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Pedestrian circulations: urban ethnography, the mobilities paradigm and outreach work

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This article considers the intersection of urban ethnography, Interactionism and the mobilities paradigm. In its course, we develop a discussion of mobilities as a social order, replete with constraints, conditions and contradictions, in dialogue with Goffman's understanding of interaction order and, more specifically, his remarks on territories and social relations. We draw on ethnographic work undertaken with a team of 'outreach' professionals tasked to care for the street homeless in the UK city of Cardiff. The team enact their duty of care through a repeated patrolling of the city centre, in the course of which they aim to encounter clients and engage them in the provision of immediate services and in planning for support that might meet their needs in the longer term. Outreach workers are street-level bureaucrats then, in a literal sense; they work out of doors and on the move, and lack the sureties of office space – their clients, for their part, lack the sureties of fixed abode. In this context, outreach workers must move through and make use of everyday city space, as they find it; they must also find their clients – searching them out repeatedly, wherever they might turn out to be. The article describes searching and patrol as distinctive mobility practices, and combines this description with reflections on ways to move beyond the sedentary tendency in Goffman's (and others) work. We close by recommending the everyday as locus of inquiry for considerations of the future city and, indeed, for directions of future travel for mobilities oriented street-level ethnographic inquiry.

KEYWORDS:

Cities, Goffman, patrol, search, pedestrian, outreach work, homelessness

Introduction

In this article we draw on field observations of a local authority outreach team tasked to look out for the homeless on the city streets of Cardiff, UK. This is work on which we have reported previously (see Hall and Smith, 2011; 2013; 2014; 2015), and which we develop here as a distinct contribution to the theme of 'intersections'. Our aim overall is to consider the contribution of local, empirical and pedestrian research to ways of knowing and engaging critically with the contemporary city. Our point of departure, and of reference throughout, is the mobilities turn or paradigm (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007) taken as enabling of forms of sociological inquiry attentive to the ways in which mobilities might (re)shape and order the social. We consider one of the many challenges posed to extant modalities of social science by a new and interdisciplinary concern with (im)mobilities to be methodological: if '[a]ttention to the fluid, fleeting, yet powerful performativity of a multitude of everyday (im)mobilities transforms conceptions of sociological inquiry, explanation and critique', then this has implications for the practice of research and the ways in which analysis might be folded into the empirical (Büscher and Urry, 2009: 99). In this context, we are particularly interested in what urban ethnography, more or less conventionally construed – not technologically augmented, but rigorously practised – might afford by way of engagement and understanding of everyday (im)mobilities in the city.

Our argument comes in three parts, and it may help to treat these out of sequence, here, in order to establish our contribution overall. This article has to do with homelessness, but only indirectly so; what we are directly concerned with is the professional practice of street-based outreach work, which is oriented to and takes place *with* the homeless. In particular we are interested in the ways in which pedestrian mobility figures in the work that outreach workers undertake as they attempt to bring about their own street-level intersections with a hard-to-reach client group. A description of the work of outreach and an account of mobility practices particular to this context can be found in the second of the three sections into which this article is divided. A third and final section argues that ethnographic attention paid to the mobility practices of urban outreach

reveals those practices to be constitutive of the very settings and limits within and along which they might first appear to operate; the 'front line' across which homeless outreach operatives extend themselves is something they also repeatedly *produce* in movement. To recognise this is to recognise grounds for critique: an intersection between urban ethnography, street-level (im)mobilities and visions of the good city. Before either of these two sections, however, and in anticipation of each, we frame our contribution overall by setting out something of what we see as the conceptual troubles and fruits encountered at the intersection of urban ethnography, (im)mobilities research and Interactionism, in particular Goffman's writings on territories and gatherings.

Where is the action?

