



# The 'Time-space' Biographies of Daily Life in Deprived Neighbourhoods

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# **The 'Time-space' Biographies of Daily Life in Deprived Neighbourhoods**

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## 1. Introduction

There is a tendency in policy narratives and academic debate about poverty, related behaviours and associated impacts to assume that people live spatially bounded (neighbourhood based) lives. Policy debates increasingly portray deprived neighbourhoods as spaces of difference, where internally cohesive and segregated communities nurture dispositions and behaviours that deviate from social and cultural norms (Flint and Robinson, 2008). Efforts to comprehend area effects associated with living in deprived places also fall into this 'local trap', taking no account of the real world 'action-spaces' of individuals (Kwan *et al*, 2003; 2004). Meanwhile, research into 'getting by' has tended to be aspatial in emphasis, focusing on household budgeting practices, informal economies and reciprocal patterns of care. Yet, one of the ways in which people might seek to overcome or compensate for the penalties of place (service provision, social resources, economic opportunity) is to extend the routines of everyday life. Recognising this fact, this working paper draws on emerging findings from an ongoing research programme seeking to examine the interaction between 'poverty' and 'place' to investigate the 'time-space' biographies of some 180 people living in six deprived neighbourhoods across the UK.

Attention focuses on describing the time-space biographies of daily life of people in these six neighbourhoods and the factors shaping their spatial routines. This includes attention to the specifics of place, as a physical locality, social setting and socio-cultural context, and to the aspirations, attitudes and resources informing individual agency. The associated costs and benefits of extended spatial routines are also considered. After a brief introduction to the research context, the paper is organised into four key sections:

- *The complex 'time-space' biographies of daily life* – provides an introduction to the time-space biographies of respondents, making the basic point that people in poor neighbourhoods are following spatial routines that are complex and individualised and frequently extend beyond the limits of the residential neighbourhood.
- *Triggers and consequences of extended time-space biographies* – considers the benefits that appear to trigger the extension of time-space biographies beyond the limits of the residential neighbourhood.
- *Understanding the time-space biographies of everyday life* – considers the reciprocal relationship that exists between people and places and serves to shape the specifics of individual spatial routines and certain observable patterns apparent within or across the six case studies.
- *Emerging conclusions and issues for further analysis* – considers the significance of the insights provided into the time-space biographies of residents of deprived neighbourhoods and what can currently be said about impact of extended spatial routines on experiences of 'getting by' in deprived places.

Throughout the paper, extended sequences from in-depth interviews are presented in order to convey the spatial routines and attendant factors driving these patterns of mobility in respondent's own terms.

## 2. The Research Context

This paper draws on data from qualitative interviews undertaken in two waves with 180 residents living in six relatively deprived locations. The first round of interviews was undertaken with around thirty respondents in each of the six neighbourhoods in the Spring and Summer of 2008. These were followed up with repeat interviews with a sub-sample of eighteen to twenty respondents in each of these areas in wave 2 interviews, carried out a year to eighteen months later, during 2009. A common topic guide was used across the neighbourhoods, and new themes were introduced for the wave 2 interviews.

The six case study neighbourhoods are: the *Hillside* area (part of a larger housing estate in North Huyton) in Knowsley, Merseyside; *Oxgangs*, which is a suburb to the south of Edinburgh; *West Marsh*, to the west of Grimsby town centre in North East Lincolnshire; *Wensley Fold*, a residential area close to Blackburn town centre, in Lancashire; *West Kensington* estate in the Earls Court area of West London; and the town of *Amlwch*, Anglesey, in a semi-rural setting. The areas are all in the lower two deciles of the relevant national deprivation index, and were selected to represent broad differences in the extent of diversity, connectivity and residential mobility according to relevant social indicators.

The neighbourhoods are not therefore all classic areas of ‘concentrated poverty’ that have tended to dominate research into relatively deprived areas (Milbourne, 2010). Amlwch and West Marsh are both isolated from major centres of economic activity and have faced long term economic decline, with modest in and out-migration over the past thirty years or so. Oxgangs and West Kensington are deprived neighbourhoods in the midst of very affluent areas in two prosperous capital cities. West Marsh and Hillside are ethnically homogenous areas (predominantly white British), while Wensley Fold is a more ethnically mixed neighbourhood, with a well established South Asian community living alongside a white British community close to the town centre of Blackburn.

There are further contrasts in the extent to which the neighbourhoods have been subject to area-based renewal programmes over the years. Hillside and West Kensington are both within New Deal for Communities areas and have therefore been at the heart of this flagship regeneration initiative over the past ten years. Oxgangs has also been subject to a major remodelling, demolition and new build programme in the past ten years. A housing refurbishment programme was undertaken in Wensley Fold five years ago as part of the housing market renewal programme for East Lancashire. Area-based interventions in West Marsh and Amlwch, however, have been modest and sporadic. The extent of variation between the neighbourhoods is intended to help unravel both consistencies and contrasts in the perceptions and experiences of the residents, in ways which might not be evident from more quantitative assessments of economic and social indicators.

## 3. The Complex 'Time-space' Biographies of Daily Life

### 3.1. Introduction

The spatial routines of daily life revealed through the analysis of 180 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with people living in deprived neighbourhoods in the UK were complex and highly individualised. In the vast majority of cases, however, these spatial routines extended beyond the local neighbourhood on a regular and frequent (often daily) basis. This is a simple but important finding. It reveals as a fallacy the assumption that poor people lead tightly bounded spatial routines rooted in their local neighbourhood, a notion inherent within policy debate about life in deprived neighbourhoods and academic discussion about living with poverty. This chapter evidences this finding through reference to a number of case study examples. Subsequent chapters explore in more detail the factors informing extended spatial routines of everyday life.

### 3.2. Extended Spatial Routines of Everyday Life

The majority of the 180 respondents interviewed across the six neighbourhoods reported spatial routines characterised by the extension of processes of engagement, interaction and exchange beyond the residential neighbourhood on a regular and frequent basis. These routines were complex and highly individualised and obvious and distinct patterns were not always easy to discern. A flavour of this diversity is provided by the examples of Mary, Melinda, Mark and Carol, which are summarised below. Generalisable features, as well as the more unique or particular aspects of these spatial routines are highlighted.

Mary is a single woman who lives alone in Wensley Fold, Blackburn. Mary detailed a complex geography of day-to-day life that involved spending much of her time 'out and about' beyond the local neighbourhood. Mary was formerly a nurse but reported being no longer able to work because of ill health. Every Wednesday she travels to Manchester to work as a volunteer in a drop-in centre for people coping with the same health condition as herself. On other days she fills her time visiting family and friends in other parts of Blackburn and beyond, as well as walking her dog and shopping:

*Mary*                    *I don't tend to shop locally, I'm a Lancashire lass, I eat hotpot and mince and potatoes, I'm not one for being an ethnic chick who goes buying all these hippy trippy spices and trying to cook something up, and 'I want to be like you', I'm myself, I'm a Lancashire lass but I accept everybody for being how they are. I just don't shop locally.*

*Interviewer*        *There's quite a lot, there's Netto and stuff like that, do you go up to those places?*

*Mary*                    *I don't do Netto or Lidl.*

*Interviewer*        *Where's the supermarket then that you go to?*

*Mary*                    *There's Asda, there's Sainsbury's in Darwin.*

*Interviewer* You go down there then?

*Mary* Yeah, well you see I tend to, because I've got long term health problems I fill my days and what I do is things like get the dog in the car and go for a walk and do the shopping on the way home, but I go somewhere nice to go for a walk like go to walk along the beach at Blackpool or I might take her up to the woods at Tockholes. If I go up to Tockholes I could go to Sainsbury's in Darwin, I love being in Blackburn, that's where my base is, Blackburn's my home, the whole place.

Mary's everyday routine was distinct from many other respondents in a number of ways. First, it did not follow a regular pattern, other than on a Wednesday when she worked as a volunteer at the drop-in centre. This reflected the relative freedom she had to come and go as she pleased - she was not in work and had no children or relatives that she was caring for and had the financial resources to run a car. In contrast, many respondents revealed more regular patterns of movement beyond the neighbourhood, for example, associated with travel to work routines or regular shopping trips. Second, Mary detailed a more extended spatial routine than many respondents, whose time-space biographies tended to be limited to adjacent neighbourhoods and the town or city centre. This appeared to reflect Mary's disassociation from her residential neighbourhood and the resources available therein, as well as her familiarity with the town and surrounding area and her ownership of a car that allowed her to move about with relative ease. Third, Mary was one of only a small number of respondents whose extended routine served to enable them to engage in more extensive and expensive forms of leisure and consumption. More commonly, extended time-space biographies were associated with routine activities and were driven more by necessity than choice.

Melinda, a woman in her early 30s who is in full time employment and is living in a shared house in West Kensington, also detailed an extensive spatial routine. Melinda has lived in London for more than 10 years, but only recently moved into West Kensington, attracted by its connectivity to other parts of London. For her, the residential neighbourhood appeared to be little more than a place to return to at the end of the day:

*Interviewer* What was it that attracted you to West Kensington, why did you decide to move here, what sort of issues?

*Melinda* It's the location, 'cos it's so central to many places, it's not too far away from Fulham, it's close to Earl's Court, it's close to High Street Ken, so it's fairly close to lots of different areas, and I like variety.

*Interviewer* Are you pleased that you've moved here?

*Melinda* Yep, so far so good (laughter). Location wise it's good, definitely.

*Interviewer* How would you describe a typical day in terms of where you go and what you do?

*Melinda* Right, okay, well, Monday to Friday I'm hardly here because I work in Wimbledon, so I go to work and then I go the gym, so I'm only back in this area in the evening. So, I just come straight home and do homey things. And at weekends I usually stroll about, go to Fulham or I go to High Street, Ken and I like to do window shopping and go for walks, and go for coffee, so.

*Interviewer* So you actually venture out of North Fulham.

- Melinda* Yeh.
- Interviewer* You go to different parts of London as well.
- Melinda* Yeh.
- Interviewer* What about shopping and things like that, do you do them here in West Ken?
- Melinda* Yeh, it just depends. If I go for a stroll to High Street, Ken, if I need to buy anything then I would do it there, or if I go for a walk in Fulham then I would do it there, it really depends.
- Interviewer* Okay. What's the best thing about living round here? You've already mentioned those issues.
- Melinda* It's the location, yep.

In West Kensington, the connectivity of the neighbourhood to other areas of London, by virtue of physical adjacency and public transport links, served to help extend the spatial routines of many respondents in the neighbourhood. In contrast, respondents in Amlwch were faced with the challenge of overcoming relative isolation. Mark is in his late 20s and lives with his partner in Amlwch. He works fulltime as a landscape gardener, a job that takes him all over Anglesey, and at weekends he also works as a DJ in a pub. Asked how he spends his time when not working, he described a routine rooted in Amlwch, but which regularly extends beyond the town:

- Interviewer* When you're not at work, on a typical day, say the weekend, what would you do on a typical day, what sort of things would you get up to?
- Mark* Well, I work in – it's a bit sad actually – but I tend to my plants, my veggies, I'm big on growing vegetables.
- Interviewer* Have you got a big garden at the back?
- Mark* Garden round the back, yeh. I do that. Take my mum and dad's dog for a walk.
- Interviewer* Do they live round here?
- Mark* Up the road.
- Interviewer* What about things like shopping, do you have big shops, would you go to Amlwch?
- Mark* No, no, it's either Llangefni or Holyhead.
- Interviewer* Is that the food shopping, or?
- Mark* Food shopping.
- Interviewer* You wouldn't go to Somerfield then [in Amlwch]?
- Mark* No, if I'm desperate for something, I might go to Somerfield. Main shopping is Llangefni or Holyhead.
- Interviewer* What's the thinking with that, what's Llangefni got that Amlwch's not got then?
- Mark* Asda. Somerfield here's expensive.
- Interviewer* Is it? A lot of people have said that ... So, I take it then that you've got a car.
- Mark* Yes.
- Interviewer* And has your partner got a car as well?

- Mark*            *No, she takes the same car.*
- Interviewer*   *Now, without that car, would you have shopped in Amlwch? The car gives you the mileage that you –*
- Mark*            *Yeh, yes and no. If I borrow mum's car, I could have gone to Llangefni. If I'm stuck on a car it would be Somerfield here.*
- Interviewer*   *Okay. Other things that you might do at the weekend, would you go out to the cinema or anything, or theatre?*
- Mark*            *No, 'cos I'm working every Friday and Saturday, I've got a part-time job as well. I'm a DJ.*

Respondents in Amlwch reported some of the most extensive spatial routines, reflecting the physical isolation of the town compared to the other study areas and the consequent need to travel relatively long distances to neighbouring towns in order to access alternative or additional resources, including shopping and leisure facilities. More commonly, daily routines were more circumscribed, extending little beyond an adjacent neighbourhood or a nearby town or city centre and, for most respondents, extended spatial routines were less about exercising lifestyle choices and more about 'getting by'.

