was of course the Hub Project and Dorchester. It would be easy to romanticise the work and ethos of the Hub Project. But this study is not, and cannot be, a hagiographic account. It could be experienced as much as a 'space of fear' as a 'space of care'. It could be a setting for physical intimidation, casual sexism and rampant xenophobia. But it was also a site of hope,

compassion and camaraderie in the face of the dramaturgy of adversity. It was, above all, for homeless people experienced as a performative and affective space in which cultural codes and patterns of conduct that appear peculiar, quixotic or even 'aberrant' under external gaze were allowed to 'be' (Wacquant, 2008:50). In my opinion the dual act of ethnographic research and voluntary labour brought me closer to understanding homelessness and homeless people. As a result, my perception and experience of Dorchester became intimately bound-up with the complex geographies of homelessness, thus remaking the social and material boundaries of the town (Cloke et al., 2008). Talk of Dorchester no longer evokes an image of the mythical Casterbridge or the fantasia that is Poundbury. It has revealed multiple understandings of Dorchester and its people. These multiple, and sometimes intersecting subjectivities are of course not divorced from local politics and power relations, and indeed can themselves represent shifting and complex power contexts.

Those principles were respect, openness and valuing difference. Such a perspective was animated by the desire to bring a set of specific voices, experiences and events into the public domain. Performatively these values were enacted through routine chores and attending to people in acute need with a mixture of pragmatism and idealism. In so doing I was forced to cross emotional boundaries. On this view, it seems to me that we need to be cognizant of the ways in which 'the self' is a pervasive constituent of ethnographic inquiry. I exposed my origins, biography, locality and intellectual bias. Following Denzin and Lincoln (1998) I have attempted to 'write' myself into this descriptive and experiential account. To acknowledge this is to stand in opposition to the consistent neglect, if not denial, in much ethnographic literature, which has sought to present ethnography as some kind of objective, impersonal approach (Blackman, 2007). On the one hand, we must recognise that these are discursive practices – ways of presenting oneself and one's work - that demands scrutiny and deconstruction, while on the other ethnography is, ultimately, about creating elaborate rationales whereby we place ourselves in other spaces. But

we also need to go further than this. We need to recognise not only the particular ethical concerns that research into homelessness generates but, more specifically, that as qualitative researchers we occupy a privileged position insofar as we are able to journey into the day-to-day life of homeless people while also freely being able to return to the relative comfort of the academic community. In this respect, the only moral justification to support the recurrent exploration of the complexities of homelessness is to convey its individual, political and social significance.

6.9 <u>Concluding Remarks</u>

> I wouldn't say that it is 'making' but 'helping' them to become responsible citizens. My aim is to help everybody get these people off the streets. I didn't want them sleeping on the streets but sometimes you have to be hard to be kind. We have to make life as hard and as uncomfortable as possible and then they will to do it hopefully. It's about not being a soft touch. We need to get these people into all the supports by whatever means available. Maybe they will come off quicker. I know that rough sleeping is not always fun (Inspector Les Fry).

This doctoral thesis has presented important insights into the contemporary governance of homelessness. Drawing on the extended case study example of street homelessness in West Dorset, I have attempted to give particular expression to the 'complex collisions between national and local actors' (Milbourne, 2010:164). At any given rate, the devolution of welfare responsibilities to the community level has created a powerful context in which local statutory actors interpret, translate and implement national directives and policy guidance (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010). Yet, as I have indicated from the outset, this expanded relationship and

interchange between national and local policy actors and charitable service providers is fundamentally uneven and unequal. In Dorchester it was the Hub Project that advocated and initiated housing, care and support - often in the absence of statutory support – for homeless and other vulnerably housed people. These efforts were often curtailed or disrupted by the combination of its own limited organisational manoeuvre and the full-force of official oversight and regulation. In this most crucial of ways, we have charted the complex and contested cartography by which an emergency service for homeless people came to be regarded as problematic. Within this aggregation and representation, the organisational ethos of the Hub Project was seen to support (and indeed maintain) on-street homelessness and its perceived corollaries anti-social behaviour and the erosion of personal responsibility (Gentleman, 2010). But this interpretation stumbles over an unavoidable and insuperable contradiction, springing as it does from the uneven geographies of welfare.

Looking at the Hub Project makes it possible to see how the task of caring for, or serving homeless people in rural communities is pivoted towards small-scale faith based organisations. There are a number of significant points that can be made about this. First and foremost, it points to the way in which a vibrant culture of volunteerism and a strong commitment to the 'politics of generosity' (Coles, 1997) has taken root in local communities in order to plug gaps in welfare provision and service delivery. Second, it also serves to deepen our understanding of the relationship between rural homelessness, space and place. It illustrates, for instance, how the physical and social invisibilities of homeless people can be radically rewritten as potentially transgressive and 'out-of-place'. Third, and perhaps more crucially, such a contextual framework allows us to begin to understand how the nature and experience of homelessness is mediated by local history, culture and welfare resources.

The distinct and defining contribution of this doctoral research project is perhaps most apparent in the way in which it critically explores and explains the relationship between homelessness and citizenship in and through the orbit of ethnography. Without field observation in Dorchester, I would not have been able to both present *and* critique contemporary social policy interventions that seek to promote behavioural change and conformity to social norms (Manzi, 2010). It therefore provides a significant new analysis of the intersection between on-street homelessness and contemporary citizenship which is sensitive to, and enriched by, a focus on the views, experiences and knowledge of people who are themselves affected by homelessness.

In making sense of the parallel circuits connecting the experience of rough sleeping in West Dorset with social policy efforts associated with promoting responsibility and enforcing civility, we have encountered the very clear imprint of coercive welfare (Phoenix, 2008). Viewed in this way, it becomes urgent to consider the complex and contradictory interplay between welfare support and criminal justice systems. This is particularly obvious in respect of the increasingly durable and forceful conflation of street culture with anti-social behaviour. But it also finds anchor and influence elsewhere. Take two further examples. It has mutated into a concern with charging homeless people for services (couched in terms of empowerment versus charity) and the establishment of behavioural contracts (presented in the form of self-management versus enforced conditionality). Framed in such simplistic and binary terms, these arguments would seem to imply that responsibilisation is counterbalanced by expanded obligations and support packages for homeless people. However this particular ethnographic record would seem to challenge these popular and pervasive assumptions. It stresses that, for all the positive and enlightened talk of combating social exclusion and advancing new forms of citizenship, for those trapped in cycles of on-street homelessness and acute housing need, the prevailing discursive narrative is encoded within an expectation of raising levels of self-endeavour and personal responsibility on the part of homeless people (Cloke et al., 2005:396).

The concept of 'responsible citizenship' provides a different way to think about the contemporary governance of homelessness.[149] In Dorchester, I found that the ethnographic gaze swam back and forth from the general to the specific, or - more specifically - to a dense mesh of details that made sense through the exploratory power of the 'responsibilisation thesis' (Cowan, 1999). It was a fitting conceptual and analytical approach for looking at the relationship between homelessness and citizenship in Dorchester.

Focusing on responsible citizenship can also provide a way to explore people's own experiences and perceptions of homelessness and social exclusion. It undermines, *inter alia*, normative presentations of homelessness which have cohered within dominate public, political and media structures. The broader point is that speaking of responsible citizenship helps us to focus our attention on the explicit moral justifications that are employed against rough sleepers and other socially excluded groups. It also emphasises the degree to which 'the political narrative of community and individual responsibility is one that deliberately deflects attention from the causes of poverty' (Imrie & Raco, 2003:30). Looked at differently, homeless people in Dorchester spoke critically and reflectively about the acute social anxieties and chronic physical and mental damage wrought by life on the streets. They also spoke forcefully and movingly about experiences of custodial care, family breakdown, bereavement and substance misuse. As such, this study can be seen as offering an important case study on the relationship between homelessness and social exclusion.

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[149] An alternative if surprisingly under-utilised framework in discussions on homelessness – spaces of citizenship – centrally focuses on the spatially differentiated nature of de facto citizenship as experienced by 'othered' groups who are subject to social and spatial marginalisation (Deforges et al., 2005). It highlights, in turn, the need to move beyond legal or formal spaces to consider the agency of individuals and groups in constructing citizenship.

Although recognising the foregoing achievements, I am nevertheless acutely aware of the charge that this doctoral thesis is open to challenge on theoretical, methodological, ethical and political grounds. However, I want to use this brief space to reflect on two methodological points. The first concerns the Hub Project as my primary unit of analysis while the second relates more directly to the issue of time spent in the 'field'. In taking the decision not to carry out mobile ethnography (with an eye to directly experiencing the micro architecture and the polyrhythms of the everyday geographies of homelessness in Dorchester), I made the conscious choice to frame this research project within the contours of the Hub Project (Hall, 2009). Arguably this study is the weaker for it. Likewise there is every reason to believe that such an approach would have yielded a more nuanced understanding of the sense of despair, fear, dislocation, opprobrium, banality and liminality (among other reactions) that coalesce around street drinking and rough sleeping. It is also possible that had I engaged in mobile research and fieldwork I would have gained a better appreciation of the use of enforcement to combat expressions of incivility and acts of disorderly behaviour. In choosing the admittedly narrower institutional focus of the Hub Project, I unquestionably alighted upon a far safer and more structured research environment. Even allowing for this caveat, I would still contend that this institutional focus has deepened and enriched the way in which we attempt to relate and seek to comprehend *other* 'social worlds' and 'social situations' (Spradley, 1980).

In a related sense, it is conceivable that had I chosen to spend each and every day in Dorchester over say a six month period then the tenor and tonality of this study would have felt markedly different. As it was, in carrying out fieldwork in Dorchester for one or two days a week over a twenty month period I was able to establish contacts, form relationships and closely observe unfolding debates and dilemmas within and outwith the Hub Project over the long march of time. As a result, I would argue that the overall depth and diagnostic value of this study is the stronger for it.

This doctoral thesis certainly suggests future and continued research directions. One potential line of enquiry would involve undertaking more comparative studies of the local governance of homelessness. An important step in this direction would be to critically explore in more detail the way in which local communities enforce measures to combat aggressive begging, street drinking and anti-social behaviour. Such an endeavour could then begin to determine the extent to which the contemporary governance of homelessness embodies revanchist politics or coercive care (Johnsen & Fitzpatrick, 2010:14).

Promoting responsibility and shaping behaviour is an issue that has received increasing attention in the literature on anti-social behaviour and welfare conditionality. One of the main tasks of ongoing and future research on processes of responsibilisation is to examine the crucial role of addiction and 'rehab' within contemporary understandings of homelessness. This would provide a very useful prism through which to address the crucial link between housing support and compliance with recovery plans or abstinence contracts (cf. Croucher et al., 2007).

The study of welfare and values is a vibrant area of research that has grown considerably over the last decade. This research has travelled far, but it has not run its course. It would therefore be of interest to look at the intersection between faith-based organisations providing welfare to homeless people and the 'politics of responsibility'. This shift in thinking would seem to be particularly apposite in respect of the growing emphasis on voluntary sector involvement in public service delivery. It would clearly feed into important debates about morally acceptable ways of caring for homeless and other vulnerably housed people. The obverse side of this process could involve addressing the fascinating, yet understudied, area of rough sleeping and service user involvement. Work in this field could potentially begin to challenge the powerful and pernicious image of homeless people as socially disaffiliated and as passive recipients of social welfare.

To bring this extended case study to its natural endpoint, I would strongly suggest that the key task for those critically engaged scholars who seek to explore the complex interplay between homelessness and citizenship is to challenge the recurring – and peculiarly vicious - discourse which portrays homeless and other vulnerably housed people as deviant, irresponsible and, ultimately, self-excluding. A necessary part of this process is the challenge of resetting the metronome of responsibility so that it better reflects the needs and aspirations of people with experience of homelessness and 'deep' social exclusion.

