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**The Spatial Routines of Daily Life in Low Income Neighbourhoods: Escaping the 'Local Trap'**

**Abstract**

In recent years, research and policy have become increasingly interested in the relationship between poverty and place.  While research has explored the possibility that living in poor places might make people poorer, policy has been drawn to the idea that poverty and social exclusion have their origins in segregated spaces of the poor and excluded.  This paper argues that both perspectives fall into the 'local trap' of presuming that people living in areas characterised by economic hardship live spatially bounded, neighbourhood based lives.  Drawing on evidence from interviews with 180 people living in six low income neighbourhoods across the UK, spatial routines of daily life are revealed to regularly extend beyond the residential neighbourhood through processes of engagement, interaction and exchange.  This simple but important finding undermines some key presumptions of contemporary policy and points to the need for improvements in the theoretical models underlying analysis of the relationships between poverty and place.

**Introduction**

A remarkable level of continuity has been revealed in the geography of poverty over time. Geographic concentrations of poverty have proved resistant to intervention, persistent across the economic cycle and a consistent feature of particular locations despite population turnover and change.  It appears that areas inherit disadvantage and advantage more than people (Dorling and Pritchard, 2010).  Numerous studies have set out to explore the effects

of living in these 'poor places' on individual opportunities and outcomes.  Analysis has explored place effects on labour market outcomes, educational attainment, social networks and well-being, and general socio-economic prosperity.  The general conclusion to emerge is that living in a poor neighbourhood can make you poorer than you would otherwise be (Baum et al., 2010;  Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Friedrichs *et al*, 2003; Gordon and Monastiriotis, 2007; Ellen and Turner, 1997; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Mohan and Twigg, 2007).

Policy has also become increasingly interested in the relationship between poverty and place.  Indeed, a wide array of contemporary problems in urban society are now presumed to have their origins in the segregation of the poor and excluded into particular parts of the city, which it is assumed nurture cultures that assert values and norms of behaviour at odds with the dominant moral order and serve to further distance and exclude residents from wider society and opportunities (Andersen, 2002; Flint and Robinson, 2008).  Hard-pressed areas characterised by unemployment, poverty and social stress are depicted as lacking the requisite social fabric to prosper.  According to Amin (2005), this subtle elision of the social and the local serves to legitimise the treatment of these places as container spaces of social failure.  Policy previously conceptualised local problems as the product of local, national and global forces and considered their solution the responsibility of central government, principally through the welfare state.  Subsequently, opinion coalesced around the view that poverty and inequality might best be tackled through cooperation between government and local communities, for example, in the delivery of area based initiatives (Barnes et al., 2007). Now, social problems are localised and thrown back at these places to resolve themselves through the reinvigoration of community.  This reasoning was evident in the Third Way thinking on community cohesion and social capital as a means of overcoming local poverty and disadvantage and is now manifest in the UK context in the form of the 'Big Society' agenda, which seeks to encourage people not to turn to officials, local authorities or central

government for answers to the problems they face, but to help themselves and their own communities (Amin, 2005; Kisby, 2010).

The suggestion that place matters has not been without its critics.  Policy's reliance on social neighbourhood effects to explain social problems and exclusion in concentrated areas of poverty has been criticised for treating poor neighbourhoods as closed systems and thereby denying the importance of national and international political and economic processes in shaping opportunities and outcomes for local residents (Amin, 2005; Smith 2005).  Critics also point out that evidence of shared norms and behaviours in these problematised places, such as a low commitment to work, has proved elusive (Robinson, 2008).  More generally, empirical evidence on what specific aspects of place matter for experiences of poverty remains weak.  While accepting that it is perfectly plausible to expect that poor people are made poorer by the character of the neighbourhood in which they live, Cheshire (2007) argues that a close examination of the best research available does not reveal any clear evidence to support it.  The most that can be said is that where you live might matter, but not nearly as much as your personal characteristics (Friedrichs *et al*, 2003).  It is possible, however, that limited evidence of area effects reflects weaknesses in approaches to understanding the role of place in shaping individual outcomes, rather than the fact that place has little or no affect on these outcomes.