Carol's time-space biography was typical of many respondents. Carol is 27 years old and lives with her partner and three children in Wensley Fold, Blackburn. She is currently looking after the family home and described a routine rooted in the local neighbourhood, but which regularly extends into the nearby town centre:

- Interviewer*   *Could you tell me what you do on a typical week day?*
- Carol*           *Normal week day is get up, get the children ready, walk them to school, come back, if it's nice sometimes I go out to the park, it's only up the road that way, shopping, cleaning, basic things really, nothing really special, and then go and pick the kids up and come back and carries on from there.*
- Interviewer*   *So in terms of the things you use in the area do you do your shopping here?*
- Carol*           *There's a little store down road, Netto, I go there if I go there if I forget something and need something but town's not too far anyway, it takes about seven minutes to get to town so I tend to do my shopping in town but there's two major parks and they're not too far from here so when it's nice it's a nice walk.*
- Interviewer*   *Is that the park down here?*
- Carol*           *Well there's one down the road which is not too bad on the way home from school nipping in for half an hour, there's a community centre down the road where the children go in school holidays to do art and football and things and then there's Waves which is not far, the swimming pool so they go there for swimming lessons, we go there during week sometimes so I do use facilities that are quite close yeah.*
- Interviewer*   *Do you go out of Blackburn much?*
- Carol*           *probably four times a year, take the kids to do things like we go to Blackpool, things like that.*

### 3.3. Conclusion

The finding that spatial routines of people in poor places frequently extend beyond the residential neighbourhood was consistent across the six case study localities and for different age groups, in a range of household situations, fulfilling different roles and responsibilities and involved in a variety of daily activities. Of course, there were some people who reported spending most of their time in and round their residential neighbourhood. Tightly circumscribed daily time-space biographies, however, were the exception rather than the norm. This finding raises an obvious series of questions: why might an individual need to extend their spatial routine; what opportunities are they seeking to access; where are these opportunities available; what benefits flow from extended routines; and what are the costs of more localised routines? The following chapter considers these questions.

## 4. Triggers of Extended Time-space Biographies

### 4.1. Introduction

The extension of spatial routines beyond the residential neighbourhood typically represented an adaptive mechanism, through which people compensated for and sought to overcome the limits of the opportunities available within the local neighbourhood by moving through and into places where opportunities were more readily available and accessible. Various benefits were therefore associated with extended routines of everyday life. This chapter profiles these triggers and the associated benefits of extended routines, including related patterns of social interaction and engagement. Discussion focuses on six key triggers evident within the spatial routines of the 180 respondents interviewed:

- employment opportunities
- education and training
- shopping
- leisure activities and facilities
- public services and goods, and
- social networks.

### 4.2. Employment Opportunities

Employment was an important influence on mobility patterns within the daily lives of respondents. The time-space biographies of many respondents were intimately related to the need to venture beyond the residential neighbourhood to access employment. People in employment exhibited the most frequent and regular patterns of mobility beyond the residential neighbourhood. However, the specifics of these spatial routines varied widely.

The pattern of spatial routines associated with work was heavily gendered. Most of the men in employment reported geographies of work that extended beyond the local neighbourhood. Most involved a relatively short drive or bus ride to work, but there were examples of men travelling relatively long distances to work on a regular basis. However, there were some examples of respondents who noted that they could not access work in other areas because the transport costs were prohibitive, when considering the wages on offer. One workless respondent from Wensley Fold, Blackburn, whose case was reported in Crisp *et al* (2009), had recently left a job in a food production factory in nearby Preston because of the prohibitive cost as well as the time involved in travelling to work:

*Respondent* I actually got work there [in Preston] but it didn't work out worthwhile. I had to change two buses just to get there and that came to three hours.

*Interviewer* What type of work was it?

*Respondent* Roasting chicken and making samosas, it's mainly frozen food ... it didn't work out worthwhile for me ... Not at all, in fact I had to spend more money out of my own pocket to do that work.

This finding concurs with the conclusions of other studies, which have challenged the tendency for policy to assume that narrow spatial horizons in relation to job search reflect a culturally informed reticence to travel. Travel to work patterns also reflect more pragmatic concerns about the cost and time involved in travelling to work in a labour market dominated by low paid work (Gore *et al*, 2007; Green and White, 2007).

Women – and, in particular, women with children - were far more likely to work closer to home. Exploring this issue further, it emerged that the work related spatial routines of women with children were frequently restricted by parenting responsibilities and the need to minimise travel to work time in order to fit around the school day. This pattern was evident in Marie's daily routine, in which work was squeezed in between dropping off and picking up her young children from school:

*Interviewer* Can I just ask you could you describe to me a typical day to me, a week day in terms of what you would... what we're interested in is how much you use the Oxfords area as opposed to other areas so just in terms of shopping or working or whatever. What would you do in a typical day.

*Marie* On a typical day well a normal week day I take my son to school, the school's only two minutes along the road so I take him there and then I have to go to work. I'm self employed, I do a bit of house cleaning which I don't do in Oxfords, I do it in the Green Bank area, and then from there I've got another job, down the road so from there I go there, up to the school to work so we're talking by end of lunch time 1.30 there's me finished so I come back, get him from school then maybe do a bit of shopping over at the shop over there and that's it. In terms of what do I use, facilities in Oxfords, I don't really. I go to the library now and again up the top of the road and the Scotmart? There which actually, I don't like going there cos it's not well the best shop to go to, it's either that or you've got to go away along to Tesco at the end or it's either that or Morrison's right on top the hill so you find most people, they go to Scotmart, it's no the best shop but most people go there for convenience.

*Interviewer* It's handier?

*Marie* It's handier so that's really all the facilities that I do use. Now and again there'll maybe be something on at the community centre, like they do things at Christmas, they do the discos for the kids, Halloween they do a disco for the wee ones, things like that, so now and again we do use the community centre.

*Interviewer* And if you and your partner were going for a night out would you tend to go into Edinburgh or would you go about here?

*Marie* We don't really go out but if we were going out, I mean we're past the clubbing stage so if we were going out, I mean we'd probably go to a restaurant in West End, there's a few pubs locally, maybe Morningside area that we might drink in, don't drink in the pub in Oxfords, well I don't, occasionally my partner will but I don't go here.

*Interviewer* And do you ever use the shop, the Broadway, would you ever go there for any of the other shops?

*Marie I do go there now and again if I'm up that way at the library, then I'll kill two birds with one stone and I'll go cos like there's a post office up there so I go there as opposed to going over, they call it Mains? There's the other post office so yeah I do.*

Work often had a constraining effect on the geographies of respondents, such as Marie, who worked close to home, leaving them with little free time in which to pursue activities, associations or exchanges that might take them beyond the neighbourhood. Barbara, for example, works as a cook in a local school in Knowsley five days a week and also works in a local pub on Saturday. Her daily life is tied to the local neighbourhood for six days a week, and during the school term she has little time to venture outside the local area.

Respondents often came into contact with and developed associations with people from beyond the local neighbourhood through (voluntary and paid) work. In some cases, the dispersed nature of work-related personal networks served to undermine the development of stronger ties out of work, the distance involved representing an 'unsupportable cost'. In other cases, friendships were reported to have developed with work colleagues. One respondent in West Marsh, for example, reported spending his time 'chilling out' after working three 12 hour shifts in three days:

*R Well I'm a shift worker, I work out in the countryside at [name of employer]. So basically three days a week, I work Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, me time's taken up from 6 in the morning till 8 o'clock when I get home. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday just chilling out waiting to go back to your 12 hour slog like you know, bit of shopping, visit parents.*

He reported knowing few people where he was living, other than immediate neighbours to say 'hello' to. However, he had developed a close friendship with work colleagues, who would come around for a chat and a drink on an evening and who had been helping him with DIY around the house:

*Interviewer What about where you work?*

*R Yeah*

*Interviewer And how do you get there?*

*R Company transport, they put a coach on and they pick up.*

*Interviewer So do you socialise with any people that work there or is it just a small social network round here?*

*R To tell you the truth I haven't got many friends round here cos...*

*Interviewer You've only just got back?*

*R Yeah but a friend from work, he comes round, like today, he does a bit of joinery work for me and such like so, which is cheaper than getting somebody you don't know.*

[Grimsby, 44 year old man, married, resident in neighbourhood for 24 years]

### **4.3. Education and Training**

The absence of educational and training opportunities in the local area prompted many respondents to venture beyond the residential neighbourhood on a regular basis. This was a common pattern in the daily routines of young people, many of whom were still living in the parental home. In the majority of cases, these routines

were characterised by multiple journeys each week to attend college or university. A small proportion of these respondents were travelling to other towns or cities. A respondent in Wensley Fold, for example, was travelling to Preston to attend university. Many of the young people interviewed in Hillside reported travelling to St Helens to attend college three or four times a week. In Oxgangs, Maddie, a young mother of two reporting travelling to attend college on the other side of the city:

*Interviewer*    *Where is college?*

*Maddie*            *Oh other end of the world. It's down at Granton.*

*Interviewer*    *So how do you get there?*

*Maddie*            *Couple of buses or I get a lift from Tracy's friend, this week I've been starting to get a lift from Tracy's friend which makes a huge difference cos if I get a lift from Marlene I have to leave at 5 to 8, if I get a bus I have to get on the bus for 25 past 7 so it makes a huge difference. The kids get up at 6 and they get ready and my ex partner's mum is my child minder and she comes down at half 7 in the morning and picks them up, takes them up to her house up at Buxton and takes them to school from there and picks them up after school and then brings them home.*

It should not be assumed that just because people are moving through and spending time in different places they inevitably interact and bond with people they encounter. Young people in Hillside, Knowsley, for example, were frequently travelling outside their local neighbourhood and attending college in other parts of Merseyside, but they appeared to often be travelling and socialising with other people from Hillside. In other words, there was little evidence of bridging, as opposed to bonding, capital emerging from these experiences. In contrast, as we will see below, the involvement of individuals in clubs and teams was more likely to result in more meaningful and sustained engagement with others.

#### **4.4. Shopping Opportunities**

Shopping was the most common trigger of mobility beyond the residential neighbourhood. The majority of respondents reported travelling to a supermarket or superstore outside their residential area on a regular (typically weekly) basis. These movements were prompted by the limits (range and cost of available produce) or the absence of local shopping opportunities. The distance travelled reflected the location of shopping facilities. Respondents in Amlwch, for example, reported travelling 20 miles to Bangor to do their weekly food shop, where there was reported to be more choice and cheaper produce than in Amlwch. Sian, a married woman with children who was working part-time, talked about approaching the weekly shop as a day out:

*Interviewer*    *That's interesting. So would you say that you feel like Amlwch is a long way from other places?*

*Sian*                *No again you need a car, or we need better services, facilities, we've lost the railway line that used to come into Amlwch. Now there is talk of re-opening that which I think would be an excellent idea and I think you'd get more tourists and stuff coming in. I think again if you're prepared to travel, we still look at it as like going out for a day. If we go out shopping we'll generally go out for something to eat and make a day of it so no, I don't think we're out on a limb, not at all.*

Most respondents in West Marsh, Wensley Fold, Oxgangs and West Kensington, in contrast, reported having ready access to shopping opportunities close to home and

being able to walk or drive a short distance to do their food shopping. Routines associated with shopping were therefore relatively circumscribed. Farideh, a married woman in her early 30s with children who was looking after the family home, talked about being able to satisfy all her immediate shopping needs close to home in West Kensington. Furthermore, additional shopping opportunities, services and facilities were reported to be available only a short bus ride away:

*Interviewer* I'm going to ask you a bit about living in this area. How would you describe a typical day in terms of what you do and where you go?

*Farideh* What I do is we've got the market, North End Road market which is great for food, you get all sorts of food here, fruits, vegetables and it's a good market and it's cheap so I think it suits the people around here because some of them are not working, some of them aren't high earners so relatively it's a good area but it could be better .... And I go shopping on the buses so you can get on a bus, go to Kensington High Street which is round the corner, it's so central for everywhere, I take my son to the dentist, he's in Guys Hospital so we just take the tube and it's just so convenient for transport, local amenities, there's a sports centre in Fulham and so everything is here. There's a mosque for us where I used to teach.

*Interviewer* Is that nearby?

*Farideh* It's not far, it's past the Fulham Broadway towards Parsons Green so that's located there so I used to walk to work and no transport, didn't have to worry about the journey.

*Interviewer* Do you venture out quite a bit then in terms of on a daily basis do you use not just the blocks nearby but do you use....

*Farideh* Yeah, Wandsworth, because 28 [bus] goes straight to Wandsworth so I like going to Wandsworth, my sons are there, different shops, the market's here and like I say Kensington High Street so you've got all the good shops. I very rarely go to Oxford Street now because there's nothing new there for me, everything is down here, Hammersmith is very close by and then there's a great big shopping centre being built in Shepherd's Bush which is going to make it even more convenient because it's just a bus ride away.

