

SOLDIERING ON?

AN ANALYSIS OF HOMELESSNESS AMONGST EX-SERVICEMEN

by

Paul Richard Higate

M. A. (Hons) in Sociology, University of Glasgow

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Centre for Housing Policy/Department of Social Policy and Social Work

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Abstract

The complex links between full-time military service and homelessness represent the central research focus of this thesis. Material produced from twenty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews with a mix of single homeless ex- and non ex-servicemen illustrates the relevance of hitherto unconsidered elements of human agency, within both the genesis and sustaining of insecure accommodation status. The contextual backdrop to these social phenomena concern the 'traditional' military located within a 'detraditional' society.

In furthering understanding of the ways in which individuals experience homelessness, analysis of the empirical materials is centred around the themes of travel, the emotions and embodiment. In the case of travel, single homeless ex- and non ex-servicemen are shown to be highly mobile. Impetus for movement is understood through the gender-dimension. Here, travel offers a legitimate escape route for relationships that become excessively close; particular men become 'heroes' of their own journeys that have a somewhat fluid point of start and finish. Discussions of the repressed emotional 'inner life' of the participants characterized by a fierce pride and self-reliance give an insight into the ways in which a number of single homeless ex-servicemen experience great difficulty in seeking assistance when in times of need. When combined with the tenacity of a body trained in the military to resist cold and hunger, the emergence of homelessness appears as part-rational response to limited conditions of possibility.

Whilst the themes outlined above represent novel approaches to understanding this particular form of social exclusion, the influence of structural inequalities is accorded weight with regard to the marginalized status of these individuals. In the final analysis, asymmetries between the housing and labour markets resonate throughout opportunity for membership to mainstream society.

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PREFACE

Rapid social and political change brings with it a number of negative consequences that require balanced and considered analysis, from a range of critical perspectives. The following study is intended to contribute towards debates that centre on a fundamental manifestation of social exclusion - that of homelessness. The rationale for this work is to be found in the capacity of the human condition to adapt and adopt to change. Framed in these terms, the challenge for researchers of social life in this field is to *resensitize* the well-resourced and relatively powerful many to the problem of homelessness - a phenomenon that has been largely neutralized on account of its creeping normalization. This study then, drawing on an eclectic range of contemporary sociological thought, offers a range of responses oriented at rekindling interest in the lives of individuals who are noted to move between marginal and mainstream status, with insecure accommodation characterizing the former experience.

A complex understanding of human agency is developed throughout the thesis within the context of material inequality, in which the emotional and embodied realms are invoked. For example, the physical body is rather more than a carriage for the mind; it should be understood as sentient, with concomitant resonance on the actions of human agents. In a parallel sense, the influence of emotional lives should not be downplayed with regard to the conditions of possibility for individuals subject to particular social forces. The material consequences of the frequently unacknowledged emotional realm contributes towards the extent to which human action is deemed both appropriate and legitimate, to the self and others. These particular understandings pivot on the largely neglected and taken for granted dimension of gender. Clues to the genesis and sustaining of homelessness are to be found within the paradoxical features of contemporary masculinized identity amongst an experientially homogeneous group of men.

Ultimately, discussion is oriented at bathing the debates around homelessness in a sharper and more sophisticated light. Though grounded within empirical examination of a small

number of cases, this work should be understood as contributing to considerably wider issues of social exclusion and inequality in the contemporary period.

Rationales underlying thesis structure should be contingent on the nature of the study in question, rather than rigid adherence to formulaic convention. For this reason, a discrete literature review is not offered. Rather, introduction and discussion of relevant materials is grounded within the context of analysis, whether it be more theoretically inclined work as is noted in Chapters 1 - 4, or the main empirical component of the study, detailed throughout Chapters 6 - 8. Synthesizing research findings and supporting literature in this way, offers at least two advantages. First, the somewhat unhelpful distance and related tensions between 'theory' and 'findings' are diluted. Second, chapters are framed in terms of their individual integrity; readers are not called on to move between contextual and substantive materials that might be inappropriately separated-out in the name of convention.

The genesis of this work can be found in two reports that are discussed at length in Chapter 1. These flag the apparent over-representation of ex-servicemen amongst the single homeless population. Of central interest, however, are the ways in which they unintendedly, and implicitly perpetuate lay-person thinking with regard to the ways in which the military allegedly institutionalizes its members. In essence, the opening chapter illuminates the ideological dimensions of both 'homeless person' and 'service-person' representation in contemporary society.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are largely preoccupied with conceptual issues, that turn respectively, on social change and the notion of the 'traditional military'; the universalities of military socialization; and 'homelessness' and 'the homeless' as chaotic concept in Chapter 4.

Within the context of more conventionally organized theses, Chapter 5 might be understood as the requisite 'methodology chapter'. However, attention is focused towards an explication of the 'why' of the process of research, rather than protracted concern with the methodological 'how', that broadly adheres to the rights and wrongs of data collection, analysis and so forth. To these ends, elucidation of the authorial self throws light on the limitations of this work and the tool of intellectual autobiography is utilised as a way in

which to elicit 'accountable knowledge'. The complex relationships between homelessness and travel, the embodiment of human agency and the emotions, represent the core themes of Chapters 6, 7 and 8, the main empirical components. Inclusion of qualitative fieldwork material illuminates both the sustaining and genesis of homelessness for twenty-one single men. Figure 1 (below) provides a highly simplified conceptual map of thesis organization. An elaborated version of this map can be found in Chapter 9, the concluding discussions to the thesis.

Chapter 9 offers an overview, and invokes a stark juxtaposition between global events and their resonance and implication for individuals understood to be homeless within the domestic context. The closing discussion returns to core issues articulated above; in particular, issues of material inequality and the contemporary sociological purview, within the context of men's social practice. Reflection on the problem of homelessness, though insightfully and innovatively elaborated by recourse to the embodiment of subjectivity, cannot be adequately explained outside of the centrality of structural inequality and the limited conditions of possibility they necessarily produce.

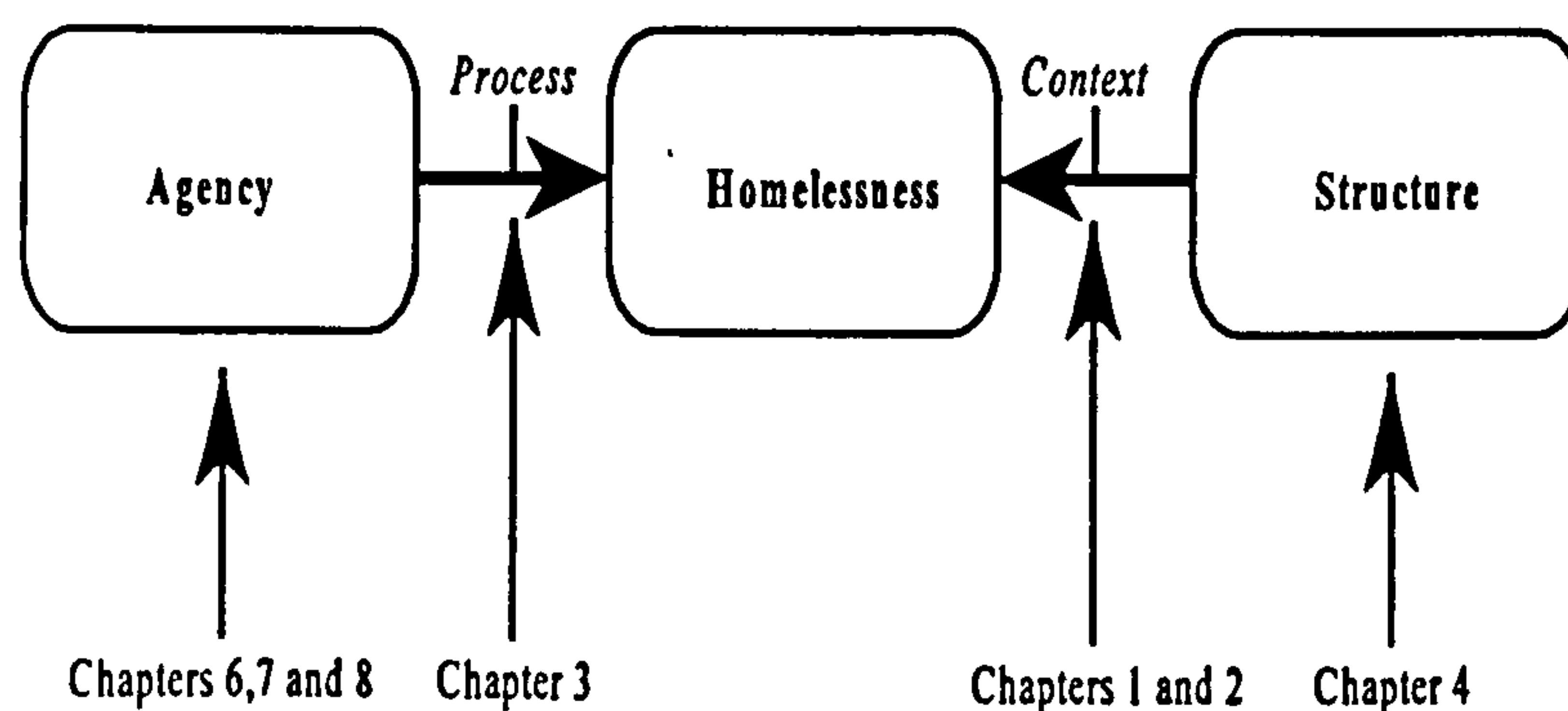


Figure 1: Organisation of the Thesis: A Conceptual Map

Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks go to the twenty-one men who allowed a fleeting stranger access to their lives. Without their frankness, patience and understanding, this thesis might never have been written. Other thanks go to the many others with whom I talked in day centres, hostels and on the streets. Their tenacity and good humour served to contextualize and humble my own struggles with the doctoral work.

My heartfelt thanks go also to my supervisor, Roger Burrows. Despite becoming a dad for the second time in the recent past, he has unfailingly been on hand to offer advice and support. His encyclopaedic knowledge of the sociological and other literatures have done much to shape my thinking, and in turn the work presented here. Of particular value was his unstinting commitment to listen to every word, sentence, paragraph and chapter that follows. That he did so with only the occasional yawn is further testament to his staying power.

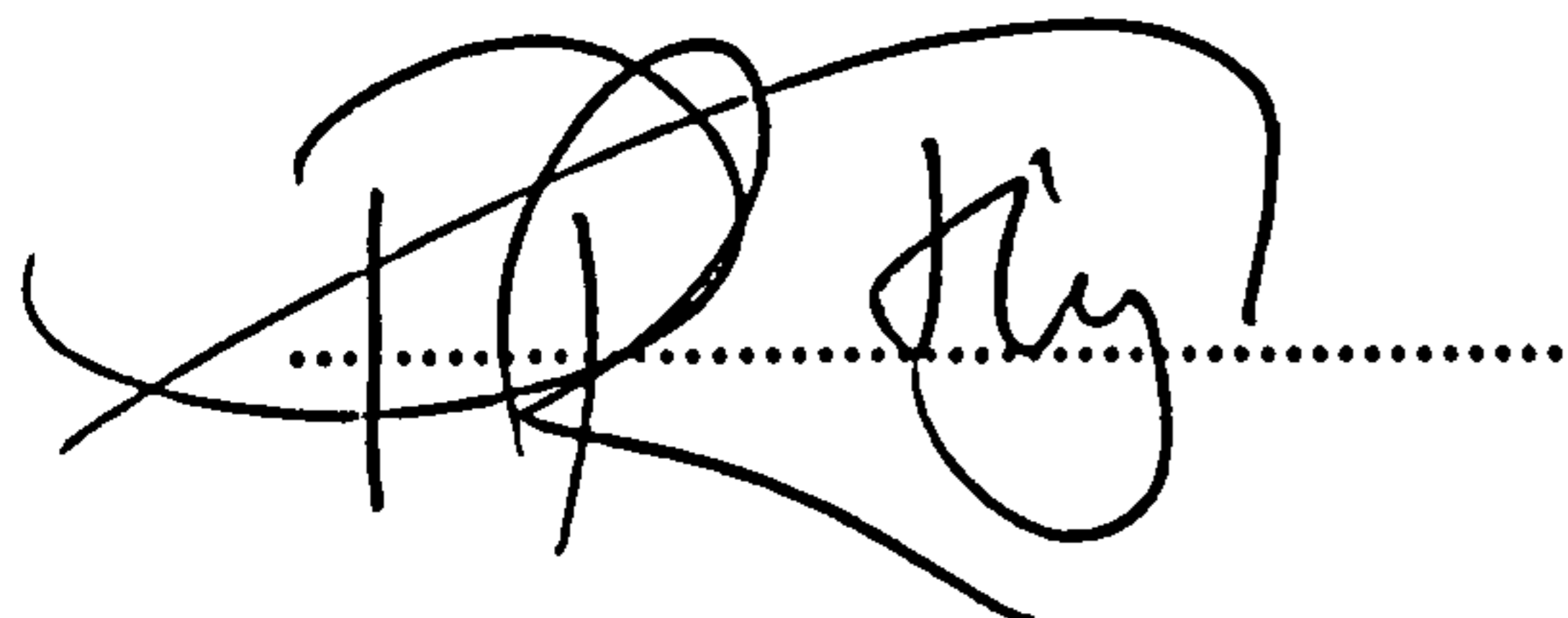
I have been doubly fortunate in working within the Graduate School at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, here at the University of York. The lively intellectual culture - most evident during the taking of coffee and food in the kitchen (and beer in the pub) - has allowed me to state, define and develop a range of ideas and concepts. In particular, the friendship and support of Rhidian Hughes, Christine Skinner, Dexy Boy and Emma Carmel have been of central value. The doctoral experience has been enjoyable, challenging and above all, brilliantly social.

My thanks and respect go to Antonia Parera for supporting me through the ups and downs of the research enterprise, and, perhaps more challengingly, for putting up with the terrible British weather. T'estim molt (sempre).

My gratitude goes lastly to all those people who are not named here on account of my failing memory and haste. Ta.

Thesis Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and that the research it describes has been done by me. This thesis has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree. All quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and the source of information clearly acknowledged. Longer quotations have been indented and sources similarly acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. R. Higate', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Paul Richard Higate

October 1998

Material's Previously Published

Material presented in Chapter's 3 and 5 of this thesis have been published elsewhere, as outlined below:

Sections of '**INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE MILITARY EXPERIENCE**' (Chapter 3) have appeared in:

Higate, P. (1998) 'Soldiering On? Theorizing homelessness amongst single ex-servicemen' in R. Burrows, N. Pleace and D. Quilgars (eds) *Homelessness and Social Policy*, London: Routledge.

Sections of '**RESEARCHING HOMELESS MEN**' (Chapter 5) have appeared in:

Higate, P. (1998) 'The body resists: everyday clerking and unmilitary practice' in S. Nettleton and J. Watson (eds) *The Body in Everyday Life*, London: Routledge.

CHAPTER 1 - HOMELESSNESS AND EX-SERVICEMEN

Constructing Members of the Deserving Poor

Johnny [the bogus ex-serviceman] sets up his [begging] pitch...his large piece of cardboard reads, in black letters: FALKLANDS VETERAN - I LOST MY LEG FOR MY COUNTRY. PLEASE HELP. A fiver lands in the hat. "God bless ye sir", Johnny acknowledges. He is about to pack up and leave when a thin, frail woman approaches him. "Wir ye a Royal Scot son? Ma Brian wis a Royal Scot, Brian Laidlaw."

"Eh, Marines missis." Johnny shrugs.

"Brian nivir came back, god love um. Twinty-one he wis. Ma laddie. fine laddie n aw." The woman's eyes are welling up with tears...she takes out her purse and, producing a twenty-pound note, crushes it into Johnny's hand. "Here son, here it's aw ah've goat, bit ah want you tae huv it." Welsh, Trainspotting; 1993: 318-319.

At 0100 we paraded for the final hurdle on [Special Air Service selection] test week, the fearsome Endurance march. It was nearly eighty kilometres, to be completed in less than 20 hours, across the length of the Brecon Beacons, carrying 65lb...I felt a weariness such as I had never felt before but as I pushed my legs on through the snow, each step in its own way a victory, I knew I had to keep moving...inside the truck I took my boots off and my feet swelled like balloons. The pain was excruciating. But I'd passed. McCallion, Killing Zone; 147-148:1996.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Taken from the hugely successful novel *Trainspotting*, this first extract engenders a degree of revulsion. Not so much with regard to perceptions of so-called 'junkies', but rather, the celebration of unfettered deceit. *Johnny's* alter ego, the injured war veteran, appears to have made sacrifices along the lines of those described in the *McCallion* account - against the backdrop of loyalty, trust and service in the name of 'Queen and Country'. And yet the truth of *Johnny's* pariah-like status as drug user exists at the polar extreme of this assumed

identity. Posing as a one-legged *ex-Royal Marine*, money acquired from begging may appease his drug habit for many days into the future.

The second account speaks to us in terms of absolute human limits; *McCallion's* determination is almost tangible in the face of this incredible physical challenge. Those that conquer such physical and mental exigencies have earned the highest respect. The crystallization over many years of dedicated preparation and training is the moment of acceptance into the 'Regiment', or the Special Air Service.

In this chapter, we examine the deeper underpinnings of *Johnny's* success. Why should homeless ex-servicemen be construed as members of the deserving poor? How might it effect both the examination and subsequent reporting of homelessness amongst this group? Before these questions are tackled, we consider two highly significant research reports. They remain crucial to the genesis of the current work which is concerned with the links between full-time military service and homelessness.

1.2 HOMELESS EX-SERVICEMEN DISCOVERED - RECENT RESEARCH

In 1991 1,346 single homeless individuals were interviewed in day centres, hostels and soup runs in the London area. This work was commissioned by the Department of the Environment and carried out by the *Centre for Housing Policy* based at the *University of York*. The aims of the research were:

'[T]o establish the characteristics of single homeless people, the reasons why they were homeless and their accommodation needs and preferences' (Anderson *et al*, 1993:vii).

A range of questions were posed, but of concern here is the suggestion that around one in four of those interviewed stated they had served in the armed forces. The question that elicited this information was framed in the following terms:

'Have you ever been in the forces or the merchant navy, not counting national service?'

And as a note to the interviewer, to be stated verbally:

'DO NOT INCLUDE NATIONAL SERVICE, OR THE TERRITORIALS'

Around one quarter of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Within the report summary, this particular finding featured only fleetingly and was stated thus: 'A significant minority had been in the armed forces' (Anderson *et al.*, 1993: ix).

The findings of Anderson *et al.* (1993) came to the attention of the homeless charity CRISIS, and formed the rationale for a subsequent study of single homeless ex-servicemen. Their research aim was to:

'[E]xamine the extent and nature of the problems of single homeless people who have been in the forces and what provision is made for them' (Randall and Brown, 1994:5)

Further underlying motivation for this research was conveyed in these terms:

'Many agencies providing for single homeless people find that a disproportionate number of their clients have served in one of the armed forces at some time in their lives. But until now the research has remained largely anecdotal' (Randall and Brown, 1994:5).

They continued by referring to Anderson *et al.*'s. (1993) work and stated their intention to:

'[R]e-analyse the Department of the Environment data to compare homeless people who had been in the forces with those who had not' (Randall and Brown, 1994:7).

This research strategy consisted of two parts; the second component of the work was a 'Survey of Ex-Service People'. Seventy-three single homeless individuals drawn from a number of day centres and hostels in London contributed to in-depth interviews. The criteria for incorporation in the survey was that they had served in one or more of the following: 'the Army, Royal Navy, Merchant Navy...but excluding those who had done National Service only'.

The authors produced three sets of findings from this research project. First, the statistical information generated by Anderson *et al.* (1993) was subject to secondary analysis. Next came the production of both qualitative and quantitative material from the charity's own survey of 73 homeless ex-servicemen. Lastly, there was a synthesis of these two strands of analysis. The research findings were summarised in the following comments:

'Around one quarter of all single homeless people have served in the forces (excluding National Service).

- Ex-service homeless people are even more disadvantaged than other homeless people.
- Ex-service people found it difficult to settle on leaving the forces.
- Many ex-service homeless people have problems other than a lack of a home.
- Ex-service homeless people found the level and quality of help in finding accommodation when they were leaving the forces to be low.
- Resettlement help given by the forces and services' welfare agencies for people leaving the forces is geared towards families - much less is available for single people'

(Randall and Brown, 1994:3-4).

Randall and Brown also made a number of recommendations in view of their findings. They suggested that empty Ministry of Defence homes (60 000 of which have been sold to Nomura International, a Japanese Bank), should be made available to single people leaving the forces. Further, that temporary accommodation with employment and housing should be established for recent discharges. Finally, that greater consideration should be given to accommodation with regard to single ex-servicemen, with the role of housing agencies being increased (Randall and Brown, 1994).

1.3 'ONE IN FOUR OF OUR BOYS ARE HOMELESS' - REACTION

The work of Anderson *et al.* (1993) - perhaps as a consequence of limited dissemination - remained largely unreported. However, the CRISIS report had considerable resonance throughout the media. Its authors were said to have been:

'[S]urprised by its impact, with acres of newsprint and air-waves devoted to its findings...the report makes striking reading' (Kelly, *The Times*, 8 Jun 94).

The British Legion expressed 'great sadness' and described the figures as 'horrifying' and further that there existed a 'crisis and the facts are now coming home...it is a tragedy...that so many have ended up like this' (Kelly, *The Times*, 30 May 94). The London based charity, the *Homeless Fund*, called the findings of the DoE commissioned report 'startling' (McCrow, 1996) and began their own research into the problem. *Radio 1* also referred to the CRISIS report during this week (though the original Department of the Environment work went unacknowledged), and a number of journalistic investigations around this theme were implemented (for example, *Radio 4* showed an interest together with regional news programmes (McCrow, 1994)). In *Opportunity 94* (a magazine aimed at ex-service people seeking employment), the reaction to the one in four figure was stated in the following terms:

'Consternation in the newspapers was the most visible effect of the report' (*Opportunity 94*:36).

To what extent did media interest in this particular story stand out from reporting of news in the most general sense? First there emerged a consensus with regard to the central issues and second, the findings appeared to hit a raw nerve amongst a wide range of organizations. We turn now to illustrate the manifestation of these concerns through a number of extracts taken from broadsheet and tabloid newspapers.

1.3.1 Media Framing

Examples of the ways in which single homeless ex-servicemen were framed in terms of their quiet resolve in the face of hardship is captured in these three extracts:

'The single room is tiny and sparsely furnished but Phil Battersby, 31, a 6ft 4in former Coldstream Guard, is relieved just to have space of his own. Two months ago Phil...was sharing a hostel dormitory in Clapham, south London, with down and outs, drug addicts and alcoholics. Two months before that he was living rough in rat and lice-infested "Cardboard City", near Waterloo Station' (Braid, *Independent on Sunday*, 29 May 94).

'Take George Padfield, a trim 48-year old. He lives at New Belvedere House, an Ex-Service Fellowship Centre hostel. But for two years he was living rough. A career soldier, he served 22 years as a driver with the Royal Engineers - mostly in Germany, but he also spent three-and-a-half years in Northern Ireland. "I'd go and do it all again really", he says. "That's what I said to the Colonel when I left"' (Rafferty, *Daily Mail* supplement, Jun 94).

'Stephen Rowe, aged 33, formerly of the Coldstream Guards, lives in a hostel in Victoria and sells copies of *The Big Issue*...as a single man, he is not a priority homeless case. He bears no rancour towards the Army, nor does he blame it for his plight. "They give you good training", he says. "They look after you almost too well"' (Kelly, *The Times*, 8 Jun 94).

None of these single homeless ex-servicemen express bitterness. They are 'relieved to have space of their own' would 'go and do it all again' and are said to 'bear no rancour towards the Army'. These brief articles were written against the backdrop of the military's largely positive historical and contemporary representation within British society. In this sense there is little evidence of resentment, rather a quiet and somewhat fatalistic deference. How might we begin to account for this particular response towards ex-servicemen? A more comprehensive understanding of this reaction turns on broadening the context. Are there lines of continuity between response to single homeless ex-servicemen particularly, and the media portrayal of the military generally?

Before we explore these key points, we return briefly to the two research reports that fostered media responses outlined above. That these research findings were accepted unproblematically (with the exception of the Ministry of Defence), illustrates the significance of ex-service person status in contemporary British society, together with an implicit understanding of the ways in which military experience affects individuals. They were understood as members of the deserving poor on the one hand, and on the other had apparently been institutionalized by their military or Merchant Navy experiences; this had resulted in homelessness. To what extent were the military responsible for this 'social problem'?

1.4 THE MILITARY AS RESPONSIBLE?

Frustration towards the military characterizes recommendations detailed in the CRISIS report, with ex-servicemen cast in the role of victim; the onus is on the MoD to move to prevent the apparently increasing number of single homeless ex-servicemen. Further, media reporting highlights the concern with the *laissez-faire* MoD approach, with one journalist stating: 'they received little help from the Army' (Kelly, *The Times*, 8 Jun 94). A typical example of a media extract is framed in the following way:

'[T]hey seemed to have had no help to find a home or work except for a session with a careers officer' (Evan, *The Independent on Sunday*, 29 May 94).

And:

'We didn't get the assistance that was required to move from a very disciplined life to a very free life' (Kelly, *The Times*, 8 Jun 94).

The media assumed a similar stance towards homeless veterans in the US context (Beamish *et al.*, 1995:355):

'[T]he US media...have extensively covered the social and psychological crises faced by the returning veterans - drug addiction, homelessness and mental anguish.'

We have briefly outlined some of the ways in which single homeless ex-servicemen/veterans have been presented as victims. Not only might they have been psychologically disturbed or institutionalized, but their service in the name of the country appears to have been ignored. Is it possible, however, that the notion of institutionalization implicitly resonates throughout the very developmental foundations of these two research reports? Might it have unintendedly framed the research questions articulated in both Anderson *et al's*. and Randall and Brown's work? We turn next to examine more closely the deeper underpinnings of the two reports.

1.5 RESEARCH REVISITED

There was a tacit acceptance that the research findings reflected accurately the number of ex-servicemen amongst the single homeless population. However, might not these figures be problematic? In many ways, answers to this question turn directly on assumptions that permeate academic as well as broader societal perceptions. There is as we have seen, an implicit presupposition that the military institutionalizes, and in this way may cause homelessness. We return to Anderson *et al's*. (1993) original question:

'Have you ever been in the forces or the merchant navy, not including National Service?' (*original emphasis*).

Crucially, responses to this question will throw little light on length of military service, or time spent in the civilian environment prior to the onset of homelessness. This gives rise to a series of further, pivotal questions: How much is homelessness a result of civilian experience? Did these individuals serve in the military for 2 months or 22 years? In these terms, we can say only one thing with confidence: Approximately 25 per cent of the single homeless population appears to have served in the armed forces, for an unknown period, at some stage in their lives. Rather than considering 'ex-servicemen who have become

homeless', we should reframe the statement in terms of 'homeless people who have, at some time in their life, and for an unknown period, experienced military service'. It could be argued that this realignment of the problem amounts to little more than semantic pedantry. However, a decentring of the military dimension - linked as it is to homelessness - may facilitate a more balanced understanding of the phenomena.

We might speculate on the extremes of lay-person engagement with the problem of single homeless ex-servicemen. On the one hand, military experience institutionalizes, whilst on the other, ex-servicemen are heroes who cannot possibly become members of a group of 'feckless undesirables'. In this next section we speculate on the reasons underlying the incorporation and framing of this particular research question.

1.5.1 Lay Perception and The Academic Space

The question was most likely incorporated as a consequence of anecdote emanating from the homelessness field, coupled with previous research suggesting a propensity to homelessness in those with experience of institutions (Bahiel, 1995; Carlisle, 1996; Carlen, 1996). Presupposition thus played a role in this phenomenon's ultimate under-theorization. We are reminded at this point that social scientists can never be (perhaps thankfully) 'truly' detached; in this way they are unable to disconnect from society, rather the crucial question concerns their location within it (Mills, 1959).

In linking military service with homelessness, the researchers' relationship to the social world was characterized by its considerable grounding within lay perception. As Morgan (1996:11), in the context of ethnomethodological and phenomenological critique¹ reminds us:

'[T]he ways in which sociologists routinely drew (and draw) upon common sense and everyday understandings...structure(s) (the understandings of) that world'

These 'everyday understandings', (embodied in the one in four figure) were problematized, however, by the magazine for ex-service people: *Opportunity 94*. Their concern was the transitory nature of homelessness:

'The statistical conclusions are therefore vague, although they indicate that the ratio of 1:4 is an over-estimate. One difficulty in coming to a hard and fast conclusion is that of making any reliable census of what is necessarily a shifting population' (*Opportunity 94*:36).

Though fully aware of the DoE commissioned report, they chose not to return to its incomplete source findings around the one in four figure; once again they confirmed the linkage of military experience with institutionalization.

1.5.2 Powerful Figures

Brief and punchy statistical information is particularly appreciated by the tabloid press. Figures are authoritative and easily digested; there may be something scientific or mathematical about them so that doubt concerning their validity remains marginal. Lindblad (1995) calls this a 'quantification strategy':

'Accurate figures play a special role in increasing the truth value of the account, but approximations are also helpful. Quantification is not necessarily limited to numerical expressions: words and non-numerical characterizations describing quantities, shares and ratios...are important' (Lindblad, 1995:48).

Thus, 1 in 4 is interchangeable with one quarter and 25 per cent. This rendered the findings even more media-friendly, with all or some of these quantifications appearing in articles describing the data (*The Independent on Sunday*, 29 May 94; *The Independent*, 30 May 94; *The Times*, 30 May 94, 8 Jun 94). We turn next to the follow-up report produced by the charity CRISIS and highlight shortcomings in both research design and understanding. We

start with a brief consideration of the report's front cover, as it is noted to key the readership into the preferred meanings attached to the research findings.

1.6 THE CRISIS REPORT - 'FALLING OUT'

At the foot of the first page of the CRISIS report sits an elderly, and somewhat melancholic man staring blankly into space. He is surrounded by blankets, bits of cardboard-box and litter - clearly he is sleeping rough. At the head of the cover appear three smaller photographs. All portray confident, even cocky-looking National Servicemen in uniform. They appear in apparently tight-knit groups, and their optimistic and youthful faces beam out at us². We are immediately urged to make the connection between homelessness and military experience by way of a stark juxtaposition.

What follows is constructed around the notion that there is a *causal* link between (as it transpires, an unknown) period in the military and homelessness. The illusion is compelling, especially when presented in positivistic language. However, secreted in the textual description of Randall and Brown's (1994) bar charts is a hint that things may not be quite so straightforward:

'[S]ome of the causes of homelessness amongst ex-service people are long term and not solely linked to the process of leaving the forces' (Randall and Brown, 1994:8).

This important statement, however, remains peripheral to the main thrust of the report. Perhaps most damning is the age profile of the respondents. Though this does not appear in the report, secondary data analysis by the present author reveals a mean age that suggests that many of the sample may well have completed National Service³, thereby skewing the figures in favour of ex-serviceman response.

1.6.1 How Many?

Aside from the present study, the work of Anderson *et al.* (1993) and Randall and Brown (1994) represents the entirety of contemporary social scientific research dealing with the links between military service and homelessness. Anecdotally, however, their presence amongst the homeless population has been touched on by a number of commentators, including Stone (1996), Carlisle (1996), Rafferty (*The Daily Mail Supplement*, Jun 94), and further contemporary (medicalized) research within the United States: Rosenheck and Fontana (1994), Rosenheck and Koegel, (1993) and Wenzel *et al.* (1993). Within the US context, it was estimated that around 25 per cent of the single homeless population had so-called veteran status, interestingly a figure that coincides with British findings. However, the Vietnam War meant that US ex-servicemen were drafted or conscripted into the military until relatively recently. This means that the number of ex-servicemen as a proportion of the total male population is necessarily greater than that of Britain, where National Service ceased in 1962 (Royle, 1997).

In the following section, we attempt to account for some of the ways in which ex-service people are cast as members of the deserving poor. As we have already suggested, the findings of both Anderson *et al.* (1993) and Randall and Brown (1994) tell us little of the complexities of homelessness amongst this group. Of greater analytical value, perhaps is an interrogation of the social context into which the potent one in four figure was projected.

1.7 ACCOUNTING FOR MEDIA FERMENT

Tabloid headlines are intended to convey information in rapid time. Language is characterized by its clear presentation. With this in mind, it is significant that headlines relating to military personnel utilise a number of apparently esoteric words or phrases, including '*Wren, Para, Sarge, Corps*' and most frequently '*Squaddie*'. This illustrates the pervasivity of military argot within the broader society. In this context, there exists a widely held body of knowledge linked to relatively specialist terms. In the next section of this

chapter, tabloid headlines are included as a way in which to illustrate the largely positive representation of service people.

**OUR BOYS LEFT TO
FREEZE AFTER
MoD BUNGLE**

**NO BEER, NO SEX
(not even Page 3)
FOR DESERT RATS**

**RAF corp who
tortured thief
to confess is
freed by judge**

They won the war...

but will Our

Boys ever

have peace

of mind?

**1,000 GIRLS SEND THEIR
LOVE TO SMUDGIE**

**SAUDIS SEIZE BIBLES
FROM OUR BOYS**

Randy Wrens to
go to sea aboard
girls-only subs

Parabutchers wife

**I'm so proud
of being Mrs
King Rat**

**HERO'S WIFE
WHO WAITS**

**IRA WANTED ME AS SEX
BAIT TO KILL
SQUADDIES**

**AT THE TREBLE! OUR
SARGE IS A DAD**

Shy Navy
doc stole
Wrens'
knickers

COLONEL GETS 4 YEARS FOR DRUNKEN GROPE

He crept to women's beds

NAVY COP SACKED!

THE REAR

Artillery CO booted
out in 'poof' probe

GUNNER

SEA COP
'GROPED
WIFE OF
SAILOR'

HMS SINVINCIBLE!

Navy officer caught on
the nest with a Wren

OFFICER IN A NAUGHTY NAVY LARK WITH WREN

The three headline montages can be 'read' from a range of perspectives. However, they have been constructed with three themes in mind. In the first, we are concerned with the use of the term 'our boys' on the one hand, and the generally favourable reactions to service people on the other. In the second, we concentrate on this specialist terminology, with the somewhat bizarre headline 'I'm so proud of being Mrs King Rat'. The third montage tends to demonstrate the limits to negative portrayal.

These headlines exploit playful language linkage. Seriousness is eroded, and terms including 'HMS Sinvincible' and 'drunken grope' prime the reader for what might be described as frolic within an over-disciplined environment. This exemplifies the extent to which readers are encouraged to develop a specialist affinity with the subject matter. These terms were (re)introduced during the course of the Gulf conflict of 1991, when awareness of the military was heightened. Readers are able then to de-code terminology and encouraged to feel a particular institutional relationship to the tabloid newspaper. There is an attempt to couch stories in terms of soap operas - episodes are compelling and require particular prerequisites of understanding from the readership.

1.7.1 Tabloid Themes

Though chosen only in terms of their reference to the military, themes are broadly similar. For example, sexual misdemeanour (a tabloid obsession generally), contradictions around female service personnel, violence, and the affinity the 'people' are assumed to possess with regard to service people, infuse media framing in the most general sense. These headlines represent the staple diet of the tabloid press in the case of the military sphere, and it is likely that the readership develops comforting rapport with such representation. By virtue of media inclusion, it appears that service people *should* be less vulnerable to transgression - and thereby worthy of valuable column inches - than mere civilians or 'civvies'. It is reassuring to realise that even *they* are human.

In the next section, we turn to the work of the *Glasgow University Media Group* and examine the ways in which media messages are both produced and received. In this way we might elaborate the deeper ideologies infusing service person construction.

1.8 TALK IS ACTION

Drawing on some of the tools of sociolinguistics, the Glasgow University Media Group (1980) discuss the specifics of 'news talk' in the context of television. Whilst their intention is to investigate 'the structure and ideology of broadcast communications systems' (GUMG, 1980:119), we follow their notions of 'predictability' and 'redundancy' to further ground reaction to the one in four figure⁴. The *Glasgow Group* are concerned with acceptable [news]talk, in other words, talk that is considered to be competent, and as such operates within certain predictable parameters (GUMG, 1980).

We have argued that our headlines gravitate loosely around a cluster of largely expected treatments characterized, in the tabloid examples, by frivolity⁵. The expectations fostered in the readership are constantly reinforced through these portrayals of service people. In war, 'our boys' distinguish themselves through heroic behaviour and though prone to prankish behaviour in peacetime, continue to serve as competent members of the armed forces. The apparently disproportionate number of ex-servicemen amongst the single homeless population subverts these media thematizations in two ways. First, the findings remain impervious to light-hearted tabloid treatment; across both the broadsheet and the tabloid press, homelessness is considered a serious issue. Second, given what we know about brave and resourceful service people, how is it that a considerable number experience homelessness - the preserve - according to dominant discourses within the media - of the feckless? The one in four figure is difficult to reconcile with a dominant homelessness discourse or ideology in which belief concerning 'weak agency' remains hegemonic. Thus service (and ex-service people) are considered anything but weak in these terms:

[T]he CRISIS report dispels the myth of a stereo-typed "homeless" person: the no-hoper, good-for-nothing who has only himself to blame. Instead, homeless people are revealed to be widely diverse, *including some of those who once*

offered their lives for their country' (Kelly, *The Times*, 8 Jun 94; *emphasis added*).

The lives and experiences of service people may rarely coincide with their portrayal in the media, however. Yet, it seems likely that the notion of 'homeless ex-serviceman' remains a contradiction in terms. Only rarely are (ex) servicemen portrayed as 'no-hopers' or 'down-and-outs'. Further, if the '*Sacking...of a Navy Cop*', warrants column inches, then it is no surprise that the one in four figure remains compelling.

In the next section, we explore briefly the MoD's reaction to the findings. To what extent are service people aware of their status outside of the institution? Might not some of the more senior military ranks fail to acknowledge the ways in which their way of life is revered in the host society?

1.9 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE RESPONSE - JUST ANOTHER JOB?

Unsurprisingly, the most vociferous critics of the findings were those directly implicated in the 'scandal of ex-servicemen homelessness': the MoD. In the following extract, the significance of military service is downplayed:

'[O]ne senior officer said [homelessness] was not the services fault or because of inadequate efforts to resettle them..."you could find a quarter who'd done office work, a quarter who'd done manual work...so flagging up a quarter as ex-service is not the most startling statistic"' (Bellamy, *The Independent*, 30 May 94).

There is, however, a sense in which this MoD spokesperson misreads the importance of the figure. In terms of capturing media and public opinion, 'office...or manual work' is almost entirely irrelevant, particularly when juxtaposed with 'ex-serviceman'. The impetus underlying secondary reporting of 'the facts' (Randall and Brown, 1994) ensured their continuing credibility.

Response to the findings might be mapped onto a continuum, characterized by the varying significance attached to military experience. At one extreme is the sentiment evident from the MoD 'that it is pretty much 'like any old job', with reaction to the one in four figure appearing at the *opposing* pole. It was, in these terms, nothing like a normal job⁶, and the MoD had responsibilities over and above those of other employees. As Fallows (1959:171) states:

'Before anything else, we must recognize that a functioning military requires bonds of trust, sacrifice and respect within its ranks, and similar bonds of support and respect between an army and the nation it represents.'

Single homeless ex-servicemen are envisaged as amongst the deserving poor precisely because of their unique status within British society.

In the next section we introduce two recent examples of service person representation against the backdrop of conflict. Here, particular limitations to negative portrayal serve to reinforce the argument presented throughout this chapter in which we have attempted to account for the linkage of single ex-servicemen with the deserving poor. We start with the favourable ways in which service people have been presented. In the following section, we return to the work of the Glasgow University Media Group, and its examination of the media during the Malvinos/Falkland conflict.

1.10 THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL OF SERVICE PEOPLE

Journalists travelling with the South Atlantic bound Task Force were unable to send back live television pictures (GUMG, 1995; Shaw, 1991). This, they asserted was because of an absence of will on the part of the MoD (GUMG, 1995). Casualties remained largely out of sight until the war finished, and though reporting of these events appeared in the print media, the paucity of live images suggested 'our boys' encountered only occasional defeat; the myth of British invincibility was rarely threatened. The lobby system⁷ ensured that the majority of the news was sanitized. Hand-picked correspondents were permitted into defence briefings whilst more 'dissenting' journalists were denied material with which to work. Further, self-censorship rendered the posing of tricky questions as low on the agenda of reporters:

'The leading political correspondent for a respected British Sunday newspaper said he would not even try to contact members of Thatcher's inner "war-cabinet" because he doubted they would talk to him and he wanted to avoid "doing anything that might endanger our boys"' (GUMG, 1995:84).

There is not so much a concerted desire to adhere to the MoD/governmental line, rather, somewhat unintended alignment with an institutionalized procedure. Partly as a consequence of espoused national interest factors, reporting around the military pivoted around eliciting favourable public opinion. One officer (eventually killed on *HMS Glamorgan*) wrote:

'"The newspapers just see it as a real-life "War Mag" and even have drawings of battles, and made-up descriptions entirely from their own imagination! If some of the horrible ways that people died occurred in their offices, maybe they would change their tone"' (David Tinker, quoted in GUMG, 1995:93).

Ultimately, images of bloody carnage were deemed unacceptable. This, together with the appetite for salacious war stories - they bolster the distribution figures - undoubtedly added grist to the mill of skewed perception likely amongst some elements of the British public.

Battle is horrible, and the taking of life too dreadful for most to contemplate, as Morgan (1994:169) states:

'[T]he very activities associated with the military life, ultimately to do with the taking of life and the exposure to extreme physical danger, serve to establish an almost unbridgeable gulf between the world of the soldier and the world of the civilian' (extract from Bilton and Kosminsky, 1990).

It is unsurprising that the military should be prone to misrepresentation. Indeed, even those who serve may not see themselves in a role that requires the ultimate sacrifice. An Army psychiatrist comments:

'I must confess that I have seen very few young men who join the British Army in order to die for their country' (O'Brien, 1993:288).

Reporting tended to obfuscate the real feelings and experiences of many individuals (GUMG, 1995). Thus, 'the war comic-book view does not permit the admission that any of the Task Force were less than perfect' (GUMG, 1995:93). It is clear that the disjuncture between 'courageous fighting man', and 'homeless ex-serviceman' is considerable. The widespread existence of homeless ex-servicemen acted to subvert a body of knowledge in which members of this group, in war at least, were considered to be nothing less than perfect.

In this brief summary of particular elements of the Malvinos/Falkland coverage, we have suggested that the media was a significant force in establishing supportive public opinion. The armed forces, a crucial symbol of British sovereignty, were promoted as invincible with an appeal to historical victories, patriotism, the Empire and so on. However, evidence suggests that positive public opinion, whilst *assumed* to be widespread, was rarely available for debate. There were notable dissenters from this apparently 'consensual' support for the campaign, including figures such as Tony Benn, the veteran MP who broke from the supportive Labour party line. Similarly, opinion polls in the *Daily Telegraph* demonstrated a greater ambivalence towards the war than the media would have the public believe

(GUMG, 1995). The press, however, created a circle of opinion in which dissent was given short shrift, and successive polls were selectively reported:

'The popular papers, indeed, construct "public opinion" as one of the characters in their drama. It becomes a kind of affirmative Greek chorus, a crowd which occasionally troops onto stage to offer patriotic support to "the nation" and "our boys"' (Latin American Bureau; quoted in GUMG, 1995:139).

We cannot assume that the media sets a widely held consensual agenda. Perhaps we can go no further than suggesting implicit media *influence* on individual's perceptions through time. These preferred discourses are refracted and reflected throughout common-sense understandings, and may contribute towards subsequent service person status in the eyes of wider society.

There are, however, limits to favourable conceptions of the service person; how significant might they be? To what extent might the media be responsible for establishing an illusory agenda? Next we consider negative portrayal in terms of a case study from the United States. This is followed by a brief examination of similar evidence from the British context.

1.10.1 Anti Troop Feelings?

Might not pacifists feel opposed to service people? Could the considerable number of non-supporters in both the Malvinos/Falklands (GUMG, 1995) and the later Gulf (Shaw, 1991) campaigns represent a weakening of our argument? In other words, to what extent might this largely favourable image towards ex-servicemen be eroded as a consequence of reluctance to be involved in war?

The process of eliciting public support may rely at times on the invocation of emotive imagery. We return to the theme of media agenda-setting and argue that orientation to veterans in the US does tend to mirror those towards servicemen in the British context. We learn, for example, in the case of anti-Vietnam war protesters, that reaction to homecoming troops was underlined by hatred and loathing:

'Vietnam-era activists were verbally hostile and even physically abusive to US soldiers [there were] instances of war opponents spitting on returning GIs' (Beamish *et al.*, 1995:344).

This apparent reaction to veterans from anti-war individuals, however, will be shown to be largely manufactured by the US media, as one element within an overall strategy - analogous to the partly unintended aims of the British lobby system. Though there are important cultural differences between the US and Britain, particularly in the case of the associated military institutions and continued symbolic and cultural resonance of the Vietnam War, there are at least two points of intersection. First, negative perception would be most likely amongst those that were vociferously opposed to war (as the media might suggest). Second, we note particular media strategies pivoting around the attempt to ostracize dissenters. At stake here is the status of service people within an emotively charged context.

In the run up to the Gulf War, Beamish *et al.* (1995) asserted that the media had played a particular role in 'making...collective memory'. The intention of the media was to demonize Gulf War opponents by recourse to the activities of those protesting during the Vietnam era:

'During the Gulf War we were struck by the taken-for-granted way in which the media...agreed on the characterization of Vietnam-era protesters as anti-troop' (Beamish *et al.*, 1995:345).

Through portraying the protesters of the 1960s and 1970s as anti-troop, recent Gulf War opponents could be incorporated into a discourse through which hatred towards troops characterized the extreme and wholly irrational stance of demonstrators generally. Though demonstrators were cast in the mould of 'troop haters', this resonated only marginally with *actual* events. Alleged anti-troop sentiments emanated from a simple either/or dichotomy. By virtue of opposition, demonstrators were *assumed* to carry negative feelings towards veterans (Beamish *et al.*, 1995). Indeed, the response to service people from opponents to

the Vietnam and Gulf Wars was largely *favourable*, with the somewhat abstract 'military institution' serving as the locus of concern.

That the military might be identified negatively (in these examples as 'uncaring') may inadvertently bolster the status of single homeless ex-servicemen as they are seen to be victims of a cold and somewhat monolithic bureaucracy.

1.10.2 Negative Portrayal

The ways in which the Malvinos/Falkland conflict was presented to the public appear to have fostered largely beneficial feelings towards the tough physical exigencies of 'our boys' military experiences. However, in cases of poor behaviour⁸, there may be genuine concern at excessive drinking and brawling, with some public houses in so called Garrison towns, for example being deemed 'no-go' areas for civilians. Similarly, there has been alarm at bullying in the military. Headlines include '*Seamen dismissed for mock hanging*', (*The Times*, 18 Jun 94), '*NCO's face bullying charges*', (*The Independent*, 19 Mar 92).

Historical precursors to negative portrayal are documented by Myerly (1992). During times of European war, public support was high (there are some parallels with the Falkland/Malvinos campaign, perhaps more obviously in terms of the Gulf War), but during peacetime, ambivalence best described public perception. Myerly (1992) illustrates this low regard for the average soldier during the mid 19th Century:

'[S]oldiers were a most unlikely group for admiration...the army was viewed by Britons with mistrust and distaste [and as] coarse drunken, louts whose brawls... were a widespread problem...they were despised as lazy wastrels and the outcasts and dregs of society' (Myerly, 1992:105).

Resonance of these feelings persist today. As Stone (1996) states:

'You can tell a squaddie a mile off, even in their civvies. Maybe it's the uncompromising haircut, or the obscenely muscle-bound physique. It could be the

air they give off of slightly dangerous schoolboys on the rampage' (Stone, 1996:100-101).

In this discussion we have briefly sketched both historical and contemporary presentations of servicemen. On balance, less than favourable response has been marginal. In the next series of discussions we take the theme of 'distance' as the prime point of departure. Here there is brief reflection on historical and contemporary conflict, together with their implications for service person imagery.

1.11 DISTANCING THE CONTEMPORARY MILITARY

There is something rather enigmatic about military bases. Uniformed military members guard the gate, and barbed-wire fencing thwarts entry and obscures a landscape peppered perhaps by enormous early warning aircraft or formidable *Challenger* tanks. This distance undoubtedly fosters further misunderstanding:

'Military institutions appear to be, in a multiplicity of ways, highly and strongly bounded, certainly in the context of modern societies' (Morgan, 1994:169).

'Perimeter fencing provides limited access to all military bases. Much military housing is situated within such areas, and families routinely talk of being housed "inside the wire"' (Jessup, 1996:177).

Here physical isolation is very much evident; less apparent boundaries manifest themselves through a range of cultural or 'psychic' forms (Dawson, 1994). What we 'know' about the military is mediated across a range of areas from television sitcom to drama including *Dad's Army*, *Soldier, Soldier* and *Sgt Bilko* together with the plethora of war movies and comics (Dawson, 1994; Shaw, 1991). Yet, for the majority of individuals based in the broader host society, the messages may be somewhat contradictory, as Beevor (1991:471) points out in the context of 'military efficiency' in the Army:

'Whether or not the Army was seen as "militarily efficient" by the public was confused by sitcom clichés based on National Service days with twittish officers and booming Sergeants. These vied in people's memories with other television footage such as the storming of the Iranian Embassy, foot patrols in Belfast, or British troops marching to Port Stanley.'

1.11.1 Historical Reflection - Psychic Isolation

Access to the psychological arena of war specifically, and the military in the wider sense has remained elusive for many of those outwith these experiential or physical environments, as we have already suggested above. An historical example of this isolation is captured in the work of Turner and Rennell (1995), with regard to servicemen returning from World War II. The first extract is taken from the *Manchester Evening Gazette* (April, 1946):

'One final word - don't try and tell civilians about your experiences, even if they ask you. The two of you are talking and thinking a different language, metaphorically, and never the twain shall meet' (Rennell and Turner, 1995:66).

The extreme manifestation of the 'bounded military institution' is captured in the following account, which describes the experiences of a recently demobbed World War II serviceman:

'He returned to his own land last year and immediately fell into difficulties. Though a young man of 25 he had never been in an English pub, and panicked on the two occasions when he tried to ask for a drink. He felt awkward because he did not know what behaviour was normal in any social situation and felt that he was a foreigner, liable to be looked at and laughed at. Any public places...brought up problems of behaviour and common

convention which made him feel inferior and ignorant' (cited in the *Journal of Mental Science*; quoted in Turner and Rennell, 1995:50).

Civilians may not want to know about the experiences of service people; many of them may be too traumatic to contemplate. Similarly, service people may find it hard to live and work in the civilian environment, so that there could exist a mutual distance between ex-soldier and civvie. In the next section, and framed within contemporary debates around processes of 'postmodernization', we continue to examine the relationship between military and society. Could this distance of understanding be compounded as media control increases? How might this influence the ways in which service people are perceived?

1.11.2 'Real Time Conflict' - The Gulf War

The Gulf War may have contributed to this distance of understanding⁹. Perhaps it was the first 'postmodern war' (Lyon, 1994a), though in less abstract terms, perception in the West rested heavily on slick presentation of technological wizardry coupled with selective reporting. 'The mass media' states Shaw (1991:197) 'were the major instrument in the process of mediating violence to distant populations'. The effects of reporting were said to mirror those apparent during the conflict in the South Atlantic nine years previously. In this way, favourable reception of the war remained contingent on careful image control (Shaw, 1991).

Paradoxically, the instant as-it-happens, real-time *CNN* satellite broadcasts may have compounded a sense of unreality. We might speculate on this bizarre scenario: The avid viewer sits in front of the television with a warm drink, whilst the pet dog slumbers at her slippers feet. Meanwhile, 'smart weaponry' selectively destroys 'military installations' in Baghdad, and the Allies 'suffer minor casualties through friendly-fire'. Finally, Iraqi soldiers and civilians are exposed to 'collateral damage'. This 'spectator sport militarism' (Mann, 1987) encourages a highly detached sense of what modern warfare might be like for service people and civilians alike. Baghdad was described as 'being lit up like a Christmas tree', and

phrases including 'it was just like the movies' were noted from US aircrews (Shaw, 1991:198). However, public opinion was shown to be somewhat fragile. This was evident in the US context as the spectre of Vietnam hovered in the wings; watershed images included a dead Iraqi tank driver. Real people were put back into the equation:

'The ghastly image of the charred and grinning skull of a dead Iraqi caught on the road to Basra had flashed around the world...[T]his wasn't video wars and smart bombs beamed to you via CNN, this was horrible reality' (*The Observer*, 14 Jan 96).

The powerful image of Flight Lieutenant John Peters, a member of the downed aircrew, battered and bruised, filled television screens around the world. Just below the rank insignia in the flickering pictures, could be seen a tattered Union Jack badge. Here there was a living, breathing British serviceman, suffering real injuries. Though low-level bombing was stopped as a consequence of further aircrew loss, there seems little doubt that the potency of these pictures had a contributory influence on public and military opinion; risks of this nature became increasingly unacceptable. This negative imagery, however, rarely took central stage. The non-Iraqi forces succeeded in monopolizing air-time with victorious celebration.

The *SAS* myth was further bolstered through Andy McNab's successful book *Bravo Two Zero* (1994) detailing 'Scud destroying missions' during the Gulf War and the later *Immediate Action* (1995) highlighting the more glamorous elements of an *SAS* career. However, according to an article in *The Observer*, the competence of *SAS* missions during the war were open to question:

'Bravo Two Zero is now accepted by officers to have been a mistake, sent into battle on foot and without vehicles to make good its escape...sources today question whether these operations resulted in a single 'Scud' kill' (Williams, *The Observer*, 14 Jan 96).

This is certainly not to deny the courageous nature of these and other missions, rather to illustrate distortion characteristic of these popular discourses of war. Indeed, it is entirely possible that senior military officers tasked with directing such hazardous operations deep into Iraq were partly influenced by the apparent invulnerability of their very own *Special Forces* troops. Simply put, they may have overestimated the capabilities of this 'elite' soldier.

Perversely, it may have been the absence of combat that was difficult for the troops to handle on return to Britain:

'It was drilled into us that there would be this massive battle and lots of casualties. We were all hyped up, but there was no blood, guts or glory. I believe that's partly why so many of us are now so stressed out' (*The People* supplement, Feb 95; *Eddie Blench* comments on his post Gulf War experiences).

These comments point to the strain service people experience as they are 'prepared' for any eventuality. Civilians unfamiliar with such stresses may well find it curious that *non-engagement* with the enemy might engender such a problematic response.

We turn now to two popular cultural forms of entertainment, and illustrate lines of continuity linking 'our boys' with military comedy. Though produced 20 years apart, these materials have continued to promote a largely favourable (albeit somewhat farcical) image of the service person.

1.12 POPULAR CULTURE - *DAD'S ARMY* AND *SOLDIER SOLDIER*

There are a number of interesting overlaps between *Dad's Army* and *Soldier Soldier*, both popular forms of written, broadcast and video entertainment. *Dad's Army* has been considered in terms of its connection with 'nostalgia militarism' (Shaw, 1991) and like *Soldier Soldier*, continues to elicit considerable viewing figures. We will take the contemporary drama first.

The drama *Soldier Soldier* has been met with wide acclaim and continued popularity. The following comments appear on the reverse of the video packaging (series six, part one):

'Action drama and laughs in equal measure' (Daily Mirror, undated)

Like the cover of the CRISIS report, we are struck by the imagery emblazoned across one particular *Soldier Soldier* video. It speaks in volumes of men of action, teamwork and challenge. Technology is symbolized by the enigmatic backdrop of an Army helicopter swiftly ascending after dispatching its human cargo. Soldier-mates lean on each other and smile, whilst to the left of this image, a car explodes. On the spine of the video box, we note seriousness; three soldiers gaze unswervingly at the camera, their strength of determination in no doubt.

In the case of the video cover for *Dad's Army*, only men appear. The *Dad's Army* cover concentrates on *Captain Mainwaring* as the central character. He is offset against the members of his platoon by means of a split - us/them; Us (the troops), and Them (the officer class). The backdrop is characterized by a silhouette of Britain with advancing and retreating forces, the Union Jack is clearly visible, opposing the German swastika. This cover is 'Britain'; the intransigent workforce grounded in a problematic hierarchy together with notions of (somewhat unbelievable) conquests. Its potential blatancy is appeased through an appeal to the comic or the farce.

1.12.1 Boys, Pride and Nation

Britishness or Englishness infuses these mediums of entertainment. The national dimension is referred to almost continuously both implicitly and overtly. In *Dad's Army* and *Soldier Soldier*, we observe the importance of regionality, for example. Private Frazer, the dour Scot, features in the former, his origins of absolute centrality to his character, that we '*are all doomed*' has entered the everyday lexicon, coupled with an attempt to inflect a Scottish lilt. Another character, Private Walker, represents the 'spiv' or 'crafty cockney' figure. Interestingly we find a parallel character in *Soldier Soldier*. In the same way, he is noted to 'wheel and deal' and his accent can be traced to the London area. Further, in *Soldier Soldier*, accents can be attributed to both Liverpool and Scotland so that the identity of these characters rests very significantly on them being 'Scousers' or 'Jocks'. We might reflect on the effectiveness of many scenes if the characters in question hailed, alternatively, from foreign climes. Shaw reminds us that:

'The military and militarism are social and cultural forms of the competition between nation-states: inevitably, they accentuate differences between one national society and another' (Shaw,1991:110).

It is clear that the discourse of nationality, bound inextricably as it is with the institution of the military offers a potent way in which to engender affinity with the largely British audience. There is a sense in which the nationality discourse acts as a pervasive reminder that *we* are not foreign, and that most certainly the institution of the military remains 'quintessentially British'.

A brief return to the headline montages above demonstrates how this is manifested in the phrase 'our boys'. Their rightful place is at home - in the mother nation of Great Britain. This is due in part to the places in which campaigns have been waged. In terms of boyhood 'imagining' of war:

'The heroic imaginings of British boys have been made possible by the historical circumstances that - with the exception of air and sea raids in the two world wars, and the periodic guerrilla campaigns waged by Irish Republicans - Britain's wars have always been fought in other people's countries' (Dawson, 1994:235).

And Shaw:

'This popular militarism, linked in large part to "heroic" adventures in distant colonies, had a strong entertainment element' (Shaw, 1991:115).

We might identify notions of 'our boys' in the following, where *our* is allied to nation, and *boys* to gender:

'Within nationalist discourse, narratives about soldier heroes are both underpinned by, and powerfully reproduce, conceptions of *gender* and *nation* as unchanging essences' (Dawson, 1994:11; *emphasis added*).

A return to the media sketch of the first homeless ex-servicemen above, illustrates this point. *Phil Battersby* is forced to endure 'down-and-outs, drug addicts and alcoholics'. Clearly these individuals represent the antithesis of his former military colleagues and yet he remains heroically self-effacing, his large stature adding to a 'gentle-giant' like demeanour. Dawson (1994), during a personal exegesis in his formative years mirrors this preoccupation with tempered physical potential through his 'imagined heroes':

'I liked to imagine that my heroes...never engaged in wanton violence against other characters, but always acted out of self-defence or with justice on their side' (Dawson, 1994:256)

And, as Morgan (1990:14) states:

'Constructions of the heroic are as much to do with the *control of violence and of self* as of its direct expression in the field of battle' (*emphasis added*).

The nesting of 'our (vulnerable) boys' within the heroic discourse resonates throughout the construction of single homeless ex-servicemen, particularly in terms of their framing as members of the deserving poor. In the next section, we examine more closely the notion of 'our boys' through both historical and contemporary dimensions.