Research within the urban studies tradition has relied on quantitative analysis of the aggregated attributes of individuals living in an area to explore the role of place in shaping people's experiences of poverty.  Little attention has been paid to whether observable differences between places might reflect aspects of place not captured in population characteristics, such as the social or institutional context (for an exception, see Galster, 2003).  There has also been a tendency within these studies to construct places and people as mutually exclusive competing explanations, with research seeking to establish whether there is an explanatory role for place after the individual characteristics of the population have been taken into account.  As Macintyre et al (2002) point out in relation to studies of

health status, this approach is flawed for at least three reasons: it is conceptually opaque; it inadvertently controls for, or overlooks, variables that might mediate causal pathways between place and individual outcomes; and it therefore serves to undermine efforts to explain the mechanisms through which area of residence and individual outcomes might be related.

Social policy researchers have also become increasingly interested in the relationship between poverty and place, prompted by engagement with the ideas of social exclusion and its broader concern with the social and geographical contexts of poverty (Milbourne, 2010). Qualitative methods have been employed to explore agent-centred accounts of individual experiences, behaviours and trajectories, resulting in greater understanding of the interplay of human agency, structures and power relations informing complexity and variation in individual outcomes (Lupton and Power, 2005; Lupton, 2003; Power and Willmot, 2005; Ridge, 2009; Parker and Pharoah, 2008; Orr et al., 2006; Hooper et al., 2007). While this contribution is to be welcomed, the tendency to shy away from engaging with geographical conceptualisations of place and exploring the complex interplay between people and places has rendered unclear the role that different dimensions of place might play in shaping individual outcomes.

This paper puts forward an additional reason why our understanding of the relationship between poverty and place remains relatively weak; the 'local trap'. Originating in development studies and analysis of urban democracy, the local trap questions the focus of research and policy on the local area or neighbourhood as the only meaningful unit of interest (Born and Purcell, 2006; Purcell, 2006; Purcell and Brown, 2005). Cummins (2007) extends the concept to studies of place effects to ask whether the local is always the most appropriate scale for analysis. Do small administrative areas or neighbourhoods serve as useful proxies for exposure to context in analysis of place effects? Does this focus reflect the real world action-spaces of everyday life (Kwan, 2004; Kwan et al., 2003)? This paper argues not, asserting that people living in areas characterised by economic hardship do not

live the spatially bounded, neighbourhood based lives that research and policy presumes. Indeed, one of the ways that people can seek to overcome or compensate for penalties of place (service provision, social resources, economic opportunity) is to extend the routines of everyday life. This possibility poses some difficult questions for policy-makers, who are increasingly prone to reference social neighbourhood effects when seeking to explain an array of contemporary challenges in urban society. It also holds some important lessons for researchers seeking to understand the lives of people on low incomes and to comprehend the relationship between poverty and place.

This paper evidences this assertion through an exploration of the 'time-space' biographies of 180 people living in six economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the UK. Discussion begins with a brief introduction to the research context and methods, before moving on to profile the time-space biographies of research participants and consider some of the triggers that serve to extend the action-spaces of everyday life beyond the residential neighbourhood. Recognising that analysis of push-pull factors only takes us so far in understanding the complexity and variability within these time-space biographies, discussion then goes on to consider the relationship that exists between people and places, which is argued as being key in shaping the particulars of individual spatial routines and explaining certain observable patterns apparent in the biographies of people across the six case studies. A concluding section considers the implications of the findings for research and policy.

**Research Context and Methods**

This paper draws on data from qualitative interviews undertaken in two waves with 180 residents living in six relatively deprived locations across the UK. The interviews were undertaken as part of a research programme designed to consider how experiences of living on low incomes in the UK varies between different types of place and to explore the salience

of place in shaping perceptions, actions and outcomes for different types of household (see Cole et al., 2009). This was an agency centred study which examined the circumstances of people living in deprived neighbourhoods and explored how they managed financial pressures, interactions with family and friends and how they moved through and utilised places within and beyond their residential neighbourhood.

