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SOCIAL EXCLUSION, MOBILITY AND ACCESSⁱ

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ABSTRACT

Much of the literature on social exclusion ignores its 'spatial' or 'mobility' related aspects. This paper seeks to rectify this by examining the mobile processes and infrastructures of travel and transport that engender and reinforce social exclusion in contemporary societies. To the extent to which this issue is addressed, it is mainly organised around the notion of 'access' to activities, values and goods. This paper examines this discourse in some detail. It is argued that there are many dimensions of such access, that improving access is a complex matter because of the range of human activities that might need to be 'accessed', that in order to know what is to be accessed the changing nature of travel and communications requires examination, and that some dimensions of access are only revealed through changes in the infrastructure that 'uncover' previously hidden social exclusions. Claims about access and socio-spatial exclusion routinely make assumptions about what it is to participate effectively in society. We turn this question around, also asking how mobilities of

different forms constitute societal values and sets of relations, participation in which may become important for social inclusion. This paper draws upon an extensive range of library, desk and field research to deal with crucial issues relating to the nature of a fair, just and mobile society.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION, MOBILITY AND ACCESS

1. INTRODUCTION

It has recently been observed that much literature on social inclusion and exclusion ignores the ‘spatial’ or ‘mobility’ related aspects (see Church, Frost, Sullivan 2000; SEU 2002; Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty 2002; Levitas 1998). This paper seeks to rectify this by analysing the travel and communication processes that engender and reinforce social exclusion in contemporary societies, especially the UK. It is increasingly argued that such exclusion results from some combination of distance, inadequate transport and limited ways of communicating; that these exclusions are unfair or discriminatory; and that local and national government should reduce such socio-spatial exclusion. This implies that citizenship is no longer confined as in T.H.Marshall’s famous model to civil, political and social rights, but that there are also what we might term mobility rights (see Marshall and Bottomore 1992; on mobility rights, see Soysal 1994, Urry 2000).

To the extent to which such a mobile citizenship is addressed in the UK, it is largely organised through the discourse and concept of ‘access’. Questions of ‘access’ are frequently associated with questions of disability. In what follows we deal with similar issues but expand the debate such that we consider how various processes limit people’s *spatial* access to the range of ‘activities, values, and goods’ that appears to determine full membership or citizenship. It is shown that there are many dimensions of such access, that improving access is complex because of the range of human activities that might need to be ‘accessed’, and that determining why people on occasions ‘have to’ travel and communicate is necessary so as to figure out what has

to be accessed. We pay special attention to the dynamic relation between changing mobilities and networks, on the one hand, and the sorts of relations, sites and practices that are important for social inclusion, on the other. We argue that the very place of multiple mobilities within contemporary social life and especially within different social networks affects the nature of access and citizenship.

The next section suggests that a generic discourse of access is increasingly influential in current thinking about the causes and consequences of social exclusion. Some limitations of the implementation of this discourse are outlined. The third section examines the connections between a more networked patterning of social life and the nature of access. Subsequent sections deal with social networks within the world of work and family life. The sixth section brings these debates together by outlining the multi-dimensional nature of access. We argue that there are financial, physical, organisational and temporal components to access and full participation within a society. We conclude by reviewing a couple of innovative local authority initiatives that begin to address the multi-dimensional character of social exclusion and access within increasingly networked forms of social life.

2. DISCOURSES OF ‘ACCESS’ AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Following the election of the Labour government in 1997 there was renewed interest in the UK in ameliorating the consequences of social exclusion. A Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was established to monitor and influence policy across all Whitehall Departments. In 2002 the Unit turned its attention to travel, transport and access, seeing these as processes implicated in the reproduction of social exclusion. The Report *Making the Connections: Transport and Social Exclusion* states that: ‘Recent

years have seen a growing recognition that transport problems can be a significant barrier to social inclusion' and 'This report examines the links between social exclusion, transport and the location of services (SEU 2003: 6). *Inter alia* the Report notes that young people with driving licenses are twice as likely to get jobs as those without; that nearly one-half of 16-18 year olds experience difficulty in paying for transport to get to their place of study; that almost one-third of car-less households have difficulty in accessing their local hospital; that children from the lowest social class are five times more likely to die in road accidents than those from the highest social class; and that twice as many people without a car find it hard to see their friends. This wide-ranging Report concludes that: 'social costs have not been given due weight in transport policy', and that 'local authorities do not routinely assess whether people can get to work, learning, health care or other activities in a reasonable time or cost' (SEU 2002: 4).