1.13 THE VULNERABILITY OF 'OUR BOYS'

The media's ubiquitous use of 'our boys' is nested within a number of themes. Vulnerability, immaturity and sacrifice infuse their status as (youthful) servicemen. They have been sent to do a man's job; in the name of honour, they cannot shirk such responsibility. This juxtaposition of 'boys' with 'war' has remained durable throughout a considerable period (Dawson, 1994). The following extracts, drawn from fictional and real-life accounts exemplify similar linkage, this time the 'boy-soldier-vulnerable' nexus. The first is from *The Regeneration Trilogy* (Barker, 1996), and is set against the backdrop of World War I:

'They take off their clothes, leave them in piles, line up naked, larking about, jostling, a lot of jokes, a few songs, everybody happy because it's not the dreary routine of drills and training. Inside the barns, hundreds of tiny chinks of sunlight from gaps in the walls and roof, so the light shimmers like shot silk, and these gleams dance over everything, brown faces and necks, white bodies, the dividing line round the throat sharp as a guillotine' (Barker, 1996:531; *Prior's* troops take their bath).

Examples of this child-like susceptibility are also captured in the work of the First World War poet, *Siegfried Sassoon*. In Pat Barker's work, he is fictionally interpreted; his prose remains powerfully emotive:

SUICIDE IN THE TRENCHES

*'I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.*

*In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.*

* * * *

*You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go'
(Sassoon, 1918:31).*

Nakedness and youthful larking - a powerful sense of both naivety and cold wisdom refracts throughout both passage and prose. We see boys and we see their untainted optimism. In the first example, these 'boys' as it were, have experienced bloody horror in their shit filled trenches, and yet they *appear* to have shrugged off this legacy; it's almost as if the effect of the bath is to wash away these memories. And yet Barker feels compelled to insert the word *guillotine* to remind us not only of their potential fate, but to close down excessive celebration of the moment. Sassoon is more direct, and manages to convey the distance between boy-soldier and 'smug-face crowds'.

In McNab's (1995) real-life account *Immediate Action* we note that photographs illustrating various stages of an SAS career are titled as follows:

'The ice-cream boys topping up their tans and doing a bit of pistol practice'
(McNab, 1995:21; facing page).

'Preparing for a patrol with the boys, Latin America 1989' (McNab, 1995:248; over page).

'The boys: team photo' (McNab:1995:248; over 2 pages).

And finally, from the US context:

'Smiling and obviously pleased Mr. Nixon stopped and told how he had been thinking, as he wrote his speech about "those kids out there (soldiers in Vietnam)...I have seen them. They are the greatest"' (Beamish *et al.*, 1995:352).

That the 'boys...have paid the full price' reminds us of the way in which they have been robbed of a 'full and adult' life as a consequence of war. The boy/soldier nexus remains pervasive in the contemporary period and engenders feelings of protectiveness and concern. Indeed, recent work carried out by the *Homeless Fund*, (McCrow, 1995) to estimate more accurately the number of single homeless ex-servicemen described the importance of locating 'young men and women who have served in our Armed Forces in the recent past'¹⁰ (McCrow, 1995).

In this final section, we contextualize preceding discussions through sketching the historical precursors surrounding the linkage of ex-servicemen with housing.

1.14 HOMES FIT FOR (SINGLE) HEROES?

In the immediate aftermath of war, housing has been of prime importance. The corollary of victory in war is expectation that sacrifice will be recognized, usually by recourse to state housing provision - in the face of many bombed-out dwellings - or intervention of one kind or another. Historically, however, the case of single demobbed servicemen has been overshadowed by that of his married peer. During the majority of this century, single

homelessness has remained largely hidden or relatively unusual, particularly during the post-war economic upswing. The phrase 'Homes fit for Heroes', was most likely coined after World War I, and it provides us with a vivid example of concern with the welfare of ex-serviceman and (in this case) their families. It offers two ingredients on which preceding analysis has centred: ex-servicemen and their representation through a range of media. However, Kemp (1992:56-57) points to the provision of social housing and its linkage (at the level of rhetoric at least) with a concern to 'reward' the returning troops. In the case of World War I:

'It was the 1924 Act, rather than that of 1919, which really established council housing as a long-term feature of the housing market. It had little to do with slogans about "homes for heroes", however, and instead reflected the collapse of private rental construction' (1992:56-57).

The phrase '*Homes fit for Heroes*' has such significance because of its subject matter - a relationship characterized by reciprocity. Returning troops deserve a home because they have fought heroically for their country. After World War II, housing was an issue of similar importance:

'The government promised immediate action. Ernest Bevin spoke confidently of building five million homes in "quick time"' (Turner and Rennell, 1995:195).

Turner and Rennell (1995) however, in their otherwise thorough work, fail to mention the plight of the many single homeless ex-servicemen demobbed shortly after the war. There is an assumption that single men can return to family, or are able to look after themselves. Traditional family structure implicitly underpins policy here, with an assumption that the marital category of single is but a temporary phase. Given the changes in familial structure over the last 25 or so years, however, the military looks rather out of step with the plight of some of its single ex-members (Jessup 1996; Jolly, 1992). The following extract is taken from the CRISIS commissioned report:

'Housing help given by the forces and services welfare agencies concentrate on families - very little is available for single people' (Randall and Brown, 1994:34).

Changes in the demographic profile of the population has presented policy makers with a number of challenges. These refract throughout many areas including some of those that underpin a general growth in homelessness in Britain during the last 20 or so years. Response is characterized by a lag that has rendered many of the single homeless population invisible and anomalous; those that have served in the military are but one 'deserving' group.

1.15 SUMMARY COMMENTS

In this chapter there has been an attempt to account for some of the ways in which single homeless ex-servicemen have been portrayed as members of the deserving poor. Whilst the roots of 'the victim' discourse are undoubtedly complex, nevertheless, mainstream media influence should be accorded particular weight in terms of shaping so-called public opinion. The military's characteristic distance (both physically and metaphorically) from its host society fosters the potential for distorted representation; here we noted the fruits of ideological labours that come into sharp focus during moments of conflict. At other times, the media apparatus is less well-tuned, though significantly it is understood to be somewhat consistent in its portrayal of service personnel.

In the next chapter, we suggest that the military institution might be described as 'traditional'. Set against the backdrop of rapid social change, or processes of 'detraditionalization' in the contemporary period, the institution is understood to be characterized by 'cultural-lag'. Chapter 2 is intended to perform a contextual function, and should augment theorizing outlined in the current chapter. Whilst there has been a focus on service person identity with reference to the apparatus of the media, the following chapter is pitched at a higher level of abstraction. In this way, the legacies of social change are considered with regard to their impact on the nature of military practice and value systems. Implicit in this approach are the tensions that may characterize service person identity reconciliation, evident from a traditional to a detraditional environment.

CHAPTER 2 - THE CONTEMPORARY MILITARY AND SHIFTING GROUNDS

A Traditional Institution within Detraditional Times?

We seemed to have the culture of the seventies but the army of the fifties. It felt as if I was living in one of the black-and-white movies I sometimes used to watch on a Saturday afternoon. Each morning we had to drink a mugful of 'screech', the old army word for powdered lime juice. The colonel must have been reading a book about Captain Cook and thought it would stop us getting scurvy. McNab, Immediate Action, 1995:19.

The armed forces tend to recruit people who are quite well-educated. One set of people are good at one thing, but not so good at another. Your Afro-Caribbean is a big chap, often very athletic and more interested in sport and music. Royal Air Force Squadron Leader Cowan, The Guardian, 23 Mar 96.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 opened the way for significant change within the military. Yet, talk of the peace-dividend has withered away as the contemporary military prepare for a (new) world (order) characterized by uncertainty. The military are to be more flexible, pro-active and to be deployed on peacekeeping duties¹ or to oversee humanitarian aid operations (Bett, 1995; Dandeker, 1994; Harries-Jenkins, 1990; Moskos, 1988; Shaw, 1991). Media influence has also proved significant, as it contributes toward public awareness of global events, and generates pressure for military intervention in regions identified as humanitarian hot-spots (Dandeker, 1994). Set against the backcloth of socio-economic change, the military is asked increasingly to justify its considerable defence budget. The disappearance of four decades of communist 'threat' have, to a certain extent, fostered a vacuum of legitimacy with regard to the traditional role of the military.

These developments are broadly in line with those commented on within social theory. Increasing risk, uncertainty, anxiety and insecurity characterize the contemporary period

(Beck, 1992, 1996) and the military is but one institution amongst many attempting to realign itself with rapid social change.

In this chapter we provide a snapshot of the contemporary military. Many areas of institutional culture remain stubbornly traditional, whilst others appear to have borne the full brunt of change emanating from broader society. In what follows we attempt to capture some of the ways in which the military 'lags' behind its host society. Throughout these discussions, it is clear that the 'total' institution of the military is characterized by 'permeable' boundaries; whilst it might be described as 'total' it cannot, nor does it 'totalize' the identity of its members.

In outlining the complex nature of tradition in the military, it is clear that ex-service people - to greater or lesser degrees - may well encounter a *detraditional* society through which uncertainties engender a range of difficulties. With this in mind, the wide-ranging debates presented below provide a broad context through which we attempt to link ex-service person identity with largely outmoded or 'traditional identities' fostered within the military.

2.2 THE TRADITIONAL MILITARY

The military institution has frequently been described as traditional (Beevor, 1991, *The Observer*, Dec 96; Downes, 1988; Dunivin, 1994, Edmonds, 1988; Harries Jenkins, 1991; Jolly, 1992; Shaw, 1991). For these commentators, tradition broadly relates to 'an outmoded way of life' (Rose, 1996:308). Thus, military culture continues to be characterized by deference, honour and loyalty, whilst within the broader society, these values are alleged to be in steep decline. For example, Beevor states that 'many veteran's organizations were born in an age of deference' suggesting that current societal notions of deference have diminished (Beevor, 15 Dec 96, *The Observer*).

2.2.1 The Conservative Institution

The military is closely linked with what might be described as the 'establishment', nested within the largely unchanging organs of the state:

'The contemporary military profession and its relationship with the parent society reflect a centuries-old alliance with the institutions of monarchy, Parliament [and] the Church' (Downs, 1988:153).

Dunivin's discussion of the conservative US military officer-code has sharp resonance with the sorts of ethos encouraged within the British context:

'The military espouses conservative, moralistic ideology as reflected in its ethics and customs. For example, each service academy's honour code ("We will not lie, cheat or steal [nor tolerate those among us who do"]) guides the ethical development of cadets and midshipmen in preparation for their service as "officers and gentlemen"' (Dunivin, 1994:534-535).

Jolly (1992), in a discussion of the Royal Air Force, attempts to capture the ways in which institutional culture turns on 'the good old days' on the one hand, and its potentially negative legacies on the other:

'The military has much to offer, but it has always been a conservative institution, resistant to change and especially to social change. Pointless lamentations over supposedly "declining standards" and futile attempts to "restore" them will not help the situation one bit. The Services should work out new policies to adapt to today's circumstances. If they insist on standing, Canute-like, on the shore trying to turn back the tide of social change, they may find themselves in deep water, floundering' (Jolly, 1992:185).

Morgan (1994) focuses on the ways in which military masculinities tend towards a relatively unquestioned aggressive and misogynist type through which naturalized (traditional/patriarchal) male dominance is rarely questioned - unlike recent trends in the

civilian environment (MacInnes, 1998). Implicit within Dandeker's (1994) commentary is the 'cultural-lag' (Ogburn, 1964) characteristic of today's military. It should, he states, mirror more closely broader societal change, particularly in terms of:

'[F]lexibility in...organization structures...[it should] respond to pressures from wider society...to conform to civilian values such as social equality [including] the current debates on the position of women and homosexual personnel in the services' (Dandeker, 1994:637).

Clearly then, there are good grounds for describing the military as traditional, in the sense that it is failing to maintain the pace of social change apparent within broader society.

2.2.2 'Cultural Lag'

It is argued that there remains distinct tensions between rapid change in the society and the traditional military (Jolly, 1992). In the case of the Army:

'As recently as 1988, some senior officers were still asserting with pride that the Army should always remain half a generation behind society as a whole. Either they completely underestimated the changes taking place, or else they believed that the Army, having ridden out the revolutionary Sixties, could remain insulated in the apparently far more favourable climate of the Eighties' (Beevor, 1991:362).

Manifest here is the military's desire to be apart or differentiated from society; conceptualized along a temporal dimension - old is good (and proved), modern remains uncertain. Whilst a number of influential officers bemoan recent civilian trends refracting throughout the military (Beevor, 1991), they remain surprised that ex-service people might endure difficulty some time after discharge. On the one hand, these officers are keen to stress their detachment from society - hardly surprising given the military's ultimate task of

taking life (Morgan, 1994) - yet simultaneously assert the ease of ex-member 're-integration' (Rafferty, *The Daily Mail Supplement*, Jun 1994).

We have sketched some of the ways in which recent commentaries have linked 'military' with 'tradition'. In this sense, particular elements of military culture are noted to trail those evident within broader society; they have been outmoded. In the next section, however, we problematize this somewhat simplified picture.

In the first example below we note *continuity* of the military in terms of its symbolic significance - a point hitherto neglected within academic theorizing. In the second, we draw attention to an area in which the military might be said to have *pre-empted* allegedly novel change within broader society. Taken together, these discussions problematize the apparently straightforward linkage of military organization with tradition.

2.3 CONTINUITY AND THE MILITARY INSTITUTION

Contemporary theorizing around postmodernism or late capitalism points to the significance of the spectacle (Baudrillard, 1981; Jameson, 1991). Its importance, it is alleged, is in its depthlessness and the ways in which imagery has become fleeting and transitory. Against the backdrop of a global media explosion, images are asserted to work in terms of their instant appeal. Art galleries proliferate, the pop-video dwarfs in importance its accompanying song; we exist in a world where a fascination for surfaces (for example, in architecture) has moved centre stage (Harvey, 1990)².

2.3.1 The Military Aesthetic

In the contemporary period we may attach different meanings to this myriad of imagery, together with an appetite that tends to be nourished through a fleeting feast of id-oriented spectacle - embodied in the notion of an 'MTV culture'. Yet we argue that the military has in previous decades both satisfied and stimulated this desire to be captivated by the aesthetic

dimension. Indeed, contemporary theorists³ frequently ignore the importance of the 'military as spectacle'. From an historical perspective, Myerly, (1992:105) states:

'[S]pectacle is an intrinsic dimension of armies and conflicts, but the impact of army spectacle upon nineteenth-century Britain has been neglected...no scholarly work has examined the appeal of the military show.'

Whilst we acknowledge the postmodern concern with the superficial level, it seems likely that in a number of ways, the military spectacle of the nineteenth century could be the subject of Harvey's (1990:54) more recent concern when he states:

'The immediacy of events, the sensationalism of the spectacle (political, scientific, military, as well as those of entertainment), become the stuff of which consciousness is forged.'

The parallels between 'spectacles' separated by decades are perhaps closer than has been previously considered. Consider these two descriptions - some 165 years apart - of two military spectacles:

'[T]he size, figure, and complexion of the men presented...[T]he dazzling colour of the uniform, the variety of the facings, the contrasts of the different parts of the dress, the profusion of the ornaments, namely feathers, frisures, powdered locks, ponderous queues, and polished accoutrements' (quoted in Myerly, 1992:107).

'[T]he hundreds of helicopters I'd flown in began to draw together until they'd formed a collective meta-chopper, and in my mind it was the sexiest thing going; saver-destroyer, provider-waster, right hand-left hand, nimble, fluent, canny and human' (Herr, 1977:77).

Both extracts are characterized by their similar linguistic cadence. This most likely reflects the attempt to capture the enormity, uniformity and simultaneity of the military spectacle(s); there is little doubt that the imagery remains potent. Current advertising campaigns, and airshows, for example mirror closely the attempt to reflect this powerful spectacle, albeit within a markedly different cultural context. In this sense, the linkage of military with traditional seems less appropriate, particularly when tradition is understood to refer to outmoded phenomena.

The military image can be presented to broader society in a range of ways that may not fit easily with notions of tradition. Many might conceive of the military as highly advanced - particularly in view of its exploitation of the latest technologies. We now turn to a second area in which military practice - far from being outmoded - is noted to inform the ways in which late-modern business corporations might improve their competitiveness.

2.3.2 Flexibility and Military Training

Emily Martin tells us:

'[T]o compete successfully in the "corporate olympics", corporate bodies must become agile, leaner, in shape, flexible enough to change' (Martin, 1994:210).

Corporations, in meeting the challenges of a global economy are urged to incorporate experiential training. These programmes are framed in the language of Total Quality Management; people should not work for themselves but for the company⁴. Empowered learning would facilitate successful engagement with a rapidly changing world, in which workers would embrace challenge and risk (Martin, 1994). This rhetoric and practice has now entered the domain of the modern corporation, and appears to fit closely with the novel, uncertain conditions of a detraditional business-world. More important in this context

is the onus on *flexibility*; in reacting to change, flexibility is premised as panacea to unpredictability in the workplace. The product of experiential training should be:

'[N]ew "people" [who are] to be active in their willingness to tolerate risk and danger but passive in their willingness to depend on the work group... their [flexible bodies] should be poised to respond in a continuously changing environment whilst constantly communicating with other such bodies' (Martin, 1994:214/215).

This training would involve risk, challenge, adrenalin, excitement, energy, teamwork, adaptability, trust, self-worth and so on⁵. This, details Martin (1994) is encouraged through the scaling of sheer walls, crossing high wires, and jumping off cliffs on safety harnesses. Within the corporate context, the approach is framed in terms of its innovative and ground-breaking nature; a plea to novelty legitimates these changes.

However, the ways in which these attributes are encouraged within the military context also pivots on so-called experiential learning. A cursory reading of military training (Hockey, 1986; McCallion, 1996; McNab, 1995; Mitchell, 1969) demonstrates the ways in which 'flexibility' (though not perhaps at the broader organizational level, see Roper, 1994:117) has long been encouraged within the 'traditional' military. Whilst it is acknowledged that variables including rank and precise nature of military environment (for example, the Special Forces in terms of the latter) dictate the parameters and style of training, much of it is essentially 'adrenalin' learning (Martin, 1994:215). Yet, Martin does refer to the Outward Bound movement as a relevant historical precursor to experiential training in the corporate world; its main aim is and was to expose people to risk, which was perceived as positive (Martin, 1994). Anxious parents received the following reply when they expressed concern about their children's safety. Could their safety on an Outward Bound course be guaranteed?

'No, (it) certainly can't...[W]e guarantee you the genuine chance of [his] death. And if we could guarantee his safety, the program would not be worth running' (Unsoeld quoted in Martin, 1994:219).

In conceptualizing change throughout broader society, commentators have neglected the military institution. In these terms, we acknowledge the limits of the term tradition when it is understood to refer to 'a way of life that is lost' (Rose, 1996). The nexus linking late modernity and flexibility turns on the importance of fostering the experiential dimension amongst individuals located in the corporate world - practice that has characterized military training for many decades.

Our central point of departure in these brief discussions has been that of tradition. It is clear that the military is irreconcilable with a rather blanket use of the term tradition. In the first sense outlined above, its symbolic currency has remained durable through time, and has lost none of its resonance within broader society - here imagery might be understood as far from traditional. In the second, we suggested that apparently novel experiential training has been a mainstay of military culture for a considerable period.

The theme of military representation is further explored below, with particular reference to military advertising campaigns. In the following discussion, we suggest that whilst there is broad continuity of the military spectacle in terms of its ability to captivate the public, the nature of military advertising campaigns may have changed in recent times. In these terms, there has been more of an appeal to soldierly 'intellect' over and above that of bodily capital - messages that resonate with the applicability of military skills to the civilian employment market.

2.4 RUPTURE - THE CASE OF THE MILITARY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

To the top right of a desert scene spanning two colour supplement pages is the blurred image of a Hercules transport aircraft. The aircraft appears to be jettisoning a number of

supply crates with parachutes in various stages of deployment. Above this striking scene, the following words appear:

'AFTER A DROUGHT THE FIRST FEW DROPS ARE VERY PRECIOUS'

'The cries of starving babies pierced the still air. From the distance came the faint hum of engines, growing steadily louder. One by one, sacks rained on the dusty earth, their simple cargo of grain greeted as though it were manna from heaven...'

This narrative continues under the dreamy imagery:

*'Since Ethiopia the Royal Air Force have made [food] drops in Kurdistan and more recently, Bosnia. When it came to feeding the World back in 1984, there were millions of people who gave money. Thankfully, a few gave a lot more' (Impact Magazine - part of *The Guardian* group, June 96).*

This example illustrates a number of related points. First, it captures the changing role of the military in the Post Cold War period, peacekeeping duties together with aid relief offer a new foundation of legitimacy⁶ as we have already suggested above. Second, we are reminded of Winston Churchill's spirit stirring speech with reference to the Royal Air Force of World War II. 'Gratitude' together with the 'many and few' are juxtaposed and reworked into a humanitarian context.

2.4.1 Experience, Display and Change

The humanitarian advertising campaign of the Royal Air Force may be contrasted with a Royal Navy recruiting drive. A dimly lit Harrier Jump Jet is pictured on the deck of an unknown aircraft carrier. Here the appeal could be understood against the backdrop of somewhat enigmatic computer technology. Emblazoned across the top of the photograph are the following words:

THERE'S NOTHING VIRTUAL ABOUT THIS REALITY

An altogether punchier approach is further emphasised by the narrative:

ANYONE CAN PLAY GAMES. WE NEED PEOPLE TO DO IT FOR REAL. THOSE WHO PREFER STIMULATION TO SIMULATION SHOULD SEND FOR OUR INFORMATION PACK..

- The Observer, 19 Feb 96

Current campaigns appear increasingly concerned with the masculinized dimensions of reason and skill under pressure. For example, an advertising campaign for the *Royal Marines* in the *Daily Mail* (11 Jan 96) catches the eye through the following message in stencilled letters:

'AT -30c IT BECOMES DIFFICULT MORE TO STRAIGHT TO STRAIGHT THINK'

'At -5c your finger go numb. At -15c your body goes numb. At -30c your mind goes numb. However resilient you are, when hypothermia sets in, normal disciplines go to the wall. How then does a Royal Marine avoid the problem and remain ready to fight?'

There are even greater differences between contemporary campaigns and those from recruiting drives during the 1940s. A poster used to boost Royal Air Force enlistees during World War II urges us to 'Look to the Future in the RAF'. The rigid bust of an airman, his face turned away from the audience gazes longingly at a number of aircraft. Raw experience and challenge seem wholly absent, as we note the slightly proud, raised head of the uniformed individual. That we are able only to see a partial profile of the airman may mark one of many changes. The face, as an important bearer of emotional state (Elias, 1991; Goffman, 1959) remains hidden, there is no room in this instance for affective display (see Chapter 8 for fuller discussion). Wouters' (1992:229), drawing on Steans and Haggerty, tells us:

'During the Gulf War fighter pilots, interviewed for TV in their planes before taking off, admitted to being afraid. They did this in a matter of fact way. This would have been almost unthinkable in the Second World War,

when such behaviour would have been equated almost automatically with being fear-ridden...[T]he dominant response at that time, in answer to the problem of how to prevent soldiers from giving in to fear may be summarized in a quotation from a 1943 manual for American officers: it is the soldier's "desire to retain the good opinion of his friends and associates...his pride smothers his fear".'

The ways in which a life in the military is sold to potential enlistees (at the level of advertising, in this example) may have changed in ways that relate to the legitimacies of emotional display (Wouters, 1992). A further example of these changes is captured in the imagery conveyed by a poster promoting service in the *Royal Marines*. This particular campaign turns on 'warrior like' display; here we note the grimacing faces of troops in action.

The contemporary military career tends to be bracketed out from civilian occupations in terms of its particular experiential dimension. The potency of the phrase 'service, to Queen and Country' has been largely replaced by an appeal to the benefits of service for personal development⁷. Military service is presented in an increasingly instrumental manner, particularly in terms of its beneficial relationship to post-discharge labour markets.

In these sections we have examined some of the ways in which the military has been presented to society. In the next sections we critically examine the term 'tradition' - with specific reference to work by Anthony Giddens. Following this, these more theoretical orientations are related to substantive examples characteristic of today's military.

2.5 CONCEPTUALIZING 'TRADITION' - DEFINITIONS

A further way in which to conceptualize a traditional formation is to note the ways in which 'the individual personality is lost in the depths of the social mass' (Heelas, 1996:4). Thus, traditional formations are:

'[G]enerally (although not always) held to be *exclusivist...with the self belonging* to (as informed or constituted by) a particular and true order, what does not belong (namely selves belonging to alien or different orders) is not accorded equivalent dignity. "Our way is the right way; you are excluded, rendered inferior, because you do not follow our immemorial path"' (Heelas, 1996:4; *emphasis added*).

Giddens' (1994) formulation parallels that of Heelas. There is a similar recognition of tradition's collective, ritualistic and unquestioned dimensions. To what extent might these understandings resonate with the contemporary military?

2.5.1 Tradition and Consensus - the Military Institution

First, the military community is contingent on a shared and consensual understanding of norms, values, attitudes, hierarchy and so on. Second, saluting, bodily drill and the wearing of uniform represent ritualistic endeavour carried out largely at the non-discursive level (see Chapter 3). Third, and connected closely with the degree to which practice is 'unreflectively accommodated' (Cohen and Taylor, 1992:47), is the existence of so-called 'formulaic truths' (Giddens, 1994:64). The authoritarian hierarchy necessarily demands a high degree of deference - most obviously from those situated towards the lowest reaches of the rank structure⁸. Finally, 'guardians' are responsible for mediating truths (most potently, to younger members unfamiliar with the 'system'). They might be represented by the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM: Army) or Station Warrant Officer (SWO: Royal Air Force). Many years of military experience coupled with an auratic charisma render utterances largely beyond question. Meticulous attention to dress, strict adherence to the military rule book and a profound awareness of location within the military hierarchy characterize these often eccentric individuals. They may literally become 'dealers in mystery' (Giddens, 1994:65). It is likely that with reference to particular situations, military tradition might be understood as 'fundamental' (Giddens, 1994:100). The defence of military practice - notably in the face of civilian challenge - is couched in non-negotiable language:

'A discursive defence of tradition does not necessarily compromise formulaic truth, for what is most consequential is a preparedness to enter into dialogue...[o]therwise, traditionalism becomes fundamentalism...[this] may be understood as an assertion of formulaic truth without regard to consequences' (Giddens, 1994:100).

Next, we consider a substantive example of this unwillingness to enter into dialogue within the context of ethnicity.

2.5.1.1 *Tradition and Race*

Giddens' comments remind us of the nature of Squadron Leader Cowan's beliefs quoted towards the head of this chapter. The corollary of ethnic origin is an apparent biological disposition to certain expertise, in this case 'athletics, sport and music'. Cowan's assertion works in terms of both form and substance. First, it appears as a statement of fact; ethnic minorities remain at the whim of their biological 'givens'. Second, the sentence: 'Your Afro-Caribbean is a big chap' relies heavily on the word *chap*. Chaps are not simply male colleagues, they are more often than not good chaps or decent chaps. That your Afro-Caribbean is a big chap coincides with the foreclosing sentence structure - like natural skill, one has no control over size of body. 'On the whole' then, your 'Afro-Caribbean' is in reality a 'likeable fellow' who really does 'mean well' (despite his 'primitive impulses'). Issues of race within the context of fundamentalist military discourse concern other commentators too:

'The social conservatism of the British military...is also reflected in its ethnic composition and racial policies. Until very recently, The Ministry of Defence and the armed forces were unwilling to admit the existence of a problem of racism in the military...[T]he press had no difficulty...in identifying less positive responses...in the armed forces themselves: 'Paras jump to dismiss "overstated" problem of prejudice', ran one headline; 'Calling recruits "Blackie" is not an insult says CO' (Shaw, 1991:142/143).

2.5.1.2 Tradition and Military Argot

Giddens' (1991, 1994) notion of tradition also turns on the significance of language, in terms of the ways in which it influences collective memory. There are varied ways in which these techniques become manifest in the military, specifically in terms of particular argot. Hockey's (1986) study of infantry recruit training illustrates the importance of its swift acquisition⁹. Thus:

'An...assimilation of Army jargon and argot enables the recruits gradually to classify and order their newly encountered experiences' (Hockey, 1986:32).

And from the embryonic moments of joining the *Special Air Service*:

'I felt like a nun in a whorehouse, knowing none of the jargon and none of the people using it...I didn't have a clue what or who anybody was talking about. There were all these different terminologies...I had no idea...I had to ask for translations' (McNab, 1995:133/136).

In both of these examples, language, knowledge and power are inextricably linked. Membership and identity rests largely on the appropriate linguistic code. Language is complexly intertwined with tradition, thus:

'[R]itual speech is speech which it makes no sense to disagree with or contradict - and hence contains a powerful means of *reducing the possibility of dissent*' (Giddens, 1991:39; *emphasis added*).

We have highlighted values, exclusion, language and the sometimes fundamental nature of military tradition. Notions of tradition accord broadly with military organization and culture when contrasted with a society understood to be undergoing processes of what has been termed detraditionalization (Beck, 1992, 1996). With this in mind, the military might be conceptualized as a 'barometer' of wider change in that it continues to thrive on practice and values nested within a strict hierarchy; these characteristics are less pervasive within broader society, as a range of 'innovative' working practices (certainly at the level of rhetoric), stress the *flattening* of hierarchies in post-fordist production (Gough, 1992).

So far in this chapter, we have focused on those elements of the military that are understood to be somewhat outmoded within broader society. A number of areas - particularly those concerning military representation(s) - appear less obviously traditional in the senses outlined above. On balance, however, the institution remains characterized by a lag *vis-a-vis* its host society. We augment this position in the next section by examining two substantive examples of military practice that might be considered largely outmoded within broader society. The first deals with homosexuality in the military and second, debates concerning the linkage of 'women' with 'military'. Taken together, these discussions suggest an increasing intolerance from broader society towards military ideologies linked to the ways in which the military constitutes its 'traditional' subjects.

2.6 FITTING THE MILITARY MOULD - HOMOSEXUALITY

Binary notions of sexuality permeate military culture. Recent postmodern theorizing has explored the constructions of these dimensions together with the possibility that sexuality makes certain demands on agency (Kimmel, 1994). This understanding operates at the polar extreme of military thinking, through which sexuality is grounded within a biological *truth*. This discussion hopes to further understanding of presuppositions at work in the military regarding sexuality and for this reason should provide:

'[A] more active model of social change...one which looks at masculinities as constructions which are open to challenge, negotiation and consent' (Morgan, 1990:27).

These debates have (and to a certain extent, remain) anathema to an environment in which:

'[T]he nexus linking masculinity, violence, and the military...[provides] ...some of the most *dominant* gendered images in many cultures' (Morgan, 1994:179; *emphasis added*).

Various techniques, practices and strategies through which homosexuality is actively (and sometimes aggressively) revealed may be understood against the backdrop of fear. Tensions between the myth of 'the queer' and his or her actual manifestation remain largely unresolved within the military sphere. That is not to say, however, that service people are homogeneous in terms of their homophobia. Hall (1995), Morgan (1987) and a BBC2 documentary (*Secret Lives*, 23 May 97) demonstrate a range of tolerances towards people understood to be homosexual. Historically, at least, this may be related to the mandatory nature of National and war service; here large numbers of the civilian population were mobilized, thereby embracing a wider range of sexualities than is likely within an all-volunteer force.

The reaction to the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces can be broadly conceptualized as moderate on the one hand (Hall, 1995) and radical on the other (Tatchell, 1995). Hall's (1995) book is entitled '*We Can't Even March Straight*' and calls for a new tolerance towards homosexual service people, in other words, equality with heterosexuals. In the case of the radical perspective, the title of Tatchell's pamphlet (1995) is far more provocative: '*We Don't Want to March Straight*'. It is to this work we turn first.

2.6.1 Gay Rights

The dimensions along which Tatchell (1995) conceptualizes the military rest partly on masculinized excess within an outmoded and traditional institution. In a parallel manner, the following comment is made by Morgan (1994:178):

'[T]here is no doubt that military life provides not only many of the resources out of which misogynies are constructed (group solidarities, all-male bondings...), but also, from time to time, the opportunity for such misogynies to be given open physical expression without sanction or retribution. However, much of the misogynist rhetoric is not peculiar to military cultures and may be a feature of many all-male work situations or, indeed leisure activities in which danger and group solidarities are involved.'

Here, the thinking of Morgan and Tatchell overlap somewhat with regard to the conflation of authoritarianism with misogyny, and violence with man. Further, Morgan's (1994) analysis stands as a corrective to Enloe (1983) who asserts it is the military that might be characterized by its ultimate hegemony with respect to the production of 'misogynistic masculinities'. More accurately, we might identify a complex interaction of a whole range of masculinities located within different spheres spanning both the military and the civilian contexts.

2.6.2 Assimilation

Hall's work represents an assimilationist approach for gays in the military, and is considerably more moderate than that of Tatchell's. His accounts highlight the sometimes harsh treatment of homosexual service individuals. Traditional military policy sets a powerful precedent:

'Homosexuality, whether male or female, is considered incompatible with service in the Armed Forces. This is not only because of the close physical conditions in which personnel often have to live and work, but also because homosexual behaviour can cause offence, polarise relationships, induce ill-discipline, and as a consequence damage morale and unit effectiveness. If individuals admit to being homosexual whilst serving and their Commanding Officer judges that this admission is well-founded they will be required to leave the Services' (MoD Policy, quoted in Hall, 1995).

Though this policy provides an official justification for ultimate discharge, it relies heavily on a rather obfuscatory discourse of sexuality. What can we tease out in terms of preconceptions concerning 'deviant (military) sexuality'? To what extent does the legitimacy of this policy rest on a particular ideology of sexuality? Is not this ideology somewhat outmoded within broader society?

2.6.3 Aberration

We are able to gain a useful insight into the deeper beliefs of deviant (military) sexuality through examining official correspondence. The following letter, from a senior Naval Surgeon is in reply to a Junior Naval Officer who found the Navy's approach to homosexuals harsh (Hall, 1995). The Senior Officer, defending the ban on homosexuals states:

'[A]lso, think hard about this. While homosexuality makes no real sense from a reproductive, evolutionary or even behavioural standpoint, the bacteriological argument is irrefutable. In design, layout and function, "genito-urinary" must always be kept separate from "gastro-intestinal". Whilst I very much hope that you will go on to obtain the equivalent of a Double First in your chosen subjects of Sociology and Politics, I know that even if you succeed, you'll still not be able to convince me about the merits of a way of life in which the main sewer gets regular use as a playground' (Surgeon Commander Jolly, quoted in Hall, 1995:74).

The stance on homosexuality - together with the use of rational/masculine (Seidler, 1989) formal policy language - draws legitimation from a medicalized discourse. The potency of scientific discourse appears irrefutable. Yet the 'truth', in which the very existence of the human race 'from a behavioural standpoint' is invoked does in a sense, parallel some of the ways in which HIV and AIDS has been inextricably linked with homosexual men in terms of the so-called 'gay plague'. More broadly:

'[S]cience...claim[ed] to speak the truth, it stirred up people's fear; it declared the furtive customs of the timid, and the most solitary of petty manias, dangerous for the whole society; strange pleasures, it warned would eventually result in nothing...short of death: that of individuals, generations, the species itself' (Foucault, 1979:54).

The military/medical profession quickly established itself as the grand authority on sexual practice. In this sense it assumed exclusivist control over the identification and ultimate ostracism of homosexual service people. The apparatus to codify such individuals left little space for the inclusion of outside agencies to become involved. This exclusive control resonates with Heelas's (1996:4) understanding of a traditional formation. Like medical 'experts' within the civilian context, the military/medical organization set itself up as:

'[T]he supreme authority in matters of hygienic necessity...it claimed to ensure the physical vigor and the moral cleanliness of the social body; it promised to eliminate defective individuals...it justified the racisms of the state...it grounded them in "truth"' (Foucault, 1979:54).

Foucault's analysis resonates closely with Surgeon Commander Jolly's suggestion that matters of hygiene must transcend the sexual folly of 'defective individuals'. Similarly, Martin (1994) understand the significance of hygiene against the backdrop of a discourse of power most active in the nineteenth century:

'When almost everyone is convinced, then, but only then, and afterward, will hygiene be a "power" to discipline and to coerce' (Martin, 1994:16).

Homosexuality in the military context thus represents unhygienic and threatening practice, not least because it is considered wholly irreconcilable with traditional perceptions of heterosexual masculinities. Here broader societal tolerance¹⁰ of the gay culture in the 1990s might be understood to be located at the far extreme of predominant military culture.

2.6.4 The Confession

When suspicions have been sufficiently aroused concerning the possible homosexuality of a service person, there is the interrogation and desired confession. There lurks a truth just waiting 'to be got at'; here homosexuality renders inferior (Heelas, 1996) the individual under suspicion. The military police (inevitably) are tasked with revealing the admission of 'deviant' or 'unnatural' practice:

'The questions are not couched in general terms, but are startlingly specific - someone has taught the service police the fine detail of what lesbians and gay men do in bed...

What did you do in bed with him?;
So which fingers did she use on you?;
Was there anything strange about the way he acted in bed?;
Was he violent at all?'

(Hall, 1995:25).

The confession serves a number of purposes. Perceptions of the military police turn directly on the ways in which individuals believed to be 'deviant' have subverted the very (sexuality) dimensions along which they are constituted as service individuals. The service police (often the Special Investigation Branch or SIB) have considerable power and as figures of authority are active at the interface of admission, whilst a scientized discourse legitimates the truth:

'The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship...the confession was, and still is, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex' (Foucault, 1979:62).

Here, the military is demonstrated to be largely divergent from broader society, at least in terms of the legal status of homosexual acts between consenting adult males¹¹. Undoubtedly, the confession is characterized by its 'ritualistic and exclusive localization' (Foucault, 1979; Hall, 1995) within the military. Against the backcloth of the armed forces, homosexuality remains an object of:

'[G]reat suspicion; the general and disquieting meaning that pervades our conduct and our existence...the point of weakness where evil portents reach through to us; a fear that never ends' (Foucault, 1979:69).

Whether or not legitimated homosexual practice would 'undermine military efficiency' remains a moot point (*The Guardian*, 4 Mar 96, 5 Mar 96, 12 Mar 96, 14 Mar 96; *The Independent* 8 Jun 95; Stychin, 1996). More obviously, it appears that military practice and ideology is reduced to draconian investigative methods infused with a qualified fear; these remain somewhat outmoded in the host society.

2.7 ACCOUNTING FOR OUTMODED PRACTICE IN THE MILITARY

How might we conceptualize fear in terms of 'ambiguous' sexuality? No doubt the close proximity of same-sex individuals may engender occasional questioning of one's own sexual 'orientation', particularly for a number of younger service people. In these terms, forces driving homosexual oppression flow largely from sexual insecurities. Thus, service people, by virtue of their intense shared experiences on a range of fronts, may share a powerful affinity that occasionally spills over rather arbitrary boundaries. The subjects of the following extract are off-duty soldiers who have just left a pub:

'They're swaggering about and playing manly games with each other, play-fighting, wrapping their arms around each other's necks and slobbering in each other's ears, slapping each other on the back, wrestling, play-punching just this side of a ruptured spleen, ruffling hair and pinching cheeks, obviously in love' (Stone, 1996:101).

When juxtaposed with the following extract from a letter to *The Times* written by a retired Army Officer, the results are striking:

'[I]n battle every soldier must be able to trust the other, but none too much. If two soldiers were to be *emotionally involved* that essential trust would be destroyed' (Major General A S Jeapes, *The Times*, 29 Apr 95; *emphasis added*).

It is apparent then that in part, military policy turns on a complex interaction of fear with homosexuality and emotional 'unpredictability'. Emotions can get out of control. Recognition is however, given to the physical elements of camaraderie, for example, the highly tactile 'Mess Rugby' (Beavor, 1991) or similarly physical drinking bouts in the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) for other ranks in which horse-play is accepted and encouraged. Essentially, and somewhat problematically for the ways in which military individuals are constituted, the boundaries between love, physicality and emotion remain amorphous and fluid; against this background masculinities may appear somewhat fragile.

In the second of the substantive discussions, we turn to the linkage of 'woman' with 'military'. Contradictions underlying this relationship reveal similar inequalities that parallel the plight of homosexuals in the military.

2.8 ONE OF THE BOYS? - GENDER STABILITIES

Women menstruate, they 'leak'. Their bodies are round and fleshy rather than firm and straight and they tend to be shorter than their male counterparts. Strength is relatively questionable. Women 'breed', their breasts swell and their bodies are subsequently constrained. Aesthetically, these bodies may diverge sharply from the military (man) ideal; these remain hegemonic and may establish unobtainable standards for women. For example, large breasts could render servicewomen as sex-object - and therefore unlikely to be 'militarily proficient', small breasts; too manly. The military perceives competent women as one of the boys, whilst simultaneously condemning them by virtue of their lack of

femininity¹². Thus: '[F]ew combinations have caused more unease in the male psyche than women and war' (Beevor, 1991:435).

Within civilian life, discourses around sexuality tend to be conceived of in terms of a heterosexual matrix. This - in somewhat convoluted terms - is a:

'Hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be stable sex expressed through stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality' (Butler; quoted in Gutterman, 1994:225).

There is a sense in which greater gender stability is demanded in the military environment; gender should be unambiguous. This is reflected throughout a range of areas from dress codes to hairstyles. A serviceman's appearance in a flowery shirt in soft pastel shades is unlikely to be well received within the routinely gender bound confines of the NAAFI bar, unless for example, a special event lends legitimacy to the sporting of such feminized clothing.

2.8.1 Traditional (Military) Women?

Media coverage of the Gulf War highlighted the ways in which the paradoxical role of the 'girl-soldier' were reconciled by recourse to a number of 'traditional' discourses incorporated into a non-traditional context (Forde, 1995). Female soldiers, from a range of coalition countries were portrayed as vulnerable, immature and predisposed to ready shows of emotion when contrasted with male soldiers. Photographs conveyed the passive and maternal instinct of female service people, so that:

'[T]raditional ideologies of femininity were reconstructed within the context of war...women soldiers were predominantly constructed as potential victims, mothers and most frequently, sex objects' (Forde, 1995:117).

The problematic woman/male role nexus highlights constraint in the heterosexual military matrix. Servicewomen who display competence through a range of activities from consumption of alcohol to technical ability are considered 'one of the boys'. The oppositional male/female boundaries in the matrix are blurred as servicewomen are perceived to adopt 'superior' male characteristics. Unsurprisingly, the masculinized environment of the military (and other similarly dominated contexts including the police), renders women as inferior. The hierarchy is pervasive and permeates many spheres of the servicewoman's life, particularly sexuality:

'Men soldiers don't respect WRACs [Woman's Royal Army Corps] at all. If you're in it, you're a lesbian or a slut. And there's a real pressure to sleep with men. In the men's quarters at one of my driving units, they had a list of all the WRACs pinned up and a tick system on whether they thought you were gay or straight - on the basis of who *they'd* slept with' (Enloe, 1983; *original emphasis*).

And:

'Servicewomen finding themselves in a sex-obsessed environment, have to learn very early on to "bite their lip". The soldier's slang term for a "WRAC" - a Cadbury's Snack - gives an indication of what they have to put up with...the threat of being labelled a lesbian is one of the most common' (Beevor, 1991:443).

Similarly, within the masculinized police-force:

'Women officers, are...placed in a bind of their own, at one extreme, if they fight for equal treatment, by aping male attitudes, they risk losing their femininity. At the other, if they passively accept the sexist attitudes of their male colleagues, they risk losing their identity altogether by conforming to the stereotype men have of them' (Graef, 1990:193).

The hierarchy is further reinforced as woman and/or homosexuality are framed disparagingly:

'Get fell in and stop fucking about! Act like men and not like a bunch of wet tarts...[S]oldiers should be young and fit, rough and nasty, not powderpuffs!' (Hockey, 1986:35)

A servicewoman sacked by the Royal Air Force stated that "pregnant...women were considered as bad as homosexuals" (Evans, *The Times*, 16 Sep 93). As 'one of the boys', how can women possibly have babies? Servicewomen's reproductive ability has until recently been susceptible to a masculinized power discourse (crystallized in military policy) whereby pregnancy resulted in loss of career, and it is to a discussion of those issues we now turn.

2.8.2 'Breeding Machines' and 'Meddling Influence'

The policy of dismissing pregnant servicewomen was found recently to be contrary to European law, and has over the last five or so years, led to a number of successful claims for compensation. They have ranged from 300 to a few thousand pounds. The final bill, however, could reach 200 million pounds (Evans, *The Times*, 3 Jun 94, 15 Jun 94). A closer

examination of this policy highlights a number of paradoxes that challenge the traditional and somewhat outmoded ways in which servicewomen have been constituted and subsequently treated.

Legal pressure from the European judicial system has forced the MoD into granting servicewomen 24 weeks unpaid maternity leave. This debate has been characterized by military belligerence; attitudes expressed have mirrored those evident amongst the 'Eurosceptics' - individuals on the right of (the somewhat fragmented) oppositional Conservative Party. They understand the alleged process of 'federalization' as eroding British sovereignty and 'tradition'¹³. In what sorts of ways might these 'traditional attitudes' become manifest?

2.8.3 Matter-of-Fact Birth?

As constituted subjects of a 'specific kind', the servicewoman's reproductive ability had until recently, been couched in terms of an either/or choice:

'A former servicewoman suing the Ministry of Defence...criticised the armed forces yesterday for creating a culture based on the assumption that women join up to get married and then "leave to breed"' (Evans, *The Times*, 15 Nov 94).

A solicitor representing a number of ex-servicewomen who alerted the military to their pregnancies before discharge stated:

'It was all very matter-of-fact at the time, no counselling or anything...they just asked as a matter of course if they wanted an abortion or if they wanted to leave, almost abortion on demand' (Gibb, *The Times*, 8 Sep 94).

The possibility of emotional trauma as a result of discovering pregnancy, compounded by possible loss of career, was dealt with in a cold and instrumental manner. For example, a hospitalized servicewoman about to give birth was approached by a superior attempting to sack her:

'A doctor had to intervene and send the officer away. She was upset by this. The act of trying to serve discharge papers on a woman in hospital who was fearing a miscarriage was of such insensitivity that it passes belief' (Gibbs, *The Times*, 19 Nov 93).

These examples illustrate the ways in which servicewomen were and continue to be construed as inferior on account of their reproductive ability. Clearly, the military environment pivots on hegemonic masculinities through which women might only ever be considered second-best.

Whilst there have been changes in the nature of military service for women, it is important to highlight the limitations to this apparently pro-feminist impulse. Women's increasing presence in the military results in part from changes in demographic trends within broader society, resulting in a shortfall of recruits (Harries Jenkins, 1990). Recent changes have meant that women can now serve on warships and pilot combat aircraft and the overall number of servicewomen has grown (Beevor, 1991; Dandeker and Segal, 1996).

In the preceding sections of this chapter, we have focused on the ways in which the military might be understood as traditional. In this sense, military culture has been understood as largely 'outmoded' or 'lost' when contrasted with developments in broader society. However, there are alternative ways in which to conceptualize the relationship between the military and society. In the following section, we problematize the traditional/detraditional cleavage as above, though in these instances with a focus on the complex overlap between the military and civilian environments.

2.9 AWAY FROM TRADITION - THE DIVERSE MILITARY

The notion that society is undergoing processes of so-called detraditionalization have not gone unchallenged. The prime critic of these apparent developments in society, draws on the significance of 'locales of practice', rather than through the temporal dimension (Rose, 1996). Here, social change is understood in terms of the proliferation of discourses with which it is possible to formulate identity, rather than a hiatus of sudden 'detraditional' change. As Rose sees it, society is characterized by diversity - a contradictory mix of both traditional and detraditional processes that have strong resonance with previous societal patterns, for example those identified as 'individualization' from at least the 12th Century (Rose, 1996:294-327). Rose frames this understanding in the following way:

'[R]ather than *narrativizing* the ways of being human, [or in this case being a 'service-person']...we need to *spatialize* being. Such a spatialization would render being intelligible in terms of the localization of repertoires of habits, routines and images of self-understanding' (Rose, 1996:304; *emphasis added*).

Thus, particular locales of practice in the military may mirror those situated in the civilian society. Here, there is an appeal to the resilience of agency. Though the military provides intensive experiences of socialization, 'detraditional views' emanating from civilian life may be impervious to change:

'No matter how assiduously new recruits are put through a rigorous induction process...there would...be much by way of residual civilian attitudes and belief systems that would be irrevocably ingrained...[T]his should be expected, for armed services are more than functional automata' (Edmonds, 1988:52).

Conceptualized at the micro level, the character of the military may be considerably more diverse than its straightforward labelling as 'traditional' might suggest. As we will suggest in Chapter 3, presenting cultures are unlikely to fully colonize self identities:

'[H]uman beings neither inhabit a homogeneous domain of representations of personhood which encompasses all practices and techniques, *nor do they internalize a certain view of themselves through their immersion in a system of meanings*' (Rose, 1996:298; *emphasis added*).

We continue with the theme of diversity, and turn briefly to issues of identity. Here a range of authoritative discourses compete; traditional 'soldier' identity may be far from significant at certain moments.

2.9.1 Military Identities

We could ask: in which situations is military rank or trade significant as traditional marker of identity? What about the significance of 'length of service', for example? With this in mind, Morgan (1987:32) illustrates a particular ritual associated with the experience of National Service:

'One of the most frequent sounds at RAF (X)...was that of one airman calling to another "get some in"...it was recognition of common fate, a kind of badge of identity...it can be suggested that "get some in" underlined the superiority of civilian life to service life.'

Here, time served (and therefore time remaining prior to the onset of a civilian life) represented an important 'signifier of identity'. Civilian life was perceived as 'superior' to that of service life - a situation perhaps mirrored in the contemporary military institution

(Moskos, 1988). The *traditional* authority of rank - at least amongst the lower echelons - is temporarily transcended, as 'fewer months remaining' might be characterized by a particular kudos/status, irrespective of place in hierarchy. Further channels along which context-contingent identity might be encouraged to run could include: 'value of one's tax free car (in Germany), ability to consume alcohol, work competence, fighting prowess' and so forth (Beevor, 1991; Hockey, 1986, Morgan, 1994). In these terms, service-person identity may straddle the civilian/detraditional - military/traditional divide; here the character of the military is understood to be largely contingent on its constituent members.

In this next section, military influence towards broader society is examined. The significance of the military/civilian interface is signalled through the following extracts:

'Too closely focused on the military as an institution, military sociologists have hardly tried to examine the content of the...military culture in societies, or the ways in which the transformation of military institutions generates new effects on other social institutions and groups' (Shaw, 1991:75).

'The extent to which the values or practices of a given culture pervade the wider social order is of consequence for those outside that culture. Thus, under certain conditions, military values may come to dominate civilians as well as soldiers' (Morgan, 1994:168-169).

Here military practice - couched in the language of tradition - will be shown to have been deployed ideologically as a way in which to halt the decline of (civilian) moral values. In the following sections, we reflect on the influence of the military towards broader civilian society. These discussions further exemplify the nature of the fluid and overlapping military/civilian interface.

2.10 MILITARY INFLUENCE TOWARDS THE HOST SOCIETY

The task of locating military influence on civilian culture has been tackled most recently by Shaw (1991). Frequently framed in terms of 'Civil-Military' relations (for example, see Edmonds, 1988) few commentators have sought to examine the ways in which the institution is deployed to legitimate political ideology in the name of tradition. The attempt by the (now) oppositional Conservative Party to incorporate military practice into the civilian context will be shown to have invoked resistance.

The aims of this section are two-fold. First, we attempt a novel examination of the military by recourse to its ideological currency in a society asserted to lack 'values'. Second, and in line with one of the general thrusts of this chapter, we argue that changes within the contemporary host society have rendered 'traditional-military' ideologies as increasingly contentious from the perspective of broader society.

2.10.1 Major's Nostalgia - the 'Golden Years'

That the 'past...may be re-articulated to legitimize a politicized configuration of the present' (Allan *et al.*, 1995) is of crucial significance within this discussion, as in many ways, the military is conceptualized in terms of its close continuities with the 'Britain of Old'. For example, the television programmes '*It Ain't Half Hot Mum, Privates on Parade*' (Edmonds, 1988; Shaw, 1991) and '*Goodnight Sweetheart*' are located within a cultural milieu of allegedly greater traditional fixity. The military is admired in terms of its morality which has been encouraged to infuse 'conservative traditions' (Allan *et al.*, 1995). We argue that predominant military values are offset against 'the sense of historical decline of the nation, the fragmentation of 'unifying norms and values' (Allan *et al.*, 1995:369).

It is into this new and morally fraught society that 'bootcamps' were mooted as a way in which the behaviour of young offenders might be radically modified. A regime characterized by the short-sharp-shock, it was asserted, would realign the fragmented and anti-social values of persistent young criminals.

2.10.1.1 Bootcamps - Military/Moral Correction?

The existence of both borstals and Detention Centres offer historical precursors to current discussions around bootcamps. Prior to the most recent debates, a former Conservative Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, advocated the beneficial effects of the 'short-sharp-shock'. However, during 1995/6, the extent to which these regimes would be aligned with military institutions was noted to have reached its apogee:

'Young offenders could be detained in "glasshouses" - the military's corrective training centres...Cabinet correspondence reveals that the Minister is determined to introduce real "boot camps", run by the armed forces, to deal with persistent young criminals' (Fairhall, *The Independent*, 24 Aug 95).

Retrospectively, however, we note the tension between rhetoric and practice; by 1997, the experiment at Colchester to place 32 civilians into military-style correction facilities had folded. The ethos of the proposals were never fully endorsed by the MoD on the one hand (*The Independent*, 24 Aug 95), and on the other, rigorous criteria for offender selection rendered most inappropriate (National Association of Probation Officers' News, Mar 97). The 'model' offenders were to conform to the following criteria before admission to Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institute Colchester (HMYOI Colchester):

- '- No previous or current sexual offences;
- Suitable for open conditions;
- Not a danger to the public;
- Whether the criminal history of the prisoner indicates likely absconsion;
- Whether victims would be in danger if there was an absconsion;
- Whether the disciplinary record indicated an abuse of trust;
- Whether the prisoner was likely to bring in contraband such as drugs;

- Whether the prisoner had any history of any of the following:

- Drug or alcohol abuse;
- Mental disorder;
- Stress related illness;
- Institutional behaviour.'

(NAPO Newsletter, Mar 97)

In this sense we might understand the proposals as an attempt to appeal largely to the 'Conservative Party faithful' (Fletcher, quoted in *The Independent*, 24 Aug 95) through the creation of a showcase correction centre. Quite clearly, the number of 18-21 year old offenders that fit the extensive criteria and agreed to enter the regime was extremely small. Coupled with this were the highly problematic costs of training - some 60,000 pounds a year. The logic of discipline, however, fitted closely with a broader perception that the traditional military value system might have 'corrective' influence in the lives of individuals who had experienced previous instability of one or other sorts.

Whilst the future for civilian offenders who may have entered the regime was uncertain, the majority of service individuals within the punitive system had military careers to incentivise behaviour (*The Guardian*, 18 Apr 96) and therefore were likely to attach different meanings to the testing conditions. One report of the 'corrective' experience comes from a serving soldier, he stated:

'It was designed to act entirely as punishment, not rehabilitation. But I have to say it worked. It was not my intention to go back in there, and I put my head down and got through it, and was released with four days' remission for good behaviour. I came out much fitter. I believe honestly, that for the right sort of offender - a hot head, basically - it would work' ("Dave Smith", quoted in *The Independent*, 28 Aug 95).

The debate around bootcamps has facilitated a range of insights into the ways in which so-called 'traditionalists' understand modern life as pivoting around the incessant quest for instant gratification. Here, the military is perceived (particularly the onus placed on lengthy

military training) from the civilian sphere in terms of its ethos of delayed gratification, against the backcloth of commitment and sacrifice:

'Young offenders can be weaned off crime and a culture of "instant pleasure and gratification by being left on mountains eight hours away from a hot bath, warm fire and tasty stew", a Home Office Minister has claimed..."Army-style exercise programmes...would expose troublemakers to tough conditions... boredom was responsible for the crime of young male hooligans...[the activity] would turn around youngsters. [W]hen you have never done anything more strenuous than reach for the video control, you can look back and say I did that"' (David Maclean, quoted in *The Independent on Sunday*, 16 Oct 94).

In this sense, the physically and mentally demanding experiential dimensions of the military institution are conveyed in terms of their elixir-like qualities. They are integral elements of a life that has been lost through which, in the contemporary period, individual/selfish values are allowed to transcend those of the group or community. Ultimately, military culture fosters consideration for others:

'The moment when a kid realises that his own success and well-being depends on the goodwill and co-operation of others in the team, that is the moment to ram home the message that when he is back home the rest of life is like that' (David Maclean *quoted in The Independent on Sunday*, 16 Oct 94).

Throughout this brief discussion, we have illustrated the ways in which aspects of military culture have been ideologically deployed. The ways in which this political project drew upon the notion of tradition turned directly on its construction as a way of life that had (apparently) been lost. In these terms traditional/military practice was not so much envisaged as outmoded, but rather as sorely missed.

2.11 THE MILITARY AND SOCIETAL INFLUENCE - ACCOUNTABILITY

Throughout both society and the military, discourses of accountability have gained increasing legitimacy. The MoD has been susceptible to compensation claims from those that have alleged bullying, and others who are suffering illness on account of active service in the Gulf region. Though it is difficult to locate the precise origins of these new and confident challenges to military practice, it seems likely that the spirit of the Citizen's Charter, and its likely corollary - greater expectation of public services generally (Bellamy and Greenaway, 1995) - has resonated throughout the relationships between serving/ex-serving members and their (former) employers. Further challenges to military practice have come from European judicial bodies. They have criticized the nature of MoD justice, for example, in terms of 'courts martial' (*'MoD braced as judges outlaw courts martial', The Independent, 26 Feb 97*).

These examples offer a range of clues linked to the 'decline' of deference with regard to military personnel. The significant impetus behind these challenges would have been unthinkable hitherto. In exploring change in society and associated impact on the military, we start with the case of so-called Gulf War Veterans (GWV).

2.11.1 Gulf War Veterans

An investigation into the causes of 'Gulf War Syndrome' has recently been prioritized by the new Labour government. Discussion under the previous Conservative regime had been characterized by a stance that rendered dialogue almost entirely absent; this dogmatic stance reminds of the nature of Giddens' traditional 'formulaic truth' (outlined above). As the Labour Defence spokesman Dr David Clark commented:

'It's against the culture of the British establishment to admit they are wrong or to admit responsibility for anything' (quoted in *The Independent on Sunday*, 12 Feb 95).

Thus, the MoD has alluded to the illness as 'being all in the mind' (*The Independent on Sunday*, 12 Feb 95) during much of their limited dialogue with the various groups fighting for compensation. Implicit within this line of defence, is the belief that honour and sacrifice should transcend psychological trauma suffered as a consequence of 'shell-shock' or post traumatic stress disorder¹⁴. Mental fortitude has and continues to be inextricably bound up with the masculine/military culture, (as we demonstrate in greater detail in Chapter 8).

The conflation of weakness with mental 'breakdown' has a considerable history. For example, the fictional work of Pat Barker (1996; see also Dawson, 1994) illustrates the ways in which a psychiatrist struggles to reconcile the military mind-set with clearly (psychologically) damaged individuals. Indeed, at the time of writing, it is likely that a large number of servicemen executed for cowardice during the First World War might receive posthumous pardons¹⁵. The relentless shelling together with unimaginable carnage in the trenches had almost certainly influenced the mental condition of these soldiers, yet a discourse of cowardice was used to legitimate execution by firing-squad (*The Guardian*, 28 May 97). However, the status of (men's) 'emotional disclosure' (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993) may be changing, as has already been suggested above in the context of military advertising campaigns. Major Martin Bagley states:

'One of the things we keep hammering on about is that it's normal - not a sign of weakness - to feel upset or angry when your friend's brains are splattered over your face...[O]ne of the sad things is that a lot of the people in the Falklands developed problems and left the service' (quoted in Rafferty, *Daily Mail Supplement*, Jun 94).

Yet tensions exist between Bagley's hopes concerning the importance of dealing with trauma, and the military/masculinized nature of the institution. In this respect, this masculinized culture is characterized by its resilience to change, and is understood to be somewhat defensive with regard to the influence of the feminist critique (Enloe, 1983).