The six case study neighbourhoods were: 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, Wales, in a semi-rural setting. The areas were 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. 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 North Huyton 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. The areas were not all, therefore, the classic areas of 'concentrated poverty' (typically inner city areas) that have tended to dominate research into relatively deprived areas (Milbourne, 2010).

In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 30 adults in each case study in 2008. Repeat interviews with a sub-sample of 18 to 20 respondents in each case study were subsequently conducted during 2009. The sample in each case study included men and women of different ages and ethnicities, living in different housing and household situations, who were in work, unemployed and economically inactive. Respondents were not selected

on the basis of whether or not they were living in poverty. The focus of the study was on understanding the experiences of people living in poor neighbourhoods. The sample therefore included some people who might not be considered poor on the basis of relative measures of poverty. In the first round of interviews, the topic guide focused on a range of issues, including the connectivity of respondents to their residential neighbourhood, physical and social constraints on extended spatial routines, and geography of social networks and the accessibility of associated resources. The second round of interviews provided an opportunity to revisit certain issues in more depth, as well as picking up on any changes in household or neighbourhood circumstances that had occurred in the intervening period. Interviews lasted between twenty and ninety minutes, but were normally around forty minutes. All were taped and subsequently transcribed into verbatim text to facilitate analysis. Analysis of these data provided rich insights into the time-space biographies of daily life of respondents and the prompts, motivations, processes and structures underpinning these geographies.

**Drivers of mobility in time-space biographies of daily life**

The spatial routines of daily life among the 180 people interviewed across the six case study neighbourhoods were complex and highly individualised, but in the vast majority of cases they were extended on a regular and frequent (often daily) basis beyond the residential neighbourhood by processes of engagement, interaction and exchange. Extended routines were a mundane, taken for granted feature of people's everyday lives. This finding 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 is a simple but

important finding which challenges the 'container fallacy' (Macintyre et al., 2008) inherent in policy discourse and academic debate about place effects, that assumes poor people lead tightly bounded spatial routines rooted in their local neighbourhood.

The extension of spatial routines beyond the residential neighbourhood appeared to represent a manifestation of choices that people were exercising in response to local circumstances and individual requirements; an adaptive mechanism through which an individual adjusted their spatial routine in order to access a more preferred situation. The primary triggers and benefits associated with extended routines of everyday life are briefly considered below.

*Employment*

Employment was an important influence on mobility patterns within the daily lives of respondents. People in employment exhibited the most frequent and regular patterns of mobility beyond the residential neighbourhood. The specifics of these spatial routines varied between men and women. Most of the men in employment reported geographies of work that extended beyond the local neighbourhood. Typically, this involved a relatively short drive or bus ride to work, but there were some examples of men travelling an hour or more to work on a regular basis, although the time and cost of travelling further afield often proved prohibitive. Women – and, in particular, women with children - were far more likely than the men interviewed to work closer to home. 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, a finding consistent with studies of the relationship between work and childcare (Bell et al., 2005).

*Education and Training*

The absence of educational and training opportunities in the residential neighbourhood, as well as the desire of some parents for their children to attend a 'better' school, prompted many respondents to venture beyond the residential neighbourhood on a regular basis. This

was a common pattern in the daily routines of young adults.  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 Blackburn, for example, was travelling the 10 miles to Preston to attend university on a daily basis.  Many of the young people interviewed in Knowsley reported travelling the five miles to St Helens to attend college three or four times a week.  It is interesting to note that these young people 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.

