Citizenship on the Edge: Homeless Outreach and the City

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In this chapter, I want to consider the edge along which citizenship runs in the city. I do so on the basis of extended fieldwork spent in the company of welfare professionals working on the streets of Cardiff, the capital city of Wales, UK. I take as my starting point the idea that the work of welfare, social work in particular, and more particularly still outreach work with the street homeless, can be considered as taking place at or across a boundary; also, that encounters between outreach workers and their clients are, among other things, border transactions. As at any border, transactions conducted can take many forms, but they are given their edge by the border itself, never more so than when what is at stake are the movements of identity and belonging which occur when we move not only goods and services but ourselves from one side to the other—across, over. Ethnographer Michael Rowe (1999), to whose work I will turn in a moment, suggests that one of the possibilities at stake in such border transactions is citizenship itself.

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We are familiar enough with the idea that citizenship finds its limits at borders, at and along which movements and crossings assume a particular significance; this is the very stuff of, for example, international travel. At passport control we step up to a line and pause, waiting—anxiously—while identity and credentials are examined and verified. Our status as citizens is likely to be the crux of the matter. Waved across, we step into the territory beyond. We might do so in a number of ways, perhaps as a first-time visitor, or else as an experienced traveller, possibly as a home-comer, wearily pleased to be back where we feel we belong (perhaps curious as to how things might have changed in our absence). The sharp edge of citizenship is seldom so clearly marked out as when an immigration official invites you to step up to and across a line (Jenkins 2014). Elsewhere the edge of citizenship is harder to see. Yet questions of belonging and membership, identity, entitlement and expectation are everywhere, as are the lines and edges across which such questions are explored and tested. They are certainly a part of the fabric of any city. In what follows, I examine only one of the ways in which the edge of citizenship is traced out in and around one city in particular: Cardiff. I hope to consider some of the work this involves and the issues at stake. Some introductory remarks will help frame and provide context to the account I will develop.

The City and the Edge, and Citizenship

It is no accident of language that the words citizenship and city can be found close together in a dictionary, and side by side in at least one encyclopaedia of social science (Kuper and Kuper 1996). Historically, the words are twinned, citizenship denoting belonging and rights and duties owed in respect of the city. To be a citizen was once to be so as a member of a city state or polis,[1] the very edge of which might well have been marked concretely, by a wall. To enter the city you had to cross over or pass through. Doing so was at the same time a matter of gaining admittance to a territory within which citizenship held good for those so designated. To stand in the middle of the city looking out and across the cityscape was also to look out and across a domain of citizenship and to the territory beyond it. And the line dividing the two

marked the limits of each: an edge, within which was the city and citizenship (at least for some), beyond which was neither. So: the city and citizenship, each of these ringed by the same edge. If the question is, or was, along what edge does citizenship run, then there was a time when to trace that line was at the same time to trace the edge that encircled the city. Not anymore. The idea that one might surround and demarcate the city—thereby signalling and accomplishing a division between those inside and those without—seems quaint and unlikely today, to say the least, and would do almost anywhere in the world. Most modern cities have never been so encircled. City walls today more commonly hold up the roofs of buildings than ring the city, but this has by no means prevented city life from being marked by very definite lines of difference and division.

Sociologist Richard Sennett is one of a number of sociological commentators to have reflected on the ways in which the geography of the modern city can signal inclusion, exclusion and status without the need for walls. Reflecting on such urban divisions he draws on his own biography, having grown up in a US public housing project—Cabrini Green in Chicago, to which he moved with his mother in 1946, aged three. Sennett recalls Cabrini Green as located in a locally understood and keenly experienced geography of inequality, standing and stigma. 'To the west of the project' writes Sennett, 'space meant more': suburban developments, houses with garages and private lawns, 'signs a family was rising into the lower middle class' (Sennett 2004, 9). Nothing so evident or absolute as a wall marked the distinction and transition; even so, stuck where space meant less, residents of Cabrini Green could appreciate the difference, and suffer from it.