Our key position in this article is that situations and settings are the product of and emerge from multiple and intersecting (im)mobilities. This is perhaps widely recognised within the mobilities literature but we also want to emphasise that the consequences and politics of (im)mobilities are handled and produced *situationally* in interaction. And this is something we think is lost in treatments of mobility as an all-encompassing order. This is not to simply contrast the moving with the static – interactions take place on the move and involve movement too – but, rather, to think about the ways in which mobilities and interaction are co-constitutive orders. This leads to a necessary engagement with the distinction that Goffman made (1983: 3) between the situational and the merely situated; the former referring to that which can only happen in co-presence and the latter to that which simply happens to be so. So, whilst the key tenets of Interactionism are broadly compatible with the mobilities paradigm – specifically a rewriting or outright rejection of static notions of structure and/against agency, taking, instead, both to be an outcome of process (Atkinson and Housley, 2003; Rawls, 1987) – each poses analytic questions of priority for the other. The central tension revolves around the question of 'where the action is' (Goffman, 1967) in the contemporary era when 'all the world seems on the move' (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Although we do not pursue power as a particular issue in this article we might consider this quote from an article discussing the Interactionist conceptualisation by way of exploring this theoretical intersection:

By explicitly *not* assuming a fixed relationship between micro and macro, structure and agency – indeed, by disavowing the legitimacy of such distinctions – it is possible to show how power *as manifested in real situations* generates and shapes both the individual and his or her social context.

(Dennis and Martin, 2005: 207)

Every Interactionist will bet all they are worth that this is the case and with good reason. Through a sustained programme of theoretically informed observational research it has been shown that all the grand matters of sociological trouble turn out to be handled by people *in situ* on a moment-by-moment basis (Duneier and Molotch, 1999). Yet, at the same time, it is hard to ignore the ways in which the field of mobilities research has over the past decade demonstrated that socio-technological change has prompted a questioning of previously stable assumptions of how settings and situations are produced and organised in and through relations of (im)mobility such that they come to be treated as 'real situations' in the first instance. And this, we argue, raises a pressing issue for the social sciences, certainly so if we are to understand, apprehend and intervene in the street-level politics of the contemporary 'global' city. The intersection of mobilities research and theory with Interactionist concepts has been taken up in the work of Ole B Jensen (2010) to good effect in questioning the dualistic opposition of sedentary and nomadic thinking in relation to city space. We want to push this a little further by thinking with Goffman's treatment of interaction order and aim to demonstrate how we might come to see the city as accomplished moment-by-moment and in and through particular attentions, disattentions and mobility practices. And we do so through particular reference to an often overlooked (at least by mainstream sociology) but central aspect of Goffman's theory and writing: the claim.

Goffman, of course, writes a good deal of movement; famously between front and back regions (1959), of vehicular units on city streets, and the circulations of the traffic system (1972), and of territories of the self which can be situational or fixed, or 'egocentric' and move with the person (1972: 52). In specific relation to our case, Goffman also writes of claims and patrol, in introducing a discussion of the notion of territory:

This concept from ethology seems apt, because the claim is not so much to a discrete and particular matter but rather to a field of things – to a preserve – and because the boundaries of the field are ordinarily patrolled by the claimant.

(1972: 29)

Yet, viewed from a mobilities perspective there is something of a sedentarist position in Goffman's work. People move *between* regions, vehicular units move *within* a 'traffic system', and, most strongly in his remarks on claims and territories. Boundaries precede patrol, it seems. The consequence is that whilst we learn a good deal about the politics and winners and losers of and in situated face-to-face interaction we learn less about how the movements of actors might themselves produce and recognise (and thus *accomplish*) territories and settings in the first instance. This, it seems to us, is vital for understanding the organisation of the contemporary city and, indeed, its futures. Equally it is important to retain the sense of mobilities as a social order; socially produced and socially organised. This organisation, across and as an unevenly experienced terrain of mobility, is a terrain constituted *through* the differing potentialities and opportunities of individuals and groups to move and stop; *is* the politics of mobility. As Creswell describes:

By a politics of mobility I mean the ways in which mobilities are both productive of such social relations and produced by them. Social relations are of course complicated and diverse. They include relations between classes, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, and religious groups as well as a host of other forms of group identity. Mobility, as with other geographical phenomena, lies at the heart of all of these.

(2010: 21)

Whilst this position is readily and widely accepted it is, in turn, complicated by Goffman's insistence upon power and social constraint as being irrevocably situational matters:

More than to any family or club, more than to any class or sex, more than to any nation, the individual belongs to gatherings, and he had best show he is a member in good standing. The ultimate penalty for breaking the rules is harsh. Just as we fill our jails with those who transgress the legal order, so we partly fill our asylums with those who act unsuitably – the first kind of institution being used to protect our lives and property; the second to protect our gatherings and occasions.