*Shopping*

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 often prompted by the limits (range and cost of available produce) or the absence of local shopping opportunities, although there was evidence that in some instances consumption patterns were rooted in lifestyle and identity issues, with a small number of respondents explaining a preference for a particular chain of shops or brand of product which was not available locally.  The distance travelled tended to reflect positionality in relation to shopping opportunities.  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.  In Grimsby, Blackburn, Oxgangs and West Kensington ready access to shopping opportunities relatively close to home (a walk or short journey by car or bus) resulted in more circumscribed shopping routines.  Typically, shopping routines tended toward anonymous public interactions, but in some instances they were described as involving public-familiar relations with shop keepers, a feature of urban life reported to be on the wane (Blokland, 2003).

*Leisure activities and facilities*

Involvement in leisure activities, including swimming, visiting the cinema, various keep fit activities and sports, served to extend the spatial routines of some respondents beyond the residential neighbourhood on a regular basis. Mobility was often driven by the desire to access facilities not available within the residential neighbourhood. These routines also often had a social dimension. For example, two retired respondents in Blackburn talked about using the leisure centre as a rendezvous point where they would meet up with friends who lived in other parts of the town. In Amlwch, Knowsley and Oxgangs 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, while another reported travelling around Liverpool and beyond to take part in boxing tournaments with a local club. A man in Oxgangs reported playing in two darts teams and travelling to matches across Lothian and the Scottish borders every week. These routines were one of the drivers of extended routines most likely to result in more meaningful and sustained social engagement beyond the place of residence.

*Public Services and Goods*

The need to access and utilise public services and goods required some respondents to venture beyond the residential neighbourhood. Examples included health care, 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. In many cases, spatial routines were a direct response to a deficit of resources in the local neighbourhood, which reflected the retreat of state and market provision from some of the case study neighbourhoods. In the Hillside neighbourhood of Knowsley, for example, residents talked about being forced to venture outside the area by virtue of the lack of key infrastructure, including basic services such as post offices and pharmacies. However, patterns of service use were not always forced, and were sometimes informed by

preferences and choices.  As a result, there were cases of people preferring to utilise services that were not the nearest or most immediately accessible, reflecting a preference for the familiar (some people maintaining an association with a dentist or doctor where they used to live) and dissatisfaction with or difficulties accessing local provision.

*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.  Rejecting individualisation in favour of social connectedness, there were examples of people living with, next door to, on the same street and within close walking distance of family members.  This proximity gave respondents access to various forms of support and assistance, including help with child care, help getting around (for example, to work), practical help around the house (for example, with DIY tasks) and friendship and camaraderie.  Many other respondents reported dispersed social networks, with close family members (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 relocate and leave behind family and friends.  In cases where respondents had relocated within the same town or city, they would often return to visit friends and relatives on a regular basis.  This was particularly true of younger people.  There were few examples of people having regular face-to-face contact with people in other towns or cities, distance often proving to be an 'unsupportable cost' limiting interaction with more dispersed members of a social network, although meaningful contact was maintained via the telephone and internet.

This discussion of the local circumstances and personal situations that prompt extended routines has revealed some of the 'preferred' opportunities people are able to access beyond the residential neighbourhood as a result of these extra-local movements.  These include access to services, leisure activities and employment options.  In addition, extended

routines can help support and sustain strong ties with close friends and family, which can serve as an important source of support and assistance. They can also facilitate the development of weak ties (acquaintances), which it is suggested can provide a bridge into information, advice and opportunity (Granovetter, 1983). However, this focus on push-pull factors only takes us so far in understanding these spatial routines and the associated costs and benefits.

Spatial routines are not always triggered by a single stimulus. More often they are informed by a series of incidents, events, preferences and choices. The ability to extend the daily routines of everyday life is also closely related to the resources that an individual has at his or her disposal. It is also important to recognise that spatial routines are not always merely a matter of rational choice, but are also informed by the nature, character and outlook (or disposition) of an individual. Any attempt to understand spatial routines also needs to consider the places in which people live, pass through and avoid; the contextual features of the physical and social environment, the composition of the local population and the socio-cultural features of community. Mobility can be a source of freedom and liberation, but extended routines can also be forced upon people, for example, by virtue of the limits of opportunity within a place of residence. Spatial routines are more than a mere product of an individual's attempts to overcome the penalties of place. They are more than adaptive mechanism through which an individual adjusts their routine in order to access a preferred situation. Recognising this fact, the following section develops an organising framework with the ambition of promoting a more nuanced appreciation of the factors informing extended daily routines, laying the foundations for more rigorous analysis of the associated consequences for experiences of poverty.