*Interviewer* So do you tend to stay in Fulham then?

*Farideh* Yeah, yeah I mean like I said the furthest I go is... but then I do go towards Putney as well because my son attends a school in Richmond, so he's using the bus to go to Richmond and so [other son] he's in college nearby so there's a college here, Hammersmith and West London College .... so we've got everything here, it's a very nice area, you get a bit of the posh, you get a bit of the other side but it's good yeah. It's a nice area, I don't feel unsafe to go out during the day. I mean even everywhere's not safe at night, not just here but then during the day you know there's a lot of people there, there's a lot of Arabic shops here where you get your Halal food and everything and that's a really nice thing about living here and I think the whole of the borough everybody from everywhere is there, lots of Polish shops are opening up as well for Polish people so the community is catering itself for its community in every sense so that's good.

*Interviewer* So you feel that really diverse needs are being met?

*Farideh* Yeah some things, clothes and things like this, not as much really what I wear, not available in this area but you know .... but it's close by, Shepherd's Bush, the market in Shepherd's Bush, they do a lot of things for the ladies, Muslim ladies who cover and things like this. But other clothes you have the market where they have the stalls, you've got Peacocks here, you've got good variety of shops.

In a small number of cases, online supermarket shopping served to constrain spatial routines by reducing the need for people to venture out and use public space and facilities, within or beyond the local neighbourhood. Three key factors appeared to inform the use of online shopping. First, in some cases shopping online was presented as easier and cheaper option than travelling to the supermarket in person, particularly if reliant on a taxi to transport the shopping home. Second, online shopping served to save time for people juggling multiple responsibilities, for example, working, looking after children and caring for relatives. Third, shopping online served to open up new possibilities and choices for people with mobility problems who found it difficult to venture further afield on a regular basis. Helen, for example, is retired from work and lives with her husband and grown-up son in West Marsh, Grimsby. Helen has mobility problems, and reported having had knee replacement surgery that was not successful. Helen reported doing all her shopping on-line:

*Interviewer* So in terms of the internet then do you buy all your shopping?

*Helen* Yes I buy my clothes on line.

*Interviewer* How about day to day things, bread and milk and..

*Helen* Yes that's what I'm doing, I sit down once a week, I compare sites, Asda, Tesco's, Sainsbury's, I can see which one will do the cheapest. So far I've saved £7 from Asda, I haven't done the Sainsbury's yet, but £7 is £7 when you're of pensionable age, it's quite a lot of money. It's a bit extra in the electricity pot [laughs].

*Interviewer* So that covers absolutely everything really in terms of clothes and presents apart from this one excursion that you have at Christmas when you go with your son?

*Helen* Yes, yes.

*Interviewer* So in terms of when you do go out it's mainly the doctor's?

*Helen* Doctor's mainly, I haven't been for some time, I haven't needed to go, they don't really do any more for me so there's no point in bothering him and wasting his time. It's not fair, they're busy people aren't they, getting appointments... I can order my tablets on line, I can ring Sainsbury's up, they will deliver them for me, so there's a way round everything.

#### **4.5. Leisure activities and facilities**

Involvement in leisure activities, including swimming, visiting the cinema, various keep fit activities and sports (including football, fishing, pool and darts), served to extend the spatial routines of some respondents beyond the residential neighbourhood on a regular basis. Variable geographies were associated with these routines. Typically, movement was driven by the desire to access facilities not available within the residential neighbourhood. A typical example was respondents with young children in Wensley Fold, Blackburn travelling the short distance to the Waves leisure centre in the town centre, sometimes on a regular basis to attend lessons, sometimes on a more irregular basis, for example, as a one off activity at a

weekend or during the school holidays. Some retired respondents in Wensley Fold also talked about utilising leisure facilities on a regular basis. For example, Elizabeth, a retired woman living on her own, talked about how she met up with a friend at the Waves centre on a set day every week, as well as attending a Tai Chi class once a week:

*Interviewer* We're going to talk about the things that you do during the day around here. Can you describe to me a typical day, the things that you do in a typical day?

*Elizabeth* I generally get up, have a shower, come down, about three days a week I meet a friend but unfortunately she lives at the other side of town, we meet up.

*Interviewer* Do you meet in the town?

*Elizabeth* In town and sometimes we'll get the bus, we'll go to Chorley or Burnley or go to Accrington.

*Interviewer* So you get out and about of Blackburn?

*Elizabeth* Get about because there's nothing much in Blackburn to see, I have me dinner out and then we come home.

*Interviewer* Do you find the transport ok? I'm assuming that you're retired?

*Elizabeth* Oh yes

*Interviewer* Have you got your bus pass though, you've got free travel?

*Elizabeth* Yes, you can travel after half past 9 but if you go before 9 you pay full price. Yeah we do go swimming twice a week, we go up to Tai Chi once a week but at the moment my friend's feet are very very bad and she's got them bandaged up and we haven't been able to go swimming for a bit and we haven't been to Tai Chi for a fortnight because schools have been on holiday and I've had my little granddaughter.

*Interviewer* Where do you do the swimming?

*Elizabeth* We go down to Waves in town.

*Interviewer* That's in Blackburn?

*Elizabeth* Yes

*Interviewer* And what about Tai Chi?

*Elizabeth* Tai Chi we go to the centre near St Anne's school.

*Interviewer* Is that walkable?

*Elizabeth* Oh yes it's just in town.

In Amlwch, Hillside and Oxfgangs there were examples of spatial routines extended by involvement in football, fishing, boxing, pool and darts clubs or teams. One young man in Knowsley reported travelling to different parts of the UK on fishing trips with friends. A man in Oxfgangs reported playing in two darts teams and travelling to matches across Lothian and the Scottish borders every week. Clubs or teams were sometimes located outside the residential neighbourhood and involvement such leisure activities emerged as one of the drivers of extended routines of daily life most likely to result in more meaningful and sustained engagement with people from other places. William, a retired single man in West Marsh, Grimsby, for example, talked about making friends with people living across North Lincolnshire since he joined a rambling club:

*Interviewer* Just thinking about your friends, you say your friends are in different parts, is it because your friends have tended to do quite well that they've ended up living in these different areas?

*William* No what it boils down to really, the two girls I was very friendly with at school, we joined school on the same day, we left school on the same day, one of them lives at Billingham now and one of them lives at Cleethorpes, but they both married and I didn't and had families and I joined a rambling club, Joan at Billingham, she joined it as well, and that's where I made my friends, in the rambling club you see. Well they all tended to be professional people and so that's how it came.

Typically, the spatial routines associated with leisure activities were less regular or frequent than routines associated with work, education and shopping.

#### **4.6. Public Services and Goods**

The need to access and utilise public services and goods required some respondents to venture beyond the residential neighbourhood. Examples include health care (GP, hospital and dentist), council offices, Jobcentre Plus offices, libraries and Post Offices. The geography of flows associated with service access was found to vary depending on a series of place-specific factors (availability and accessibility of services) and individual dispositions (attitudes and preferences). In many cases, these spatial routines were a direct response to a deficit of resources in the local neighbourhood. The Hillside neighbourhood of Knowsley, where there was a lack of key infrastructure, including basic services such as post offices and pharmacies, was a stark example of this driver of extended routines. There was also a reported lack of shops selling affordable essential goods in West Marsh, Grimsby and Amlwch. This finding raises an interesting dilemma for policy. If people are unable to access good quality resources and employment in their local neighbourhood, they appear more likely to extend their spatial horizons and daily routines, increasing the potential for interacting beyond the neighbourhood and potentially developing bridging social capital. However, in the context of poverty, the provision of good quality services at the local level would seem to be a more pressing concern.

Many of the drivers and motivations for using places beyond the neighbourhood were the result of forced requirements rather than choice. However, there were examples of people preferring to utilise services that were not the nearest or apparently the most readily accessible. This was particularly true of health care services. A young woman interviewed in West Marsh, for example, reported travelling to Cleethorpes to visit the dentist, while there were examples of people travelling beyond the local area to see a GP. These patterns of service utilisation appear to reflect a combination of factors, including a preference for the familiar, which prompted some people to maintain an association with a dentist or GP where they used to live, and dissatisfaction with or difficulties accessing local provision.

#### **4.7. Social Networks**

Routines of association with family and friends emerged as an important mobilising force in the lives of many respondents. Some respondents had dense, closely knit networks of association; there were frequent examples of respondents with multiple family members and friends living locally, and sometimes on the same street. Close geographical proximity within family ties was most obviously apparent among respondents in the Wensley Fold (Blackburn) case study and, in particular, among Pakistani respondents. Within this sample there were examples of people living with,

next door to, on the same street within close walking distance of family members. Kadir, for example, is a 22 year old Pakistani man living in Wensley Fold, in one of two houses shared by his extended family:

*Interviewer* If I kick off with how long you've been living here for?

*Kadir* I was born round this area, I was born on [name] Road in Blackburn and my parents were living at [name] Road and we moved from there to there at [second name] Road where we are now, I'd say about 20 years of my life I've been living at the address I'm at now.

*Interviewer* And how many of you are there in the house?

*Kadir* In my household there is 9 of us not including my brother's kids, he's got two kids, so 11 in total but we've got two houses.

*Interviewer* Next door to each other?

*Kadir* Yeah next door

Fahim had been living with his wife and young child in Wensley Fold for the two and half years since he left Pakistan and had his brother and sister and their families on the same street:

*Interviewer* So do you feel that you belong here in this area?

*Fahim* Yes definitely

*Interviewer* And what about your family and friends, do you think they feel the same way?

*Fahim* Yeah our families all think the same, we're not gonna move from here because we've got everything here, all of our family, friends, work, everything's here and all the facilities are here

These dense, closely knit networks are strongly reminiscent of the archetypal working class neighbourhood described by Bott (1955), who observed the concentration of people of the same or similar occupations living in the same neighbourhood, whose jobs and homes were in the same area, which was characterised by low population turnover and continuity of relations, opportunities and need for family and friends to help one another, little demand for physical mobility and little opportunity for social mobility. The result was a high degree of density or close knit social networks, where kin, work associates and neighbours were largely all the same people (Young and Wilmott, 1957).

Living in close proximity to family members gave respondents access to various forms of support and assistance. Probably the most frequently cited example was help with child care, but other examples included help looking after a sick or disabled relation, help getting around (for example, to work, the doctors, more distant family and the supermarket), practical help around the house (for example, with DIY tasks) and friendship and companionship. In contrast, there were many respondents with dispersed social networks, with 'significant members' (for example, a father, mother, sibling or grandparent) living in another town or city or even outside the UK. These respondents typically had a history of residential mobility, which had seen them move relocate and leave behind family and friends. In cases where respondents had relocated within the same town or city, there were examples of people returning to visit friends and relatives on a regular basis. This was particularly true of younger people. Respondents in both Hillside and Oxfords talked about returning to their old neighbourhood to socialise with friends on an evening or weekend. There were also examples of social networks that sustained over relatively long distances as a result

of the residential mobility of friends. Sheila, a single parent in West Kensington with two grown-up children and who was working full time, described a friendship group that was dispersed across London and beyond:

- Interviewer* And now then, you've got a bit more financial independence [since the children left home], do you find yourself going out more and doing more?
- Sheila* I do, yeh.
- Interviewer* What sort of things would you do? I see you talked about seeing your friends.
- Sheila* I go meet up with my friends, we go to the movies, we go out to the pub, we go out for lunches, we go – not lunches, dinners. We go clubbing (laughter).
- Interviewer* Good for you. Where would you go?
- Sheila* Indian clubbing, of course, but there again I go very very far, like Watford, Wembley, Slough, that's where my friends live.
- Interviewer* And you mention that you've got a car.
- Sheila* It's like an hour's drive.
- Interviewer* Would you drive there? Have you always had the car or is that something you've had more recently?
- Sheila* I've always had a car.