Sennett recollects his city upbringing so as to introduce a theme: respect. His account of life in Cabrini Green supplies the opening chapter to his book *Respect: The Formation of Character in an Age of Inequality* (2004), a good part of which is given over to dilemmas of dependency and assistance and different methods of care, including those practised by social workers (his mother was a social worker). Puzzling out some of the dilemmas of assistance, respect and dependency, Sennett suggests that social work can be considered a task that involves practitioners in the crossing of a 'boundary of inequality'

(Sennett 2004, 20), and it is this idea that care and attention paid to others in need, in the context of social work practice broadly conceived, might involve the crossing of a boundary, that I aim to consider here. Note that we have moved already from walls around the city to something not at all so certain and concrete, to a graduated social geography spread across the cityscape—appreciated and understood by local inhabitants, if not marked out as a sharp edge—and, from there, to something more abstract or notional still, a boundary of inequality, implying and requiring no physical, tactual geography at all—but all the same an edge, across which society might extend itself (and find its limit) in responding to the needs of others.

Everyday Borders and Homeless Encounters

Border crossings can signify a great deal or (seemingly) not very much at all, but not a day goes by that we don't undertake a good few; borders are ubiquitous, a persistent and repeated feature of the organisation of everyday life. Michael Rowe makes this very point in the closing pages to his study of encounters between homeless people and outreach workers in the USA. He writes: '[w]e cross a foggy border of sleep to find our waking selves. An hour later our working selves greet us at the office. We encounter boundaries of self and other, of task and situation. We create and use borders as starting and stopping points for thought' (Rowe 1999, 156). This understanding of borders repeatedly made and used in the round of daily life is available to anyone, not only ethnographers and sociologists. If borders supply an everyday architecture of thought and action, then we might expect any number of others to appreciate this, including architects themselves. And indeed they do. Simon Unwin, for one, invites us to consider the pervasive powers of the doorway, an elementary element in the architectural organisation of space, passing through which 'affects our states of being; who we think we are as well as where we find ourselves' (Unwin 2007, 3). To arrive somewhere and step up to and across a line, through to the other side, is to experience a transition in state of being:

[y]ou move away from being a 'person outside' into a 'person inside', from being a 'person at large' to being a 'person at home', from being a 'person lost' into a 'person who knows where they are'. The catalyst of this transformation is the doorway. And when you are on one side or the other, the doorway gives you a view into another place … the doorway divides your world, and in doing so, provokes a sense of 'otherness'. (Unwin 2007, 12)

Stepping through a doorway is no more than a minor accomplishment, repeated countless times in the course of a single day. But even as we do so there is the potential always for transformation, for some affirmation or denial of the self—as someone inside and reliably located, or outside, at large and perhaps lost. The sense of otherness implied by any border or division (unattributed to any person or category of person in particular, by Unwin) is exactly that which Michael Rowe suggests might organise our understanding of homelessness. He writes:

Homelessness is, in part, a bureaucratic and political category. Its divisions by time served, demographics, disability, or the sheer bad luck of its occupants are abstractions that give order to our thinking and help us allocate scarce resources for unlimited human needs. The otherness of homelessness has its special stigmata, derived from history, from observation of homeless persons, and from our pity, disgust, and fears. We mentally place homeless individuals at our symbolic border and see them as living apart from us, perhaps because of our uncomfortable feeling of closeness to them. (Rowe 1999, 156)

For Rowe, the border between ourselves and others makes homelessness what it is. Clearly we have moved some distance from the everyday— the implication is that the reader belongs to the category 'us' not the category 'other'. Even so, Simon Unwin's comments on everyday architecture supply a ready vocabulary with which to understand the extremity of need that the term homelessness can signal, someone outside, at large and perhaps lost.[2] And what is more than this, Rowe suggests that the border at and beyond which the homeless stand, is a border marking the limit or edge to social obligation and belonging, and, as such, a

border across which citizenship may be offered, established, accepted or declined.

At this point, it will help to say a little more about Rowe's exemplary study of homeless outreach encounters, as a precursor to my own comments, based as these are on observations of this same practice in the city of Cardiff. Rowe's ethnography *Crossing the Border* provides a close account of the interactions between a team of mental health outreach workers and their possible clients: homeless people living out of doors and on the streets in the city of New Haven, Connecticut. The book details the work of encounter and interaction in which outreach workers engage as they attempt to identify and approach clients—on the street, where they may be found—and enrol them in relations of assistance and intervention; also the delicate negotiations that ensue as homeless people themselves deliberate over whether or not to accept such identifications and approaches and offers of assistance and intervention in their lives. *Crossing the Border* has a great many strengths, not least of which is Rowe's insistence that outreach encounters:

> do not stand alone. They require homeless individuals to be rescued and outreach workers to be dispatched… they will lack substance if we fail to consider both homeless persons' experience of homelessness and the seductions and dangers that come for outreach workers who wander far from the centers of institutional life. (Rowe 1999, 3)

Commendably, Rowe's study does not treat the homeless as passive recipients of services extended to them by workers dispatched to their aid. Instead he is concerned to explore outreach encounters as transactional. Each party to the outreach transaction—workers on the one hand and homeless people on the other—has a part to play and a stake in what might (or might very well not) be accomplished. And if outreach encounters are a two-way process, involving various moves and stakes—risks, refusals, confirmations of status, affirmations of role, promises—as Rowe depicts them, then the essential stake is citizenship. This is so in at least two senses, each related to the other. Whatever other and intermediate services outreach workers might have to offer, they are always working towards the wider possibility that the marginal

and excluded individuals they encounter might accept the offer of assistance in the making of a return to citizenship and the social mainstream (the seeming puzzle that anyone might need persuading of this is something I return to below). Put another way, outreach encounters take place at a perimeter and involve border crossings. Outreach workers must step away from office-based welfare work (and its conventional trappings) in order to locate and approach possible clients on the streets; those homeless people who respond to the outreach offer must weigh up whether they want help in stepping back across a line of inequality and exclusion behind which they may have assembled coping strategies and compensations fitted to a circumstance they know full well to be subject to negative societal judgement. Each side has to make a move, or at least consider the possibility of doing so. How far are outreach workers prepared to go in attempts to engage a possible client? What will it cost a homeless person to admit their need and respond to kindly assistance, committing to a movement back across a line they had begun to think of as crossed for good? Any movement either way brings opportunity and anxiety combined; there are risks and ambiguous shifts in status. And the line or edge along which the work is practised is a line of citizenship. Rowe is quite clear on this:

> to talk about borders and crossings is to say there is a line to cross and that homeless persons and outreach workers stand on either side of it … *border* will refer in part to the point at which mainstream society loses its hold and in part to perceptions of borders and the routes by which perception becomes reality. (Rowe 1999, 2; italics in original)

This is an edge that defines both homelessness and outreach, and marks the extent of citizenship; and it runs through the city, not around it, threading together various locations in which outreach workers find it best to practise.

I am now in a position to turn to my own research and observations, similarly ethnographic and similarly directed to the work of urban outreach with the street homeless. In doing so, I hope to keep up the movement I have already established, back and forth, between the physical geography and shape of the city on the one hand and the

boundaries of inequality and citizenship along and across which out-reach practitioners patrol.

Centre and Margin on Callaghan Square, Cardiff

Cardiff was once a walled city, surrounded by a substantial defensive structure six feet thick in places, the early construction of which dates back to mediaeval times. The wall has long since disappeared—the last substantial section was demolished in 1901; a very few surviving fragments can still be found, at a couple of locations in what is now the city centre, no longer its limit. But lines of difference and inequality, citizenship too, are as much a part of the fabric of Cardiff as they ever were.

Callaghan Square in central Cardiff is as good a place to start as any; it is the heart of Cardiff's business district, adjacent to the main shopping and retail streets and transport hub. The square is rather dominated by traffic and office developments and lacks an organic character, with the result that its central concourse is a little under-used. If you were to take a seat here—there are concrete benches, some urban planting, pools and modern fountains—you might very well find yourself alone. But the location is instructive, so we will rest here briefly. Sat on a bench on Callaghan Square, facing west, one finds oneself positioned along an axis dividing two sides to city life—in Cardiff, perhaps elsewhere too by imaginative extension. To one's right, along one side of the square, a large office complex houses the local headquarters of the international law firm Eversheds. Further along there are the office headquarters of the professional services firm Deloitte (consultancy and corporate finance) and also British Gas (this building reportedly sold to overseas investors a few months ago, in a deal worth more than £32 million). Beyond these office premises, further ahead and rightwards, there is Cardiff's central train station and behind that the national sports stadium of Wales—the Millennium Stadium (currently, for sponsorship purposes, the Principality Stadium). Between the station and the stadium, the skyline bristles with construction cranes busily at work on a major redevelopment of Cardiff's Central Square, set to become