(Goffman, 1966: 248)

People *belong* to the gathering in the sense that the social Self can only be produced in the conditions afforded by social interaction. Thus the gathering, and face-to-face interactions, contains its own 'rules' and constraints and compulsions upon the behaviours permissible within it and demanded by it. The interaction order is thus characterised by a series of commitments, conditions and constraints belonging neither to structure nor agency but to social settings and encounters. Interaction is, thus, a production order *sui generis* (Goffman, 1983; see also Rawls, 1987). We might ask, however, as we do via our discussion below, how this understanding of power and constraint operates in terms of the movements and mobilities that find people involved in gatherings and social settings in the first instance? If people claim and patrol more or less fixed and more or less permanent territories, how might we come to see these territories as produced in, rather than pre-existing, movement? If interaction with objects and with peers is key to the production and modification of meaning (Blumer, 1969) then what part does mobility play in this? And, centrally for our case, if the gathering is where the action is, how do people end up there?

What we provide below is a snapshot of the ways in which mobility practices, and foot patrol or 'streetcombing' in particular, as instantiations of urban walking, are pivotal to the work of urban outreach. These movements enable the gatherings in which clients are met and talked and worked with and helped out but, we want to argue, they do not simply precede this work; these movements too are operative and generative. We provide an account of a professional practice rather than an everyday mobile action, and we do so both to contribute to the mobilities research record but also, and perhaps more significantly, to point to the ways in which the social milieu of the city is produced in rhythmic and arrhythmic circulations, arranged in palimpsest. And we can

demonstrate something of this through an account of the situational politics of (im)mobility through which vulnerable persons come to be lost and then found in the city.

Hard-to-reach and homeless: outreach services in a city centre

Anyone who has spent time in the middle of any major UK city will have more than likely come across or caught sight of some or other individual who looks a little lost. Depending on what you take this turn of phrase to mean, you might imagine (or recall) one of at least two possibilities. Perhaps someone stood still amidst the general pedestrian traffic, holding a street map, frowning down at the detail then looking up and around at the available street signs. Staring at a map in the middle of city is as effective a means as any of communicating the idea that you are not from round here, and is likely to prompt, before too long, a well-meaning intervention from someone who is and wants to lend a hand: 'Are you lost? Can I help?'. That is one possibility, but there are others, depending on what 'lost' is taken to mean. As Kevin Lynch notes in his classic study of urban form and design, '[t]he very word "lost" in our language means much more than simple geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of utter disaster' (1960: 4).

With Lynch in mind, perhaps you might imagine or recall a second someone with a look of being lost, only this time with no map in their immediate possession (unless bundled up somewhere in the half dozen or more plastic bags they are lugging, or the shopping trolley they are pushing, piled high with what looks like scavenged rubbish). Such a person might look lost in some other way, might look adrift somehow, or undone; and as such they might give off a rather different impression in terms of where they are from or belong – they are likely to look as if they have nowhere else to go, as if 'round here' is all they have to work with. We are talking about 'the homeless', and although they too stand still on occasion they also move, shuffling along on fugitive errands that share pavement space with those around them. Unlike those in the grip of geographical uncertainty, the homeless do not draw so very much by way of kindly attention. Something about them forestalls well-meaning intervention, and they less often hear that same enquiry: 'Are you OK? Can I help?'