Coda

As I alight from the 0844 South West train from Bournemouth to Dorchester South, I am greeted by a fierce shard of sunlight and the firm handshake of Bob Matthews. Six months have elapsed since I was last at the Hub Project in the role of putative ethnographer and aspiring academic. My return to West Dorset is predicated on the need to fulfil a longstanding commitment and the desire to retrace the ethnographic timeline spanning from the spring of 2007 to the winter of 2008.

We begin to move slowly away from the platform edge and swiftly fall into easy conversation. Discussion gathers momentum and we oscillate between memories of our shared time at the Hub Project and more recent events and unfolding developments in relation to rough sleepers in Dorchester. As we walk over the small corrugated footbridge which straddles the track north to London Waterloo and south to Weymouth and towards a narrow strip of tarmac that opens out into a small and relatively inconspicuous housing estate, Bob critically remarks on the fact that "*the Hub was closed yesterday. For some reason it was decided to relax the age rule. Of course it was overwhelmed with young people. I remember Ann wanted the age lowered to eighteen and I resisted that. The* [current] *decision was taken without proper consultation, and now it's been forced to close and rethink.*"

We continue walking through suburban streets, and then turn off into a private lane lined with a row of Victorian railway cottages. I think I must have slowed slightly and looked surprised, and the change in my posture registered with Bob. "*What did you think of the meeting?*"

Measuring out my words, I reply:

I suppose I was surprised by the extent to which the focus has moved from being operationally autonomous and having a strong independent voice to one of chasing statutory funding and working with the CLG, Homeless Link and West Dorset District Council…There is a danger, in my mind, that the Hub will change and a new, more explicit focus will be placed on changing behaviour.

Two weeks earlier I had travelled to Dorchester to attend the Hub Project's annual AGM in the United Church. The tenure of the meeting was predictably lively, critically informed and passionately engaged. Unlike in 2007 or 2008, though, the main focus of debate was not given to the 'problems' and 'difficulties' associated with recognising and responding to the particular needs of rough sleepers with balancing the experiences and expectations of the wider community. Briefly put, the animating theme of the evening concerned the vexed issue of the Hub Project's continued ability to reside outside of the institutions and structures of centrally-funded initiatives and regulatory regimes.

In phrasing this particular debate, the trustees' had argued:

It was never our intention to remain as the sole service for homeless people in this area and the need for residential accommodation to meet various levels of need is paramount. As we promised last year, we have now explored working in partnership with Bournemouth Churches' Housing Association (BCHA) and we are pleased to state that we are ready for the Hub's management and services to be taken over by them. It is our mutual hope that, over the course of 3 to 5 years, a total service for rough sleepers across Dorset could be set up with Supporting People money to purchase it.

Pushing this point further:

> Homelessness is high on the rural agenda but there is little government recognition of this. From being an area with no service at all for the street homeless, Dorchester now has a service it is proud of, where people who want to get off the streets and settle into more mainstream lives, can find the skilled help and support they need. There is much more still to be done in the whole of South and West Dorset but we hope that the handing over to a professional company with a good track record and 40 years' experience will ensure that it happens.

The sensibility of this appeal was contrasted by Bob's assertion that the shift in perspective from an 'outsider' charitable model of welfare to the perceived 'insider' rhetoric and practice of social entreprenurism foreshadowed a move towards a potentially more exclusionary working regime, regulated by strategic funding contracts and the principle of personal responsibility:

> Bournemouth Churches' Housing Association is using phrases like 'Places of Change' for the Hub, which obviously has links with Homeless Link and the CLG. That is the language, but I think that we wanted that as well. We wanted people to change, but we were quite prepared to accommodate people who didn't want to change or even had no intention of changing. But we allowed them [some of the most entrenched and troublesome rough sleepers] to come indefinitely and eventually they wanted to change. But I do feel with the 'Places of Change' agenda and the size of the Hub it makes it too difficult, and [so] you will end up excluding people too soon.

As to the future, it remains to be seen to what extent, if at all, this change in institutional governance and the transforming discourses of professionalism will create new opportunities to access greater resources to further its guiding objectives in meeting social needs. Perhaps we should view this change as an inevitable attempt to transcend the disadvantages common to all small-scale faith-based and secular welfare service providers (see, for example, Melville & McDonald, 2006). It could be argued, though, that the Hub Project has fought a valiant losing battle for the freedom to deliver a particularistic type of social service. A logical extension of this is the critical awareness that a powerful alliance of forces (both within and outside West Dorset) cohered to ensure that the Hub Project's ability to effectively operate largely outside the reach of the contemporary governance of homelessness was consistently undermined and therefore increasingly unsustainable.

After meeting with Bob, I undertake a tour of the material reference points and sensorial landscapes of Dorchester as a 'homeless place'. I start out by walking towards Whittard's of Chelsea, the site of one of only two official Big Issue vending pitches in town, and encounter a careworn woman wearing a headscarf and holding half-a-dozen or so magazines encased within a protective plastic sheath. In slow and broken English I learn that she shares the spot with her husband; that they recently moved to Dorchester from Blandford Forum and the very act of distributing the Big Issue involves undertaking a fifty mile roundtrip to Bournemouth each week to collect the magazine. And in response to my final question I am surprised to be told that the couple were unaware of the existence of the Hub Project.

Pressing a £2 coin into the woman's hand, I continue towards Antelope Walk and pause briefly at the Dorset Echo office to buy the late edition of the paper. I carry on traversing through the backstreets of the town and past the art deco splendour of the Plaza Cinema in the direction of the wide path that carves directly through the arboreal canopy of Bowling Alley walk. As the sun

filters through the net of light green leafs, I notice that the wooden benches are vacant (much less abused or condemned) and the grass embankment shows no discernable sign of having been occupied by street drinkers or rough sleepers. Today this bruited skid row resonates with the simple footsteps and bonhomie of young families and retired couples making haste to South Street and the Tudor Arcade.

Now cutting through Borough Gardens I emerge onto Great Western Road and quickly set out towards the Hub Project and Dorchester West train station. As I approach the day-centre I find that the iron gates are drawn closely across the forecourt. In the absence of howling dogs, emotional outbursts, verbal barrages and general rough-housing, the day-centre seems much smaller and far less intimidating than my memories of those early, awkward and uncomfortable field visits. Thus, I stand there ruminating as a succession of slow moving vehicles enter and exist from the adjoining Focus Do It All car-park. In breaking this reverie I move casually on and pass through the entrance of Dorchester West train station. The southbound platform known colloquially as the 'office' feels eerily silent and quietly abandoned. Retracing earlier steps, I walk towards Dorchester South train station. I begin to canter through the Fairfield Market site and watch with mild curiosity as money is freely exchanged and shopping bags are filled with fresh local produce and an assortment of sundry bargains. I continue walking on and soon arrive back at the platform edge.

These meandering journeys across the sites and sights of homelessness in Dorchester must, however, be seen as partial and incomplete. Indeed, as Sarah Pink has argued 'place happens somewhere at the intersection between the ethnographer's direct experience and its reconstruction as ethnography' (2008:191). This embodied and reflexive engagement served to regenerate an addictive cycle of interest in the presentation of homelessness (as a social problem) and Dorchester (as a specific set of local social relations). Despite the fact that I had

spent over two years thinking about and carrying out fieldwork, I kept returning to Dorchester and the Hub Project for rough sleepers through the pages of the Dorset Echo and in the process of scrutinising the ethnographic record. In the coming weeks I was alerted to the re-emergence of the articulation and contestation of anti-social behaviour and street homelessness within the town centre. The apple has truly not fallen far from the tree. Two streams of public and local authority concern - the obsession with maintaining behavioural and aesthetic norms (Millie, 2008) - converged. As the Dorset Echo related:

> We have had a number of complaints about rough sleepers on the streets of Dorchester who are causing anti-social behaviour. What we do not want to do is prevent those genuine people who are out enjoying themselves and having a good time. This order is about dealing with the behaviour that any normal and sober person would find unacceptable (Inspector Les Fry).[150]

And similarly:

> A lot of the groups don't always realise how intimidating they can appear to people. They are not the most conventional of people and some people are frightened of their dogs. When you get one or two it's fine but when you have half a dozen or more some people are frightened. It doesn't really matter whether they are actually doing very much wrong, some people perceive it as unsafe to go about their business and businesses then lose out (President of the Dorchester and District Alistair Chisholm, 2009).[151]

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[150] Hogger, H. (2009a) Time's up for Dorchester's Rough Sleepers, *Dorset Echo*, 07 May 2009.
[151] Hogger, H. (2009b) Police Prepare for Crackdown on Anti-Social Behaviour in Town Centre, *Dorset Echo*, 06 July 2009.

In an earlier article entitled 'Time's up for Dorchester's Rough Sleepers' the Dorset Echo reported that:

> PCSO Rhyan Toms Holman from Dorchester's Safer Neighbourhood Team said there had been a noticeable influx of vagrants in the town. She said it was likely that many were coming up from Weymouth as there is a section 30 dispersal order in place there during the summer, unlike Dorchester.

There is a strange paradox here in that unacceptable and disrespectful behaviour in Dorchester was attributed to the presence of homeless people from the neighbouring town of Weymouth. This settled assumption is structurally related to the belief it negates. The circularity of this is further apparent in the argument that the management of unwanted behaviours is only resolvable through the technologies of surveillance and social control. In these terms the most striking aspect of the recombination of rough sleeping with acts of incivility in Dorchester is both the scope and depth of effort expended by local statutory partners in policing and purifying the town (Millie, 2008:1684). It follows, perhaps, that the vocabulary of anti-social behaviour and the instrumental use of Dispersal Orders are embedded within the very fabric of the contemporary governance of homelessness in Dorchester. This mentality does not seek to ameliorate the injustice of poverty and hardship. Rather, it is conceived simply to recalibrate the perceived behaviour of this entrenched and vulnerable 'other' while recreating the aesthetic quality of Dorchester as a place of historical value and local meaning. But it can be no more than a temporary strategy. Eventually, such diversionary tactics will require the emergence of innovative and sustainable approaches that address unmet support needs, reduce problem behaviour and promote social inclusion (Nixon et al., 2008). Until such time, homeless people in rural West Dorset will continue to exist on the periphery of care and in the rearguard of mutual respect and empathy.

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Appendix A

Street Homelessness and the Architecture of Citizenship People, Place & Policy Online Volume 2 Issue 2 2008 pp. 88-100.

Abstract: The perception and experiences of homeless people in relation to the public spaces they occupy and identify as their own, and the corresponding struggle to assert and enact citizenship rights, remains an under-explored area of socio-cultural research. To help make sense of this neglect, I argue that citizenship - as a status and peformative act - is influenced and mediated by a series of complex and fluid interactions between physical, institutional and socio-political landscapes. This argument is developed with particular reference to an on-going PhD project that aims to illuminate the dynamic and complex ways in which rough sleepers draw on both context-specific experiential understandings and broader social processes in order to negotiate, embrace or challenge contemporary policy tropes and discursive strategies that position homeless people as degraded or shadow citizens. The paper concludes by arguing that any attempt to define more closely the relationship between street homelessness and contemporary citizenship must interrogate the meaning of citizenship empirically from the standpoint of homeless people and learn theoretically from these encounters.

Keywords: citizenship, exclusion, homelessness, welfare.

Introduction

Today, under the panoptical of New Labour's prescriptive moral agenda, citizenship has been recalibrated into a simple and crude binary. This civic stratification has resulted in a narrow, essentialist view of contemporary citizenship taking root which has as its crucial reference point the distinction between the socially embedded and economically purposeful 'active' citizen, and its antipode, the socially dislocated and welfare dependent 'passive' citizen. For this reason, there has been a significant renewal of interest in the location and characteristics of contemporary citizenship, particularly with regard to those communities or social groups who are perceived to be suffering the corrosive effects of deep exclusion (Carter, 2007).