A year later, we interviewed a number of local authority representatives with the aim of finding out how they were thinking about the relation between social exclusion and transport and what sorts of strategies and measures they were adopting in response. These respondents interpreted the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion in often different and inconsistent ways. Some applied the term 'socially excluded' to specific social groups, others used it to refer to certain deprived areas or locations. More generally, the catalogue of what might constitute exclusion was extensive, including unemployment; deprivation and poverty; lack of education; disability and mobility impairment; lack of community inclusion; geographical isolation; hard to reach groups and self-exclusion; poor access to facilities; and information deficiency (Cass, Shove, Urry 2003: 16).

We also found that the apparently simple goal of ‘improved access’ was a priority within many Local Transport Plans (LTPs) developed by these local authorities. These LTPs are framed in terms of reducing social exclusion through enhancing access or accessibility. Thus the Cheshire LTP intends to improve ‘accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without a car’ (Cheshire County Council 2000: Section 4.1). Indeed Objective 1 is ‘To promote sustainable accessibility’. To achieve this the County Council will seek to reduce traffic growth and congestion; ensure adequate *access* is provided to development areas; improve *access* to economic centres of the County; improve opportunities for inter-modal trips; and improve facilities for the vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the community, particularly with respect to *removing barriers to mobility* wherever possible (our emphases). Likewise the Hampshire LTP maintains that lack of easy *access* to employment, shops, education, leisure and health facilities leads to social exclusion and a tendency for many residents to use cars for such journeys (Hampshire County Council 2000). Improved accessibility and hence greater social inclusion is a strategic theme in this local transport plan. The authority’s LTP claims that: ‘Access to jobs and training opportunities remains key to social and economic inclusion’ (Hampshire County Council 2000: Section 3.11).

Local authorities are not alone in making connections between travel, access and social exclusion. Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty also argue that there is a ‘mobility dimension to exclusion’:

The process by which people are prevented from participating in the economic, political and social life of the community because of reduced

accessibility to opportunities, services and social networks, due in whole or in part to insufficient mobility in a society and environment built around the assumption of high mobility (Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty 2001: 210-1).

More specifically, Church, Frost and Sullivan claim that there is a clear need for indicators that reveal the role of transport *within* that exclusionary process (2000: 197). They note that where transport figures within current indices of deprivation it often functions as a proxy for something else, for example, low levels of car ownership get taken as an indicator of poverty in a given area rather than as something structuring social exclusion. In short, access and social exclusion are inter-related through a commonsense discourse in which resources (money, cars, etc.) are required to reach important destinations. Defined thus, both concepts are at heart about individual capacities.

In keeping with this approach, local authorities often conclude that large-scale socio-demographic categories, the unemployed or single-parent families, or the residents of specific areas and estates *are* socially excluded. Yet there is no reason to suppose that such populations necessarily suffer from a lack of access and hence social exclusion. It is not obvious what effective access and participation means for different social groups or what mobility 'demands' this brings in its wake. It is, for instance, possible that highly paid commuters are socially excluded from their local neighbourhood precisely because of their high mobility.

Thinking more abstractly about the spatial and mobility related aspects of social exclusion is thus a major step. Having taken this step it is immediately apparent that the idea of improving *access* is difficult to conceptualise, let alone to act upon. First,

in what is, by some counts, an increasingly mobile world the challenge of accessing other people, places and services at some geographical distance is not something fixed and easily measurable. What is necessary for full 'social' inclusion varies as the means and modes of mobility change and as the potential for 'access' develops with the emergence of new technologies such as charter flights, high speed trains, budget air travel, SUVs, mobile phones, networked computers and so on. These developments transform what is 'necessary' for full social inclusion.