'a proud new Gateway to the Capital of Wales … [reflecting] Cardiff's ambition to be amongst Europe's most successful cities'.[3]

To the left, things look more than a little different. Along the left-hand side of Callaghan Square, behind a galvanised steel security fence, is a large, vacant plot of land, awaiting development: nondescript and scrubby—mud, grass, a few plastic bags and drinks cans. Behind this plot is a large hostel for single homeless people, including those with drug, alcohol or mental health problems, run by the Salvation Army. A few hundred yards further on, still leftwards, is another hostel, this one run by the local authority. And next to that, a complex of municipal office buildings housing a range of support services for homeless people; the local authority's *Housing Options* advisory service is located here, so too its *City Centre Team*, tasked to work with vulnerable adults, particularly those finding themselves homeless or otherwise in need out of doors and on the streets, in the centre of the city. This is the team of practitioners whose work has particularly interested me in recent years and whose practice I will draw on exclusively in the second half of this chapter.

There is no visible seam or fault running down the middle of Callaghan Square, marking the divide between these two sides to the city, no painted line, or wall; but the contrast is stark, or can be made to seem so when set out as I have done so above, for effect. On the one side a corporate city and aspiring European Capital. On the other side something less seemly, although just as much a part of the life of any city: need and vulnerability, neglect, and various charitable and statutory responses to these—assistance, intervention, provision, protection. Perhaps each side could be said to keep to its own half of the city, at least in the sense that you would be unlikely to find a resident at the Salvation Army hostel holding down a day job as a lawyer; no more likely than you might expect to find a corporate finance consultant eating lunch in the *Housing Options* canteen. But elsewhere and throughout the city, out of doors and on the streets, in the parks and concourses—on Callaghan Square even, were it not so often empty—these two sides to city life muddle together somehow as they must do, as must also happen with any and all differences that a city might host and contain. This muddling together is not without its patterns and

striations, however; urban divisions are not lost to the crowd. Rather, those divisions repeatedly reveal themselves, sometimes in uncomfortable juxtaposition. Lines of inequality and belonging, of need and obligation, of citizenship, run tangled through the city.

One final observation from Callaghan Square, having looked first right and then left. If one were to shift around and look backwards and behind, over one's shoulder, what more might be seen? Answer: another vacant plot, awaiting redevelopment, and behind that an office building, only recently constructed and as yet unoccupied. But in front of both of these, and concealing each to a degree, is a wall of advertising hoardings, one of these digital, featuring a scrolling sequence of electronic notices and promotions. The scrolling images are conventional and commercial save for one, which jars with the rest: a missing persons ad, asking for help and information from anyone who might have seen an elderly woman (photograph and description supplied) much missed by her family who are worried about her and want her found, hopefully safe and well; someone who has been lost and may, for all anyone knows, be out of doors.

Outreach Work in Central Cardiff: Missing People

Not everyone who goes missing is found again, sadly. What is more, not everyone who goes missing is even missed. Some absences go unreported; some people disappear without anyone having noticed. These, the unmissed, are not necessarily too hard to find, or even too far away. Their absence is unadvertised. Among them are the homeless. Men and women who have lost contact with the some of the routines and responsibilities, also the reassurances, of work and housing, of regular hours, of family and support networks, and whose personal and financial circumstances expose them to the risk of moving 'out' and beyond the point at which society is able and willing to fully recognise and support them. The sorts of provision I have mentioned above as running along one side of Callaghan Square in Cardiff—the hostels, accommodation

projects and services—represent a last resort in this context: emergency accommodations meeting minimal requirements for those who have reached the end of the line, have lost their own means of support and drifted out to the very fringe of entitlement, with nowhere else to go. Residents at the Salvation Army and local authority hostels could be described as having secured for themselves a place at the edge of entitlement, and perhaps a sort of second-class citizenship—but a citizenship all the same, a measure of recognition and inclusion. To move any further out, past these fringe entitlements, would be to move to the very edge of social membership and into the otherness of homelessness, on the streets of the city.