2.11.2 Political Influence

We have already alluded to the importance of changes in the 'global-order' for the military. However, at a domestic level, 1979 appears to represent a particular hiatus, not just for the armed forces but many establishment institutions. Yet, it is likely that military organizations will always experience political influence to a greater or lesser extent:

'Armed forces are core institutions of nation-states, and the military elements of cultures are important components of national cultures and political ideologies' (Shaw, 1991:110; *emphasis added*).

Whilst Margaret Thatcher may have been politically successful, many service people remain ambivalent to certain of her alleged successes¹⁶. Direct and unintended consequences of policies implemented during this period continue to resonate throughout many areas of military life. We can perhaps better understand this 'popular authoritarianism' (Hall, 1988) to have engendered a range of cultural shifts. In this sense, military *identity* - largely stable over previous decades becomes increasingly open to civilian influence:

'"[T]hatcher's children" as a number of senior officers dubbed the yuppie generation, showed little taste for a permanent career in the Army, and many of those who joined were sceptical of its values' (Commissioned Officer, quoted in Beevor, 1991:88; *emphasis added*).

Two points should be clarified, however. First, the durability of these cultural/identity shifts is still under question. To what extent have we become, and will we remain a society of 'entrepreneurs'? Might the social trends felt in the contemporary military be reversible? (Beevor, *The Observer*, 15 Dec 96). In these terms, might the extract taken from Morgan (1994) below, constitute a wholly novel description of the *contemporary* relationship between the military and the civilian spheres when he states:

'[M]odernization involves identification with growing individualism and a stress on the self. In this context...military values do not seem all pervasive and might...serve to heighten the boundaries between military and civilian life' (Morgan, 1994:174).

Describing events some 50 years ago, however, one ex-serviceman suggested that individualism, understood as 'looking after number one' was widespread. The linkage of 'military' with 'community' is thus subject to historical variation - as one demobbed serviceman put it:

'[E]ven persons of the utmost integrity, after six years of war, were motivated by self-preservation. It wasn't so much of 'dog eat dog', rather to make sure that no opportunity of easing one's existence was missed' (Rennell and Turner, 1995:46).

Two points can be made from these comments. In the first instance, the military could be understood as promoting values characterized by their greater (traditional) commonality than those found in the civilian context. This supports Morgan's concerns around the heightened civilian/military boundaries. Second, however, that individualism in the sense of selfish gain may fluctuate according to availability of resources, rather than the apparently

'even' (individualizing) logic of modernity. In this way, a focus on *locale* may flag variation of process.

The Thatcherite political project carried with it a swathe of unintended consequences. To conflate 'change in attitude towards military values' with political ideology (as Army commentators are shown to have done, above) is to neglect the complexities of political hegemony. 'Thatcherism' might better be understood as contributing towards the intensification of individualistic impulse. This more complex position is borne out within the context of changes implemented in the military as early as 1966:

[M]embers of the British military were already moving away from conceptualizing the armed forces in an institutional format legitimated in terms of values and norms...their embryonic preference for an occupational format, legitimated in terms of the market place, was subsequently recognized in the introduction of the "military salary" (Harries-Jenkins, 1991:5).

The (albeit tempered) language of the market place and its linkage with the military thus has important (detraditional) precursors. Built into the current military salary is the so-called 'X factor'¹⁷ which is intended to compensate for the institutional exigencies that characterize military life. The nature of military remuneration is, however, bracketed out from civilian salaries, thus:

[O]n the surface, the military salary is institutionally based because of its determination by rank, its continued calculation as a daily rate, its paternalistic protection factor (the X factor), and its retention factors of additional forms of pay and committal pay' (Downes, 1988:168).

The institutional model - despite early change - continues to be influenced by traditional tenets. The interpenetration of market forces in tandem with notions of the military as 'just a job' (Moskos, 1988) point to the influence of detraditional processes. Crudely, there exists an inverse relationship between institutional and occupational values (Harries-Jenkins, 1990). Beevor comments:

'The "post-baby-boomers" do not believe in staying with career, yet are extremely qualification-conscious. They are much more sceptical than their predecessors about authority, they question orders and they have much higher expectations of pay and conditions - partly out of a rootless ambition and desire for instant professionalism. Not surprisingly, this makes the Army, with its belief in public service and long-term commitment, very uneasy' (Beevor, 1991:25).

Noted here is the increasing tension between (military) public service that remains largely outside of the logic of the market place, and 'quantifying' discourses of accountability. Serious repercussion flow from such attempts at monitoring military 'efficiency'. In the final section we illustrate some of the ways in which the nature of the military task is argued to be irreconcilable with the logic of the market-place.

2.11.3 Measuring 'Spirit'

Against the backdrop of intense change and disorder, discourses of financial accountability assume hegemony as they promise a degree of calculable security within a risk-ridden world. The need for ontological security finds expression through discourses of economic rationality (Burrows *et al.*, 1995; Power, 1992). Thus, civilianization, contracting of work previously carried out by military personnel and the growth of local budget holders represent manifestations of this logic (Edmonds, 1988). In a blistering attack on this logic of accountability, however, Beevor opens with the comments of a senior serviceman:

"How do you define our productivity...by the number of people we shoot?"
No institution except perhaps the monarchy is as deeply affected by a
modern clash of cultures as the armed forces' (Beevor, 15 Dec 96, quoted
in *The Observer*).

Beevor (1991) highlights the nature of military tradition in the face of rapid social change; soldiers, he asserts may march, but rarely *fight* on pay scales alone. Beevor continues with an assessment of this accounting discourse in that he equates the impact of economic rationality with a hidden agenda of cost-cutting. Job insecurity appeared for the first time in many years, and false economies coupled with short-termism refracted throughout the organization, clashing with military practice and policy. The Army was noted to be quite unlike a conventional 'business' and it was ridiculous to think that conventional economic justifications might be appropriate within this largely institutional environment (Beevor, 1996).

2.12 SUMMARY COMMENTS

In this chapter, we have attempted to capture the dialectic of social change apparent between the military and civilian environments, whilst flagging the importance of continuity in other areas. Using a broad and consensual notion of the traditional/stable military, we have contextualized social change evident in the broader society. In these terms, traditional practice has been conceptualized as either an 'outmoded' or a 'lost way of life' when contrasted with processes of detraditionalization.

Military ethos has been shown to have moral currency with regard to particular political projects, and it is likely that many retain the view that National Service might serve as panacea to society's ills. The authority of military ideology was also shown to be under new and confident challenge across a number of areas, both at the level of ex -and currently

serving members. We have also suggested an alternative way in which to conceptualize notions of tradition and in doing so have illuminated *diversity* within the military. The military/civilian interface is characterized by dynamism, and should be understood as continually metamorphosing in finely nuanced ways as social change reflects and refracts throughout.

This chapter has been by way of context. The complex interaction of social/military change and its legacy for service person identity does not make for straightforward analysis. However, in painting a broad picture of change and flux, we should retain the ways in which the institution tends to be somewhat out-of-step with society. Most importantly, this has a series of repercussions for service-person identity. In this chapter, we have moved between general and specific levels of abstraction in an attempt to outline the contours of social change. In the following chapter, however, we focus on the ways in which the institution confers particular identities on individuals, who in turn are understood as 'service-people'. The plight of single homeless ex-servicemen might be better understood against the backdrop of these two chapters; ultimately, soldiers, sailors and airmen embody the experiences of both environments against the backcloth of social upheaval and a 'detraditional' host society.

CHAPTER 3 - INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE MILITARY EXPERIENCE

Military Socialization

During the period [of basic military training]...he completely submits himself, day and night, to a programme of instruction...the acceptance of orders is unquestioned. Jolly, Changing Step, 1996:35-36/38.

[A] Corporal forced recruits to eat cigarettes, after he caught them smoking without permission: Researcher: Your smokings' stopped now lads? Recruit: Not fucking likely - we've just got to keep a better lookout! Again, we have a common, cooperative solution...and this on the second day of the recruits service. Hockey, Squaddies, 1986:45/47.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ex-service people who endure homelessness are, as we suggested in Chapter 1, implicitly assumed to be institutionalized by their military experiences. According to this understanding, tenacious levels of dependency towards the military environment contribute towards difficulty in civilian life. This particular understanding of the process of institutionalization is problematic, however, in that it presents a rather over-socialized concept of actor.

Those labelled 'institutionalized' tend to be bracketed out from the mainstream population; they are *different*. But, differences are not so great. We are all institutionalized to greater or lesser degrees. From the unthinking use of a particular commuting route, through to negotiating the payment of utility bills, we necessarily squeeze routine activity from conscious reflection. We could not possibly 'go on' unless we did so (Campbell, 1996). With this in mind, it is likely that those who have built up complexes of routine around home and paid employment might also be conceived of as institutionalized. They, like members of stigmatized and marginal groups, would also struggle with the difficulties of

homelessness, particularly if the transition from secure to insecure accommodation status occurred swiftly.

Clearly, then, we need to outline what is meant when the terms *institutionalized* and *institutionalization* are used. In this respect, we argue for a *gendering* of the term on the one hand, and on the other, a focus on the *non-conscious realms* in terms of military socialization. In developing and qualifying the terms in this way, we hope ultimately to throw greater light on both the genesis and sustaining of homelessness amongst single ex-servicemen.

In problematizing the lives of individuals who do not routinely experience homelessness in ways touched on above, it is clear that the notion of institutionalization tends to be deployed in an ideological sense. Its effects are to both explain and condemn individuals to a life characterized by weak pathology, in this way deleterious structural factors are rarely invoked.

Given that ex-servicemen are asserted to be institutionalized, however (Anderson *et al.*, 1993; Randall and Brown, 1994), we open with literature that focuses on the process of transition from the military to the civilian environments. This material offers a potentially useful point of departure as it is popularly thought that ex-servicemen who experience homelessness do so soon after discharge.

3.2 THE MILITARY/CIVILIAN EXPERIENCE - TRANSITIONS

Around 30,000 individuals leave the military every year for a range of reasons, from termination of contract, through to administrative or medical discharge, for example (Rafferty, *The Daily Mail Supplement*, Jun 94). Within the sociological enterprise, however, the move from military to civilian life has attracted little interest¹. We turn now to one of the few works that has attempted to articulate more fully this particular process of transition.

3.2.1 `Changing Step' - The work of Ruth Jolly

In this first section, we appraise Ruth Jolly's (1996) most recent book in which she presents a pseudo-sociological elaboration of common sense understandings of `institutionalization' with a particular focus on service people. This work is concerned with the process of military to civilian transition, specifically the following problematic: Why is it some ex-service people `fail' in civilian life? Clearly this question has direct relevance to the case of the single homeless ex-servicemen. In response to this issue, Jolly suggests that ex-service people who struggle are deemed to be institutionalized and `captives of their military past'. In attempting to account for this dependent condition, Jolly understands institutionalization in the following way:

`Being institutionalized...involves a total yielding of the self to an organization...[F]ully institutionalized people may be found among the ranks of long-term prisoners, in homes of the elderly...[they have] *lost* the freedom to order their own lives and have become incapable of looking after themselves' (Jolly, 1996:39; *emphasis added*).

These understanding are extrapolated to the experiences of military institutionalization. Here, dependencies towards the paternalistic military are noted to rob individuals of the ability to function outwith this social structure. The way in which Jolly (1996) gauges this `condition' turns on the extent to which 62 respondents were able to `break out' of a military mind-set, and forge a positive outlook. Institutionalization in this sense might be understood as inertia against the backcloth of an over-important military past, its frequent reinsertion into current events undermining motivation in the civilian environment. More specifically, Jolly's (1996:165) focus was the:

`[A]ttitudes and ambitions that have given some leavers the incentive to look to the future while others have remained captives of their past.'

Jolly's analysis, however, might be described in terms of its crudely positivistic or 'derivative' frame. Ex-service people either succeed or fail, and these experiences are conflated with the ability (or inability) to look ahead positively by virtue of jettisoning psychological military baggage. Understanding of the subjective dimensions of success or failure and civilian context are ignored. In essence, Jolly has inadvertently mirrored broad lay-person understanding of institutionalization. Here, 'looking to the past' is conflated with participant dependency on the social structure invoked in this memory work (see Chapter 5 for discussion of this particular issue).

The complex and recursive interaction of agency with institution is suggestive of the ways in which institutionalization (or, closely linked, becoming a 'service person') should be conceptualized as a dynamic process, rather than the totalizing and somewhat static experience alluded to. Military enlistees across the broad spectrum of the institution should be understood as active agents, both complicit and dissenting at particular moments with regard to the fostering of military identities, as we suggested in Chapter 2.

In attempting to illuminate processes of institutionalization Jolly's model is silent on three key issues. They concern the sophistication of agency, the importance of routine and habit grounded within the non-discursive realm and finally, the gendered dimension of military socialization. Throughout the following sections of this chapter, these key themes are elaborated, with a number of references to the work of Jolly. Within these discussions we approach our understandings of service-people from a range of perspectives.

In the next sections, we focus on both diversity and agency; these elements remain central to the character of the military. The first way in which to dispel a common-sense myth linking the process of military socialization with the production of 'unthinking automatons' a popular misconception also challenged by Edmonds, (1988) is to highlight the institution's inherently *social* nature.

3.3 THE MILITARY AND SOCIAL DIVERSITY

The military is little different from other organizations insofar as one might expect to discover service people engaged in a wide range of behaviours (Willetts, 1990) many of which deviate from the formal rule-book². They use illicit substances, pilfer from their place of employment (see Ditton, 1977 on institutionalized pilferage), get into debt (Beevor, 1991), have affairs (Jessup, 1996), get depressed (O'Brien, 1993), form relationships - gay and straight (Hall, 1995; Jessup, 1995; Tatchell, 1995) and so forth. In these respects, the degree to which ex-service people need to be 'resettled' varies considerably as pre-enlistment experience interacts in complex ways with heterogeneous military experience (Edmonds, 1988). Stereotyped understandings that conflate 'squaddies' with reckless and unthinking behaviour necessarily simplify the diversity of military life and identity³ formation.

3.4 HUMAN AGENCY AND MILITARY IDENTITIES

Great importance is attached to the primary stages of military socialization, or the basic training⁴ process. The passing-out parade is considered to be the key public and private moment through which military identity is conferred upon the recently enlisted individual. However, this ritual must be seen as just one element of a lengthy military career that could last thirty or more years, and its subjective significance may be perceived in widely differentiated ways. Further, training phases vary widely in both their duration and intensity. In the Royal Air Force, basic training lasts six weeks, whilst in the Army it can last eighteen weeks (Beevor, 1991). Outward Bound type training, as we suggested in Chapter 2, may dwarf in physical intensity basic training experienced in the former service, although the Outward Bound organization is organized and run by civilians.

Does the experience of military socialization result in a change within individuals that we can all agree on? If it does, then we necessarily assume that individual selves have a consistency through which military socialization creates a definitive state of being. Perhaps a consensus on what constitutes a 'military individual' rests on the less obvious (but vital)

custom⁵ of swearing allegiance to the Queen. This ritual could, however, be overlooked by enlistees keen to reflect on more exciting future prospects. Other desires may momentarily and significantly transcend this event. For example, Hockey (1986:51) states that seductive military images are: '[I]mposed upon recruits who have been promised an action packed, adventurous life, filled with masculine challenge.' In this way, the defining moment of embryonic service-person status is experienced as little more than formality, and might be considered in terms of its status as label, rather than as integral element of self identity.

In other words, whilst service people experience a period of civilian-military identity reconciliation, some perhaps perceive of themselves as civilians who endure, rather than relish the donning of blue or khaki uniform. Readaptation to the civilian world after varying military 'engagements', or lengths of service may be of little concern to individuals understood in this way. Whilst serving, these service people may live off-base, occupy their own house, consume food prepared at home, rarely socialize within the military unit, and reflect on the similarities of civilian occupations with their current military activities. In this way, 'institutional' ethos might become diluted (Moskos, 1988).

Discharge is not characterized by 'changing step' for individuals understood in this way. Rather, exiting the military may amount to little more than moving between different spheres of paid employment. These individuals might be identified as least likely to be reliant on the social-military structure, though in name, they carry ex-service person status. It is not easy to see how these individuals could be described as 'institutionalized', as they had never really displayed these attachment tendencies whilst carrying out full-time military service.

This discussion has turned on diversity of engagement with the military experience, with reference to the tenacity of human agency. Here an intensively presented culture (Beavor, 1991; Hockey, 1986) may have relatively little effect on identity formation. Whilst formally understood as soldiers, sailors or airman, a number of individuals might be only marginally concerned with these particular ways of relating to themselves. In turn, these 'civilian/non-service people' identities may resonate throughout the period post-discharge. In the next

section, we explore the notion that service people are necessarily 'bellicose' (Jolly, 1996), and illustrate limitations to this apparent disposition.

3.4.1 Agency and the 'Man of Hobbes'

The perception that individuals who enlist into the armed forces are necessarily 'war-like'⁶ (Willetts, 1990) remains the bedrock of military thinking. Less definitively, however, Willetts, (1990:13) states:

'[G]enerally, those who volunteer for duty in the military are more inclined to agree with Hobbes than Locke.'

As we have suggested above, many individuals envisage the military purely in terms of occupation. Here useful skills can be learned early on and transferred to civilian life, and indeed advertising campaigns have become increasingly preoccupied with the civilian value of military-skill capital (see Chapter 2). In a similar sense, it would take a considerable imaginative leap to assume that the life of a Royal Air Force Steward (employed chiefly to clean the rooms of commissioned and senior non-commissioned ranks, and serve behind the bar in the appropriate living quarters) might be preoccupied with issues around combat. Necessarily, service person heterogeneity fosters varying response to legitimate violence - the ultimate task of the military (Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1971; Morgan, 1994). Whilst military socialization aims to foster a range of largely consistent and predictable reactions on the battlefield (O'Brien, 1993; Solomon, 1954), a number of troops assess personal justification in the discharge of violence - both before and after the event (McCallion, 1996). Indeed, some question the legitimacy of extreme and violent situations. The assumption that 'man is bellicose' remains simplistic and requires a number of caveats that turn directly on issues of human agency.

Involvement in combat deemed illegitimate may manifest itself in trauma that works destructively through the self in a context far-removed from the battlefield:

'The ex-serviceman, John who admitted a charge of actual bodily harm on the baby...spent four and a half months in the Gulf in 1991. He told Burnley crown court that he could not deal with the fact that the armed combat was so heavily weighted on the allied side. He said he went out expecting to fight a war but found that it was a massacre of teenage Iraqi conscripts' (Bellos, *The Guardian*, 6 Aug 96).

Two crucial points are raised here. First, the limitations of bellicosity and military socialization are clearly demonstrated - John's actions might be understood against the backcloth of somewhat shared 'natural justice'. Evidence suggests that within the realms of the so-called 'fog of war' fighting for survival frequently transcends the importance of killing the enemy (McCallion, 1996). In these terms, agency is not infinitely malleable as Jolly would have it. Second, we might speculate on the extent to which John's difficulties on return to a civilian environment are compounded by a wider social context through which he is treated as a 'hero' (Morgan, 1994). This civilian response highlights a tension between apparent sacrifice (the discourses of 'our fighting boys'), with a truth that cannot easily be divulged (the killing of defenceless youths). Guilt, remorse and regret may flow from such contradictions and become manifest in further excessive acts, including the use of alcohol and violence. These could be understood as particular manifestations of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD (Van de Kolk, 1994).

Next, we examine the ways in which individual identity is asserted to be subsumed within the greater military body. How might we understand agent tenacity against the backdrop of an apparently homogeneous and *homogenizing* group?

3.5 DISAPPEARING AGENCY?

Jolly's consideration of the basic training process is characterized by a range of extremes in terms of both recruit experience and institutional pressures. For example, it is asserted that individuals under training are constantly scrutinized, that all symbols of individuality are prohibited, and that behaviour is continuously understood in terms of its careful deference (Jolly, 1996). We take each in turn, and highlight the limits to these rather rigid ways in which to understand particular facets of the military experience.

Though the first few hours of basic military training represent the most narrow parameters in which individuals might subvert control mechanisms, nevertheless degrees of dissent pervade infantry (and no doubt other areas⁸) of recruit training (Hockey, 1986). On the more relaxed battle camp phase of training (Beavor, 1991; Hockey, 1986), parameters for recruit relaxation may be broadened - sleeping between shift duties may not incur the usual wrath of a training Non Commissioned Officer (NCO). Back at the permanent base, however, NCOs may be less forgiving as *they* too may be subject to increased surveillance. Even during the most intensive 'civilian role dispossession phase' of infantry man socialization:

'Going to the toilet represents the one action where it is possible to be alone. As one recruit, no doubt wistfully explained, "it's the only place you can have a wank in peace!"' (Hockey, 1986:25)⁹

The ways in which symbols of individuality are perceived in the military context, and again during the most intensive period of military socialization, are clearly contingent on the vantage point one adopts. For example, a comment from training staff, reported in Beavor, (1991:26):

"I know I shouldn't say this...but they're moulded - clones. You can look at a squad and it won't take a second to spot who their instructor is."

We might expect training staff to perceive recruits in this way. Indeed, if recruits were unlike this - the hoped for products of training-staff labours - instructors might be deemed to have failed in some way. Perhaps the staff's response might be understood in terms of surprise that individuals can both appear and apparently 'allow' themselves to blend into one another.

Similarly, striking imagery in which individuality appears subsumed into a broader regimented mass renders military rank and status interchangeable:

'Sergeant majors bear down with huge chests and an autocratic imperative. Slim young Sergeants move with practised precision on their own or in pairs, twiddling extended pace-sticks beside the right hip like giant brass and wood dividers, though when the same Sergeants march a shaven-headed squad in double time from one place to another they appear to take on new, temporarily hysterical, personalities. Meanwhile the recruits at the bottom of the chain jerk like overwound clockwork toys; their rigidity and command eyes right, makes them look as though they have dislocated their necks. And even while their bodies move rapidly, they have a dazed uncomprehending look' (Beever, 1991:15).

Within the context of the training regime, usual markers of individuality are removed. Hair styles, clothing; overall demeanour is heavily influenced by military socialization. It is likely this harmonizing of appearance has a series of repercussions for the recently enlisted individual, including bolstering a strong sense of belonging. Bourdieu, in his discussion of class, introduces some further understanding of what it means to be part of such a strong social collective. There is enormous potential power latent within the military machine. To be part of the military parade - the synchronous movement of bodies of men, is to achieve near-flawless equilibrium:

'[T]he practices of the same agent, and more generally, the practices of the same [class], owe the stylistic affinity which makes each of them a metaphor of any of the others' (Bourdieu, 1984:172-3).

As recruits come to think of themselves increasingly within the context of the broader squad or flight, individuality, marked in the sense of differentiating hair style or clothing does lose significance¹⁰. Here we note the universalizing dynamic of military socialization at least in terms of appearance. Might not these pressures on individual selves engender alternative forms of independent expression?

3.6 RENEGOTIATIONS - AGENCY AND INDIVIDUALITY

Into these apparently homogeneous identities, however, flow a myriad of other markers. Nicknames take on a new and powerful relevance, football teams and home-town origins are quickly linked with identity. Hockey (1986:47) frames this spontaneous process in the following terms:

'The constraints of their common situation, its enforced communality and propinquity, broke down the everyday social barriers...the recruit uses a number of gambits to obtain information...including "where d'you come from?", and "which team d'you support?" The barrack rooms consequently soon echo with cries of "Bolton Cunt, Man United are wankers", and the like' (Hockey, 1986:47).

Further, it is likely that training staff quickly distinguish one recruit from another. For example, located close to the training staff's office may be a noticeboard on which individual recruit's photographs are fixed. Surnames quickly become common currency in the issuing of orders and verbal abuse. Recent enlistees may be known by their poor (or

excellent) 'bedblocks'. The trademark of competent recruits (they frequently assume a 'high-profile'¹¹ as training staff use their performance as a benchmark for others) may be signified through immaculate kit preparation, or particular expertise on assault courses and timed runs. Essentially then, individuality is unintendedly encouraged to colonize novel domains; it does not, nor can it be somehow 'prohibited' or homogenized. In the following discussion, we develop these points within the context of military rank.

3.6.1 Human Agency and Rank

Rank hierarchy comes into particularly sharp focus during the intensive period of basic training. Training Corporals are addressed in full, and deference appears to be the order of the day from the perspective of the disempowered recruit. However, the hierarchy is more flexible than might popularly be understood, and facilitates a degree of negotiation. For example 'bad superiors' are to varying extents at the whim of potentially intransigent subordinates. An Army Lieutenant states:

"The difference between here and Sandhurst is that at Sandhurst you are told that soldiers will do exactly as they are told. You soon realise that it's not so, and that you have to watch them, otherwise they can make things difficult for you. It's not really power they have, its sort of non cooperation. They can do things in a certain way, which can embarrass you in front of others" (quoted in Hockey, 1986:158).

The processual nature of ongoing intra-rank bargaining and negotiation represents the informal face of the social military (Hockey, 1986). The oppositional relationship privates maintain within their military lives illustrates a reflexive engagement with continuously transforming situations. In these there is recognition from both sides of limited control and influence. This gives way to hitherto unexplored avenues through which subordinate autonomy might flourish:

'Evasion by skiving, making life more comfortable by scrounging and giving barely or less than adequate work performances to embarrass superiors, the

use of ridicule, mimicry and even the application of official procedures to inconvenience those in command such as "saluting traps", were all gambits in evidence...they are far from passive agents in the military process' (Hockey, 1986:158).

Deference may be carefully contrived and tantamount to subtle manipulation, thereby exploiting the 'grey' domain of rank parameters. This observation is intended as a corrective to Jolly (1996) who tends to understand deference as little more than an automatic and unthinking response, in the face of a rigid hierarchy.

We have sketched a number of ways in which agency flourishes within a particular military training context. Similar instances of the inexhaustibility of human agency have been noted by a range of commentators within the context of the civilian workplace (Collinson, 1992; Davies, 1988; Gabriel, 1993, 1995; Roy, 1973). For example, Gabriel notes that:

'[W]ithin every organization there is an uncolonized terrain, a terrain which is not and cannot be managed, in which people, both individually and in groups can engage in all kinds of unsupervised, spontaneous activity' (Gabriel, 1995:478).

It is this uncolonized terrain that Jolly (1996) has overlooked. Agency and military socialization are characterized by a relationship of collusion and in this sense, deviance from the formal military rule book might be functional for institutional goals (Hockey, 1986).

Throughout the first half of this chapter, we have concentrated on the tenacity of human agency within a particular institutional setting. This has been achieved by reifying the concepts of 'service person' and 'military institution', as neither are able to exist independently of the other. Here, resonance of Marx (1976) Giddens, (1984) and Bhaskar (1989) is noted in that service people make their own lives, but not in conditions of their own choosing. Nevertheless, surprisingly open conditions of possibility facilitate human agency. Military enlistees are active agents, not *tabula rasa* units into which military attitude and belief is unquestioningly instilled. For that reason, recruits are not *simply* 'broken in' (Shaw, 1991), 'mortified' (Goffman, 1961) or 'moulded' (Jolly, 1996). Nor can it

be asserted that over time¹², individuals will become increasingly colonized by military ethos.

Jolly's (1996) work has been used as a key point of departure, as it tends in the most general sense to exemplify lay-person perception of the military experience. Discussions concerning institutional diversity and agency, against the backdrop of the social-military illustrate the limitations of popular 'derivative socialization' processes. In these formulations of both training and the general military experience, there has been an attempt to depart from simplistic 'squaddie' caricature.

These analyses necessarily undermines the linkage of institutionalization with the military experience and homelessness with ex-service person status. Ultimately, however, these discussions beg the following question: *Given the diversity of agency and experience within the military institution(s), are we able to identify the common legacy of exposure to processes of military socialization?* Responses to this problematic should surely throw light on both the genesis and the sustaining of homelessness amongst ex-servicemen. It is to the universality of military experience we turn next.

3.7 MILITARY SOCIALIZATION RECONSIDERED

How might we begin to understand the long term legacy of the military experience? Our concern is the non-discursive realm¹³ and its relationship with institutionalization. To maintain functional degrees of reflexivity (Hockey, 1986) service people are encouraged to relegate anxieties to realms outside of their immediate grasp. The taking of life, though unusual in the contemporary military, might only involve those in so-called 'front line combat'¹⁴. However, whether or not service people are involved in combat, preparation for the event may have a particular and durable legacy within the non-discursive realm. In this respect, socialization for front-line possibilities may be characterized by a series of practices that become embodied in the term 'institutionalization'. The lead is taken here from Jenkins (1992:179) who states that:

'[C]onscious and unconscious mental processes lie at opposite ends of a continuum...in between is an area which is, as yet, little considered by sociologists...inasmuch as it is the domain of habit it is of great sociological importance...this may be where much [in this example, military] socialization put down their strongest roots...it is also likely to be the source of the potency of the processes of institutionalization.'

Next we consider the work of Giddens (1984, 1991) whose thinking has developed from the radical psychiatrist, R. D. Laing; at the centre of these discussions is consideration of activities that are generally unacknowledged or 'disattended' to.

3.8 ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY, HABIT AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Whilst it is possible to argue that agents are far from passive in the military training process, it does not mean that some of the more durable legacies of military socialization (throughout the entire career) do not or cannot become deeply embedded into the military self. In this next section, we introduce key theoretical concepts that throw light on the nature of these processes. In the first instance these suggest that a number of individuals may be vulnerable to the longer term effects of military socialization by virtue of their biographical trajectories.

Individuals who experience substantial 'pull' towards the military may be influenced in a paradoxical sense. First, their investment into military culture may be substantially greater than those who envisage the career in more instrumental terms. Second, the extent to which these processes might be deeply embodied is less reflexively gauged. There is a sense in which the military experience may become manifest in terms of unacknowledged behavioural or attitudinal residue, *post-discharge*. We turn now to a sociological elaboration of these processes.

3.8.1 Ontological Security

Ontological security is asserted to derive from a secure psychological and emotional state, as Giddens (1991:380) puts it:

'[C]onfidence or trust that the natural worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity.'

Confidence or trust that the world is as it appears is derived from routine as a way to buttress the self against ever threatening existential anxiety. Ritual activities answer uncertainties concerning self and belonging (Giddens, 1984, 1991). The value of this conceptual formulation is the onus placed on continuity so that ontological security is asserted to derive from a sense of continuity and order in events (Giddens, 1991:243). Ontological security in the military setting is not necessarily derived from routine in the popular sense. Rather, flowing from the wellspring of belonging may come a deep-rooted military pride and profound belief that the daily task, no matter how trivial, is integral to the overall functioning of the regiment, squadron or ship. Here routine and belonging are embedded into one another. Potential chaos in the sense meant by Giddens (the omnipresent anxieties 'waiting in the wings'), is banished through constant reinvestment into a particular social system that values its members through paternalistic channels. With whom might this emotional investment have most durable resonance?

3.8.2 The Military Family

Enlistment into the military may be for reasons other than simply 'finding a job'. An Army psychiatrist states:

'[T]heir [the service individual] joining the army is not simply in order to get a job, but in order to find a family which will nurture and respect them. Some of these young men find exactly that' (O'Brien, 1993:288).

Similarly, Beevor (1991:4) asserts that:

'[T]he group identity promises a substitute family to the large minority who have been pushed out by mothers or by their mothers' boyfriends. "It's a generation without fathers", another colonel observed...."the Army often still finds itself acting as foster-parent to some of the nation's waifs and strays".

It is perhaps for this group that ontological security has particular resonance. Could there be a subconscious 'searching-out' for security¹⁵ against the backcloth of a difficult upbringing? In the following section, we further explore the notion of ontological security, in particular its non-conscious realms.

3.8.3 Realms of Consciousness

For Giddens (1984:36), practical consciousness is the cognitive and emotive anchor of the feelings of ontological security. The notion of habitus broadly parallels this understanding. For Bourdieu there is a:

'[P]ractical mastery of the logic or of the imminent necessity of a game - a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which works *outside conscious control* and discourse (in the way that, for instance, techniques of the body do)' (Bourdieu, 1990:61; *emphasis added*).

Thus, activities characterized by these concepts may not be discursively apparent to the agent; they are 'unthinking ways of perceiving and acting within everyday routine' (Cohen and Taylor, 1992; Giddens, 1984, 1991). They may appear as habits, often with their origin

in the military training context: saluting as a response to an officer, a close attention to physical appearance and considerable deference (with the caveats outlined above) to those in authority.

3.8.4 Bodies

We can then conceptualize the serviceman's body - the military body - as the point at which man and practical competence fuse. For instance, 'appearance is unusually important in the military, especially when it is accompanied by strength and agility' (Mazur and Keating, 1984; Willett, 1990:15). The imperceptible characteristics of these processes, channelled through the body, account for their tenacity. As Bourdieu views it:

'[T]he principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit' (Bourdieu, 1977:93-94).

For many the military habitus remains pervasive - perhaps the self cannot but fail to refer to the military persona, that is significantly rooted within the corporeal self (see Chapter 7). And yet we must balance this assertion through considering the subsequent post-discharge societal context. In this way, tenacious elements of military institutionalization could be laying 'dormant' and only become manifest through structural disadvantage, otherwise they live-on unproblematically. Activities encouraged to colonize the practical consciousness may take an awful lot of unlearning; their resonance may be far reaching, perhaps never forgotten.

3.8.5 Life and Death

The justification for exposing the self to such concerted military socialization processes may of course be a matter of life and death. The eliciting of near-spontaneous response to orders is crystallized in the combat domain. As knowledgeable agents, servicemen are acutely aware of their finitude, however, the military environment is one in which reflection on dangerous duty must be tempered so as not to subvert order-following. Action and reaction to commands is encouraged in day-to-day activity. Similar absolute response - carried out at the level of the practical consciousness - may act as the base impetus for placing oneself in potentially catastrophic danger. The relegation of possible death to the level of the practical consciousness does not mean however, that combat soldiers (in this case) are little more than automatons as we have suggested above (Edmonds, 1988; Hockey, 1986). Rather, engagement with differing levels of consciousness frees-up the human agent from potentially stressful introspection. Questions that may result in mutiny, deserting, or dissent are deterred from roaming around the discursive consciousness; sense of self is contingent on a solid understanding of what may be required. Effective servicemen - more especially combat soldiers - will almost certainly draw on an ontological security rooted in trust, hope and courage. Trust in terms of the degree to which fellow-soldier's actions may be predicted, hope in the face of a cemetery as one's final destination, and courage permeating the former two. These rely, fundamentally, on the strong capabilities of the self.

3.8.6 Trust

Beyond initial training, trust is built up during shared experiences of hardship, and from trust flows hope and courage. For Giddens (1991:38):

'[T]his trust in others...is at the origin of the experience of a stable external world and a coherent sense of self-identity...[it is]...what creates a sense of ontological security...[and what]...carr[ies] the individual through transitions, crises and circumstances of high risk'

This theorizing helps us to grasp the potential pervasivity of military experience. Recognition that the realms of discursive and practical consciousness are not mutually exclusive - indeed their interface is both fluid and manipulable (Giddens, 1984; 1991 and see below, this chapter), may shed light on the varied military training strategies.

We turn next to the crucial importance of the military as prime site for the reproduction of masculinities. This area represents the second, largely neglected, element of the process of military socialization, a realm that has perhaps most resonance with with the likelihood of later, post-discharge dependency, or institutionalization.

3.9 MILITARY/MASCULINE INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Ontological security is nurtured in an environment characterized by the fostering of masculine identities (Morgan, 1994). Military service requires fit and active individuals who are able to endure protracted physical and mental hardship. Amongst combat soldiers (for example, the Infantry, Royal Air Force Regiment, Royal Marines and the Special Forces) expectations and experience of tolerance to hardship are high. Tough field exercises, long runs with weighted back-packs, sleep deprivation and suffering characterizes training and may underpin many hours of more routine duty:

'[B]eing able to take it like a man was, and continues to be, part of the military experience with its particular emphasis on a whole range of deprivations from harsh and sometimes all-embracing disciplines to cold water, hard beds and lack of sleep' (Morgan 1990:23).

Servicemen exposed regularly to the exigencies of the military environment may build up tolerance rooted within practical consciousness. An essential corollary of these experiences

- to be found in many strands of contemporary theorizing focusing on masculinities (Canaan, 1996; Roper, 1994; Wacquant, 1995) - is the importance of 'taking it like a man'. Protestation at such extremes may be perceived as weakness in terms of the self and, if directed towards superior ranks, likely to indicate a separation of the 'men from the boys'. Space in which expression of hardship is allowed to flourish may be far removed from the arena of the field exercise. Whilst complaining to one's military colleagues may be acceptable (and perhaps vital) to bolster a flagging self, even this outlet may be somewhat constrained. Overall unit morale cannot afford to be undermined as a consequence of continual 'moaning'. Connections between emotional display and the masculinized environment of the military are, however, apparent, and often at important moments, as Morgan (1994:177) illustrates, tears 'are to be found at the heart of the military experience'.

3.9.1 Habit and Masculine Excess

Anxieties in the military context might be given outlets through which expression remains non-discursive. The corollary of this 'bottling up' (see Chapter 8) frequently becomes manifest in acceptable male-oriented excess. For example, the pressures of a tough field exercise often finds legitimized outlet in drinking binges. Hockey (1986) eloquently details the somewhat ritualized activities of the 'licentious soldiery', Beevor (1991) and La Plante (1992) detail similar activities.

It is in the off-duty company of service mates that excesses of drinking, fighting and bullying - crystallized in the murder of a Danish tour guide in Cyprus by three British soldiers (Willard, *The Daily Mail*, 29 March 1996) - reach extreme, and sometime tragic levels. Similarly, less anti-social, but nevertheless masculine oriented pursuits, including womanising and body building, may constitute other leisure activities (Beevor, 1991; Herr, 1977; Hockey, 1986; La Plante, 1992). However, back regions are asserted to provide not only an escape from the exercise of power, but are important for maintaining a sense of ontological security. That the military back region for the single serviceman may be infused with overtly celebrated aspects of masculine ideals allows little space for avoiding self

identities that are not, to some extent at least, reliant on 'aggressive, threatening and deeply misogynist' perceptions of the world¹⁶ (Morgan, 1994:177).

Central to the masculine ideal within the military setting, and particularly for combat soldiers, are those issues that concern aggression, as we have already flagged above within the context of alleged bellicose disposition. The boundaries that separate legitimate from illegitimate violence tend to be blurred. In the following extract from an Army Officer, control of violence is of central concern:

'[I]f it [violence] goes too far you have to treat it seriously...well if they really badly damage people or property, if they start using the bottle for instance. Otherwise it's treated in a fairly tolerant fashion. Of course there's always the problem of getting mixed up with civilians, police wise that is. Yet in a sense it's a good thing, as it keeps the spirit up, makes us more of a family' (quoted in Hockey, 1986:149).

Within their career, many servicemen establish highly pervasive levels of masculinized ontological security. They may experience an all embracing sense of belonging underpinned with degrees of unassailability. It almost goes without saying that a strong sense of self-identity is rooted in high levels of worth and a favourable concept of masculine self.

In the second section of the chapter, we have considered the tenacity of the non-discursive realm together with its interconnectedness with processes of military/masculine socialization. Taken together, these particular ways of 'being a (service)man' will be examined against the backdrop of both the genesis and the sustaining of homelessness. These discussions are more fully developed throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8, within the context of empirical materials. In the next sections, however, we shift the focus to the civilian environment. The section starts with the question: Were the military years considered to be amongst the best? Given that service person identity may colonize self perception, how might the civilian environment be engaged with?

3.10 EXITING THE MILITARY - LEAVING THE 'BEST YEARS' BEHIND?

There is evidence to suggest that many consider their military years as 'amongst the best' (Higate, 1997; Morgan, 1987; La Plante, 1992; Rafferty, *The Daily Mail Supplement*, Jun 1994; Randall and Brown, 1994; Roper, 1994; Turner and Rennell, 1995). Though referring directly to the experiences of World War II¹⁷, the following extract is included in an attempt to illustrate the heightened spirit of the social-military experience. Whilst this account relates to demobbed soldiers and civilians alike, nevertheless sense of unity, belonging and purpose link it to a more particular military experience:

[F]or a great many, the end of the war marked the beginning of their decline. The war had been an emotional pinnacle from which, subconsciously, they would have liked to look down for ever. It was a feeling that they would later, except at odd confining moments, probably deny. But in their bones they knew that they would never feel quite so much, or ask and get so much from life, ever again. Out of the crucible of war, a generation had created certain standards of responsibility, of excitement, of purpose, that no social blueprint could ever live up to. And if indeed those emotional terms of reference were somehow recreated, they too would only be like a debased coinage, a counterfeit cliché of the heart' (quoted in Turner and Rennell, 1995:224-225).

And, more specifically, for La Plante's fictional ex-Para, Dillon:

"We used to pride ourselves we were the toughest, the best fighting men...[T]he Falklands was the best time in my life. Everything I'd been trained for came together. It was the same for all of us - everything made sense" (La Plante, 1992:68).

Yet, it is worth remembering that military experience tends to coincide with fundamental life-events: securing employment, gaining financial independence and the move from youth to adulthood against the backdrop of an intensive and overt *rite-de-passage*¹⁸ - the genesis and acquisition of military status (see Chapter 6). Thus, key life markers and the military experience become closely intermeshed. It is likely that the commonality of purpose that tends to characterize military experience is less evident within the context of civilian life transitions. For example, the University experience and foreign travel, whilst no doubt invoking considerable nostalgic indulgence, tend not to be experienced in such an intensive manner; shared hardship may not be so crucial here. Nor might these more common experiences be characterized by the largely favourable resonance that a military career has within broader society, as we suggested in Chapter 1.

3.10.1 Resettlement?

Two years before service people depart the military (for those on a routine contract), there is encouragement to attend a series of resettlement interviews and courses (Scottish Council for Homelessness, 1996). With some considerable time left to serve, a number of service people may well develop an affinity with the idea that they might require 'resettling' in civilian life; others may have a less than realistic notion¹⁹ of future civilian experience.

3.10.2 Leaving the Camp Gates Behind

The moment of exit - this may be psychological as well as physical (Fuchs, 1986, Jolly, 1996, La Plante, 1992) may be characterized by an experience described here as alien disjuncture. In the case of extreme examples, a psycho-social void²⁰ could appear. The poetic words of a homeless ex-serviceman are telling here. An extract from 'The Army and I' included in the magazine for the homeless, the *Big Issue*, reads:

*'...So I came out of the army
into a world of pure hell I looked
Around and all that I saw was chaos
And poorness and poverty that's all.
I did not know what to do...'
(Bill C. Big Issue, Feb 96)*

Here there is resonance of the experiences endured by La Plante's (1992) fictional characters, particularly in terms of the experience of 'chaos' post-discharge. In addition, we are drawn to the sense of inertia captured in the last line. The point of uncertainty - 'what to do?' is at one and the same time a great vulnerability: *What am I? How am I to make sense of this foreign situation?* Of crucial significance is the desperation to become a legitimate member of society. Throughout the fraught interim, ontological security might be fractured, and existential anxiety invoked. Continuity and future may fragment. Terms including most commonly, 'culture shock' capture these difficult moments. Here we are reminded of ontological 'insecurity' (Laing, 1965). This represents the extreme situation, and as we have suggested above might be marked on the far pole to those for whom civilian life remains but a minor step. For those enduring culture-shock, repertoires of military experience may assume a powerful resource with which to make sense of the post-discharge unknown.

3.11 MILITARY AND CIVILIAN IDENTITIES - SCRIPTS

If we consider that identity is something one comes to possess through a number of scripts that constitute us as social subjects (Gutterman, 1994), then servicemen who experience high soldierly 'role centrality' (Fuchs, 1986) might play to scripts which are largely inappropriate in the civilian context, or more problematically, find themselves unable to draw confidently on any script. We continue this dramaturgical metaphor with the words of Burns (1972). She states that:

'The theatrical quality of life, taken for granted by nearly everyone, seems to be experienced most concretely by those who feel themselves on the margin of events either because they have adopted the role of spectator or because,

though present, *they have not yet been offered a part or have not learnt it sufficiently well to join the actors'* (quoted in Cohen and Taylor, 1992:77; *emphasis added*).

There may be a number of scripts that require urgent reconstitution - most obviously those that inform the ways in which it is possible to be a service person. That they may be deeply embedded within the non-discursive realms may result in considerable anxiety for ex-servicemen who come to realise the inappropriateness of such scripts. The soldierly role or script, for example, is somewhat redundant in civvie street, though may find expression within specific contexts including security work (Jolly, 1996; La Plante, 1992; Shaw, 1991) or in the extreme, employment as a mercenary (Green, *The Guardian*, 27 Mar 97; Shaw, 1991).

3.11.1 Reflexivity

Scripts pivotal to a positive civilian identity have to be acquired, amongst which is the urgent necessity for people to be reflexive. A number of social commentators, notably Giddens (1991) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1996), have argued that the central feature of contemporary society is the profound shift which has occurred towards the processes of individualisation. Their argument is that although the old sociological dictum that people make their own history (social agency) but not under conditions of their own choosing (social structures) still holds, the balance has shifted towards social agency and away from social structural determinants of social action. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1996:27) for instance, argues that:

'[O]ne of the decisive features of individualization processes...is that they not only permit, but demand an active contribution by individuals...if they are not to fail individuals must be able to plan for the long term and adapt to change; they must organise and improvise, set goals, recognise obstacles, accept defeats and attempt new starts...they need initiative, tenacity, flexibility.'

The hierarchically organized military structure determines a service persons' access to information. The 'need to know' principle ensures that knowledge (operational and other matters) remains fragmented, and therefore, relatively secure. Ability to act is dependent on particular knowledge-resources which become decreasingly circumscribed as the hierarchy is ascended. This may contribute towards curtailing reflexivity within the context of the military institution for lower ranks. Indeed, high dependence levels are encouraged amongst these groups, as the military remains the prime site from which crucial information flows. Accommodation, food, on and off-duty dress codes, official tasks and broadly consensual world views provide guiding channels along which reflexivity is encouraged to run, and these paternalistic legacies may impinge on reflexivity in civilian life (Higate, 1997).

We broaden the context in the next section and examine the raw materials with which identity, post-discharge in the civilian world might be forged. The formation of identity is characterized by a mix of conscious and non-discursive engagements with the self and the social world. Pervading this discussion is a key question that turns on the legitimacy of identity. Who or what is it possible to *be* given one's experience-resource on the one hand and social conditions on the other? One way in which to approach this question is to consider the nature of broader society in which these military-civilian identities have necessarily to be brokered.

3.12 SELF/SOCIETAL PERCEPTION AND THE 'NORMALITY OF WAR'

In the work of Lomsky-Feder (1995) there is a concern to link individual identity with societal perception. To these ends, she focuses on the ways in which discourses of war have attained a particular naturalized status within the Israeli context. We draw on this material in order to highlight how societal perception impinges on phenomenological reconciliation of self with extreme or intense experience, (in doing so we conflate 'war' with 'military service'). Thus:

'[J]ust as war is institutionalized and normalized into the Israeli macrosocial order, so too the individual integrates and co-opts it into his personal biography' (Lomsky-Feder, 1995:463).

Other commentators argue that war veterans represent their experiences as traumatic, and that further it is 'foreign to the course of a normal life' (Danish *et al.*, 1980). However, Lomsky-Feder suggests that the war experience is incorporated into the life course of Israelis', and that its characteristically traumatic resonance is largely negated.

Israeli societal arrangement and culture is aligned closely with conflict; evident through long periods of conscription and the prominence in the contemporary period of the highly symbolic Yom Kippur war (Lomsky-Feder, 1995). Here we note the social dimension of subjectivity, apparent at the intersection of the micro and macro dimensions. What appears as given (the linkage of trauma/war) is demonstrated to rest significantly on wider perceptions; expectation of war 'as normal' feeds into the ways in which biographies are constituted, and reflexively monitored. In this sense, we recognize that 'subjectivity is not something that gets in the way of social analysis' (Ribbens, 1993:88) but rather its examination may reveal broader social processes; subjectivities links individual with society.

3.12.1 The Social Self - Understandings

As we argued in Chapter 1, understanding of service person 're-adjustment' within the British context continues to be characterized by the marrying of *ex-service* with *institutionalized*. Lomsky-Feder's work demonstrates how ideologies of understanding become legitimate resource - a common currency of understanding drawn on by military selves and others. These 'discourses of institutionalization' locate, codify and presuppose (Rose, 1989, 1996) a distinct relationship between the (military) experience and a specific condition (dependency), and likely feed back into self-understanding (Jenkins, 1996). How might these raw materials be used in terms of ex-serviceman identity? Here, La Plante (1992) juxtaposes two discourses 'order' and 'anarchy' within the context of her fictional account of ex-servicemen experience:

'That was all he knew, rapping out orders to squaddies and Toms - *Do this, soldier, do that* - expecting to be obeyed on the instant, and it was hard to break the habit. This was Civvie Street, where anarchy ruled. Nobody took orders from anybody' (La Plante, 1992:43, *original emphasis*).

La Plante provides a discourse of understanding through which we are given access to Dillon's subjective experiences; civilian life is characterized by 'anarchy'. It is likely that Dillon may (and indeed does) have a range of difficulties in 're-adjusting' as he appears reliant on an understanding of the civilian world fostered in the close knit environment of the Army's Paratroopers. He is noted to grapple with discourses flowing from both the military and civilian spheres. Whilst he realises the negative aspects of ordering people around, he simultaneously maintains that civilian life is chaotic - the former is perhaps an attempt to come to terms with the latter. Thus, his subjectivity is problematically constituted in the collision of these uneven and perhaps irreconcilable ideologies. Further, the words 'instant' and 'habit' are suggestive of action carried out at the level of non-discursive consciousness. Here, Dillon's experience of civilian life has provided him with a 'social knowledge', in this example, the less than compliant reaction of his wife and children to loud demands. In this way, activities usually relegated to the realm of the practical consciousness become the objects of reflection. How might we account for this novel self-examination of spontaneous and unthinking action?

Schutz and Luckmann (1974) state:

'[W]hen a subject or event receives conscious attention and is *the object of focused discussion*...the [agent]...does not confine himself to presenting the matter but also *interprets it and determines its significance and meaning* on the basis of the interpretive schemes available to him..."interpretive relevance" is the encounter between the individual's experience and social knowledge...as long as events, incidents...are familiar and do not create "noise", they are interpreted in a routine and almost automatic manner' (quoted in Lomsky-Feder, 1995:467-468; *emphasis added*).

We could say then, that awareness of 'noisy phenomena' is the first move towards a reflexive engagement with the institutionalized condition, and similarly that we might label informing discourses as social knowledge. Given the potential tenacity of the military experience, manifest through particular habit and routine, are there particular environments in which problematic identity might be appeased? To put this another way, might particular social situations limit the extent to which ex-servicemen are exposed to problematic reappraisal of taken-for-granted civilian 'ways of being'?

3.12.2 Legitimizing Discourses

These potential meaning-resources or ways of relating to the self, may manifest themselves within the context of broader society in a myriad of ways, from language, through psychiatric discourse to institutional space. For the former we are reminded of the media reporting examined in Chapter 1. In terms of the second, an Army psychiatrist invokes the following image of the returned World War II servicemen:

'We see them here and there already in our streets, those straight, bronzed figures, moving with a precision that no civilian suit can disguise, although the outward bonds of discipline have been escaped and we wonder what they are taking back home in their minds...[W]e shall not easily discover it. Their stories, their service slang, their new habits, preferences and

prejudices, will be more easily understood than the inner man' (quoted in Turner and Rennell, 1995:40).

That this description of 'what to expect' appeared in the Salvation Army newspaper the *'War Cry'* (and was perhaps widely disseminated) remains significant. Its readership, armed with subconscious preconception may well have compounded the apparent returning serviceman's characteristics brokered through intersubjectivity, within the framework provided by this particular social knowledge. Here identity becomes something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Of course there are limitations to this rather stereotypical imagery, and we draw on Turner and Rennell only in terms of an ideal-typical conception of the returning service person, located within a different sociohistorical context.

We turn our attention next to the dimension of institutional 'artefact'. Here we suggest that the organization of particular institutions (somewhat analogous to the military sphere) may inadvertently foster similar relationships of dependency amongst a number of ex-servicemen, some of whom may be homeless.

3.12.3 Institutions in Civilian Life

Civilian institutions under consideration here might be represented by day-centres, drop-ins, hostels for the homeless and soup kitchens, for example. They are characterized by varying assumptions around a central theme - that particular individuals are 'in need'. The interior spaces of these buildings are organized around a split between helper/helped. Volunteers (often located in offices, or behind coffee bars) are ready and willing to assist, offer advice and listen to problems. Posters ask the clients if they need information, or counselling. Indeed, we might conceptualize these spaces in terms of the ways in which they elicit specific behavioural response. The notion of Bourdieu's habitus is rekindled here, particularly in the context of the likelihood that the deep-seated (latent) legacy of military socialization is given 'noise-free' expression. These civilian institutions might be understood - in the following (somewhat ironic and convoluted) sense as:

'[S]ystems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures...as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a *conscious* aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu, 1990:52-8).

Indeed, the continuities between the military sphere and institutions of this sort may further compound and reinforce the normality/familiarity of these spaces for ex-servicemen who have slipped through the net. There exists shared hardship; a them (volunteer/paid worker) and us (homeless) split characterized by access to knowledge (see discussion above regarding 'need to know' and reflexivity); the largely masculinized culture of these settings the culture of alcohol, and so on²¹. It is no accident that we should return to the work of Bourdieu against the backdrop of institutions in civilian life. These formulations may contribute to our understanding of processes outwith agent consciousness that give rise to the cycle of institutional experience, common to a significant number of homeless individuals (Randall and Brown, 1994).

We have suggested that ways in which institutionalized individuals come to think of themselves as people of particular types cannot be adequately theorized in the absence of the broader societal context. There are, however, limitations to this theoretical frame. There could, for example, be a temptation to pursue this line of enquiry to a skewed conclusion in which agents are seen to be 'robbed of their independence...through welfare provision' of one kind or another (Murray, 1994; Taylor-Gooby, 1985). The notion that provision is equal to cyclical entrapment has gained considerable currency recently and has been deployed as a way in which to justify the continued erosion of welfare benefits. Central to these debates is the notion of dependency which (as we suggested within the introduction to this chapter) may well be characterized by an ideological component linked to those understood to be socially excluded - simply put, individuals are 'blamed' for their 'own' situation.

3.13 SUMMARY COMMENTS

Discussion in this chapter has centred on the notion of institutionalization with reference to the military experience. We have attempted to demonstrate some of the ways in which the term has been under-theorized through highlighting its gendered and non-discursive dimensions. The social-military experience has also been shown to be widely diverse, and that assumptions concerning the effects of military/masculine socialization should turn on plurality rather than the universalization of military identities. However, those that seek out stability and security through enlistment may well be more vulnerable to the tenacious elements of military socialization.

The complex process of institutionalization is nested within a broader context in which interpretation of the term's meanings interacts with the self-identities of those deemed to be institutionalized. To these ends, the notion of surrogate institutions was invoked; day-centres, hostels for the homeless and drop-in centres may inadvertently mirror the predominantly masculinized context of the military and provide similar opportunities to attain ontological security. It is crucial, however, to avoid invoking notions of fecklessness at this stage - a likely ideological move within these debates.

In Chapter 4, we turn attention to issues around homelessness. Given discussions sketched in this chapter, it is important to explore more fully what is meant by the terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness'. Only then might notions of institutionalization be contextualized with the specific experiences central to an examination of the links between military service and homelessness.

CHAPTER 4 - THEORIZING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness - A Chaotic Concept?

You do not have to look far to find substantial bodies of literature on chaotic conceptions...common are searches for empirical regularities...in relationships between [subjects] which are internally heterogeneous and hence unlikely to behave consistently. Sayer, Methods in Social Science, 1984:128.

Absolutes and universal truths relating to homelessness and homeless people do not exist. Neale, Homelessness and Theory Reconsidered, 1997:59.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The terms 'homeless and homelessness generally refer to hardship in which accommodation status is of central concern. More often than not, the notion of 'rough sleeping' is invoked. Underlying the genesis and sustaining of homelessness are the asymmetries that characterize the housing and labour market interfaces; here tensions between the two are translated into the appearance of individuals for whom warm, safe and secure accommodation might remain elusive. Structural forces interact in complex ways with individual pathologies, giving rise to a largely transitory population who exist on the 'margins' of mainstream society. In the broadest sense, these understandings go some way to accounting for the inexorable growth and continuance of homelessness over the last 20 years.

However, in this chapter, and for reasons linked to the empirical components of the work, traditional understandings of 'the homeless' and 'homelessness' are shown to be limited. Whilst these notions help to explain any one individuals' specific and fleeting circumstance, they do so at significant conceptual cost. Responses to the frequently posed question 'what

causes homelessness?', turn typically on an unhelpful, and somewhat aprocessual elaboration of the structure/agency dichotomy. In this sense, whilst these formulations signpost complexes of shifting inequality, the terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness' are examples of reified descriptions referring to one element (accommodation status) of a whole series of complexly interacting phenomena.

Notwithstanding these comments, this chapter starts with a brief examination of previous approaches to understanding the genesis of homelessness in the contemporary period.

4.2 DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

In the most literal sense a significant percentage of the population has experienced 'homelessness' at some time. Intentional or unintentional, many have been without secure accommodation for one or more nights. They may have had to sleep in a car because it has broken down. Similarly, they may have missed the last train, and had to sleep in the waiting room of a railway station. Strictly speaking, however, these phenomena tend not to be problematized in the same sorts of ways that long term rough sleeping might be; to conflate the physical (Bines, 1997) and mental hardships that characterize rough sleeping with these brief experiences would be wholly inappropriate.

4.2.1 Approaches - Quantitative and Qualitative

A continuum of homelessness might serve us better as a way in which to understand the nature of the relationship individuals have towards their accommodation status (Watson and Austerberry, 1986). The extreme poles are represented by *rooflessness* through to residence in secure or permanent tenure - most frequently, owner-occupation. However, this framework tends to be more in tune with quantitative analyses (Carlen, 1996) and tells us little of the subjective or experiential dimension of homelessness. Jahiel (1987) promotes a qualitative understanding, however, identifying the differences *between* individual perceptions for those living in similar accommodation (Carlen, 1996). Whilst the qualitative

approach may be somewhat poorly received within the social policy sphere (given the privileging of 'hard' over 'soft' data), nevertheless it is an excellent tool for investigating the meanings individuals bring to a most crucial dimension of their lives: issues of shelter. This approach may also direct analysis away from descriptive categories - by tenure for example - through which assumptions are made concerning 'quality of life'. Here, owner-occupation is broadly considered 'better' than other forms of tenure, partly as a consequence of recent political/ideological work, although linkage of 'home-ownership' with superior 'quality of life' may be somewhat spurious (Ford, 1997¹).

4.2.2 Durations of Homelessness

Perhaps the length of *time* one spends devoid of safe, warm and secure accommodation helps us to better grasp the deeper meanings attached to homelessness. Even within these terms, however, consensus is likely to remain elusive. For those involved with the road protest and peace movements², for example, long term rough sleeping is common, but may be engaged with instrumentally.

Though crudely stated, the approaches sketched above represent a separation between measurement (quantitative) on the one hand, with attempts at understanding the phenomenological dimensions (qualitative) of individuals understood to be homeless, on the other. In the next section we discuss the extent of homelessness within the European context and offer a summary of commentaries linked to explanations of the sharp rise in numbers of individuals outside of secure tenure.

4.3 EXPLANATIONS FOR HOMELESSNESS - GLOBAL CHANGE

Recent theorizing around homelessness has highlighted the economic tensions inherent within processes of globalization (Caton, 1990). Thus, the significant rise in homelessness across the European Union appears to be closely linked with the emergence of structural unemployment. However, a turn away from the terms homeless and homelessness is

evidenced in the European context, with the concept of social exclusion emphasising the ways in which individuals might be understood as marginalized in a wider sense. Here, citizenship and societal cohesion are emphasized (Room, 1995) over a direct concern with activity in the market place or tenure category, as apparent in the UK context (Evans *et al.*, 1995).