The work that we have observed is oriented much more to this latter category than the former, though indirectly. What we are directly concerned with are the operations and practices of a team of welfare practitioners whose job it is to ask that difficult question – 'Are you OK? Can I help?'. This team operates in the middle of Cardiff, capital city of Wales, as part of a wider effort on the part of the local authority to reach out to and support vulnerable adults whose private troubles have reached a pitch sufficient somehow to decant them onto the city streets – call them, as we have above, the homeless. Similar provision can be found in a great many UK cities. The Cardiff team includes a range of health and care practitioners, among them, and central to our purpose in this article, a small number of specialist outreach workers. These latter represent the team's front line, tasked to meet up with likely clients on the city streets and reach out to them with immediate services (hot food, first aid, information and advice) and the promise of more if those they meet up with can be persuaded to take up the offer – a hostel bed, a doctor's appointment, a detox programme, a place on the waiting list for council housing. Making this offer is easy enough, but getting others in the sorts of need encountered by the team to hear what is being said, to understand what is being asked of them and to re-align their own immediate priorities and accept is not always easy at all, as anyone familiar with this sort of work will appreciate. In this context, some of the street homeless are routinely described as 'hard-to-reach', meaning they seldom seek out mainstream health and welfare services on their own initiative and are liable to recoil from, or treat with suspicion, offers of help.

But hard-to-reach has a literal meaning too, which makes the work of homeless outreach a particular mobility practice as well as an exercise in dogged assistance. Outreach work of the sort we are describing strives (and struggles) to engage a client group that is not only unwilling but not to hand – not sat dutifully in some waiting room pending assessment but scattered across the city's streets and parks. That is the working premise. Clients are not housed and could be anywhere. In order to find them – the ones you know and are already working with, the ones you don't know yet and haven't met – you have to move around; you have to search them out. And this is no simple task. For all that at least some of Cardiff's homeless might be imagined to stand out in amidst the busy commuters on the city's central streets, they have ways and means of keeping out of sight, and good reasons for wanting to do so, on occasion. Added to which, a further difficulty, they don't keep still; they drift about according to their own timetables and concerns and are also, on occasion, chased off from wherever it is they have sought to settle; they are never reliably where they were when last seen or where they promised they'd be this morning. Outreach workers, then, find themselves engaged in a

daily game of hide and seek, attempting to locate the city's homeless in the course of repeated patrols of the city centre – the team undertakes at least two patrols daily, each one lasting at least a couple of hours; our fieldwork engagement has been defined by this practice.¹ This makes outreach work a mobility practice, before it is, or can be, any sort of welfare intervention; and it makes it a distinctive mobility practice too. Unlike other sorts of care crews on the move in the middle of Cardiff – paramedics racing to the scene of an accident, social workers setting out to make a home visit – outreach workers don't know where they are going. Not because they are lost, but because they are looking for something.

Streetcombing

Homelessness is not a game of hide and seek or anything else, of course; nor is outreach work an entertainment – it is a professional practice in which experience and expertise are deployed for serious purpose.² Our point here, however, is that homeless outreach (see Rowe, 1999) of the sort we are describing begins long before a practitioner encounters a homeless client and sets to work – with all the skill and nuance that such work then requires: there is a certain amount of leg- and foot-work that has to get done first. Moving is working – as it is for the social worker and the paramedic; but more than this, looking is working too and takes some skill; it is a practice that outreach workers learn to be good at, and it requires not only leg-work but leg-work of a particular sort, having less to do with getting anywhere than with searching out and reconnoitring. Outreach workers casting about for clients in the middle of Cardiff are mobile, certainly, but they cannot be described as on their way to somewhere any more than someone looking for something can be described as looking at it. What they want (to find) is not only not to hand but missing. And under such conditions moving becomes something other than moving towards – a destination; it becomes a practice undertaken in the hope of turning up, or coming across, or producing that which is sought. This activity can be described here in only the briefest detail:

Outreach patrol: An outreach worker, one of two, climbs down from front passenger seat of a van, parked by the side of the road; it is early morning, still dark. She is joined by her co-worker, and together they make their way on foot across the road and between barriers to enter a bus station. Here they begin a steady walk up and down the empty bays, making their way to the end of each bay and then back. They move slowly and patiently, but not idly; they seem to be looking for something, or if not that exactly then in the business of directing their attention somehow; but it is not altogether clear what it is they are after (they are not here to catch a bus, that much is clear). At intervals they pause to examine or consider something underfoot, some trace or indication that must matter to their line of work: a couple of beer cans, a discarded shoe, a sheet of cardboard laid flat beside a bench. One of the two stoops down to pick up and examine a scrap of paper, half of a chemist's prescription. They puzzle over this together, and move on. Ten minutes later they have left the bus station behind and are at the far end of a rear access lane, approaching a wire mesh security gate and a building site beyond. The gate is secured by a chain and padlock, but there is enough give in the gate to allow one of the two to squeeze through to the other side. On the uneven ground beyond she stops by a muddied blanket, nudging it aside with one foot to reveal a scatter of discarded syringes. There is a tool shed a few yards further on. The outreach worker moves closer. 'Danny? Is that you? Are you in there?' she calls. The door is ajar and there is movement inside.