Transposed to mainstream public and policy discourses, the social exclusion of homeless people has become unerringly viewed as emblematic of passive citizenship. This suggests that, the exclusion of homeless people combines several interrelated dimensions, exclusion from the labour market, from social citizenship rights, ideological and housing exclusion (Stephenson, 2006). In these and other ways, homeless people have become positioned as part of a category of 'undeserving', 'dangerous' or, as the American sociologist David Matza (1990) comments, the 'disreputable' poor. Homeless people are thus conceived - discursively and symbolically - to exist on the margins in opposition to the values and everyday social relations of 'respectable' society. This involves, in turn, seeing homelessness as a shadow or degraded form of citizenship.

The major purpose of this paper is to critically address the relationship between street homelessness and contemporary citizenship. I employ the metaphor of 'architecture' to convey the discursive, institutional and ideological circuits which serve to channel homeless people into unequal social, economic and political relationships. Architecture as both a physical structure and ideological current also allows us to explore how formal and informal mechanisms regulate the quotidian practice of homeless people. In advancing this strategy, I argue that contemporary social policy interventions in respect of homelessness, while presented as compassionate and progressive are often complex and contradictory. My concern here is to argue that, far from enabling inclusive and pluralistic forms of citizenship, these shifts in public policy and political discourse aim to maximise the productivity of social space while reproducing the social values of the 'domiciled' majority. These assumptions are explored through direct empirical engagement with rough sleepers at a small voluntary daycentre in Dorchester. My approach, therefore, suggests that theorising about the relationship between homelessness and citizenship should – as an intellectual and moral precondition - draw on the local context and on the perspectives of homeless people while, simultaneously

and significantly, explaining how the actions and perceptions of homeless people are shaped by socio-cultural processes, which extend both 'down' into street culture and 'up' into social policy and the public sphere.

Developing this line of analysis, I will address four key themes: (i) the dichotomy between 'active' and 'passive' citizenship; (ii) community governance in respect of homeless people; (iii) and the politics of exclusion. Underlying these four themes, and running through the discussion as a whole, are two further key issues, namely, the nature and boundaries of the homeless experience, and debates concerning the relationship between contemporary welfare reform and homelessness.

The Dorchester Study

Before entering into a substantive analysis it is necessary to first briefly place this – albeit modest contribution - within the wider context of an evolving PhD research project that investigates how street homelessness and contemporary citizenship are linked through the logic of standpoint theory (Harding, 1983). This research, based on ethnographic fieldwork, explores how notions of social exclusion and passive citizenship get reworked on the street, both in what people say and what people do (Gowan, 2002). It also sets out to investigate how homelessness as the iconic subject of social exclusion has become a key arena within the context of contemporary New Labour policy discourse, one which fuses the themes of neo-liberalism and neo-communitarianism, and a corresponding return to punishment, surveillance, and exclusion as the dominant modes of social cohesion and control (Fyfe, 2005).

My principle research site is the Hub Project for rough sleepers in Dorchester, a place of contemporary affluence as well as small pockets of literal and visible street homelessness. In Dorchester, as with other small urban towns with a large rural hinterland, homelessness has been a recurrent if largely overlooked social reality. Historically, homeless people and wayfarers (men of the road) have been drawn to the town by virtue of its symbiotic relationship with Dorchester Prison, its proximity to the Pilsdon Community, Hilfield Friary and the Dorset coast. As such Dorchester was – and to a significant extent remains - a key nodal point in homeless migration strategies (Whiteford, 2008).

While historically such tendencies have been underlain by the wider homeless migratory circuit, the contemporary response to rough sleeping in Dorchester have been stimulated by an increasing appreciation of the scarcity of social housing and insufficient support services for a small but significant community of homeless people. Alongside this, a renewed focus on the policy and strategic approaches needed to tackle homelessness and social exclusion resulted in new duties for local authorities to produce homelessness strategies (Van Doorn and Kain, 2007). At the theoretical level, Newman (2002) has argued that such developments should be seen within the context of New Labour's drive to re-imagine the relationship between the state and citizen, with the state's role moving from provider of (welfare) services, to that of facilitator. Under this model, community participation and localism are invoked in order that communities and individuals take greater control and responsibility in their own governance.

The Hub Project was originally conceived in response to the recognition that local voluntary and statutory agency support for homeless people in rural Dorset was inadequate. Today, the Hub Project operates under the auspices of Dorchester Poverty Action, and is essentially a 'survivalist' agency providing hot food and drinks, clothes, blankets and showers. Additionally, the Hub Project also provides limited but direct access to a nurse practitioner, a drug and alcohol prevention worker and a Shelter housing specialist through an appointment based system. These services, taken together, reflect the Hub's commitment to addressing the health and housing needs of homeless people by developing strategies that, however partially and imperfectly, have the potential to contribute towards breaking the cycles of poor health and housing exclusion.

In attempting to produce local spaces of welfare, there is a strong and intractable argument that the very existence of the Hub Project has served to attract in-migrant homeless people. It is within this context, and against this changing social policy terrain, increasing evidence exists to suggest that homeless people have

'migrated' to Dorchester in an effort to access basic support services. The following quotes describe the interconnections between the prevailing social care landscape and the local policy process:

In Dorchester, we have been accused of attracting people from far and wide. This may have an element of truth, but if there were similar day facilities in neighbouring towns (like Weymouth and Blandford etc) then people would not migrate to the Hub for the support and help they need (Barker, Broome, Caullified, 2007).

Support for the view, from within as well as outside the Hub Project, as to its ability to effectively cope with the increased demands placed on the service has given rise to a significant realignment of its relationship to the wider community. Such concerns seem mainly to be associated with the notion that the highly visible presence of people sleeping rough on the streets of Dorchester symbolises a challenge to the locally hegemonic 'spatial code' as well as to what Halfacree has described as the 'spatiality of the imagination' (1996:45).

Underlying these developments, a discourse of 'local knowledge' has been articulated by rough sleepers and wayfarers in my research emphasising the importance of the link between spatial context and social networks in shaping the choices and constraints faced by homeless people as they negotiate access to social welfare. Hence, this is to draw attention to the argument that the Hub's existence and, pivotally, its geographic setting demonstrate how the geographic unevenness of local support services for homeless people is deeply entwined with the highly mobile character of the single homeless population (Higate, 2000).

Not surprisingly, this emphasis on the migratory strategies employed by homeless people has become a crucial rallying point in the wider politics of community and contractual governance (Rose, 2001). The issue of on street homelessness, in this context, opens up a path towards gaining a critical appreciation of New Labour's communitarian ethos and its drive to identify 'community' as both the location and processes of governance (Flint and Nixon, 2006: 941).

There are parallels to be made here in relation to the work of Mitchell (2001) and Katz (2001) whose useful analyses of the increasingly controlled and surveilled nature of public environments intersects with a detailed consideration of the various forms of socio-cultural policing of the performances and practices of homeless people. This is useful in thinking more broadly about the way in which homeless people are routinely excluded from prevailing notions of 'community'. It also points to the ways in which 'responsible communities' target both the involuntary status of being homeless and the supposed failure of homeless people to conform to the normative standards of a more 'active' and self-disciplined conception of citizenship (Anker, 2008).

Passive and Active Citizenship

In recent years, political discourse and academic inquiry has emphasised the distinction between 'active' citizenship and its cognate 'passive' citizenship (Levitas, 2005; Tonkens and Van Doorn, 2001). The cultural logic of this civic stratification of citizenship leads inexorably towards an overarching focus on responsibility and community processes which privilege individual duty and autonomy, communitarianism and a neighbourhood level-focus on the social and cultural as well as economic dynamics of exclusion. Corresponding to this process, we can see the progressive erosion of the welfare entitlement of citizenship in favour of a moral authoritarianism that has sought to portray individual fecklessness rather than government policy as the causal factor in an increasingly hostile, suspicious, antagonistic and unequal society. Here, neo-liberalism has rendered obsolete the notion that certain welfare provisions are not only impenetrable to commodification but also enduring. Today, citizenship is a key term for New Labour and draws increasingly on the lexicon of obligations rather than rights (Roche, 1992). To be sure, New Labour has made it clear that it is consistently willing to invoke the language of citizenship in order to inform and justify its welfare policy. Integral to such thinking has been the promotion of a particular type of moral

community in which citizens earn access to their social rights through a combination of hard work, responsible behaviour and personal contributions (Dwyer, 2002: 274).

Under the prevailing neo-liberal order, with its turn away from emancipatory and egalitarian goals associated with traditional welfare paternalism, rough sleeping has become the iconic subject of social exclusion. The moral architecture underpinning this new social policy terrain and its accompanying discourse can be seen as a vehicle for two concepts at the centre of the New Labour project. On the one side, a social inclusion framework that endorses the extension of affordable housing, education and employment opportunities, as well as greater tolerance for diverse living arrangements. But equally, it can be used to endorse policies that require various forms of social participation as part of 'mutual obligation' between individuals and society. Overall, then, this has resulted in greater conditionality, reduction or removal of services and opportunities, rather than their extension.

The effect of this ideological shift has given rise to the discursive positioning of homeless people vis-à-vis societal norms as 'other' or 'deviant'. Understanding this, Takahashi (1996) has argued that contemporary representations of homeless people are defined by perceptions regarding their productivity, degree of dangerousness and personal culpability for episodes of homelessness. In light of these developments, Mitchell (2001) has argued that we have moved from an earlier position of 'malign neglect' of homeless people towards a more obviously punitive urban regime. The overall effect of this drive is that in terms of intellectual attraction and public support 'social inclusion' has been steadily stripped of its transformative power. All of this shows that the vocabulary of citizenship, presented in terms of inclusion and exclusion, is increasingly deployed as an instrument for the responsibilsation of homeless people (Phelan and Norris, 2008). Given this, we can begin to identify the unfolding of a silent but powerful manoeuvre in which there is a deliberate attempt to exclude certain groups, in order to readmit them (or not) to the social fold on special, punitive terms (Calder, 2003).

Community Governance

Displaced people represent a danger to social order. Being unattached and transient, homeless people are seen as a threat to social order (Stephenson, 2006).

In Dorchester, as with many support services for homeless people serving rural environments, the Hub Project stands uneasily between containing the perception of a homelessness 'problem' and the wider 'place image' of the town which is predicated on a sense of gentility, entrepreneurial spirit and, above all, its desirability as a tourist destination and gateway to the imaginary world of Wessex. As such, the issue of street homelessness in Dorchester provides a useful example from which to seek to understand and critique the way in which a diverse constellation of forces have mobilised in order to reproduce boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

At the centre of this new spirit there has been a determined effort to characterise homeless people, socially and geographically, as 'outsiders'. In this regard, Rahimian et al. (1994) have described how contemporary representations and perceptions of homeless migrants are used as a common political strategy by local authorities attempting to avoid obligations to provide support to homeless individuals on the basis of their transiency. However, in Dorchester the effect is as much economic as it is symbolic.

In a delicately crafted analysis, Robinson has pointed out that the invisibility of rural homelessness in local and national political discourses has had a powerful and persuasive influence in shaping the social construction of homelessness among rural residents (2006:97) Recognising this, I want to suggest that in this context rough sleepers in Dorchester are perceived to represent a significant transgression of socio-spatial expectations and, as such, reifies the distinction between where homelessness is in, or out, of place (Cloke *et al.*, 2001).

On a more immediate level, I now wish to briefly consider the central and defining role that the local media has undertaken in relation to the perceived visibility of street homelessness in Dorchester and its immediate

environs. A careful reading of the Dorset Echo suggests that it has attained a key strategic position in framing discussions and debates about the Hub Project, rough sleepers and Dorchester's self-image and community ethos. Insightfully, Zufferey (2006) has noted that elsewhere that media representations of homelessness and 'homeless people' inform public discourses and practical responses, influencing the social and physical space people experiencing homelessness can occupy. Thus the Dorset Echo has assumed 'vehicular power' in mobilising public support for the socially pernicious charge that the sight of people sleeping rough in Dorchester tarnishes the character of town and contributes to a broader process of degradation and alienation. What is striking is that this perspective echoes the rhetoric of New Labour by framing the social exclusion of homelessness within a discourse that shapes public opinion along two thematic lines. On the one hand, homeless people in Dorchester have been characterised as representing a threat to social order, and homelessness as a problem of social integration. On the other hand, homeless people in Dorchester are portrayed as victims. In this representation, their role as active agents is purposefully ignored or discounted. These two contrasting representations – homeless people as, alternately, both threat and victim –function to manage public opinion and to maintain support for social policy interventions.