4.3.1 Biographies of Work and Social Change

Within the context of youth homelessness, Carlen (1996) identifies a wide range of structural influences that have impacted on younger people (between the ages of 16-25). Carlen's (1996) focus on youth homelessness, whilst instructive, may, however, have a number of limitations when contrasted with the experiences of older ex-servicemen. Younger homeless individuals differ substantially from older cohorts, in the sense that the latter have been active in the labour market within their life-course, and may have different expectations concerning future opportunity (at least within the context of the present study). It is suggested that the legacy of previous employment may form a crucial 'biographical-benchmark' against which current and future aspiration is gauged, and ultimately influenced. In this sense the phenomenological dimension of homelessness for older individuals³ appears to diverge from the experiences of the younger homeless cohort, who may be subsumed more readily into a 'culture of homelessness' (Carlen, 1996).

Though direct comparison is problematic, many of the factors Carlen (1996) identifies for the youth homeless resonate throughout the lives of the older homeless population who represent the focus of the current study. First, the increasing gap between the costs of accommodation and incomes. Second, largely on account of the Conservative flagship 'Right to Buy' policy, is the significant decline in the availability of social housing, with questions hanging over the habitability of the remaining stock (Burrows and Quilgars, 1997:12). The relentless trimming of the welfare budget, has left a number outside of the benefit system altogether, (notably 16/17 year olds), many of whom have been solely reliant on severe hardship payments (Coles, 1998). More broadly, for the older homeless cohort, the increased onus on 'targeting' state assistance has excluded many from the private sector

with rents exceeding housing benefit levels (Bevan and Rhodes, 1997), and, closely linked, the overall decrease in properties available for rent. The ways in which the constitution of the traditional nuclear family has changed over the last 25 years is also significant. As Neale (1997:39) comments within the context of an historical and feminist critique of housing policy in the broadest sense:

'Feminists argued that the meaning of home was bound up with ideas of companionate marriage, children and shared activities, but such socially and historically specific interpretations stigmatized and ghettoised those who did not conform to this pattern (for example, gay and lesbian families, lone-parent families, single person households).'

Perhaps the starkest change over the last 20 or so years, has been the significant shift of wealth towards the upper echelons of society (Hutton, 1995:170). Unemployment and poverty have thus interacted in complex ways to produce the conditions in which homelessness has continued to proliferate (Carlen, 1996). In the following section, we return to the ways in which questions around the 'causes' of homelessness have been explored within the academic literature.

4.4 STRUCTURE AND AGENCY - 'CAUSES'

Carlen (1996:27) states:

'There are two types of answer to the question "what causes homelessness"? - the empiricist and the social structuralist. The former looks at the presenting characteristics of currently homeless people and then provides a teleological explanation based on those attributes...[T]he circularity of this type of argument should be obvious'.

Whilst Carlen presents a somewhat polarized summary of the positions adopted in relation to the central question, 'what causes homelessness?', debate is more likely to be characterized by a recognition of agency-structure interaction. In this way, the vulnerability of particular groups in relation to sharp economic downturn or scant availability of social housing, for example, flags awareness that a crude either/or position (a hallmark of earlier literature in this field) may well be less than helpful in furthering understanding (Carlen, 1996). Crucially, however, this extract points up the limitations of working from a particular agent attribute (ex-serviceman status), to the search for evidence to substantiate linkage to insecure accommodation status. This teleological approach can be eased somewhat by thinking-through the limitations of the terms 'homeless' and 'homelessness', in a similar manner to the exercise in Chapter 3, where the concept of 'service person' was explored through a critical, deconstructive lens. This approach is considered in greater detail later in the chapter.

For Neale (1997), focus on structure is approached, following Foucault, from a micro-level in terms of power-structures. In this way, 'day-to-day injustices' might be identified, and strategies of resistance invoked. An example of intervention at the everyday level might be the establishment of a forum through which the voices of individuals in a hostel for the homeless are heard. In this way, there is recognition that:

'[H]omeless people are not...helpless victims devoid of all agency...they have a fundamental part to play in defining their needs and in shaping the provision available to them' (Neale, 1997:49).

Here Neale's analysis is reducible neither to omnipotent structure, nor limitless agency. There is a conscious move to dissolve the dichotomies that have characterized previous understandings of homelessness. Carlen (1996:9) approaches the problem in a similar way. She states:

'[J]ust as the concepts of homelessness and the homeless should not be conflated, neither are the sociological dualities of agency/structure, victim/survivor, or normal/pathological very useful in analysing the extremely complex and contradictory meanings conferred on the term homelessness by those who either experience or witness it.'

Here binary oppositions characterize understandings of homelessness in terms of both explanation and identification. In turn, these crude positions fuel reification of the phenomena; 'homelessness' appears to exist in a social vacuum. Now we examine more closely the limitations of causal understanding through recent work that takes *subjectivities* as its point of departure.

4.5 REIFICATIONS - COMPLEXITIES

Rieber (1992:62) refutes any notion of positivism in the context of homelessness (a likely danger within debates turning on dualisms of one or other sorts). He states:

'This word "cause" is the biggest weasel word around. You're not going to find a single factor which has the power to produce...homelessness...[it is rather] something like a whole interacting system of events which trigger off other events and then trigger off other events and keep interacting in ways that come together and build up...[A]nd to point to one single factor as the cause of the event is simplistic and deceiving.'

Thus, the myriad of complexities that are obscured by the terms homeless and homelessness have come under increasing scrutiny. This more critical approach has arisen partly as a consequence of the post-structural and postmodern debates that stress identity-projects and subjectivities as fruitful points of departure through which to elucidate the experiential dimension (see Gurney, 1990 within the context of meanings of 'home'). Carlen (1996) does not construct a strong and coherent narrative across her study, but rather, attempts to reflect the contradictory and irreducible interaction of subjectivities and structural/pathological phenomena. This gives rise to the 'jigsaw' method which is:

'[A] mixed-mode of analytic description, argument and counter-argument which...merely pieces together fragments of narrative in such a way as to suggest all kinds of homelessness cameos, which taken together, may raise more issues than they resolve.' (Carlen, 1996:9).

Inherent within this approach is an understanding of the difficulties of elevating the phenomena of homelessness to a plane of study in its own right. Indeed, as we show below, it might be that the way in which the 'problem of homelessness' has been approached turns directly on the terms' reification. The continued deployment of these terms occurs at the contradictory interface of the political, economic and cultural spheres. Here a widely used common-sense notion of homelessness (Bramley, 1988) concentrates on 'lack of control and privacy, and poor material conditions' (Somerville, 1992:530). At a higher level of abstraction, there exists particular asymmetries (Carlen, 1996), as we suggest above, so that the moral reciprocity between state and individual appears heavily weighted in favour of the state (Carlen, 1996). Simply put, it has failed to provide the conditions in which all individuals might equitably access the employment and housing markets. The terms 'homeless and homelessness, however, remain strongly ideological; notions of fecklessness are typically invoked that at one and the same time allude to a rejection of mainstream values. In the next section we highlight the importance of the sphere of consumption. Implicit in this discussion is the notion that activity in the market place has become increasingly linked to the informal dimensions of citizenship.

4.6 MEMBERSHIP THROUGH CONSUMPTION - DISCIPLINES OF THE MARKET

In attempting to understand the shock that homeless individuals might elicit, we should look to identity that turns (within mainstream society, at least) on close alignment with the sphere of consumption⁴. Here, designer-labels and ownership of cars, for example, epitomize membership of an informal hierarchy of achievement.

What of individuals who do not or cannot subscribe to such market place activities? Is it not likely that stigma may at worst mean little, and at best offer up fulfilling membership⁵ of alternative orientation to mainstream society? Marcuse, in explaining reaction to marginalized individuals, puts it like this:

'The rewards of society have not proven attractive, or available to them. But neither have the penalties: jail holds no fear for them, humiliation, cold, and hunger are part of their daily lives...the system has come up against some limits it cannot exceed, has created a world it can no longer control' (Marcuse, 1988:83-4).

The 'other' thus becomes the shadowy spectre of the urban space, loitering within one of the many cathedrals to consumption⁶, the shopping mall. Here we are encouraged to express ourselves through relentless acquisitive behaviour - the very activity that is unavailable or unattractive to those outside the predominant values system. As Carlen (1996:80) suggests, the 'others' presence is at one and the same time threat and warning; the living, breathing personification of the disciplining market to which many of our life-courses are deeply embedded. Rejection carries with it a range of penalties, the most visible of which remains potential for transformation into the shambling 'dosser'. Is it possible to delve a little deeper into societal consciousness *vis-a-vis* the 'homeless other'?

4.6.1 Public Perceptions

How might we account for the public's response to those understood to be homeless? Whilst biography may ultimately enable, it also constrains; experience and imagination are key dimensions here⁷. The imaginative leap necessary to create a degree of empathy is perhaps too great. This understanding might go some way to explaining the dismissive incredulity of many in society who perceive the homeless as nothing more than 'feckless

scroungers'. And, as Snow and Anderson (1987) point out, the majority of studies in this area have tended to focus on the 'characterological problems' of the homeless, thereby confirming the nature of societal consciousness, in terms of the homeless population's bracketing from the 'non-deviant' populace. The onus on individual pathologies inadvertently (and ideologically) shifts structural factors backstage. The fleeting encounter with 'the homeless person' establishes a series of refracting and reflecting dynamics that go far beyond the urban context in which these individuals might be forced to eke out a living. It is likely that the appearance of the 'other' has a cumulative effect on those for whom *their* problem seems largely incomprehensible. The American psychiatrist Lifton, (1992:131), discussing 'psychic closing off' puts it like this:

'[A]ll of us have to cope with more numbing, more dissociation, in order to live in an everyday way...and that's a very profound matter because it really means we have to become increasingly dissociated as human beings, as a society.'

Dissociation then works in complex ways, and its effects are far from consistent across society. However, Lifton (1992:132) neatly captures the dilemma of handing over money to the homeless - to give or not to give?⁸ :

'There's no satisfactory resolution...should we call forth more dissociation or should we be immediately humane to a person who is clearly suffering? While recognizing that it's not going to solve his or her problem, but might be a decent act and, in a way, runs the risk of us opening up further our own guilt and shame and problems by the very act of stopping and taking in that pain.'

The increasing ubiquity of the homeless contributes towards a normalization of this particular form of social exclusion. In this way, and in a most paradoxical sense, the problem becomes ever 'elusive' as its intransigence is confirmed by its continued

reoccurrence. Homeless individuals might easily melt into the busy urban landscape⁹, and be understood as simply another drain on the resources of the busy shopper.

We turn attention in the next section to the so-called 'homelessness literature'. How might we understand the limitations of commentary that tends to focus on one (particularly visible) manifestation of hardship?

4.7 THE HOMELESSNESS LITERATURE - FLAWED FOUNDATIONS?

That the homelessness literature tends towards simplistic and atheoretic conceptions is but one element of the broader story. Deeply entrenched problems surrounding the actual *existence* of a particular literature remain at the heart of Pleace's (1998a:57) concern:

'[T]he mere fact there is a "homelessness" literature in its own right demonstrates a fundamental methodological flaw. It is not how the problem of homelessness is being examined that is the problem, it is the decision that there is a "homelessness problem" that needs examination that is a central difficulty. There is no such thing as a unique social problem called homelessness and any study predicated on the assumption that it can be *isolated and studied in its own right* is founded on a misconception' (*emphasis added*).

The examination of 'homelessness as a discrete area' tends towards an unhelpful one-sidedness in which life-course, for example, is interpreted solely in terms, as we suggest above, of 'snapshot' accommodation status. Next, we consider alternative perspectives through which agency and difference amongst the homeless is invoked.

4.7.1 Conceptual Limitations

To consider homelessness as a discrete area of study¹⁰ represents an unhelpful reification (Neale, 1996, 1997; Pleace, 1997). Subsequent policy strategies geared to alleviating marginalization from mainstream society might therefore be undermined. Drawing on Foucault and Giddens', Neale (1997:48) states:

'Homeless people occupy a range of different and shifting positions in relation to a wide variety of power structures - for example, gender, race, age, health, and the employment and housing market. There is...no single oppressive force impinging upon their lives...there is no agreed cause of...any universally accepted definition of their homelessness.'

This powerful critique should not undermine consensus concerning strategies to alleviate homelessness, however. We must retain sight of the very real spiritual, material and physical suffering that characterizes the lives of the marginalized (many described as homeless) no matter how we choose to approach the area (Neale, 1997). Neither, however, should we neglect conceptual limitations. Drawing on Walby (1992), Neale (1997:46), acknowledges that, for example in thinking through homelessness:

'The postmodernist argument can...be taken too far...[D]efinitions and meanings can be deconstructed so rigorously that they lose all significance and potential for practical action.'

Whilst securing consensus on what might constitute 'suffering' or 'hardship' may be tricky, this extract flags the very real challenge that the social sciences face in the contemporary

period. In this way, preoccupation with subjectivities, for example, can rob theoretical labours of their praxis potentials.

4.7.2 Chaotic Conceptions

Early on in the fieldwork for this study, it became clear that single ex-service and non ex-servicemen were characterized by a wide range of relationships to the rather static notion of homelessness. For some, both the status and the materiality of accommodation appeared as secondary to a range of other issues. Whilst for others, the concreteness of the term captured the very real suffering and disadvantage through which days appeared interminable, and the maintenance of mental and physical well-being a real struggle. In this and other studies (for example, Snow and Anderson, 1987), self alignment with the labels homeless or homelessness co-existed with a negative self-identity; thus, in the minds of a number of individuals, self-ascription was necessarily conflated with failure in one or other ways.

At the broadest of levels, the terms homelessness and homeless as 'particular problems' tend to be presented in an orderly, logical and coherent way, which necessarily detracts from their processual, dynamic and chaotic characteristics. Of course a range of caveats are incorporated in order to further qualify what is meant by 'the problem', nevertheless an unhelpful reductionism tends to characterize the ways in which the terms are applied. What has actually occurred might be understood as a process of abstraction. A particular social phenomena (concerning accommodation status) has been torn, or 'amputated' (Plummer, 1983:68) from a context outside of which it becomes relatively meaningless. Sayer (1984:127) in his discussion of 'bad abstractions' or 'chaotic conceptions' (a Marxist term) states that their effect is to:

'[A]rbitrarily divide the indivisible and/or lump(s) the unrelated and the inessential, thereby "carving up" the object of study with little or no regard for its structure and form.'

In this way, the term homeless or, more generally social exclusion has remained, *a priori* the point of departure from which an object of study has been both defined and, at the level of analysis, constrained. The coining of the term leads to a range of problems, the most significant of which is the assumption that homelessness is a clearly demarcated area in which we might reveal a range of defining causes, be they structural or pathological.

Limitations to the terms homeless and homelessness turn very directly on the extent to which human agency interacts in complex ways with structural forces. In this next section, we attempt to account for the ways in which individuals unwittingly collude with what might be termed their 'conditions of possibility' that give rise to a state or condition labelled 'homeless'.

4.8 CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITY

In Chapter 3, we outlined the ways in which human agency was noted to flourish within the tightly controlled basic military training and later environments. In attempting to explain the ways in which insecure accommodation status came about post-discharge, we must, in a parallel sense, allow for human intention. Given social-structural constraints, we pose the following questions: What was it possible for individuals to do? What made sense, at a particular moment, within a particular social context? In these ways, a consideration of what was 'possible' in any one situation provides scope for intentional human agency whilst recognizing the range of constraining limits that influence social action (Bhaskar, 1989). This theoretical frame accounts for the transformed and transforming nature of social life. And, it is recognized in this study that biographical legacies (for example military socialization and experience) influence the particular essence of these transformations. Here, we key into the recursive nature of social life (Giddens, 1976) which allows us to move away from the structure/agency dichotomy within the context of homelessness (Neale, 1997). Bhaskar, (1989:78) alludes to recursivity in this extract:

'[P]eople in their social activity...perform a double function: they...not only make social products but make the conditions of their making.'

Thus, the ideological conflation of human intentionality with 'choice' remains an ever present threat to the integrity of those for whom 'choice' barely exists. Sleeping in a dirty, noisy and threatening hostel for the homeless in which one has constantly to guard against robbery may leave little option but to sleep rough, for example (Carlen, 1996:95). Furthermore, constraints have material effects by virtue of their inherently social constitution:

'Homeless people are thinking, feeling, social agents with rights and responsibilities, but they are socially constituted, and therefore, are constrained in many ways.' (Neale, 1997:47).

Thus, individuals understood as homeless may engage in 'reasonable' and 'rational' behaviour through which particular outcomes may combine to produce experiences of hardship. This characteristic of human action is captured by Bhaskar (1989:80) who:

'[D]istinguish(es) between the genesis of human action...lying in the reasons, intentions and plans of human beings, on the one hand; and the social structures governing the reproduction and transformation of social activities on the other...[I]t should be noted that engagement in a social activity is itself a conscious human action.'

Limits to action arise at the interface of 'human intention' and social structure. Creation of social structures that act back on those responsible for them both constrain and liberate. In considering these tensions we highlight the explanatory weakness of the term 'choice' together with its spurious linking with 'homelessness'¹¹. However, and as we illustrate throughout the empirical chapters below, accomplishments by human agents undoubtedly include a non-conscious or non-discursive component (as we suggest in Chapter 3 with

reference to the process of institutionalization). In this way, we should be attuned to the potential inefficacy of terms including 'strategy,' 'intent' and 'reason' within the context of discussions around the genesis and sustaining of homelessness.

Taken together, preceding discussions have flagged the complexities that necessarily accompany the use of a particular snapshot reference to accommodation status, encapsulated in the terms homeless and homelessness. They are understood as 'chaotic conceptions' that do much to categorize and yet do little to explicate complex process. In the next sections, phenomenologies of homelessness are considered, together with the ways in which 'the homeless' are available as raw material to which a range of meanings might be attached.

4.9 MEANINGS - CONTEXT

Who are the homeless? As we suggested in Chapter 1, they are predominantly understood as the 'non deserving poor'. As such, they are 'explained' by a wide range of agencies, professionals and the media. Issues of institutional and sexual abuse, (Carlen, 1996) reliance on illicit drugs and poor job opportunities represent the raw materials with which homeless individuals make sense of both the genesis and sustaining of their pariah-like status. Whilst there is a degree of diversity in these examples concerning the causes of homelessness, nevertheless they tend to gravitate around negative stereotypes. Carlen (1996:8) outlines the shifting subjectivities of the so-called homeless:

'homelessness...has multiple and diverse meanings for the people, who in occupying it...through choice or not...become known as the "homeless".'

Clearly, Carlen recognizes complexity and contradiction, but her work does tend to stand out within the broader homelessness literature. Diversity and a degree of complexity

underlie the next example. In this instance, we note that representations of homelessness vary considerably, and perhaps somewhat accidentally as they are noted to subvert predominant populist accounts.

4.9.1 Recruiting the Homeless

A recent Army campaign to recruit homeless individuals (*The Big Issue in the North*, 20-26 Oct 97; *The Guardian*, 30 October 97; *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 Oct 97; *The Yorkshire Evening Press*, 30 October 97) illustrated some of the ways in which the notion of homelessness is vulnerable to a range of diverse representations. Both the Army and the media are noted to have attached differential and contradictory meanings to terms which might range from 'dosser' through to individuals 'down on their luck'.

The Army's quest for 'high calibre individuals' meant that they were *not* interested in 'winos from cardboard city' (Stokes, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 Oct 97). Nor did they have an interest in 'Drunks and drug addicts' (Butcher, *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 Oct 97). The invocation of common stereotypes is tied closely to the ways in which some individuals apparently chose this way of life. However, the point at which 'homeless people' were understood as potential resource, was at one and the same time the point at which notions of homogeneity amongst this population became redundant. These individuals:

'through no fault of their own, find themselves on the streets and homeless. Many have a lot to offer.' (Stokes, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 Oct 97).

This Army campaign actually served to *problematize* understandings of homelessness offered by the media more generally, and the reports of Anderson *et al.* (1993) and Randall and Brown (1994) in particular. In this sense, suggestion that the homeless might be heterogeneous parallels recent academic attempts outlined above (Neale, 1996; Pleace, 1998a) to infer complexity on this transitory population. This Army campaign, however,

whilst largely ideological, is a rare instance of the media acknowledgement of diversity within and amongst the homeless population.

4.10 ADAPTABILITY - IS IT A PROBLEM?

Homelessness is characterized by its episodic and transitory nature (Jones, 1995) together with a range of responses to, as we suggest above, 'what it means to be without permanent and secure accommodation'. For example, so called *New Age Travellers* do not necessarily remain preoccupied with a self-identity turning on homelessness (with one or more of its stigma inducing tenets). As Davis *et al.* (1994:4) state with reference to so-called 'travellers': '[L]iving successfully as a traveller imparted a sense of self-worth and of control over (their) lives'.

Similar themes were conveyed by individuals who took part in the high profile Newbury bypass protests. Indeed, some spoke of their self-sufficiency (in feeding and housing themselves) as particular values of the then dominant Conservative government - the apparent enemy of the road movement. In this way, the publicity given to their activities served to mediate mainstream beliefs - at the level of media rhetoric - against the backdrop of a somewhat stigmatized activity. The meanings attached to living in a hastily prepared tunnel did not turn on homelessness or exclusion, but rather celebration and *inclusion*. Far from being marginalized on account of appearance and attitude, body piercing and the wearing of tattered clothes continued to be *de rigeur* and the name *Swampy* infused with a kudos of acceptable resistance. We note here the differential meanings attributed by the media, the public and those at the centre of the protest movements. Crucially, however, these incidents of insecure accommodation status were not especially problematized for individuals living out this particular reality, nor for the ways in which broader commentaries framed their lives.

4.10.1 Biographical Experience and Problematization

It is not only those involved with constructing shelters (as do many in the road protest movement) that display adroit reaction to testing situations. Though working with the most limited of resources, mental and physical dynamism characterizes the challenge of rough sleeping; as Wayne (aged 23) describes:

'Keeping clean? I used to go into C & A, rob a pair of socks and a pair of boxer shorts. Then I'd go to the swimming baths, pay me 30p, have a shower, put me clean underwear on, come back into town, go to Rackhams for the free samples of deodorant, walk out I'd be clean then.' (quoted in Carlen, 1996:101).

As Carlen (1996) argues, many of the youth homeless involved in her study were 'survivors' and to these ends she describes the range of behaviours characterized by innovation, resourcefulness and swift adaptation to difficult conditions. In this sense, the extent to which homelessness is problematized varies through time, and social context. Problematized or not, the homeless display particular resilience in the face of hardship. In relation to individuals described in this way, Giamo and Grunberg (1992:40) state the following:

'What I find remarkable....is that, despite what seems to be in many cases complete separation, stasis, and disintegration...there is this capacity to go on. There is a capacity to live, to create to some extent, to stay physically alive and, to a certain degree, socially and symbolically alive'

Indeed, protracted experience of hardship may compound its normalization, and unproblematic incorporation into a particular 'way of life'. Drawing on Giamo and Grunberg (1992), Carlen, (1996:79) states:

'People who have survived extreme deprivation...may take pride in, and become psychologically attached to, the condition survived...they may...embrace and adapt the initially unfavourable conditions in which they find themselves, shaping them into new modes of living.'

As we demonstrate throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8, single homeless ex and non ex-servicemen's reaction to accommodation status varied through time and may be characterized by cycles of disadvantage. Simply put, early experience of difficulty might inadvertently facilitate later hardship. In this way the novelty of - in this example, rough sleeping - may hold relatively little fear for those already familiar with such physical and psychological exigency. In an ironical sense, these experiences may become institutionalized in ways suggested in Chapter 3, thereby rendering them somewhat cyclical, and ultimately tenacious (Carlen, 1996). Indeed, as suggested in Chapter 7, situations which call forth embodied challenge (a corollary of rough sleeping in particular) may actually be responded to and made sense of within a framework of pseudo-challenge (Higate, 1997). These issues key into debates around the linkage of masculinities with emotions which are explored more fully in Chapter 8.

4.11 SUMMARY COMMENTS

Discussion in this chapter has turned on an understanding of the terms 'homeless and homelessness, following Sayer, as 'chaotic concepts'. Complexity, diversity of experience, and heterogeneity of the homeless population have been of central concern. Homelessness (if we consider it to refer to problematized rough sleeping, for example) signals deeper structural asymmetries in which human agency - though pitched against weighty odds, displays remarkable innovation. The passage of time, however, may serve to erode the urgency of this particular form of hardship as it is normalized, and perhaps perpetuated by a burgeoning homelessness 'industry' (see Chapter 9), that unwittingly feeds off the circumstances of this disempowered and transitory population.

In Chapter 5, issues concerning the epistemological foundations of this research project are discussed. The empirical components of this study follow in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Here, there is an attempt to move from some of the abstract inclinations noted in this chapter, to empirical grounding of diversity and complexity alluded to throughout, within the context of ex and non-ex service participants.

CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCHING HOMELESS MEN

Overview and Reflections on the Research Enterprise

Our consciousness is always the medium through which research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher Stanley and Wise, Breaking Out Again; 1993:157

The real work on which...the thesis is based began much earlier. I should stress at this point that I was very much part of the social world that I was to study: an ex-member who returned in order to conduct an ethnographic inquiry Hobbs, Doing the Business; 1988:2

The best one can do as a researcher is to present an interpretation of reality to the reader, one which has itself gone through a highly personal and idiosyncratic interpretation in its conversion from the raw material of human experience to sociological knowledge Hockey, Squaddies; 1986:5

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended to bridge early material (included in chapters 1-4) with later chapters (6-8). The move between broad-brush and largely contextual material is, it is hoped, eased through reflecting on methodological issues relating to the study. In essence, material in this chapter is oriented towards priming the reader to later empirical material. Whilst the undoubted shift between 'exorcizing' and 'including' the researching self may well disorientate, it should be seen against the backdrop of the overall material's status - that of publicly examined document. For this reason, the auto/biographical 'I' is invoked below within the context of work conducted by well-established academic commentators, including Liz Stanley and David Morgan.

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first represents a conventional and somewhat condensed account of the research process. Here, procedures are presented descriptively in terms of their apparently unilinear nature. The ways in which this material is

framed fit with predominant approaches, particularly those that constitute 'methodology chapters' within mainstream social science theses. This first section provides an accessible, (somewhat sanitized) description of the methodological tools, together with their particular method of application, throughout this study.

In the second section, the insights provided by intellectual autobiography are used to illuminate the limitations of the approach outlined above. The role of the researching self is invoked, and in doing so, epistemological issues are brought under a critical and reflexive lens. We open with the background to the current study.

5.2 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

As we have already seen in Chapter 1, evidence suggests that up to one quarter of the single homeless population has served in the Army, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal and Merchant Navies (Anderson *et al.*, 1993). These findings form the foundational elements of the current research project. The ways in which this social problem was investigated are now explored.

5.2.1 Focus of the Study

Though a number of difficulties characterized the research report by Anderson *et al.* (1993), nonetheless, it did seem likely that a disproportionate number of ex-servicemen experienced homelessness some time after discharge (Higate, 1997). The central concern of the present study was to explore the links between full-time military service and homelessness. This enquiry would, it was hoped, provide a sociological understanding of the relationship between particular individuals and their interaction with specific social structures.

During the initial literature based elements of the project the links between the two environments appeared relatively robust, and the core research question was framed thus: Is

it possible to identify universal military experiences that dispose particular men to homelessness?

Prior to venturing into the field, literature dealing with transitions was examined, for example 'role-exit' in the work of Fuchs (1986), and more specifically, the military to civilian transition (Jolly 1996). These works, however, appeared to offer little insight into the assumed mechanism of 'institutionalization', and tended to focus on individuals largely deemed 'successful' in their new roles (see Chapter 3).

Working within the confines of a slim literature base, a research strategy was devised through which the links between military service and homelessness might be more fully explored. This represented a novel area of study, though initially, it appeared to resonate with work dealing with the move, for example, from psychiatric institutions (Scull, 1984; Taylor, 1992) to the wider community. Literature concerning 'transitions', however, was primarily quantitative and individualistic. This work tended to lack a human quality, and the life-courses of individuals were reduced to statistical tables or 'outcomes'. Here, analysis was primarily derivative, and institutions were conveyed as somewhat detached from broader societal influence. Clearly, the positivist paradigm (see Chapter's 1 and 3) remained highly influential within the context of discussions around individual biographies and the transition from institutions to wider society.

5.3 THE HUMAN FACE OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The sentiments conveyed in Ken Plummer's (1983) *Documents of Life* dovetailed with researcher 'instincts', and confirmed an approach through which biographies would take centre stage. The focus would thus be 'human documents'; as Plummer (1983:1-2) states:

[T]his research is characterized by a lack of pomposity and pretension about methods: the researcher is merely there in the first instance to give "voice" to other people; in some circumstances the voices may then be interpreted..."human documents" (are) accounts of individual experience

which reveal the individuals actions as a human agent and as a participant in social life.'

It was felt that the most appropriate way in which to 'give voice' to homeless individuals - many of whom were typically denied such opportunity - should be linked to the stances taken towards data collection and presentation. Here, the work of Carlen (1996) proved both compelling and influential in terms of its extensive use of qualitative interview material from those understood to be amongst the 'youth homeless' population. The words of Plummer resonated through the approaches taken to 'data' collection:

'Dissolve the subject! Such statements may be supported by refined theoretical reasoning, but they bring with them the spectre of conservative collectivist idealism which can kill off any concern for the concrete joys and suffering of active human beings; they bring with them a denial of the root tensions that have existed within sociology since its earliest days by co-opting the subject into an "ideology"; they harbour a myopia which can deny insights of other approaches and contrary disciplines' (Plummer, 1983:4).

The decision to focus on narrative accounts was further bolstered after visiting informally a number of day-centres in the local area. The social life therein seemed wholly irreconcilable with a quantitative focus which tends to strip away the reality of such extreme circumstance (typically associated with homelessness), through transforming subjects into statistics, or to develop Plummer's point - into 'mathematical ideology'.

5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

There were to be twenty semi-structured in-depth interviews with men, as ex-service women rarely appeared amongst the single homeless population (Anderson *et al.*, 1993). This was most likely due to the gender composition of the military, with women forming around 5 per cent of the female population across the three services (Dandeker and Segal,

1996). This potential number of participants, would it was hoped produce an appropriate and manageable volume of qualitative material. In order to elicit some degree of comparability, the participants included in the project were to be split; ten single homeless ex-servicemen, and ten similarly aged non ex-servicemen. There was to be an attempt to conduct interviews in locations common to the research reports of Anderson *et al.* (1993) and Randall and Brown (1994). Here there would be a focus on the users of particular services, as it was assumed that many of them would self-identify with homelessness; subjective perception of identity was here considered central. Day-centres, hostels for the homeless and soup-runs were to be the focus of researcher interest, with the hope that a degree of 'snowballing' of participants would occur.

5.4.1 Age of Sample

Parameters concerning age were dictated by the cessation of National Service in 1962 (Royle, 1997); in this way the approach taken by Anderson *et al.* (1993) to eliminate ex National Servicemen was replicated. Individuals who were over 52 years old (in 1996) would be outside of the *purposive* sample; here the evolving nature of the study was central (Arber, 1993:72). In keeping with the exploratory tone of the project, (and again mirroring the work of Anderson *et al.* (1993)), any age of single homeless ex-servicemen, together with any length of service would be considered appropriate. After a number of interviews, however, age range was fixed so that generational difference¹ might be minimized.

5.4.2 Incentive Payments

Literature on incentives within social research has burgeoned in recent years (Ackerman, 1989; Rudy *et al.* 1994; Zelizer, 1996). Material here flags a number of considerations including ethical, 'response-rate' and 'bias' issues. For example, Melrose (1996) equated money payments in her study of fraudulent social security claims with coercion, signalling the importance of ethical debates. Where possible, and within the context of the present study, cash payments were largely avoided for reasons touched on by Melrose (1996). However, some payments were made (£5.00) to a number of participants and this was done

as a way in which the time given to interviews might be recognized, rather than as straightforward incentive. For example, in *Salvation Army Hostels* and the *Bail Hostel* (establishments that were typically approached at short notice, and in which meal payments were not possible), cash payments were granted, where possible *after* interview. Alternatives to cash were offered when available. In day centres seven days' lunchtime 'meal-tickets' were offered. In the case of *Big Issue* vendors, ten copies of the magazine were purchased from the distribution point for prospective sale. All monies were supplied from the fieldwork expense budget.

5.5 POTENTIAL RESEARCH OUTCOMES

It was hoped that a well designed research project would throw light on the nature of the genesis of homelessness amongst single ex-servicemen, together with the way in which these circumstances were experienced. In turn, attempts at ameliorating their plight might be operationalized through policy implementation tailored to particular needs. To these ends, it was predicted that a range of agencies may ultimately have become involved, including the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Association (SSAFA), and other civilian organizations. The context in which debates around the 'discovery' of single homeless ex-servicemen unfolded also appeared conducive to a proactive approach. A reformist impulse characterized by the 'deserving poor' rhetoric, which was synonymous with 'our boys' and homelessness (as we demonstrated in Chapter 1) promised much with regard to tackling accommodation difficulties amongst this group.

5.6 INTO THE 'FIELD'² - THE PILOT STUDY

Pilot work contributed towards evaluating the overall research design, from approaches adopted in face-to-face interviewing to the ways in which data was transcribed and ultimately analysed. Initial interview guides (Newell, 1993:97) were left partially structured and relatively open. They provided a degree of security for the researcher - a memory prop - as much as a pointer to the ways in which the interview might develop.

Four pilot interviews were conducted at a local day centre/hostel. These created the platform to a more refined guide in which pre-military experiences featured. Hitherto, military and post-military experiences had formed the focus, broadly in line with assumptions made about the ways in which the military was assumed to institutionalize; in other words, to be directly implicated in the genesis of homelessness (see Chapter 1). Work was conducted throughout different areas across Britain, including: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, London, Manchester and York. These areas were visited out of necessity to boost participant numbers, (rather than any attempt to reflect geographical idiosyncracies)³. Twenty one individuals were interviewed over an eleven month period.

5.6.1 Practical Problems

Early problems linked to recruiting sufficient numbers to satisfy research design were eased significantly through contacting the magazine for the homeless, the *Big Issue*. They assisted by asking vendors - at this stage single homeless ex-servicemen - if they might co-operate with the research project. A number of men, characterized by a range of ages and military experiences were interviewed. A minor degree of snowballing occurred, and, in conjunction with individuals encountered at a part-time place of employment (a *Bail Hostel*), by the end of the project, a total of seventeen single homeless ex-servicemen were interviewed. Though the target figure had been ten individuals from either group (see above), work with single non ex-servicemen was curtailed after only four participants were interviewed. Here, 'theoretical saturation' (Arber, 1993:74) had been reached and there was little to be gained by interviewing additional non ex-service participants. Rather, ex-servicemen material proved considerably more insightful to the central research question.

There was a second, less formal element to data collection that turned on some of the tools developed within the ethnographic tradition (Fielding, 1993; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Considerable periods, mostly those dedicated to awaiting the arrival of potential participants, was spent observing the rhythms of day centres, hostels for the homeless and

the pick-up areas for the *Big Issue*. A flavour of one of these settings is captured in the following extract from the fieldwork diary:

I am in a day centre around the time of the evening meal awaiting the influx of individuals who use the service for provision of hot food. As the doors open, a considerable volume of people pour into the hostel, most are engaged in animated conversation, laugh loudly and appear at ease within somewhat drab institutional surroundings. At that moment, I reflect on the term 'social exclusion'. Whilst I could not support the highly disadvantaged circumstances that are linked to their place in social structure, I cannot help but reflect on the concurrent activities of 'mainstream' members of society. That they may be glued to the TV for the duration of the evening speaks of a particular *asocial* isolation that appears absent from the lives of those forced together under conditions of hardship (at least during these particular moments).

(January 1996)

The significance of this account lies in the ways in which it flags the universal features of institutional life - in short its particular characteristics of sociability and shared hardship (in this example, see Chapter 3. In attempting to understand what the process of institutionalization might 'look like', this setting alerted the researcher to the importance of *continuity* between environments.

5.7 ANALYSING THE DATA

Two data sets were compiled. First, the tape recorded material from the interviews (which was transcribed verbatim by the researcher as swiftly as possible after interview so as not to lose a sense of the 'feel' of the material). Second, contextual handwritten fieldwork diary notes served as an *aide memoire*, and in addition, drew attention to the particularities of the institutional settings in which much of the interviewing took place. In terms of 'memory work' these notes proved invaluable.

Elements of the topic guide were developed throughout the research process. Much of the coding was data led, in that 'benchmark interviews' highlighted hitherto unconsidered links between military experience and subjective perceptions of homelessness. These insights were then incorporated into subsequent guides. The process of cutting and pasting recurring themes was executed systematically using the tools of a simple word processing package. Separate files were constructed for each potential area of importance. The significance of the content of these files lay in their relationship to the core research question which had evolved in the face of interviews with non ex-servicemen. The central research question (vulnerable to ongoing development around a common theme), was now framed in the following way: What factors might contribute towards the genesis and sustaining of homelessness amongst older, particularly ex-service, single men?

The relative openness of evolving themes facilitated space in which theoretical innovation and sociological imagination was allowed to flourish, though the ex-servicemen focus was largely retained. Interpretive inclination was towards social complexity, and in the substantive chapters (6, 7 and 8) cases that do not 'fit' overall categories or themes are included alongside those that resonate closely with core categories (cf. Bloor, 1978:547). The interview material was thus treated in terms of its internal integrity (Watson, 1994; following Glaser and Strauss, 1967), together with analysis characterized by the constant oscillation between inductive and deductive processes (Gilbert, 1993:24).

5.8 FRAMING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The preceding discussion represents a condensed and descriptive account of a particular research design and application, concerned with exploring the links between full-time military service and homelessness. It has been framed by relative detachment from the researching self. It broadly adheres to the norms of accounts produced for these occasions - at least within main or mainstream sociological theses.

However, as Bloor (1978:550) states: 'discussions of methodological techniques are best grounded in the context of particular research problems'. Through highlighting particular

moments of difficulty encountered during the research process, it is possible to produce a more honest and open account, that in turn directs attention to the limitations of the project. This approach fits with that advocated by Stanley and Wise (1993:2) who suggest that the:

'[B]asis of knowledge production should be examined, rather than the method itself...there is no way of doing research "correctly", rather research approaches which are more appropriate'

Throughout the remaining sections of this chapter, we reflect on the basis of knowledge production within the context of the research process described above. Before we turn to an examination of epistemological issues that these discussions necessarily provoke, we locate this somewhat marginal approach to explication of method within the predominant sociological purview.

5.9 MALESTREAM INFLUENCE

The equilibrium of the malestream sociological universe continues to be largely untroubled. Core constellations linked to the external validation of 'objectivity, neutrality' and 'rationality' remain influential and thus dictate the style and content of the social research process (Morgan, 1981, 1992). Deeply entrenched cultural norms shape this approach and understanding of the social world; by and large, it is what 'counts as sociology' (Morgan, 1981:100). This, despite the considerable weight behind the feminist critique. Feminist thought, though diverse (Delamont, 1996; Morgan, 1992), is understood to be somewhat peripheral to 'serious sociology'. Its departure from the hegemonic scientific paradigm, it is alleged, renders it 'non-generalizable, methodologically individualistic' and largely 'anecdotal'. The work of a number of individuals who utilise feminist methodologies is thus understood to be 'no better than literature', self-indulgent, and irreconcilable with the central tenets of the social scientific approach. However, the following sentiments of Stanley and Wise (1993:172) are both instructive and enlightening:

'If this is the kind of literature that our kind of research is compared with then we accept the comparison and feel flattered...[I]f this kind of research can open people's eyes, can influence them and change them, to the extent that literature has done⁴, then it will do better than any other social science research that has appeared to date.'

In reflecting on these words, it is apparent that sociology - as understood by Stanley and Wise at least - should have some practical bearing on the social world. Here, the onus is on change, and in particular consciousness raising with regard to the oppressed, whether known by the category 'men' or 'women' (Stanley and Wise, 1993:8). Concerns with developing theoretical 'models' and distancing oneself from the research 'product' together with advocating the superiority of the researcher over the researched, are largely rejected. We turn next to issues of consciousness flagged in the opening extracts of this chapter.

5.10 RAISING (THE ISSUE OF) CONSCIOUSNESS

The act of exorcizing consciousness from the sociological enterprise comes at considerable cost. Consciousness cannot be 'left at home' prior to venturing into the field of social research. It thus pervades the public and private realms of life, rendering these 'splits' both amorphous and arbitrary. Social scientific rhetoric serves to distance researching selves from their own knowledge products (Ribbens, 1993) thereby normalizing the language of detachment. And yet, the repercussions raised here for mainstream sociological enquiry have still to permeate the awareness of many engaged in the research enterprise (Stanley, 1990a), even those who acknowledge the importance of reflexivity in these contexts. For example, Hockey (1996), in referring to his own 'knowledge product' - doctoral research - recognizes emotional involvement at every stage of the project. Drawing on the work of Fine, he calls this 'contaminated' research. Implicit in this concept, however, is the notion that one could conduct 'uncontaminated research'. Presumably, this enterprise would be characterized by its autonomy and detachment from those who brought it into being. In these terms, work that is characterized by self-referentiality of the researching self is

generally understood to represent a deviation from the 'objective' kernel; here the ideological dogma of 'science' remains tenacious.

The theoretical and practical tools of sociology do not exist independently of the researcher, and her or his idiosyncratic character pervades every stage of the research process, from the earliest moments of inception, through to the provisionally 'finished' product (Hockey, 1986, 1996; Stanley and Wise, 1993). It shapes the framing of research questions, resonates throughout approaches to data collection and impinges on the nature of interpretation brought to the analytic forum. In essence, researching selves are directly implicated in the production and conditions of knowledges 'worked up' for particular audiences and at particular moments. In explicating interaction between the process of research and the authorial self, it is possible to move towards a position in which 'accountable knowledge' is produced (Stanley, 1990a). Key issues informing this process invoke experience of the researching self; issues of transparency and honesty are urged to infuse the act of knowledge creation. In this way, limits concerning the generalizability of this knowledge are made clear, and are nested within the social context of production (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Analysis of social structure necessarily proceeds through the lens of biographical experience. In essence, and with regard to a discussion concerning autobiographical work:

[S]ociology should represent an imaginative and critical engagement between *personal experience* and the analysis of social structures and processes' (Morgan, 1987:2; *original emphasis*).

How might we address the inclusion of the researching self within a discipline that prides itself on 'stripping understanding from its social and biographical roots' (Wilkins, 1993). To what intellectual resource might we turn so as not to lose sight of the 'debunking motif' (Berger, 1963:51) inherent within a sound sociological approach? With these questions in mind, we turn now to a consideration of 'intellectual autobiography'. The following discussions pave the way for the ushering-in of authorial experience and its concomitant resonance with the research project.

5.11 INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Hobbs (1988:3) words are significant at this stage:

'The details of my biography are...crucial in understanding not only my motivation for engaging in research, but also in comprehending the importance of selecting a relevant methodology that exploits the researcher's *inevitable* participation in the ensuing social milieu' (*emphasis added*).

Autobiographical work within the social sciences has typically been related to the feminist critique of main or mainstream practice. However, Delamont (1996:124) suggests that 'good quality' research turns centrally on the pivot of reflexivity, and might not necessarily be linked to the feminist enterprise (cf. May, 1998). Intellectual autobiography is closely allied to reflexive practice, as the researching self is invoked, together with his or her relationship to the research process.

Auto/biographical accounts have long been used as both resource and topic within the social sciences (Morgan, 1987; Plummer, 1983; Stanley, 1992). Prime amongst them is the work of Stanley (1990a, 1992) which is characterized by its extensive consideration of the status of knowledge within sociology, with direct reference to the auto/biographical enterprise. Whilst her concerns are with clearing intellectual space in which 'feminist sociology' might be granted greater legitimacy, this approach keys directly into epistemological debates. In this sense, in representing participants in various ways throughout the substantive chapters of this work, necessarily:

'Authorial power is involved...not only in relation to *who* is deemed a "fit subject" but also *how* their life is represented...including what sources are accepted as authoritative and treated as preferable to other contrary sources...the biographer is an active agent in the biographical process, in the sense that she *constructs* the biographical subject rather than merely

representing them "as they really were"...biographers should not only make available to readers as much of the evidence, and of different kinds, that they work from as possible, but also an account of what facts, opinions and interpretations they find preferable and why: their "intellectual biography" for this period of time' (Stanley, 1992:9-10; *original emphasis*).

The central themes of construction, transparency and interpretation should be placed under the critical spotlight, for it is only then that we might be in a position from which to appraise authorial inference, suggestion and allusion, with regard - in this case - to the lives of homeless ex and non ex-servicemen. We start, prior to explicating authorial experiences considered pertinent to the contours of this research topic, by considering the artful nature of traditional auto/biographical work. Comments in the next section are intended to show some of the insights to be gained by placing the taken-for-granted 'objective/subjective' hierarchy under the critical spotlight.

5.11.1 Transparency through Subjectivity

Examining the 'experiencing self' in the context of an intellectual enterprise may facilitate greater insight into the genesis of subjectivity. This approach remains relatively free of the usual concerns around what Spender (1980) describes as the 'pseudoscience' of sociology. Thus, the predominant desire to be 'objective' is exposed as limiting; rather the ways in which the 'subjective' is constituted moves centre stage (Morgan, 1987; Plummer, 1983). In these terms:

'We may not wish to approach autobiography with ideas about its "objectivity"...but instead explore what it can tell us about our own "subjectivities"' (Ribbens, 1993:87).

And, for Friedman:

'[A] critical and reflexive form of autobiography thus has the sociological potential for considering the extent to which our subjectivity is not something that gets in the way of our social analysis, but is itself social' (quoted in Ribbens, 1993:88).

Our goal should be to work towards a 'reflexive' autobiography. One through which we might begin to:

'[D]evelop a critical self-awareness, stimulate new areas of sociological imagination, and explore the issues of self and identity that are central to sociological theory' (Ribbens, 1993:84).

A possible first move towards a 'critical self-awareness' is the realization that truth might best be conceptualized as shifting and contingent, with the prism of consciousness working incessantly to make sense of the reflecting and refracting reality⁵ 'out there'. Intellectual autobiography should take on some of these contradictions - the overlap, the fleeting, the elusive, the 'unknowable' (Stanley, 1992). We turn now to consider the ways in which elements of particular life-courses are narrativized with a specific focus on the temporal realm.

5.11.2 Time and Autobiography

There is no cumulative linear chronicity (Morgan, 1987; Rose, 1996; Stanley, 1992) through which we might frame experience; it remains fluid, at times elusive, and for Stanley (1992) represents raw material available for ideological work. It backtracks, enters familiar *cul-de-sacs*, so-called *deja-vu*, and at moments, 'is a law unto itself', seemingly infused with its own impetus: 'how time passes!'. Put another way, and with one eye on the notion of

provisionality, personal reflection represents the crucial interplay between past and present. The past is thus constructed from particular viewpoints and motivations, located in the present (Stanley, 1992:7).

In terms of auto/biographical writing, time is a chief problematic. Reflection on past experience cannot be analogous to holding up a mirror in which we might glimpse, untainted, previous episodes in the lives of ourselves and others. Though unconnected directly with autobiographical writing, Aron's (1970:27) assertion that sociology represents a 'reconstruction', nonetheless neglects the passing of time. He states that:

'[All] sociology is a *reconstruction* that aspires to confer intelligibility on human existences which, like all human existences, are confused and obscure' (*emphasis added*).

This assertion turns directly on the difficulties of conceptualizing the temporal dimension. Whilst Aron is correct to flag the 'confused and obscure' elements of social life, he unwittingly assumes that the tools of sociology might be used to 'reconstruct human existence'. However, sociology in the broadest sense, and specifically auto/biographical techniques that are put to work in the service of sociological enquiry are necessarily:

'[O]ccasioned activit(ies)...autobiographies are stories produced for particular occasions...they are...as much about these occasions as they are about the actual events recounted' (Morgan, 1987:5; *original emphasis*).

An occasion is a point in time. And it is precisely that point - the moment - that mainstream auto/biographers believe they might recreate or reflect elements of the past through the use of particular narrative convention:

'[B]oth biography and autobiography lay claim to facticity, yet both are by nature artful enterprises which select, shape, and produce a very unnatural product, for no life is lived quite so much under a single spotlight as the conventional form of written auto/biographies suggests' (Stanley, 1992:3-4).

For Barthes, there is 'the self who writes about the self who was' together with the (same) self who continues to live, to which this autobiographical artefact apparently (and subsequently) 'refers' (Stanley, 1992:133). In effect, time serves to shift the focus of the single spotlight. As auto/biographers move through the life course, the subject of their focus is reinterpreted in view of time's incessant flux, together - at the level of interpretation - with the broadening of sociological understandings (Higate, 1998:183). In this way those that claim the narrative 'truth' of a life do so from a very particular, socially located and partial viewpoint (Morgan, 1987; Stanley, 1992). In terms of the auto/biographical exercise, these sentiments are echoed by many, including Aldridge (1993), Cotterill and Letherby (1993), Ribbens (1993) and Zola (1995). More generally, invoking the past represents intervention:

'[S]elf-reflexive practice...does not constitute a summation of the past but an intervention in it' (quoted in Morgan, 1987:5).

The occasion of the interpretation presented below (details of the research process) should be seen against the backdrop of the material's status; as a document to be publicly examined. The autobiographical extracts to be presented are thus constructed for a very particular audience, within conventions outlined by academically established commentators.

These extracts are culled predominantly from the fieldwork diary and their inclusion is achieved at the risk of appearing somewhat self indulgent (Hockey, 1996; Williams, 1993).

To counter this charge, their status in terms of sociological capital has been central to their inclusion or otherwise and has necessarily involved a series of value judgements.

5.12 THE STUDY - HOMELESSNESS AMONGST SINGLE EX-SERVICEMEN

At the time of proposal submission, there was little awareness that the hoped-for research was anything other than an intellectual pursuit gravitating around issues of inequality. However, subsequent exposure to parallel enterprises has invoked deeper, little-acknowledged impetus, best captured in the following quote by the ex-soldier Hockey (1996:16). Here, he describes motivations to investigate processes of military socialization amongst infantry recruits for the purposes of his doctoral research:

'[I] wanted to recover (my) past, to understand it...[A]bove all I wanted to find out what they (my military superiors) had done to me! I wanted to find out how they had done it and what the consequences were. I wanted to dissect military life, bit by bit, with conceptual tools...I wanted to demythologize it, and by doing so I wanted to take away their power over me once and for all'

The moments in which these sentiments were digested confirmed considerable authorial involvement in the research enterprise. Though personal experiences of the military life - both within the context of life-course and later research labour - might be considered less extreme than those of Hockey, nevertheless this extract did resonate closely with deeper, inclinations to pursue a line of enquiry which placed at its centre the lives of ex-servicemen; this was indeed 'contaminated' research.

5.13 INVOKING THE RESEARCHING SELF

The topic of the proposed research project - a thorough exploration of the links between military service and homelessness - meant a return to aspects of a life familiar to the author (mirroring the work of Hobbs, 1988 and Hockey, 1986). Responses to and developments of

the research topic were complexly interwoven with authorial biography. It was presumed that deeper understandings of homelessness amongst single ex-servicemen would be grounded in a nexus linking the experiential dimension of the researcher with the lives of participants encountered during the work. Somewhat privileged 'insider information' (military experience), allied to analytic and critical skills fostered during a four year sociology degree, would it was hoped, enable the author to produce persuasive explanations of a particular social process. Next we turn to the authorial biography; what is meant when the phrase 'military experience' is used?

5.13.1 Authorial Biography

In these following sections a number of accounts are included detailing particular episodes of authorial experience. Some have been taken from the fieldwork diary and reworked in various ways for the occasion of their inclusion in this chapter. The second type of account has been worked-up specifically for their incorporation in the thesis; clearly, the passage of time is of importance here. The material immediately following falls into the second category.

With eight years military service in the Royal Air Force, grounded within a cumulative total of fifty-six years military service for immediate family members, this research enterprise turns on the fulcrum of tacit and discursive knowledges garnered over the full life-course. More particularly, 'military experience' is framed in the following way:

I was raised within the socio-cultural confines of military establishments (mostly Royal Air Force bases) and attended "service schools" for the majority of my years in compulsory education. As a little boy my father would frequently take me to his exciting places of work - the Recruiting Office - or later, whilst serving in Royal Air Force Germany, would let me sit in the cockpits of jet-fighter aircraft. Like my brothers before me, I eventually enlisted into the Royal Air Force for a little over 8 years, thereby continuing the family tradition. I purchased my discharge from the Royal Air Force after feeling let down by "the system".

The military habitus thus had enormous influence on my world views during formative and later years. I travelled widely and had, in common with others 'thrown together' (Royle, 1997) to adapt swiftly with individuals from a broad spectrum of backgrounds in service schooling and on enlistment. These details are significant, for they allow us:

'[T]o view an individual in the context of (his) whole life...can lead us to a fuller understanding of the stages and critical periods in the processes of (his) development...it permits us to view the intersection of the life history of (men) with their society, thereby enabling us to understand better the choices, contingencies and options open to the individual' (quoted in Plummer, 1983:69; *emphasis and bracketing added*).

Here, personal experience highlights the differential access individuals have towards 'choice', particularly within the context of research possibilities. In this way, it is entirely possible that funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) was granted - at least in part - as response to the proposed researchers' status as 'ex-serviceman'.

Next, we focus on the process of enlistment, and suggest that it is only now, within the context of the present study, that deeper motivations to enlist have become clear. Here, a combination of the passing of time, coupled with exposure to sociological thought, have diluted the myopia of involvement with the military life; in this way I might now be described as 'on the outside, looking in'. This process of reflection - from a reflexively monitored vantage point - may throw light on the life-courses of others (ex-servicemen) marked out through experiential overlap.

5.13.2 Enlistment and Career

Enlisting into the Royal Air Force at seventeen years of age is recalled somewhat hazily. Father and sibling service-person status naturalized this process and it appeared to happen with little effort, partly because it had always been assumed that I would follow this

particular career course. Like Hockey (1996), I achieved few qualifications during compulsory schooling and became an 'unskilled' RAF Administrative Clerk. There was considerable tacit acceptance of the various regimes, and once again akin to Hockey (1996:14):

'I had a somewhat unimpressive career, being neither a good soldier (airman) or a particularly bad one. I conformed to military life and I deviated from it in minor ways...I was in effect passing time and like a lot of organisational ritualists, going nowhere in terms of moving up the rank structure.'

A detailed account of the conditions surrounding the ultimate decision to exit the RAF are given elsewhere (Higate 1998), however, at this stage, it is enough to reaffirm that during the initial stages of post-discharge experience, I was only fleetingly conscious of ex-serviceman status. Considerable pleasure was linked (like many ex-servicemen in this study) to the move from a stultifying and somewhat petty minded bureaucratic-disciplinary system. Yet, the legacies of military (and informal pre-military) socialization remained key elements of self as 'social product' (Stanley, 1992) and have remained surprisingly tenacious.

The genesis of the initial research proposal is outlined next. Unlike more conventionally presented descriptions of the research process, autobiographical accounts are presented with the intention of illuminating the sociological 'why' with regards to any one particular action during the process of social research. In this first case: 'Why examine the links between ex-servicemen and homelessness anyway?'

5.14 THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL - INITIAL IMPETUS

This extract refers to the earliest stages of the research enterprise, and has been worked up for the purposes of this chapter:

I am carrying out research for my undergraduate degree in the University Library. During this work I encounter the "finding" that around 1 in 4 of the single homeless population have served in the armed forces.

At this point my intellectual and biographical trajectories collide, with far reaching consequences. On the one hand, I felt a degree of frustration with the ways in which enlistment into the RAF and the process of military socialization had been carried out 'behind my back' (here my experiences mirror those of Hockey, 1996), and on the other, could not reconcile the somewhat stigmatized homeless population with individuals I had encountered whilst serving in the military. In this way (and as we demonstrate in Chapter 3 in the context of work by Lomsky-Feder, 1995), a good deal of 'noise' was created in which normative categories became ridden with incongruity; in this example, 'homeless' and 'ex-serviceman'. In my non-conscious realm they had hitherto been characterized by their mutual exclusivity. I held in mind a paradox. On the one hand I carried an ideological baggage characterized by a jaundiced view of the military. This could be both appeased and vindicated by identifying them as a monolithic and uncaring institution. They train to kill, but invest little energy in helping individuals to understand how this might have occurred, together with the ways in which these changes in self might be addressed subsequently. Clearly, the result was maladjusted ex-servicemen, some of whom who were likely to slip through to the lowest reaches of society.

On the other, there was a degree of disbelief concerning the military's influence on the lives of their members. The organization was dynamic and challenging, it trained-in useful skills and taught degrees of independence; these were positive traits⁶ and thus irreconcilable with what I 'knew' about the 'homeless'. The words of Wiseman (1971:325) are instructive here with regard to the category 'ex-serviceman':

'What I really object to is the view that the cop, as a human being, is really any different from anybody else. I don't believe it's true; I may have believed it was true before I spent six weeks with them, but I certainly don't believe it now. The ease with which some people can classify large groups of people

as either being groovy or just pigs escapes me' (quoted in Plummer, 1983:81).

Like Wiseman, I recognized that the category of 'ex-serviceman' was a 'chaotic concept' (Sayer, 1984; see Chapter 4). My vulnerability to ideological labours pervading the media and other channels of communication emanating from the organs of the state, however, meant that I was unable to make the mental leap necessary to recognize diversity amongst a stigmatized population - 'the homeless'. They were presented in terms of their homogeneity linked to fecklessness and flawed individual pathology. These understandings went unquestioned. Motivation to pursue this channel of research thus lay within the complex interplay between military experience and concomitant location in social structure - in other words the dichotomy of self and society.

5.15 'BLAMING THE MILITARY'

Early stages of research were thus marked by the unintended drive to locate the military within a discourse of blame in relation to the situation of the homeless ex-serviceman. These interpretive inclinations seeped into thinking-around the problem, through to initial stages of data collection. Indeed, early interviews were occasionally characterized by subtle attempts to urge participants to heap responsibility, linked to current hardship, onto their former military employers. Whilst some undoubtedly felt the military had disposed them to later disadvantage, (see Chapter 8), others were less willing to collude with this gentle persuasion. Soon after the pilot phase, it became evident that the linkage was considerably more complex than I would have liked! This caused a good degree of anxiety, as not only might the 'military influence' be downplayed (here they would be 'let off the hook'), but further, there would be greater demands placed on the researcher with regard to producing a satisfactory account of complex social process.

5.16 REFLECTIONS ON THE 'HOW' AND 'WHY' OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

The preceding discussions have turned on the authorial biography, and its impact on the initial (and some later) stages of the research. However, it is important to see these issues as elements of a broader challenge. In this way, it is worth reflecting on the words of Stanley and Wise (1993:153) who no doubt echo concerns of most, if not all, engaged in the research enterprise. Relative inexperience often means that social research turns out to be:

'[A] nasty shock...the point at which we begin to realize that this "hygienic research" in which no problems occur, no emotions are involved, is "research as it is described" and not "research as it is experienced", is frequently a crucial one.'

A key question arising from this comment concerns what to 'do' with this 'emotion'. Whilst it is typically exorcised via 'social scientific rhetoric' (Aldridge, 1993), throughout the following sections, there is a particular focus on the gender dynamic resonating throughout the interview element of the fieldwork. Here, the mutual interpenetration of the emotional lives of the researcher and participants influenced what and how particular stories were articulated and interpreted.

Material from the qualitative interview phase of this research project is presented throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Whilst the status accorded to these substantive chapters is relatively modest on account of the exploratory nature of the work, nevertheless, a number of methodological considerations should be pointed up in line with the more general sentiments sketched previously concerning issues of reflexivity.