At some point, distance became an 'unsupportable cost' (Fisher, 1982) for people on low incomes. Face-to-face engagement with more dispersed members of a social network therefore became more intermittent, with contact maintained through telephone conversations, text and email contact. Nearby associates (whether family or not) therefore tended to be the source of practical forms of support, such as child care, while more distant family served as a source of advice and financial support. This pattern of family contact and support is well illustrated by the experiences of a single mother with two children aged nine and five years old living in West Marsh, Grimsby:

- Interviewer* So how often do you see your mum or do your mum and dad come here?
- R* Yeah they're coming this weekend, I don't go there very often cos I haven't got any transport and going on the train and that it's just extortionate. Sometimes my mum even comes to pick me up, it's like 35, 40 quid round trip, it's a lot of money, but yeah we get to see them probably every couple of months which isn't enough but...
- Interviewer* Kids get on with them do they?
- R* Oh adore them, me daughter speaks to me mum every day, the minute she gets in the door, 'can I ring me granny' 'yeah go on then' every day and me mum sends us letters and they write letters to me mum and email and so yeah we're still... and as I say me brother, he just lives near the college and we see him nearly every day, nips in nearly every day.
- Interviewer* So has he got family?
- R* No he's on his own and he works but he is me rock me brother, I couldn't do what I do without Stuart, I mean especially going to

*college and that, he was the one who took her to school when I had a course and you know he was... and still now, he's brilliant, I couldn't do half without him and I do feel so sorry for these young lasses that have got nobody, I don't know how they cope, you know got no family round them and nobody'll help them, it's such a shame.*

*Interviewer So you needed that?*

*R Oh yeah*

*Interviewer You say with the college particularly?*

*R Yeah especially me course yeah...*

*Interviewer Just by practically...*

*R Yeah if I was to say 'I've got a course and it doesn't finish till 5' 'oh I'll pick the kids up from school for you' and it's sometimes just an hour, that's all it is, or when they're off school we sometimes do courses here, obviously when the kids aren't at school and he'll have the kids for the day for me and you know, you do need it, especially when you're working and doing adult education, you just need it.*

*Interviewer Absolutely, it's good that you've got him here isn't it?*

*R Certainly*

In some cases, the difficulties that respondents encountered extending their spatial routines to include contact with family members within their everyday life was overcome by the mobility of family members, who were able to extend their own spatial routines and pay regular visits. One woman in West Marsh, Grimsby, for example talked about her parents driving in from outside town once a month to baby sit so that her and her partner could have a night out. Another woman in West Marsh, who originally came from East Anglia, talked about only being able to maintain contact with family members who were relatively nearby and who were willing and able to travel to see her:

*Interviewer What is it about family that would make it different?*

*Respondent Well I've got my family, my daughter who lives up the road which, we don't talk now, but apart from that I've got a nephew in Doncaster that I see as often as we can, he comes here, I don't travel because I don't have the money to do it but he'll come down as much as he can.*

*Interviewer So you would like to be near your family?*

*Respondent Yeah now I would yeah. When I was younger I could get about and go about but now I'm older I don't.*

[Grimsby EB1, 65 years old, single woman, looking after Grandson who is at college]

Other examples of spatial routines extended through social networking activities included older, retired respondents travelling to meet a friend or family member in a convenient location (often the town centre) on a regular basis for a coffee and a chat,

as in the case of Elizabeth, discussed above. In some cases, networks extended to other towns and cities, and even beyond the UK. However, there was limited evidence of frequent trips and visits to other parts of the UK and beyond.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

The identification of push-pull factors that serve as triggers of mobility within the spatial routines of respondents across the six case study areas represents a valuable contribution to understanding of the time-space biographies of people living in poor places. It also serves to cast light on the benefits secured through the extension of geographies of everyday life. However, analysis of push-pull factors only takes us so far in understanding the complexity of and variability within these time-space biographies. How, for example, are we to explain the diversity apparent within the work-related mobility patterns discussed above, or the contrasting spatial routines associated with shopping or leisure activities? The answer lies in the relational connectivity between people and places, which is explored in the following chapter.

## 5. Understanding the 'Time-space Biographies of Daily Life

### 5.1. Introduction

The time-space biographies of respondents are the product of the complex inter-relationship between individuals - their dispositions as manifest in aspirations and practices - and the nature of place, as a location, a social and material setting and a 'meaningful location' (Agnew, 1987). Understanding spatial routines therefore demands consideration of the particulars of the places within which they are rooted, pass through and avoid, and the incidents to which individuals are exposed, the resources at their disposal and dispositions prompting action (and inaction). This chapter rises to this challenge, by spotlighting four overlapping and inter-related bundles of issues and influences that interact to shape individual time-space biographies. These are associated with the individual (identity, disposition and resources) and the nature of places in which they live (context, composition and collective dimensions).

### 5.2. Identity and Dispositions

The first bundle relates to certain fundamental dispositions, rooted in an individual's social and cultural history and identity and reflected in their attitudes, preferences and aspirations. These dispositions, which may vary on the basis of class, gender, age, ethnicity and associated identities and assumed and acquired roles and responsibilities, are critical in shaping perceptions and interpretations of place and the recognition and utilisation of resources, which result in particular mobility choices. The case of Mary, discussed above, usefully illustrates this point. A central feature of Mary's time-space biography is regular and frequent routines that take her out of her residential neighbourhood. Exploring this geography further, it became apparent that a very particular dispositional outlook was informing Mary's routine, a fact which she reflected upon and talked about openly when explaining why she spends so much of her time out and about beyond the neighbourhood:

*I've kind of been a bit peed off with it, I've got bored with it, I've had to find other ways of living like going out to find things, it doesn't satisfy every need, what it satisfied is my most basic need which is for safety and security and for a home and for an area that is supportive enough for me to have that home there.*

Expanding on this theme, Mary went on to reflect upon how she differed from other people in the neighbourhood:

*Interviewer*    *So do you think that people who live in the neighbourhood around you are in a similar situation to you or in a different situation to you?*

*Mary*            *I think most people are in a different situation to me. Due to my circumstances I've needed a base, I've needed a home and I've needed that security because of my health but had I been the nurse that I was I would not have still been in this area, I'd have moved on, I would have been in some leafy suburban place now, I*

*know I would. But... I don't know, I would have moved on, so it's owing to my circumstances that I'm still here. What I expected and what I got are two very different things, but I recognise how lucky I am.*

'Being different' was referenced to explain the particulars of her routine, including why "I don't do Netto or Lidl", preferring to travel to Sainsbury's in Darwin. The sense of belonging elsewhere, on the basis of identity, was also referenced in discussion of the voluntary work she does every Wednesday in Manchester and why she should like to relocate to the city:

*Interviewer Is there anything about your life at the moment that you'd like to change?*

*Mary I'd like another two or three years to have been paid off my debt, that's the really one thing that kind of holds me back because if I did move I probably, the way my life is at the moment I wouldn't be moving into the dream place on top of a hill, right now I'd be moving to Manchester.*

*Interviewer Why Manchester?*

*Mary Well recently, I do a lot of voluntary work in Manchester at the moment, on a Wednesday, doing [voluntary work for charity] and I started to socialise and make more friends over there and I just fancy living in Chorlton, to me it would be perfect to be able to go to a coffee shop and to a bookshop and meet interesting strangers that I can communicate with, cos it still saddens me, the idea of this lady who all we ever say to each other is 'hello, how are you?' so there's only so far you can go here and there is a closeness about the community that I live in that I'm excluded from because I'm White so I have the awareness that it's a kind of a place where I'm slightly an outsider and I don't, because of my [illness] as well that's probably somewhere I sought out, because that's how I naturally felt.*

The comment from Mary regarding 'interesting strangers' represents an intriguing reflection on relationship between community, identity and the geography of routines. Whilst face-to-face relations within the neighbourhood are clearly important for some residents, for others there is a stronger affinity with an (imagined) community elsewhere. This ties in with Wellman's (1996) notion of 'community liberated', as the link between place of residence and social ties weakens. Extra-local activity becomes a way of realising these forms of community, although the quote also indicates that Chorlton is valued as much for the perception that it is full of people like Mary who might become acquaintances as for the existing social ties she has there.

In contrast to Mary, for some respondents Wensley Fold, Blackburn provided both a territorial focus for a sense of identity and belonging, fostering ontological security in the face of exclusion and persecution, and access to important social resources. This was very much the case for the South Asian respondents. For example, recent immigrants from Pakistan talked about the ontological security and sense of identity that was to be gained by living in, what was frequently referred to as, an 'Asian' area:

*Interviewer So that means that since you've come from Pakistan you've mostly stayed in this area?*

*R Yes*

*Interviewer So are you happy that you've lived in this area?*

*R Yes, it's because we have a lot of our community here, I can't speak English so it's nice that I have my own people here cos I can speak Urdu or Punjabi and also the whole family lives in this town, that's why.*

*Interviewer So all of your relatives live here, and what about facilities and services?*

*R We have everything, all services here.*

*[Blackburn man, married, three young children, arrived in UK from Pakistan 2.5 years ago]*

The existence of closely knit, locality based social networks associated with kinship and family ties were often central to such relational connectivity and socio-cultural affiliation to the neighbourhood. Jez is 16 years old and has lived in Hillside, Knowsley all his life. He recently left school and is hoping to go to college and study plumbing and joinery. Jez also described a time-space biography rooted in the local neighbourhood, spending most of his time in and around the neighbourhood, either at home, with his friends at a local youth club or training at a local boxing club:

*Interviewer In terms of yourself, can you just talk me through an average day, what you would do from getting up.*

*Jez I'd get up, have some breakfast, I come down to the club nearly every day and I go 'ome and then I go to the gym at night, Monday and Thursday I come back down to the club until later.*

*Interviewer So this [the youth club] is very important to you then?*

*Jez Yeah*

*Interviewer And what's on during the day when you're down here?*

*Jez Play pool, go on the computers and that.*

*Interviewer And how many, I mean you were saying [your friend] he does that as well, how many of you are there that kind of do that during the day?*

*Jez About five of us.*

*Interviewer All from Hillside?*

*Jez Yeah they're all from Hillside yeah.*

*Interviewer And do you all know each other?*

*Jez Yeah*

Jez's reported going on holiday with his family every year or two and has been to Wales and will be going to Ireland with the boxing club, but otherwise he appeared to have limited spatial horizons and reported rarely leaving the neighbourhood:

*Interviewer Where's the Thai boxing? Where do you go for that?*

*Jez .... St John's estate, just over there.*

*Interviewer And do you do actual boxing, fights and...*

*Jez Yeah*

*Interviewer And is it people round here, do you have fights?*

*Jez No they're from Wales and that.*

*Interviewer Right so have you been to Wales?*

Jez *Yeah I've been to Wales, I'm going to Ireland next February.*

Interviewer *Fantastic yeah.*

Jez *Just move on from there.*

Interviewer *So is it like a proper club?*

Jez *Yeah*

Interviewer *That's good. Apart from the boxing do you ever get other opportunities to go outside the estate, are you in the estate often, do you spend most of your time around here?*

Jez *Spend most of me time around 'ere.*

Interviewer *Is there any reason for you to go out other than the boxing?*

Jez *No*

Interviewer *So you wouldn't go to the centre of Liverpool very often?*

Jez *No, I don't like it there.*

Interviewer *Why not?*

Jez *Too crowded, loads of people.*

Interviewer *So you feel you're able to do the things you want to just around here?*

Jez *Yeah*

Interviewer *And would you ever think about living anywhere else?*

Jez *Probably not, no. All me mates are from round here and that.*

Interviewer *Yeah and your family?*

Jez *Yeah and me family*

Interviewer *You said your mates, your family, is there anything else that's good about living around here?*

Jez *Probably not, just the club, me family, me friends.*

### 5.3. Resources

The second bundle relates to the resources that an individual has at his or her disposal, which can take four essential forms. Financial resources (capital, income, access to loan finance and debt) are an important determinant of an individual's capacity to sustain an extended geography of everyday life. As discussed in Chapter 4, distance represented an 'unsupportable cost' for some people, financial resources limiting opportunities to travel to access work, amenities and facilities and to visit family and friends. An obvious illustration on the potential of financial resources to extend spatial routines was car ownership. Owning a car proved to be beyond the financial reach of many respondents, but there were numerous examples of spatial routines that were extended by car ownership. Eric and Margaret, for example, live together in a housing association flat in Oxfords and have had a car for three years. Margaret cannot drive, but commented that getting a car "changed our life". Eric travels to work in Livingston, some 18 miles away, a job that he has secured since getting the car. The car also allows Eric and Margaret to shop at their preferred supermarket. They also regularly drive out into the countryside at the weekend to go walking and travel further afield to visit their children, who were reported to be scattered across Scotland and England. However, while some respondents, like Eric and Margaret, talked about how car ownership changed their life, respondents in Amlwch talked about how car ownership was critical to their daily routine:

*Interviewer* And you keep a car don't you?

*Gareth* Yeah

*Interviewer* Is that a fairly essential item for you living here, would you say?

*Gareth* Yeah I done a day without it is not going to happen, with me working at Llangefni, I use that as an example because if I didn't drive or I didn't have a vehicle I'd have to get the bus and the buses there are not every hour, I think there's about three or four buses that go from between the hours of 7 till about tea time from here to Llangefni so I couldn't depend on that, Bangor at least is every hour, you can depend more on that than what you can to from here to Llangefni, so the best thing is obviously to get a driver's license you know.

Cognitive resources - the knowledge and awareness of opportunities available in different places and how to access them - can also prove a critical determinant of spatial routines. There were instances, for example, of spatial routines involving mobility beyond the residential neighbourhood to access facilities or services that other residents knew to be available in the local area. On the other hand, there were also some examples of people making in do with what was available locally, because they did not know what opportunities were available elsewhere.