A number of individuals sleep at night on the streets of Cardiff and somehow manage their daily lives out of doors in the centre of the city (no more in number than in other UK cities; Cardiff is not unusual in this). Those who are 'out' in this way are at the sharp end of homelessness, and in a number of cases, the accommodation difficulties they experience come tangled up with other severe disadvantages and difficulties. In the language of UK policy, the label that comes closest to describing this circumstance is Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH), which can be defined as follows:

> People have experienced MEH if they have been '*homeless*' (including experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) *and* have also experienced one or more of the following other domains of 'deep social exclusion': '*institutional care*' (prison, local authority care, mental health hospitals or wards); '*substance misuse*' (drug, alcohol, solvent or gas misuse); or participation in 'street culture activities' (begging, street drinking, 'survival' shoplifting or sex work). (Fitzpatrick et al. 2012, 1; italics in original)

To be this sort of homeless is to lack or have lost quite probably a number of things, more than just a place of one's own. Some might be said to have lost any expectation of assistance, or much interest in making any sort of change.

The outreach work that I will now describe is addressed, principally, to this condition; it is work with those whose needs have pushed them

far enough 'out' from the familiar centres of life for mainstream society, as Rowe has it, to have begun to lose its hold. The local authority in Cardiff employs a multidisciplinary team (housed in offices off to one side of Callaghan Square) including health, care and social work professionals, whose job it is to work with vulnerable adults whose needs manifest, in some way or other, in public space—street homelessness is a major area of work, but also drug use and addiction, and sex work. Clients of the team are not only those who stand in some sort of visible need of health, housing and support services but also and especially those who appear to be struggling to access those services independently. Team members are tasked to engage with and support such individuals, supplying immediate assistance where possible, assessing needs and negotiating entry to appropriate mainstream and specialist provision. This team is known locally (to those who need to know of its existence) as the City Centre Team. Essential members of the City Centre Team include a small sub-team of outreach workers, whose particular job it is to make first contact with potential clients and to work and negotiate with them up until such a point as they can be persuaded to engage with other team members—social work staff, for example—and access the services to which the City Centre Team acts as gatekeeper. Getting through to new clients, and persuading them to accept assistance and take steps to address their current needs and circumstances can be a challenge; it is one of two key challenges that define outreach work.

Why would anyone in such an extremity of circumstance need persuading to accept help and services? Answers are suggested by the MEH definition supplied above. Individuals captured by this definition are sometimes also described as 'entrenched' or 'hard-to-reach'. The challenge to which these phrasings refer is something indirect, not homelessness itself as a material circumstance, but, rather, the inevitable accommodations and adjustments made by those who *have* to get by, somehow or other, within that circumstance. The hard-to-reach homeless include those whose reworked priorities, habituated behaviours, circuits of practice and association make them difficult and unreliable clients: suspicious of offers of help, sometimes in denial (or something close to it) about the damage in their own lives, negative and fatalistic in

their outlook, sometimes angry or disorientated or evasive, some of them firmly embedded in networks of practice and outlook—glossed as 'street culture' in the MEH definition—of the sort that make sense enough in situ, but which invariably further entangle. This is the essential challenge of outreach work: to reach out and across such difficulties—the difficulties of homelessness itself, but also the evasions and refusals and suspicions which can come enmeshed with that same material circumstance. Outreach workers are not only there to help, but also, in some instances—by no means all, but a good few—to persuade those in need that help is what they want. *What are you doing here? Why should I trust you? Why can't you just leave me alone?* These can be harder questions for an outreach worker to answer persuasively than might at first seem to be the case. And every such suspicion or refusal of assistance, every continuing self-destructive action, helps inscribe a line at which societal response and citizenship might begin to falter, as has begun already for a number of Cardiff's street homeless, whose mistrust of mainstream housing and welfare services is matched by an unwillingness on the part of at least some of the professionals working in those fields to prioritise their needs. Caring for the street homeless is hard work, and hard work is not always its own reward: '[c]are providers do not always make a full effort for these people, particularly when they are not motivated or avoid help. What care providers need themselves—the reward that clients follow up instructions, attend appointments, express their gratitude—is not forthcoming' (Schout et al. 2011, 670). Under such circumstances care, avoidance and institutional disinclination can amplify each other, scoring the line more heavily still.