What are we to make of this? What is about to happen? Most probably an encounter between a street level bureaucrat (Lipsky, 1980) and a homeless client. Such encounters are freighted and complex,³ and deserve attention. But for now another question holds our interest: What has already happened? One answer, simple enough, might be that two people have walked across town to where they wanted to be, to where their work is about to begin. But to answer in this way would be to neglect the careful moves required just to get there – well in advance of any subsequent negotiation with a hard-to-reach homeless client. Outreach workers out and about in the middle of Cardiff in the pre-dawn are not walking to work; they are *looking* for work – or, rather, the looking itself is work; they are *searching*. And we suggest that searching – for someone or something – is not only a distinctive mobility practice, but, more than that, a mobility practice in which what might appear to be distinct conceptions of what it is to move fold into one another.

Walking practices can be variously undertaken and described (see Solnit 2001), and sometimes celebrated, positioned as desirable and essentially healthy (for example de Moor, 2013), as against stasis and sedentary lifestyles. In this context it can be a useful corrective to have one's attention (re)directed, now and

then, to those for whom walking is simply hard work, or a burden: the homeless, for example, but also, in this instance, outreach workers, for whom walking is also a chore – or, paid employment. But there is more to be gained here than a salutary reminder. Certainly walking as a necessitated practice can be distinguished from walking as idle pursuit or leisure activity. Weighing up the act of walking in the context of urban design, Filipa Matos Wunderlich (2008) does just that, proposing a distinction between what she calls purposive and discursive walking. The former is defined as a necessary movement, destination orientated: ‘a walking task ... [i]t connects A to B to C and further on, and is normally of a constant rhythmical and rapid pace’ (Wunderlich, 2008: 131). Walking to work and home again are given as examples of purposive walking, in which commuting mode certain practices characterised by bodily disengagement may apply: ‘[w]alking while listening to a walkman or ipod, walking while talking on the mobile phone, and walking while eating’ (2008: 131).

Discursive walking is different: it is not destination orientated, or needn’t be; it is a spontaneous and participatory activity ‘in the course of which one ‘half consciously explore[s] the landscape while sensorially experiencing it passing by’ (2008: 132). Such distinctions have their uses, certainly, but do not quite capture the obligated yet circling movement of the urban homeless. Nor is it clear just where the sorts of outreach work with which we are concerned would fit here. What sort of walking is searching? Purposive? Discursive? Neither? Both? We suggest that searching, as a mobility practice, usefully complicates this seeming binary.⁴ Outreach patrol of the sort (briefly) described above is a mobility practice that is acutely purposive even as it does not know its destination; it is a participatory, exploratory activity – ranging around the city, attentive to what the urban environment might hold or offer up – yet one that cannot lapse into leisure; it is conducted at (what seems) an idling sort of pace sometimes even as it counts as urgent business; it appears hesitant at times, yet this seeming indecision is in fact the mark of expert familiarity, a tentative sensitivity to the possibilities introduced by moving carefully through the streets alert to *what just might be the sort of thing you are looking for*.⁵

The mobility paradigm is already populated with various subjects – the tourist (McCabe, 2014), the commuter, the passenger (Dant, 2014), the loiterer (Dewsbury, 2014), to name but a very few.⁶ Our own research, in the field of homelessness but with a particular focus on the work of outreach (rather than the homeless themselves, who receive enough attention elsewhere), suggests yet another subject: the searcher; person in search of something. Searching, we propose, is a distinctive mobility practice, with its own logics and choreography; it is a subset of seeing, which though familiarly conceived of as distinct from moving is of course only ever accomplished in movement; to look for anything, simply to see, is to move or be able to do so (Noë, 2004). This, then, is our substantive contribution in this article: searching, as a mobility practice; not movement A to B, but purposive; not any sort of indulgence or leisure activity but (necessarily) unhurried and with no destination in mind. And – perhaps most importantly – a mobility practice, a mobile method even, already in play. Not contrived for research purposes (see, for an early and influential example, Kusenbach, 2003,⁷ also Hall, 2009; and Housley and Smith, 2010), nor yet requiring new methods capable of capturing things and people on the move. What outreach workers in the middle of Cardiff get up to, where they go, what they know and how they ‘arrive’ at that knowledge – all this is available to the ethnographer prepared to put in a little leg-work⁸.