5.16.1 Researching Selves and Biographical Disclosure

In Jolly's (1996) work, *Changing Step - From Military to Civilian Life* (see Chapter 3), approaches to data collection were oriented solely towards interview work. Jolly's biography (5 years as an RAF officer) presumably meant that personal experience might be used as resource (see Morgan, 1987) during later analysis. Omitted from this work, however, was reflection on the extent to which authorial biography was *shared* with ex-service participants. Through failing to disclose ex-service person status, Jolly could have 'asked naive questions, but utilised a non-naive position from which to appraise material' (Hockey, 1996:18), thus mirroring Hockey's (1986) ethnographic strategy. Alternatively, and on this point we are unclear, Jolly may - through disclosing a military past, have unintentionally provided:

'[I]ndividuals with frameworks within which their memories (were) localized...memories are localized by a kind of mapping. We situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided' (Connerton, 1989:37).

The ways in which parallel biography (common 'maps') may influence material produced during face-to-face interactions is of particular significance in the context of Jolly's (1996) work, as notions of 'institutionalization' were understood to rest on: 'The continuing emotional dependence on the military of [institutionalized] respondents' who were noted to be preoccupied with their military past (Jolly, 1996:41). A contrasting approach is evident within the context of interview work with 'organization men' (Roper, 1994). Here, Roper interrogates the ways in which his own subjectivity impacts on the face-to-face interview. He states:

'[I]t is imperative that I consider whom I represented in the pasts of organization men. What kind of fantasies did my appearance, age, background, and demeanour touch off?' (Roper, 1994:37).

This particular reflexive approach is framed largely by techniques developed within the psychoanalytic tradition, notably through derivatives of the concept of 'transference'. Roper develops analysis by attempting to understand - (in sociological jargon) - the ways in which 'presentation of self' may elicit particular cultural understandings which become embodied in *nature* of response. Importantly, and not unlike the 'organization men's' keenness to reflect on the past, Jolly has conflated the 'nostalgic indulgence' of her participants with 'institutionalization'. Many ex-service people experience alienation from the civilian environment, however (see Chapter 1; Higate, 1997; Morgan, 1994; Rafferty, *The Daily Mail Supplement*, Jun 94; Randall and Brown, 1994), and relish the presence of a sympathetic ex-service person ear. In an attempt to foster rapport, Jolly may have presented as a valued interaction-resource, and interpreted this look to the military past as a failure to embrace future challenge.

Prior to interview work with the twenty-one men in this study, the decision to disclose ex-serviceman status was left open. There were a number of reasons for this, that were vindicated throughout the research process. First, that I was to interview ex and non ex-servicemen, and was unclear how to present a relatively 'consistent self' across both groups. In this respect, in orienting ex-servicemen to parallel biography, there was a risk that I would provide 'mental maps' flagged by Connerton above, and thus unduly conflate military experience with homelessness. This I tended towards, though for reasons linked to prejudice towards the military, outlined earlier in this chapter. Second, in the case of ex-servicemen, I remained concerned that they might be somewhat reticent as they talked with a 'civvie'. Military socialization builds distance between service people and civilians and I may have been distrusted; this represented a case for disclosure. Third, my feelings towards re-engaging with aspects of the military life (albeit through memory work) were ambivalent. Dredging up feelings linked to my occupational under-performance as an Administrative Clerk was likely, as participating ex-servicemen may have echoed similar workplace and, ultimately 'identity' disappointment. A decision not to disclose would have called forth a considerable degree of 'impression management' (Goffman, 1974). In parallel:

'I did not, or perhaps more accurately did not want to, realise the presence and strength of emotional forces rooted in my own military experience which were lurking ready to ambush me.' (Hockey, 1996:19).

In the event, disclosure was determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors underpinning this decision were linked to appraisal of ex-servicemen participant-ease. For some, particularly those who had recently left the military, revelation of authorial biography helped to discharge tension pervading the process of interview; for example, familiar service argot represented continuity. Other homeless ex-servicemen appeared comfortable and a number were largely indifferent to researcher status. Although, the homeless ex-servicemen *Dougy* remarked that 'he knew I was ex-forces...just by looking at me'. As we noted above, transcripts were compiled verbatim, and were augmented by observational fieldwork notes. In this way, the fullest practicable record of interviews and setting was compiled in order that analysis might take account of the significance of notable difference across interaction (Fielding, 1993:145).

These comments encapsulate the fine balancing act between producing material that may be somewhat generalizable (and thus carry a degree of policy capital) on the one hand, and on the other, understanding the researcher's emotional life in terms of the ways it might be used 'creatively and analytically to enhance...academic work' (Wilkins, 1993:94). In the closing sections of this chapter, we turn to the gender dimension of the interview setting and highlight a number of moments through which masculinized identity becomes problematized. Here, gender is conceptualized as 'ongoing process' or 'achievement', individuals are thus noted to be routinely engaged in masculinity 'work' (Morgan, 1992; Pattman *et al.*, 1998).

5.17 REFLECTING ON MASCULINITY

Hockey (1996:18) reflects on the extent to which he experienced considerable personal change during a doctoral ethnography, apparent only after entering the field. Discussions linked to the process of individual change might be pursued along a number of channels. However, during the many months of the fieldwork element of the research project presented here, there was a growing awareness that I 'achieved masculinity' in ways that differed from those characteristic of my military days. Immersion within the so-called 'men's studies' literature sensitized me to the processual and dynamic tenets of my status as 'man', together with some of the ways in which it might be 'placed on the line' as in the case of unemployment (MacInnes, 1998:49-53; Morgan, 1992:99-119). Prior to invoking the significance of these comments within the context of the fieldwork, a few words about the ways in which masculinities are framed in the three chapters immediately following.

5.17.1 Masculinities and Crisis

A central question raised by this research enterprise concerns the linkage of 'masculinity' with 'crisis'. Whilst it was found that homelessness may represent a powerful assault on masculinized identity amongst men generally, and ex-servicemen specifically, masculinity, as MacInnes (1998:11) argues, has 'always been in one crisis or another'⁷. Moreover, that

'[M]asculinity does not exist as the property, character trait or aspect of identity of individuals...masculinity exists only as various ideologies...about what men *should be like*' (MacInnes, 1998:2; *original emphasis*).

It is thus crucial to spell out what is meant when the term 'masculinity' is used. In the extracts from the fieldwork diary produced below, the achievement of masculinities is subverted at particular moments by both participant and researcher. In explicating these

situations, and in line with understandings propounded by MacInnes (1998), Morgan (1992) and Seidler (1997), masculinity assumes a rare clarity when it is noted to deviate from its normalized ideological groundings.

5.18 BROKERING MASCULINE IDENTITY - MEN INTERVIEWING MEN

Reflection on one's own 'doing of masculinity' - particularly within everyday situations, makes significant demands on the researching self. However, if gender is to 'be taken seriously' (Morgan, 1981:94), 'the male researcher needs, as it were, a small voice at his shoulder reminding him at each point that he is a man.' (Morgan, 1981:95). In the following brief discussions, the plurality of masculinities are placed under the critical spotlight, through autobiographical work. Gender is shown to influence the research process in terms of what is 'disclosed or withheld, pursued or neglected' during face-to-face interviewing (McKee and O'Brien, 1983:147).

5.19.1 Collusion

In this extract from the fieldwork diary, the non ex-serviceman *Graham* represents women in ways that whilst once unproblematic during my military (and other masculine experiences), was now understood to be in somewhat poor taste, and ultimately harmful to the interests of women⁸:

I am interested in the interplay between partnered relationships and the genesis and sustaining of homelessness. With considerable hubris, *Graham* constantly alludes to the things he has 'done to' women. His use of language is unintendedly oriented at inducing a response grounded in my (assumed heterosexual) masculine self. Whilst I feel uncomfortable about colluding in the objectification of women in this way, I simultaneously feel that this masculinized discourse is common currency within this setting, and to highlight it in any way might subvert the flow of the interview which has been unwittingly built on the foundations of an attempt at shared hypermasculine identity. During these somewhat uncomfortable moments, I nod and smile, and the interview moves on. (December, 1996).

Here, *Graham*, somewhat unwittingly, throws down the gauntlet of shared masculine identity - to what extent might I collude⁹ with this view of women? The words of Powell (1996:2) are salient here:

'However "detached" (authors) might claim to be, work is generated within and is received within a context not only of intellectual but also emotional acceptance and rejection.'

I was reminded of unacknowledged representations of women held during my days of military service. Whilst I had subsequently worked hard to distance myself from them, there were still moments in which the long term legacy of military/masculine socialization resurfaced; in this way it was all too easy to slip-into collusion characterized by somewhat superior attitudes towards women. Powell (1996:1) argues for emotional empathy¹⁰ with participants - but quantifies this by outlining instances in which this might be deemed inappropriate.

5.19.2 Protecting Masculine Identity

We start this section within an autobiographical account from the fieldwork diary. Here, an early interview from the project is thrown into unknown territory:

I am in a Salvation Army Hostel in a northern town, awaiting the arrival of two homeless ex-servicemen. They arrive together and I sense that one of them has not experienced full-time military service, rather his motivation for attending is linked to the five pound incentive payment. I ask him if he has been in either one of the three services, he replies in the affirmative and names the Royal Air Force. The considerable inaccuracies characterizing his description of basic military training confirm my doubts. I state that I am unconcerned that he may not have ex-serviceman status and decide, if he is willing, to include him in the non ex-servicemen homeless group. He declines, and subsequently produces an account of "military life" that resonates closely with experiences characteristic of the Air Training Corps

(ATC) - an organization for adolescents - rather than the qualitatively different Royal Air Force.

(June 1997)

Here, there is concern with the *fragility* of masculine identity. That the individual had not served in the Royal Air Force was of little concern to me, though it appeared central to the participant. This was revealed through increased anxiety and a jittery insistence in response to my attempt to placate by letting him know that I both 'understood' and could relate to his 'real' reason for attendance - after all he was almost certainly without any money prior to the interview. These responses might be nested within a power imbalance evident within the interview setting generally; (issues that transcend the gendered nature of interviews have been addressed most influentially by Oakley (1976, 1981) and Finch (1986)). In essence, material produced from this interview cast little light on the central research focus, though did serve to highlight the precarious nature of masculine identity within the artificial interview setting. These issues could also be addressed through discussions grounded in a nexus linking interviews with incentives of one or other kinds, here the analytical lens would be shifted to consider 'bias' (Thompson, 1996).

5.19.3 Masculine Identity and Non-Discursive Display

In Chapter 8, we deal specifically with the ways in which particular men were characterized by their reluctance to disclose aspects of emotional lives deemed uncomfortable. The stigmatizing influence of homelessness should urge us to reflect on the 'legitimacy' of this particular topic. Individuals might be unfamiliar and wary about articulating feelings linked to this 'state' - indeed it may be that they do not associate with this assigned label (McKee and O'Brien, 1983:151). For this reason, a pertinent question within the context of research presented here concerns the ways in which this tendency impinges on what single homeless ex and non ex-servicemen feel able to disclose to an unknown male researcher: a 'within gender' setting. The excluding effects of homelessness, together with previous experiences

that may have influenced location at the periphery of the social structure are thus noted to undermine sense of masculine self. This is clear from the following diary extract:

I am interviewing the non ex-serviceman *Tom* in a local hostel/day centre. He is a very intense man who inadvertently imbues me with a great deal of anxiety. He is physically large, and refers to his prison experiences, related to aggressive behaviour. Whilst informing me that his pride was of central importance, I become aware that his childhood period may have particular resonance with later actions. I ask him to tell me a little about this time of his life; he looks both angry and scared, and tells me it is unimportant. This line of enquiry is not pursued.

(April 97)

Whilst this non-discursive display could be interpreted in a number of ways¹¹, it resonated closely with the majority of other, less dramatic interview moments with homeless men. Classic 'face saving' work (Goffman, 1972) hardly constitutes a novel discovery, though discussion linking it to gender is relatively unusual. One exception is detailed in an account by Owen (1996) who was concerned with exploring the consequences of infertility in men. Ultimately, he states:

'It is difficult for men to speak openly about their emotions, even more so when the feelings disclosed are concerned with doubts about masculinity' (Owen, 1996:62)¹².

Similar sentiments were conveyed by McKee and O'Brien's (1983) study involving fathers and lone fathers, although this work involved cross-gender interviewing, and its generalizability may be open to question, within the context of this work (Fielding, 1993:145).

Sociological research depends largely on 'challenging the taken for granted' (Delamont, 1996:121; see McKeganey and Bloor, 1991:196 with reference to gender; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Nowhere might this prove most fruitful (and challenging) than through engagement with gender, and yet it is not possible to investigate gender from neutral ground (Delamont, 1996). In taking reflexivity as our point of departure in these preceding discussions, we must be attuned to the partial viewpoint it facilitates, for example, we might raise questions around parallel research topics, involving, alternatively, *ex-servicewomen* researchers. In this way, gender has been somewhat 'overstated', and there has only been fleeting acknowledgement that other variables might be at play, an issue Morgan (1986:46) has commented on.

Before highlighting a number of the limitations associated with explicating the researching self, there follows a brief consideration of the ways in which the interview material was validated.

5.20 INTERVIEW MATERIAL - PART VALIDATION

After each interview, a few moments were taken to ask participants how they felt about the questions put to them. Analogous to the study of McKee and O'Brien (1983:151), responses were frequently framed in terms of difficulty; they had not known what to expect, and had brought into view long buried, and somewhat painful memories.

During the initial stages of interview, there had been purposeful vagueness on the part of the researcher, with regard to the precise focus of the study. In essence my interest was couched in terms of 'the details around current (or recent) experiences of insecure housing or accommodation'. In this way, the onus for agenda setting - against the backdrop of an extremely open interview guide - was left to participants. This allowed ex and non ex-servicemen to negotiate the label of 'homelessness' on their own terms. In essence they were not drawn on to refute their 'homeless state', or to 'accept' that is what they 'were'.

By failing to disclose specific, areas of interest (primarily the links between military service, and homelessness for the 17 ex-servicemen, and pathways into homelessness' for the remaining 4 participants), I was able to raise relatively 'naive' questions. Towards the closing stages of the interviews, however, a more explicit account of the research was provided. Finally, responses were sought that were closely allied to the research questions, and, during the latter stages of interview, the concept of 'institutionalization' was introduced. A surprising number of participants (including non ex-servicemen) appeared keen to continue the interview at this point, here the dying embers of the interaction were rekindled. This was unexpected but it appeared that these ways of relating to the problematic nature of accommodation status allowed participants explanatory frameworks through which they might make sense of hitherto unclear patterns of behaviour. Of course there are a number of issues here relating to comments made earlier in the chapter around 'mental maps' together with the ways in (particularly ex-servicemen) may look for 'answers' to problems (see Chapter 8). However, on the issue of validity more generally Bloor (1978:550) states:

'[V]alidity...is constituted by establishing some sort of correspondence between an analyst's and collectivity members' views of their social worlds.'

In the summary comments of this chapter, a number of general points are made with respect to the approaches taken to explicating the research process.

5.21 SUMMARY COMMENTS

In this chapter, there has been an attempt to make transparent the more salient elements of a chosen research design, together with its operationalization. In so doing there has been a focus on those factors that impacted on the nature and status of the findings. Notions of 'reliability, objectivity' and 'validity', have not been rejected out of hand; rather an

understanding of 'internal' measures has been allowed to transcend 'external' appraisal. Whilst the latter's ideological underpinnings have typically been linked to a particular mainstream sociological paradigm (embodied in academic and other structural organization, Morgan, 1981, 1992) nevertheless they alert us to pivotal issues within enquiries of this nature. In this context, they concern not only how it is that we might understand 'generative mechanisms' (to invoke somewhat positivistic terminology), but crucially, how these social phenomena might be observed, interpreted and presented. However, the fashioning of this intellectual work into a chapter (worked up for a particular occasion) has entailed considerable authorial angst. This difficult experience is linked to a tension between the 'scientific' tenets of sociological enquiry (together with the writing conventions they necessarily invoke), and a 'spirit' of presenting material that undermines such convention; here notions of creativity and readability are pivotal. We turn now to the main empirical component of the work, detailed throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Readers may prefer to turn to Appendix A first, where biographical profiles of the twenty-one participants can be found. It should also be noted that few of the participants were actually sleeping rough at the time of interview. In Chapter 6, the relationship between travel and the genesis and sustaining of homelessness is explored from a particular gendered dimension.

CHAPTER 6 - HOMELESSNESS AND TRAVEL

'Men on the Road'

The community of [military] mobile individuals...does not offer much in the way of security...[N]evertheless, there are many people who find this kind of life intensely exciting and the perpetual moving almost addictive. Jolly, Military Man, Family Man, Crown Property, 1992:69.

In many societies being feminine has been defined as sticking close to home. Masculinity, by contrast, has been the passport for travel. Feminist geographers and ethnographers have been amassing evidence revealing that a principal difference between women and men in countless societies has been the licence to travel away from a place thought of as "home". Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases. Making Feminist Sense of International Politics, 1989:21.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

From the policing of far flung Empire territories (Giddens, 1989) and their coastal waters, to the establishment of British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) and Royal Air Force (RAF) bases, service people have for hundreds of years experienced travel on global proportions. Enlisting 'to see the world' continues to offer up potent imagery infused with excitement and adventure.

Recent changes however, including the hand-over of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China, and the closure of many British garrisons in Germany have rendered travel in today's armed forces as decreasingly likely. The formation of a 'Rapid Reaction Force', monitoring of the 'No-Fly-Zone' in southern Iraq and the continued maintenance of bases in the South Atlantic do mean, however, that service people will find themselves posted - perhaps at short notice - to a range of locations around the world. And, though the strength of British troops in Germany has fallen, many opportunities still remain for movement throughout this and other regions of continental Europe.

In this chapter we examine the role of travel in the lives of a number of both ex and non ex-service homeless people. Of central concern is the complex relationship linking homelessness with travel.

In the research report 'Falling Out' (Randall and Brown, 1994), links between fundamental unsettledness amongst single homeless ex-servicemen were traced to military and Merchant Navy experiences. Given the relationship between the military and travel, this is a reasonable assumption. However, little attention is given to the importance of travel *prior* to enlistment on the one hand, or the fundamental links between men and travel on the other. In terms of the former, early alignment with (men's) travel and independence may underlie motivation to enlist. For the latter, we should broaden analysis to consider travel through the largely neglected prism of men's social practices within a particular context (Hearn, 1996). Taken together, these approaches throw light on the nature of both the genesis and the sustaining of homelessness.

In the first section we locate the significance of military travel within a broader framework. Here the contemporary status of social theory is suggestive of a recent turn to consider the constantly metamorphosing nature of societal constitution.

6.2 SOCIETAL BOUNDARIES AND TRAVEL

Featherstone (1995) identifies themes of difference, migration, discontinuity and fragmentation within the context of postmodern thought. Fluidity, mobility and non-fixity characterize the contemporary experience from the realms of language through to identity (Wolff, 1993). Of interest here, are the antecedents of travel in terms of those deemed 'outsiders', from bohemians (Featherstone, 1995) to hobos (Orwell, 1986). Travel, as a key developmental dimension of feudal through to late-modern or postmodern society has been largely neglected by sociology¹. This is due in part to the dominance of concepts such as *Gemeinschaften* through which societal boundaries were implicitly conceived as fixed, 'traditional', or non-permeable. These understandings deflect interest from the 'transformative' or 'deformative' characteristics of societal constitution (Featherstone,

1995). It is important to retain this sense of restlessness within any one social group because a focus on travel within the military must be grounded within the broader context of transience; in this way, military life represents a microcosm of broader travel impulse. Both popular and academic literature concerning issues of travel do, however, remain fashionable, from the work of Kerouac (1972) through Burroughs (1993) to work on 'New Age Travellers' (Hetherington, 1996; Lowe and Shaw, 1993).

6.2.1 Travel Pluralities

There are a number of factors that influence the nature of travel, not least those connected to financial resource. In this way, individuals do not have equal access to the 'open road' (Swedenburg and Lavie, 1996:3; Wolff, 1993). The participants in this study (or the traveller-subjects) tended to assume Baudelaire's 'flaneur-like' status, together with Simmel's more obviously metropolis-bound 'sociological' flaneur (Frisby, 1988)².

In Chapter 4, we referred to broader socio-economic influences that served to precipitate the growing numbers of homeless throughout Europe. Worthy of reiteration is the social context in which many of the participants in this study struggled to secure employment and housing. Thus, the Thatcherite project (Leys, 1989) together with broader global shifts established a series of social dynamics that impacted directly, and devastatingly, on the employment and housing markets (Ford, 1997). Within this context, the legitimacy of individual and group movement - embodied in Norman Tebbit's 'on yer bike' rhetoric - largely pervaded rationale for travel.

6.3 TRAVEL IN THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

Hetherington's (1996) work on 'New Age Travellers' has a series of repercussions for the ways in which we might re-conceptualize homelessness. Thus, the participants in the present study were split between those who made 'alternate sites places of their own' (analogous to 'travellers'; Hetherington, 1996:38), or on the other hand, those for whom largely negative

mainstream understandings of homelessness influenced the ways in which they came to understand themselves as selves of a certain type (Rose, 1996). For the latter group, discussed more fully below, the stigma and negativity of homelessness infused self-identity and was inextricably bound up with the nature of the travel undertaken.

6.3.1 Travel as Positive Experience

The subjects who had 'accepted' insecure accommodation as either a pre-requisite for a particular way of life or as something that was beyond their power to change, tended to engage with travel in a more positive manner. In this way, attitude to housing was characterized by fatalism (Somerville, 1992). Awareness of the considerable financial costs of living in a conventional house (Lowe and Shaw, 1993:28) often deterred commitment to this predominant way of living. The daily struggle to pay utility bills and particularly rent, remained at the centre of discussions referring to the attractiveness of life 'on the road'. For those that favoured a less fixed lifestyle, travel was linked closely with adventure and camaraderie; being 'on the road' was a challenge that bolstered sense of self and served to re-align 'margins as centres' (Hetherington, 1996:39). In this way, living in a peace or a road-protest camp was not considered as conferring marginal identity. Commonality of interest acted to bind individuals into a loose and transforming (Featherstone, 1995), somewhat nomadic collective through which modes of dress, styles of speech and so on became normalized within a particular social habitus or setting. Hetherington (1996) and Lowe and Shaw (1993) identify further characteristics of these loose groups by reference to the 'Brewcrew' for whom Special Brew lager-beer had symbolic importance; celebration of a particular brand of alcohol was of central concern. Further examples would include the 'rave-culture' (no doubt considerably more heterogeneous than this label suggests) in which 'E' or MDMA Ecstasy was, and likely continues to be of prime concern both symbolically and pharmaceutically. Dismissal, ostracism and stigmatization flowing from mainstream society is reinterpreted in these examples, and for participants in the current study, similar, though perhaps more mundane attitudes were expressed, against the backdrop of regular travel. 'Alternative' identities were at least partly contingent and offset against mainstream perceptions of 'the other'. For those that articulated their homelessness (relatively

unconnected with notions of distress) there remained a sense in which continued struggle gave way to what Lifton (1992:146) understands as the 'survivor' attitude:

'I'm sure that many of them resent being simply a homeless person as a definition, as not quite a human being. On the other hand there's something in that kind of sense of self or identity, whether it's an antiwar veteran...[or] a Hiroshima survivor...that's very important. You've seen that many survivors of death camps keep their number tattooed on their arms. They can have it taken off...[T]hey keep it on there, and these other groups keep their identity of that kind of survivor.'

These sentiments were apparent amongst a number of the men within the present study, though in varying degrees. For example, though a number embraced travel and did not appear to problematize their accommodation status, nevertheless they spoke of their experiences with a certain 'survivor pride'. The undoubted physical difficulties of living in a tent, bus or caravan appeared to bolster self-esteem and returns us to the masculinized nature of self-reliance, resourcefulness and ability to 'rough-it' if necessary (see Chapters 3 and 8, in addition see Higate, 1997; Morgan, 1990; Seidler, 1997). Here masculine identity is nourished through its regular diet of extremes, couched perhaps in a 'competition' of stories told and re-told, within a life 'on the road'. Alternatively, those for whom homelessness was of considerable concern tended to reflect on their 'survival' in a somewhat bitter light.

In the crudest sense, a number of the ex and non ex-servicemen who participated in the study were characterized by either a 'push' or a 'pull' impulse in terms of their relationship to travel. Those in the former group turned to travel as response to hardship, whilst those who felt drawn to travel in and for itself tended to assume counter identities.

6.3.2 Travel as Resistance - Counter Identities

Moving in order to secure housing and paid employment should be seen as logical response to constrained circumstance. However, less obvious are the ways in which travel is used to escape strategies of surveillance that proliferate within modern society. Here, a number of individuals actively resist: the normalized and largely hidden apparatus through which electronic and paper traces might be used to monitor anything from movement to 'lifestyle' choice (Lyon, 1994b). Constant travelling might allow individuals to attain an ambivalent relationship to the state, and therefore problematize conventional notions of citizenship.

These individuals have come to be known as 'mispers' (O'Hagan, 1995) and are understood through their peculiar 'somewhere/nowhere' relationship to location. Of the ex and non ex-servicemen interviewed in this study, a number appeared to be characterized by an impulse Deleuze (1977) links to resistance. Individuals who subvert these informal and formal controls do so within the context of an adventure-quest. Understanding according to location is rejected for those that:

'[C]ommence a sort of adventure. They enter into another kind of unit, this time a nomadic association...and they begin to decodify instead of allowing themselves to be overcodified' (1977:14).

In this section we have taken travel as our key point of departure. These contextual comments are aimed at highlighting the complex and shifting nature of societal constitution. We have also considered the notion of the 'other' that might turn to travel as a way in which to avoid codification. The dimension of travel is central to many of the lives of those understood as 'outsiders', notably a number of single homeless ex and non ex-servicemen. However, to be *homeless* necessarily requires one to be excluded from a particular location - but how and what constitutes 'a home'?

6.4 WHERE IS HOME?

Home, according to one pop ballad is 'Wherever I lay my hat'. Here, the reference to temporariness of home is nested within a nexus that links 'travel' with 'freedom', against the backdrop of a masculinized frame of reference.

Notions of 'home', however, are complex (Jones, 1995) and may be related to a range of both physical and psychological phenomena. According to Somerville (1992:533), the 'minimal meaning of home':

'[R]equires merely that there be some place which can be called home, and the security associated with mere place is likewise minimal.'

Home might also be linked to familial relationships (Allan and Crow, 1989; Oakley, 1976), 'sanctuary' (Moore, 1984), as ideological/affective construction (Gurney, 1990), and as 'taxonomic generalization' (Saunders, quoted in Somerville, 1992). In this sense, one comes home to a base or - drawing on a distinctly Anglo-Saxon metaphor - a castle. Homelessness might then be linked with exclusion from an immutable point from which journeys' start and finish. This notion parallels that of Watson and Austerberry (1986) who distinguish between an ideal home - experienced or otherwise - and accommodation conditions characterized by insecurity. From this perspective, home is related directly to its genesis within intellectual and cognitive labour 'even though (individuals) may have no experience or memory of it' (Somerville, 1992:530). The interplay between travel/home/homelessness is complex; a student-backpacker might be homeless for many months but an existential 'sense-of-place' infuses the surety with which s/he moves between culture and place. Home is not at the end of any road, but at the end of *the* road located at a place, durable through time. This amounts to a notion of 'domestication', so that:

'[T]he individual has roots in the world in so far as that world is ordered for them - that is tamed...it makes sense to one's own intellect and provides points of reference for others' (Somerville, 1992:533).

Evidence suggests that the homeless population are highly transitory (Carlen, 1996; Jones, 1995; Pleace, 1997:68; Pleace, 1998b; Pleace and Quilgars, 1997; Randall and Brown, 1994; Vincent *et al.*, 1993 and 1995), pointing to the continued elusivity of an *enduring* base³. In line with discussion in Chapter 3 concerning the significance of ontological security, might not the military be seen as home in terms of the ways in which it provides opportunities for psychological attachment?

6.4.1 The Army as Home?

The links between homelessness and independence have not been lost on the pressured recruiting Sergeant in the contemporary period, as we suggested in Chapter 4 with reference to the Army's attempt at recruiting from hostels for the homeless:

'The Army believes they (the homeless) may have sound survival skills built up from their independent lifestyles' (Evans, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 Oct 97).

It is likely then, that for a significant number of younger, unqualified Army enlistees, degrees of insecure accommodation may be experienced prior to enlistment. In this way, we might identify a particular trajectory that provides a series of conditions through which military service appears attractive. The outdoor life, independence, resourcefulness and adventure may characterize early and later post-discharge experience, thereby mirroring earlier trends. The Army life is thus vulnerable to a range of expectations, one of which

might be its 'settled' nature when contrasted with a civilian existence characterized by homelessness, travel and uncertainty. The following comments were made by homeless individuals in relation to the Army campaign:

'I'd love a stable life, accommodation' (John, *The Guardian*, 29 Oct 97)

'It will make some people more settled...I've often thought it would suit a lot of us' (Scott, *The Guardian*, 29 Oct 97).

'[T]oo many are on drink and drugs. It will get the thugs off the streets. Once you're in uniform your attitude changes' (*Big Issue* vendor, quoted in *The Guardian*, 29 Oct 97).

In the following section, we turn to the significantly gendered nature of movement, and discuss the deeper foundations of a nexus characterized by the linkage of 'men' with 'travel'.

6.5 THE GENDERED NATURE OF TRAVEL

The gendered nature of travel has been touched on by a range of commentators, including Allen (1987), Curtis and Pajaczkowska, (1994:201), Dawson, (1994), Lake, (1986), Morgan, (1992) and Wolff, (1993). A gendered 'reading' (Morgan, 1992) of Orwell's (1986) *Down and Out in Paris and London* illustrates the exclusively masculine world of the hobo and 'spike'⁴. A range of factors converge on the site of travel so that it might be understood as the relative preserve of men. First, and perhaps most obvious is the public/private split, the latter invoking imagery of the domestic space in which women might be found (Morgan, 1992, 1996; Dawson, 1994; Seidler, 1989:53). This is crudely stated, however, and as Dawson (1994:63) indicates the gendered meanings attached to the space of the home have changed through time; similar concerns over the variabilities of meanings are advised by Morgan (1992). Further, Wolff (1993:243) argues that this split is related to ideological work, rather than reflecting 'the reality of the social world'. Typically, however, and broadening the focus, the confluence of *Empire* with *adventure*, and *quest* with *men* retains powerful influence over the appearance of men in the public space. In the

following poem by A. E. Houseman, daylight and air are implicitly offset against the stale environment of the domestic space in which women are likely to be; the female hobo is doubly deviant in these terms as 'wanderer' and 'woman' sit in incongruous partnership:

'Oh stay at home, my lad and plough'

*Oh stay at home, my lad, and plough
The land and not the sea,
And leave the soldiers at their drill,
And all about the idle hill
Shepherd your sheep with me.*

*Oh stay with company and mirth
And daylight and the air;
Too full already is the grave
Of fellows that were good and brave
And died because they were.*

(Baker, 1997:19).

This prose is infused with a range of themes linked to the social practice of men. First, there is the subtle invocation of physicality; 'body as resource', to be pitted against the hard steel of the plough. Second, there is a suggestion of 'wanderlust' (Swedenburg, 1996) together with notions of freedom captured in the following lines:

*'And all about the idle hill
Shepherd your sheep with me.'*

Finally, we are introduced to 'daylight and...air'. The outdoor life is here romanticized and is offered up in these terms as a way in which to dissuade this potential conscriptee from 'joining his fellows in the grave'. Essentially, the picture conveyed speaks in volumes of where a man's 'rightful place' lies.

6.5.1 'Women Should Stay at Home'

Implicit perhaps in the apparent exclusivity of men's travel, is the idea that women 'could not' cope - in a physical sense - with the rigours of travel. Reproductive capability is alleged

to stymie the ease with which women (burdened by a 'cumbersome menstrual cycle') might get up and go. Johnson (1983:126), discussing Jack Kerouac makes this very point:

'Could he ever include a woman in his journeys?...Whenever I tried to raise the question, he'd stop me by saying that what I really wanted were babies. That was what all women wanted...I said of course I wanted babies someday, but not for a long time, not now. Wisely, sadly, Jack shook his head' (quoted in Wolff, 1993:229).

6.5.2 Public Men and Private Women

We can further illustrate the close linkage of men and public by problematizing this relationship in the following hypothetical manner: A busy Saturday afternoon urban space, the centre of which is monopolized by a number of 'drinkers' or 'winos'. Their heavily soiled and stained clothes compound deviation from norms of public presentation of self. They swear, shout and sing, and act-up in terms of an exaggerated horseplay. They jump on each other's backs and laugh uncontrollably. Extreme behaviour - yes. Men's behaviour? Almost certainly⁵.

Shopper's consternation in response to *women* appearing and acting in this manner should alert us to the limits of behaviour in the public space and the degrees to which these performance-spaces are bounded by the ideologies of gender. Indeed, it is not just their high-profile appearance that may be disconcerting for some. The following linkages might also be suggested: drinking/men, swearing/men and horseplay/men. Drawing on Harman (1989:10), Wolff (1993:234) suggests the following:

'[T]he very notion of "homelessness" among women cannot be invoked without noting the ideological climate in which this condition is framed as *problematic*, in which the deviant categories of "homeless woman" and "bag lady" are culturally produced' (*emphasis added*).

Men's public ubiquity opens up conditions through which travel retains a particular legitimacy, from the exigencies of hitch-hiking between destinations (frequently ill-advised for women), to the highly visible nature of travel in the most general sense. In terms of the logistics of travel, these two factors are suggestive of women's vulnerability against the backdrop of 'their place in the home'. Women's apparent susceptibility though presented as natural, arises on account of the broader social context in which women are subject to a range of violences (Frude, 1994; Pollard, 1994). It is likely, however, that violence - particularly between young men within the public space - is considerably more widespread (Archer, 1994). Issues here include perceptions of 'gendered susceptibility' which may feed-back into the extent to which women feel exposed. Contingently, these factors erode the possibilities for women to both appear in the public space, and embark on journeys more generally.

In the preceding discussions we have attempted to illustrate the gendered nature of travel on the one hand, and complex notions of home on the other. We turn in the next section to the fieldwork element of the thesis and in so doing examine the complex relationship between homelessness and travel.

6.6 THE STUDY - TRAVEL AND HOMELESSNESS

Individuals in the present study expressed a range of relationships to their accommodation status. For some it remained barely problematized, and uncomfortable conditions were subjugated to other considerations, for example, living within a peace-camp. For others at the far extreme, insecure accommodation remained of prime importance and its elusiveness undermined sense of self-worth. This crude polarization, as discussed above, mirrors the meanings of home and homelessness developed schematically by Somerville (1992:533). Here, through a series of binary oppositions, the positives and negatives of home and homelessness are juxtaposed. In reality, dichotomies between home and homelessness were characterized by overlap, and for some travel and homelessness became problematic through time; there are limits to how long one might be 'on the road' (Lowe and Shaw,

1993). Following Somerville (1992:533), homeless ex and non ex-servicemen tended to be characterized by 'material deprivation, powerlessness, anomie and placelessness'. Of most importance here, is the notion of placelessness that gives rise to restlessness (Somerville, 1992:533). Incessant movement, somewhat devoid of purpose, characterized those for whom accommodation became synonymous with 'social distress' (Rieber, 1992).

6.6.1 Travel as Problematized Response

Those for whom accommodation was problematic deployed terms such as 'drift' or 'dossing' to describe their movement between towns and places. Travel was apparently undertaken as a way in which to find paid work or secure accommodation. However, (as Jolly suggested at head of chapter within the context of the military), it appeared 'addictive' and gave way to a fundamental unsettledness (Somerville, 1992) through which nomadic activity ultimately undermined acquisition of both employment and housing. Terms including 'the grass is always greener' and 'itchy feet' peppered narratives, and were offered up as rationale for travel. In what sorts of ways, however, might travel facilitate pathways into homelessness? How might we understand the relationship of travel to the sustaining of insecure accommodation status?

In the following section, we introduce empirical material from the present study. Here, early experiences of homelessness are highlighted that for some, prefigured later post-discharge hardships.

6.7 TRAVEL - TRANSITIONS AND TRAJECTORIES

The transitional phase of 'leaving home' (Jones, 1995) is of central importance to the first series of participant accounts presented below. In Coles (1995) analysis of youth development, three transitional phases are suggested. The two that concern us here relate to the 'attaining of (relative) independence from family of origin' and 'the move away from the parental home' (Coles, 1995:1). In practice the boundaries between these phases may be blurred as is illustrated in the following narrative extracts. Precursors to full independence or homelessness, were apparent for *John*, who framed them in the following way:

I used to go out in the park, play football, go home, get something to eat, back out again...me mam was really lax, I could come home at midnight...I could do more or less what I wanted and when you're 14 or 15 you think it's great

The theme of independence recurred in *John's* account and culminated in eviction from social housing during the late 1960s:

One thing led to another...she wan't paying rent and we ended up getting evicted...[It] didn't bother me, you know - out on streets, and I was lucky, you could find places then

Eviction represented the prime precipitator of travel. First within the local area, and then in the south of England where *John* slept rough. At around 20 years of age he returned to Yorkshire and enlisted into the Army.

Jethro's story is similar in that independence characterized experience from the early teenage years. In comparison to *John's* experiences, notions of transition through time appear somewhat compressed:

I left home when I was fourteen...living in a tent...in the Peak District at Woodhead...still going to school every morning...I was sleeping in a maggot farm at night

The non ex-serviceman *Geoff's* experiences mirrored those of *Jethro's* in that he moved swiftly at the age of 14 into insecure accommodation:

[I] was 14 year old, the first time I left home, I don't know what made me do it...my mother and father had gotten up and gone to work, I just got up, packed a load of gear and that was it

He did subsequently attempt to enlist into the Army, but was rejected on medical grounds. The combination of Blackpool's 'bright-lights' (where he spent some days under the pier before finding affordable Bed and Breakfast accommodation) together with difficult familial circumstances precipitated his move into homelessness. And similarly for an ex-serviceman drawn from another study:

I was chucked out of home when I was 14. I signed up for 9 (years) and changed to three (quoted in Randall and Brown, 1994:18).

Early trajectories of travel, coupled with a love of the fresh air are apparent in the following. First is the non ex-serviceman *Simon*. I asked him about his early experiences and he told me:

Yeah, I was always out...I was always somewhere, I just like being in the open air

And for *Rod*, the proximity of rural areas were conducive for the outdoor life from an early age:

I was in the Boys Brigade up in Scotland... [U]sed to go camping and all the rest of it, hunting rabbits. Did quite a bit of poaching when I was younger as well...you know coz countryside's not far from Aberdeen - 40 minutes drive and you're out in the rurals

Wicksy framed his earlier experiences in terms of survival:

We were out all the time...we wasn't in watching the television like the kids nowadays...(they haven't got the training) to go outside and survive

I asked *Dougy* if there were any interests that may have influenced eventual enlistment into the Army. Once again, the theme of open air and travel reappeared:

We used to live under canvas a lot...(our) parents used to say "what's the matter with you?"...we wanted to be out all the time...the further away the better

Dougy then went on to describe the link between a continued love of the outdoor life and enlistment:

When I got made redundant, I thought, let's have a go at the Army game, let's have some of this

These accounts are suggestive of early outdoor experience that ended in enlistment into the military or marked the initial stages of considerable careers of homelessness as was evidenced in the case of the non ex-serviceman *Geoff*.

6.7.1 Independence

In the accounts just presented, travel appears relatively mundane and was closely linked with moving out of the family home. However, this key move represents at one and the same time embarkation - on a (usually unknown) journey - both metaphorically and physically. It is likely that enlistment into the Army flowed from early independence on the one hand, and a desire for 'family' security on the other (Beevor, 1991; Hockey, 1986; O'Brien, 1993). Other factors may have included possibility for adventure linked to travel - a central plank of previous and contemporary recruiting strategy discussed in both this and Chapter 4.

It could be suggested that there exists a predilection amongst some young men for the 'outdoor life' that a period in the military serves to develop in a range of complex ways. Links between travel and the military may be forged even before individuals enlist. Other commentators have alluded to these links, and importantly, enlistment into the military is characterized by a degree of 'transition legitimacy'. Burton *et al.* states:

[M]ost young people manage the transition from dependent to independent living without experiencing any serious difficulties. This is especially the case when the circumstances of their leaving are seen as respectable or legitimate...for instance to carry out (often compulsory) military service' (quoted in Jones, 1995:32).

Here, Burton *et al.* assume that the links between dependence and independence are relatively straightforward (and may well be for many). Some individuals, however, might leave the family home and enter a period of 'independence' against the backdrop of financial or psychological hardship (Jones, 1995). To a number of these younger people, enlistment into the military might be informed by both the quest for security and the experience of independence that comes with being a 'survivor'. It is to the experience of 'military travel' we now turn.

6.8 MILITARY/MASCULINE TRAVEL

In earlier sections of this chapter, we suggested that the links between travel(s) and masculinities were significant - particularly in the current study. We focus now on the more obviously gendered aspects of travel. The military is linked directly with its relationship to the hypermasculine performance of its members - particularly whilst abroad. In this section we do little more than suggest that the nature of military travel may, for some, be played out within the civilian environment post-discharge.

6.8.1 Military Travel and Excess

The characteristics of travel within the military could be considered as highly institutionalized and may well have a number of repercussions for the ways in which diverse cultures are perceived and engaged with. In the fictionalized novel *The Virgin Soldiers* (Thomas, 1966), for example, amongst the National Servicemen there swiftly develops a circuit punctuated by particular brothels and bars. Notions of 'authentic experience', to be gained when leaving the beaten track, may point to a less than competent performance when conceptualized through the ideology of masculinity, at least within this somewhat 'nationalistic' context.

In this first extract, the ex-sailor *Dave* describes an 'odd' naval colleague who collected material to be presented in the form of lectures to Wives Clubs on return to the United Kingdom:

He wasn't married, he was a single man and would spend all of his time when he was at sea, and on shore at places, filming and speaking into microphones ...and when he was back in UK he used to go round these mother's meetings and give them lectures...on what places were like...he was treated as if he was really weird. You know, there was something wrong with this guy, because he didn't go ashore and get wrecked with the rest of us

Dave draws heavily on notions of 'meetings' and 'mothers' together with 'the lad's single status'; here masculinity is put under the spotlight⁶. Similarly, 'speaking into a microphone' tends to be a solitary affair, thereby lessening any real sense of camaraderie.

With a wry smile, *Ken* alluded to his 'fun and games' whilst travelling with the Army, together with the ways in which this information could not be divulged on return:

You would go away for a few months, she'd be stuck at home with the kids, you'd be doing this and doing that. Basically you were having a good time but you didn't want to say that

Taken together these accounts are suggestive of limits to the military travel experience; what represents acceptable behaviour for (service)men abroad? Indeed, the norms of serviceman travel almost certainly turn on a hypermasculinized/racist engagement with diverse cultures. Getting 'wrecked' on novel cocktails of alcohol and 'sampling' the local 'golly' women continue to represent the extremes of servicemen's behaviour abroad and at home (Beavor, 1991). Here's Hockey (1986:36) quoting a training Senior Non Commissioned Officer in the context of travel and women within the Army:

'It's been a good life, I've been all over the world for free, shagged them all, black, white.'

A number of common themes are apparent in this extract. The Army's paternalistic undertone through which travel is 'for free' is the first, and as we suggest above, significant in terms of motivation underlying enlistment. Second, notions of Empire are alluded to. Here, masculinized sexual conquest and the reduction of women to little more than their (exotic) skin colour are combined and flag the continued belief of Britain's superiority whilst abroad. We should, however, be alert to the range of masculinities, conceived of in terms of the plurality of men's social practices, within the military (Morgan 1987, 1994) and might consider the travel experience of the 'officer class' as pivoting around activities considered less boisterous or bawdy.

In the next section, we outline a theoretical and historical backdrop to the notion of adventure, together with a mix of ex-serviceman and non ex-servicemen accounts. Some of these extracts reflect military travel experience, whilst others are drawn from the civilian environment for ex-servicemen, post-discharge. This range of material turns centrally on notions of adventure, and is intended to highlight the beneficial characteristics of the travel experience. It may be that movement post-discharge whilst homeless carries with it attempts at recreating the enjoyable dynamic of the journeying experience.

6.9 TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE

Dawson's (1994) concerns are with the masculinized nature of the 'adventure-quest', in the particular context of Sir Henry Havelock and T. E. Lawrence. In a similar way, Clifford underlines the linkages of men/travel/adventure:

'The marking of "travel" by gender, class, race, and culture is all too clear... "Good travel" (heroic, educational, scientific, adventurous, ennobling) is something men do. Women are impeded from serious travel' (quoted in Wolff, 1993:230).

We start with participants for whom adventure transcended the experiential vagaries of insecure accommodation or - as was the case for many of these men - rough sleeping. These accounts reflect experiences within the military and, in the case of non ex-servicemen, within the civilian environment. First, there is the non ex-serviceman *Roger* who expressed considerable nomadic impulse from an early age. He told me:

It was a case of wanting to see more of the world, as a kid...we used to have holidays - but never abroad, so that always fascinated me, still does to a point...we just made a decision - me and a friend of mine - to go

And *Dave* who spoke warmly of his travel experiences whilst in the sheltered environment of the Navy:

I enjoyed it tremendously as a younger man, you know going abroad...[I]t didn't seem to matter that you were away from England. You weren't bothered, going to the West Indies, you were getting about everywhere

I started by asking *Rod* how he felt about his Army service generally. He stated that he was 'pissed off' with some of the experiences, particularly the strict discipline. However, the theme of travel quickly appeared. This aspect of military service smacked of adventure and he stated that he:

Enjoyed it immensely (and) went half way around the world a couple of times

Rod continued with the theme of travel, and highlighted the positive status of nomadism embodied in the notion of being 'widely travelled':

I've been all over the country - yeah, up, down, left, right, south, north

Lenny who spent three years in the Canadian Army saw travel as a bonus that would perhaps contribute towards 'broadening' his horizons:

Military service gave me a chance to travel...which was much appreciated at the time

After leaving the Army, *Paul's* travels involved him in highly diverse situations. He lived primarily in his own bus during this time, and recounted the adventurous and sometimes unpredictable nature of his most recent travel and work experiences:

I've just been touring Europe for three years, working in Holland, Spain, Germany, Denmark, doing a variety of jobs, street entertainment as a clown and juggling and things like that to earn some money...I was working as a props man in Spain, on a bulb farm in Holland and a building site in Germany, I also ran a peace tent in Germany. In Denmark, I worked with some young people who had problems with heavy drugs

I asked *Paul* if he had any idea from where this love of travel came:

I don't know, I like the adventure of it, I don't know if it comes from the forces. But I've always er, travelled, I mean I've been to America, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Malawi, New Zealand

Characteristic of the attitude to travel has been the significance of travel for homeless ex and non ex-servicemen. As Dawson (1994:53) states:

'Circumstances that can be called "adventures"...provide a challenge to assert human will and test human capabilities against the vicissitudes of a world that remains deeply uncertain. A paradoxical tension between risk and control remains at the heart of adventure...[W]ithout risk there can be no adventure'

And:

'Travellers are confronted with the contradictory pleasures of authority and exclusion, in order to enjoy, they must risk the other' (Curtis and Pajackowska, 1994:201-202).

Further, and particularly in the case of *Paul*, travel had been infused with both learning and close interaction with non-British peoples. In this way, a narrative of experience linked by work and travel, ups-and-downs and encounters with the 'other' fuels the impetus for future movement and challenge. To some this may look like 'unsettledness' as stimulation, nourished through travel assumes an immanent, and ultimately irresolvable logic. Whether or not we might deem this 'restlessness' (Somerville, 1992) or 'addictive' (Jolly, 1992) ignores the ways in which it is perceived as restorative or enriching. As Robertson *et al.*, (1994:5) state::

'The imperative to travel signifies the quest for the acquisition of knowledge...[P]sychic desires are displaced in partial and vicarious participation in another set of relations (another place and time), and the self becomes realized as the hero of its own narrative of departure and return.'

Travels outlined in this section ranged from adventure-quest post-discharge, through to positive experience of travel whilst in the military that was perceived in terms of its development of 'worldly wisdom'. Of central concern are the complex linkages that characterize the homelessness/travel relationship. In the next section we focus on ex-serviceman post-discharge travel.

6.10 THE MILITARY EXPERIENCE AND POST-DISCHARGE TRAVEL

Individuals exit the military to a wide range of opportunities and situations. In contrast to those that experience discharge from the military whilst in Britain, others - particularly those stationed in Germany - may find the transitional phases considerably more challenging. Staying with the key theme of travel, we now look more closely at a number of ex-servicemen who eventually endured homelessness. These individuals had to engage with a series of phases concerning both exit and assimilation. First from the military, second from Germany, and finally to 'home' in Britain.

6.10.1 Discharge in Germany - Double 'Culture Shock'?

At the head of this chapter, we alluded to the importance of military establishments based in Germany, particularly their implications for future ex-serviceman travel and possible homelessness. Though troop numbers are dwindling, the period in which many of the subjects were discharged coincided with their period of service in Germany, and for others, Northern Ireland. The former location is known as a 'home posting' and it is possible for Army personnel to spend almost their entire career based in Germany. Life in Germany undoubtedly offered a higher standard of living in terms of tax-free alcohol, fuel, cars, and increased possibilities for European travel (Beavor, 1991). Some participants attempted to seek paid employment in Germany post-discharge, and when this failed returned reluctantly and perhaps over-expectantly⁷ to a recession bound Britain. Others, particularly *Paul* - embarked on travel within Europe, his confidence bolstered by familiarity with the German language and culture.

We start by looking at a number of problems associated with the ultimate move back to the United Kingdom. Coming home often represented the end of one or other failed enterprises; travelling back became synonymous with social distress and gave way to the first signs of post-discharge 'unsettledness', wherein travel became linked with the negative sense of homelessness.

6.10.2 Coming Home

Soon after discharge, *Brian* secured paid-employment as a language teacher in Germany. High degrees of continuity characterized his move from the Army as he quickly entered a familiar Anglo/German civilian environment; in this way the transitional period was largely unproblematic:

I didn't feel too bad, because whilst I was leaving the Army, I was stationed in Osnabruck in Germany at the time, and I had friends, both Army and German civilian (and also) English civilian friends. [T]he opportunity for work was based in the area...so the relationships and friends I'd built up over the period were still available...so it wasn't such a great wrench at that stage

However, the process of returning to England (under difficult conditions) coincided with social distress around the delayed process of transition. The ways in which home were engaged with had changed markedly through experience of living and working in Germany:

It was not until I (left) Germany for England that...I experienced a massive culture shock

Brian's comment alerts us to the ways in which home, as we suggest above, is constructed experientially (Gurney, 1990), nowhere does this ex-serviceman mention the physical sense of home - embodied for example, in a house. At the interface of biography and return (to England) we note the legacy of immersion within contrasting culture (Germany). Here, travel both liberates and constrains. Being based in mainland Europe may have inadvertently fostered expectation and a degree of 'unreality' in terms of the opportunities available in Britain. The home *Brian* returned to was characterized by considerable economic difficulty. The complex interaction of memory with expectation rendered home unrecognisable, challenging and somewhat disorientating.

Paul articulates the links between military experience and travel within Germany in the following way:

I'd been stationed in Germany when I was in the military...I was in Minden...so I knew a little bit of the language, not a lot, but I mean I went from Dusseldorf, right across to Berlin...[A]nd then I ran a peace tent in Berlin for the last 5 months that I stayed in Germany, selling chi-tea and pancakes

And for *Jethro*:

I was in Germany when I left the Army...I had a job as a car salesman...selling cars to soldiers...me and this other lad who was also selling cars set up our own business selling made-to-measure suits and clothes...[S]oldiers didn't like German fashion, and couldn't speak German

For *Mick*, Germany appeared to offer an answer to unemployment in Britain:

I was hoping to stay in Germany (and) work on the building sites

The experience of travel and residence in Germany appears to have opened up a series of opportunities for gaining paid-employment outside of the United Kingdom. At the same time, however, a combination of unawareness of the employment and housing markets, together with a disconnectedness from a British situation that had changed for the worse, combined to problematize the ultimate move home. These conditions served to precipitate the genesis of homelessness for these four ex-servicemen.

In the next section, we consider those for whom travel was engaged with somewhat instrumentally. In contrast to the difficulties evident amongst individuals who were discharged whilst overseas, the following ex-servicemen expressed knowledge and balance towards the travel experience. Here accommodation status was far from problematized, as the adventure of travel appeared seductive, and in one instance brought notions of 'escape' into sharp focus.

6.10.3 Doing Travel Right - Purpose

For the ex-serviceman *Benny*, travel had to be carried out in a purposive manner - homelessness remained unproblematized and aimlessness was unacceptable. He stated:

Let's get somewhere to aim for, I wouldn't just set off - I had to know where I was going to. There's no point if you don't, because you wander around aimlessly

Here *Benny* used a tent and hostels as a way in which to facilitate frequent movement. *Tony* expressed the importance of the travel experience in and for itself, rather than as a form of escapism. Here, a strong relationship to 'responsible travel' is hinted at:

Nothing wrong with being on the road...you're travelling around and you've got the money in the bank to be able to buy your food and fuel your vehicle and tax it and maintain it...but to do it...as a form of escapism is a different thing, it means you're doing it not because you really want to do it but because it's the only way you can cope

Tony slept in the van and on peace or 'traveller' camps. In this sense travel was infused with a degree of instrumentality. Future considerations include the route the journey was to take, justifications for experiencing insecure accommodation and ultimate aim of movement. Once again, this is an extract taken from *Benny's* narrative account:

You can always find a bit of work, and if you're going to go down to Kent, give yourself 2 days to get there...You've got to think on the way down, there's motorway cafes that are going to cost you a fortune. (You should) take some tins with you, and you've got to work out where you going to go to, and which roads you're going to use

In this narrative extract from the CRISIS report, 'Falling Out' (Randall and Brown, 1994) travel appeared relatively structured against the backdrop of seasons⁸ and a long-term plan:

I didn't want to settle down. I was quite happy working the resorts in the summer and in the cities in the winter (Randall and Brown, 1994:17).

Benny and *Tony* developed 'ground-rules' for their travel exploits. Pre-emptive planning framed their movement. Where am I going, and why? Can I afford to reach the destination. Which roads should be selected? What about sustenance? Sufficient foodstuffs or funds? Insecure accommodation was the necessary trade-off for mobility and was made tolerable through self-imposition of (in both cases, financial) limits. Perpetual movement also served other, less conscious purposes that turn directly on masculine identity. In the following

section, the nature of frequent travel necessarily lessened the opportunity for building up close and intimate relationships.

6.11 FLEETING HOME - 'CHANCE' MEETING: THE POWER OF CAMARADERIE

The importance of camaraderie might be understood in terms of punctuating the travel experience with moments of relief through encounter with familiar face. In this way, hope and fate energize travel, and as many of the routes for those with scarce resources overlap - for example, through day centres and hostels - opportune meeting remains likely⁹. Indeed, it is possible that the juxtaposition of stark loneliness endured 'on the road' with apparent chance upon friend facilitates a sustaining of movement in the long term. Of key concern here is interpersonal relationship of a transitory nature; not 'getting too close' against the backdrop of a realism fostered through a number of emotional disappointments. This perhaps suits many men for whom intimate relationships are problematic (Barker, 1996; Connell, 1995; La Plante, 1992; Morgan, 1992; Seidler, 1989, 1997).

6.11.1 Strengths and Weaknesses - Transitory Relationships

It is difficult to sustain relationships if one is constantly on the move. Though some individuals did move with travel-partners, the relatively informal nature of these relationships tended to be framed in the language of emotional distance. As the non ex-serviceman *Simon* said:

We never ask each other about personal things, we just get on with it. We don't get too close to each other. We just do our own thing. We look after each other when we're together, but we don't go into each other's problems because we've all got them

Here, *Simon* illustrates the ways in which this informal code freed up individuals from any real sort of emotional reciprocity. Problem-sharing tended to be avoided so that relationships might unwittingly withstand the transitory nature of homelessness.

Alternatively, *Benny* stressed the stimulating elements of travel, pivoting around relationship novelty:

It's new faces all the time, new places, you might meet friends on the way,
that you've met before

For *Roger*, the fascination with different places sat squarely with the chance to meet others. Like *Benny*, novelty concerning people and places characterized this transitory lifestyle:

Some of the times we did have on the streets were fun. It's not all gloom and doom - summer comes around and you're in different places - where you've never been before. You make new friends and you have some really good times - you really do

And, for *Rod*, opportune meeting with old Army friends was conveyed with a sense of nostalgia:

I bumped into a couple last year. They were down in London, working near Buckingham Palace. They took me out and got me absolutely rattled (drunk) ...(I was) delivered back to Victoria with 50 pounds in my pocket and beer coming out of my ears

The non ex-serviceman *Geoff* also invoked the significance of spatially disparate and somewhat informal friendships:

If I went back up to Edinburgh tomorrow I'd go and see a few mates and get somewhere to stay. If I went back down to Cornwall it would be exactly the same

The gender/travel connection has reappeared in this brief section, with particular reference to the nature of the 'fleeting' relationship. It is possible that regular movement serves to maintain homelessness for both ex and non ex-service individuals as commitment to others remains relatively unusual. Analysis here is suggestive of the significance of the 'gender' rather than the 'military service' variable in terms of furthering our understanding of travel for these men. However, we should be wary of attributing masculinity with 'causal power' (Hearn, 1996). Rather, it might be conceptualized as 'identity template' against which the practice of particular men assumes a degree of legitimacy. In the following section, we continue to explore the masculinized dynamic of 'non-fixity', with regard to place. Here, we focus on a particular status in which freedom is stressed; this is nested within a broader framework in which conventional notions of 'responsibility' are largely shunned.

6.12 TRAVEL FREEDOM - 'GET UP AND GO'

The ability to simply 'get up and go' has a particular status. One's fixity to conventions of job and 'permanent home' are replaced by a 'travel-freedom'. I asked the non ex-serviceman *Roger* if he found travel easy:

Oh yeah sure, I've got all the gear, oh yeah I can be in one town lunch-time and at the other end of the country (soon after)

Benny had travelled extensively after leaving the Army and his accommodation status was largely unproblematized. After around 2 years of 'life on the road' he got married. I asked him how this experience compared to his years of travel:

Well it was different! Yeah, very different, because you'd be expected to be there next morning...(I missed) the freedom, just being able to go

His marriage broke up after six months as he felt uncomfortably constrained by the 'predictability' that comes with a permanent home. Adventure and marriage remained mutually exclusive. Permanence, and conventional notions of stability were perceived in terms of constraint. Morris makes a parallel point, she states that

"Home" (is) the site both of frustrating containment (home as dull) and of truth to be rediscovered (home as real). The stifling home is the place from which the voyage begins and to which in the end, it returns...[T]he tourist leaving and returning to the blank space of the *domus* is, and will remain, a sexually in-different 'him'" (quoted in Wolff, 1993:230; *original emphasis*).

Benny did not return however, and is currently single, living in social housing. He awaits the onset of decent weather conditions before his next journey commences.

In this section we have presented material from individuals for whom homelessness remained largely unproblematized. For most, travel had been engaged with in a positive manner, and accommodation status had been of little concern. As Lowe and Shaw illustrate (1993:218-243) however, the 'end of the road' is often linked with distress of one kind or

another. How might we frame limits to travel? How might they be linked to the problematization of accommodation?

6.13 LIMITS TO TRAVEL

In the case of *Paul*, limits were reached when his bus was stolen. Devoid of contact with what represented a symbol of (nomadic) freedom, minimal sense of home (Watson and Austerberry, 1986) was not met by sleeping in extreme conditions:

I had my bus stolen in October. I couldn't get any lower...I had nothing, a sleeping bag - that's all I had, I spent four days in Denmark, in the snow and the rain, and I was sleeping in a bandstand, which was outside, and it had like a cover, it was open to the elements, so when the wind blew it was terrible, horrible

For *Tony*, limits came in the shape of a bottle. Travel was fine, but its combination with over-reliance on alcohol was not:

Drink and being on the road...doesn't do anything for you

Hitherto, these individuals unwittingly struck a balance between risk and adventure, as Dawson (1994:53) states:

'Without risk there can be no adventure...(but)...excessive risk may cause the experience of excitement to give way to anxiety'

The well known risks from drinking, for the latter participant, and uncertainty/immobility for the former, rendered the travel experience unacceptable for these two ex-servicemen.