Outreach Work in Central Cardiff: Patrolling the Edge

I have suggested that two key challenges define homeless outreach work in Cardiff. The first has to do with outreach clients being hard to enrol as clients in the first place, and, as such, hard to bring back onside and across the line, into contact with the services and local provision that

constitutes something of what citizenship might count for. Richard Sennett suggests that the task of somehow managing offers of care and support made across a boundary of inequality—perhaps citizenship too—is a challenge faced by all welfare workers.[4] What needs managing is the respect with which such offers are made, such that an offer of assistance does not undermine or shame those in their need. Ideally, there is reciprocity of a sort, and mutual recognition; those in receipt of assistance are positioned as something other than passive beneficiaries. Rowe's notion of a symbolic border, across which the work of outreach gets done signals something of the inherently reciprocal nature of outreach work—passivity will not do here as it is the very receipt of welfare services, not yet stably established, that outreach workers hope to accomplish. The first challenge of outreach proceeds from the uncomfortable fact that those at the sharpest end of homelessness, whose lives are hard enough already, have good reason, some of them, to cleave to a known if numbing existence (Rowe 1999, 106–107) rather than risk the uncertainty of opening their lives up to change and, beyond that, what may prove to be no more no more than a second class citizenship.[5] The second challenge, however, has rather less to do with any symbolic or notional border, of citizenship or inequality; and less to do with the various moves—exploratory, transactional, concessionary, movements of identity and status—made back and forth across such borders in the context of the work of care. Instead, the challenge is to find the clients in the first place; to locate them physically, wherever it is they might be. This might seem a rather less interesting challenge, but my aim in what remains of this chapter is to suggest that it is not at all uninteresting and to submit also that attention paid to this aspect of outreach work might signal an important aspect of citizenship in the city.

Outreach workers in Cardiff are office-based, as I have already indicated; their work premises is off to one side of Callaghan Square, close to the train station and city centre retail and business precincts. But their practice is not one that keeps them indoors. Their clients are, by definition, unlikely to present themselves in person, looking for assistance; they do not reliably make or keep appointments, and are not sat in the reception to the *Housing Options* advisory service or similar offices, dutifully waiting to be 'seen'. Instead the city's homeless are 'out'

there, somewhere. By no means out of reach if that were taken to mean far away—beyond the city limits—but in any case out, and not coming in, just yet.

Where exactly? Not too far away is one sort of answer. For reasons which I will assume to be apparent to most readers, homelessness of the sort that I am writing about in the city of Cardiff, as in other cities around the world, tends to show itself in central space and is less of a visible 'problem' elsewhere—in the suburbs, for example. But just where *exactly*? It is hard to be precise, because the circumstance in question is one that has to do with lacking a location, a home, an address, to call one's own. Cardiff's street homeless may very well be close to hand, not too very far from Callaghan Square; but they are not always so very visible, and not reliably *anywhere*. They know very well where they are themselves, or may do (depending on sobriety and state of mind), but others do not. And they are in that sense missing, or—again—hard-to-reach; only this time being hard-to-reach presents a spatial rather than a social and psychological challenge. And before any welfare work can even begin, they have to be found. This is a job in itself, and not a small one; it takes a good deal of outreach time, every day. Indeed, looking *for* clients defines the work, for those that do it, almost as much as does the close interactive business of working *with* clients, once they have been located That this is so bears directly on my theme, and (in my own reworking of it) the wider theme of this collection: citizenship and the edge along which it runs.

How then do outreach workers move? What gets them going and where do they go? These questions deserve a number of answers, more than I can supply here; readers can turn to my own ethnography of outreach work (Hall 2016) for a fuller treatment. What I want to do here is no more than to draw a distinction between only two ways in which outreach workers set about finding those they hope to encounter and engage. On occasion, outreach workers step out across Callaghan Square and into the city centre in pursuit of a *particular individual*— a missing person, as it were—perhaps because they have received a call from a concerned member of the public, or the police, or a retail manager, about someone in difficulties—drunk, distressed, collapsed, disorientated; either that or, in receipt of some new piece of relevant

information, perhaps news of a toxic batch of heroin recently sur-
faced in the city, they will chase after known and particular clients to
whom this news must be conveyed. (They may also set out to locate
individual clients not presumed to be in any immediate difficulty but
due somewhere today, in consequence of arrangements made in the
days preceding—a drugs counselling session, a doctor's appointment,
a job interview.) Such individual forays, in search of this or that per-
son in particular are part of the fabric of almost any working day, but
they do not in themselves constitute the essential spatial practice of out-
reach. Outreach workers also move in order to find and reach out to
those they don't yet know they are looking for. That is, they explore—
nowhere new, but instead a territory they know intimately—making
repeated daily circuits of the city centre in order to turn up the day's
work, updating their practitioner knowledge of who is 'out' and where
exactly and in what sort of circumstances. I am going to call this second
spatial practice, in which outreach workers move around the city, not
destination orientated, not looking for anyone in particular but wholly
attentive to whatever they might come across, *patrol*. Every working day
for the City Centre Team is bookended by two such patrols, one in the
early morning, the other in the early evening, each lasting a good couple
of hours and sometimes more. A general description will allow me to
move to a concluding discussion.