Poor health and disability informed the constrained spatial routines of some respondents. Helen, for example, is retired from work and lives with her husband and grown-up son in West Marsh, Grimsby. She has lived in Grimsby for seven years, having moving to the town from nearby Immingham. Helen has mobility problems, and reported having had knee replacement surgery "unfortunately not successfully". Helen detailed a day-to-day routine rooted in the home environment, that rarely ventured beyond the house, other than for the occasional visit to the hairdresser or the doctors, when she was assisted by her son:

*Interviewer* I was going to ask you about, if you get out and about, from what you say visits to the doctors are the main...

*Helen* Yes, my son's got the car outside, he'll run me there, I don't walk, to hairdresser's twice a year, but apart from that I don't really leave the house. I might try desperately hard at Christmas, we do very late at night because people shove and my balance isn't very good now, if anyone pushes me, I try and do one shop at Christmas time because you can't always see everything on the web site that you're looking for, he'll take me very late at night, do it that way.

*Interviewer* So of a week you might go out once a week?

*Helen* I haven't been out since Christmas but fortunately when I speak to other disabled people you know, my son does several, he does their computers, they all have to get out of the house, they'd go mental, fortunately it doesn't bother me, I can amuse myself and go on the internet and try and learn something you know, do all sorts of things.

Shopping emerged as one of the most common drivers of mobility within the day-to-day lives of respondents, but not for Helen, who reported doing all her shopping on-line:

- Interviewer* So in terms of the internet then do you buy all your shopping?
- Helen* Yes I buy my clothes on line.
- Interviewer* How about day to day things, bread and milk and...
- Helen* Yes that's what I'm doing, I sit down once a week, I compare sites, Asda, Tesco's, Sainsbury's, I can see which one will do the cheapest. So far I've saved £7 from Asda, I haven't done the Sainsbury's yet, but £7 is £7 when you're of pensionable age, it's quite a lot of money. It's a bit extra in the electricity pot [laughs].
- Interviewer* So that covers absolutely everything really in terms of clothes and presents apart from this one excursion that you have at Christmas when you go with your son?
- Helen* Yes, yes.
- Interviewer* So in terms of when you do go out it's mainly the doctor's?
- Helen* Doctor's mainly, I haven't been for some time, I haven't needed to go, they don't really do any more for me so there's no point in bothering him and wasting his time. It's not fair, they're busy people aren't they, getting appointments... I can order my tablets on line, I can ring Sainsbury's up, they will deliver them for me, so there's a way round everything.

Social resources (that might be contained within networks of kith and kin) can also be an important determinant of spatial routines. There were numerous instances across the case studies, for example, of spatial routines dependent upon the support of a friend or family member giving a respondent a lift to work, or to the supermarket to do the weekly shop or to meet friends and relatives. Extended spatial routines were also facilitated by the availability of social resources that released people from responsibilities that tied them to the locality. The most obvious example is the role of family in providing child care. This finding undermines some of the distinctions made between bonding and bridging capital, in that it shows how local, bonding capital can be an important pre-requisite of securing work and, thereby, increasing the opportunity to develop 'bridging' ties in the workplace outside the neighbourhood. This potential for convertibility of bonding into bridging capital is often overlooked.

Political resources, including the rights secured by or ceded to a particular group, can also impact upon individual time-space biographies. Returning, once again, to the issue of transport, free travel on public transport was found to support extended spatial routines among older respondents, as the case of Sarah, a retired women living on her own in Oxfgangs, revealed:

- Interviewer* could just describe what a typical day might be for you, what you might do on a typical day.
- Sarah* Just go shopping
- Interviewer* Where do you shop?
- Sarah* Morrison's and then we've got such a wide choice and I am very lucky because just down at the bottom of the road here I've got a number 5 bus and it takes me to Asda hypermarket down at the other end of town that takes you 40 minutes on the bus, so it's a way at the other end of town so I'd rather get my shopping there and just left at the bottom of the road there. And walk to Morrison's for odds and ends and on a Tuesday I meet a friend up the town and have a coffee.

*Interviewer In the centre of Edinburgh?*

*Sarah Ah huh in Princes Street, and she comes from East Lothian, sometimes her sister and have coffee and we go in the shops, find the bargains, get a few odds and ends and go home, then I meet another friend on a Thursday, we go to the bingo.*

*Interviewer Where about's is that then?*

*Sarah Up the bridges [central Edinburgh] and we go in there for about an hour and a half, cup of tea and that and that's us. I don't really go out in the winter time when it's dark at night because well, you don't know whether you're safe. Don't get me wrong, it's not a bad place but there's....*

*Interviewer Yeah*

*Sarah So I don't go out on the winters nights, I just do my knitting and watch telly, it's something to do.*

*Interviewer It sounds like you lead quite an active life then?*

*Sarah Oh aye, I don't sit in the house.*

John, a retired man in Amlwch also talked about the benefits of free bus travel, although the limits of the local bus service limited its utility and forced him to continue to rely on his car:

*Interviewer Do you find that you use your car quite a lot now?*

*John No I don't, I use it... my father's a bit wobbly on his legs, only because of his age, he hasn't got anything specifically wrong with him, so I take him to get his pension and wherever else he wants to go and I use it for shopping. Other than that if it's going to town then I walk to town because it's not even a mile, it seems a bit scandalous to drive that little distance unless there's anything heavy you want to bring back.*

*Interviewer Yeah, but keeping your car's certainly something that you, it's an essential item really even though you don't use it that....*

*John It is yes, I've got a bus pass now, I use that quite a lot actually.*

*Interviewer Are there bus services to the main centres?*

*John The bus service to Bangor is very good, no complaints with that at all, but that's about it, Holyhead is not so good. If you want to go to Llangefni that's even less good, in fact that's not very good at all really, it's do-able but you're very restricted on the times that you go.*

*Interviewer So in terms of shopping activities where would you mainly do your shopping?*

*John We have a Somerfield supermarket which I despise, it's overpriced and they have little choice so use it for odds and ends but generally speaking drive to another town to Bangor or Holyhead.*

*Interviewer How long a drive is it to Bangor or Holyhead?*

*John It's 20 miles each way so...*

*Interviewer So a significant drive to go and do your shopping?*

*John It is significant yes.*

*Interviewer* But you think it's probably worth it?

*John* Well I think you probably get your petrol money back, diesel money in my case, just by the saving and there's certain things you can't buy in bulk but most stuff you can, cases of beer for example.

The availability of and access to these resources is inevitably conditional on an individual's situation and circumstance, including role and responsibilities in the household, family and wider society, which, in turn, will be informed by class, gender, ethnicity, age and position in the life-cycle, education history, ethnicity and other aspects of individual and collective identities and status. This point is well illustrated by the relationship between the gendered nature of childcare in some households and associated consequences for the geographies of work, discussed in section 4.2. Another important example is health status. Helen, for example, whose case was discussed in section 4.4, has mobility problems and detailed a day-to-day routine rooted in the home environment. Helen reported rarely venturing beyond the house, other than for the occasional visit to the hairdresser or the doctors, when she was assisted by her son:

*Interviewer* I was going to ask you about, if you get out and about, from what you say visits to the doctors are the main...

*Helen* Yes, my son's got the car outside, he'll run me there, I don't walk, to hairdresser's twice a year, but apart from that I don't really leave the house. I might try desperately hard at Christmas, we do very late at night because people shove and my balance isn't very good now, if anyone pushes me, I try and do one shop at Christmas time because you can't always see everything on the web site that you're looking for, he'll take me very late at night, do it that way.

*Interviewer* So of a week you might go out once a week?

*Helen* I haven't been out since Christmas but fortunately when I speak to other disabled people you know, my son does several, he does their computers, they all have to get out of the house, they'd go mental, fortunately it doesn't bother me, I can amuse myself and go on the internet and try and learn something you know, do all sorts of things.

#### **5.4. Contextual Characteristics of Place**

The third bundle relates to the opportunity structures evident within the local physical and social environment, including the availability of services, facilities and public goods. Observable differences in the patterns of daily life are, in part, a consequence of the actual or perceived absence of resources - including employment opportunities, shops, leisure facilities, medical services, child care and such like - between the place of residence and the world beyond. The precise consequences of this imbalance will depend upon the relative positioning, or location, of a place in space - and its adjacency to and connectivity with other places.

Wensley Fold (Blackburn), Oxgangs (Edinburgh) and West Kensington (London) appeared to be rich in local resources, limiting the need for extended geographies of getting by. The daily routine of Jane, a married woman who has lived in Oxgangs for 20 years and has three children (two at school and one attending pre-school) and spends her time looking after the family home and exemplifies this finding:

- Interviewer* .... just to start there could you just give me an idea of what you do on a normal day, for example yesterday what did you do if you can remember and then tell me if it was a typical day.
- Jane* Right yesterday, took the kids to school, came back.
- Interviewer* Do they go to a local school?
- Jane* Yes just down the road, came back up and we got the car and I took him [youngest child] down to, he goes to like a play group thing twice a week, took him down there, picked my daughter up because she had a doctor's appointment, took her to the doctor's came back down and then by that time it was time to go and pick him up again, did a bit of shopping, went and got some messages, came back, by that time it was about half past 1, did a bit of housework and then go down and pick the girls back up, one gets out at 10 to 3, other one gets out at quarter past.
- Interviewer* So do you hang around in between?
- Jane* Hang around in between and then come back up the road, by that time it was about quarter to 4ish and then get their homework done, try and get their homework done and then have tea and then daddy comes in and all hell lets loose then, that's about it.
- Interviewer* So that's pretty typical?
- Jane* Aye, up the road, down the road, up the road, down the road.
- Interviewer* You said you went shopping and got messages.
- Jane* Yeah normally I just go up to Morrison's which is just 5 minutes up the road.

Exploring Jane's daily routine further, it emerged that she was aware of and regularly utilised a range of facilities and services in the local neighbourhood, including shopping opportunities and the community centre:

- Jane* .... I use the hairdressers and the shops, the post office and there's another shop and the chemist.
- Interviewer* You're in and out of there quite a bit.
- Jane* Yeah and that's the community centre which we use quite a bit, the girls go to a junior club, one goes on a Tuesday, one goes on a Sunday, they normally have discos up there once a month.
- Interviewer* Which they go to as well?
- Jane* Which they go to. When they were younger they used to go to like a kinder gym thing for the kids and they have pantomimes up there and stuff like that, they have, they also do play schemes at summer and Easter which the kids go to.
- Interviewer* So you use...
- Jane* Yeah I use it, also they do a fruit and veg co-op on a Wednesday up there.
- Interviewer* Oh yeah, are you part of that?
- Jane* Well you can go up and buy fresh fruit and veg which is a bit cheaper than what it is up the road so I sometimes go up there. So there's lots of stuff up there for any age group, pensioners, right through, there's computing classes on there's keep fit

*classes, there's quite a few various things which cater for quite a few ages.*

*Interviewer What are the best things about living around here?*

*Jane Well it's handy for school for the kids.*

*Interviewer And is it a good school?*

*Jane The one they go to yeah, cos it's quite a small....*

Wensley Fold in Blackburn was also reported to be rich in local resources. Although some respondents bemoaned the loss of many of the local pubs, there were still two in the neighbourhood; there was a vast array of general and specialist stores, local places of worship, a community centre, two parks within easy reach and local schools. The neighbourhood was rich in the physical, institutional and human resources and environments that underpin active community ties. This fact was reflected in the everyday activities of respondents, which were frequently rooted in the local neighbourhood:

*R Normal week day is get up, get the children ready, walk them to school, come back, if it's nice sometimes I go out to the park, it's only up the road that way, shopping, cleaning, basic things really, nothing really special, and then go and pick the kids up and come back and carries on from there.*

*Interviewer So in terms of the things you use in the area do you do your shopping here?*

*R There's a little store down road, Netto, I go there if I go there if I forget something and need something but town's not too far anyway, it takes about seven minutes to get to town so I tend to do my shopping in town but there's two major parks and they're not too far from here so when it's nice it's a nice walk.*

*Interviewer Is that the park down here?*

*R Well there's one down the road which is not too bad on the way home from school nipping in for half an hour, there's a community centre down the road where the children go in school holidays to do art and football and things and then there's Waves which is not far, the swimming pool so they go there for swimming lessons, we go there during week sometimes so I do use facilities that are quite close yeah.*

This was particularly the case among South Asian respondents, but was also apparent in the routines of White British respondents, even when they had more dispersed everyday lives, leaving the neighbourhood to shop, socialise and visit families:

*Interviewer Would you say Bank Top is a typical area of Blackburn compared to the areas you know is it better, is it worse?*

*R To tell you the truth I'm proud of where I live, I'm not saying it cos I don't want to say... all the other areas are good, to try and make my area look good, but if you look at I personally would say we've got new houses being built round our area, we've actively engaged with the councillors and stuff .... and I'd say as constituents we're proud of who we've elected and we've got a lot*