However, this was not the case for *Bill*. He linked his 'unsettledness' to the number of moves made whilst in the military. He told me he had made:

18 recorded moves in 12 years, plus the leave, plus the exercises...that's at least 6 other moves...you know, Belize, Germany to UK, UK to Germany

Bill, however, was unable to reconcile this incessant movement with paid-employment post-discharge, and when difficult conditions (for example, a corrupt landlord) appeared, his first action was to move - often into self-assigned homelessness. Like *Bill*, the ex-sailor *Dave* secured paid-employment that had strong resonance with his protracted periods away from home whilst in the Navy. This time his relationship suffered irredeemably; and the move was suggestive of a deep-seated (though perhaps little acknowledged) desire to experience novel environments:

I had an excellent job, when I was working at the hospital, and later on I got a job in computers, and the money was tremendous... [My] wife eventually got a job, worked her way up and she was on good money...(we had)...our own house which was very nearly paid for, and er, we were as happy as sandboys... [A]nd then, I don't know what it was, but I decided to take a job in Saudi Arabia, and I ended up leaving her again for 18 months

Did *Dave* 'run-away'? Ownership of considerable assets brings a range of responsibilities and expectations which might partly explain *Dave's* move to Saudi Arabia; here financial motivation may have been important. Though already touched on, the notion of relationships and the ways in which they might demand commitment also appeared to influence flight from place (clearest in the case of *Benny*). This is apparent in the phrases being 'tied down', or being 'under the thumb'. Both are suggestive of immobility and constraint, and more often than not, directed from men towards women.

6.13.1 Aimless Travel and Homelessness

Engagement with the unknown was an element of *Brian's* travel experiences discussed next. It was, however, a manifestation of social distress and desperation rather than an expression of adventure. Here the meanings attached to uncertainty relate not to positive expectation, but anxiety:

I ended up...deciding I needed to move to another area, to look for work through a series of just getting on the first train that came along, and I ended up in Southend in a B&B

Brian's experiences illustrate similar themes, around which a *range* of meanings might cluster. Travel and uncertainty are apparent, but, unlike other participants in this chapter, adventure is not.

Uncertainty played a significant part in one of the non ex-serviceman *Roger's* spontaneous adventures. After a particularly raucous party that kept him awake all night in an adjacent flat, he decided to 'hit the road'. This was feasible because not only had he saved some money from his benefit for just this sort of eventuality, but also his biography was stamped with a wealth of travel experience. Combined, these factors produced particular conditions of possibility that facilitated 'leaving it all behind':

[I] went to the railway station and...there was a big long train in there...I said to the guy "where's that going", he said "it's written on the side", I looked at it and thought I've never been there before...I went and bought a ticket and got on the train, 6 hours later we ended up in Southampton

Here, travel was linked more obviously by an attempt to escape, or perhaps a vague notion that possibilities for employment might be more abundant in other areas. Vivaly, insecure accommodation status came into sharper focus and interacted in negative ways with attempts to secure paid work. The continued erosion and problematization of accommodation status is discussed next. In this final section the largely negative experiences of homelessness assume particular significance.

6.14 DRIFT AND DOSSING - HOME AND SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Though *Roger's* early travels were positively engaged with, sense of home was eventually fractured when a series of family tragedies occurred. The nature of travel subsequently assumed a degree of 'drift' as a definitive point of return had disappeared:

There was a time about 11 or 12 years ago, I lost a lot of my immediate family in a short space of time, I was back in West Yorkshire, Hebden Bridge. There was no reason to stay really, I got up one day and did what I've always done - travel about - but the difference was that before, I had somebody to come back to...this time I hadn't

And, similarly for *Simon*, 'drift' became synonymous with homelessness:

The marriage broke up, and I found myself...drifting from, York, to Newcastle, Middlesborough. I came back to York after being split up for about 3 months and was on the streets for about 4 or 5 days

The vagaries of unemployment and relationship compounded to produce conditions through which *Brian* entered homelessness. His travel was characterized by anomic (Somerville, 1992) 'drift':

The relationship broke up and I started just drifting around between a variety of different jobs...I drifted into a number of jobs that ex-servicemen seem to pick up, security work, erm, bouncing in night clubs and bits and pieces like that...(although) I tried hard not to drift into security sort of jobs

Rod bemoaned the erosion of familial connectedness. Here 'ties' stretching across time and space had faded giving way to a weakened sense of home:

I was up in Scotland about 3 months ago. I said "hello" to my family and all that. But the old ties are just not there you know...they're getting married, settling down, moving on

And for *Tony*, relationship failure provided the conditions through which travel became less than purposeful:

After the relationship ended I went back on the road myself. I went to London and (was) living rough and basically dossing

For these homeless men relationship break-up gave rise to rootlessness. The importance of 'personal-relations' appears in Somerville's (1992:533) schematic understanding of homelessness, and is captured in the following terms of existential *insecurity*: 'emotional/misery, ontological/senselessness, spiritual/suffering'. In essence, sense of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 1967; quoted in Somerville, 1992:533) for these subjects relied rather more on interpersonal relations than it did to connectedness with the spatial 'physicality' of home or place.

The chaos of travel and the unpredictability of hitch-hiking, for example, alert us to the possibilities of loneliness. In a sense, *Simon's* identities as father and husband were held in limbo during a period of non-contact with his family. So that potential conditions for encounter might be preserved, possibilities for travel were ruled out:

No, I want to stay close to people if (I'd) moved right away...I don't think I could have coped with it because I would have felt so lonely

6.15 SUMMARY COMMENTS

In this chapter we have focused on the meanings and importance of travel for both ex-service and non ex-servicemen, and in so doing have illustrated the ways in which military experience might be transcended by focusing on men's social practices more generally. The distinguishing characteristics of those understood to be socially excluded almost certainly turns on the significance of travels of one or other kinds. The masculinized nature of travel is also central to preceding analysis, and draws our attention to the relative invisibility of women who might - like the men in this study - be similarly denied access to a range of material resources, including secure accommodation. Desire for stimulation through movement may carry with it a number of ultimately deleterious repercussions, that flag the nature of contemporary society. In this way, bureaucratic logic demands a degree of fixity so that individuals might be 'codified' through time and place. Here travel represents subversion and serves to empower resisting individuals at the expense of access to mainstream employment and housing markets.

In Chapter 7, we continue to explore both the genesis and sustaining of homelessness amongst a particular group of ex and non ex-servicemen. The focus here concerns a particular dimension of the non-discursive realm of human agency; that of embodiment. It

builds on recent theorizing around the body within sociology and grounds analysis in an empirical framework.

CHAPTER 7 - THE EMBODIMENT OF HOMELESSNESS

Embodied Resource and Unintended Outcome

The signs for recognizing those most suited to this (soldiering) profession are a lively, alert manner, an erect head, a taut stomach, broad shoulders, long arms, strong fingers, a small belly, thick thighs, slender legs...because a man of such a figure could not fail to be agile and strong. Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 1977:135.

Army life is sort of embedded into you...you don't realise that it is a totally different style of living, breathing, eating...than would be outside of a military environment. Brian, 10 years Army service

[W]e assimilate the body to cognitive modes of representation and so fail to appreciate that the body has a life of its own. Seidler, Embodying Masculinities, 1997:187

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the links between military service and homelessness are conceptualized through the embodied dimensions of human agency. Whilst there is little doubt that we all possess bodies, we argue for a more sociologically sophisticated recognition of the sentient nature of the corporeal dimensions of human agency. In this way, embodied elements of agency have 'autonomy' in that endocrine and nervous systems, for instance, function at the level of the non-discursive consciousness. Further, that the embodied dimensions of human agency are constantly subject to transformation, as a consequence of varying environments. Heat produces sweat and eventual weight loss. Cold causes 'goose pimples' and the erection of bodily hair, for example.

It is likely then, that experiences of homelessness calls forth diverse embodied response. Sleeping rough during the winter months almost certainly requires tolerance to cold weather conditions at both the levels of 'will power' and the sentient body. In a similar sense, scarcity of regular and nutritious food makes other demands on the embodiment of agency. Is the physical body familiar with the sensation of an empty stomach? How long can one go without a hot meal? In these instances we argue for a connection between the performance and tenacity of sentient bodies with memory and prior experience. We start by sketching some of the most recent theoretical developments within the so-called sociology of the body.

7.2 THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY

Plummer (1983:54) states that 'lived life' is:

'[A] dialectical compound of self and society and the organic matrix of body and mind...we must acknowledge that experiencing individuals can never be isolated from their functioning bodies and their constraining social worlds - there is no room for a bodiless idealism or a mindless materialism. Body, mind, context, society - *all* are in constant engagement with each other, and *all* need to be taken into account' (*original emphasis*).

In this extract, Plummer flags the significance of the embodied dimensions of human agency. Here, the body is more than flesh and bone matter existing within a social vacuum. Somatic selves are inherently social, and whilst they may be far from the minds of their owners, nevertheless, represent fundamental entities in terms of all human action. In the first section, we outline the ways in which the embodied dimensions of human agency have escaped the central purview of the social sciences.

7.3 THE NEGLECTED BODY

A highly condensed historical understanding of the continued hegemony of mind over body within Western thought would almost certainly turn to the legacy of religious belief systems (Turner, 1984, 1996)¹. Thus, drawing on the work of both Foucault and Brown (1989), Seidler (1997:188) states:

'Within a Christian tradition the body has long been distrusted for it tempts us into sin and transgression ...[W]e learn to despise the body and to silence its desires...[T]he body is to be trained and to be obeyed...it is to become an instrument of our will'

The body's alleged subservience to rational cognition located in the mind underlines the ways in which this physical entity is construed as somewhat unpredictable, and demanding high degrees of personal 'surveillance'. Grounded within a patriarchal context, these beliefs also serve to undermine the position of women, as they are understood to be closer to 'nature', and at the whim of their 'biological functioning' (Gergen, 1995; Seidler, 1989, 1997). The ideological repercussions of this theoretical stance necessarily extend into the sphere of masculinities. In contradistinction, men are asserted to be more 'rational, reasoning' and in 'control'; they are less vulnerable to emotionally embodied impulse (Morgan, 1992). Given the malestream tenets of social science (explored in Chapter 5), it remains unsurprising that the physical body has been continually neglected and considered somewhat peripheral to the 'serious' sociological enterprise (Morgan, 1992; Seidler, 1989, 1997). However, the recent growth of interest in the body within the discipline, (crystallized in the 1998 British Sociological Association Conference on 'Bodies'), illustrates how, in the contemporary period of late or post modernity, the body is being accorded greater theoretical and empirical gravity. The spectre of socio-biology no longer hangs over developments in this area and a range of commentators have begun to acknowledge that 'sociology ignores biology at its peril', (Benton, 1991; Freund, 1988; MacInnes, 1998).

7.4 BRINGING IN THE BODY

The invocation of the physical body within sociology is, however, far from novel. The body's 'absent presence' (Shilling, 1993) throughout much sociological writing in this century reminds us that bodies cannot be 'left at home' (Nettleton and Watson, 1998). For example, the presence of the body was vital to Goffman's concern to understand more fully the rituals of 'face-to-face interaction'. In addition, and as Jenkins (1996:21) states within the context of G. H. Mead:

'Mead is...clear that mind and selfhood are attributes of *embodied* individuals...[T]he human body is simultaneously a referent of individual continuity, an index of collective similarity and differentiation, and a canvas upon which identification can play. Social identification in isolation from embodiment is unimaginable' (*original emphasis*).

In the contemporary period, the embodied nature of human agency is at the very heart of a considerable number of theoretical and empirical endeavours within sociology.

7.4.1 Recent Developments in the Field

Recent developments have varied in their scope and range. Shilling (1997) has been involved in 're-embodiment' understandings of the social world. For example, Giddens' notions of reflexivity are limited in that they have failed to take into account the 'partial socialization of the body' (Shilling, 1997). Shilling argues for an interplay between the partial physical influence of the body together with the ways in which it serves to transform social structure. In this chapter, we attempt to counter the typically undersocialized understandings of homelessness, by focusing on some of the ways in which bodies function outside of conscious human agency, within particular social contexts.

For Crossley (1995, 1996) the work of the existentialist philosopher Merleau-Ponty provides a number of key insights. In formulating a grounding for the subjective realm (the 'body-subject'), Crossley states the following:

[The body]...is the very basis of human subjectivity...embodied subjectivity is intersubjective and rooted in a particular institutional and historical order' (Crossley, 1995:44-45).

Mind is inseparable from body; they remain 'reversible aspects of a single fabric' (Crossley, 1995:47) grounded within particular social contexts. He further states that:

[T]he body eludes sociology every time it is dissociated from and juxtaposed to the social or one of its aspects; that is, every time sociologists "forget" that the social is embodied and that the body is social' (Crossley, 1995:44).

Here, theoretical abstraction resulting in the mind/body split is rejected, and ways of being-in-the-world directly concern practical achievements experienced through the corporeal dimension (Crossley, 1995:53). Driving a motor vehicle, and predicting the external dimensions of one's car necessarily entails a non-discursive perceptual transposition of physical spaces - an unthinking 'amalgamation' of body with vehicle size, for example. In this sense the body has an imperceptible 'presence' in the world that can be spontaneously 'interpolated'. Our sense of self turns directly on what can be achieved through embodied actions:

'Our principle relation to our world is not a matter of "I think" (Merleau-Ponty maintains), but rather "I can" ...[T]he "I" is misleading in this phrase because it suggests precisely the reflective and reflexive subject that Merleau-Ponty is arguing against but the 'can' clearly conveys his understanding that our primary relation to our environment consists in practical competence' (Crossley, 1995:53).

Merleau-Ponty's notions of embodied being-in-the-world owes a great deal to the ways in which bodies are vulnerable to socialization. They are entities of 'habit', and mirroring discussions in Chapter 3, routinized behaviour has embodied foundations. Though Shilling draws on Hochschild's (1983) contributions to the sociology of the emotions, to illustrate the ways in which individuals might become 'corporeally predisposed towards certain actions rather than others' (Shilling, 1997:746), it is clear that:

'[S]ocialization needs analysing in terms of the *partial* social shaping of *embodied dispositions* as well as in terms of the partial internalization of mental views and attitudes' (Shilling, 1997:45; *emphasis added*).

Embodied dispositions thus colonize habitual performance that provide direct channels to the memory:

'[T]he body [should be seen] as socially constituted in the sense that it is currently shaped in its actual practices and behaviour...and in particular habitual performances [as these are important] in sustaining memory' (Connerton, 1989:104).

For Connell (1995) bodies remain an integral element of social agency, and they both generate and set limits on social action. Drawing on the work of Bryan Turner, Connell (1995:60) states:

'We need to assert the activity, literally the *agency*, of bodies in social process...(I want) to argue for a stronger theoretical position, where bodies are seen as sharing in social agency, in generating and shaping courses of social conduct' (*original emphasis*).

Theoretical developments sketched above partly fulfil objectives outlined by Benton (1991:25):

'The task for any proposed re-alignment of the human social sciences...can now be seen as one of providing conceptual room for organic, bodily and environmental aspects and dimensions of human social life'

Though the commentaries outlined above represent progress in getting the body onto a serious sociological footing, there remains a good deal of theoretical preoccupation, reflecting its somewhat ambivalent reception amongst more 'traditional' sociologists (Higate, 1998:194). A recent volume concerning the everyday relationship of the body to its social environment (Nettleton and Watson, 1998) adds to a literature (see the edited collection by Scott and Morgan, 1993) in which, hitherto bodies had been conceptualized as biologically given on the one hand, or, on the other (of notable predominance in the social sciences), as socially constructed 'landscapes' (Connell, 1995:45-46).

In arguing for a more dynamic understanding of the physical body, we should be aware of its relationship to time and memory. In this way, we might invoke the notion of a 'somatic memory' to take account of the ways in which bodies are noted to change through time. It is to these issues we now turn.

7.4.2 Enduring Transformations - The 'Somatic Memory'

The body's relationship to time might be conceptualized in terms of the ways in which its shape changes. Physical exercise, varying diets and/or sedentary behaviours thus manifest themselves both within the internal organs of the body, and at the level of bodily appearance; quite literally the body's historical trajectory is etched deep into flesh and tissue. Shilling (1997:737) puts it like this:

'The body is the subject and object of labour, built up and broken down by diet, exercise and other factors. It shapes our responses to social systems, and is shaped by them' (Shilling, 1997:746).

The dynamic interplay between body and environment tells us and others of its capacities and weaknesses. Basketball 'talent hunters' might be immediately drawn to individuals who are tall, their height representing a particularly appropriate bodily capital. Alternatively, this tallness would prevent individuals from training as racing jockeys, as height and weight are broadly proportionate and render this aspect of bodily capital as disadvantageous. Bodily transformation thus represents a particular (and partial) material manifestation of the (somatic) memory. Most importantly, changes in the body impinge very centrally on the relationship individuals have to their sense of self and to the social world². Within the context of the family, Morgan (1996:122) describes the connections between the temporal and somatic realms in the following way:

'A whole range of bodily pleasures and sensations may be associated, ideologically, actually or through the work of memory, with family life: memories of warmth, bodily freedom and the comforts of food and countless minor tenderness'

Seidler articulates a parallel point within the context of the relational dynamics between father and son linked to physical abuse. Elements of these memories are thus noted to be 'carried in the muscle tissue' (Seidler, 1997:148). Before we put recent theorizing to work in the service of highlighting the genesis and sustaining of homelessness amongst ex and non ex-servicemen, we turn to the limitations of theorizing around the body.

7.4.3 Limitations to a Sociology of the Body

Bertholet (1991:390) asks the question 'Is there any meaning in a sociology of the body?' This problematic turns centrally on how or what a human body 'is' and this he suggests, represents a rather banal field of knowledge, as human agency is, at all times, necessarily embodied. Located at a multitude of interfaces (biological/social, collective/individual, structure/agent, cause/meaning and so forth), the body is 'materialized as an irreducible, unique being.' (Bertholet, 1991:399). In essence, Bertholet remains unclear if a sociology of the body is indeed possible as we have yet to develop a 'scientific' understanding of the 'various disorders that meet there and fuse' (Bertholet, 1991:401). On a final note he states:

'We can only...sketch out the perspective of a counterpoint sociology which finds its epistemological vector in the body considered as product and producer, the place of pain and pleasure, alienation and reappropriation, inscription and affect.' (Bertholet, 199:401).

Somewhat unwittingly, Bertholet has flagged the slippery nature of the body, particularly when theorized within sociology. That consciousness allows human agents to reflect on their material sense of being-in-the-world necessarily urges them to confront a paradox; at one and the same time they both *have* and *are* bodies, and that in this sense, they are 'thinking with them'. The work of Merleau-Ponty, as we have already seen, offers a way out of this irreconcilable dichotomy by recourse to bodily sentience in terms of everyday practical achievements grounded in a seamless (non-Cartesian) entity.

A further tendency, identified by Morgan (see Scott and Morgan 1993), concerns the ways in which bodies might become over-theorized. However, and as has already been suggested, the growing literature in this area is increasingly characterized by attempts to locate bodies within empirical frameworks. Throughout the remaining sections of this chapter, empirical groundings are accorded high status, and the tools of theory are used to illuminate deeper non-discursive dimensions of human embodiment. We start by examining the military experience from its particular embodied dimensions.

7.5 EMBODIED ENVIRONMENTS - THE MILITARY

The linkage of the military with the control, symbolism and shaping of bodies has been touched on by a number of commentators (Foucault, 1977; Hearn and Parkin, 1987:67; Mazur *et al.*, 1984; Morgan, 1994:167; Scott and Morgan, 1993). Whilst the military might be said to be colonized by a range of 'bodies' (Higate, 1998), it is likely that particular notions of the ideals of height, size and shape establish a potent consensus amongst military men and women.

7.5.1 Gauging Bodies

From the moment the hopeful individual walks into the Armed Forces Recruiting Office, his or her body is subject to close scrutiny. Are they tall? If so the trade of Military Policeman might appeal. Overweight? How likely are they to pass the medical examination? Athletic build? Perhaps she would be highly valued amongst a sport oriented regiment. In this following extract, T. E. Lawrence details a description of his Royal Air Force medical examination some 70 years ago. His experience remains timeless:

"Turn over: get up: stand under here: make yourself as tall as you can: he'll just do five foot six, Mac: chest - say 34. Expansion - by Jove, 38. That'll do, Now jump: higher: lift your right leg: hold it there: cough: all right: on

your toes: arms straight in front of you: open your fingers wide: hold them so: turn round: bend over" (Lawrence, 1955:19-20).

Here bodily capital³ is at the centre of the medical practitioner's concerns. Would this potential recruit's body fail under testing conditions?

In the following account, *Rolly* conveys awareness that the military training experience would change his body, thereby influencing motivation to enlist. His relatively low bodily capital embodied in 'skinniness' could he hoped, be transformed and allow him to seek revenge on those that undermined his sense of masculinized physical self during his period of schooling:

I was very skinny as a kid, I'd been bullied at school particularly by teachers, and I thought right 'I'll get in the Army and learn how to do it'...and I'll go back and beat the shit out of them

Rolly makes well-established links here between physical prowess and fighting ability. Taken together these indicate what Connell (1995) terms 'body-reflexive practice'. Here hegemonic masculinity achieves expression through particularly embodied channels. As Connell states (1995:64):

'Body-reflexive practices...are not internal to the individual. They involves social relations and symbolism: they may well involve large-scale institutions ...[T]hrough body-reflexive practices, more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed'.

The military is concerned then, to transform bodies in one or other ways, and develop particular elements of physical capital. It is to a consideration of these processes we now turn.

7.6 THE EMBODIMENT OF MILITARY TRAINING

The deeper philosophies of military training concern the inherent 'unfinishedness' of the human body (Shilling, 1991, 1993). Protracted physical exertion is thus orientated to changing bodily capacity on a range of fronts, from aerobic capacity to muscular strength. In this context the body is seen as:

'an entity which is in the process of becoming; a project which should be worked at and accomplished' (Shilling, 1993:5).

Arrival into the hands of the solidly built Physical Training Instructor (PTI) may well be a humbling experience on account of the ubiquity of bulging Instructor physiques in immaculately pressed white shirts at the training unit. Even their way of moving speaks of high levels of physical capital. This can give way to feelings of recruit bodily intimidation, and untrained bodies dwell at the lower reaches of this particular somatic hierarchy⁴. An example of the experience of 'bodily inferiority' is expressed in the following account by McNab (1995:65) during initial stages of *Special Air Service* (SAS) selection:

'Some people had turned up looking fearsomely fit. I judged myself all the time against them...[W]e went out for a run...one day...stopping to do press-ups and sit-ups. (He) took his shirt off and revealed...a superb physique. I'd always been really fit in the battalion...It annoyed me that compared to some of these blokes I was a bag of shit, sweating and knackered.'

In a similar sense, the following extract captures the potent meanings attached to *deviations* from the physically idealized 'warrior body' (as outlined by Foucault at head of this

chapter). With a good degree of irony, Thomas describes the following scene as witnessed *Sergeant Driscoll*:

'He counted first the men who wore glasses. There were fifty-two out of one hundred and sixty...[S]even of the N.C.O.s wore them...[I]n addition there were...men with fingers or toes missing...bald men...' "[I]n Private Longley," said Driscoll... "we have a unique physical oddity. Even for this place. Unique. He is the very opposite to a hunchback. He is a hunchfront! Just see that pigeon chest. It's forcing his head back...[H]ere they are, top of the circus bill'" (Thomas, 1966:22-23).

Bodies within the military constitute 'raw material' with which PTI's must work. Recruits unable to pass the various tests often fail on account of flawed bodily capital. Serious injuries (such as shin-splints) may lead to recruits being 'back-flighted' (Hockey, 1986). PTI's have a parallel role to those who are responsible for training boxers, for example. In terms of this next comment, 'boxer' and 'serviceman' are easily interchangeable. Wacquant argues (1995:67) that:

'The boxers body is simultaneously his means of production, the raw materials he and his trainer have to work with and on...*[B]odily capital and bodily labour are thus linked by a recursive relation* which makes them closely dependent on one another.' (*original emphasis*).

And, as Mansfield and McGinn (1993:53) state in relation to Foucault:

'[T]he notion of the soldier as a social-type gave way to a notion of the soldier as the end product of a series of specific disciplined practices. Foucault compares earlier notions of the soldier as someone born with certain attributes with a more recent understanding of the "soldier" as someone that was/could be produced by military training.'

There are limits to bodily transformation, however (Jenkins, 1996:51), and military training processes have necessarily to work within these parameters. For example, the relationship between proportion of limb, or torso to foot, in a fully mature adult is fixed. Within the military training context, elimination of hopefuls may come about as a consequence of 'inappropriate bodily capital'. In McNab's (1995:66) description of the experience of SAS selection, we note the way in which a particular element of embodied human agency served to undermine attempt at 'Selection':

"It was because I kept falling over", Dave said to me. "And the reason I keep falling over is that my feet aren't big enough to support me. I've only got size sevens."

The ways in which limits are set is commonly thought to rest within the cognitive realm as the term 'mind over body' indicates. There is no doubt that bodies might be pushed to hitherto unimagined limits and the phenomena of 'will-power' cannot be rejected as an important factor within bodily transformations. However, physical constitution is (relatively) fixed in particular (both limiting and liberating) ways.

Quite literally, military bodies represent 'flesh capital' so that an effective fighting force depends directly on the fitness of its constituent bodies. Though the increasing intervention of technology is influencing the extent to which physical resilience remains significant (Hables-Gray, 1997), nevertheless the ethos of high bodily capital (body-man-warrior), (Morgan, 1990) remains central to the military. Again, the following comment concerning boxers has considerable resonance with service person experience:

'[The body is]...the template and epicentre of their life, at once the instrument and the object of their daily work, the medium and the outcome of their occupational exertion' (Wacquant, 1995:66).

How might these experiences of military training be articulated, and to what extent did changes in physical abilities impinge on sense of self?

7.6.1 Changes in Sense of Self - Military Training

Lengths of military training vary between service and trade. For example, within the Royal Air Force, training has and still is characterized by relative briefness giving way to its description as a 'more gentle experience' (Morgan, 1987; Royle, 1997). On the opposing pole, as we saw in Chapter 3 and above, training for SAS selection remains brutally physical, occasionally resulting in the death of hopefuls (McNab, 1995); here bodies are quite literally pushed to 'breaking point'.

Prior to examining the ways in which single homeless ex-servicemen in the present study recalled their experience of military training, we include an extract from the work of Hockey (1986:27/34) with reference to Army infantry recruits:

'They complain constantly of being "knackered" and hungry, despite three meals a day, and their leg muscles ache constantly from the unaccustomed physical training...The "right" qualities are developed through a programme of activities designed to...test them. These include physical training, road runs, assault courses, forced speed marches...The overall character of these activities is that they are physically hard upon the recruits.'

Of note here are the physically tough regimes, the majority of them characteristic of Army training. *Tony* recalls the rigours of his infantryman training:

[Y]ou used to have...a lot of 10 mile...route marches, they aren't marches at all, they're basically runs, 10 miles, then occasionally you'd stop and march for 200 yards...they make sure it's absolutely throwing it down with rain, and

extremely cold...you might be carrying ...your normal rifle and your pack which works out at about...63lb in weight

And for *Rolly*:

I would always double (run)...up hill, and march downhill...we used (sometimes) to do 40 miles on Dartmoor

Ziggy who enlisted during late teenage years recalled his enjoyment of the training:

I used to do a 10 mile run every morning like, with a 10lb pack on...we used to do a 30 mile yomp every week...we had to do it in 9 hours but it sometimes took us 12 or 13 hours...I used to enjoy that though

It is clear that these training experiences are highly specialized and few outside the military environment might easily engage with such embodied challenge. Further, we note the significance of extremes of temperature, together with the experience of hunger. The engendering of desire for tough challenge, rooted within the sentient body (Shilling, 1997) may foster a hankering after physical test, perhaps even using embodied prowess to gain respect. As *Rolly* explained:

[R]espect has to be earned...when we went on route marches I was invariably put at the front...at the beginning I was hated for it because I would always double (run)...up hill, and march downhill...and after the first couple of route marches, they realised it was easier to do it that way than to march up hill and double down-hill

This ex-serviceman puts the embodied dimension of agency to work in the service of masculine status. The conflation of fitness and informal (embodied) hierarchy is rarely explicitly stated. Yet, its resonance is embedded deep within a particular embodied element of the 'serviceman illutio' (Higate, 1998; Wacquant, 1995). The importance of highly embodied training become both familiar and positively received. Discussing the regular bouts of Army training, *Sven* stated most enthusiastically:

I loved it...in fact I lived for it

And similarly, for *Rod*:

I was a right fitness freak at one time, yeah - every night doing a couple of miles you know - with a pack on the back and all the rest of it - I was enjoying the adrenalin rush offa that

The interplay between partly socialized bodies and their environments is complex, though it seems likely that for both *Sven* and *Rod*, a particular affinity with physical exertion developed. Interaction between endorphins (see below) and the social environment represented 'both response to and shaping of social system' (Shilling, 1997). In this formulation, endorphins are conceptualized as bio-chemical 'raw material', interpreted beneficially by the exercising-self partly on account of wider belief systems⁵. Here, the linkage of physical exercise to robust health and issues that connect bodies with masculinized status, are central. To take Connell's (1995) notion of 'circuits and staging posts' concerning the body, masculinities (here linked to mens' social practices) and sexuality, we might suggest that 'bodily-cultural-masculine' response to physical exercise represented a cycle crucial to sense of bodily confidence. The complex and irreducible bio-

cultural circuit swiftly assumed a vital role in the life of a number of individuals for whom the embodied dimension was vital to sense of self-worth. Most importantly, these processes tended not to trouble the realm of the discursive consciousness and developed relatively autonomously, though ultimately, their effects were represented as a crucial component in the shaping of behaviour⁶.

Bodily capital is at the centre of Wacquant's (1995) work - invoked earlier in the chapter - specifically those aspects required within the profession of boxing. In the following extract, we note that the shape, capacity and potential of the body 'within the ring' is noted to work at a deep and unthinking level, and yet has a profound influence on sense of self:

'Yet ultimately, the strongest root of the belief in the pugilistic *illusio* is found lodged deep within his body...engagement in the specific universe and acceptance of its stakes operate beneath the level of discourse and consciousness, through a...*quasi organismic commitment*...that govern[s]...the body-mind complex...structuring...his corporeal and mental categories' (Wacquant, 1995:88, *original emphasis*).

Here, Wacquant is offering an explanation for the ways in which the health risks of boxing are negotiated at the level of the '(re)socialized body'. Quite literally the body 'remembers' its protracted experiences of training through material adaptation which impinges directly on sense of masculine self. Central to this conceptual frame are Bourdieu's formulations of *habitus* and *doxa* which, in this context suggest the 'inhabitation of the boxer by the game he inhabits' (Wacquant, 1995:88). There develops a seamless and unconscious 'fit' between social environment and somatic constitution:

'[Physical training] reorganizes the entire corporeal field of the fighter, bringing to prominence certain organs and abilities and making others recede, transforming not only the physique of the fighter but also his "body-sense", the consciousness he has of his organism and, through this changed body, of the world about him' (Wacquant, 1995:73).

The significance of the relationship between changed corporeal constitution and sense of social environment might also be illustrated by men who suffer bodily 'disablement'. Though a range of coping strategies are invoked as response, drawing on Gerschick and Miller, Connell (1995:54) states: 'The one thing none of these (disabled) men can do is ignore it.' At the other end of the somatic continuum are bodies that are characterized by high fitness, or that adhere to idealized shapes. These too may well engender greater discursive awareness whereas Lewis, quoted in Morgan (1993:86) states:

'The sum of my knowledge about the male body, its structure and functioning was the fact that I had one. It worked very satisfactorily for me, performed most of the tasks that were required of it and without too much difficulty. It never seriously bothered me, and consequently, I never seriously bothered about it.'

Throughout the next section we examine some of the ways in which the significant embodied dimension of human agency is carried over into post-discharge life. The importance of embodied challenge represents a particular continuity between the military and civilian environments.

7.7 MILITARY/CIVILIAN TRANSITIONS - EMBODIED CONTINUITIES

In this section, we consider some of the unintended ways in which insecure accommodation emerged for a number of single ex-servicemen on account of their desire to re-create challenge, and forge status through the embodied realms of human agency. Here, high bodily capital derived within the military experience was given continued expression in a range of ways, throughout varying environments. These experiences served to bridge the transitional military/civilian void and bolstered masculinized self-worth.

7.7.1 High Wire - Embodied Risk and Challenge

We start by considering the activities of the ex-servicemen *Paul* and *Tony*. Soon after discharge they joined the Peace Movement and became involved in 'direct action' campaigns. Here, daring raids requiring high bodily capital and invoking challenge and drama were suggestive of parallel scenarios within the military environment⁷. As we assert above, the partial socialization of a sentient body that has grown used to being pushed and challenged may remain tenacious through time and thus, between context.

In this comment, *Paul* explicitly links the Army to civilian life in terms of embodied challenge:

[A]nd to me it was like I was back in the Army again, climbing up the trees and swinging across - you know, and it was good fun...like when we climbed the Houses of Parliament...and we put ladders up onto the scaffolding, up onto the roof...we got on the top

Tony relayed a story concerning direct action on an airbase known to have a nuclear strike potential. He was accompanied by a fellow homeless ex-serviceman, *Dave*:

[T]here was this great big 300 foot water tower, which used to supply the whole base with fresh water, and what we decided to do one night was...scale it...go right to the very top...(and) paint - "F111's (military aircraft) go home" - so when the planes (were) coming into land they'd see it, but nobody would be able to see it from the ground. We had to climb up on this thing before we could climb up to get onto this actual ladder...so we'd gone all the way up...if you can imagine 250 foot...it was quite nerve racking for me...(though) *Dave* was used to it being in the Paras. We got all

the way up to the top of this thing...which was no wider than (a few inches) with no railings...Dave just ran across it you know - pitch black this was

There is little doubt that these activities drew very centrally on the embodied dimension of human agency, both in terms of vital body-capital and the repercussions of the challenge in terms of masculinized identity, brokered through informal membership of an elite direct-action partnership. Embodied skills learned within the military environment were re-inserted into civilian life serving to rekindle elements of 'the buzz' which remained contingent on the exercise of specialized body-capitals. In this way, the rigours of insecure accommodation status were unintendedly 'accepted' or at least remained peripheral when compared to central concerns (direct action); here bodily performance moved centre stage. One particular interpretation of these events concerns broadening the context, and invoking wider structural changes within the labour market. In this way, these ex-servicemen might be understood to be optimising embodied opportunities as paid employment - if obtainable at all - would likely offer a relatively mundane existence. Here, the body's declining significance (against the backdrop of technological developments in the work-place) may challenge the linkage of masculinized work performance and identity with 'bodies' (see for example, Cockburn, 1983).

7.8 THE DEMISE OF TRADITIONAL EMBODIED OCCUPATIONS

In Chapter 2 we suggested that the military might be understood as characterized by its largely traditional character. In this way, discourses locating the marginalization of both women and homosexuals were highlighted. However, it is also likely that the onus on high and specific bodily capital within the embodied military represents a further element of its traditional nature. Traditional (embodied) military capitals, or 'transferable skills' epitomised by the infantry soldier are of decreasing significance in the contemporary labour market. Clearly, this asymmetry resonates throughout accommodation status, as paid-employment and securing housing are mutually interdependent; an address is required for paid

employment, and financial resources are necessary for good quality housing (Ford, 1997). Turner (1996:2) makes the following points about contemporary labour markets:

'Economic change and restructuring have brought about fundamental shifts in the nature of labour and its composition...[Y]oung, working-class men have become a surplus population, whose machismo image of toughness no longer has a direct functional relevance'

The linkage of 'machismo toughness' with occupations that require high bodily capital is clear. Seidler (1997:2) describes contemporary change in the labour markets in the following way:

'The restructuring of democratic capitalist societies in the West in the 1980s and 1990s has often worked to undermine traditional sources of male identity. There are far fewer traditional working class jobs that could sustain men in their positions as breadwinners...for instance, shipbuilding and mining'

Similar comments are made by Connell (1995:55) who states:

'The combination of force and skill is thus open to change. Where work is altered by deskilling and casualization, working class men are increasingly defined as possessing force alone.'

Thus, the trajectories of paid employment open to those who have, for example, served as combat soldiers in the Army tended to depend centrally on high bodily capital. In the case of

Rolly, physical fitness was vital to his early experiences of employment as a deep-sea fisherman, post-discharge:

(I was out) there long-lining (fishing)...you need to be fit...and window cleaning. Of course you're out all year round...no matter what the weather

The decline in the fishing industry meant that *Rolly* moved to another occupation - window cleaning - through which, once again he endured the physical rigours of previous occupations. For a number of months, the ex-serviceman *Mick* applied his bodily-capital to heavy forms of work within the construction industry in Germany. In this comment he links Army and civilian employability:

I mean in the building trade, the fitness I got in the Army has helped me

Mick was made redundant in Germany, and returned to Britain to discover that the construction industry was in considerable decline; this led to eventual unemployment.

Further evidence suggests that a number of ex-servicemen find employment within the security industry (Jolly, 1996; La Plante, 1992). This was the case for *Brian* who was eventually made redundant, on account of the (ironic) insecurity of such paid employment. Again, we note the significance of size and shape of body for security work (for example night-club 'bouncers'), and it is likely that requirements concerning bodily criteria would partly explain the move of ex-servicemen into other uniformed work, including the police force and the prison service. As *Rolly* stated with regard to ex-servicemen:

They usually end up as prison officers or security guards

Soon after leaving the Army, *Ziggy* served a 2 year prison sentence. Even within the confines of this environment, bodily-capital remained important, serving eventually to provide a role closely associated with the embodied dimension:

I still played football, still ran, still did press-ups...even in prison I used to do that and got a job as a gym orderly

In this section, we have traced particular lines of continuity between the military and civilian experience. Here, the embodied nature of military life was expressed through post-discharge paid employment that relied pivotally on high levels of bodily capital. These occupations were vulnerable to structural change and were characterized by their insecurity. In the longer term, the poor degree of fit between 'skill/bodily capital' and labour markets influenced the ultimate genesis of homelessness to varying extents. Importantly, the embodied lines of continuity went largely unacknowledged, though sense of masculine self remained implicitly contingent on the physical nature of these occupations.

We turn now to consider the physical experiences of homelessness in the broadest sense and in doing so draw on the work of Carlen (1996).

7.9 THE EMBODIMENT OF HOMELESSNESS

As Carlen states (1996:98) in direct relation to rough sleeping:

'Survival on the street is a matter of keeping body, mind and spirit together. The body has to be fed, sheltered and protected'

However, the nature of the homelessness literature on account of the relative 'absent presence' of bodies means that embodied issues - even within the context of the most vital concerns (for example, of food) - remain relatively marginal. A re-reading of the material so

as to tease out issues around the body, (a strategy advised by Scott and Morgan 1993), reveals a linkage between the embodiment of human agency and the experience of homelessness. Most obviously, the rigours of a life devoid of stable accommodation and balanced, or even adequate diet, manifests themselves at the level of the body, as health serves as a material barometer of physical and mental hardship (Bines, 1997; Wilkinson, 1996).

7.9.1 Homelessness and Health

In the following extract, a character in Orwell's (1986) *Down and Out in Paris and London* attempts to bring colour to his pale cheeks - evidence of protracted hunger - so as to appear suitable for work:

Appearance, is everything...[H]e stopped at a jeweller's window and smacked his cheeks sharply to bring the blood into them. Then before the flush had faded, we hurried into the restaurant and introduced ourselves to the *patron* (Orwell, 1986:49; *original emphasis*).

Information about the body and its (employment) potential is here 'given off' in a Goffmanian sense. In the contemporary period, however, these bodily signals may be subject to a process of intensification, as Featherstone (1991:186) notes within the context of ageing. As the sphere of consumption increasingly pervades bodies, appearance may become more or less socially acceptable depending on one's particular presentation of self (Nettleton and Watson, 1998:5); here bodily transformation (for example, cosmetic surgery), and financial resources may become closely linked.

The links between health and homelessness, however, are far from straightforward, as Bines (1997:146) states:

'[T]he physical health...of single homeless people was found to be considerably worse than that of the general population. While it is difficult to know the direction of cause and effect between homelessness and poor health, the findings...nevertheless confirm that there is a strong relationship between the two.'

Clearly, homelessness makes great demands on the embodied dimensions of human agency. In these contexts, the very foundations of human life (food/warmth) move into the discursive consciousness and almost certainly become problematized. However, these phenomena do not exist within a life-course vacuum. Experiences of this kind may well shape future action, and it is to a consideration of so-called 'benchmark experiences' we now shift attention.

7.10 EMBODIED 'BENCHMARK EXPERIENCES'

The acquisition of tacit embodied knowledge may serve to broaden future possibilities with regard to physically challenging sleeping conditions. I started by asking the homeless non ex-serviceman *Geoff* how he coped with sleeping out during the winter months. Was the debilitating cold and damp a problem?

Er, no, coz, (in) '87...they were having it really rough on the south coast...I was sleeping rough down there anyway so...I had it pretty bad then

Earlier experience of extreme conditions served to contextualize later hardship. In this sense, 'nothing compared' to later rough sleeping. In a parallel manner, the homeless non ex-serviceman *Roger* invoked previous experience of sleeping out; this together with his training provided him with vital information around maintaining the integrity of embodied agency, 'benchmark experience' had come whilst abroad:

I already knew...from previous experiences of sleeping rough on the continent (the) clothes to wear. Always wear your hat when you are sleeping rough, keep warm. Yeah, I knew what to do really, I was lucky in that way

And *Benny*:

I went to Newbury...I moved down there with the tree protesters, it was great. You've done it all before...so it's not new to you

Memories of benchmark experience were enduring. As *Wicksy* explained:

[W]hen you're at home and that, you don't get a chance to sleep out, 'til you're kicked out and then you've got to experience it for the first time

The significance of 'the first time' cannot be underestimated. It may be analogous to a rough sleeping *rite-de-passage* providing the individual with vital and direct embodied experience of sleeping out. No matter how much individuals might have 'mentally' prepared for such an eventuality, its initial accomplishment resonates throughout later parallel experience, impacting on both the ways it is tackled and the meanings brought to it.

In the examples of the non ex-servicemen *Geoff* and *Roger*, we noted how sleeping out had been encountered within the civilian environment. In the next examples, however, we

examine experiences of sleeping-out in the military environment, endured on so-called field exercises. For a number of single homeless ex-servicemen, these episodes built on rough sleeping prior to enlistment (as we demonstrate in Chapter 6). In the following accounts, differences between ex and non-ex servicemen are amplified, as those in the former group had direct recourse to very particular survival training, a dimension almost wholly absent from the lives of 'civilians'.

7.11 CONTRASTS - EX-SERVICEMEN AND 'CIVILIANS'

We turn first to a brief consideration of preparation for sleeping out in terms of the contrast between the ex-serviceman *Tony* and the non ex-serviceman *Kevin*. The former stated:

[I]'d acquired a sleeping bag, when I left the Army, and a few other bits and bobs...hexy stove, and things that I needed to survive...(off I went) camping where I wanted

And from the non ex-serviceman *Kevin*, a qualitatively different account:

First time I slept rough was in a shop doorway...in York...and all I had was a black bin-liner, that was it, it was all night, I wasn't sleeping, I wasn't sleeping at all

Unlike *Kevin*, *John* referred to both equipment and preparation:

In a way (Army life) helped because you used to do the old training exercises, where you went out...I got a sleeping bag, so it wasn't too bad...yeah...it sort of, how can I put it...it prepares you for anything like that, you know, if you have to sleep out

In considering survival, *Benny* stressed the importance of pre-empting the embodied difficulties that accompany rough sleeping:

A lot of people have an argument, and just walk off from where they are, they don't think what they are going to do the next day. They'll sleep in a bus shelter for the night. But the next day when they wake up, they've got nothing, no sleeping bag, then they start to panic. But if you think it all out, what you're going to do first, then you can survive

Dougy referring to those who don't prepare and cannot 'cope':

Some of these people, they just can't (cope)...it's a terrible thing. But if you've been in the Army, self-discipline is drummed straight into you, you know. It can be pouring down but you know the score - you know what to do. Rather than sitting there soaking wet, get yourself in a nook and cranny somewhere - you'd be dry in the morning

Preparation, however, remains far from the minds of individuals caught within highly charged situations. It is likely that sleeping out within the military environment constitutes benchmark experience against the backdrop of the acquisition of a range of knowledges.

These are related to both the embodied dimension (warmth/diet) and the more 'conscious' realm - concerning which equipment to use, for example.

7.11.1 More Certain Futures - Being 'Aware'

For the non ex-serviceman *Roger*, experience of difficult conditions prior to travel abroad came about as consequence of survival training on the Pennines. Here, knowledge was imparted by military personnel that turned directly on the importance of maintaining optimal bodily functioning in the face of extremes. For *Roger*, 'losing it' would result in death and his training had been invaluable within the context of later experiences of homelessness. He recalls those who educated him in survival techniques:

[Y]ou needed people like that, who knew exactly what they were doing, I mean you see people...losing it, they die up there and things like that...these people knew exactly what to do, they passed it onto us really

Thus, survival training may well have unintendedly influenced the genesis of homelessness, as tacit knowledges came to colonize the embodied dimensions, *Roger* continued:

I started off sleeping rough which was no big deal because I've done that a lot

Familiarity with extreme cold and hunger might unwittingly be used as resource. The future, though bleak, holds decreasing uncertainty as body and mind adapts to testing condition. As one individual in Carlen's (1996) study said:

'You hear all this about streetwise. It's not bull. It's a big bad jungle out there. You gotta know where you're going, and where you stand. It's a big learning process, University of Life...[I]ve got the knowledge to know that I

could survive back on the street again' (*George* aged 20, quoted in Carlen, 1996:98).

Paul makes a parallel point concerning knowledge fostered within a difficult environment - a military field exercise. Here, he is more specific than *George* and discusses quality of food together with the ubiquitous 'jungle' metaphor:

What we're saying is that you've had it rough at times in the military, you know when we've been on exercise, [you're] living in a jungle somewhere, for 5 weeks and you're just living on compo [military] rations...it does make you...aware

Next, we examine particular aspects of this 'awareness' fostered within the context of both military experience and homelessness. In the following section, we suggest that knowledge around diet, for example, may enter embodied resource-repertoires, thereby unwittingly bolstering tolerance to testing conditions.

7.12 HOMELESSNESS - THE EMBODIMENT OF HUNGER AND COLD

In initial sections of this chapter, we suggested that the body might be conceived of as sentient. In this way, it is noted to adapt in ways - some more enduring than others - to an ever-changing external environment. These transformations frequently occur outwith discursive consciousness (Wacquant, 1995) and may unwittingly influence future conditions of possibility. One such change is grounded within the realm of diet. In this way, to be homeless almost certainly renders one devoid of regular and balanced nutritional intake. More generally:

'Inequalities in resource distribution ...influence the kinds of foods which are consumed by different income groups (Huby, 1998:39).

Lupton (1996) provides a wide ranging historical and contemporary analysis of the complex links between food and society. Like Morgan (1996) however, there is a tendency to gloss over the shifting relationship between gender and food. In this way, it is asserted that she does not:

'[Go] far enough in demonstrating the plurality and contestation of meanings, particularly in relation to gendered experiences of food.'
(Harbottle, 1996:780).

Whilst precise information regarding the nature and quality of food was not obtained in the present study, nevertheless, considerable knowledge was expressed by homeless ex-servicemen towards diet. These are explored below, and following these discussions, issues of gender and food are invoked. We start however, with a brief reflection on the pivotal relationship expressed by homeless individuals to food.

7.12.1 Food - More than Simply Fuel?

Even the sight of food might invoke crude bodily sentience as in the case of *George Orwell's* homeless colleague who had not eaten for many days:

'Poor lad, not a word could he utter; but his belly answered for him, with a disgraceful rumbling which it set up at the sight of food' (Orwell, 1986:142).

It is to a consideration of its centrality to human agency within the context of homelessness we now turn. In the following sections we explore particular elements of the relationship between intake of food and human agency amongst a number of non ex-service homeless individuals.

7.12.2 Struggles for Food and Warmth

'Sleeping rough' does invoke the most basic of concerns around the continued functioning of the body, and these turn directly on food and hunger. As *Ron* (aged 17) stated:

'You don't know whether you're gonna starve to death or freeze to death' (quoted in Carlen, 1996:97).

And *Spanner* (aged 19):

'[Y]ou can't eat. You can't survive on water. You wonder what's goin' to happen. Who's going to come along. Is it gonna rain? Is it gonna be freezing cold?' (quoted in Carlen, 1996:97).

I asked *Kevin*, the homeless non ex-serviceman, about his most enduring memories of hardship:

[Y]ou're always cold (and getting)...food - those are the main things. Keeping warm - getting something to eat, you know. They're the worst things

For *Steve* (aged 24):

'The worst thing's during winter. You're out there and it's freezing cold and you just wanna curl up in front of a fire in some nice, cosy house' (quoted in Carlen, 1996:99).

The hardships articulated here - a number of them drawn from Carlen's (1996) study of youth homelessness - parallel exigencies that characterize life within the military, particularly in terms of temporariness of shelter and lack of food during field exercises. However, a key difference is that within the military, these testing conditions are rarely endured for sustained periods. As *John* told me within the context of military training:

You always knew at the end of the day you were going back. You were gonna get a meal - you know a bed

Certainty that training will be terminated at some time in the near future served to energize tolerance to hardship. And yet, in both military and civilian environments, bodies are vulnerable to partial socialization. Getting 'used' to being hungry and cold thus resonates throughout the extent to which these hardships are problematized. In the words of *Geoff*, (aged 20):

'I've gone without food for two days, *that hasn't bothered me*. Cos the cold's hit me more than the hunger has. Most nights I feel as if I've been asleep for hours, but I've only been asleep for 10 or 15 minutes and I'm freezing. I've gotta walk around until I get warm, then park myself down again. But it's a case of up and down all night.' (quoted in Carlen, 1996:99; *emphasis added*).

For most of people, going without food for two days would represent a profound test of mental fortitude, whereas for *Geoff*, familiarity of the experience unintendedly eroded its significance, against the backdrop of other concerns.

In these sections, we have sketched particular elements of the embodied nature of homelessness. The universal experience of cold and hunger link together those described in this way, though we have focused on physiological requirements. The ways in which food can become the subject of potent cultural mediation is discussed next.

7.13 FOOD - SYMBOLIC AND CULTURAL MEANINGS

Many individuals might find the retrieval and consumption of food from dustbins as wholly repulsive. However, in meeting the needs of embodied human agency, individuals frequently exhaust all avenues of available nutrition and assume innovative practice so as to sustain themselves. Here, Orwell (1986:198) reflects on the disposal of food within a particular establishment:

'The wastage was astonishing and, in the circumstances, appalling. Half-eaten joints of meat, and bucketfuls of broken bread and vegetables, were pitched away like so much rubbish.'

The non ex-serviceman *Geoff* explained his approach to procuring food. For him the process was relatively unproblematized, and he understood it as an acceptable way in which to meet his embodied needs:

If there's no soup kitchens, try churches, places like that, or if you have to, go round (the bins of) the big supermarkets...there's actually one just down the road - *Netto's* - they throw out thousands of pounds worth every week

In contrast, *Brian* linked his loss of pride with foraging in bins for food. This painful process was closely connected with his overall experience of social distress rooted in the exigencies of embodied agency and homelessness during these months:

I was starting to lose what pride I had left which was making me feel awful, by the fact that I had to start rummaging in bins, and so on, to find scraps of food, and perhaps eating things that I would never in my life dream of really doing

Less dramatically, issues of convenience may temporarily transcend physiological need concerning food. As *Paul* stated:

[I] didn't have money for food, but I've have enough money to put my clothing in a locker, so I wasn't walking around with everything on me back, so to speak...and that pound or 2 pound I'm putting in that machine, which lasts for 24 hours, would have bought me a coffee and a roll, which would have been more important to me than locking my stuff up

We might presume that individuals who had experienced insufficient nutritional intake would, when the opportunity arose, acquire a hot and filling meal. *Brian* explains a particular incident in which the embodied dimension of agency became infused with dilemma. This is his story, quoted in full:

[O]ne of the places that I used to go to look for food was in a park, which was across the road from a very large company. Hundreds of people would come over to the park for their lunch, (and) it would be a good place to go and look for food at lunch time after they finished. People must have realised that I was living rough because at one of the points that I used to go and look for food there was a little pile of money. It was too sort of convenient for somebody to have lost it...that caused me great problems because I'd managed for quite a long time with no money at all. I had this dilemma of finding this money, which was not enough to do very much with...it was a few pounds...what an earth did I do with this few pounds? Did I go and buy myself a really good meal - back to square one - or did I go and get myself a cheap pair of shoes which I was badly in need of?

In part, *Brian's* experiences of social distress tended to be solitary, unlike other homeless ex-servicemen who joined one element of the community based Peace Movement. For *Paul* and *Tony*, consumption and preparation of foodstuffs confirmed 'sense of belonging' (Morgan, 1996:158), perhaps echoing similar shared experiences . . . of food within the Army. First, however, food had to be secured - in this next example - for the soup kitchen *Paul* worked in. Again we note the 'recycling' of food destined for disposal:

[W]e used to do a...run...every night...all the vegetable stalls would give us stuff...and there would be nothing wrong - you'd just have to take a little bit of the brown off or something like that, but it was good - so people could come and have a hot meal, and do a little bit of work...I mean it was a DIY culture

Similar themes around the linkage of food and community were apparent within the ex-serviceman *Tony's* experience of the peace camp outside the now closed United States Air Force base *Upper Heyford*. He said:

[W]e had a big communal camp fire...we used to have a big meal on it...it'd be great fun at night times especially in winter you know, a nice big pot of Irish stew or something like that...we'd (all) chip in...we'd have a nice big fire going

In both these examples, embodied requirements gave way to a series of cultural mediations around food. These likely turned on economy and convenience (Morgan, 1996:157-171) as well as serving as locus around which individuals might seek out a common rallying-point, against the backdrop of shared hardship.

There is, however, a further dimension that tends to mark servicemen from other groups, and that is the subversion within military life of the nexus characterized by the typical linkage of women with food (Morgan, 1996), and it is to those issues we now return.

7.14 MEN AND FOOD

The masculinized nature of military life means factors that typically connect women to many facets of food control, from procurement to preparation (Morgan, 1996), are loosened considerably. Men's domination of these processes has a series of legacies for ex-servicemen, which may extend to relatively expert knowledge concerning nutritional value of certain foodstuffs, together with the ways in which it might be prepared. The linkage of men with food should be contextualized with the overall growth in single households (many of whom are headed by men) in the broadest sense.

7.14.1 Diet and Self-Sufficiency

Military training urges individuals to reflect on their own embodied states. Survival techniques directly involves service people in preparation and consumption of food and drink for themselves and others. Specialist nutritional knowledges are encouraged as 'second nature' and swiftly enter tacit body repertoires. Here's the point at which McNab (1995:103-104) learns a crucial lesson concerning his bodily liquid requirements in an extreme jungle environment:

'Because we were sweating so much, we were losing loads of electrolytes, sodium and chlorides - and the result was dehydration. We were losing non-circulating body fluids'

I asked *Wicksy* what he'd learnt during his brief period in the Army, he replied:

[S]tuff like what you're supposed to eat, and what's good to eat, and what can help you in the cold weather like...I mean I was taught chocolate was good for you in cold weather

Mick also recalled the importance of a diet that contained:

Water, fuel - high fibre...carbohydrates

Lenny expressed considerable knowledge around embodied states - particularly those related to food, drink and obesity. He said:

[L]oads of extra weight creates tension on your heart...blood system, arteries, respiratory system, liver, kidneys, brain...an unfit body (is linked) with your mind because it effects ability to make decisions...because your brain is an organ...if your internal system is not functioning 100% per cent or near that, then obviously your brain is going to function at a nominally deficient capacity...as opposed to somebody who is 100 per cent physically fit...his brain is working to its maximum ability

It seems likely from the foregoing discussions, that awareness of the embodied dimensions of human agency in relation to ways in which to stave off the assaulting elements, and experiences of cold/hunger, contribute to relatively high degrees of resilience. In the next section we consider the ways in which ex-service homeless individuals framed the military-insecure accommodation link with a particular focus on parallel, embodied experience.

7.15 HOMELESSNESS AS MILITARY EXERCISE?

I asked *Ziggy* how he remembered the experience of sleeping rough shortly after leaving the Army. He said:

To tell you the truth...it didn't bother me...I just looked at it like doing a fieldcraft exercise...something like that

How did *John* experience sleeping out in the context of his military experience? He remarked:

[W]hen it came to...sleeping rough, I just used to think, well, "I've done this in Army, it's no big thing"

Benny, in equating freedom with sleeping out, stated:

I...found it easier to do what (we'd) been doing - on exercises all the time, camping out, sleeping rough, it was just an extension of that...so, I was quite at home with it

And *Dougy* who had experienced many months of rough sleeping after a 15 year stint in the Army commented:

[I]t was just like being back in the Army again wasn't it?...you're a bit more used to it. I mean you've slept under the stars before...you've got an idea of how to cope

Rod put survival down to his earlier military experiences:

[I] didn't think I'd be here now, if I hadn't had the Army training...because, even last night, I had 3 blankets on top of me, I was freezing...but a was warm enough...they reckon there were people dying on the streets of London

Brian reflected on the season in which he first slept out post-discharge:

[I]t was around...March, April...time of the year and the weather wasn't too bad, and I can always remember thinking to myself that (during)...my time in the Army, I'd actually been paid to sleep in worse conditions than I was sleeping in...so in that respect I didn't think of it as anything...out of the ordinary

7.15.1 'Falling into Homelessness'

The genesis of homelessness appears relatively straightforward from the comments in the previous section, though in the case of *Brian*, we note a paradoxical reflection of his early encounter with rough sleeping⁸ in civilian life. He said:

It wasn't a question of doing it easily, because it was just something you fell into

The clue to reconciling *Brian's* 'difficulties of sleeping out' with its apparent 'ease', may well lie within the embodied dimension of the experience; here sentient and non-discursive understandings of a resilient body prove insightful. These particular interpretations of human action appear to resonate throughout *Rod's* engagement with homelessness. That it should have only been an interim measure is clear from the following:

I thought it'd only be for a couple of nights...I thought...it's only a couple of nights - you know what I mean - no problem

It is likely that this rationale for sleeping on the streets of London would be distant from the minds of the majority, and for *Rod* at least, turns on the *familiarity* with such possibilities.

Throughout this chapter, and within the context of theoretical materials concerning the embodiment of human agency, we have suggested ways in which the genesis of homelessness may be characterized by a somewhat unintended corporeal component amongst a number of ex and non ex-servicemen. The differences between the two groups in terms of the genesis of homelessness are less than clear, though this limited study does point to the significance of 'resilient bodies' in the case of ex-servicemen. In this formulation, the embodied dimension is 'liberating' and unwittingly contributes towards the opening-out of particular conditions of possibility.

In the final sections, however, we flag the 'constraining' elements of embodied human agency. The paradox underpinning the following discussions concern longer-term legacies of hardship. That bodies do 'set limits to agency' (Campbell, 1996) might mean that homeless individuals (sometimes reluctantly) rekindle membership to mainstream social activities on account of ill-health; in this sense 'failure' of bodies may actually signal the end of social exclusion.