   An evening's outreach patrol in the centre of Cardiff has no set route,
nor any exact schedule and timetable—though it is in another sense
routine, performed every working day, without fail. At or around the
end of office hours, members of the outreach team will set aside other
tasks and gather together to head out across the city on group patrol.
They carry phones and notebooks, advice leaflets and minimal first
aid, little else—perhaps a few blankets or items of food to distribute;
they will be dressed for the outdoors and in standard issue workwear
or its close approximation (including 'safety' footwear suited to uneven
ground and offering protection from the shards of glass, rusted cans
and brambles that litter and trail across the sorts of ground that out-
reach sometimes covers). Over the course of the next 2 or 3 h, they will
wend their way through the centre of the city, never more than a mile

at most from where they started out, on a course that, were it traced across a map, would look not unlike the course of someone who was unsure of their location, or lost—full of backtrackings, diversions, circumnavigations. Or if not lost, then looking for something—which is rather closer to the truth. The path traced out across the city results not from any uncertainty about the local territory but, quite the opposite, from expertise and experience, a professionally tuned understanding of the ways in which appropriate movement across the city might turn up the sorts of need to which the work of outreach is addressed. Outreach workers know what they are about as they move around the city, but this is not exactly the same as knowing where they are going at any one point along the way. Outreach patrol does not run on rails; it is an ad hoc spatial practice liable to be overtaken at any point by whatever it might be that outreach workers glimpse or come across. Thus, setting out across Callaghan Square, the team may have it in mind to look in at a small number of established sites: locations they know to be in use, or at which they can be half-way confident of coming across someone or something of interest. But there will be no firm commitment to any of this. Along the way they may fall into conversation with a client who lets slip that a couple, new in town, have made a space for themselves in the far corner of municipal gardens. Walking past a tired-looking office building, recently vacated and awaiting redevelopment, outreach workers may spy a half open window and move in closer to investigate. Straddling a wall, they shift around the side of a footbridge to the scrubby grass beyond, wedged between the rear of a hotel and the train tracks. On a whim they may branch off to check somewhere they haven't been in a while—the rear garden of an empty residential property, 5 min' walk from the river bridge—if only to confirm what they suspected: no one there.

In this manner, any one evening's patrol is likely to string together a collection of quite disparate though proximate locations (and the gaps in between) sharing, all of them, possible affordances for shelter, occupancy, respite and the offer of assistance. These locations might include some of the set-piece public spaces of the city, the main pedestrian streets and concourses—though these are less likely to reward

attention, as the homeless struggle to gain a hold in such settings and are repeatedly moved on (Hall and Smith 2013)—but also, and more often, certain corners and particularly *edges*, indistinct margins in the middle of the city, indeterminate spaces where ownership might seem moot or stalled somehow, and which escape ordinary attention: road-side verges, building perimeters and fire exit stairwells, underpasses, neglected niche spaces and what urban planners sometimes call *lost space*: 'the no-man's-lands along the edges of freeways that nobody cares about maintaining, much less using … abandoned waterfronts, train yards … vacant blight-clearance sites … residual areas between districts … deteriorated parks' (Trancik 2007, 64).[6]

All of which is to say that outreach as a spatial practice traces a line of moot and available—public?—space in the centre of the city, keeping to the edge of things but always in the middle. Outreach workers on patrol in Cardiff never leave the city centre and would not see the sense in doing so. Their work belongs only where the homeless already are—which is along the edge of, and in the gaps in between, available city centre space.