*of facilities around our area as well and resources in terms of we've got the football pitches here, got basketball courts, we've got everything really.*

*Interviewer And which of the facilities would you use?*

*R We used to use, I don't now so much, but we used to use this football pitch a lot, we've got this community centre here, we used to come here a lot.*

Respondents in West Kensington could access a range of services, facilities and public goods with relative ease and often detailed spatial routines that were rooted in the local area and took advantage of the wealth of resources and opportunities within easy reach, including shopping, work, socialising and leisure activities. However, these routines could readily be extended into neighbouring areas, by virtue of the local transport network connecting the neighbourhood to the rest of the city. Zoe, a single mother living in West Kensington with three children and working full-time, described a routine that took full advantage of this connectivity:

*Interviewer if you were describing a typical day where would you go in the neighbourhood, what sort of places would you visit?*

*Zoe Shopping wise?*

*Interviewer Starting with shopping then yeah.*

*Zoe I use the local shops on North End Road, I use the market a little bit, not as much as some people might imagine. We do sometimes climb on a bus and go to Putney which is over the water or we go the opposite direction in equal time distance to Hammersmith. They've got a better selection of shops.*

*Interviewer So both Putney and Hammersmith have got better shops than here?*

*Zoe Yeah*

*Interviewer What sort of shops then have they got that this place hasn't got then?*

*Zoe Argos, when you don't have much time on your hands it's easier to shop out of a catalogue, so they've got, just a different selection of shops, better perhaps choices, more variety of shops.*

*Interviewer Apart from shopping then in this neighbourhood would you do other things in the neighbourhood then in terms of moving around and going places?*

*Zoe There's a cinema here, we sometimes go in the school holidays.*

*Interviewer That's going down...*

*Zoe Right down to the Broadway but it's walking distance.*

*Interviewer So you walk down there?*

*Zoe Yeah*

*Interviewer How long would it take to get down there?*

*Zoe 25 minutes.*

*Interviewer Anything else that you do like going for a drink or going to a restaurant or anything else that you do?*

*Zoe No we don't eat out, we sometimes have a take away.*

- Interviewer* Ok, and in terms of going outside of this neighbourhood, you go to Putney, Hammersmith, any other parts of London or elsewhere that you tend to go to on a regular basis?
- Zoe* Kensington High Street, that's probably equal distance again but it is a little bit expensive there but I've recently converted to buying free range chicken and I know a good shop where I can get it in Kensington so that makes me go there now.
- Interviewer* Would you walk there or would you bus there?
- Zoe* No bus it.

In addition, Zoe's routine also connected into central London and the resources available there:

- Zoe* There's very easy access to a lot of museums for example from here, in the winter months they put on an ice skating rink in the natural history museum which is a bus ride from here.
- Interviewer* Would you quite often go into the city centre then and West End?
- Zoe* I don't consider the museums as central, maybe you might, for me it's a bus ride so if I can get to the museums in 25 minutes that's pretty good going. The children like bowling so we go into, I can't think of the area, it's a little bit beyond Kensington anyway.
- Interviewer* And is that a real attraction, you've got all those museums and skating, is that a real big thing about... particularly when you moved up from Hampshire, about all the amenities and services you've got.
- Zoe* Obviously now I'm in another phase of my life in London because I have to look at it through my children's eyes and if I want a free day out I can take them to the museum with a packed lunch, if we're feeling like having a splash or doing something more we'll do bowling and skating or cinema, everything is quite local so we don't have to worry about extremely long journey, feeling tired when we're coming home and those kind of things.

In contrast, to Oxgangs, Wensley Fold and West Kensington, people in Amlwch often reported having to travel beyond the town to work and the 20 miles to Bangor to have a choice of supermarket and 20 miles to Holyhead or 35 Miles to Llandudno Junction to visit the cinema. There was also a lack of resources and facilities in West Marsh, Grimsby. There were few opportunities for people to meet in pubs (there was only one pub on the edge of the neighbourhood that many respondents were unwilling to enter, perceiving it to be rough and unwelcoming); cafes or corner shops (there were few local shops and most people did their shopping at nearby supermarkets or in the town centre, which is only a 10 minute walk); community centres (there is one community centre that people with younger children did report attending, but most people were unaware or disengaged from the services provided); parks (the local park was in poor condition and was reported to be a hangout for local gangs and street drinking); library (there is no library within or close to the neighbourhood). The local schools emerged as the only local service provider where people were regularly making interpersonal connections within the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood appeared to have been emptied of the institutional and physical infrastructure that helps support social connectivity. There were therefore few opportunities for people, even if they were inclined, to show an interest in the well

being of others. Entertaining and socialising was frequently taking place in the home and when people went out, alone or with others, they frequently left the neighbourhood:

*Interviewer* Next questions are about what you do in West Marsh so what sort of things do you do on a typical day?

*R* Shopping. I get up 7 in the morning, get me grandson off to college now, he's left school, feed the animals and usually just go to town to shop around.

*Interviewer* To Grimsby?

*R* To the town centre yeah.

*Interviewer* Do you go every day?

*R* Yeah because I can't afford to put the heating on a lot so if I don't go out and sit up there I'm freezing in the house all day and I'm on my own all day so I do, the bus is only across the road.

*Interviewer* So you get the bus there?

*R* yeah the free bus, get the bus to town, in the summer I walk but in the winter catch the bus so just wander round town and then come back and start doing more work in the house, decorating or cleaning or what have you.

*Interviewer* Where does the grandson go to college?

*R* The Grimsby College, started in September.

*Interviewer* Do you go anywhere else?

*R* No I don't... occasionally I used to go to Louth on a Wednesday, I'd take one of the kids or a neighbour but I keep myself to myself now so I don't really go.

*Interviewer* Do you go out at night?

*R* No I never go out at night.

*Interviewer* What do you term as night?

*R* Well I'm in the house from half past 2, 2 o'clock usually unless there's someone coming.

*Interviewer* Do you go out in West Marsh, do you go up to the community centre or...

*R* No

*Interviewer* Or neighbours' houses?

*R* No I never mix with neighbours, I don't encourage them in mine and I don't go in theirs.

[Grimsby, 65 year old single woman, looking after grandson, lived in area 11 years]

The impact of these factors on social networks was most acutely apparent in the experiences of the older people interviewed, a finding that appears to concur with Fleur and van Tilburg's (2000) suggestion regarding the environmental dependency that can make older people are more vulnerable to the overall characteristics of their neighbourhood.

## 5.5. The Collective Dimension of Place

The fourth bundle relates to the socio-cultural and historical features of place-based communities. Different places have different characters, reflecting variations in social and cultural norms, standards and practices. Place can also provide a territorial focus for the politics of identity. The same place can therefore provide some people with a sense of belonging and associated feelings of safety and security, while others might acquire a sense of unease and alienation; of difference and otherness, depending upon the individual's social and cultural identity and associated dispositions. Bound into the distinctive social and cultural setting provided by their residential neighbourhood, some people might be less comfortable and more reluctant to move between and spend time in other places, as Becky, a young mother living in Wensley Fold, Blackburn, discussed when contemplating the idea of relocating to elsewhere in the town:

*Interviewer* And thinking about your family round here or friends, do you think your life would be very different if you moved somewhere else?

*Becky* Oh yeah definitely

*Interviewer* What would you lose?

*Becky* I'd have no friends at all if I moved away cos I've only got one friend and she lives in [different neighbourhood in Blackburn] but I still see her every week cos she drives and comes over. All my family live in Blackburn so I'd have no family to go to and same with schools, cos I went to the school that the children go to and so did [partner] and so did our mums so we all know the teachers and you feel comfortable where you know you are and that's how I feel living here, I feel comfortable living here and with what's around me, so I'd lose everything if I moved away, I'd have nothing left.

*Interviewer* Would you say you feel a sense of loyalty to the area?

*Becky* No I don't feel loyal in any way at all, I just feel more comfortable because I know where I'm going, I know every nook and cranny around here and I know more or less, well a lot of people round here, so I just feel comfortable.

Familiarity with the local environment, facilities and amenities, the existence of established social networks and nearness to friends and relatives all serve to bind people's spatial routines more tightly within their local neighbourhood. This was particularly the case for the South Asian respondents interviewed in Wensley Fold. The neighbourhood appeared to provide respondents with a territorial focus for a sense of identity and belonging. The relatively large local South Asian population in the area also provided the critical mass of demand required to warrant the development of key facilities, such as community-led services, religious amenities and shopping opportunities, which some respondents reported relying on to get by on a day-to-day basis. There was also some suggestion that a sense of comfort and security stemmed from living in an area where a person did not readily stand out merely on the basis of not being White. Minority ethnic respondents in West Kensington, such as Farideh, made a similar point, hinting at the comfort and security associated with being in a diverse neighbourhood:

*Interviewer* You mentioned the posh bit and the other, so you recognise that there are....

*Farideh* Oh yeah definitely yeah, the Fulham Broadway, the Fulham side where I used to work, that side is very very....

*Interviewer* What sort of obvious differences do you notice?

*Farideh* The obvious things I think people's attitude really, I do come across that, whereas here you feel that you see so many ladies walking about with jilbab. And things you know, lots of different communities from different parts of the world, Somalian, Arabs, Lebanese, from Syria, all these places, they're all here around and they work in the area but when you go towards the other part of Fulham where we were before we moved here, temporary, we were in towards, off Wandsworth Bridge Road and towards there is the area which is all posh.

*Interviewer* And the behaviour you were saying about?

In addition, respondents in West Kensington reported valuing the cosmopolitan nature of the neighbourhood, which was more accepting of difference than other places they had lived. In contrast, Mary, whose case was also discussed above, reported the need to venture beyond her residential neighbourhood (Wensley Fold, Blackburn) in order to access an alternative socio-cultural milieu where she felt more 'at home'.

The failure of neighbourhood relations to extend much beyond the convivial was most apparent in the Grimsby case study neighbourhood of West Marsh, where it frequently appeared that people had retreated behind their front door and possessed only loose knit networks of neighbourliness. In contrast, in Wensley Fold, Blackburn there was evidence that the local area was playing a role in the fostering of close friendship or kinship ties. In particular, there were numerous instances of neighbours being both regular contacts and social intimates. These closely knit, locality based social networks were rooted in three key relationships. First, some respondents talked about having friendships with the neighbourhood that had developed over many years. Some of these respondents had gone to school and grown up in the neighbourhood. The sustainability of these friendships was underpinned by the fact that both respondents and their friends had remained in the area. In Wensley Fold, this was true for many younger, as well as older respondents.

*Interviewer* And thinking about your family round here or friends, do you think your life would be very different if you moved somewhere else?

*R* Oh yeah definitely

*Interviewer* What would you lose?

*R* I'd have no friends at all if I moved away .... All my family live in Blackburn so I'd have no family to go to and same with schools, cos I went to the school that the children go to and so did [name of partner] and so did our mums so we all know the teachers and you feel comfortable where you know you are and that's how I feel living here, I feel comfortable living here and with what's around me, so I'd lose everything if I moved away, I'd have nothing left.

*Interviewer* Would you say you feel a sense of loyalty to the area?

*R* No I don't feel loyal in any way at all, I just feel more comfortable because I know where I'm going, I know every nook and cranny around here and I know more or less, well a lot of people round here, so I just feel comfortable.

*Interviewer* Would you say it's the sort of place where people get on?