To this end, it is important to recognise that this kind of moral discourse is by no means unique to events in Dorchester. In a similar fashion, the imagery of pollution, disorder and incivility might be read as an ideological process that Sibley (1995) terms the 'purification of space', a process enacted via the identification and removal of unsightly people, which is as applicable to rough sleepers as it is to Roma Gypsies. What is equally important to understand is the way in which these discursive strategies, in turn, serve to ensure that the everyday social relations between homeless people and the 'settled' community are increasingly shaped by conflict, antagonism and avoidance.

The Politics of Behaviour

Far from being free, open or 'unrestricted' public space is in fact highly controlled space. It is layered with rules, regulations and bylaws and practices which govern its occupation and use. Some of these rules are explicit and obvious, but most are well hidden. Many are revealed or evoked only be the absence and exclusion of those who might transgress them. (Winford, 2006:55)

By seeking to redefine popular understandings of contemporary 'social welfare' New Labour in its apparent compassion and enthusiasm to provide exit routes from homelessness, has pursued a complex and contradictory policy agenda. It is in this respect that homelessness has become a site of symbolic struggle in which conventional (and idealised) notions of the 'inclusive society' are buttressed by a corresponding regime of deterrence, denial and discipline (Fitzpatrick and Jones, 2005). What this suggests is that the governance of homelessness involves the imposition of surveillance and programmes of social control. Thus, the particular complexities of the homeless experience are now ensnared with a wider attack on incivility in everyday life and a perceived epidemic of street crime through the expression and elaboration of increasingly coercive legal mechanisms.

When transferred to the realm of social policy intervention, the idea of strong, cohesive communities has given rise to a series of instruments and quasi-legal sanctions which, putatively and purposefully, aim to tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce crime (Nixon et. 2008). In terms of outcome, the use of dispersal orders and curfew orders has led to the emergence of aggressive policing tactics around public and marginal spaces traditionally associated with, and used by, homeless people.

At this point, we should also note that this unfolding logic of increased regulation, surveillance and punishment is sedimented within a dominant mode of social control. It is from within this environment that current interpretations of anti-social behaviour draw upon negative stereotyping and rhetorical narratives that undermine the social status of marginalised groups (Jacobs, 2006:12). As a political and moral project, the notion of 'anti-social behaviour' is open to the accusation that it is both authoritarian and persecutory in its nature and impact.

Embracing the shift towards community governance through the surveillance of behaviour, Dorset Police have focused on issuing rough sleepers with 'dispersal orders'. These legal and ideological devices are geared to managing groups perceived as marginal and troublesome. In effect the deployment of dispersal orders further constrict the rapidly diminishing public spaces available to homeless people, but also serve to overtly criminalise poverty and homelessness.

Homeless people in Dorchester, sited at the social and economic margins, have no choice but to occupy public space. Understanding this, Blomley (1994) has pointed out the urban environment both shapes, and is shaped by, all those who inhabit it, including homeless people. However, efforts to both shape and change the physical landscape of Dorchester has resulted in rough sleepers being deemed problematic on the grounds that homelessness is 'out-of-place' because it partly stands in opposition to normal rules of propriety (Cloke, 2003). This repressive turn towards the language and use of anti-social behaviour orders exists to provide a degree of symbolic reassurance to 'respectable' society that effective action is being taken against crime and incivility and, therefore, has a disciplinary effect on the behaviour of rough sleepers.

As part of this process Dorset Police have issued orders to disperse under Section 30 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act, and confiscated alcohol from homeless people who occupy both 'prime' and 'marginal' spaces within the town centre and its neighbouring streets (Dorset Police, 2008). Add to this, anecdotal evidence that suggests rough sleepers are routinely woken by police officers and on many occasions, searched as well, moved on from begging sites, given warnings about perceived behaviour and threatened with arrest, we can quite clearly see the regulation of the quotidian practices of rough sleepers within the town.

The governance of anti-social behaviour in Dorchester has fallen disproportionately on rough sleepers. The ubiquitous surveillance of homeless people demonstrates that the imposition of curfews and dispersal orders can prevent homeless people from seeking help from services they need, such as medical care, drug treatment and support agencies (Johnsen and Fitzpatrick 2007). The resultant landscape reflects and reveals not only those with power but, perhaps more crucially, has served to limit access to the Hub Project, thus distancing the multiple support needs of people who have experienced or are experiencing acute social exclusion from services that attempt to address specific wants and needs that would otherwise go unmet.

As Tony explains, this is not however a process that goes unchallenged:

We occupied the [Hub] forecourt last night. There were four of us and two of the dogs. The Police came and tried to move us on. We told them that this was private property and that we were allowed to sleep out because we use this service everyday.

On street homelessness may have disappeared from the 'prime spaces' of Dorchester, but it will inevitably resurface because as Coleman has perceptively remarked 'the city is, and always has been, constituted as a contest over space - over its production, representation and regulation; over who is authorised to be in it and who is kept out; over what constitutes an unpolluted space and what constitutes transgression of space' (2005: 143).

Through this prism we can discern the homeless experience as a struggle against socio-spatial marginalisation. This is a crucial point because it proposes that rough sleepers in Dorchester are engaged in spatial struggles that serve to resist preconceptions about their identity and against processes and spaces of increased regulation, surveillance and punishment. What seems especially important is the recognition that homeless people are constantly embroiled in power struggles which serve to make and remake the urban landscape and experience. This gives cohesion and a unifying perspective to the fact that while criminal justice, policing, housing and other social welfare policies fail to address the critical and troubling dynamics associated with social exclusion, homeless people themselves are active in their own situations, continue to make decisions and take action (Pain and Francis, 2004). Such an analysis, I

believe, has significant implications for how we might productively go about disentangling the relationship between homelessness, social exclusion and citizenship.

Discussion

In the preceding discussion I mapped out the discursive and institutional architecture that constrain and foreshorten the ability of homeless people to enact citizenship claims. In so doing I have attempted to show that within the context of contemporary New Labour policy discourse, marginal and reviled social groups such as the homeless people are portrayed as existing outside the norms of the dominant culture, a threat to the social order and, therefore, to the power base of established groups (Powell, 2007).

Yet such an analysis is, ultimately, incomplete. In trying to understand how notions of social exclusion and passive citizenship get reworked on the street, both in what people say and what people do, it is both imperative and urgent that critically engaged social research is driven by an ethical and empirical commitment to giving 'voice' to homeless people. This entails recognising that to ignore or overlook the standpoint of homeless people in research leaves a major gap in our understanding of the less visible structures and processes, which engender and sustain 'life on the streets' and repeat episodes of homelessness.

At this point, I want to suggest that homeless people are both aware of their degraded position in society and have a broader sense of the external issues exerted on them (Parker and Fopp, 2004). More interestingly, however, my experience of undertaking ethnographic fieldwork shows that homeless people negotiate discursive strategies and material circumstances which position homeless people as 'passive' citizens and, in so doing, challenge dominant discourses and social practices. To accomplish this task, I offer three vignettes that serve to illustrate the often contradictory and context specific ways in which homeless people reproduce dominant, oppositional and mediated discourses:

In the first example, Richard, an entrenched rough sleeper suggests that 'life on the street' is a form of social inclusion, rather than social exclusion by highlighting themes of 'community' and 'independence'.

I have been offered a flat that I will probably accept, although I intend using it for storage. Then I will go back on the street or on-site (temporary and illegal travellers encampments) Why would I want to struggle with a TV licence, utilities and boredom? It's better to be with friends, people who don't judge and just accept you.

By contrast, Paul, a street musician while recognising his own degraded position embraces 'received and conventional wisdom' to denounce others.

Housing aren't prepared to take a homelessness application because I am not a junkie, piss-head or bloody foreigner. I don't scrounge. I'm prepared to work, and work hard, unlike most of the homeless wasters.

While not overtly acquiescing with dominant representations, Eric, 50, a skilled tradesman who became homeless upon being deported from the Channel Islands having been unable to secure employment contrasts the demeaning status evoked by being homeless with the culturally powerfully valorisation of 'paid employment'

With the new flat soon and catering college, it's a new start and chance to make a real change. I want to work and not to feel stigmatised because I am homeless and claiming benefits. I suppose I want to feel a sense of self-respect and social worth.

These examples make plain that people who are homeless are not immune from the ideologies that demonise, pathologise and penalise them and in policies, programmes and service delivery seek to normalise (Fopp, 2007). This is to be mindful of the fact that discursive practices are important because

they contain moral judgements which, in turn, may justify action or inaction. They are also important because they help to construct the actual experience of being 'homeless' or 'socially excluded'

Conclusion

The architecture of street homelessness in Dorchester reveals that New Labour's promissory note to eradicate the spectre of rough sleeping from both urban landscapes and public consciousness has oscillated in the past decade from a creative vision which was, ostensibly at least, prefaced on offering a more permanent solution to the problems of homelessness to its current, more punitive concern with regulating public space and individual behaviour within the calculus of the new politics of conduct. However, viewed from a setting such as Dorchester where access to well-resourced, imaginative and experimental substance misuse support programmes, mental health services and education, training, volunteering and employment opportunities is severely rationed or completely absent, the prospect of exiting homelessness and reconnecting with mainstream society is fundamentally at odds with New Labour's professed commitment to the 'social excluded'.

All of this shows that the distinction between active citizenship and passive citizenship is increasingly deployed as an instrument for the responsibilisation of homeless people. In such a context, we need to highlight the fact that dividing contemporary citizenship into two disparate and seemingly irreconcilable camps, both as an analytical category and organising tool, has very little resonance in the everyday geographies of homelessness. Binary oppositional thinking such as this is obviously mechanical rather than dialectical, suggesting discrete entities while in reality homeless people's experiences of, and responses to, becoming homeless resist such crude and reductive schemas.

Evidence from Dorchester suggests that we need to be mindful of the fact that anti-social behaviour strategies and the all powerful and persuasive shibboleth of community governance targets the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and, ultimately, serves to deflect from a sustained focus upon the responsibilities of wider society for tackling homelessness and the most extreme forms of social exclusion. Building on this insight, we also need to recognise that the de facto criminalisation of homelessness through the unfolding logic of spatial exclusion and identity purification illustrates that there are deep rooted and intractable obstacles to enabling homeless people to become full and active citizens. Only by contesting this exclusion – by establishing as Hannah Arenndt (1958) puts it, 'a place in the world which makes…action effective' – can homeless people challenge as citizens these powerful and pervasive circuits of injustice.

Notes

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Appendix B

Who Are the Wayfarers (And Why Are They Still Here)? *E-pisteme,* **Vol, 2 No. (2) 2009 pp. 18-32.**

Abstract This article focuses on wayfarers (men of the road), a group largely ignored by contemporary sociologists and cultural geographers of homelessness. Drawing on ethnographic research with homeless people in rural Dorset, it explores both the spatial and socio-cultural significance of wayfaring. I argue that wayfaring is a distinct and under-theorised homeless 'subculture', an experience characterised by (in)voluntary movements and mobilities and avoidance of mainstream living. In so doing, I seek to place the study of wayfarers within its sociological context, arguing that a sociological investigation of wayfaring can help to broaden our understanding of the experiences of homeless people while also allowing us to question and challenge the strong and powerful perception of homelessness as a unitary and homogeneous phenomenon.

Introduction

A Poor, wayfaring man of grief
Hath often cross me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never answer nay.
I had not pow'r to ask his name,
Where he went, or whence he came;
Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love; I knew not why.

A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief (Montgomery, 1826).