**Understanding time-space biographies of everyday life**

This section explores the spatial routines of interviewees across the six case studies, guided

by an organising framework that spotlights four bundles of issues: identity and dispositions; resources; context; and the collective dimension of place.  Along the way, light is cast on some of the consequences associated with different geographies of everyday life.  In practice, it is difficult to untangle these different aspects of the spatial routines of daily life, which are bound together by the relational connectivity between people and places.  The unpicking of this knotted relationship that follows is therefore purely for analytical purposes.

*Bundle 1:        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, 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 usefully illustrates this point.

Mary is a single woman who lives alone in Wensley Fold, Blackburn.  Mary reported having to stop working because of ill health.  She was in receipt of sickness benefits, but reported struggling to make ends meet as a result of managing a large debt that was accrued in her name by a partner in a previous relationship.  Mary detailed a complex geography of day-to-day life that involved spending much of her time 'out and about' beyond the local neighbourhood.  Every Wednesday she reported travelling to Manchester to work as a volunteer in a drop-in centre for people coping with similar health problems to 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'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

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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 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.  This, in part, reflected the resources Mary had at her disposal.  More commonly, extended time-space biographies were associated with routine activities and were driven more by necessity than choice.  Third, Mary detailed a more extended spatial routine than many respondents, whose time-space biographies tended to be limited to adjacent neighbourhoods and the local 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 the ownership of a car that allowed her to move about with relative ease.

Exploring this geography further, it became apparent that a very particular dispositional outlook was informing Mary's routine, a fact which she reflected upon when explaining why she spends so much of her time out and about beyond the neighbourhood:

> Mary        I've kind of been a bit peed off with it [the neighbourhood], 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.

This ambivalence appeared to provide a mechanism through which Mary managed her 'spoiled identity'.  Expanding on the theme, she went on to reflect upon how she perceives herself to be different from other people in the neighbourhood.  'Being different', on the basis of class and ethnicity, was referenced by Mary to explain particulars of her routine, including why she rarely used local shops:

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| 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 locally, there's Netto, 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 Darwen. |

A sense of (elective) 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 would like to relocate to the city:

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| 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'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 and I started to socialise and make more friends over there and I just fancy living in [popular Manchester suburb], 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 [the suburb of Manchester] 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', involving the weakening of links between the place of residence and social ties. Extra-local activity becomes a way of realising these forms of community, although the quote also indicates that the popular suburb 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, the local neighbourhood provided some respondents with 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 in Wensley Fold. In particular, 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. Young people in Hillside, Knowsley also revealed a relational connectivity, socio-cultural affiliation and strong sense of 'rootedness' in the local neighbourhood, mirroring the findings of studies exploring the territorialities and microgeographies of young people (Kintrea and Suzuke, 2008; Matthews et al., 1997).

*Bundle 2:     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

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extended geography of everyday life. Financial resources can be key in minimising the potential for distance to represent an 'unsupportable cost' and opening up opportunities to travel to access work, amenities and facilities and to visit family and friends. The most obvious illustration of this point is 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. Social resources (that might be contained within networks of kith and kin) also emerged as an important determinant of spatial routines. There were numerous instances across the case studies 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. Social resources could also serve to release people from their ties to the neighbourhood. The most obvious example is the role of family in providing child care, which some people relied on to be able to go out to work. 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 for securing work and can, thereby, increase 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, 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. Finally, 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. One the on hand, there were examples of spatial routines extended beyond the residential neighbourhood in order to access particular facilities or services that other residents knew to be available locally. Conversely, there were examples of people who were unaware or unclear about what opportunities were available outside the

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area and were therefore making do with limited provision available in the residential neighbourhood.