7.16 HOMELESSNESS AND EMBODIED LIMITS

As we have already seen, the experience of homelessness is closely linked with assaults on the embodied dimension of human agency. Through time, these hardships undermine the integrity of physical capital, and set limits on the extent to which individuals might endure insecure accommodation status. Illustrative of these tough experiences within a particular 'protest context' was the ethos of the centre in which *Paul* worked. It was a

place where people who were on campaigns all over the country could come...sleep...for a few days, recharge their batteries, get themselves a shower, get cleaned up, collect their dole money, and just get their head back together again...`coz when you're on a campaign...you're not sleeping...and the weather is shit...living in a bender (shelter)...the rain always manages to find its way in somewhere

Examples of bodily transformation on account of protracted hardship are identified by the non ex-serviceman *Tom*:

I lost a lot of weight, but was starting to build myself back up..in the last two months...lost about 2 stone...I was a big lad...you know, and I've lost it

And the non ex-serviceman *Roger*:

I looked totally different - I was about a stone and a half less than I am now...just pretty shattered all round. It's the sleeping rough - the drink...it blots out the reality of the situation you're in...especially in winter time...[W]hen sleeping out you're physically...capable of looking after yourself, but it does grind you down. At the time, you don't actually realise

Limits located at the embodied level were unwittingly breached in the case of *Roger*. Masculinized independence infused sense of self-worth at the expense of physical well being. As Seidler (1997:98) states within the context of men:

'We resist our own mortality, and have little sense of limits. Having learnt within a Cartesian tradition to treat our bodies as machines we do not expect them to let us down...[T]his is the way we have learnt to test ourselves'

The nature of change in embodied states, culminating in 'the body's refusal to cooperate'⁹ is captured by Connell (1995:57/58) when he says:

'Not only are men's bodies diverse and changing, they can be positively recalcitrant. Ways are proposed for bodies to participate in social life, and the bodies often refuse...[T]he body is virtually assaulted in the name of masculinity and achievement'

In returning to *Roger* and *Tom's* comments, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between 'survival on the street' and 'achievement' (Higate, 1997), grounded more broadly within a gendered context.

Alternatively, bodies can display unexpected resilience. As *Jethro* explained:

I was always very fit, used to do lots of sport...even though I was a mad abuser of anything that came my way...[O]ver the years, it's surprised me by how well it's stood up...and the doctors say that I have a constitution like an OX

Self-reflection on embodied state moves into discursive consciousness (as we suggested above) when bodies can no longer live-up to previous levels of performance. We explore these limits next, in the final section of this chapter.

7.16.1 'Final Truths' - Embodied Collapse

The homeless non ex-serviceman *Roger* had used alcohol for many years. After an epileptic fit in a supermarket, he discovered that organic and possibly irreparable damage had been inflicted on what had been a valuable resource. I asked him to describe what he knew about his changed somatic constitution:

My...central nervous system (is) literally shot to pieces, that's through alcohol. I've got nerve damage through my hands, I had operations...the year before...that is through living on the streets. I used to be an athlete, playing football, weight training, running, yoga and skiing. Now it takes me a long time to walk around these days...you're not infallible, you're not Mr Invincible. You're just human

And, in the case of the non ex-serviceman *Kevin*:

I got ulcers, I got ulcers in the end, I got ulcers through the drink

Particular lifestyles, whether characterized by protracted alcohol use, frequent travel and rough sleeping had necessarily to be changed. Embodied failure thus served to 'push' particular individuals into situations hitherto (and somewhat unwittingly) rejected. The body as 'final truth' signalled a move into more conventional practices, including moving into poor quality social housing, and - albeit reluctantly - building a life of 'inevitability' outwith challenge, stimulation, drama and risk.

We conclude by considering the actions of *Ken*. His experience of homelessness was characterized by particular social distress - like *Brian* he attempted self-harm on a number of occasions but in a somewhat bizarre manner. Aware of the stigma around suicide, he subconsciously placed himself into hazardous situations so that potential resulting death might appear accidental. In this following extract, the body was utilised as a site through which he might distance himself from responsibility. The finitude of the organic or embodied dimension of human agency appeared as solution to an existence characterized by protracted drug and alcohol use together with recent family tragedy. The manifestation of the Cartesian split at the level of everyday experience is the most fascinating characteristic of this account. As a keen supporter of the Scottish football club *Rangers*', he would court violence by frequenting the public bars of the staunch rivals, *Celtic*. This is what he told me:

I would be getting myself into situations (like) walking into places...and causing trouble...basically, I was looking to kill myself...but not actually doing it...I wanted to die...but I didn't want my kids to think I committed suicide and taken the easy option...[S]o I would walk into a pub full of *Celtic* supporters, and I would walk in singing the 'Sash' (normally sung by supporters of the *Rangers'* football Club) - and I would get beat...I ended up in hospital with my arm broke, my leg broke, my skull fractured...I mean, I wasn't doing it consciously - subconsciously I was doing things like this

We are reminded here of the paradoxical nature of the embodied self. Whilst *Ken* 'knew' that he was likely to be violently assaulted he unwittingly allowed the sentient body a degree of autonomy. Somatic precursors to these actions lay within military experience in which he was regularly reprimanded (and again, hospitalized) for violent incidents. Seidler (1997:210) commenting on men's bodies states the following:

'[T]hey are despised and often punished for letting us down when we need them most. For our bodies as machines have become property that is at our disposal. Our freedom supposedly lies in being able to do with them whatever we will. If they let us down we can feel they deserve to be punished. But the body has its own way of getting its revenge.'

We might say, in the last analysis that the truth of the embodied dimension of agency concerns its inevitable, and final exhaustion.

7.17 SUMMARY COMMENTS

The military experience may unintendedly contribute towards situations which call forth particular embodied attributes. Occupations that turns on such physical capitals are in decline, and fit/strong bodies have little opportunity to 'sell' their specialisms on the labour market.

The embodied dimensions of human agency are vulnerable to partial socialization, and, therefore, necessarily influences action. Embodied resilience fostered during military experience may unintendedly broaden conditions of possibility that turn on the genesis of insecure accommodation status. These comments further undermine the inappropriate linkage of 'choice' with 'homelessness'. Non-discursive characteristics of embodied practice likely remain tenacious, as do transformations in sentient bodies; these phenomena remain both influential and non-acknowledged. Individuals thus maximise embodied capacities in accordance with the opportunities open to them. Here we note the particular manifestation of the 'society in the body' (Freund, 1988).

In this chapter, we have attempted to uncover a cluster of generative mechanisms rooted in the corporeal self that interact in a complex manner, and ultimately influence the ascription of the chaotic concept 'homelessness'. In the following chapter, we continue to examine the genesis and sustaining of homelessness from the perspective of recent commentaries loosely labelled the 'sociology of the emotions'.

CHAPTER 8 - HOMELESSNESS AND THE REALM OF THE EMOTIONS

Men of Self-Reliance

I think that the pride that you develop...throughout your forces career, is a pride in yourself, a pride in your unit, a pride in the way you carry your uniform...the way you carry yourself. Brian, 42 years old, 10 years Army service

[A] lot of people don't realise...that you was in hard times, they don't know coz you don't tell `em, and you're the last person they would ever think would be...in that situation. You know, you're walking tall and walking proud like everyone else - "Oh there's old so and so, came out the Army a while ago, looks well, yeah he's doin' alright" - ...they don't realise you're going to soup-kitchens, handout places in London where someone's gonna give you some clothes, or someone's gonna give you something to eat, they're none the wiser Dougy, 51 years of age, 12 year Army service

The Army attitude is that if you can't put a bandage on it, it doesn't exist Wyness, The Observer 2 Nov 97

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The worst aspects of social distress endured during experiences of homelessness represent a threat to sense of masculine identity. In this chapter, we examine pathways into and the sustaining of insecure accommodation status through the emotional realm. We draw on current sociological interest in 'the emotions' to suggest that masculine phenomenology may be self-defeating in the face of hardship. It is suggested that the emotional habitus of the military remains tenacious against the backdrop of a challenging civilian environment. Asking for help may be tantamount to 'failure' and 'weakness' in the case of single homeless ex-servicemen specifically, and homeless men generally. An ability to be self-reliant, independent and able to 'rise to a challenge' bolsters sense of self. The difficulties associated

with relying on others for support illustrates the fragility of the masculine self. We start with a brief appraisal of contributions to the sociology of the emotions.

8.2 THEORIZING EMOTIONS

In recent years, work around the 'sociology of the emotions' has proliferated (Bendelow and Williams, 1998; Burkitt, 1997; Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Elias, 1991; Jackson, 1993; Shilling, 1997; Williams, 1998; Wouters, 1992). This current interest builds on the work of Durkheim (Shilling, 1997) and Elias (Burkitt, 1997), amongst others. Analogous to, and overlapping with the contemporary sociological interest in 'the body', concern with the emotions is far from new. This is unsurprising given the ways in which classical theory is subject to a process of reappraisal more generally within sociology (Sandywell, 1998). This is clear, for example, from Shilling's (1997) discussion of Durkheim. In related disciplines, such as psychology, there has long been a more explicit interest in the emotions. Here, there has been particular concern with the linkages of gender with emotion, and cognition with emotion (Crawford *et al.*, 1992). Whilst debate within the sociological enterprise continues around what is meant by the term 'emotions' (Burkitt, 1997), it appears that something of a consensus is emerging through which 'emotions are considered as complexes' (Burkitt, 1997; Shilling, 1997). In this way they are conceptualized as multi-dimensional, having irreducible corporeal and socio-cultural foundations (Burkitt, 1997; Shilling, 1997). In a more substantive sense, Williams' (1998) work is concerned with the manifestation of deleterious emotional experience at the level of the corporeal self; of prime concern are the complex links between inequality and health (Wilkinson, 1996). Other commentators have centred on the gendered characteristics of emotions, suggesting that men experience considerable difficulty in expressing their emotional life thereby *externalizing* responsibility for 'emotional work' (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993, 1998; Seidler, 1997).

During the fieldwork element of this study, it became clear that issues of 'emotional disclosure' (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993) amongst single homeless ex and non ex-servicemen was inextricably linked to the genesis and the sustaining of disadvantage. Simply

put, these men found it difficult to express, and therefore begin to resolve emotional experience we might label 'traumatic'.

In this chapter the notion of the 'masculinized emotional habitus' is elaborated. Implicit in this formulation is the embodied dimension of emotions (Bendelow and Williams, 1998:xvi), together with the ways in which they are expressed through particular social contexts (Burkitt, 1997). Whilst it is desirable to state what is meant when the term 'emotion' is used, we concentrate on the social context through which emotions become manifest, rather than focusing on issues of embodied emotion. In the next section, we identify the broader context of rapid social change in which emotions and emotional lives are noted to be vulnerable to a shifting range of cultural influences.

8.3 CULTURE, EMOTION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The ways in which emotions have been treated both historically and analytically might be organized along a continuum. At one extreme are understandings that accord gravity to the bodily or organismic dimensions of emotional lives (classically, Darwin, 1872). At the far pole are commentators for whom emotional lives remain nested within a social constructionist frame; culture is imbued with considerable potency in terms of the shaping of emotions. A brief reflection on the complexities of the linkage of emotion with culture within the context of 'love', are tackled by Hochschild (1998:11) who states:

'[C]ulture impinges at many points: at the point of recognizing a feeling, at labelling a feeling, at appraising a feeling, at managing a feeling and expressing a feeling. Thus, an emotional strategy useful in defending oneself against the paradox of modern love, provides not simply an emotional armour, but to some degree the feelings that are armoured.'

The recursive relationship between feelings (which have a corporeal grounding) and 'emotional armour' reminds us of the suitability of the term habitus (Burkitt, 1997). Here, emotions are characterized by both spontaneity and autonomy, particularly with respect to

the ways in which they remain largely outside of active agent consciousness. As Hochschild argues, socio-cultural influence provides emotion 'scripts' which agents appropriate according to the situations in which they find themselves (Hochschild, 1998). Difference between gender may be blurred at particular moments as men articulate 'feminine' emotions. Women who express hardness and the language of reason might be considered to be appropriating scripts that remain the preserve of men (Seidler, 1989).

Within the context of the following sections, it is maintained that the military (as suggested in Chapter 2), is characterized by a degree of cultural lag. In this way, hegemonic masculinities, when conceptualized through the emotional realm, pivot around key themes that are broadly aligned with self-control. That the linkage of gender and emotions is complex and shifting is treated in a simplified manner in this chapter. Whilst Seidler's (1989, 1997) generic use of the word 'men' is pitched at a high level of abstraction¹, nonetheless, his main premise - that men experience considerable distance and ambivalence towards their emotional lives - is of central importance. Yet, there has been an attempt to incorporate what are described as 'peripheral masculinities' within the fieldwork material. These are marked by surprisingly frank emotional disclosure, and whilst distance from hegemonic masculinized emotional display may be considerable, it remains appropriate given the private and 'anonymous' social contexts (the interview setting) in which they arise (Hochschild 1998)². We turn now to consider the emotional habitus of the military.

8.4 THE EMOTIONAL HABITUS OF THE MILITARY

As we argued in Chapter 3, the military is characterized by wide diversity. Hegemonic masculinity thus varies between, amongst and within particular military habitus. Whilst we might expect bodily capital to significantly influence the trade of Physical Training Instructor (PTI) (see Chapter 7), the embodied dimension of agency would be of less concern within the trade of Royal Air Force Air Traffic Controller (ATC), or Motor Transport Driver (MTD). In a similar way, the emotional elements of habitus are characterized by *difference*, with combat soldiers appropriating the extreme hypermasculinized elements of the emotional life (Hockey, 1986). A crucial question

spanning this range of military locales concerns 'what it is appropriate to feel', together with the ways in which affect³ is transformed into display (Hochschild, 1998:5). In a closely linked sense, we might conceptualize these ranges of habitus through their linguistic dimension. They are characterized by 'emotional dictionaries' (Hochschild, 1998:6). In this way, they pivot around the argot of reason (Seidler, 1989). Emotional lives turning on self-control, independence, emotional non-disclosure, and competition infuse the construction of hegemonic masculinities in military contexts.

In attempting to understand the ways in which homelessness might both arise and be sustained post-discharge, we look to the experience of the military environment and its possible legacy for later behaviour. It is clear from the following interview material that an implicit 'policing' of the emotional life characterizes military experience.

8.4.1 Emotional Men - 'Weak Men'?

Problematization of emotional lives served to illuminate the deeper underpinnings of the military's so-called 'macho culture'. To whom might servicemen reveal emotional difficulties? Could they actually tell anyone? How might emotional 'disclosure' be received in an environment in which all problems have a logical 'answer'? (Jessup, 1996). Within a total institution - particularly one based within a non-British context, to whom might servicemen direct their concerns? I started by asking *Rolly* if he could approach his military superiors to discuss an emotional problem. He framed his response in terms of exposure to poor treatment, and with some consternation said:

[T]hat is taboo...oh no, no, no...no, no, no...it is an unwritten code...you do not complain about the treatment you get...you deal with it yourself...if you were in the Army and you phoned the Samaritans, God...you'd be out -(they would say) "you're supposed to be able to deal with your own problems...we don't care whether you know what they are or whether you understand them, you're supposed to deal with them"

Here, notions of masculinized independence, self-control and the suppression of the emotional life serve to implicitly and explicitly police disclosure of affective state. In a similar sense the ex-serviceman *Jim Adams* referred to the practical impossibility of seeking out assistance within military life, he stated:

'Counselling was never offered, but if I'd gone I'd have been ridiculed.'
(Johnston, *quoted in The Observer*, 2 Nov 97).

Ken made the connection between admittance that one required support with a flaw in masculine identity:

[I]n the forces it's always seen as a sign of weakness... if you have any kind of problem...I mean it's very much frowned upon...the forces has a macho sort of gung-ho atmosphere

And *John* who served for 3 years:

[G]uys in the Army don't like to show feelings...it's seen as a weakness if you like

'Macho men' do not complain. They are expected to resolve their own issues, and revelation of a problematic 'emotional life' is tantamount to weakness. Indeed, it is on the foundations of resilience, repression and self-control that masculinized military identity is built. Men do not like to be considered weak, as 'a weak man is not a man at all' (Seidler, 1997:190). In a similar sense, Prendergast and Forrest (1998:168) in their discussion of the socialization of boys, state: '[W]imps seem to be despised above all, as polluting the male ideal, conveying

qualities of softness.' So as not to appear 'soft', servicemen assume responsibility for their own difficulties. Once again *John* recalled his experiences of a military career:

you try not to get help, you try desperately to resolve your own problems

Within a habitus characterized by largely unspoken and significantly constrained parameters of emotional expression, to whom might servicemen turn during moments of personal crisis?

The Padre symbolizes tolerance and understanding (Morgan, 1994) and it was assumed that his Christian philosophy represented one of the few faces of compassion, in what constitutes a tough and emotionally barren environment. However, the close-knit and public nature of the total institution meant that whilst he might be willing to listen, even he could not assure confidentiality. As *Ken* stated:

You (might have) talks with the Padre...(but) you were always that bit wary that someone was gonna find out. In the Army - everybody has their eyes on each other and if you thought a guy had a weakness, you wanted to stay well away. It (could) lead to a sort of snowball effect (people might say) - "this cunt's not right in the head"

And *Benny* said:

[T]he only one you can go and see is the Padre, but if he thinks it's a serious problem, it could carry on from there

The permeation of knowledge revealing a less than controlled emotional life thus signals the individuals' 'unpredictability'. Meanings attached to emotional disclosure 'of problem'

remain negative. Their appearance may pervade and impinge on the latent emotional concerns of others, leading - in the words of *Ken* - 'to a snowball effect'. This process turns very fundamentally on the potentially dangerous nature of a military career, in which trust is grounded in predictability and control (Higate, 1997). Fear and uncertainty are potential handicaps to the hazardous tasks that service people may be expected to undertake and emotional revelations characterized by negativity are considered to be potentially dangerous. Fostering doubt in soldier colleagues may refract throughout morale; trust is thus understood to minimise the chances of 'physicality becoming finality in the remains enclosed in a body bag' (Morgan, 1994:167).

8.4.2 Early Socialization - Emotional Realms

Trust in this context turns directly on a potentially fragile masculine identity that is subject to near constant (albeit largely non-discursive) personal and group surveillance. Here, military-masculine experience is understood as process layered onto emotional disposition fostered during early formation of masculine self-hood. The ways in which boys are familiarized with the masculine emotional habitus provides foundations on which the military might develop and reinforce emotional disposition. The efficacy of the military habitus can be traced back to the ways in which the 'weak' boy (described as such for a range of reasons, including smallness of body) becomes the target for those who unwittingly uphold a particular masculine ideal. Attacking those who are smaller, for example, can assume a cyclical logic, through which teachers eventually come to oppress boys. Discussing a recent study, Prendergast and Forrest, (1998:167) state:

'Cycles of endurance...might be seen as structurally self-perpetuating: our data recorded not only oppressive behaviours from boys to girls...but also from adult males...to boys.'

These comments flag the likely rationale for oppressive behaviour, in that development of masculinized selves assumes an immanent logic to which others become subject. These

world views are normalized and perceived unproblematically. This cycle goes some way to accounting for generative mechanisms through which oppressions of those who are (inappropriately) emotional might be ostracized in a wide range of masculinized settings. In the case of the military habitus, as we have stated above, attacks on others are legitimated in relation to the overall safety of the group:

'The group rationale is to try to drive out weaker members who may let them down, particularly in Northern Ireland.' (Beevor, 1991:30)

In this sense, the largely negative meanings attached to emotional disclosure are equated with a masculine incompetence (see Hockey, 1986, Chapter 2, for discussions concerning the linkage of femininity with incompetence). However, as Beevor (1991:30) astutely comments:

'Yet one cannot help suspecting that their attempt to purge the weak from their midst is, in fact, a sneaking admission of inadequacy, an attempt to weed out weakness in themselves.'

Self-doubt concerning masculinized status may well give way to bold display aimed towards those considered weak within the context of the wider group.

The considerable historical trajectory infusing the construction of emotions (Burkitt, 1997:39) and masculinities thus finds its exemplar expression within the military (Morgan, 1994). 'Needs' and 'weakness' co-exist incongruously with 'manliness' and remain a key threat to male identity (Seidler, 1997:171). In a similar sense, Morgan (1994:166) recognizes the ways in which emotion is subjugated to a 'larger (military-masculine) rationality' within the military context. It remains 'shameful to have needs...especially in the company of men'. This can give way to an experience of vulnerability, and again

masculinized status may become problematized (Seidler, 1997:178). The legacy of perceived weakness within this tight-knit environment might lead to ostracism or bullying. As Seidler (1997:167) states:

'[A] rationalist culture does *not* teach us to respect our own emotions as part of a process of self-respect. Since we learn to suppress emotions, we expect other boys to do the same. Boys who have been brought up to acknowledge and respect their emotions can become a target for the hostility of other boys' (*original emphasis*).

It is clear that emotional habituses within the military set limits on the extent to which emotionality might be given expression.

Before we focus on the highly competitive nature of military life, we draw out some similarities from the masculinized experiences of prison. Here, the homeless non-ex-serviceman *Simon's* account has resonance with those previously sketched, in terms of independence. He told me:

I did 8 and a half years...and I spent about 4 and a half years in solitary confinement...they could *ask* me to do something, and I would do it, but a would not be *told*. If they talked down to me, my pride went up and up and up...(even now) I will not give in to people's bullying, I will not...if I've got to go and ask people for something, then I'm actually letting myself down, I could be starving, I could be on my last legs

A range of themes are apparent within the narrative extract from *Simon* and many of these will be developed later in the chapter. However, at this stage we note the centrality of attempts at self-control. Masculinized sense of identity⁴ pivots on the stubborn maintenance

of autonomy within a highly disempowering context; having needs is here perceived as a threat to identity.

The strict (formal) hierarchy of the military fosters a pervasive competitive ethos. In view of the 'emotion/weakness' nexus, it is unsurprising that there are limits to which service people feel able to share problems of a personal nature with others. In the next section we examine the ways in which military/bureaucratic practice serves as a further disincentive to emotional disclosure. Even when servicemen reached a point at which they felt able to communicate their concerns, confidentiality could not be assured.

8.5 EMOTIONAL DISCLOSURE AND DAMAGED CAREERS

Individuals within the total institution of the military remain subject to thoroughgoing levels of surveillance, implemented both formally and informally. Given the synonymy of emotional disclosure with weakness, it is likely that the 'boss' represents the very *last* individual service people might approach. Crucially, bureaucratic logic dictates that formal meetings be recorded - most usually written down. Here's *Dave* discussing the contradictory nature of the relationship with his superior:

[T]he officer in charge of you...will turn round and say - "my door is always open" - (but) you were always wary...how far does that go?...[H]ere's you striving like hell to get advancement and get on...(but) he is going to be writing your report at the end of the day - with...these "emotional problems". As far as I was concerned...he was...the last resort

Benny too referred to the ways in which sensitive information might 'leak':

(If you go to see) a Sergeant or whatever, it'd be all over the camp, it might not come from that Sergeant, but the paperwork's there, it's been put down. Whoever's typing it - the clerk - he'd have a look at it

Common themes reappear in these interview extracts. Might this confidential information be disseminated? And how might others, particularly peers, react? And finally, how might this knowledge influence the aspired upward move through the rank hierarchy, given the meanings attached to such information? There is little doubt then, that the close-knit nature of the institution, grounded as it is within strict bureaucratic logic, serves to limit the avenues through which 'personal' concerns or emotional worries might be expressed; similar limitations likely exist throughout other bureaucracies infused with a competitive ethos. In the next section, we discuss the nature of the channels through which servicemen might express matters deemed 'emotional'.

8.6 HOW AND WHO CAN WE TALK TO?

I asked *Rolly* if there was any particular figure in whom he felt able to confide whilst in the Army. He told me that there was one superior in particular that was:

[A]pproachable, providing I approached him in the right way...it had to be done in private, without anybody else knowing what was going on. He would...offer advice...he would listen, usually with disdain, because if you're a problem...there's gotta be something wrong with you, his parameters were the same as mine..."[Y]ou can't let the officers know, you can't let the other ranks know"

The pervasiveness of surveillance once again resonates throughout this comment, together with the condemnatory response to admittance or disclosure. Indeed, to admit one has a 'problem' is equated with the perception that the servicemen in question is just that. Here we are reminded of the logic of organizational rationality through which individual servicemen are considered as little more than units of 'man power' or less dramatically, 'bods' (Scott and Morgan, 1993:16). The subjugation of individual 'flaws' to the logic of the military's bureaucratic impulse serves to de-personalize and marginalize the significance of individual military selves, together with their unpredictable/problematic and possibly 'feminized' emotional life.

8.6.1 The Woman's Royal Voluntary Service

The Woman's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) is an organization who liaise closely with the armed forces in a predominantly counselling and support role. It is characterized by greater accessibility and offers a less judgmental forum through which servicemen might make personal concerns known to others. During the late 1980s revelations around the bullying issue resulted in:

'More members of the Womens' Royal Voluntary Service (being) employed to give young soldiers a less intimidating figure with whom they could discuss their problems and complaints' (Beevor, 1991:31).

Here we note the dilution of a crucial power dynamic usually apparent between discloser and superior. That these individuals were women, and the servicemen young, is suggestive of the re-enactment of parent/son relationships. In a similar sense Hockey (1986) demonstrates how training instructors come to occupy a 'fatherly' role towards recruits who may not have experienced the influence of a significant male role-model prior to enlistment. The Army is framed in this way as 'extended family' (see Chapter 6). For *Rolly*, like both

Dave and *Benny* above, the crucial factor concerned the recording of such information. He recalled that:

[T]here was a Woman's Voluntary Service on every camp, where you could go...they were always accessible to talk to...they wouldn't pass judgement, they'd listen. As soon as you speak to a Senior Non Commissioned Officer...it's gotta go down on paper. You go to the WRVS there's nothing down on paper...[T]here was also the Church Army...but they were the same as our Army...anything you said to them had to go down on paper

John identified another figure⁵ whose peripheral and thus somewhat autonomous role facilitated a range of insights into the stresses and strains of a hyper-masculinized environment:

[Y]ou had the odd one...sometimes it was a Medical Officer and he was...sympathetic

As we have seen, emotional expression within the more formal elements of the military was possible, but remained subject to particular constraints. In the next section we identify military environments through which shared hardship and tragedy served to bridge intra-serviceman emotional distance.

8.7 TALKING TO THE LADS

The resonance of the word camaraderie signals the unique nature of relationships fostered between military men (and less frequently, women) who endure shared hardship on a range of fronts, including most profoundly injury and death. The cementing of emotional intimacy is likely under these circumstances (Barker, 1996; La Plante, 1992) thereby eroding negative meanings attached to emotional disclosure. However, it was clear that communication remained emotionally stilted, frequently finding its most powerful outlet through the excessive use of alcohol (Higate, 1997; Hockey, 1986, Morgan, 1987) and

violence. Shared experience and continued close proximity energized emotional intimacy. Unsurprisingly, the confined nature of a ship provided conditions through which problems of a personal nature remained less obviously equated with flawed masculine identity. The routinization of temporary loss from loved ones is captured in the account from *Dave* in which peers provided a vital channel of relief:

You're better off talking to the lads you know. Because everybody on board ship, is in the same situation. When the ship sails...you've got 200 blokes on the frigate (they) have got exactly the same problems. You're all there in the same situation, you see the young lads, they're missing their mums and dads, the married one's are missing their wives...you've all got that period of depression to get through

Beevor (1991:29) details similar close relationships between tank crews who experience physical propinquity for protracted periods, he says: '[T]he cramped conditions within a tank tend to make crews get on together from the start.' Whilst we have only limited access to the very particular masculinized conventions that characterize the ways in which 'emotional' concerns in these environments are raised, acknowledged and possibly resolved, it is clear that this extract represents a further example of the plurality of masculinities within the military (Morgan, 1994), when conceptualized through the emotional realm. A further example is noted within the Army context, where rejection by a partner might be publicly demonstrated:

'Postings abroad and the disruption of a relationship also take a toll...the infantry experience the most sudden moves - a custom of pinning a "Dear John" letter up on the company noticeboard has arisen as a gesture of defiance' (Beevor, 1991:40).

This act is intended to compound the blase attitude (service)men might harbour towards women. Those that are able to appear emotionally 'cold' or in control in the face of a potentially traumatic situation might gain considerable respect within the context of the masculinized group. Evidence of distress thus undermines idealized masculine identity which continues to turn on the pivot of controlled reason and emotional non-disclosure.

Extreme situations, as experienced by *Paul* gave way to both group intimacy, and a degree of concern over the longer-term legacy of exposure to such tragedy:

[Y]ou talk among yourselves...because you've all had (particular) experiences...I spoke to lads...where bombs had gone off, and they were sent in to clean up the area. When you're shovelling people up and putting them into black dustbin-bags...[I]t's not very nice at all - and that must have some psychological effect

There is evidence here to suggest that deep-seated emotional concern (engendered in the face of death) might remain tenacious, even when there is a degree of acceptance around discussing the legacy of concerns deemed 'emotional'; speaking about what one feels to soldier colleagues who may have experienced similar events might not be enough. In this and other less extreme contexts, the affective concerns might be thrown back onto men so that they are forced to carry out 'emotional work' on themselves. The nature of this work arises partly, however, on account of 'the (emotional) ideology of what it means to be a man' (Duncombe and Marsden, 1998:215). As Pattman *et al.* (1998:135) comments with regard to a recent study by Mac an Ghail:

'[D]espite the apparent camaraderie which male peer groups offer, they are actually experienced by many (boys) as unsupportive, in this study, several boys expressed feeling "lonely" with their "mates". This was because of the pressure which they felt in these groups to assert masculinities by avoiding all talk about feelings.'

Again, we are reminded of the significance of self-reliance and independence in the face of potentially traumatic, and emotionally testing experience - at least within the military context.

In the next section we deal specifically with issues around relationships developed between servicemen and civilian women. Whilst a number of these resulted in marriage, it was clear that a considerable emotional asymmetry characterized partnerships. For a number of servicemen, relationships invoked emotions which remained anathema to masculinized reason and control; women were the great 'unknown', emotionally mercurial and as we demonstrate, were often blamed for eventual homelessness post-discharge.

8.8 IRRESPONSIBLE MEN

Following Coser (1974), Jessup (1996) describes the Armed Forces as a 'greedy institution'. Frequent moving, an informal hierarchy that drives a wedge between the 'wives of officers' and the 'wives of other ranks', little on-camp privacy, and a somewhat outdated or traditional perception that women and the 'domestic space' remain synonymous represent defining features of (partnered) life with a serviceman (Jolly, 1992, 1996). Moreover, and of central relevance to this chapter, is the resonance of hypermasculinity throughout relationships. Here the military (emotional) habitus is transposed into privatized interaction. Evidence drawn from the present study tended to suggest that servicemen approached relationships in an instrumental manner, conflating 'settling-down' with long term 'security'; again servicemen seemed to place the onus for emotional work onto partners. In a similarly instrumental sense, Beevor (1991) highlights how marriages are frequently born out of an apparently short-term and somewhat naive solution to current hardship. In this way, younger servicemen wish to 'escape from the confines of the barrack block' and 'return from leave with a wife and two children from a failed marriage asking "for a large quarter, please sir" (Beevor, 1991:61; Jessup, 1996:19). Finally, a number of servicemen drawn from the fieldwork envisaged marriage as an emotional buffer pitched against the trauma of culture-shock around the time of discharge.

8.8.1 'Communication Let Me Down' - Post-Discharge Experience

In this section we elucidate some of the ways in which the Army inadvertently facilitated a gulf of understanding between partners. In the first, *Ken* not only blames the Army for his partner's departure but alludes to two 'separate' lives - in essence the work/home split identified by Seidler (1997) and others. The primary dimension - the military habitus - remains of central importance to masculine identity. It is characterized by 'being with the boys', adventure, mischief and emotional 'safety', lubricated through the use of alcohol. This stands in sharp contrast to domestic life (see Chapter 6 for detailed discussion of private/public split), in which *Ken* purposefully downplayed the relative excitement of the military life. This led to intolerable strain giving way to breakdown:

My first wife left me, that was basically because of the Army...[Y]ou would go away for a few months, she'd be stuck at home with the kids, you'd be doing this and doing that. Basically you were having a good time but you didn't want to say that

Ken stated that he would tell his wife 'only half of what (he) got up to', and so came to view the relationship as a burden in which emotional engagement, and the fatherly role were minimized. This self-acknowledged strategy involved a continuous volunteering for duty, thereby ensuring lengthy periods of absence.

Paul's experiences broadly mirror those of many servicemen in that the close and continual presence of soldier colleagues engendered a preference for men's company. Implicit understanding that there were 'natural' limits to emotional disclosure, for example, rendered these experiences as less threatening to sense of masculinized identity. In the two following extracts we note the ways in which *Paul* found it relatively 'easy' to spend many hours with soldier colleagues on the one hand, and yet on the other, found similar closeness with a female partner unsustainable. In the first account, *Paul* is aware that relationships with men

in civilian life were quite different from those fostered in the close-knit military environment:

I had problems with relationships when I came out (left the Army)...because in the military you're with somebody maybe 24 hours a day, a month at a time, you get to know that person very well

In the case of a long-term female partner, the opportunity for spending more time together was at one and the same time identified with the relationship's demise:

We'd been together for 7 years...and then when I came out of the military ...[of course I was away...you weren't together all the time], suddenly we were living in each other's pockets, it didn't work

More generally, Seidler (1997) reminds us that 'inability to relate to partners' fosters misunderstanding and confusion. Servicemen might experience tension between a series of incongruous roles; the fatherly role requires understanding, compassion and care whilst the soldierly role calls forward hardness and the language of reason and emotional distance, for example. There may develop a loneliness (Seidler, 1997:174) even though servicemen are within an apparently 'loving' relationship.

8.8.2 Relationships and the Sphere of Paid Employment

Employment is of central importance in terms of its impact on masculine identity. Seidler (1997:161) provides the backdrop to this sphere and makes the following points about the continued potency of the Protestant work ethic:

'(Work)...becomes the only arena that really matters...it is here that male identities are sustained...(they) will work very long hours with very little contact with partners and children...it is easy for them to fall into the background...[I]t is very easy for men to trap themselves this way.'

In terms of work as 'space in which gendered learning takes place' Prendergast and Forrest (1998:158) state:

'Work is often framed in a fashion that requires emotional skills and self-management which are gender-specified: as a person of that gender does that job he or she is reinforcing and extending what is almost certainly an arbitrary, learned linkage between gender and emotional expertise.'

In the case of the military experience, these factors may be compounded as high levels of commitment are characteristic of service in the armed forces. For this reason, opportunities to escape into 'back regions' are minimised, and remind us of the nature of this particular total institution (Higate, 1997; Jessup, 1996; Jolly, 1992, 1996).

In this section we have attempted to sketch the emotional distance that characterizes serviceman/partner relationships, and suggested, in the case of *Paul*, that these emotional asymmetries may persist into the civilian environment. Next, we pick up the points made earlier concerning the ways in which men project responsibility for their hardship onto women.

8.9 'RESPONSIBLE WOMEN?'

The homeless non ex-serviceman *Tom* was adamant that women were responsible for many ills including his present situation. Through locating women in a 'discourse of blame'⁶, he and others inadvertently endowed their previous partners with extraordinary influence: the power to make them homeless. *Tom* stated:

[W]e've all got similar stories, I'm surprised at how many people say "it's a woman...it's a woman behind it", it's surprising how many people say that

Parallel sentiments were voiced by *Jethro*, who said:

[T]he fact that I'm homeless now is that...my marriage broke up about 7 or 8 years ago...the relationship fell apart for a reason I've never been told...and that did mash my head up a bit. I went to pieces...(and) went on a massive drug binge

In both accounts there is evidence of men's passivity in the face of emotional confusion, together with fruitless quest for rational answers. This gave way to a masculinized 'learned helplessness' as attempts to engage with a deeply mystified feeling realm proved problematic. Simply put, reason and rationality remained irreconcilable with the labours that accompany emotion work. In this next extract, *Jethro* throws greater light on a nexus linking women with emotion, and men with reason:

[I] mean er, no matter how well you organize your life...if you have women trouble, it scrambles you dun' it?...[I]t involves your emotions...you can't be logical and say this is this and this is that...because of women...you get emotionally involved and end up doing daft things...when I was a bit younger, I used to get hot-headed and kick-off...I'd get arrested

Particular work informed by the psychoanalytic tradition may be instructive within the context of the narrative extracts from *Tom* and *Jethro*. For example, describing Hollway's material, Pattman *et al.* (1998:129) state:

'[S]everal of the men she interviewed spoke about having fears of becoming "caught up" in a relationship with a woman partner, "getting in deep" or "being sucked in by her". Hollway interpreted these as fears about their own emotions which they projected onto women...these men obscured what were sometimes feelings of intense vulnerability associated with recognizing their dependency needs.'

Though Jessup (1996:124-125) fails to invoke the masculine/military/reason linkage, nevertheless, the following comment points up the significance of military rationality:

'In all military decision-making, there is always a DS (Directing Staff) *solution*: a correct answer to a problem. This is just as true in areas of human sexuality and as in dealing with technical or logistical concerns' (*emphasis added*).

Throughout the sections concerned with relationships, we have attempted to illustrate the ways in which women were the focus of men's emotional projections, against the backdrop of the hypermasculine culture of the military. In this way we note a metaphorical 'shrugging of the shoulders' by men - the invocation of apparent indifference - that shielded a deeply ambivalent and sometimes tortured emotional realm.

In developing these understandings, we draw on the positions of Seidler (1997) and Prendergast and Forrest (1998). In terms of the former commentator, there is considerable emphasis placed on the externalization of masculinized emotions; in the examples just given, responsibility for emotional work was displaced onto women (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993). In terms of the second, and in a parallel sense:

'[A] boy is impervious, lets emotions go by enacting them, passing them on, giving them to another.' (Prendergast and Forrest, 1998:167).

A cycle may develop through which men unwittingly engage in protracted emotional displacement. These cycles may be augmented by men's frequenting of emotional habitus characterized by their familiarity and safety. In these cases, they might seek solace in alcohol and illicit drugs and rekindle links within the safer and less contradictory company of 'the boys' (La Plante, 1992).

The final comment in this section concerns *Tony* who said:

[S]ince coming out of the Army, I've realised it's good to show your feelings and emotions...if you're in a relationship...or there's children around, you've got to show them your emotions...you've got to tell them your weaknesses, so they can be your strength there. Same as if a woman's weak in a certain area, you can be that bit of strength for her there...just to get her through that patch. That's what's good about 2 people coming together, you get each other through rough patches

Discursivity of emotional issues remain central to this extract. Experience of a Peacecamp likely exposed *Tony* to a range of philosophies concerning, for example, women's rights, hunting and the key issue of nuclear disarmament. *Challenges* to an emotional habitus influenced by the hypermasculine environment of the military proved influential for *Tony*. In the face of difference, a re-negotiation of identity occurred.

The second half of this chapter is dedicated to exploring the ways in which a hypermasculine emotional habitus retains influence, post-discharge, fuelling the sustaining dimension of homelessness. Issues around 'pride' and the use of alcohol appear to have relatively close links to both the genesis and sustaining of insecure accommodation status.

8.10 THE LEGITIMACY OF PRIDE

In the following section we examine the phenomena of pride through a number of dimensions keying directly into the masculine trait of self-sufficiency (Seidler, 1997). In the context of accommodation difficulty, acceptance of help was perceived as a threat to

masculine identity. The nexus of resilience, resourcefulness and denial of need appeared central to the lives of homeless men generally and ex-servicemen specifically. As Seidler (1997:161) states:

'[E]ven when men feel silently desperate, it can feel very difficult to reach out for support and help. It is easy to feel that this will bring masculinity into question if we cannot sustain our self-sufficiency.'

The maintenance of control within a highly constraining context remains pivotal to sense of masculine self-worth; pride is thus noted to obstruct need-seeking behaviour.

8.10.1 Pride as Emotion

The term 'pride' permeated interview material and was used to both legitimate and rationalize engagement with hardship. Notions of pride are nested within frames of meaning in which honour and dignity are invoked. Failing to seek out help when in urgent need may be justified by recourse to a threat to autonomy, hung on the peg of pride.

That men may be 'desperately silent' in the face of hardship engenders a dialogue with the self, a key characteristic of pride. As the philosopher Taylor (1985:20) states: 'to speak of a person as proud is always to refer to his attitude towards his position'. Taylor (1985:24) develops this understanding by describing pride (in the case of a woman) as an emotion rooted within a self-referential frame:

'In experiencing the emotion she experiences a boost to her self-esteem or her self-confidence; otherwise it would not be pride she was feeling.'

In these terms, pride is understood to serve two functions. First, it infuses the self with a degree of control, crucial to sense of masculine identity (within this study), and second, it bolsters the fragile 'armour' protecting an emotional life characterized by its distance from the self. In this section, however, we focus on ways in which pride becomes manifest through particular patterns of behaviour, grounded within specific social contexts. In essence:

'A person may be proud in that...he will not accept help from others who are better off than he is...[H]e does not necessarily think of himself as being superior to others at all; he merely accepts certain standards the lowering of which he would regard as a threat to his self-respect' (Taylor, 1985:45).

We start then, with a number of general comments concerning pride that originate from both ex and non ex-service homeless individuals.

8.11 PROUD MEN/INDEPENDENT MEN

A recent report (Jones, *The Guardian*, 2 Dec 96) concerning the linkage of premature death and homelessness stated the following:

'Naturally, it is through the road, sleeping rough...[S]ome people...did know where they could seek help. Others were just "*too proud* or too ill"
(*emphasis added*).

It is clear that homelessness might well be sustained in the face of reluctance to seek out assistance. As *Paul* said:

I'm very much an independent person...it takes a lot for me...to go and ask somebody for help...[I]'ve had nothing, nothing...at all, and maybe gone 2 or 3 days without eating because I'm too proud to go

And the homeless non ex-serviceman *Tom*:

[Y]our pride is a very, very important thing...it gives you a big lump in your throat when you've got to go and ask somebody for help

John reminded me that:

[A] lot of people will go on the streets but they've still got their pride

Even when help was requested, it came at a price - the devaluation of masculinized integrity. As the non ex-serviceman *Roger* told me:

There's times I haven't asked for help...I'll try on my own...(but) 8 times out of 10, I've had to go and ask for help...but you don't like doing it...[I] think we've all got pride...(although) I suppose you feel a failure

Ultimately, help simply had to be accepted in order that individuals might make the definitive move. Once again, *Roger*:

[I]f you want to get off the streets, you're gonna have to accept help off various people. Otherwise, you gonna die out there

In these examples there is evidence of asymmetry between masculinized emotional habitus, and the experience of homelessness replete with its range of stigma inducing repercussions. This problematized habitus might usefully be conceptualized as a social map⁷. Homelessness represents a social landscape to which the social map has little or no relevance; at the interface of this tension, or poor degree of fit (Taylor, 1985), dwells a legitimizing discourse - pride. Its continual re-insertion into this contradictory space strengthens sense of self, whilst simultaneously undermining resolution of problematized accommodation status; it may be here that the most paradoxical ideologies of masculinity dwell (see Chapter 9). This model of a cycle of deprivation turning on the theme of pride could perhaps be extended to other problematized experiences in which the gender dimension is of central concern; these are picked up in the following chapter. Next, we examine how pride might become manifest through particular patterns of behaviour in relation to homeless ex-servicemen.

8.11.1 'Walk on By' - Getting Help

In Chapter 1 we discussed the relative lack of provision for single homeless ex-servicemen in contrast to their ex-servicemen cohort with familial responsibilities. In the case of the latter, the Sailors, Soldiers and Air Force Association (SSAFA) remain responsible for providing resources. For the former group, the Ex-Fellowship Centre in London provides limited hostel facilities and small cash payments for individuals who can substantiate both their ex-serviceman and 'in need' status.

In the next accounts we demonstrate a particular strand of pride that resulted in a ritualized 'walking past' the place in which help might be granted. *Paul* framed his reluctance in the following way:

[I]'d walked past this place, 4 or 5 times over a three day period, I just couldn't go through the door...you don't wanna ask...they hear all these

stories all the time...(though) you know you're genuine, it's still embarrassing to go and ask

Rod told me:

[A] lot of times, I'll just carry on walking past...I don't want to walk in and say I've got all these problems, I'm ex-forces. I want to walk in and say "I'm ex forces and in full time employment"

Dougy, unaware of the Ex-Fellowship Centre approached SSAFA instead, again he found it difficult to enter the building:

I been out there many times, many a day I walked straight past, thought "no, not going in there"...I read the board outside - "Soldiers Sailors, and Families Association". In the end I thought "you gotta see someone", so let's pluck up and get in there

Brian too found great difficulty in entering the Centre:

[I]t took about a week of me walking past this place before I decided to actually walk into it

Paul captured the deeper feelings that inhibited engagement with a fellow (in this case, successful) serviceman working in the Fellowship Centre - moreover an Officer, that provided assistance. Crucially, in this account we derive a real sense of the way in which the emotional military habitus remained tenacious through time:

"Yes sir, no sir" - it was as if I was still in the military when I talked to the Captain, it all just flowed straight back out, it was...second nature. "What's your Army number?"...and it was as if I had never left...and there you are

asking - "I'm stuck, I need to get a ticket" - ...it was me that felt bad, not him, because he had no qualms about it

Asking for help was here perceived as failure from the perspective of the needy ex-servicemen. Issues around apparent weakness and male identities underlie such reticence concerning need:

'[T]o have needs is a sign of weakness and so a potential threat to male identities. At some level we seem to be constantly pushing ourselves by showing that we can cope with...endless pressures and demands' (Seidler, 1997:171).

Given the hypermasculinized significance of toughness and endurance within particular locales of the military, it is unsurprising that the emotional habitus weighed heavily on ex-servicemen who came to realize that they were in dire need of others' help. The non ex-serviceman *Tom's* approach to assistance seeking was similarly indirect. Within the context of his 'key worker' at the hostel in which he lived, he stated:

I had to ask for (help) in a round about sort of way, I'd say "any chance of us having a meeting and a chat"...he had a list of things and he'd say, "right we'll talk about housing, next week..." So he was offering (help) *but I had to ask for it by asking for a meeting...* I wasn't coming in saying "please give me a place to stay...I need this and I need that"

John illustrated how good intention melted away in the face of a swift rationalization to stand on one's own two feet:

You're determined, you think...I'll do this, I will go...and ask for help, and then you get there and there's that nagging doubt in your mind. The longer you leave it the worse it gets, because after picking all the positive points out you just need that negative and you stop and you think, and you just put it off

The ritual of 'walking past' is illustrative of the manifestation of a predicted emotional response; here there is perception that walking through the door indicates lack of self-reliance. That these men are 'in need' represents a new reality thereby bringing the emotional life into sharp focus. As Hochschild (1998:5-6) states:

'[E]motion emerges as a result of a newly grasped reality (as it bears on the self) as it clashes against the template of prior expectations.'

Whilst admittance of need might be perceived as 'failure', a considerably more public statement around this theme is crystallized in the act of begging. Next, we examine the ways in which proud ex-servicemen reacted to begging, and in so doing identify some possible differences between ex and non ex-service homeless individuals.

8.11.2 'Spare Any Change?'

What do the 'deserving poor' look like? Clean-shaven, and relatively indistinguishable from their conventionally housed individuals? Evidence that they are 'down on their luck' more likely originates from their scruffy appearance: worn-out footwear and flowing beards combine to underlie needy status.

The military habitus is characterized by its onus on presentation of a smart self, and this may partly explain the difficulty homeless ex-servicemen experience in relation to begging. Here

self-esteem and largely 'conventional' appearance are closely linked; a lapse in the latter might impinge on a positive sense of self.

In this section we consider how begging remained anathema to a number of homeless ex-servicemen who derived sense of continuity and thus normality by adherence to routines of hygiene, shaving and the wearing of clean and presentable clothes. We start with the homeless non ex-serviceman *Tom*, however, who no doubt speaks for many forced to beg:

[P]eople were looking down on me when I was sat with the lads, begging, (they thought)... "you're scum, you're filthy... what are you doing, sat there begging? Why don't you get out and get a job?"

Questions around the links between begging and the sustaining of homelessness are complex. More obvious is the clear repulsion homeless ex-servicemen expressed when they heard that they could 'make good money' from begging; the concern here is to flag sense of anomie. Simply put, begging was the boldest and most humiliating display of surrender to predicament. As *Paul* explained:

I couldn't beg in the street, I couldn't. Again, it's a pride thing, I couldn't sit there and beg in the street

Jethro equated selling the *Big Issue* with begging. Perceived negative meanings attached to a 'magazine for the homeless' influenced his struggle:

I can't beg, my pride won't allow it... it took me about 3 months to sell the *Big Issue*... my pride just wouldn't allow it

A threat to sense of self and masculinized independence underlined *Dougy's* attitude:

I could not beg...[I] couldn't even go up to someone and say "excuse me, can I have a fag", I'd feel so embarrassed, it'd be unreal

The ex-serviceman *Brian* offered a more reflective explanation concerning his inability to beg. In this extract, he invokes the Army's influence:

I would see many people on the streets begging...[I] simply couldn't do that, whilst I might not have said to myself - "my pride won't let me do this" - I can imagine that the way in which my life had been bolted together through the Army, was what was holding me back from doing these things

As we have already suggested, to be 'successful at begging' one may have to present a needy appearance. *Paul*, stated, however:

[B]ut I can't be that way...I like to keep myself...clean and tidy

And *Dougy* understood the perceived link in the mind of the public between unkempt appearance and pariah like status:

[K]eep yourself clean and tidy, keep your hair reasonably done, keep your shoes nice and clean...look smart and tidy, and no-one's none the wiser, you know you don't get that second look

The non ex-serviceman *Geoff*, however, did not problematize begging and saw it as a legitimate way in which to procure food and money. This broadly mirrored the attitudes of

other non ex-serviceman in this study. And yet, for the ex-serviceman *Rod*, reliance on heroin infused his current begging. This he conveyed in apologetic terms:

I'm begging at the moment - I mean I'm not begging large amounts of money
...last night I begged three quid - and that was it...[Y]ou know I didn't get
greedy

In this section, we have focused on the activity of begging. Whilst there are an undoubted range of ways in which individuals might 'beg', the ascription of negative meaning to this ritualized display (notably in the case of ex-servicemen) serves to energize concerns around pride. Protection of a vulnerable masculinized self involves disassociation from those who apparently 'milk' the system. Potential mortification of emotional self through this most public of activities may - in the minds of these wronged ex-servicemen - represent the point of no return as independence is understood to be openly prostituted.

In the next section of this chapter, we continue to focus on emotional lives, specifically those of ex-servicemen. In this instance, we reintroduce a theme touched on above concerning the tendency for some men to externalize blame as a way in which to buffer engagement with the emotional life. Experiences of social distress were compounded, as anger and bitterness resonated throughout attempts to understand how and why they could have undergone such profound status transformation, from 'proud soldier' to 'homeless outsider'.

8.12 FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY

In Chapter 1, we attempted to outline the deeper media perceptions of homeless ex-servicemen, and it was argued that they were generally understood as members of the 'deserving poor'.

In what follows, we highlight subjective perceptions of this status, and illustrate the ways in which the military's perceived responsibility for homelessness influenced emotional

response. A powerful sense of injustice turned on the sacrifice ex-servicemen believed they had made towards 'Queen and Country'. The relationship characterizing ex-servicemen to their former employer was evident in terms of a perceived failure of the military to care for members post-discharge. Response was distinguished by confusion; rather than being rewarded for loyal duty, ex-servicemen felt penalized as they struggled in both the labour and housing markets.

We start with a broadly typical comment from *Paul*. He stated angrily:

I was in the military for 15 years...I've defended the bloody country for god's sake. To come back...(after travelling) and go through (homelessness) is disgusting

Rolly was particularly vocal. Anger and bitterness characterized his response:

[S]traight...into the Army, to being an adult, and then turfed out - "we don't want to know anymore" - that's bitterness, even now. I mean that was 1968, it's 1996 now, it's damn near 30 years!...and I am still bitter...[T]o come out to find that nobody gives a shit, especially the people you've been...putting your life on the line for, for the last x amount of years, it is a...very difficult concept to deal with

Resonating throughout *Rolly's* account are echoes of a 'lost innocence' (see Chapter 1). Though some thirty years had elapsed, *Rolly* still felt unable to forgive the military's apparent indifference. Indeed, anger and bitterness continue to dog *Rolly*, eliciting a good deal of negativity, and suggestive of the legacy of 'behind the back' socialization (see Chapter 5). The ex-serviceman *Sven* conveyed similar sentiments; again, notions of sacrifice were clear:

I've been let down by the MoD. I went over (to the Gulf)...I was in a uniform, I had a number, I was in the British Army. I was part of something...now they don't want to know...I feel seriously let down by them...I gave the Army my all. And what do I get in return? Fuck-all

And *Dougy*:

Terrible shock to the system to find out that when you come out, nobody wanted to know about you. I was always led to believe that when you came out of the forces...you were given a place straightaway - "look after this guy, he's done a bit of soldiering (for his) Queen and Country"

And finally, for *Brian* who experienced indifference, not from the military (which he attempted to put firmly out of mind), but civilian employers:

I quickly became frustrated at the fact that 10 years military service...counted for very little with civilian employers...I was just totally amazed - you know - at the fact that I'd spent 10 years serving my Queen and Country...to find that they stood for very little

Whilst the nature of military service is noted to have changed in recent years (see Chapter 2), it continues to be characterized by the demands it makes on its members. Values that turn centrally on dedication, loyalty and honour resonate throughout the processes of military-masculine socialization. Ex-servicemen thus develop expectations relating to the ways in which commitment might be recognized. A sense of failed reciprocity links homeless ex-servicemen to their former experiences and further serves to compound sense of hardship and injustice. Next, we explore some of the repercussions of self-reliance in terms of the emotional life. The point of departure from which analysis proceeds in the following section concerns the outlets for a repressed emotional life.

8.13 'BOTTLING IT UP'

If men do find it difficult to reveal that they are in need, and subsequently 'fail' to resolve difficulty what are the likely repercussions? Most dramatically, we might identify the manifestation of emotional breakdown; a point of crisis is reached that speaks of temporary and profound loss of control. As Johnston (1997) states within the context of the military:

'With all the training in the world you still become mentally overloaded and eventually you break down' (Johnston, *The Observer*, 2 Nov 97).

Though these comments are perhaps most pertinent to the onset of acute emotional trauma as consequence of exposure to combat (see the fictional work of Barker, 1996), we might identify parallel phenomena within the context of less dramatic situations, such as those invoking social distress. As we have already seen in the case of ex servicemen, the emotional habitus of the military builds on a masculinized trajectory of its recent enlistees. Individual biographies are thus likely to be characterized by a further significant facet of the masculine habitus during periods of secondary socialization in the military (Hockey, 1986). As Prendergast and Forrest (1998:166) state within the context of young men or boys:

'Learning to endure...require that boys cope with, hide, or repress feelings of unfairness or injustice...enduring ignominy and injustice may be a test of emotional entry both to a group and to a more adult masculinity...if a boy endures long enough without breaking down, he too may...eventually come to police the space of masculinity in a similar fashion.'

But men (and boys) do break down⁸. We return briefly to the emotional habitus of the military and detail instances of breakdown. Implicit here is the idea that similar incidents may occur whilst in the civilian environment, with devastating effects in terms of the genesis and sustaining of homelessness.

8.13.1 Emotional Volatilities

Tony in response to questions concerning the ability of soldiers to cope when under pressure, produced the widely used phrase 'bottle-up'. He told me:

[T]hey bottle up...when they're not coping because they don't feel they can tell anyone, because they're not supposed to. It's not the manly thing to do...and suddenly they explode

Rolly considered the limitations of a pressured emotional life; eventually the individual would 'snap':

[I]t's the straw that broke the camel's back...somebody can bottle up for years, somebody can bottle up for months. In the end it's got to go - they've got to snap at some point, because they just can't cope with the pressures inside...you have to learn to let go.

Dave who spent 15 years in the Royal Navy described his experiences of one particular colleague who 'bottled-up':

I saw the situation where one lad was having problems at home...you try and help as much as you can...but one night he blew a gasket, he really went crazy...[H]e was a stoker and went down to the boiler-house and smashed all the gauges...and set fire extinguishers off, he was completely and utterly gone...[T]hey ended up strapping him in a strait jacket, and hanging him up in the corridor⁹

In the following examples of the ex-servicemen *Sven* and *Ken* respectively, we note the manifestation of violence linked to pressures in the civilian environment. In both cases, the military habitus may have proved tenacious together with the vital ingredient of alcohol, fuelling emotional volatility. Discrete moments appeared to 'trigger' uncontrolled aggressive release:

[W]e're sat in a pub and a guy walks in and he had a pair of those desert style pants on...desert pattern combats...well, I just flew for him...I thought "what's he doing wearing them...walking around the streets" ...coz they meant something to me

[W]hen you have problems...you build them up inside you - bottle them up in the hope that they're gonna go away. They don't go away (and) you don't want to talk...so you just keep it inside yourself...[Y]our brains gonna explode, I mean you've got to release it somewhere...that was why I got into so many fights...you decide to take it out on some poor cunt sitting in a bar somewhere

In terms of experiential trajectory, *Sven* had experienced emotional trauma during the 'Gulf conflict', when soldier colleagues were killed by a United States aircraft in close vicinity to his own armoured vehicle. *Ken*, on the other hand, had established notoriety within his regiment as a 'fighter', and used violence on a regular basis - particularly post-discharge. The violent outbursts of both ex-servicemen served to sustain homelessness in a variety of complex and cyclical ways. Most significant, and broadly mirroring *Rolly* above, was the experience of 'inner pressure' versus 'outer release'. We are reminded here of the emotionally painful dialogue men may conduct with themselves, as they struggle with the implications of public expression against the backdrop of fragile masculine identity. How might we conceptualize these violent engagements with the social world?

In attempting to understand this destructive behaviour, we should focus on the ongoing achievement of gendered identity construction. As Seidler (1997) argues, these identities

might be located both socially and historically and should be understood as *distortion*. In essence, Seidler asserts that the label 'masculinity' unintendedly 'normalizes' men's characteristically repressive sense-of-being, thereby robbing them of a more 'authentic experience' (Seidler, 1997; see concluding chapter for MacInnes' understanding of this concept).

In the next section we explore alcohol use amongst both homeless service and non ex-servicemen. Its legitimacy amongst these groups (located as they are within a particular masculinized social milieu) is indicative of Seidler's observation in which negative aspects of masculine identities are normalized. In these cases, excessive alcohol consumption is imbued with positive meaning within particular gendered contexts. The subsequent impact on homelessness is clear; alcohol use may engender both the genesis and the sustaining of such disadvantage as it impinges on physical and mental capitals (see Chapter 7). Its promise of 'escape' may serve to compound hardship as it locks individuals into an illusory cycle of apparent but unsustainable release.

8.14 DRINKING TO FORGET : DRINKING TO REMEMBER?

In previous chapters, we have touched on the significance of alcohol use within the military. Indeed, its well established ubiquity in this and a range of other spaces hardly needs rehearsing. In what follows, we focus on the linkage of alcohol with the key question that informs the empirical chapters of this work: how might alcohol use impinge on both the genesis and sustaining of homelessness? The backcloth to this inquiry concerns the habitus of the masculinized drinking collective in which, as Seidler (1997:177) suggests 'drinking with the boys might make us feel better, and allow us to put emotions aside.' We would argue that whilst Seidler is on the right track here, he fails to recognize the ways in which alcohol use may fuel emotional display and/or disclosure. Emotions are not necessarily 'put aside', indeed they might be liberated as intoxicated men offer up hitherto repressed information concerning a wide range of emotional issues. In this sense, masculinized 'emotional dictionaries' might be characterized by their fluidity, rather than their fixedness. As Hochschild (1998:6) says:

[T]he emotional dictionary¹⁰ reflects agreement among the authorities of a given time and place. It expresses the idea that within an emotional "language group", there are given emotional experiences, each with its own ontology.'

Before we explore the use of alcohol in the civilian environment, we consider a representative account of consumption in the military context. *Dave* recalls how the consumption of alcohol was inextricably linked to masculinized prowess:

[T]he Navy was the biggest instructor going (on) seeing how much ale you could get down you, and that was because of the life you lived, you know it was sort of hard work at sea, and hard play when you got on shore...I mean in the forces, you're proud of your drinking ability...if you can go out of an evening and have 14 pints, and still walk back...and get past the Officer of the Day on the gangway, without getting into bother, you're a good lad, well done!