Depictions of homeless people moving into and out of rural and urban spaces have long been a popular conceit in cinema, literature and socio-cultural research (Duncan, 1993: Hardy, 1994: Healy, 2008). In the English-speaking world, for example, this interest has focused explicitly on the American hobo, the Australian swagman and the British tramp (cf. Anderson, 1961: Crane, 1999: Cresswell, 1997: Minehan, 1977: Richardson, 2006). In the popular imagination 'men of the road' are portrayed as part of a downtrodden, degenerate and atomised underclass of itinerants. An alternative, and superficially more expansive and positive interpretation, views such a peripatetic existence in a more genteel, bucolic and romanticised light. Arguably, these overlapping interpretations have given rise to an iconography of 'men of the road', which is too narrow and easily stereotyped. Yet, in spite of this wide body of work and interest, it is difficult to find any direct or detailed reference to wayfaring or wayfarers within the broad purview of the social sciences beyond Cloke et al's (2007) singular and significant investigation into the provision of emergency services for homeless people in rural areas.

In this article, I set out to consider the sociological significance of wayfaring in the wider context of the geographical mobility of homeless people. Given the paucity of empirical accounts grounded in thick descriptions (Geertz, 1975), the principal aim of this short exploratory review is to provide a more developed and nuanced picture of wayfaring. This is its modest, particular focus. The main body of this article is divided into four sections. In the first part, I suggest that beyond a fleeting engagement with the 'new nomads' (May, 2000) and the 'happy hobo' (Cloke et al, 1999) relatively little academic attention has been assigned to wayfarers or wayfaring. Second, I focus on the mobility strategies and environmental knowledge of itinerant homeless people. In this respect I take inspiration from Paul Higate's critical engagement with ex-servicemen on the road, and go on to argue that wayfaring is underpinned by a narrative which explicitly articulates the importance of personal autonomy, self-dependency and 'freedom on the open road'(2000a: p.331). I then outline a basic typology of wayfaring with particular reference to

empirical examples drawn from extensive ethnographic research in rural Dorset. I conclude the discussion by considering the motivations and experiences of men who decide or feel compelled to come off the road.

Background

There has always been a tradition stretching back hundred of years to the early monastic communities of caring for these types of men. Sometimes they would be able to work for a few days in lieu of accommodation. In the Middle Ages they would probably have been cared for by the Almoner and the Infirmarian. However in more recent times we allow them to stay a night in the room. This is in keeping with most religious communities in this country (Br. Smyth, 2007).

In the context of undertaking ethnographic fieldwork with homeless people in rural Dorset I have found myself becoming increasingly fascinated by, and attendant to, the journeys and pauses of wayfarers as they move into and out of rural spaces (Cloke et al., 2008). It has become progressively more apparent through 'conversations with a propose' (see Burgess, 1984, p. 102 for an exegesis) that wayfarers engage with homelessness service providers and statutory agencies in ways that differ considerably to a younger generation of rough sleepers who primarily access night-shelters, hostels and day-centres in major urban locations. This has given rise to the recognition that wayfarers experience a qualitatively different form of 'exclusion' from settled society. Here, then, I wish to dissent from Cloke et al's small but otherwise perceptive and persuasive analysis of Hilfield Friary, a Franciscan community set up in 1921 for homeless men travelling about the roads of England in search of work, rather casual and uncritical acceptance of the assertion that 'wayfarers have been made homeless whereas other groups have made themselves homeless' (2007, p.392). Of overwhelming importance in this respect is the extent to which wayfarers speak of their own deep acceptance of their current situation and social status, sometimes blatantly contradicting biographical facts, while simultaneously critiquing accepted social norms and conventional assumptions as to the causes and nature of *their* homelessness.

My principal research site is a voluntary day-centre for rough sleepers in a small market town in Dorset. It was originally conceived to meet the basic physical needs of rough sleepers but also to offer essential advice, information and signposting services. Importantly, the day-centre also recognises that, as a service hub and migratory site, it is deeply entwined in the complex movements of homeless people into and out of rural spaces. In recent times, homeless people and wayfarers have been drawn to the day-centre because of its dynamic connection with the local Category B prison, its proximity to the Pilsdon Community, a 'caring community' set deep in the Dorset countryside between the towns of Bridport and Crewkerne which offers respite and refuge to wayfarers, Hilfield Friary and the Dorset coast. This critical milieu can therefore be seen as a crucial nodal point in the wider geographies of homelessness provision. On this point, a longstanding volunteer has observed:

[The town] is a central part of the old trading ways between London down to the West Country, and people expect there to be services here for the homeless. Some people start coming down this way during March and April on their way down to Devon or Cornwall, looking for seasonal cash-in-hands jobs during the summer, then go back to London and the Home Counties (O'Donovan, 2008).

Methodology

The methodological standpoint adopted in this study is qualitative and interactive in its approach. It is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork with wayfarers. As such, participant observation is an approach that deliberately avoids some of the structure and control of some of the other research strategies, attempting instead to engage with social life on its own terms. This position of negotiation usually starts out from a situation in which the ethnographer is something of an unknown, a stranger. Indeed, Agar (1980) has defined the ethnographer as a 'professional stranger', by which he means that it is their business not only to encounter that unfamiliarity but to work towards an eventual understanding of that difference. Participant observation in this respect is important in order to gain access to the 'field', access to relevant key informants and to generate background information for the interview process. This approach is informed by

a commitment to the idea that 'hanging out' in the field is crucial for the accumulation of 'naturally occurring data' (Silverman, 1985).

Ethnographically, I have 'encountered' eleven (self-identified or imputed) wayfarers and engaged in face-to-face discussions around two central themes: first, to better understand the socio-cultural reality of 'life on the road'; second, the ways in which wayfarers strategically use 'outsider' services (see May et al., 2005 for an overview) for homeless people and the attendant importance of 'local knowledge and homeless circuits' in shaping the choices and constraints associated with 'being on the road '. Insights grounded in field experience were developed through a recursive process whereby data from participant observation was recorded as field notes, written in a journal format and continuously expanded, refined or discarded via the process of subsequent field visits, writing and discussion with key informants and gatekeepers (Emmel et al., 2007). Once the field had been exited interview material and research commentary was formally transcribed and thematically coded using a combination of manual and computer assisted methods, notably *NVivo 8* programme for qualitative data analysis (QSR International, 2008). Data collection was undertaken over a period of thirteen months from May 2007 to July 2008.

I now want to briefly outline what I consider to be the essential difference between 'wayfaring' and 'rough sleeping'. While I understand 'wayfaring' to be a form of homelessness characterised by bouts of prolonged rough sleeping, I want to suggest that as a lived experience it is expressed as a kind of natural liberty defined by opposition to social control as well as the principled avoidance of dominant social welfare institutions. This interpretation does not, however, seek to romanticise wayfaring as a form of unconstrained freedom nor does it seek to elide its privations or potential risks. This is, after all, a community which exists on the symbolic and material margins of society. Rather, what is at issue here is the way in which such meanings and representations are constructed and made visible. Equally, however, we might want to consider what wayfaring and its association with the open road and disengagement with settled society tells us about the question of what it is that people are 'socially excluded' from, and what this means for combating homelessness.

In order to develop these and related ideas, I will now turn, albeit briefly, to consider the extant literature of homeless mobility and the few available studies devoted to wayfaring.

Understanding Homeless Mobility

I asked two regulars to write a list of places they had used where they could get free food and place for the night – six months later they sent me a list with over five hundred places on it – mainly religious communities, Salvation Army, Vicarages and Presbyteries and some hostels (Fr. Barnett, 2007).

In recent years, a small but growing tributary of thought has begun to theorise the deeper underpinnings of movement among the single homeless population (Higate, 2000b: Cloke et al., 2003: Whiteford, 2008). Within the context of cultural geography, DeVerteuil (2003) has argued that mobility represents the ability of people experiencing homelessness to exercise some measure of autonomy (2003, p. 363). The key to making sense of this process is not to see homeless people as merely the passive 'consumers' of institutional settings but, rather, as actively engaged in mobility strategies for the purposes of survival. Thus, movement among homeless people is overwhelmingly driven by the desire to improve coping strategies, through the pursuit of paid employment or secure housing, or simply because homeless people are viewed as 'out-of-place' in increasingly privatised and regulated urban environments (Sibley, 1995).

The weakness of the extant homeless mobility literature in the UK is revealed most succinctly by its failure to provide a detailed sociological or empirical account of wayfaring. This is at significant odds with the far stronger body of US scholarly work, which has critically explored the related field of hobos and tramps (Anderson, 1961: Symanski, 1979: Donohue, 1996). Within the 'life-history' format, Charles Ackerman Berry's (1978) elegant and evocative 'Gentleman of the Road' is an autobiographical account of the hardships and humiliations of being 'on the road'. Drawing inspiration from Orwell's (1933:1937) social reportage 'Gentleman of the Road', while disregarding the application of distinctly sociological methods and concepts, nonetheless represents an important and insightful account of the experience of urban/rural

marginality among a largely ignored class of transient and unsettled men in the late 1960s and early 1970s. More recently, Tobias Jones's (2006) elegiac 'Utopian Dreams' makes reference to the centrality– both historically and contemporaneously – of wayfarers in the everyday life of the Pilsdon Community. While this example is of much interest, it is largely indirect, partial and atheoretical in its focus.

More helpfully, Paul Higate in his analysis of homeless ex-servicemen provides one of the most important and influential attempts to address why it is that some men 'sleep out' and embark on a 'life on the road'. Higate shows how gender ideologies interact and intersect with the notion of 'freedom' from the military to explain how this particular form of homelessness emerges. All of this points to the way in which a military background influences – and often quite profoundly – how ex-servicemen experience homelessness. This conception leads to the view that a disproportionate 'number of ex-servicemen are both disposed to, and equipped for, a life on the road, and may become 'addicted' to travel and fleeting fixedness to place' (2000a, p. 331). As Higate explains, for homeless ex-servicemen 'the road' is experienced as a form of continuity with military life and as such allows for the maintenance of an 'autonomous self' (2000a, p. 342).

Responding to such insights, I would suggest that Higate's work can be used practically as a means of understanding wayfaring because it clearly shows that the mobility strategies and environmental knowledge associated with wayfaring is a rational response to limited conditions. Much recent writing has indicated that ex-servicemen consider themselves better equipped, less fearful of sleeping rough and less inclined to seek or accept help from the emergency service network (Johnsen et al., 2008). The effect of this is that ex-servicemen tend to invert the perceived 'shame' of their situation. It is, as Higate suggests, a lifestyle that is often experienced and expressed positively. Indeed, this is apparent in the following vignettes:

'Robert' having been on the road for fifteen years comments:

I travel the circuit all over England and Ireland. I work my way around on farms in the summer picking strawberries, peas and potatoes and winter [can be spent working] in hotels or kitchens. Moving about you learn about jobs and possible places where you can stay. That's how it's been since 93'.

Wayfaring is dying out because the traditional sites are closing down. It's also [increasingly] dangerous to be 'on the road' now.

The example of 'Steve' is illustrative:

Do I consider myself to be excluded from society? No, I've been married, worked hard and had a house. Do I miss it? No, not in the slightest. I enjoy wayfaring and I stay in contact with my daughter. Sure it can be hard, particularly in the winter when it's cold and wet.

Again and again, my research participants returned to this theme:

Thus 'Chris' comments:

I have freedom to come and go. Just pick-up that rucksack and walk out. I pity those 9 to 5ers. I worked on building sites all over the country, proper hard graft. But I would rather do my own thing now than to work for a mortgage to a house which is never yours, a new car or a flatscreen TV. What kind of life is that?

Unwilling to submit to authority, Robert, Steve and Chris carve out small areas of autonomy. It reveals some of the ways in which people both adapt to, and resist a homelessness identity, by engaging in identity work that enables them to negotiate the practical, emotional and ontological impacts of insecure housing. This line of thought suggests that homeless people are vigorously engaged in debates about the nature of society that they are expected to fit into. However, I believe that we should approach such assertions with some caution. Rather, and this is a crucial point, we need to fully engage with the diversity of experiences and different responses to being homeless and also to understand that the projection of choice and 'freedom' is a rationalised response to personal and social marginalisation. This interpretation would seem

to echo Kim Hooper's (2003) argument that for some, although by no means all people living on the street, the articulation of a 'vocabulary of volition' or micro narratives which are sited in opposition to popular imaginings in both the public sphere and academe represent the last refuge of self-respect.