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 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 above. Another important example is health status, which can serve to limit mobility.

*Bundle 3:     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 balance between resources - including employment opportunities, shops, leisure facilities, medical services, child care and such like - available in the place of residence and in 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) appeared to be relatively rich in local resources, limiting the need for extended geographies of getting by. Some respondents bemoaned the loss of local pubs, but there were still two in the neighbourhood as well as an array of general and specialist stores serving the local South Asian population, local places of worship, a community centre, local schools, two parks and leisure facilities, such as football pitches and basketball courts. The neighbourhood appeared to be rich in the physical, institutional and human resources

and environments that underpin active community ties.  This finding is consistent with evidence that various practical benefits can be associated for minority ethnic residents of living in clusters of people with a shared heritage and background, including the availability of culturally relevant services, facilities and opportunities (Robinson, 2005).

In contrast, there was a reported 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 centre); parks (the local park was in poor condition and was reported to be a hang out for local gangs and street drinking); or a 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.  Neglected by public and private sectors alike, the neighbourhood appeared to have been emptied of the institutional and physical infrastructure that helps support social connectivity.  There were 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.  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 more vulnerable to the overall characteristics of their neighbourhood.

West Kensington was the case study with the most immediate connections with other places. As well as accessing a range of services, facilities and public goods within the local area, the

majority of respondents in West Kensington detailed spatial routines that extended into neighbouring areas, taking advantage of the local transport network which connected the neighbourhood to the city centre and neighbouring areas of London.  Zoe, a single mother living in West Kensington with three children and working full-time described a routine that was characteristic of the extended routines of many respondents in West Kensington, taking full advantage of this connectivity and radiating out from the residential neighbourhood:

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| Zoe | 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 | Are there any other parts of London or elsewhere that you tend to go to on a regular, say weekly, basis? |
| Zoe | Kensington High Street, that's probably equal distance again but it is a little bit expensive there….There's very easy access to a lot of museums for example from here. |
| Interviewer | Would you quite often go into the city centre then? |
| 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 … If we 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. |

The benefits that accrued to respondents through extended spatial routines, in part, reflected the balance between the opportunity structures apparent within the local environment and the world beyond.  For example, respondents in Amlwch reported how extended spatial

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routines allowed them to overcome reported deficits in the opportunities and resources available within the town.  People reported travelling outside the town to work and travelling 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.  Bangor and Llandudno were not identified as places rich in amenities, services or resources, but were reported to provide access to resources and opportunities not readily available within Amlwch.  In contrast, in Wensley Fold, Blackburn such disadvantages of place were less readily apparent to respondents, limiting the perceived need to extend spatial routines beyond the town.  The obvious corollary of this finding is that the consequences of constrained spatial routines are likely to be far greater in some places (such as Amlwch), than in others (such as Wensley Fold or West Kensington).

*Bundle 4:      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.  Hence, while Mary, whose case was discussed above, reported feeling an 'outsider' within Wensley Fold, for many South Asian respondents the neighbourhood appeared to provide a territorial focus for a sense of identity and belonging and a bulwark against the apparently rampant process of individualisation that appeared to be rife within the West Marsh case study.  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.  Respondents in West Kensington also reported valuing the cosmopolitan nature of the neighbourhood, which was more accepting of difference than some other places, although it is not clear if this celebration of cosmopolitanism was reflected in the social networks of residents.