A whole range of meanings may be attached to the consumption of alcohol, from deadening the emotional life, fuelling of camaraderie, through to the extremes of 'escape'. Within the context of this study, alcohol use was rooted in the full span of experiences, though individuals tended to emphasise one or other of the extremes. In terms of emotional deadening, the non ex-serviceman *Tom* told me:

[W]e don't go into each other's problems...we realise we've all got them...and we're drinking and...taking drugs to try and hide the pain

The significance of predicament, together with the perceived bleakness of the future catalysed problematic consumption. Emotional pain was smothered as alcohol facilitated temporary respite. In a similar (though less apparent) way, the use of illicit drugs was apparent; both, however, fostered a deteriorating cycle of consumption.

Benny and *Rolly*, however, linked alcohol with camaraderie. *Benny* explained a particular ritual:

[A]nd you'd find a park bench - find somebody else out drinking, and just wander over and sit down and just pass the bottle over or...they ask you for a cigarette, it was that easy. Once you've been there for a couple of hours, (they say) "where have you been?", and "where are you going?", (I'll say) - "I've got nowhere to go" - (they reply) "oh, we've got a squat" and they invite you along

In *Benny's* account, there is evidence of homosociability forged through the act of alcohol consumption. That the status of public drinkers or 'winos' is generally low necessarily reinforces the perception of shared hardship. Of most interest in this example is the nature of interaction; to be offered accommodation with relative strangers remains highly unusual outside of such disadvantaged milieu. A (masculinized) 'drinking collective' represents an oasis of belonging against the backdrop of a social context characterized by alienating impulse to those deemed outsiders. For this reason, the symbolic meanings attached to shared alcohol use are compelling in that they infuse marginalized selves with strong identity. Further, they functioned around a highly gendered and implicitly understood code.

As *Rolly* stated:

I can walk into a town, in a three piece suit, a bag over my shoulder, walk into a local park, sit down amongst all the sherryheads, and be accepted...[I]t's a very old saying, but it's a true one - "birds of a feather" - doesn't matter what you dress like, doesn't matter how much money you have got or haven't got - you can name me any town in the country. I'll find

out where the boys drink, I'll go down there with nothing. Absolutely nothing, and I'll bet you I drink all day...because they recognize me. They've never seen me before, but they recognize me

Benny and *Rolly* identify situations through which alcohol use was understood as an act of masculinized group defiance, rooted in camaraderie, Other participants flagged the limitations when use was conflated with 'escape'. The ex-servicemen *Lenny* said:

Yeah...you're better off dealing with a problem than running away with it...(for example) trying to escape from it through drink, drugs whatever

John identified a key precipitating factor linked to eventual homelessness:

[T]hat's another fallacy isn't it, they say "drink to forget", but you don't, the more you drink, the more you remember...a lot of people...end up getting drunk...[T]he problem's still there...and what do they think, "go for another drink", and that's how it started for me...it's like a vicious circle

The recurring themes of 'escape/cycle/deterioration' characterize the non ex-serviceman *Kevin's* account:

[I]t's just a vicious circle...it's always in the back of your mind, no matter how long...you actually stop drinking (you think) - "I'll be on it again"...if things go wrong, it's easier to go back to the drink than actually face the problems...[T]his is what happened when I had a child that died...I went back onto the drink...[Y]ou think it helps you cope with the problems, it doesn't really. It actually makes them worse in the long run. But when you're drinking you don't realise, you don't realise anything

Individuals remained both insightful and philosophical with respect to the deleterious consequences of protracted and heavy alcohol use. As *Tony* said:

[D]rinking has just done my head in...it's brought me to where I am today...and I haven't really gone forward. My abilities and what I'm really about...haven't developed, they've just become stagnant...drink destroys your...ability to go forward positively. You seem to build up so much negativity within (both) yourself, and towards others... [Y]ou won't accept their help because you'd rather not have to go through the pain (of asking)...drinking and sleeping rough (comes from)...fears within yourself

Seidler's premise that alcohol use might be tied to masculine 'inner fears' is signalled by *Tony*. Most crucially, this ex-servicemen connects homelessness with the relationship he and other men have to their (painful) emotional lives within the context of problematic reliance on alcohol. For the older ex-servicemen, *Dougy* and *Brian*, dependence on alcohol was understood as failure. For these men, homelessness was characterized by isolation. Possibilities for the fostering of strong masculinized identity through membership of 'drinking collectives' was rejected; this in turn compounded sense of anomie. The temptation for *Brian* to join such a group, however, was strong:

I could see other people around who had drifted into drink and drugs...I was very tempted to go that way

Dougy expressed disregard for the use of alcohol, envisaging alcoholism as extremely 'worrying':

I can go without a drink from one year to the next...it doesn't worry me whatsoever...I'll go 10 years without a drink...if I got to that (alcoholic) state, I don't know what I would do. I'd be very worried

For these two ex-servicemen, problematic alcohol use was tantamount to failure. The stance they took towards the drug served to marginalize and isolate them from groups whose central focus was alcohol use.

In this brief section, we have sketched particular ways in which problematic alcohol use became woven into the life-courses of disadvantaged men. Whilst it may have bolstered sense of belonging/identity, and offered temporary 'escape' from a painful emotional life, its most serious effects were inextricably bound up with problematized rough sleeping. Differences in relationship to alcohol within the ex-serviceman group appeared to be greater than those evident between those with non ex-serviceman status. This is suggestive of the extent to which alcohol use is legitimated across broader society on the one hand and on the other, reminds us of the plurality of masculinities when conceptualized through gendered meanings attached to alcohol.

8.15 SUMMARY COMMENTS

The principal aim of this chapter has been to identify some of the more salient links between the emotional lives of homeless men, and their predicaments. Whilst we have focused centrally on ex-servicemen, many characteristics through which self-worth might be bolstered are noted to permeate other groups, including those who did not experience military service. Yet, homeless ex-servicemen tended to relate more directly to notions of pride, and in keeping with this attribute, tended to reject begging as it was noted to undermine masculinized self-reliance.

Limitations to analyses presented above concern the irreducibility of the emotional and social realms, together with consideration of the case of servicewomen. Engagement with

hardship necessarily influences the expectations of individuals subject to such constraints. In these terms, masculinized pride and independence might be understood as emotional tools with which to rationalize the closing down of particular conditions of possibility, whilst simultaneously freeing others up. Realization that secure accommodation might remain elusive thus manifests itself in the legitimating discourse of pride, for example. Framed in this way, deeper meanings underpinning recalcitrant presenting behaviour might not be grounded in a 'determining' emotional realm, but rather as unintended and unacknowledged defensive mechanism that bolsters identity and appeases distress.

CHAPTER 9 - SUMMARY DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Material Inequalities and Sociological Discourse

9.1 HOMELESSNESS - OFF THE AGENDA?

The explosion in global media brings with it a crude democratization of images. We unintendedly project ethnocentric understandings onto contexts that differ markedly from our own. It is in the tension between 'image' and 'concern', together with the existence of industries¹ that have grown up around homelessness, that offer clues to some of the ways in which homelessness is sustained. On the one hand, asymmetries between housing and labour markets limit particular conditions of possibility, and on the other, function deleteriously because - at least in part - they are 'permitted' to do so. Images of skeletal human forms battling against natural disaster throughout many parts of the globe vie for attention and foster great unease in societal consciousness when juxtaposed with relatively well-fed homeless people begging outside *Woolworths*. For many in society, the very notion of homelessness has become passe at best, and at worst - entirely irrelevant. Whilst the resources may well exist with which homelessness might be drastically reduced, the political and social will appears fragmented and largely impotent.

These sentiments, articulated via academic discourse in the current study, constitute a political statement. They represent an assault on the distorted ideologies of homelessness that emanate from the media and other sources; these, somewhat unintendedly, serve to normalize a particular form of social exclusion. There is a sense, however, in which this thesis might be understood as yet another 'story about men' (Weeks, 1996), however. It is to issues of masculinities, or men's social practices that we turn next so as to clarify a number of conceptual issues, and in addition, to highlight the innovative nature of the work.

9.2 ANOTHER STUDY OF MEN AND MASCULINITIES?

A close derivative of the following paraphrased sentiment is noted to be a ubiquitous feature of contemporary literature dealing with men and masculinities: 'in recent years, there has been growing interest in men and masculinities, and this (book/article) represents a further contribution...'² Within the context of the current study, this begs a most pressing question, namely: What does the material presented in the preceding eight chapters *add* to our understanding of men located in the present, somewhat uncertain climate? It is hoped that analysis may sensitize researchers of social life to particular empirically grounded dimensions of men and masculinities (albeit through reifying the concepts of masculinities, the body and the emotions), that illuminate the *paradoxical* and *fragile* attainment of what is widely termed 'masculinities' (Hearn, 1996).

9.2.1 Conceptual Precision - the Empirical Component

The corollary of increased concern with the concepts of men and masculinities, is a critical engagement with the increasingly pervasive terminology, at least within the context of sociological discussion. Usage of 'masculinities' has been critiqued on account of its imprecise, *a priori*, causal, conflationary and essentialist tenets, for example (Connell, 1995; Hearn, 1996; MacInnes, 1998; Morgan, 1992; Weeks, 1996; Wilmott, 1996). Indeed, the force of these doubts around the term errs - at times - on pleas to expunge the concept altogether on account of its misleading application (Hearn, 1996; MacInnes, 1998). Tensions between sex and gender are at the heart of MacInnes's and Wilmott's concerns, though both tend to agree that the concept is most usefully approached with regard to its status as ideology. Wilmott asserts that the embodied dimension of maleness, like its social expression, masculinity, have discrete ontological realities. Implicit within the empirical framework of Chapter 7 we noted analogous philosophical underpinning, though dichotomizing these realms necessarily served to reify either dimension. Here the lived experience of particular men was conceptualized through 'relationship to body' - mediated through culture - that impinged on masculinized identity. In this way, 'masculinity as ideology' is linked to 'discourses of the masculine body' that constitute identity components

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keying into what it is to be an (embodied) man, in relation to other men and women in contemporary society. Here, we might invoke Connell's 'peripheral, marginal, hegemonic or oppositional masculinities' as a way in which to allow for conceptual space for the relational factors that intersect and demarcate masculine identities, thereby endowing one another with nuanced meaning. As Morgan (1992:96) states:

'by masculinities...[I am referring] to sets of culturally available, recognized and legitimated themes, themes which are more or less identified with certain aspects of being a man in a given society'.

Pitched at a relatively high level of abstraction, these understandings point to meanings attached to practices (of men) that are more or less legitimated, both historically, culturally and contextually. They are irreducible to emotional or bodily foundations and are constituted by a range of components (including, for example, the psychic-identity realm; see Dawson, 1994; Jefferson, 1994; MacInnes, 1998) that is grounded, ultimately in material practice (Hearn, 1996). There has certainly been an attempt throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8 to link ideologies of masculinities with particular empirically grounded practice. However, this discussion still leaves a number of theoretical stones unturned; not least the idea that masculinities might be spuriously attributed *causal* power (Hearn, 1996) and that they cannot exist at all as the 'properties of an empirically existing man' (MacInnes, 1998).

9.3 'A MODEL OF MASCULINITY' - THE PRESENT STUDY

The lead for this work is taken from Hearn (1996:214) who - somewhat tentatively - outlines possible ways forward with regard to the use of the term 'masculinities'. First, as has been demonstrated throughout the empirical component of the work, there has been an attempt to invoke 'the practice of men'; here we return to men from masculinities. Second, (as we suggested in Chapter 5 within the context of work by Bloor), there has been an attempt to articulate, through the use of narrative extracts, participant sentiments that

depart from hegemonic masculinities (here we recall the words of *Tony* in Chapter 8 with regard to being emotionally open in relationships with women). Last, the ways in which masculinities have been used throughout is framed with regard to their prescriptive force. Here, adherence to predominant constructions of masculinities (encouraged, for example, through military socialization) prescribe ways-of-being, understood to be 'masculine', with which it would make little sense for men to disagree with. We turn now to an overview of the thesis through an explication and reflection on chapter content. Figure 2 below represents a simplified elaboration of the work's central findings:

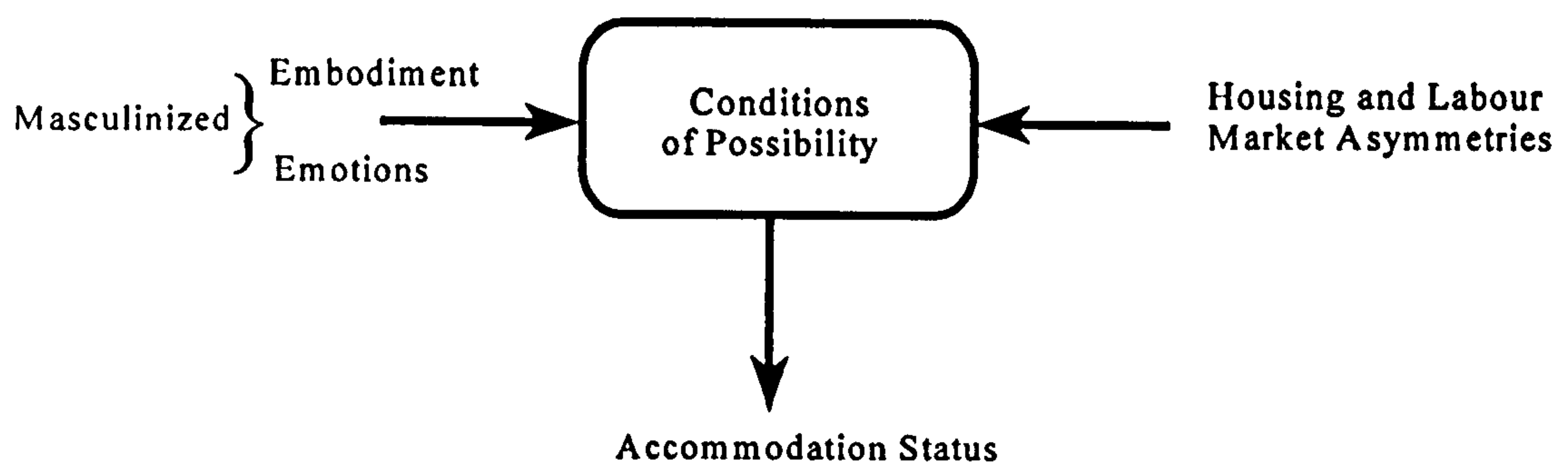


Figure 2 Context of Conditions of Possibility

9.3.1 Chapters 1 - 5: Gauging Change and Building Concepts

In Chapter 1, we attempted to account for the ways in which single homeless ex-servicemen were presented as members of the deserving poor. This was achieved through considering the complex intersection of 'public opinion' with media influence, against the backdrop of extremes invoking conflict; for example, the Malvinos/Falkland and Gulf War scenarios. Popular culture, prose and academic theorizing from both the British and US contexts pointed to broadly similar representation. Here a nexus linking vulnerability with youth, and nationhood with the military institution, exemplified a particular discourse of affinity that

found expression in the nuanced framing of ex-servicemen understood to be homeless. Indeed, the pervasiveness of one element of these constructions - institutionalization - was noted to have seeped into 'academic consciousness', manifesting itself in the limitations of a core research question oriented at estimating the numbers of ex-servicemen amongst the single homeless population. Analysis oscillated between the individual and society, and attempted to illustrate the embeddedness of understanding appropriated - most notably - by the media. The metaphor (and materiality) of distance characterizing the military/society interface provided space in which skewed perception might flourish, thereby compounding the extent to which caricatured 'squaddies' served as raw material to which a range of meanings were attached. During the closing months of 1998, these media sentiments are no longer good copy, and the case of the single ex-serviceman (and homelessness in the broadest sense), likely represents a pressing social problem. The work of Harvey Sacks, Dorothy Smith and the Glasgow University Media Group influenced theoretical approaches throughout the opening chapter; here particular elements of the state apparatus were shown to be closely aligned.

The extent to which contemporary society might be described as 'detraditional' is contingent on the theoretical tools with which one makes sense of recent developments. In Chapter 2, we outlined the military's resistance to changes that had already taken root throughout broader society. The status of homosexuals and women flagged the military's increasingly untenable subject-constitution projects. However, notions of the tradition/detradition split were problematized within the context of work by Nikolas Rose. Here, a spatialization of socio-historical change highlighted continuity and overlap, thereby undermining the efficacy of theorizing couched within terms of a linear chronicity. The ideological resonance of the military was also noted, in a failed project to instil 'traditional values' into young offenders located within a society characterized by a 'decline of deference and fragmentation of morals'. The central aim of Chapter 2, in part parallel to the opening chapter, was to flag up particular (traditional/detraditional) asymmetries characteristic of the military/civilian interface. Presented in this way, we might argue that a number of service people embody traditional ways-of-being, and thus face unique challenges post-discharge. A tension between competing value systems and linguistic codes, for example, interact with the ways in which hardship might be confronted. These represent key challenges; indeed some ex-

servicemen may endure homelessness. Whilst the future direction of change in the military is unclear, it is anticipated that women will make increasing gains, though in this respect, demographic pressures may prove more influential than feminist critiques of inequality aimed at the traditional military.

In Chapter 3, discussion converged on the site of the term 'institutionalization', a key explanatory concept within the context of understanding the genesis and sustaining of homelessness amongst single ex-servicemen. It was noted to be considerably more complex than has hitherto been recognized, particularly in terms of its gendered and social-contextual components. At times, notions of military socialization were conflated with institutionalization. This was no accident, as the former concept encapsulates process, whilst the latter signals the (closely linked) tenacity of immersion within a particular military/masculine environment. As we state at the outset of the chapter, it may well be unhelpful to bracket out 'the institutionalized' from individuals located within non-stigmatized mainstream society. Further, that intense and shared experiences of the military environment likely has a somatic component laying dormant within military socialized/institutionalized selves. Here, deleterious structural experience endured in civilian life may well elicit long forgotten embodied coping repertoires. The irreducibility of structural disadvantage and institutionalized selves, should however, signal the limitations of positivist framing; here neither might easily be allocated primacy. There was also a concern to flag the diversity of the military experience, together with the importance of individual commitment to military ways-of-being. Recognition of military-career heterogeneity thus weakens the military/homelessness link, and invokes additional considerations including *pre-military* experiences which are explored in Chapter 6. Finally, attention was turned to the notion of continuity between military and civilian environments. The extent to which transition troubled ex-military individuals was noted to be eased somewhat by flagging the nature of civilian institutions for those understood to be 'in need', particularly their masculinized and shared-hardship characteristics.

Whilst the theme of homelessness has permeated all elements of this thesis in one or other ways, Chapter 4 highlights the difficulties of demarcating fleeting accommodation status as a discrete area of study. Positivist and reified analysis likely results from unsophisticated

engagements with one element of social exclusion. For this reason, analysis in the chapter centred on the notion of homelessness as a 'chaotic concept'. Severed from its broader life context, the term assumes a seductive draw - a point around which academics might spuriously and unhelpfully rally theory and explanation. These comments were qualified by recourse to the material reality of insecure accommodation status, so that formulation might not fall into a relativist frame - a likely danger of over-zealous deconstructionism. Homelessness, as is asserted in Chapter 4, has a range of meanings for those enduring experiences labelled as such. In order to make sense of the responses of those facing disadvantage, the broader life course should be examined. It is within the experiential resource that clues to later disadvantage might be identified, rendering a phenomenological approach of particular value.

Chapter 5 descends from the high-to-middle level theorizing that characterizes earlier chapters. The conscious strategy to place this material at the half way point of the thesis rests on concerns for the reader. The theoretical and conceptual momentum fostered in preceding chapters is here noted to have reached its apogee. The invocation of authorial experience, it is hoped, serves to whittle away the schism distancing researcher from audience. At stake here, is the drive to rekindle the human dimensions of homelessness on the one hand, and reflexive engagement with the sometimes difficult emotional process of social research on the other. This is achieved through appropriation of the (albeit marginal) conventions of social (scientific) research, in the form of producing 'accountable knowledge'. In Chapter 5, the author is re-centred in preparation for the empirical materials presented throughout the following three chapters.

9.3.2 Chapters 6 - 8: The Empirical Component

Throughout Chapters 6, 7 and 8, analysis turns on questions that key directly into the ways in which homelessness might be sustained through time, coupled with an examination of those precipitating factors that give way to insecure accommodation status initially.

The homeless population are characterized by their transitory lifestyles. Impetus underlying travel varies widely within this broad group, so that we might more appropriately label this frequent mobility as 'travels'. Chapter 6 focused on the linkage of insecure accommodation with movement, and flagged the gendered element that accompanies the apparent ease (for some at least) to endure 'life on the road', or to simply 'get up and go'. The relationship between the military experience and travels may not be as strong as has previously been suggested, as non ex-servicemen also appeared restless, or could be described as having 'itchy feet', giving way to regular movement. Travel was dictated by social and individual forces. In terms of the former, the fragmented and insecure employment market demanded a degree of mobility - particular within the realms of casual or manual labour. Difficulties linked to the fostering of intimate relationships shifts the focus to the latter individual-dimension, rooted, perhaps within a life history of relationship trauma. Here, the emotional reciprocity that may accompany longer-term relationships with men or women, was diluted, as travel offered a somewhat legitimate escape route. The experience of risk and challenge served to bolster masculine selves, as they became 'heroes' of their own journeys, at the expense of fuller interpersonal relationships.

Throughout this thesis, discussion of homeless ex-servicemen has pivoted - both implicitly and explicitly - on the complex process of transition from the military to the civilian environments. Here, there has been an attempt to elucidate areas of continuity. As we saw in Chapter 6, however, the assumed links between the military and travel experiences were less than clear. The same cannot be said of continuity when conceptualized through the embodied dimension of human agency, the locus of concern in Chapter 7. It was apparent that high physical capital, coupled with particular experiential resource, facilitated certain conditions of possibility. For a number of homeless ex-servicemen, the experience of rough sleeping in civilian life resonated sharply with Army field exercises, for example. This embodied resource was utilized in two interrelated ways. First, it represented benchmark experience, thereby robbing post-discharge homelessness of its unknown elements (there are distinct areas of overlap with homeless non ex-servicemen in this respect). Second, it served as a discourse of legitimacy, as previous experience was somewhat unwittingly used to *rationalize* current hardship. That it was 'nothing new', both framed understanding and prepared individuals - in a more material sense - for the embodied rigours of rough sleeping.

Changes in the nature of labour markets also impinged on the appropriateness of particular physical capital. A decline in occupations that had traditionally maximised muscular force rendered a number of ex-servicemen as, somewhat ironically, reluctant members of a reserve army of labour. The building industry, nightclub 'bouncers' and other forms of paid employment that valued physical prowess were noted to be insecure, rendering 'hegemonic masculinities' (in the form of particular somatic military selves) as largely superseded. Analysis in this chapter, mirroring earlier positions, concerned the complexity of social and individual forces. Conditions of possibility arise from the interaction of life experience and embodied potentials, but remain irreducible to either dimension.

In the final empirical chapter, our point of departure concerned the emotional lives of the twenty-one study participants. Links were made between the hyper-masculine environment of the military and the influence of a somewhat repressed emotional life with the genesis and sustaining of homelessness. Differences between ex and non ex-servicemen came into sharpest focus within the context of relationship difficulty, pride, begging and outlets (for example reliance on alcohol), through which emotionally impoverished men might ease 'inner tension'. Self reliance appeared to be the hallmark of these men in the face of social exclusion. Recalcitrant presenting behaviour may well have compounded disadvantage, and it was only when emotional limits were reached that fuller reflection opened the way for greater inclusion into mainstream society.

9.4 HOMELESSNESS AMONGST SINGLE EX-SERVICEMEN - SUMMARY COMMENTS

One of the main aims of this thesis, was to close down the space distancing the socially 'included' from the socially 'excluded'. This was done by focusing on a loosely homogeneous group (characterized by a shared experience of military service), together with a number of similarly aged non ex-servicemen. Both were understood, with respect to objective or subjective perspectives, to have experienced homelessness in the recent past. The study was exploratory in design and execution, and drew on recent theorizing within sociology, particularly throughout Chapters 7 and 8. The embodied and emotional realms

were necessarily reified so that they might be treated analytically in a relatively straightforward manner.

We started this chapter by painting a broad brush picture of potentially disturbing global events as a way in which we might contextualize particular instances of homelessness - the subject matter of this thesis. This juxtaposition necessarily devalued the urgency of this form of social exclusion and sought to explain response to disadvantage. A pertinent question within the context of preceding analyses concerns the contribution this work might make to a range of debates that turn, in the contemporary period, on the notion of 'masculinity in crisis'. In the following and final sections, these issues are discussed and developed within broader debates that pivot around the role of sociology in the current climate.

9.5 THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL PURVIEW

The intellectual journeys undertaken in this thesis have traversed a number of themes. These have been linked to social change in the contemporary period; more specifically, asymmetries that characterize the relationships between the housing and labour markets. In view of the broad debates invoked above, discussion might be directed along any one of a number of potentially fruitful routes during the closing stages, for example: What are the implications of this work for the sociology:social policy interface? How effective is the notion of institutionalization produced in Chapter 3 within the context of other 'masculinized' environments and accompanying processes of transition? Might not this work pave the way for a more concerted focus on the military as a 'barometer' of social change, thereby anchoring and contextualizing developments in broader society? What does this focus on men say about the lives of socially excluded *women*; can it contribute anything at all?

Whilst all of these questions may facilitate insightful research trajectories, we return to a central theme; that of masculinities. If anything, discussion throughout the present study reinforces the linkage between masculinities and crisis, particularly when framed through the tensions characteristic of the tradition:detradeition interface.

9.5.1 'Crisis' and 'Masculinities'

The point of departure for recent and influential commentary on men and masculinities has been that of 'crisis' (Weeks, 1996; Seidler, 1989, 1997). The impact of the feminist critique, rapidly changing labour markets, and a gradual erosion of the legitimacy of men's social practice within many areas of social life has engendered a degree of anxiety and confusion for beleaguered or 'troubled men' (Hearn, 1998; Hugill, *The Observer*, 16 Aug 98; MacInnes, 1998; Morgan, 1992). However, notions of crisis are invoked that not only shift attention from women's continued positions of disadvantage but further, men may come to occupy a 'masculinized moral high ground'. The danger here is that men may become the focus of a victim discourse that unintendedly ignores their relatively greater access to power. These debates are rehearsed throughout a range of areas, from the plight of absent fathers keenly pursued by the Child Support Agency, to 'positive discrimination' in favour of women, at the expense of men, within the context of the work place. Whilst we have undoubtedly simplified both debate and concept in this brief appraisal, nevertheless, rapid social change has elicited a number of responses (or crises) that are noted to have rallied around the concept of masculinities.

9.5.2 Crisis and Response

A central theme of Seidler's (1997) *Embodying Masculinities* concerns men's inability to engage with their emotional inner lives (parallel issues are presented in Chapter 8 of the present study). Similar sentiments are alluded to by Roper (1994) in his study of 'organization men', though he acknowledges that men are able - albeit somewhat unconsciously - to manipulate emotional interdependencies between one another (Weeks, 1996). The gains to be made by encouraging greater emotional confluence between men and women appears to be the implicit cornerstone of recent commentaries. In this way, distance of understanding might be bridged, honesty encouraged, and the 'needs of men' understood as positive, rather than as tantamount to failure or weakness. However, in the remaining

sections of these closing discussions, the limitations to such positions are articulated, and balanced with the findings of the present study.

9.6 LIMITS TO A POLITICS OF IDENTITY

The difficulties of moving from a traditional to a detraditional environment have been conceptualized in the present study through a range of dimensions, including that of identity. The genesis and paradox of masculinized identity has been a persistent theme, particularly within the context of the main empirical component of the work. In this way, a focus on subjectivities has thrown light on the nature and sustaining of hardship of one or other kinds. Ultimately, the approaches articulated here build on those framed by late or post-modern sociological thought; emphasis on plurality of experience and the significance of 'advancement' through reflexive practice might be understood as central tenets of these broad discourses. In focusing on emotions, for example, the significance of identity is necessarily invoked. Within the context of the move of the 'sociology of the emotions' into mainstream sociological debate, however, MacInnes (1998:141-142) states:

'Encouraging men to articulate their emotions may be positive, but is unlikely to produce much social change, because it confuses identity and ideology...by confusing the personal experience of an emotion with the public expression of it...[I]t is the voyeuristic invasion of the private space of others by weak selves without enough capacity to be alone. To the extent that sociology has become focused on identity, emotion and the subjective, without reflecting critically enough on its material basis in social relations, it has become a part of the development of the mass culture of modernity which it ought to be analysing rather than uncritically adopting. It has become part of the problem instead of the solution.'

MacInnes warns against an understanding of individuals in which self autonomy and self integrity is denied. The ideological belief that selves are necessarily *tabula rasa*, is asserted to be damagingly illusory as (apparently infinite) identity projects linked to gender can never deliver equality of opportunity for men and women. The apparently limitless possibilities for

identity constitution, culminating, ultimately in strategies geared to 'androgynize' infants (as a way in which to avoid inculcation of oppressive masculinized selves), is destined to failure. In this way, the deeply entrenched sexual division of labour is noted to overwhelm attempts at diluting inequality (MacInnes, 1998:140). In essence, MacInnes moves onto theoretical ground cultivated by Foucault and Rose, who understands the proliferation of discourses tied to individual identity projects as 'hollowing out' or 'bureaucratizing the soul' (MacInnes, 1998:141). If society is able to offer equality of opportunity for men and women, the focus should be shifted away from gendered identity, which as we suggest above may be prone to reification and conflation, to ideological apparatus that remain deeply embedded into the fabric of social life. In line with this thinking, and within the context of the present study, there has been a drive to ground material disadvantage within contemporary sociological thought. MacInnes, whilst correct in describing the ways in which current theorizing might become incorporated into deflective and somewhat impotent discourse, however, is surely fighting a rearguard action through attempting to invoke the resonance of cleavages conceptualized 'along the axes of class, race and gender', (one of the discussion points of the 1999 British Sociological Association Conference). Rather than dwelling on the *form* of discussion, MacInnes might better turn his energies to the legacy of framing material in this way for the sociological, and other audiences. He is absolutely right to be concerned with those social forces that impinge on the reality of everyday lives fuelling inequality. Yet, in order that sociological discourse retains a cutting and compelling edge, the elucidation of these cleavages cannot be left to presentation through language that has lost a good degree of its force in recent times. With these thoughts in mind, we turn finally to the contribution this thesis makes to debates that turn directly on the manifestation of material inequalities of one or other kinds, within the context of men.

9.7 SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGININGS AND MASCULINIZED PARADOX

In highlighting the conflation of ideology with identity, MacInnes flags limitations to human agency. Social forces impinge on capacity for human action, and consideration of oppressive social structures should not be marginalized through a focus on 'identity projects' of one or other kinds. However, nor can insights provided by examining men's

social practice - conceptualized along the identity dimension - be dismissed. The central paradox explicated in the current study demonstrates the ways in which masculinized social action may unintendedly pour petrol on the fire of exclusion from mainstream activity. These discussions have been presented within a strong empirical framework that keys directly into issues of material inequality. Clearly, a society characterized by considerable equality - MacInnes's ultimate hope - would render these discussions redundant. And yet, somewhat depressingly, we find ourselves some distance from this position. Putting the sociological imagination to work in the service of redressing these distortions is a step in the right direction. The legacy of a sustained ideological onslaught directed, over the last 20 or so years, towards those who find themselves unable to access mainstream resources may well invoke a plea to subvert and control the unfettered application of market forces. The weight of history, however, does not bode well for rapid change oriented at creating a more cohesive society; market forces have attained hitherto unknown hegemony. The argument against societal fragmentation must be reaffirmed at every opportunity, through language and concept that penetrates ideological illusion. In the final analysis, it is hoped that this thesis demonstrates some of the ways in which contemporary theorizing can throw new light on problems of inequality that have deepened in recent years.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Morgan's position here should be understood to have its roots in the work of thinkers including the US 'ethnomethodologist' Cicourel (1964).
2. See Morgan (1987) for a discussion of photographs of this genre.
3. We can speculate on the reasons underlying the failure to exempt National Servicemen from Anderson *et al's*. (1993) study. First, the statement includes the words 'Do not include National Service'. A number of participants may have completed National Service, and then converted to a voluntary service engagement; in this way they are both National Servicemen and volunteers. This would necessarily boost the number of individuals answering in the affirmative to the question. Second, individuals may have fabricated military biographies, as 'ex-serviceman status' might be considered as a positive identity amongst a number of homeless or socially excluded men. This second point fits with evidence from the US context (Snow and Anderson, 1987).
4. For a considerably more detailed discussion of these issues, see Sacks (1974) and Smith (1978). These works explore the ways in which preferred meanings are constructed and interpreted. Sacks' work also underpins much of the early work by the Glasgow University Media Group.
5. The use of frivolous headlines may serve to discharge tension surrounding conflict generally. Attempts at diluting moments of trauma might be nested more broadly within so-called 'black humour'. See McCallion (1996) for a reference to black humour within an actual context, and see Hockey (1996) for a more reflective account invoked during his ethnography with Infantry Recruits.
6. Recent work by Moskos (1988) *Just Another Job*, considers the civilianization processes characterizing recent attitudes towards military service. See Chapter 2 in the current study for further discussion.
7. See discussion in GUMG (1995:78-81). The lobby system is grounded within a 'book of rules' that dictate - ultimately - what is permissible to publish; levels of secrecy are high and military/political briefings are couched in the language of 'national interest'.
8. Hockey (1986) and Royle (1997) provides a number of discussions linked to the negative behaviour and thus, portrayal of servicemen.
9. Lyon (1994a) takes issue with Baudrillard's infamous thesis in which the latter declares that the 'Gulf War did not Happen' That it did, is beyond question, though perhaps Lyon misses Baudrillard's point. Its 'hyper-real' effects were certainly evident within the context of its portrayal which was couched in terms of 'prime time viewing'.

10. Here there is a tension evident between 'length of service' and 'age'. Which is more significant? Should younger (ex-servicemen) receive more help than their older ex-service counterparts who have given 'more to the country'?

Chapter 2

1. Dworken (1994), however, argues that 'humanitarian assistance operations' are far from new, and that indeed, this role parallels in many ways 'low intensity conflicts' (1994:391). He argues for a close examination of the issues around these operations. Here there is a degree of 'reinvention' to stimulate issues around the legitimacy of the military within contemporary society.

2. Contemporary discussions around the 'spectacle' should be contextualized with the work of the Situationists (Plant, 1992), and also material that examines historical events, particularly those invoking the Great Exhibitions and the Panorama (Lieven de Cauter, 1993). In this way, postmodern concern can be shown to be somewhat ahistorical in its analytic interpretation of contemporary life.

3. One of the few exceptions is to be found in the work of Mann (1987) who has coined the term 'spectator sport militarism'.

4. A considerable sociological literature has grown up around issues related to changes in the contemporary workplace. See especially Gilbert *et al.* (1992) and Burrows (1991). Concepts of critical concern in these works include the notions of 'flexibility' and the so-called 'enterprise culture'.

5. Though see Chapter 3 for discussion around the range of training regimes within the diverse military.

6. The Berlin Airlift of 1946 offers a striking historical precursor to this particular appeal to military service.

7. See Harries-Jenkins (1990) for discussion focused on recent changes within the British military, with particular respect to the so-called Occupational/Institutional (I/O) thesis derived from Moskos (1988).

8. And yet Hockey (1986) illustrates the important dimension of rank *negotiation* amongst Army Privates; in this way there is considerably more scope for subversion of hierarchy than is commonly assumed.

9. Many works that take the military as point of departure whether academic or real-life accounts, inevitably include a glossary of military argot. See Beevor (1991), Hockey (1986) and McNab (1995), for examples.

10. This is not to say that pockets of intolerance towards homosexuals that rival those within the military might not exist within wider society.

11. Although the policy of so-called 'entrapment' of homosexuals may invoke parallel procedures to those outlined here.

12. This treatment of women is further borne out within the context of popular dramas. For example in the long-running detective drama *Prime Suspect*, a persistent sub-plot concerns the chief investigating officers' questionable competence on account of her gender.

13. The Conservative Defence Minister, *Michael Portillo* delivered a 'spirit stirring' speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 1995. In it he invoked the spectre of European military integration with respect to a potential erosion of the 'world leading calibre' of the British armed forces.

14. The term Gulf War Syndrome has been used to encapsulate a range of effects from potential organic damage resulting from the negative interaction of a 'cocktail of drugs' with the body's nervous system, to a psychological disorder. Running through the latter definition is the notion that the 'disorder' appears not to have consistent symptoms and therefore, cannot exist as a syndrome (Showalter, 1997:133-144).

15. The most recent development in this respect is that pardons will not be granted for those executed for 'cowardice' during World War I.

16. Although notable examples reserve high praise for the former Prime Minister (McCallion, 1996). Further support from military personnel is touched on by Beevor (1991).

17. Harries-Jenkins details the finer points of the so-called 'X factor' component of the military salary.

Chapter 3

1. An exploration of the transition from the military to the civilian environment would likely throw light on moves from similar masculinized institutions. These could include discharge from prison or the police force, for example.

2. As we demonstrate in Chapter 1, the media appear to be fascinated with everyday activities within the military - especially those linked to sexual misdemeanour. The purpose of this discussion is to highlight the somewhat mundane and 'everyday' nature of the organization; in other words to downplay any notion of difference that some may perceive characterizes this somewhat mystified work-place.

3. A number of individuals may appropriate and incorporate military identities into everyday lives. Their rooms could be characterized by all manner of combat paraphernalia; knowledge of military campaigns and hardware is extraordinary; they are regular attenders at military tattoos and airshows and they may come to think of themselves as 'military men' or 'military women'. More seriously, members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) consider themselves to be involved in military activities. In this way, the boundaries between 'service person' and civilian may be blurred in a subjective sense for individuals understood in this way.

4. All individuals who enlist into the military are expected to undergo a period of basic military training.
5. The process of attestation involves swearing allegiance to the Queen, which continues to be understood as a highly symbolic act.
6. Willett (1990:12) states the following: 'Prevailing beliefs about the use of coercive force are profoundly ideological because they are underpinned by powerful emotions and fundamental ideas about human nature, hence the hostility that the very mention of the military arouses among many people who place a high value on individual freedom albeit within the law. Usually, they have been socialized to believe Locke's thesis that humans are naturally benevolent and cooperative rather than the predatory and selfish creatures postulated by Hobbes. "Lockeans" regard coercion by force as unnecessary and a hallmark of oppressive rule. To Hobbesians such ideas are naive and even dangerous because they believe order to be possible only if there is a credible authority with the power to enforce it.'
7. Personal communication with this particular ex-serviceman demonstrated that his experiences were not exceptional. A number of his soldier colleagues endured a good deal of guilt on return to the UK on account of the apparent 'slaughter of youths' in the deserts of Iraq.
8. Authorial experience of the military certainly confirms the extent to which intra-rank bargaining was, and likely is, an intrinsic element of the hierarchical organization.
9. Visiting the toilet in many civilian prisons may be less private than examples from the military context (personal communication with recent remand prisoner).
10. Scope for individual expression is partly contingent on the length and nature of contact between training staff and recruits. For example, during basic military training, which involved living in barrack blocks, the author, along with recruit colleagues, was generally undisturbed by training staff between 8pm and 8am, when more traditional/conventional markers of identity resurfaced.
11. McCallion (1996) demonstrates how he quickly became marked out by virtue of his competence at various tasks within training and more routine service in the Army.
12. Jolly (1996) demonstrates how a straightforward linkage between 'time served' and 'reliance on social structure of military' is grounded within common sense, rather than any more rigorously produced evidence. Indeed, she finds no such correlation.
13. Giddens (1991:35-36) states: '[A]gents are normally able...to provide discursive interpretations of the nature of, and the reasons for, the behaviour in which they engage. The knowledgeability of human agents, however, is not confined to discursive consciousness of the conditions of their action...[P]ractical consciousness is integral to the reflexive monitoring of action, but it is "non-conscious", rather than unconscious...there are no cognitive barriers separating discursive and practical consciousness.'

14. In the fictional work of Barker (1996), the ways in which battlefield trauma remains tenacious are explored. She notes that traumatized officers are unable to speak, whilst similarly effected non commissioned ranks are predisposed to stuttering, here we note a difference that may be nested within class difference. Lomsky-Feder (1995) also demonstrates the significance of the social meanings attached to issues of combat and the military more generally, within the context of identity formation (see later sections of Chapter 3).

15. See discussion in Chapter 6 in the context of empirical material. Here, precipitating factors surrounding enlistment are for some, linked to early familial insecurity.

16. Though it would be wrong to generalize these negative attributes to all servicemen (broadly in keeping with the messages in this chapter).

17. Wilkinson (1996) details the linkage of health with social environment during World War II. During this period, the importance of community appears to have resonated throughout health, this despite the rationing of certain foodstuffs and its presumed legacy for physical well-being. This evidence points to the significance of the profoundly social dimension of human life.

18. See Morgan (1987) for exploration of the ways in which National Service may 'make a man out of you'.

19. Drawing on the work of Mirsky, Harries-Jenkins (1991:17-18) states 'The belief of many servicemen is linked to "the mythical friend of a friend in civilian life, who is earning £25000, driving a BMW and living in the fast lane." In fact men leaving the services are likely to see their salaries drop by a third. Even so, the myth persists.'

20. Fuchs (1986) illustrates that the physical point of exit may not coincide with its physical manifestation. In this way, individuals are asserted to have 'left their role in a psychological sense'.

21. Homeless women's relatively low-profile is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4

1. The term 'owner occupation' should be considered with regard to its ideological dimensions. In this respect, Ford (1997:88) states that: '[D]uring the 1980s...an association between homelessness and owner occupation became clearer, signified by the rise in the number of households losing their property as a result of mortgage arrears and so possession of their property.' In this way this tenure of property may be far from secure despite the notion of 'ownership'.

2. The single homeless ex-servicemen participants for the current study, *Tony* and *Paul* tended not to problematize their sleeping arrangements on protest or peace camp sites (see Chapter 6, 7 and 8).

3. Many participants within the current study remarked on the age of the 'newly homeless'. There was evidence of a split between older homeless who tended to regret their circumstance, coupled with a sadness tinged with surprise, directed towards younger individuals who experienced insecure accommodation status. In essence the older single - particularly ex-serviceman - bemoaned the lack of labour market opportunity for younger people.
4. There is resonance in these assertions with the work of Merton (1968) who considered that the generative mechanisms producing deviance were nested within the culture of the society in question (in his example pursuit of the 'American Dream' and its concomitant acquisitive behaviour). This view departed from the more popular notion that criminals should be understood as deviants situated in something like a social vacuum.
5. Alignment with sub-cultural value systems may arise amongst those deemed to have 'failed', in a manner parallel to those outlined by Willis (1977) with respect to the working class boys in the study *Learning to Labour*. Here the onus is on the largely unintended but nevertheless potent formation of divergent and resistant goals and aspirations.
6. Davis (1992), drawing on methods developed by the Chicago School, demonstrates the ways in which 'the deviants' (including the homeless) are noted to gravitate towards inner urban, particular shopping areas.
7. Stanley and Wise (1993) point to the fostering of empathetic understanding through particular and direct experience. The same appears to be true of the experience of homelessness; low levels of 'public tolerance' may well reflect experiential naivety.
8. Dissociation in the sense articulated by Lifton (1992), should be conceptualized as one element of a wider process through which individuals are called on to reconcile their own (advantaged) lives, with the circumstances of (disadvantaged) others. One repercussion of this, as we suggested in Chapter 3, may be the negative effects on the health of the population more generally (Wilkinson, 1996); the corrosive effects of inequality are not easily contained.
9. In his essay *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, Simmel states: 'There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon which has been so unconditionally reserved to the metropolis as has the blase attitude...money expresses all qualitative differences of things in terms of "how much?" Money, with all its colorlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of all values; irreparably it hollows out the core of things, their individuality, their specific value, and their incomparability' (quoted in Frisby, 1988:132). These comments exemplify the ways in which the beggar might be seen as little more than a player in the cash nexus or (for Simmel) 'the money economy'.
10. In a similar sense, Hughes (forthcoming) highlights the importance of grounding particular social phenomena (in his example, the use of illicit drugs), within broader life events. In this way, social policy might respond more effectively through a recognition of the complexity and interaction of social problems.
11. See discussion by Crow (1989) and Morgan (1989) with regard to use of the term 'strategy'. Morgan (1989:29) states 'The use of the term "strategy" to cover a wide if

indefinite range of human activity may seem to surrender too much to the forward march of rational calculation.' In concurring with these sentiments we necessarily walk the structure/agency tightrope, and are reluctant to present an over-socialized conception of human actors. However, the close linkage of the term 'choice' with 'strategy' should detract from use of the latter term, particularly within the context of issues surrounding the genesis and sustaining of homelessness.

Chapter 5

1. See endnote (3) in previous chapter.

2. How might we reach a consensus on the boundaries of the so-called 'field'? So far as this work was concerned, data has been collected from a wide range of sources, from popular literature to participant interview material. There is no singular 'field'; rather areas characterized by differentiated data.

3. Wardhaugh (1996) demonstrates how a particular 'homelessness circuit' has developed within Manchester, characterized by temporal and spatial ordering. Other areas in which homelessness occurs likely develop parallel formations. Collecting data from a range of areas may therefore avoid keying into relatively homogenous 'homelessness cultures'.

4. In the closing comments of this chapter, the tension between 'creativity' and 'sociological commentary' is invoked. That they should augment one another is to my mind of central importance; influential sociological discourse should be compelling from the perspective of the readership.

5. Frisby (1988) draws out similar philosophical positions from the work of Simmel, around the central concept of 'the fragmentation of social life'. The work of Simmel has been considered with regard to its resonance to contemporary debates around processes of postmodernization.

6. The military experience is presented in a somewhat contradictory manner. This is how I remember it; both good and bad.

7. See the comments by Weeks (1996) concerning masculinity and crisis.

8. See McKeganey and Bloor (1991:148) on the ways in which they are noted to 'disattend' to gender issues emanating from their fieldwork material. Here, the negative aspects of a masculinized identity are reflected on with a degree of regret.

9. McKee and O'Brien (1983) also refer to the ways in which men attempted to manipulate them during the process of interview, through deploying normalized (and largely hidden) aspects of masculinized identity.

10. Powell (1996) discusses some of the ways in which 'researching powerful women' may invoke a number of dilemmas regarding the relationship the interviewer develops with participants he or she deems somewhat oppressive in their everyday working practice.

11. McKee and O'Brien (1983:158) detail an incident in which they feared for their own safety on account of the potentially threatening physicality of one of their male respondents.

12. Within the context of emotional involvement (and participant 'exploitation'), Stacey highlights possible limitations to ethnographic work that serve to *support* the case for one-off interviews. It is stated that 'the ethnographic method exposes subjects to far greater danger and exploitation than do more positivist, abstract and "masculinist" research methods. The greater the intimacy, the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship, the greater is the danger' (quoted in MacDonald, 1997:128).

Chapter 6

1. See Miles (1982) concerning the (relatively) recent novelty of debates around migration within mainstream sociology.

2. Drawing on Baudelaire, Benjamin states that: 'The *flaneur* still stood at the margin of the great city of the bourgeois class. The crowd was the veil from behind which the familiar city as phantasmagoria beckoned to the flaneur.' (quoted in Frisby, 1988:87). The point here is to illustrate how particular (homeless) individuals talked of their unique vantage point from which they observed - in a pseudo-sociological sense - particular elements of the stimulating urban setting.

3. See the work by Pleace (1998b) in which he details the overlapping patterns of movement throughout Britain amongst a group of individuals understood to be 'rough-sleepers'.

4. In Orwell's (1986) *Down and Out in Paris and London*, the 'spike' (a term loosely applied to sleeping quarters for tramps, vagrants and so forth), is noted to be highly masculinized. Women do occasionally make an appearance in this temporary accommodation, but only in the role of domestic support of one or other kinds.

5. The development of these 'hypothetical scenarios' owe a great deal to the work of David Morgan, and are undoubtedly useful tools 'with which to think'.

6. Analysis is based here on the notion of 'membership categorization devices', developed by Harvey Sacks (see Chapter 1).

7. See Chapter 3, endnote (19).

8. See Lowe and Shaw (1993:6) for further evidence of the season/travel link.

9. See the work of Pleace (1998b) on opportune meeting. Here, circuit of hostels, drop-ins and so on form the backdrop against which homeless individuals encounter familiar face.

Chapter 7

1. Fritjof Capra's (1976) *Tao of Physics* demonstrates the epistemological position of eastern (mysticism) belief systems (for example Buddhism, Hinduism, Chinese thought, Zen and Taoism). Here, body and mind are understood to exist as seamless entities, untroubled by the Western 'Cartesian' split.
2. Further evidence for this can be found in work examining the male menopause. Here, Featherstone and Hepworth (1998), for example, demonstrates how relationship to, and understanding of self is culturally mediated through discourses of menopause and associated treatment programmes.
3. See Shilling (1991) for a consideration of the ways in which physical capital is developed broadly in line with meanings attached to the bodily component of gender identity. In this way, divisions of physical strength between the sexes are not straightforwardly 'given', but have part-cultural component.
4. 'Somatic hierarchies' likely exist across a wide range of contexts, from the fashion to the sport industries, for example. Here, particular environments work with an idealized conception of body shape and proportion, and individuals may be implicitly and explicitly appraised against these embodied appearance or performance templates.
5. In respect of the menopausal body, Featherstone and Hepworth (1998:281) states the following: 'lay accounts do not exist in a social vacuum but may be regarded as efforts to make sense of complex everyday experiences in terms of various sets of images and vocabularies of motive; these are provided by a variety of sources, among which should be included medical experts, academics and a range of other cultural intermediaries.'
6. Hockey (1996) uses the term 'behind my back' to capture the unwitting internalization of ways-of-being fostered throughout his Army training experience. In explicating these complex processes, a more embodied approach could prove insightful with particular regard to the formation of identities grounded in the corporeal self (Morgan, 1994).
7. A future research project might focus on the ways in which a number of ex-servicemen re-align military training and experience *against* the 'Establishment'. Evidence from the current study, anecdotal material and journalistic work (Stone, 1996) does alert us to this fascinating 'switch' in allegiance.
8. We can split rough sleepers into three groups; 'those that sleep rough habitually, intermittent rough sleepers, or so-called "one off" rough sleepers' (Anderson *et al.*, 1993; Burrows, 1997; Gill *et al.*, 1996; Randall and Brown, 1993; Vincent *et al.*, 1993, 1995). These discussions of embodied resilience do raise a number of issues within the context of the commonly used term 'rough sleeping', however. High tolerance to hardship may resonate throughout the extent to which sleeping-out is subjectively understood to be 'rough'. There is no doubt that sleeping outside - particularly during the winter months - is likely to be a most desperate experience as this and other work demonstrates (Carlen, 1996; Jencks, 1994; Jones, 1995; Pleace, 1995). However, we should be aware that the experience of rough sleeping is varied. Perhaps it is engaged with instrumentally, and with a

significant degree of preparation; for example the use of specialized equipment, including direct attention to dietary requirements.

9. These problematic states of embodiment parallel so-called 'letdown' in the work of Britton (1998). Here, (albeit in a less dramatic sense), breastfeeding mothers were frequently 'betrayed' and embarrassed by leaking breasts. In both examples, bodies failed to match the aspirations of their 'owners'.

Chapter 8

1. Pattman *et al.* (1998) also critiques Seidler's generic use of the term 'men'.

2. See discussion in Chapter 5 outlining the tensions between encouraging men to talk about homelessness, and the ways in which masculinized identity is 'placed on the line'.

3. Crawford *et al.* (1992:15) make the following point about the term 'affect' within the context of emotions, they state: 'we view emotion as something that comes and goes. It is not a mood or state, rather it is a process. Although it is an affective process, it is not to be equated with affect.'

4. In their book *Psychological Survival*, Cohen and Taylor (1972) focus on the lives of men within prison. Though less explicit with regard to masculinities, nevertheless they demonstrate how identities are forged through activities that are typically linked with men.

5. Medical doctors and psychiatrists appear to have greater freedom with regard to personal reflection on the military environment, despite their status as serving officers. A prime example of reflective writing is contained within the paper by the Army psychiatrist, Stephen O'Brien (1993).

6. MacInnes's (1998:99) notion of 'neurotic gender projections' may be relevant in the context of men that externalize inner contradiction towards women they have developed a degree of intimacy with.

7. In locating this discussion within a broader traditional/detraditional context, we draw on the work of Jenkins (1996:9) who states: 'Popular concern about identity is, in large part...a reflection of the uncertainty produced by rapid social change and cultural contact: our social maps no longer fit our social landscapes. We encounter others whose identity and nature are not clear to us.'

8. There is evidence from the United States that may well have resonance with the British context to show that suicide - the ultimate expression of breakdown - is considerably more widespread amongst men than women (Murphy, 1998). The significant growth in suicide in Britain in recent years means that the government's own targets of reduction may well be unachievable (Pritchard, 1995).

9. In the German-made movie *Das Boot*, the character *Johan* (who coincidentally, was also a 'stoker' or engine room worker) experiences a nervous breakdown whilst his submarine is being depth-charged. The parallels with *Dave's* accounts are striking.

10. Stanley and Wise (1993:14-15) make a similar point with regard to discourses available for appropriation with regard to the terms 'elliptical' and 'indexical'. They state: 'By "elliptical" we mean that in interaction people assume a common and shared stock of knowledge, which does not therefore need to be explained...by "indexical" we mean that the meaning of language (and thus knowledge itself) is tied to the occasion of its use - it is specific and contextual'.

Chapter 9

1. A recent report found that '116 different charities operate more than 500 separate projects with a total of 3000 staff and a combined income...of £120 millions - enough to service a £60 000 mortgage for every one of London's estimated 20 000 homeless people' (Rickford, *The Guardian*, 13 Mar 96), gives a partial insight into the nature of the so-called 'homelessness industry'.

2. On the *Radio 4* programme '*Start the Week*' (12 Oct 98), the author Lynne Segal suggested that results from a personal audit of literature in this area demonstrated that around 400 books on 'men and masculinities' had been written over the last 10 years.

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Appendix A

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES

The following pen-pictures provide brief contextual details of participant life-courses. They were compiled from both interview materials and the use of a 'time-line'. During the opening moments of the meeting, the participants were requested to plot major life events and transitions on a horizontal line, representing the life-course. This helped them to recall the sequence of 'significant' events, and offered me a broad life-course template from which to work in the interview.

Benny 46 years of age. 7 years Army service, discharged in 1986. Married for two years, prior to marital break-down. He has moved in search of employment regularly, preferring to sleep in a tent whilst doing so. Interviewed in local day/centre hostel; current whereabouts unknown.

Bill Aged 'mid forties'. 12 years Army service, discharged in 1982 whilst serving in Northern Ireland; relationship failure shortly afterwards. Travelled extensively, and experienced a wide range of insecure accommodation (including 'rough sleeping'). Interviewed in local day centre/hostel. Currently living in social housing in York.

Brian 42 years of age. Served in Army for 10 years. Discharged in 1981, whilst serving in Germany. Spouse instigated divorce proceedings within 2 years of exiting Army. Moved in search of employment, slept rough in beach-hut. Interviewed in place of work - a homelessness charity in London where he is currently employed.

Dave Aged 47 years. 15 years service in Royal Navy. Succession of relationship breakdowns after discharge in 1979. Relatively static whilst employed. At time of meeting, resident in Salvation Army Hostel (location of interview). Estranged from wife. Current whereabouts unknown.

Dougy 51 years of age. 12 years Army service, discharged in 1981, shortly after divorce. Attempts at employment unsuccessful, slept rough in park, building site and the infamous 'Bullring' in London. Interviewed in day centre in London. Current whereabouts unknown.

Geoff 36 year old non ex-serviceman. Employed mainly as kitchen-hand throughout many locations in UK. Extensive experience of rough-sleeping. Interviewed in local day centre/hostel. Was recently resident in hostel in York, current whereabouts unknown.

Jethro 45 years of age. Discharged from the Army whilst serving in Germany in 1974 after 8 years service. Has experienced wide range of sleeping arrangements and employment. Interviewed in *Big Issue* offices in Manchester, current whereabouts unknown.

John 46 years of age. Enlisted into Army for 3 years, discharged in 1972. Moved extensively, divorced twice. Has experienced rough sleeping in many different cities throughout Britain. Interviewed in local day centre/hostel, current whereabouts unknown.

Ken 42 years old. Served in Army for 8 years, discharged in 1981. Moved extensively, slept rough in London, numerous relationship breakdowns. Returned to Glasgow, where he was interviewed in the offices of the *Big Issue*. Most likely to be resident in the north.

Kevin 42 years of age, non ex-serviceman. Left school at 15, served an apprenticeship. Contact with Criminal Justice System. Slept rough - particularly in London. Interviewed in local day centre/hostel. Recently seen in York area.

Lenny Aged 34, with 3 years service in Canadian Army. Moved from Canada to Britain after discharge in 1987. Relationship breakdown followed shortly afterwards. Lived in Manchester area, in hostels. Interviewed in *Big Issue* offices in Manchester. Current whereabouts unknown.

Mick 27 years of age. Served in Army for 7 and a half years, discharged in 1996. Contacted through Bail Hostel where he was awaiting court appearance for fire-arms and shoplifting offences. Had camped in Germany and Britain whilst applying (unsuccessfully) for employment. Interviewed in researcher's house. Current whereabouts unknown.

Paul 46 years of age. Served in Army for 15 years. Discharged in 1989, relationship breakdown leading to divorce shortly afterwards. Travelled extensively throughout mainland Europe. Lived in bus, peace-camp, hostels and slept rough. Interviewed in day centre/hostel in London, where he was also resident. Had planned to return to mainland Europe, though current whereabouts unknown.

Rod 27 years of age. Served for 3 years in Army. Discharged from Army in 1987, returned to Scotland briefly before settling in London. Worked in 'porn industry' prior to use of heroin. Slept rough in London, and in hostels. Interviewed in London day centre. Current whereabouts unknown.

Roger 39 years of age, non ex-serviceman. Travelled internationally from late teenage years. Series of relationship breakdowns, giving way to reliance on alcohol. Owner occupier, then experience of rough and hostel sleeping. Interviewed in local day centre/hostel, believed to be living in social housing, seen in York recently.

Rolly 50 years of age. Enlisted into Army for 6 years, discharged in 1968. Travelled extensively, divorced twice. Reliance on alcohol, lived and slept in wide range of conditions. Interviewed in *Big Issue* office in Leeds, where he had secured social housing. Current whereabouts unknown.

Simon 40 years of age, non ex-serviceman. Had owned small business, and property. Estranged from wife, reliance on alcohol and other drugs; he has also served lengthy prison sentence. Had slept rough for a period of weeks immediately prior to interview. Interviewed in local day centre/hostel, likely to have remained in local area.

Sven 31 years of age. Started with Territorial Army, signing as regular for 3 years during commencement of Gulf War conflict. Discharged in 1993 suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, contacted through Gulf War Veterans Association. Has slept rough briefly, reliance on alcohol. Currently married, awaiting birth of first child. Interviewed in own home, in north-west, where it is presumed he is still living.

Tony 38 years of age. Served for 3 years in Army. Joined Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) immediately after discharge in 1980. Travelled and camped with movement, prior to travelling in van with partner. Has slept in wide range of conditions. Contacted through Bail Hostel, where he was awaiting court appearance for fraud (impersonation of pop-star in local hotel). Interviewed in local day centre/hostel. Current whereabouts unknown.

Wicksy Age 'early thirties'. Served for around 8 or 9 months in Army, leaving prior to completion of training. Discharged 'a few years ago', and moved between family members before extensive experiences of rough sleeping and begging. Interviewed in *Big Issue* offices in Leeds, where he is believed to be living in social housing.

Ziggy 31 years of age. Served for 3 years in Army, before discharge in 1986. Involved with Criminal Justice System after discharge, slept rough from time-to-time. Contacted through local drop-in centre. Interviewed in social housing flat, where he is currently living with partner and young child.