Let us now illustrate these themes by examining the salient characteristics of wayfarers and wayfaring.

Who Are the Wayfarers?

My experience in Dorset was that over half of the 500 wayfarers we had each year would be 'regulars'. That is men who were on the road as a way of life, but were often precipitated into by some crisis in their lives, often compounded by alcohol addiction (Fr. Barnett, 2007).

Without a doubt, the term 'wayfarer' evokes strong religious and melioristic overtones. It plaintively and affectingly recalls the notion that 'Christ himself was a person of the road, a wayfarer' (Cloke et al, 2007, p.391). In this regard it is not uncommon for wayfarers to travel on the Pilgrims' Way (Winchester to Canterbury) or on ancient or seasonal route ways that follow the location of monastic communities (Sancta Maria Abbey, East Lothian to Mount Saint Bernard Abbey, Leicestershire), 'cultural scenes' or established 'homeless places'. This biblical understanding and 'compassionate commitment' has manifested itself along two distinct but overlapping lines. Historically, Benedictine monks and Franciscan brothers have sought to provide vagrant homeless men with a 'space of acceptance' in which to address material and spiritual needs. Thus:

We feel that the wayfarers make an important contribution to the ethos of our community and sustain our policy of open hospitality to all comers (Fr. Barnett, 2007).

In this way, wayfarers have tended to gravitate towards religious and New Age communities because they are perceived as being less 'oppressive' and 'chaotic' and insufficiently attractive to a younger, substance-dependant generation of homeless men. Relatedly, and following Jesus' injunction to 'look for me among the poor', religious communities have actively set out to embrace mobile practices in order to engender spiritual salvation and personal reform among 'men of the road':

Our order began its ministry walking the roads and sleeping in 'Doss houses' with them and then trying to rehabilitate them by teaching them a craft (Br. Paschal, 2007).

This acknowledgement of the deeply religious character of wayfaring reveals some of the ways in which wayfarers make use of different service providers in different places, and signals the development of a meaningful understanding of the flows and countless 'iterations' of this transient group between public and private worlds, 'outsider' service providers and interstitial spaces. But we need to go further. In this regard, I now wish to introduce a basic typology of wayfaring based on eight markers or reoccurring motifs.

(1) Wayfarers reject their homeless status not because they are not actually homeless but because they are not part of the traditional 'street' homeless population, which service providers (both faith-based and mainstream) are designed to serve. It is claimed that wayfaring is perceived and experienced as a conscious choice. This may reflect the need to maintain a coherent and positive 'narrative identity' (McNaughton, 2006).

(2) Wayfarers move from town to town by 'jumping' trains, on foot or by hitchhiking. Looked at like this the 'wayfarer' is perpetually on the move, seeking casual employment or simply a place to sleep (Duncan, 1983). It is a journey and lifestyle that is all too frequently spent sleeping rough under a hedge, in a bus shelter or in a church porch. Migratory circuits are often informed by seasonal considerations, and as such will follow established coastal routes or transport hubs. In addition to this, and reflecting the centrality of Christian communities, mobility patterns become intimately connected to religious holidays and observances. Invariably these occasions provide wayfarers with an opportunity to stay and rest for more than a single night or short weekend.

(3) Wayfarers have considerable environmental knowledge upon which to draw in order to find a place to sleep or eat for free. This kind of knowledge is an inevitable consequence of meeting people in day-centres, night-shelters and 'outsider' services for homeless people, or, alternatively on the road. At the same time, however, wayfarers can also display a reluctance to share information on the basis that a previously unknown or under-utilised 'space of care' (Johnsen et al., 2005) will be overrun or 'ruined' by others. Here the prevailing view is that 'exposure' will lead to conflict, alienation and the obsolescence of once sympathetic communities or individuals willing to offer temporary refuge and respite.

(4) Many, though not all, wayfarers actively 'on the circuit' have an older age profile than the non-statutory homeless population. My research with wayfarers would seem to suggest that pathways into homelessness are similar to those commonly reported by other homeless people (Ravenhill, 2008). But within this group there will also be a disproportionate number of ex-servicemen with direct experience of the old 'spikes', relics of the poor law workhouses (Hall, 2005).

(5) Wayfarers frequently articulate micro-narratives that stand in opposition to the idea of claiming state-sanctioned welfare benefits (unless related to long-term disability), but will engage in seasonal or sporadic employment. In part, this reflects the fact that being on the road militates against 'signing-on' or establishing a 'care-of-address'. It is equally apparent, though, that wayfarers regard casual or piecemeal employment as a bellwether of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency over a culture of worklessness and welfare dependency.

(6) Wayfarers tend to avoid, or else fleetingly engage, with formal homelessness services in major urban areas. In this regard, wayfarers seek their answers to homelessness away from the problematic temptations and dangers of the urban environment. It is, moreover, a strategy that is often informed by a sense of restlessness which is shaped by a refusal of local communities to accept them. As such rough sleepers are expected to avail themselves of help and support while wayfaring and its emphasis on 'choice' seems to imply the annulment of 'active engagement'. It is arguably the case that the sense of transience, otherness and spatial exclusion that underpins (and is exacerbated by) wayfaring represents a significant obstacle to reconnecting with settled society.

(7) Wayfarers often view the 'on-street' homeless in terms of three powerful emotions: fear, pity and contempt. For many older wayfarers younger rough sleepers are regarded as being workshy, habitual drug-users and potential perpetrators of crime and incivility.

(8) Wayfarers exhibit a very strong sense of cleanliness. Indeed, being 'clean and tidy' involves undertaking fairly elaborate pollution rituals (Douglas, 2002). First and foremost, this is regarded as important in maintaining a sense of self-respect and personal dignity. Moreover, it is also viewed as providing distance between 'men on the road' and the 'on-street' homeless. By appearing presentable wayfarers are less likely to attract attention or popular ire, and thus more likely to enjoy success in soliciting work, transportation or accommodation.

The next section moves on to examine the causes and consequences associated with 'coming off the road'.

Coming Off the Road

In the course of carrying out ethnographic research I have encountered a number of wayfarers who, because of old age and growing infirmity, have taken the decision to 'come off the road'. Typically these men have spent two decades or more wayfaring, interspersed with short bouts of sedentarism in temporary or supported accommodation. Taken together, transience and longevity have profound consequences in facilitating or hindering the transition back to 'settled society'. As such this becomes an experience that is marked, for example, by difficulties associated with making a successful homelessness application on the basis of proving a local connection or gaining recognition as a legitimate user of localised social services. On the question of coming off the road, Robert notes:

Even though I've had flats I get wary [of being sedentary and becoming settled] and quickly want to move on. Four walls can quickly do your head in [and] you just drift on again.

This echoes the experience of others:

Being inside and off the road feels claustrophobic, it's like being in God's waiting room. On the road I would get my head down early evening in the winter [now] I just watch the clock.

'Peter', having been on the road for the past twenty six years, discusses his desire to come off the 'circuit' within the next twelve months.

It gets harder being on the road as you get older. I'm beginning to find it takes more effort [in physical and mental terms] I suppose.

Elaborating further:

The friary has closed. That was a great place. You can't go to Monkton Wilde or some of the other places [that were once available to wayfarers]. There are probably as many as two hundred places up and down the country that I know about…But [wayfaring and its traditions] will die out with this [current] generation.

Three significant issues are raised here. ''Four walls can quickly do your head in'' gives expression to a prevalent sentiment of restlessness, avidity for experience, and, of all forms of self-reliance, which militates against putting down roots in a particular place. Crucial here is the emphasis on freedom of movement and the choice of an (alternative) lifestyle. The second issue refers to the simple reality that "it gets harder being on the road as you get older." This is significant because it suggests that coming off the road is often experienced as an 'enforced need' rather than an 'expressed desire'. A corollary of this insight, of course, is that some long-term wayfarers' simply reach the 'end of the road' and feel the need to become more rooted in a particular place (see, for example, Cloke at al., 2003). The third issue to emerge here is the idea that ''[wayfaring] will die out with this generation.'' Clearly, both the ageing profile of wayfarers together with the changing status or winnowing of 'outsider' services would seem to give credence to this observation.

Conclusion

This article has been exploratory in nature, but its observations suggest that wayfaring needs to be rethought and pursued through new avenues. My account has been drawn directly on the experiences and practices of the very people whose quotidian life is conditioned by (in)voluntary movement and mobility and the constant search for temporary shelter. In seeking to understand the experience of wayfarers, we can begin to discern the influence that spatial practices hold in understanding the social and vice versa (Coles, 2008). Part of this task, however, requires that we resist the tacit assumption that, in our increasingly post-industrial society, 'men of the road' are merely fictitious or mythical figures drawn from an earlier epoch. Wayfaring, like chronic and entrenched 'on-street' homelessness is not accidental or aberrant. On the contrary, it is a direct response to a range of complex and interrelated material and psychosocial impulses such as poverty, substance misuse, marital discord, mental ill health and experiences of custodial care.

On the surface it would appear something of a paradox that wayfarers extensively and expressively articulate a 'vocabulary of volition' (Hooper, 2003). Yet, the research reported here, suggests that we should not lose sight of the fact that homeless people actively produce and reproduce social structures including both repudiating the stigma and subculture associated with homelessness. This is not, however, to reject or demean the powerful or potent notion of 'freedom of the road' contained within wayfaring. It is rather to see it as but one mode of social life in tension and therefore limited by others. Clearly, then, further understanding of this critically overlooked homeless 'subculture' necessitates the emergence of a new cultural idiom which neither fetishes or negates wayfaring, but is finely attuned to the agency and resilience of these men who have hitherto been rendered invisible and unknowable in both the public sphere and academia.

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Appendix C

Hot Tea, Dry Toast and the Responsibilisation of Homeless People, *Social Policy and Society*, **Vol. 9 No. (2) Vol. 9 No. (2) 2010.**

Summary This short discussion sets out to critically explore the expanding and contested vocabulary of 'responsible citizenship' as it relates to homeless people in a small market town in rural Dorset. Taking as its reference point the controversial decision to introduce a payment system for hot food at a day-centre for rough sleepers, I offer a concrete illustration of how the desire to cultivate 'active' and 'responsible' citizens is experienced and perceived by people who are affected by homelessness and other dimensions of 'deep' social exclusion. My concern here is to show that the logic of 'responsibilisation', which I suggest aims to ensure that difficult and troublesome individuals are made to accept prevailing social norms, draws its sustenance from a more fundamental concern with refashioning the meaning of contemporary citizenship. In so doing I focus on the particular problems with this approach, using an alternative approach that argues that the problems and vulnerabilities associated with entrenched and chronic homelessness remain a significant obstacle to social inclusion and meaningful participation in community life.

Introduction

The reason for charging for food is not to raise revenue but to instil a sense of responsibility among service users for their own welfare. Those not in receipt of state benefits or who are otherwise in financial difficulties - e.g. if a substantial reduction is being made from benefits will not be charged for the meal (Day-centre policy statement).

Responsible citizenship has become a central and defining concept that seemingly spans the New Labour and New Tory political divide (Ferguson, 2008). This surge of interest in responsibilisation has recently been expressed in policy initiatives which cut across the domains of social welfare, civic engagement and community cohesion. In terms of New Labour this policy focus has become most closely associated with Caroline Flint, the former Minister of State for Housing and Planning, in respect of the much publicised and widely ridiculed suggestion that social housing tenants should be corralled into accepting 'commitment contracts' as a precondition to entry into a 'something for something culture' (Wintour, 2008). At the same time, David Cameron the Conservative Party leader, emboldened by a moribund Labour administration has called for a 'responsibility revolution' to counter the erosion of personal responsibility and the rise of anti-social behaviour (BBC, 2007). In essence, as scholars like Lund (1999:450) and Dwyer (1998) have argued, the norm of reciprocity is a policy trope and intellectual concern that has antecedents in the era of the 'progressive alliance' between New Liberals, Christian Socialists and elements of Fabianism and as a feature of the Major administrations conception of the 'active citizen'. What is important to recognise is that the rearticulation of 'responsible citizenship' has entered the lexicon of mainstream political and academic discourse alongside other such discursive formations as 'community governance' and 'social inclusion' , both of which are viewed as key organising principles in the drive to enable communities to take responsibility for their own welfare (Mooney & Fyfe, 2006).