Moving care-fully: toward a situational politics of (im)mobility

Mobility makes and propagates, is generative; thus, as Jensen notes, ‘people not only observe the city whilst moving through it, rather they constitute the city by practising mobility’ (2009: 140). Our observations of outreach workers on patrol, searching out and ministering to their rough sleeping, hard-to-reach clients provide possibilities for examining just such a constitutive relation of pedestrian mobilities and the social organisation of everyday city space. Our argument, to restate, is that the peripatetic mode of enquiry and care we have shared with outreach workers not only traverses but *produces* the contours of the landscape, territory and consequent urban politics in which outreach workers move and are entangled. Drawing on Erving Goffman’s sociology, we considered, through our brief description, the possibility of engaging with pedestrian (im)mobility as a social production order *sui generis*; not subservient to or produced through other ‘higher’ or ‘grandier’ orders but itself productive of order and meaning and constraint in, and as, city space.

An ethnographic engagement with street-level mobility practices is well positioned to recognise how movements of actors do not take place *within* or *between* pre-existing bounded settings and territories but are constitutive of the edges of such observable organisational frames in the first instance. In this sense,

(im)mobilities and interaction are mutually constitutive orders. (Im)mobilities do not simply emerge from, characterize or connect given social conditions, experiences or settings, or scales of socio-spatial organisation, but are central to the production of knowledge and perception, meanings and relations, and situational accomplishments of action, practice and social organisation. In terms of urban sociology, such a perspective and ensuing programme of studies would take seriously the sense in which urban actors are participants to a constantly emergent and mobile organisation of urban life entailing the ubiquitous and situated mobile demands of dealing with co-presence, involvement, situational propriety, normal appearances and navigation and searching. A similar reworking of sociological approaches to the urban in a mobilities perspective so oriented to street-level practices would necessarily proceed by discovering or revealing the organisations of (im)mobilities of bodies, materials, objects, ideas and goods which produce – not simply exist within – the contours of urban space and place in which they are found.

As demonstrated through our case of the provision of street-care to the rough sleeping homeless we can note how (im)mobilities are not ancillary to the experience of either homelessness or outreach work but are inextricable from conditions of urban vulnerability and, indeed, the provision of street care. Outreach workers' circulations and attentions enact a city of care, repair and kindness that is at the same time inflected with a particularly urban socio-spatial politics (Hall and Smith, 2015). The mobile production of the city is reflexively tied to a cumulative knowledge of place as the product of regular and routine (although not necessarily, and necessarily not, routinized) movement. Here we have designated this skill 'streetcombing', and, elsewhere, a 'roving attention' that 'animates' the urban landscape (Hall, 2008; Hall and Smith, 2013). This, then, is not knowledge of a place held statically but, rather, a set of particular embodied skills that are, in turn, tied to and developed in and through the next day's patrol, and the next – each of which draws on but is never quite a replication of the last. Outreach work is, then, both an instantiation of a particular and distinct mobility practice and also, we have suggested, a particularly urban form of care. A necessarily open and exploratory form of pedestrian engagement that negotiates the scale, anonymity, and affordances of city space for their rough sleeping clients to be tucked away in the middle of things and the street-level governance and policing of (im)mobilities which finds rough sleepers and outreach workers in more or less constant circulation.