*R* Oh yeah but then again it's the sort of place, if you get on you get on and if you don't it's a big thing if somebody falls out round here

*and everybody knows about it and everybody gets involved and things like that. It's really strange, I don't want to come across like I know, I do know a lot of rough people and a lot of these families because that's who I've grown up around and even though you're not involved with them you still know a lot about them so everybody knows everything about everybody if you're in the circle of friends that, which is like a big circle.*

*Interviewer And do people look out for each other?*

*R Oh they do yeah*

[Blackburn, Woman, living with partner and two daughters, grew up in neighbourhood]

In Grimsby, the general picture was one of mobility among younger respondents, most of whom had moved into the area during adulthood:

*Interviewer You say you're friends with your neighbours and they're friendly and stuff?*

*R Yeah I do but there's nobody down the street that I actually could sit and have a cup of tea with or owt ... my closest friends they live further out but we see each other because they drive and things.*

*Interviewer So your friendships are across the wider area?*

*R Yeah*

*Interviewer Are there a lot of people who live around here who grew up here or is there a lot of people from all over?*

*R I don't get that impression because at the school mum's and that I talk to, I've known a few of them there which we've just ended up in the same place if you know what I mean, cos they never grew up round here.*

*Interviewer What do you think brings people here then?*

*R Close to town I think.*

*Interviewer It is, isn't it, you can walk in really easily.*

*R Yeah it's close to town and there is a lot around when you sit and think about what there is.*

[Grimsby, 29 year old woman, living with partner and four children lived in neighbourhood four years]

Longer-term residents of West Marsh tended to be older and reported struggling to forge contact and develop positive relations with younger residents. They were therefore reliant on networks of social contact that were gradually shrinking, as old friends and associates moved out or died:

*Interviewer Generally speaking what sort of things make it easier or harder for you to get by? I asked earlier from support from Pat and Helena, would that make it easier, would they help you if you couldn't get to the shops for instance?*

*R Oh Helena's helped me when she's gone shopping, she's always stopped to see if I wanted owt but me, I get what I want and I don't bother anybody else to get me owt but they would definitely,*

*especially Helena, but Pat's got enough on her plate with her husband being poorly just now.*

*Interviewer So you check on her through the window?*

*R Yeah*

*Interviewer Do you think people in general round here look out for each other or do you think it's just between the people who've been here a long time?*

*R It's just between the people that's been here a long time.*

*Interviewer So you wouldn't say the area down where the younger people have moved in and burning cars and so on...*

*R I wouldn't have asked any of them for any help. They'd rob you blind if they got in your house.*

*Interviewer ..... What makes them different, is it just because like you said there's a lot of younger people moved in that end?*

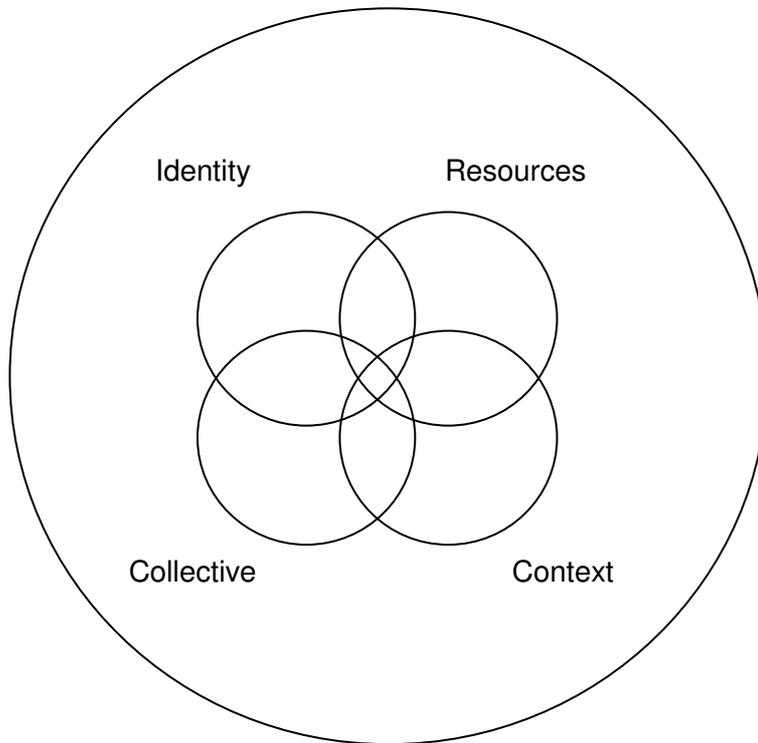
*R It's just the young people, they're not as sociable, I mean when the last person moved in there I felt sorry for her, she had two kids and expecting another one and when I did a dinner I always did too much and I always give them and when I baked I got no thanks or nothing from 'em and I got all sorts chucked in the yard from them, dirty nappies and everything and so I stopped and I said if anybody moved in there again I wouldn't help 'em, not like I have done.*

[Grimsby, 78 year old woman, 30 years in current house, son lives with her]

## **5.6. The Reciprocal Relationship Between People and Places**

These four bundles provide an organising framework for understanding the complex and highly individualised time-space biographies of people living in poor neighbourhoods. Critical to the application of this framework is the need to recognise that time-space biographies are rooted in the reciprocal relationship that exists between people and places. This fact is well illustrated by the biographies reviewed above. The research challenge, therefore, is not about establishing the relative importance of one particular bundle over the others, but exploring the relational connectivity between these different bundles of issues.

## Spatial Positioning and Connectivity



## 6. Emerging Conclusions and Issues for Further Analysis

This report has provided some initial insights into the time-space biographies of people living in poor neighbourhoods. The key finding is that people are pursuing complex and highly individualised spatial routines that frequently extend beyond the residential neighbourhood. This is an important finding that challenges the 'container fallacy' (Macintyre *et al*, 2008) – the assumption inherent in policy discourses and academic debate that poor people lead tightly bounded spatial routines rooted in their local neighbourhood. Analysis of the time-space biographies of 180 respondents across the six case study neighbourhoods has also revealed some of the key triggers of these extended spatial routines and facilitated the development of an organising framework that will support further efforts to better understand and explain these routines. There remain, however, some important questions to be answered.

The data collected through in-depth, qualitative interviews with 180 people across the UK has provided a rich insight into the real world action-spaces of people living in deprived neighbourhoods. The question remains, however, whether spatial routines are a significant determinant of experiences of getting by in poor places and living with poverty. Intuitively, it seems obvious that extended spatial routines will serve to provide people with access to a wider range of opportunities and resources and, thereby, have a positive impact on well-being. This point is well made by considering the impact of any restriction in the spatial routines of respondents on their personal situation and well being. Likely consequences would include increased levels of unemployment, reduced participation in leisure activities and the undermining of social ties and family networks that can serve as an important source of support and assistance. However, there are a number of important caveats about this general conclusion that need to be recognised.

First, there is the fact that the balance of opportunities within and beyond different neighbourhoods will vary markedly, according to the particulars of the local geography of resource availability and the quality of these resources. For example, in Amlwch, extended spatial routines stretching beyond the town (typically facilitated by car ownership) appeared to reap significant rewards for many respondents. However, these gains appeared, in large part, to reflect the deficit in opportunities and resources available in the town, rather than richness or quality of resources available in Bangor or Llandudno. Respondents in Amlwch were overcoming some basic disadvantages associated with the place where they lived through extended spatial routines. In contrast, in the Blackburn case study, extended spatial routines stretching beyond the town were important to the lives of some people, but were less common than in Amlwch and did not appear to reap such important rewards. This finding likely reflects the fact that the deficit in opportunities and resources in Blackburn was not as extreme as in Amlwch and there was less necessity to extend spatial routines beyond the town. The obvious corollary of these observations is that the consequences of more constrained spatial routines are likely to be far greater in some places (Amlwch), than in others (Wensley Fold or West Kensington).

Second, the relevance and appropriateness of available resources within the residential neighbourhood and the gains likely to be secured through extended

spatial routines, will be highly individualised and reflect personal preferences and requirements. Spatial routines are more than a matter of rational choice and analysis will need to avoid relying on deficit models that seek to measure the gap between the actuality of people's situations and some normative assumption about what they should want or require and how they might access it. Personal preferences are informed by the nature, character and outlook - the disposition - of individuals. These, in turn, are informed by the role and responsibilities of the individual, their class, gender, ethnicity, cultural experiences, personal history and so on. The result can be a range of different attitudes and outlooks among respondents living in the same neighbourhood toward: the resources and opportunities available within the neighbourhood; the benefits perceived to be associated with extending spatial routines; and the ability and willingness to extend these routines. It is difficult to discern any categorisation of these dispositions, but some shared outlooks did appear to exist across the case studies that serve to bind some groups more tightly into their local neighbourhood. These included: the relatively narrow spatial horizons of many younger people; the sense of community and belonging and the opportunity to access to associated resources reported by some minority ethnic respondents in West Kensington and Wensley Fold; and the gendered nature of roles and responsibilities within some households, which served to constrain the routines of women, who were typically assumed primary responsibility for child care.

A final point of note raised by the evidence of extended spatial routines presented in this paper concerns the questions posed for contemporary policy. Two issues stand out, in particular. First, residentially segregated and economically deprived communities are presumed to be socially isolated and are problematised for nurturing cultures and associated behaviours at odds with the dominant moral order. The result has been the promotion of social mix as a curative balm capable of healing various social ills. Yet, this paper has revealed the action spaces of people in deprived neighbourhoods to frequently extend beyond the boundaries of the neighbourhood. Rather than leading segregated or isolated lives, respondents were often mixing and engaging with people from other places. This is a finding of potential significance, in that it challenges a central tenet of contemporary policy. However, first, there are two key questions to be answered: what are the specifics of the places beyond the local neighbourhood through which people are moving; and what form and quality of social interaction and engagement is taking place? The second key question posed for policy concerns the implications of extended spatial routines for area based policies. The spatial routines of local people are a differential factor rarely taken into account when selecting candidates for area based initiatives, yet there is the real possibility that if lives are being lived outside the local area then the impact of area based regeneration programmes will more limited. Clearly, this is an issue worthy of further consideration.

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## Appendix 1 - Case Study Profiles

### A1.1. Hillside and Primalt, Knowsley

The Knowsley case study is made up of two adjoining neighbourhoods, Hillside and Primalt. Primalt is the formal name given to the area for planning purposes and by the NDC partnership, but the whole area is generally known by residents as Hillside, and this is as the term for the case study area in the rest of this report. The neighbourhoods make up one-third of North Huyton New Deal for Communities (NDC) intervention area (the other areas are Finch House, Fincham, Woolfall North and Woolfall South).

These two neighbourhoods, and the wider NDC area, form a part of the collection of inter-war and post-war municipal housing estates that were developed as 'overspill' from the City of Liverpool slum clearance programmes and the expansion of the Liverpool Docks. The majority of dwellings are two storey semi-detached and terraced family houses arranged in traditional street patterns. Households in the case study area are predominantly White, with just one per cent of residents from a minority ethnic background, according to the 2001 Census.

Analysis from the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for the two lower super output areas (LSOAs) that approximate most closely to Hillside show that the area is in the most deprived decile on four of the seven domains: income, employment, health, and education, skills and training; it is in the second most deprived decile on 'crime' and 'living environment', and the third lowest decile on 'barriers to housing and services'. The ONS statistics on population turnover for 2005/6 showed a rate of 50 per 1,000 (compared to a median turnover rate for Medium SOAs in England and Wales of 78 per 1,000).

The age profile of the area according to 2006 mid year estimates broadly matches the wider local authority and national picture, with a slightly higher proportion of young people under the age of 16. In the 2001 census, 25 per cent of households were classified as lone parent (compared to 19 per cent in Knowsley and 10 per cent in England) and 53 per cent lived in social housing (compared to 32 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). In February 2008, 6.4 per cent of the working age population in the area was claiming Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) (compared to 4.2 per cent in Knowsley and 2.2 per cent in England) and 19 per cent were claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB)/Severe Disability Allowance (SDA) (compared to 13.6 per cent and 6.8 per cent respectively).

Hillside is bounded by the M57, a dual carriageway (Seth Powell Way) and a park (Alt Park) and is one of the more isolated areas in the wider neighbourhood. In recent years void properties have been a significant problem in the housing stock, with many empty properties declared structurally unstable and dangerous. The sense of isolation has been reinforced by the demolition of a considerable proportion of the housing stock, leaving many unused open spaces that have yet to be developed as part of the masterplan for the area.

New development to replace demolished dwellings has recently been suspended, as a consequence of the economic downturn. The area has few public buildings and amenities, and one of the last remaining post offices in the area closed last year. Beechwood Primary School, which was one of three primary schools in the North Huyton area, has also recently closed down. The one public building in Hillside, the 'Hillywood' Community Centre, is well used by a range of local groups, residents and stakeholders. It is staffed by two paid community workers and a small band of dedicated volunteers.

The Primalt area comprises 648 units of accommodation including a renovated tower block known as Knowsley Heights. There are around sixty owner-occupied properties in the area. There are problems with anti-social behaviour in parts of the estate, and environmental problems, although one area, Pennard Field, is seen as a potential amenity for the whole community. There are no other public amenities in the Primalt area.

## **A1.2. Oxgangs, Edinburgh**

Oxgangs is a suburb of Edinburgh, located in the south-west of the city. It is named after an 'oxgang', an ancient Scottish land measure. The development of the area started in the early 1950s; it had previously been mostly farmland and was considered part of the countryside on the fringe of the city. The area consists of large housing schemes, ranging from Edinburgh City Council-owned high rise tower blocks to private bungalows. A large proportion of former council-owned properties in Oxgangs have been bought by tenants under the Right to Buy scheme, and there is now a high demand for what remains of the council housing stock in the area.

An analysis of the LSOAs for Oxgangs in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) for 2007 shows that the area is in the third most deprived decile overall, and is classed in this decile for income, health and crime. It is in the second most deprived decile in terms of education, skills and training and housing, in the fourth most deprived decile for employment, and the fifth for geographic access. The age profile of the area in the 2006 mid-year estimates is broadly similar to the city and national picture, with a slightly higher proportion of older residents (21 per cent, compared to 17 per cent for Edinburgh and 19 per cent for Scotland). There was a relatively high proportion of lone parent households in the areas (14 per cent compared to 8 per cent in Edinburgh and 11 per cent in Scotland) and of households in the social housing sector (46 per cent compared to 18 per cent and 29 per cent respectively).