Before going any further, however, it is useful to consider how the idea of responsible citizenship interweaves moral authoritarianism with neo-liberal politics in the social field. This is important because

responsible citizens make reasonable choices – and therefore 'bad choices' result from the wilfulness of irresponsible people, rather than the structural distribution of resources, capacities and opportunities (Clarke, 2005:451).

In discussing the principles of responsible citizenship it is important to understand that in a political context increasingly shaped by the shift away from left-right divisions and towards a neo-liberal orthodoxy responsibilities rather than rights lie at the heart of the dominant paradigm of social citizenship. One of the key assumptions of this growing consensus is that there is a contemporary deficit of responsibility and obligation. Inevitably, this has given rise to a proliferation of social policy initiatives that encourage

individual, family or community 'responsibilities' and forms of self-sufficiency (Carey, 2008:931). This has involved, most spectacularly and contentiously, the Respect and Responsibility White Paper (2003).

In describing the rise of the vocabulary of responsible citizenship, Orton (2006) has emphasised how talk of generating personal responsibility is presented as a cure-all within mainstream political and social policy debates to the perceived break up of 'community' and the increasingly atomised individualism with contemporary society. Alongside this, Mooney and Fyfe (2006) have noted that for New Labour the development of 'cohesive' and 'sustainable' communities are viewed as key components in enhancing citizenship and building a socially inclusive society. In which case, the relationship between community, personal responsibility and citizenship is held to be contiguous. It therefore follows that the 'local community' - regarded as a complex and dynamic socio-spatial entity –becomes the guiding fulcrum in bringing about cultural shifts that seek to recode social conduct.

Sociological research into responsible citizenship has tended to adopt the insights of governmentality, as derived from the work of Michel Foucault (2003), as an explanatory tool for grasping the complex and sophisticated processes by which formal and informal mechanisms of social control regulate human conduct towards particular ends (McIntyre & McKee, 2008). Work in this field has focused specifically on the idea that the failure to conform to 'good' and 'acceptable' standards of behaviour has given rise to a stronger, more robust and punitive form of contractual governance and welfare conditionality (Rose, 2001; Nixon et al., 2007; Moore, 2008). Flint, for example, has observed that in this new politics of conduct 'the capacity and behaviour of individuals are observed and classified in a framework that explicitly links conduct to moral judgements of character' (2006:20).

It should also be recognised, however, that the vocabulary of responsible citizenship is also entirely congruent with a materialist critique of the strong neo-liberal undercurrents of New Labour's welfare strategy. In this reframing of citizenship, consumerist and market-based approaches are prescribed so as to enable citizens to secure their own welfare (Paddison et al. 2008). Under this approach the role of the state is about creating the conditions for active and independent citizens. The neo-liberal imperatives of New Labour have given rise to a policy vocabulary that increasingly emphasises the principles of individual responsibility and the idea of social inclusion through paid employment (MacLeavy, 2008). Given this context, the Marxist political theorist Alex Callinicos has noted:

There is … an important sense in which New Labour authoritarianism is a consequence of Gordon Brown's version of neo-liberal economics. Unemployment in these circumstances is a consequence of dysfunctional behaviour of individuals who refuse to work, and this behaviour must in turn be caused either by their individual moral faults or by a more pervasive 'culture of poverty' (2001:62).

This awareness, however, does not detract from the point that the aggressive and pervasive mobilisation of the vocabulary of responsible citizenship reflects a desire to reconfigure citizenship. The consequence of this approach for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in society is far reaching. Such a conception of citizenship has, moreover, led some to favour the term 'discipline' over 'responsibility'. This shift is well-observed by Paddison et al:

Whilst not denying its disciplinary intent, the rhetorical emphasis on responsibility is also important in defining the assumed shift in the contract between the citizen and the state. Thus, 'responsible participation' requires welfare recipients to engage 'in the active management of their lives' and is portrayed as 'empowerment' (2008: 131).

Much has been written about the communitarian strand of responsible citizenship pioneered by New Labour. Indeed, as work by White (2003) and Pawson and Davidson (2008) suggests, the moral economy of New Labour presents an interpretation of citizenship where access to certain services should be earned, rather than made available by right. In mobilising the basic principles of responsible citizenship a significant body of work has arisen in respect of the housing-welfare state relationship and anti-social and irresponsible behaviour. However, the impact of responsible citizenship on homeless people has been discussed only indirectly with the exception of Fitzpatrick and Jones (2005) and Whiteford (2008). In this, for instance, it is not hard to detect a contradictory mix of interventions designed to tackle the social exclusion

of homelessness alongside efforts that seek to remove rough sleepers from public spaces and deter street culture activities with a view to engendering moral and behavioural improvement.

Extending our focus it is possible to identify some of the ways in which the current focus on responsible citizenship has been translated into the realm of homelessness policy and practice. There are two interesting axes to this. The former is identifiable in the way in which access to homelessness service and housing advice is increasingly dependant on compliance with work-plans, sobriety requirements and conduct agreements (see Phelan & Norris, 2008 for an exegesis). The latter is identifiable in the growing concern with providing homeless people with meaningful activity. Here meaningful activity is said to be any form of social or cultural activity that purposefully aims to empower people experiencing homelessness to build self-esteem, develop skills and reconnect with mainstream social networks (Homeless Link, 2006).

In passing, we might also wish to note the constant challenges faced by homelessness charities and organisations reliant on external funding, voluntary support and the regulatory oversight of the ever-encroaching 'shadow state' (Wolch, 1989: Whiteford, 2007:2009). Geoffrey DeVerteuil (2006) has described, for example, how the homelessness sector, specifically night-shelters and day centres, are designed to ensure the social order through regulating homeless people. In shorthand this is to view homelessness service providers (both statutory and voluntary) as institutions which seek to contain, conceal and manage homeless people. For DeVerteuil homeless day centres are crisis driven and, thus, have only limited abilities to 'solve' the problems that homeless people face. By way of contrast Dean et al. (2000) and others maintain that the homelessness sector aims to enhance the wider project of citizenship by enhancing users' access to the resources, rights, goods and services that encourage social inclusion and justice.

Building on this political rationality homelessness charities and organisations have enthusiastically promoted access to education, training or employment as key drivers in enabling people to move off the streets and towards social inclusion (Singh, 2005). Yet, responsible citizenship, as I will demonstrate below consists of more than simply a concern with targeting the multiple barriers that homeless people face in trying to access sustainable employment. Indeed, as I hope to illustrate, the net of responsibilisation has been cast wider so as to frame debates about the efficacy and equability of charging rough sleepers for a hot meal. Through this, and other similar innovations, homeless people are being responsiblised.

Manufacturing Responsibility

Homeless people are not the [day-centre's] sole responsibility – they are the whole of the community's responsibility. We do not accept that we are responsible for our attenders' total behaviour when they are not with us (Trustee).

At first sight it might appear that the decision to ask people experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness to pay for a hot meal has little, if any, direct sociological significance. However, I want to suggest that there are three distinct, yet overlapping reasons, why this specific case example is deserving of critical attention. First, it reveals the elasticity of the term 'responsible citizenship'. Second, it provides a concrete illustration of how 'community' can be reimagined as a mechanism for social control, and a vehicle for disciplining and regulating behaviour (Ferguson, 2008: 44). In the third and final place, my ethnographic example critically undermines the morally suspect and empirically unsubstantiated assumption that there is a clear division of values and norms of conduct between homeless people and the wider 'settled society'. Instead, my research findings do not provide evidence to support this contention. To put this in perspective, people who sleep rough in rural Dorset display a variety of responses to the profound and pervasive paradigm of responsible citizenship. The point here is that people experiencing homelessness resist the application of representations which cast them as 'irresponsible', 'parasitic' or part of the 'passive poor'. This, in turn, problematises the discursive and policy basis on which the notion of responsible citizenship is structured by drawing attention to a more socially variegated landscape; one that is sensitive to the confluence of material disadvantage, external labelling and the voice of people who are themselves homeless (Howe, 1998).

Methodology

The substantive discussion that follows draws extensively on a doctoral research project that set out to understand how citizenship gets reworked on the street, both in what people say and what people do (Gowan, 2002) via extended participant observation and exploratory interviews. As part of my research, I sought to ask homeless people questions about how they understand and, in some cases, experience new institutional arrangements and discursive claims that place particular emphasis on rights and responsibilities. My fieldwork would seem to suggest that the 'responsibilisation' thesis has developed in two significant (albeit different) ways in relation to the rough sleeping community. A focus on anti-social behaviour represents the first strand of this movement towards enforcing 'responsible citizenship' while a critical corollary is apparent in the 'enforced' decision taken by the day-centre to introduce a payment system for its lunchtime meal provision.

My principal research site is a voluntary day-centre for rough sleepers, wayfarers (men of the road) and those who have been resettled in a small market town in Dorset. It emerged in response to the death of a rough sleeper in a public toilet from hypothermia in 1999 when a small cadre of 'serial volunteers' and community activists mobilised in order to meet (however imperfectly) the immediate and identified needs of 'local' rough sleepers. In common with the majority of emergency services for homeless people it is financially dependent on statutory funding, very modest charitable grants and small acts of private philanthropy (see, for example, Johnsen et al., 2005). Organisationally it is underpinned by a strong and clear Christian ethos which, in turn, promotes and privileges the moral imperatives of caring for others and social justice (Cloke et al., 2005). Such philanthropic efforts have, in time, enabled the day-centre to become the focal point for targeted housing, health and other ancillary services. Notwithstanding some important and significant developments in recent years, there is a clear recognition that the extent and nature of support services for homeless people in rural Dorset is disjointed and incomplete.

In focusing on the controversial and contested question of charging service users for a hot meal, I am strongly influenced by the arguments of Mitchell Duneier (2002:1551) about the importance of moving beyond 'homeless places' in order to focus on how statutory organisations and community institutions, which are actively tasked with the promotion of 'behavioural changing' policies can affect the micro-settings under investigation. In this spirit, I have for example carried out interviews and 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102) with serving police officers, police community support officers, local housing authority officials, street outreach workers, health care professionals, parish councillors and a community news reporter. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Moreover, as a complement to this approach I have also examined official documents, media reports and 'grey literature' so as to more effectively grasp the framing of homelessness and associated interventions within this critical milieu.

Background

A question we can now begin to consider is in what way did the 'local community' act as a driving force in the decision to introduce a payment system for the lunchtime meal service. The purpose of this approach is to dramatise the way in which the existence of the day-centre for rough sleepers became an iconographic site for prevailing assumptions about the link between homelessness, anti-social behaviour and the perceived crisis of community cohesion. My concern is not is not to pass judgement on the day-centre but simply to illustrate that there is a sequencing in the events described herein. At the same time, I am not suggesting that the idea of charging homeless people for food is in any sense 'novel' or even radical. It is, for instance, easily identifiable in the policy and programmatic nostrums of Louise Casey - the New Labour apparatchik and former 'homelessness tsar' - and various arguments about welfare producing dependency (Fraser & Gordon, 1994: Dean, 1999). Rather, I wish to identify and articulate the critical exchange between the invocation of responsible citizenship and the contemporary governance of homelessness, a dimension that has been surprisingly overlooked in existing research. Having grasped this insight I now want to show how in the course of undertaking ethnographic fieldwork, I became increasingly aware that the principle of 'personal responsibility' and the overriding strategy of 'responsibilisation' were being deployed against rough sleepers. Through drawing attention to one particular way in which homelessness is mediated by the interface between formal and informal mechanisms of social control, the following discussion provides new inroads into the politics and praxis of responsible citizenship.