In terms of the lived politics of city space, we can note that care, in this case and in others, is not simply *delivered*, as if the destination of that care were known in advance. Outreach workers are surely front line public workers. Yet they are 'front line' in a sense that finds them working where their clients are at – on their turf and terms. Outreach workers do not have purpose made workshops that mark other tinkering trades (Goffman, 1991). Theirs is a fully peripatetic care in ways that the work of other social workers is not.⁹ They are front line operatives dealing with the city's most acute public need; wherever that need might be found. Here, then, the caring encounters do not take place in a particular setting that frames the caring (and other) practices that go on there. This is a more dynamic, more mobile, more compromised geography of care than that described in other settings (see, for example Conradson, 2003a,b). We note, following other research that describes the relational and affective dimensions of care work (Rowe, 1999; Lawson, 2007; Bondi, 2008), that outreach workers are too entangled and active in complex relations, inflected by power, in which the spatial, emotional, and intersect and flow in to one another. Yet, we also insist on an attention to the specificities of how a given care practice is produced, in interaction. In this sense, outreach work whilst bearing a family resemblance, is distinct from that of other front line workers in that their circulations and encounters also produce a shifting and rhythmical moral geography within wider urban spatial formations (see Hall, 2010; Smith and Hall, 2013). Their mobile work demarcates the shifting spatial and social limits of a city's territories of care; a constantly revised and moving 'front line'. And it is in this sense that we thus offer local pedestrian mobilities as the *topos*¹⁰ of the social production and organisation of urban space and, as such, fertile ground from which to develop critiques of current states and future visions of the 'Good City' (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Amin, 2006; Hall and Smith, 2011; Hall and Smith, 2015). Across our work we have aimed to demonstrate the possibility that 'grand themes, such as mobility and the good city, are susceptible to empirical research through ethnographic, street-level ethnography' (Atkinson, 2015: 137-138xx). The contribution of street-level pedestrian research is, then, in documenting the practices in and through which mobilities are produced and productive of relations of movement and stasis or motility and sessility with some groups moving, some not, some privileged, some displaced, some experiencing a burden of mobility, some brutally emplaced; an uneven relational landscape of mobilities. And whilst it is always tempting, and perhaps necessary, sometimes, for urban sociologists to look up from or beyond or behind the everyday appearances of the street-level city, we want to argue that *more* attention, much more, needs to be paid to the everyday circulations of people on city streets. It is these pedestrian circulations, and the interaction order that they display, that produce winners

and losers; that are the very stuff of city life. One need look no further than the everyday or the mundane and need nothing more than patience and perhaps a sturdy pair of shoes to see the politics of urban life enacted and experienced. To linger there, we suggest, is not to shirk a greater theoretical responsibility or calling but is to commit to an attempt to understand and describe street-level life as it unfolds, on the move, for better and worse. An ethnographic attention to the ways in which street-level mobility practices, such as urban patrol, are themselves accessories to such unequal outcomes and experiences also offers up the possibility of identifying where the possibilities of a future Good City lie; realized not in grand utopian plans and visions (Pinder, 2005), but produced in local, piecemeal, everyday instantiations of urban kindness and everyday hope (Hall and Smith, 2015; Back, 2015).

NOTES

¹ If and when asked ‘What does your fieldwork actually look like, getting done?’ our answer is or would be that it looks like one or other of us moving around the centre of Cardiff together with outreach workers as they conduct their daily patrols. Outreach workers do other things too, of course – make calls, keep records, attend meetings – but outreach patrol is the thing they do that we have done too and shared with them; it is also the thing they do that, by their own account, matters most. ‘Doing outreach’ is going out on patrol; you couldn’t be an outreach worker and not do that.

² Perhaps hide and seek is a trivial a pastime, but it is no fad; it is a time-honoured and close to universal amusement. Nor is outreach work of the sort described here something all that new or local. Consider Egon Bittner, remarking here on the mobility task facing US police officers working with the homeless and hard-to-reach almost fifty years ago: ‘If ... [a homeless man] disappears from sight and one wishes to locate him, it is virtually impossible to systematise the search... the only thing one can do is to trace the factual contingencies of his whereabouts’ (1967: 706).

³ Among other things, they are very far from being the one-sided administration of assistance that some might imagine. As Rowe (1999) has ably demonstrated, encounters between outreach workers and their homeless clients can involve some hard bargaining and careful moves as each party looks to secure a possible advantage or gain; in this and other ways the homeless are not best imagined as simply ‘acted upon’ by those tasked to help them (Keil, 2013: 394). Encounters and interaction between homeless clients and outreach workers reward close examination, and we have pursued this elsewhere (Smith, 2011).