As of November 2007, 2.6 per cent of the working age population in Oxgangs was claiming JSA (compared to 1.6 per cent in Edinburgh and 2.1 in Scotland) and 14.7 per cent were claiming IB/SDA (compared to 7.2 per cent and 9.4 per cent respectively).

The neighbourhood is well served by a variety of shops, amenities and public facilities. It has two small shopping areas at each end of Oxgangs known to the locals as the 'top' and 'bottom' shops. The top shops (Oxgangs Broadway) are the larger and feature a small convenient store known as 'Denis's', named after the owner of the shop. Other shops in the top area include a newsagents, a hairdressers, and three take-aways.

There is also a post office and a pharmacy.

The local library is a popular hub of the community, and is regularly used for meetings and classes as well as for its wide range of books and IT facilities. Oxgangs has three primary schools, as well as a nearby high school with a very good reputation locally and further afield. Two neighbouring primary schools situated

on Oxgangs Green (Comiston and Hunters Tryst) were recently merged and renamed Pentland Primary. Local churches in the area include: Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, a Roman Catholic Church and a recently built Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In 2003 Edinburgh City Council (in consultation with tenants) took the decision to demolish and redevelop Oxgangs high rise flats, originally known as Comiston Luxury Flats. In April 2005 the long-standing tower block, Capelaw Court, was demolished to make way for new housing. Capelaw was one of three high rise flats built in Oxgangs Crescent in 1961 and 1962. The other two buildings (Caerketton Court and Allermuir Court) were then demolished in November 2006. The new homes, built on the site of the high rises, were designed in consultation with local people, and provide a mixture of dwellings, including provision for the elderly and the disabled. The scheme reflected a local desire for 'low rise' housing, coupled with the need to achieve relatively high dwelling densities in the face of high housing demand. However, some local residents have expressed reluctance about moving into the newly available accommodation because of its location and lay-out.

### **A1.3. Wensley Fold, Blackburn**

Wensley Fold is a neighbourhood of Blackburn, a Lancashire town with a population of some 100,000 in 2001, and the administrative centre of the unitary authority of Blackburn and Darwen (population 137,000 in 2001). The neighbourhood is located immediately west of Blackburn town centre. It is bounded to the North by the A677 Preston New Road, to the South by a mixed use retail and industrial area and to the West by a large park. The area has a population of approximately 3,000, occupies a hillside situation and is characterised by rows of parallel terraced houses organised in a compressed grid pattern. Recently, the area has been subject to redevelopment, as part of the Pennine Lancashire Housing Market Renewal programme, with a number of terraces being demolished and replaced by new-build terrace properties, with more space between each row allowing for gardens and back yards to be developed.

Blackburn has a long history of immigration, particularly from India and Pakistan, and one in five (21 per cent) of the population in the town were recorded as of South Asian ethnic origin by the 2001 Census. In the study area, more than half of the local population were recorded as having a non-White ethnic origin by the 2001 Census, and 51 per cent were recorded as of South Asian ethnic origin. The LSOAs that were combined to create an area almost equivalent to the case-study neighbourhood were in the most deprived decile on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007. The area was in the most deprived decile on six of the seven domains measured by the IMD: income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, and living environment. In contrast, the area was in the least deprived decile in the 'barriers to housing and services' domain, reflecting its proximity to the town centre.

According to the 2006 mid year population estimates, the neighbourhood has a young age profile. A relatively large proportion of the population are children less than 16 years old (29 per cent, compared to 24 per cent in the local authority district and 19 per cent in England) and only 11 per cent are men over 65 years old or women over 60 years old (compared to 19 per cent nationally). The 2001 Census recorded a relatively large proportion of single person households (41 per cent) and households containing dependent children (39 per cent). The neighbourhood has relatively large social rented (30 per cent) and private rented (16 per cent) sectors, according to the 2001 Census. Only half (50 per cent) of the households live in owner occupied accommodation, compared to 71 per cent of households in the district and 69 per cent of all households in England.

A relatively high proportion of the local population were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disability Allowance in February 2008. The proportion of people in receipt of the latter was almost treble the national level (18.8 per cent in the case study neighbourhood, compared to 11.6 per cent across the district and 6.8 per cent across England).

The area has a vibrant local shopping centre, with local shops specialising in South Asian produce. There are also a number of major supermarket stores on the edge of the area and the town centre is within walking distance. Local community resources include a community centre that runs various training, educational and social activities targeted at the whole population, as well as places of worship and parks.

#### **A1.4. West Marsh, Grimsby**

West Marsh is a neighbourhood of Grimsby, the largest town in the district of North East Lincolnshire, with a population of about 90,000. Grimsby has a long history as a fishing port and nearby Immingham is a major container port. Other major employers in the district include the chemical and food processing industries.

West Marsh is located immediately adjacent to the town centre and also close to the A180, the main route into the town from the west. A major feature of the area is the River Freshney, which runs west to east through the neighbourhood. On the north side of the River is a park. Together, these two physical features divide the neighbourhood into two distinct areas. North of the River and West of the park is an area often referred to locally as 'Gilby'. Centred on Gilby Road, this area is relatively isolated, and consists of three parallel no-through-roads, criss-crossed by six parallel no-through-roads. South of the river is an area that many local people refer to as 'West Marsh', which is characterised by parallel roads of terraced houses.

The population of the LSOAs that are almost equivalent to the study area was just over 3,000, according to the 2006 mid-year estimate. Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) were of working age and 23 per cent were less than 16 years old. The area has a relatively small older population (13 per cent of the population, compared to 20 per cent in North east Lincolnshire and 19 per cent in England). According to the 2001 Census, a relatively small proportion of households are couples, with or without children (46 per cent, compared to 57 per cent in the district and 57 per cent across England). 17 per cent of households are lone parent families, compared to 12 per cent in the district and 10 per cent in England.

The area is relatively deprived, falling within the most deprived decile of lower super output areas in England. The area is placed in the lowest decile in relation to education skills and training, crime and the living environment on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It is in the second lowest decile in terms of income, employment and health. In February 2008, 15.7 per cent of the working age population were in receipt of JSA or IB/SDA, compared to 11.1 per cent of people of working age in North Lincolnshire and 9.0 per cent in England.

The neighbourhood, like the wider district, is ethnically homogenous. According to the 2001 Census, 98 per cent of the population of the neighbourhood and the district were White British or Irish, one per cent were White Other and one per cent were Mixed Heritage. The study team did come across anecdotal evidence, however, that migrant workers from the EU accession states had arrived into Grimsby in recent years, with some people settling in West Marsh, although the scale of new immigration is unclear.

Terraced housing is the dominant built form in the neighbourhood. Many of these properties have no garden or curtilage at the front, the front door opening straight

onto the street. A relatively large proportion of the housing stock is privately rented (20 per cent, double the district and national average), while the proportion in the owner occupied sector (64 per cent) is below the proportion in North East Lincolnshire (72 per cent) and England (69 per cent).

There are a limited number of community facilities in the neighbourhood and several shops are shut and boarded up. There is, however, a community centre on the northern fringe of the area, which provides various courses, classes and groups, including youth activities. Shortly before the study team visited the area for the first stage interviews a local man had been stabbed to death in the area. At the time of the visit, the police investigation was ongoing and police divers were combing the River Freshney for evidence.

### **A1.5. West Kensington, London**

The West Kensington case study area is located in west London, in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The area is located within walking distance of Earls Court Exhibition Centre and a number of London Underground stations including West Kensington, West Brompton, and Earls Court. The area is surrounded by several high status neighbourhoods including Chelsea, Baron's Court and Kensington.

The case study area, which comprises 1,800 properties in two social housing estates, West Kensington and Gibbs Green, forms part of a larger neighbourhood which most locals refer to as 'West Kensington.' The neighbourhood is centred on the intersection between North End and Lillie Roads, where most of the area's numerous shops, pubs and cafes are located. The area also has a bustling (semi-permanent) market which is located on Lillie Road. The West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are located in the north of the neighbourhood on the eastern side of North End Road. Reflecting the diversity of the wider West Kensington area, the neighbourhood is a mixed income area and contains many households with above average incomes. In some parts of the area, property prices are very high, with some selling recently for more than £1.5 million.

The LSOAs for the area do not match the case study exactly, but are close enough to indicate the profile of deprivation in the locality. In terms of the IMD 2007, the areas were in the lowest decile for income and living environment, in the second lowest overall and in terms of employment, health and barriers to housing and services, and the third lowest for crime. It was however (just) in the least deprived half of LSOAs in terms of education, training and skills. In terms of the age profile, there is a slightly higher proportion of younger residents under 16 (20 per cent) than in the borough (16 per cent) or nationally (19 per cent) and a lower proportion of older residents (12 per cent) than in England (19 per cent). According to the 2001 Census, 23 per cent of households are lone parents, compared to 12 per cent in Hammersmith and Fulham and 10 per cent in England, and 11 per cent are multi-person households, compared to 13 per cent in the borough and just three per cent nationally.

65 per cent of households were described as 'white' or 'white other' in the area (78 per cent in Hammersmith and Fulham and 91 per cent in England) and 21 per cent described themselves as 'black' (compared to 11 per cent and 3 per cent respectively). The black and minority ethnic population includes members of Afro-Caribbean, West African and Somali communities. 57 per cent of households on the estates were in the social housing sector, compared to 33 per cent in the borough and 19 per cent nationally, and just 25 per cent were owner-occupiers (compared to 44 per cent and 69 per cent respectively).

The study area is covered by the North Fulham New Deal for Communities programme, and social housing units on the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are being modernised as part of this initiative. The West Kensington estate comprises approximately 1,000 units and was built in the early 1970s. It is a mixed development comprising five tower blocks, low rise flats, maisonettes and some terraced houses. The Gibbs Green estate comprises some 160 flats and maisonettes, built in the late 1950s/ early 1960s. The properties are set out in six four storey blocks and one eight storey block, which is due to be replaced by low rise housing and a communal hall under redevelopment proposals.

## A1.6. Amlwch, Anglesey

Amlwch is a small town located on the northern tip of Ynys Mon (Isle of Anglesey). It is the fourth biggest settlement on the island and has a population of 1,400. It is relatively isolated geographically and the nearest towns to it are Llangefni (13 miles away) and Holyhead (20 miles). Amlwch comprises distinct neighbourhoods, including Amlwch Port, which was once a thriving port, Amlwch town itself, where most shops and services are based, and Craig-y-don, a small local authority housing estate located between Amlwch and Amlwch Port. The residential areas contain a mixture of property types, although most of the stock consists of houses of traditional construction.

The town was once of the main centres of industry in Wales. It had one of the world's largest copper mountains (Parys Mountain), was once a centre for ship building and repair, and the base for a chemical plant which extracted bromine from sea water. However, these industries have all closed and, despite the continuing economic value to the town of the nearby Wylfa nuclear power station, the town has been in economic decline for the past thirty years or so. As a relatively deprived area, there is some regeneration activity being undertaken in Amlwch, coordinated by the regeneration agency for Wales, *Communities First*.

The LSOAs selected do not match exactly the study area but they nevertheless provide reliable estimates of its socio-economic position. In terms of the Welsh IMD, Amlwch is in the second most deprived decile in terms of community safety, environment, access to services and housing, and in the third most deprived in terms of income and its overall ranking. It is in the fourth most deprived decile for employment, health and education. It does not have as high a WIMD score as many of the communities in the South Wales valleys, but the reason for selecting the area was due to its greater geographical isolation and relative immobility, signified by a population turnover rate for mid 2005 to mid 2006 of 44 per 1,000 population (compared to a median of 78 per 1,000 for England and Wales).

In the 2006 MYE, the age profile was broadly similar to district and national averages with a slightly higher proportion of those under 16 (20 per cent compared to 18 per cent for Ynys Mon and 19 per cent for Wales). Slightly higher proportions of the population were lone parent (13 per cent) or single person (35 per cent) households than in Ynys Mon (11 per cent and 29 per cent) and in Wales (12 per cent and 29 per cent). 98 per cent of the population is of 'White British/Irish' population ethnic origin (the same as for the district and one per cent higher than the national average).

In the 2001 Census, just over two-thirds (67 per cent) of households in Amlwch owned their homes (68 per cent in Ynys Mon and 71 per cent in Wales) and 18 per cent were in the social housing sector (compared to 17 per cent and 18 per cent respectively). In February 2008, 5.1 per cent of the working age population were JSA claimants (3.1 per cent in Ynys Mon and 6.6 per cent in Wales) and 12.3 per cent were JSA/SDA claimants (compared to 9.5 per cent and 10.9 per cent respectively).

Many residents speak Welsh and it is the first language for some. In acknowledgment of this, residents were asked which language they would like to be interviewed in. Most did not have a preference, but two of the in-depth interviews undertaken by the research team were conducted in Welsh.