Killing with Kindness

Moving on to discus the phenomenon of responsibilsation in relation to my fieldwork, I want to reiterate that the impetus for the proposal came not from the day-centre but directly from a coalition of forces, principal among them Homeless Link , the district housing department and the local police. Embracing the 'Third Way' emphasis on community governance, we can begin to discern some of the ways in which the responsible citizenship discourse is employed in relation to homelessness (both service providers and service users). Two broad areas of concern here focus, first, on the ways in which the 'problem' of homelessness is reduced to a concern with a deficit model of personal responsibility and social obligation; second, on the ways in which community actors seek to incorporate the voluntary sector into their political strategies.

Over the spring and summer of 2007 the sight of literal and visible rough sleepers in the community gained particular prominence as a matter of intense public debate. As was well documented at the time (Adcock, 2007a), there was an emerging public consensus that attributed the rise of homelessness and homeless people within the locality to the existence of the day-centre. There were to two key dimensions to this unfolding process. In the first place, there was a strong and credible argument that the day-centre served to attract in-migrant homeless people. In the second place, the 'problem' of homelessness became subsumed by arguments about the enforcement of laws controlling public drinking, begging and intimidating dogs. This situation gave rise to fervent and impassioned debate which, in turn, divided along the lines of popular ire and public support. As one prominent parish and town councillor commented:

There are two camps over the day-centre – one that wants to close it down and the other that wants to put it on a proper footing (Adcock, 2007b).

In an attempt to dispel popular misconceptions about homeless people and to foster a greater sense of community understanding as to the deleterious consequences of homelessness the day-centre organised a high profile public seminar with the local Conservative MP, which was attended by over sixty-five people (Adcock, 2007c). Running in parallel to this, a Communities and Local Government (the Government Department that sets policy for housing and homelessness), specialist adviser was dispatched to the town in the aftermath of a hot-spot survey into street homelessness revealed significantly higher numbers of people sleeping rough than had been expected. While the Government adviser was initially tasked with reviewing the provision of services offered by the District Council to people in acute housing need significant attention was also given to the role played by voluntary organisations and community groups, principal among them the day-centre, in responding to needs of people experiencing homelessness. This exercise resulted, in part, in the reactivation of a long dormant homelessness forum and a fact-finding mission to Westminster City Council in order to visit the Passage (London's largest voluntary sector day-centre for homeless and vulnerable people) and the Metropolitan Police Safer Streets Homelessness Unit by representatives of the District Council housing department, the local police and the day-centre to learn about the 'Killing with Kindness' campaign (www.killingwithkindness.com). At the heart of the campaign are three interconnected concerns.

1. To divert people from giving to street beggars.
2. To reduce anti-social behaviour and substance 'misuse'.
3. Charging services users for a hot meal with a view to encouraging homeless people to a assume 'responsibility' for their own welfare.

It is a revised version of this model that was taken up by the police and the District Council, and ultimately led to the introduction of the payment system at the day-centre. As one senior officer put it:

Yeah I do think that they should pay. Now in this life you get nothing for free. And I think that the people who use the [day-centre] should realise that they've got a responsibility when they use it. The vast majority of them do get, or should get or could get benefits. I think that a lot of them do get benefits there. Why should they then get their food for free? What we want is for them to become responsible for their own lives. For many reasons they have slipped on the slope of life. They have lost responsibility. If [the management]

finds them a flat [then] how are they going to look after that flat if we don't make them responsible? [They need] those skills to be able to look after themselves.

What Choice?

Charging for food can be beneficial for some clients in order to enhance their budgeting skills and to appreciate the operation of the service they are accessing. However, in some cases – such as for clients with no resources to public funds – charging may not be appropriate (Homeless Link, 2008).

Driven by curiosity I accepted the invitation to participate in informal consultation exercises with volunteers and service users to determine the efficacy as well as the equitability of the proposal. From the outset, I became aware of a critical body of opinion within the day-centre that openly challenged the moral and practical dimensions of this recommendation. For their part, volunteers articulated concern that this model of 'tough love' would be counterproductive insofar as it would lead to fewer to service users accessing the day-centre and, by degrees, exacerbate food insecurity among a population known to suffer from chronically poor nutrition (Booth, 2006).

A typical comment was:

I know the management committee seems keen to introduce charging for the lunch. It will be interesting to see whether they [service users] decide to pay, go without lunch or stop attending [the day-centre] altogether.

Faced with this situation, and driven by an ethos to serve those in need, it became increasingly evident that there was considerable unease that the initiative would marginalise notions of altruism and caring (Baines & Hardill, 2008). There are two further dimensions worth noting here. First, the core argument was viewed as a threat to the relational and intrinsic rewards conferred on volunteers. Second, the proposal to introduce a payment system for hot food was seen to be coterminous with the wider movement to reconfigure welfare provision in terms of determining need to one of changing the behaviour of recipients. One reading of this situation is the notion that the day-centre exists outside the market oriented exchange. These two moments – food insecurity and the perceived threat to relational and intrinsic rewards – are pivotal to understanding the symbolic and contested nature of mobilisation of the vocabulary of responsible citizenship.

This statement, from a volunteer, reflected the feelings of many:

It will probably change how the project feels and operates. I, for one, am not persuaded. It might actually act as a deterrent and create a sense of shame and embarrassment among the users who are unable or unwilling to pay each day.

While agreeing with the sentiments expressed above, one particularly prominent volunteer remarked on the important role played by the day-centre in sustaining homeless people by providing points of contact with the wider community:

People tell me that they support the proposal but I worry it's because they think a decision has already been made. People want us to understand their situation; to be flexible I guess. My fear is that if people are unable to pay or think that they will accumulate debt it will mean that they might not feel comfortable coming or asking for help or advice.

This statement raises the issue of the degree to which homeless people can actively choose whether or not to patronise the day-centre. This theme was particularly strong. One reading of this is that it would give rise to an environment that is uncomfortable or at worst, exclusionary.

Reflecting on this the manager of the day-centre noted:

Our proposal to begin to charge for food has convinced me that questionnaires and interviews coming from the volunteers and service users project views that are coloured by the dynamics of power. I recently interviewed a group of half a dozen service users over a free lunch who reckoned that charging £1 for a meal was a good idea. They suggested that they could pay in advance when they received their giros. And going further:

Two weeks later and two of that group informed me that the idea that we were going to charge for the 'crap' we served at the [day-centre] was outrageous. I was [in the process] of asking them to leave as they were too drunk to attend the centre that day. *In vino veritas* perhaps. Or maybe, as they had nothing to lose, they felt that they could say what they really thought. Same with the volunteers. They mostly agreed with the idea when asked individually but when I introduced group discussions, with a strong character speaking first against the idea, others who had previously been in favour, including a champion, were now against [it].

Central to this response was an awareness of the exclusionary potential of the proposal. This perspective would also appear to echo Leo Howe's (1998) observation that socially excluded groups do not express explicit opposition to the prevailing social because it is perceived that the power of the latter makes this too dangerous, and thus engenders a forced acquiescence on the part of the weak.

Discussion

The impression that the number of [homeless people] is increasing is correct, and not just here in [Dorset], but everywhere. Local voluntary and statutory agencies working together are making every effort to control the numbers here, with some success, but it is not easy. These are urgent needs but they can only be met if the political will is aroused (Trustee).

From the beginning, reaction among service users was divided. One outspoken and dissenting voice argued:

It's not fair and it's not right. It might be happening elsewhere but it can't be right that we're expected to pay for the crap that's served-up. Making money out of the homeless, it's bloody outrageous. What's fucking next?

An alternative reading of the situation:

Most people agree that we should pay. It's not necessarily about being made to feel responsible but [recognising] the food is donated and cooked by those who give of their own time. 50p for a hot lunch is the cheapest meal in [town]; you can sit down and not feel like you're being watched or judged.

The following remarks were fairly standard:

Yes it is important to make a contribution, and I'm happy to do so. If you can, then you should. Absolutely … What if you can't? That's different, isn't it?

You're expected to pay for your dinner in Torquay. It kind of seems like most places do now, which is fair enough I suppose. The only thing is that it shouldn't be too expensive [because] then it becomes unfair and people are forced to make tough choices.

Implicit in this comment is a sense of *personal responsibility*. What it does not suggest, however, is that responsibility can be imposed or reduced to New Labour's emphasis on morality or the *active* remoralisation of homeless people. Rather, it seems to indicate that responsibility is negotiated within a perception of choices and constraints. Given the social and psychological pressures facing homeless people, there is a need to recognise that homeless people encode citizenship with cultural meanings which reflect both common and discrete experiences of social exclusion. It is this experience of existing on the outer edges of society, which enables us to the grasp how the experience of social exclusion has strong material as well as relational circumstances and consequences.

Anyone can become homeless. It might because of a divorce; perhaps you lose your job or have a breakdown and end up on the streets. It's like that MP [Caroline Flint] only been in the job a few minutes and saying that people should be kicked out and made homeless if they don't 'behave'. What kind of answer's that when people need real help? (Comment made by intermittent service user).

In this statement responsible citizenship is viewed as a moral assessment. This is especially important because it contests some of the core ideological assumptions of the responsibility discourse and, equally, critiques prevailing assumptions about homelessness and homeless people.

As one service user noted:

Sending people to prison isn't the answer. It's all wrong [because] it costs hundreds to put someone inside each day and thousands each year. And for what? You come out and before you know it you're back inside again…We [homeless people] need homes not prison. What's the government doing for people like us?

Arguing from the evidence adduced here it is clear that the service users challenged the pernicious view that homelessness can simply be reduced to a deficit model of citizenship. At one extreme some service users straightforwardly and unquestioning accepted the logic of the proposal. Here housing status was vital as it was generally people who had been resettled and working towards addressing drug or alcohol use, mental health problems, housing status, physical health and training and education needs. This would seem to suggest that while homeless and other vulnerable people are on the economic outcrop of society, it is not the case that they exist on the periphery of morality. Charting a middle course some service users simply acquiesced with the policy to charge for food. We can perhaps attribute this to feelings of embarrassment, reticence or stigma (Howe, 1985:68). At the other extreme service users resisted the idea on the basis that it discriminated against a community afflicted by penury and material want. This is not to imply that homeless people do not want to become part of the 'respectable' or mainstream society as evoked by the notion of responsible citizenship. Rather, it is to argue those who accessed the day-centre regarded the emphasis on social citizenship as seen in the work of T.H. Marshall (1950) as now being overshadowed by the centrality of rights and obligations in contemporary discursive accounts and institutional practices (Kivisto & Faist, 2007).

Conclusions

This discussion set out to raise fundamental questions about the link between homelessness, citizenship and the responsibilisation thesis. As a consequence of this, I have attempted to show that the idea that asking homeless people to pay for food engenders a sense of personal responsibility is not easily proved and, for that matter, neither does it address homelessness per se. The broader point is that speaking of responsible citizenship helps us to focus our attention on the explicit moral justifications that are employed against rough sleepers and other socially excluded groups. It also emphasises the degree to which 'the political narrative of community and individual responsibility is one that deliberately deflects attention from the causes of poverty' (Imrie & Raco, 2003:30).

Apart from the labelling and stereotyping, which the notion of responsible citizenship evokes, much of the dominant discourse about homelessness and citizenship is obscurantist. It is obscurantist precisely because it negates to recognise that the real cause of homelessness is not a lack of personal responsibility but a lack of affordable housing and good quality ancillary support services. This means two things. On one level this ethnographic example has demonstrated that responsible citizenship, rather than being a panacea for intractable social, economic and political problems, overlooks the fundamental point that homelessness is, for many people, about the pervasive effects of low status in a profoundly unequal society. On another level this discussion would appear to support the notion that 'who counts' as a responsible citizen should remain an object of debate within the social sciences. A necessary part of this process is the challenge of resetting the metronome of responsibility so that it better reflects the needs and aspirations of people with experience of homelessness and 'deep' social exclusion.

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