⁴ We have concentrated our attention here on the first two terms in what is actually a three-part typology. Wunderlich offers up not only ‘purposive’ and ‘discursive’ walking practices (which stand in rather obvious, binary juxtaposition) but also ‘conceptual’ walking, which is conducted in reflective mode and bound up with ‘a creative response to our interpretation of place ... or simply a way of gathering information, or critically building awareness of urban environments ... it is a process of becoming acquainted with a space’ (2008: 132).

⁵ We recognise that we have, in ethnomethodological terms, ‘lost the phenomena’ of searching. We aim to recover it at a later date, for a different readership.

⁶ Mattias Kärrholm et al. also attest to the many forms of urban walking, but then look to develop a (rudimentary) conceptual framework or cluster with which to ‘facilitate the study of urban walking as a mutable and relational object rather than as a phenomenon attributable to a set of types or finite categories’ (2014: 11). In doing so they follow Jennie Middleton, whose work also bears on our contribution here (see, for example, Middleton, 2010; 2011; also Hall and Smith, 2016).

⁷ Kusenbach’s ‘Go-Along’, first offered as a qualitative research tool over ten years ago, has the researcher accompanying informants on what Kusenbach describes as ‘their “natural” outings’ (2003: 463). Such outings might resemble informants’ everyday routines but are nonetheless semi-contrived. Kusenbach suggests the researcher ‘follow[s] informants into their familiar environments and track[s] outings they would go on anyway as closely as possible, for instance with respect to the particular day, the time of the day, and the routes of the regular trip’ (2003: 463). Moreover, combining participant observation with interviewing, ‘[g]o-alongs intentionally aim at capturing the stream of perceptions, emotions and interpretations that informants usually keep to themselves’ (2003: 464). Perhaps, then, at least some such go-alongs are rather more performed and ‘conceptual’ in the manner of Wunderlich’s three-part typology (see note 4).

Citing Kusenbach, among a great many others, Misha Myers (2011) provides a useful overview of some of the ways in which walking has been enrolled in the development of innovative approaches to the production and representation of knowledge. Arguing in particular from work with refugees and asylum seekers in the city of Plymouth, UK, Myers directs readers to the productive disruption that walking practices can bring, as methodology, to some of the established hegemonies of communication and authorship in both academic and artistic work – this in addition to the initial dividend of simply loosening up respondents to talk (noted also by Anderson, 2004). As Myers has it, the ‘spatial practice of walking ... activates encounters within and with particular contexts through ambulant, kinaesthetic and communicative movement and interaction’ (2004: 187), and this activation can take conversation (and commentary) to places it might not otherwise have ventured. Agreed. One further instance of walking as mobile method, again intersected with artistic practice but otherwise at some remove from Myers’ work, is provided by archaeologist Chris Tilley, whose attempts to understand ancient Neolithic art in landscape are necessarily conducted by the researcher alone – in the absence of available respondents. Here too we find walking enrolled as method, a means by which to accomplish ‘a gathering together of synaesthetic and material and social sensory experiences’ (2008: 270); and although archaeological explorations in landscape phenomenology may seem a long way from work with the homeless in the centre of Cardiff, we can also note the following: ‘the process of walking is one in which one perceives in order to be able to know. To know is to know how to perceive ...’ (Tilley, 2008: 270; but see also Ingold 2011). This link between perception, knowing and going applies as readily to an outreach worker as to any archaeological or ethnographic researcher, or participant invited to walk for research purposes. But again we emphasise that in the case of outreach we are dealing with a mobility practice already in play – not introduced and/or practised by the researcher as method.

⁸ We recognise the ableist connotations of such phrase. ‘Leg-work’ is used in the same sense as we have used ‘pedestrian’: to refer to walking practices but also to a wider set of concerns bound up with street-level mundane mobility practices. These concerns are explored directly in relation to the practical troubles of wheelers in city space by Laurent Parent (this issue).

⁹ Workers who, nonetheless, move (see Ferguson, 2009)

¹⁰ Here we intend *topos* in two senses: as locale and as commonplace.

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