Edgework in the City

My purpose has been to consider the edge of citizenship as it is made manifest in empirical work with which I am familiar, having spent time with practitioners over a number of years whose job it is to reach out to the street homeless in central Cardiff. If the line or edge of citizenship no longer runs like a ring around the city, demarking city limits and a border of belonging—set in stone (it never did so exclusively; citizenship has always muddled along with other positions and status roles within the city walls), then today the same line is perhaps best described as 'diffused and dispersed within the city' (Borden 2000, 22). And if so, then outreach workers can be described as tasked to trace out this dispersed and rather more tangled line of belonging. They do so as workers dispatched to the social margins to test the limits of societal responsibility, but also in a material city scape which they must need to navigate.

If the line of citizenship in the city is no longer set in stone it nonetheless runs through a concrete cityscape, and the spatial practice of outreach workers is, in this way, coupled with a working knowledge of a series of material urban affordances: those (dwindling) locations in which the homeless can find space for themselves in the city.

Are such spaces lost? Perhaps they are, in the terminology of urban planning. More than this, however, we are losing them. In the centre of Cardiff, as in a great many UK cities, the sorts of residual site and deteriorated setting that the term 'lost space' was coined to capture are in retreat, as those cities busily reconfigure their economies in keeping with a contemporary common sense of 'competitiveness and boosterism' (Hooper 2006, 12) of the sort that is driving the redevelopment of Cardiff's Central Square. To have followed the work of homeless outreach services in the centre of Cardiff as I have done for close to 10 years is not only to have observed a running battle between the city's homeless and the changing cityscape—space found, lost, found again; space secured, breached, abandoned, rediscovered—but also, over time, a rather more one-sided engagement, in the course of which opportunities to make a small corner for yourself, in which to be left alone with your need—and perhaps in due course discovered by an outreach worker—have decidedly shrunk. It is, in this sense, harder to be homeless in the middle of Cardiff today than it was 10 years ago. Harder too to be an outreach worker.

Thinking about how to respond to the changing face of a city centre— brighter, busier, cleaner, smarter, livelier; all the things that Cardiff aims to be and is becoming—and to those ways in which such changes might inflect and impact upon citizenship as experienced in that space, involves treading yet another line or edge: between a surely unhelpful nostalgia for older unredeemed city space—dirtier and unlicensed, but somehow more real and accommodating—and an uncritical enthusiasm for the many surface pleasures and benefits of a regenerated cityscape. Among the many issues at stake, is the question of citizenship: of who belongs in the centre of the city, of who can find a place and be found there. This is a question to which outreach work with the city centre homeless—edgework of a sort—is directly addressed.[7]

Notes

1. As David Harvey notes, 'the term "city" has an iconic and symbolic history that is deeply embedded in the pursuit of political meanings' (2013: xvi).
2. Kevin Lynch, in his classic study *The Image of the City*, suggests: '[t]he very word "lost" in our language means much more than simple geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of utter disaster' (1960, 4).
3. See centralsquarecardiff.co.uk.
4. Sennett is clear that while citizenship and inequality are in tension with one another, they are not in contradiction; he directs readers back to the work of T.H. Marshall, whose model of (social) citizenship did not promise an end to inequality but rather a means by which to address those inequalities that can be avoided or ameliorated, thereby providing a foundation for those that cannot (see Sennett 2004, 261–262; also Bulmer and Rees 1996).
5. Which is where passivity (re)enters the equation. Whatever the give and take in the initial negotiation of relations of trust and assistance between worker and client, the unpalatable truth that 'haunts both parties' (Rowe 1999, 113) to the outreach encounter is that those persuaded to make a return to the social mainstream may face a very marginal existence there—marginal *as* included: 'the idea that homeless persons are returning to any niche that society has kept open for them may be fanciful … after arriving at the mainland, the homeless person's status as a poor immigrant becomes most apparent. The barrenness of the landscape that stretches before him cannot be ignored'.
6. Anne Lovell describes a similar territory, writing about outreach services and street homelessness in New York: 'outreach workers cruise city parks and transportation terminals, comb drop-in centres, and occupy empty storefronts … the less visible recesses of the urban infrastructures … in and out of anonymous urban spaces.' (1997, 357).
7. The term 'edgework' is already established in the sociological literature, and refers to voluntary risk taking (see Lyng 1990), although even this definition can encompass various sorts of risky employment, particularly those involving the deployment of flexible and on-the-spot strategies for responding to circumstance and situation. At a stretch

this would hold good for outreach work. Edgework is certainly what outreach workers are all about, both as operators across boundaries of difference and inequality, and in their convoluted spatial practice (Lyng 1990).

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