The strong collective sense of place and belonging apparent within Wensley Fold was reflected in and reinforced by close friendship or kinship ties between residents.  There were numerous instances of neighbours being both regular contacts and social intimates.  These closely knit, locality based social networks were found to be rooted in long-term residence in the same neighbourhood.  Some respondents had gone to school and grown up in the neighbourhood and the sustainability of these friendships was underpinned by the fact that both respondents and their friends had remained in the area.  This was true for many younger, as well as older respondents.  In contrast, in Hillside and West Marsh, local ties were often weak and less frequently extended beyond the convivial into attachments that might be deemed friendships.  In both places, population turnover appeared to have weakened the collective sense of belonging and shared identity associated with the area.  In Hillside, the redevelopment of the area had fractured longstanding friendship networks by the forcing some residents to relocate beyond the immediate area.  In West Marsh residential mobility was a common theme in the housing pathways of younger respondents, many of whom had moved into the neighbourhood in recent years.  This fact reflected the relatively large private rented sector in the neighbourhood and its lubricating role in the wider housing market system, together with the limited financial resources that young people had at their disposal, which meant that they 'ended up' in West Marsh, rather than exercised a positive choice to live there.  New residents frequently reported looking beyond the neighbourhood for social contact, often to where they used to live.  Meanwhile, older residents reported experiencing a gradual depletion of neighbourhood acquaintances, as contacts died or move away, and reported struggling to nurture contacts with new residents.

The result was a sense of powerlessness among long-standing residents, as the place changed as a result of processes beyond their control and their sense of ownership and belonging was undermined.

**Conclusion**

This study has provided a glimpse into the real world action-spaces of people living in deprived neighbourhoods. The key finding to emerge is that people are pursuing complex and highly individualised spatial routines that frequently extend beyond the residential neighbourhood. This is not to deny that the neighbourhood is an important context, but to suggest that it is not the only social or physical context within which people are living their lives and which might be effecting individual opportunities and experiences of poverty. Indeed, the evidence presented here hints at various ways in which extended spatial routines extend opportunities and enhance well-being by facilitating access to material provisions and social ties.

These findings pose some difficult questions for policy. The presumption that segregated places of the poor and excluded nurture cultures, norms and standards at odds with the dominant moral order presumes that people live spatially bounded lives. The residential neighbourhood is employed as a proxy for exposure to context; a container space within which people become inculcated, through social contact and interaction with other residents, with norms and standards that challenge the dominant social order. Yet, as we have seen, people in deprived neighbourhoods can, in fact, be exposed to multiple contexts in the course of their everyday routines. This simple finding stretches the credibility of policy's attempts to explain a host of problems in contemporary society through reference to social neighbourhood effects in the residential spaces of the poor and excluded. The fact that the neighbourhood is not the only, nor necessarily the most important, source of identification and association in people's lives also undermines the legitimacy of the proposed solution;

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the notion that government intervention can be askewed in favour of placing responsibility on local people to resolve their own problems through the reinvigoration of community. In particular, it is difficult to see how this approach will find any purchase in neighbourhoods where the physical and institutional infrastructure has been stripped away, promoting extended spatial routines and undermining local social connectivity.

The findings of this study also point to the need for improvements in the theoretical models underlying analysis of the relationships between poverty and place. Increasing socio-spatial inequalities pose important questions about the effects on individual outcomes and social process of life in hard-pressed places. By employing the residential neighbourhood as proxy for exposure to context, analysis of place effects has failed to account for the real word action spaces of everyday life. Meanwhile, the established 'poverty literature' in the social policy tradition has provided fine-grain biographical accounts of life on low incomes, but has failed to fully consider how people move through and interact with different places or to consider the personal risks and opportunities associated with these patterns of (im)mobility.

This study has shone a light on these routines and pointed to some of the ways in which extended spatial routines can inform experiences of getting by in poor places. It has also sketched out a guiding framework for exploring the interplay between people and places that informs these mobilities. However, many questions have been left unanswered. What are the rhythms of movement, what routes does mobility take, where and when do people stop and how fast are people able to move? More also needs to be known about what mobility means to people. What situations and positions promote mobility; what role does mobility play in people's lives; what are the links between mobility and (strong and weak) social ties; what costs and benefits are associated with extended routines; and to what extent to these mediate experiences of poverty? Answering these questions prompts a re-engagement with time-geography's interest in individuals and their continuous performance of the activities of everyday life, which pass through, avoid and dwell in a variety of real world physical and social environments.

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