It is important but again very difficult to acknowledge the temporal as well as the spatial dimensions of social exclusion, as these relate to the changing *spatial* and *temporal* organisation of contemporary life. One consequence of an apparent breakdown of what used to be predictably scheduled events (fixed meal times, specific times for social interaction and times for work) is that certain people are more obliged to negotiate meetings and social encounters, case by case. For some at least, the scheduling of social life appears to be an increasingly 'do-it-yourself' operation, arranging encounters around flexi-times, and searching for common slots between people with equally idiosyncratic schedules (Shove 2002). While certain individuals might have greater temporal flexibility than before, the consequent need to organise ever more complex diaries (more complex *because* other peoples' time is also more fragmented and less formally controlled), generates distinctive pressures for co-ordination and 're-coordination' in time and space. There are various ways in which people are *geographically* unable to access components of social life at *appropriate* times of the day, week or year. What is crucial are the time and space patterns of peoples' lives and what these mean for their membership or non-membership of certain social categories. Developing these ideas, it is argued that the nature of access

is influenced by: '(1) the nature of time-space organisation in households; (2) the nature of the transport system and (3) the nature of time-space organisation of the facilities and opportunities individuals are seeking to access' (Scottish Executive 2000: Section 7.1). What this means is that we need to know more about the spatial and temporal properties of people's social networks *and* about how these vary; only this will provide a point of reference against which to judge whether social-spatial exclusion, or 'access' - by which we mean the ability to negotiate space and time so as to accomplish practices and maintain relations that people take to be necessary for normal social participation - is indeed improving or declining.

To summarise, local authorities normally conceive of access in terms of whether certain pre-defined social groups such as single parent families can get to work, hospitals, schools, courts and so on (Cass, Shove, Urry 2003: chap 2). Emphasising *public or formal* aspects of contemporary life, the Hampshire LTP describes how the: 'Lack of easy access to employment, shops, education, leisure and health facilities can lead to social exclusion and a tendency to rely on car use for these journeys' (Hampshire County Council 2000: Section 3.5). More generally the SEU report discussed above refers to the need to access: 'work, learning, healthcare, and other key services' (2003: 1). However, this view of what is involved in 'access' is limited since it neglects the ability to maintain friendship, family ties and informal connections, the very socialities that organise and structure everyday life.

In the following we explore ways of developing the notion of access so as to address the range of limitations discussed in this section. In reflecting on the relationship

between access and networking (of various forms) we begin with a path-breaking survey from the Rowntree Foundation.

3. NETWORKING AND ‘ACCESS’

The Report *Poverty and Social Exclusion: Survey of Britain* captures the extent and demographic distribution of access to, and exclusion from, socially defined activities and customs deemed necessary to be a modern citizen within Britain (Gordon et al 2000). The Report maintains that: ‘There are social customs, obligations and activities that substantial majorities of the population also identify as among the top necessities of life’, necessary socialities that normally entail travel by some or all participants (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000).

Respondents identified various activities as normatively ‘necessary’ for a full socially included life. The Report states that: ‘Among the customs are “celebrations on special occasions such as Christmas” (83%) and “attending weddings, funerals” (80%) ...Among the obligations and activities described as necessary are not just those which seem on the face of it to satisfy individual physiological survival and individual occupation - like a “hobby or leisure activity” (78%). They also include joint activities with friends and within families such as “visits to friends or family” (84%), especially those in hospital (92%). They involve reciprocation and care of, or service for, others. People recognise the need to have “friends or family round for a meal” (64%), for example.’ (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000). But the report suggests that there are major forms of social exclusion here. It reports that: ‘...almost 14% are too poor to be able to engage in two or more common social activities considered necessary: visiting

friends and family, attending weddings and funerals or having celebrations on special occasions.’ (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000).

This Report captures the socialities involved in people’s everyday lives, showing that a certain amount of travel and communication is required in order to maintain and reproduce these relationships. But the Report does not assess the nature or the extent of differences between people, either in the shape and density of their social networks or in the resources needed to sustain them. Members of close and close knit communities are, for example, unlikely to travel as far as those whose families are scattered or whose friends live in other parts of the country or the world. It would seem that the development of more extended and complex social networks accounts for some of the exceptional increases in daily personal travel that have occurred in almost all countries in the post-war period.

We now briefly document these increases. In Britain people currently make around 1000 domestic journeys a year, spending about 360 hours per year travelling (DTLR 2001: Table 2.1; Table 3.1). The total distance travelled over the past half-century has risen from about one-half billion-passenger kilometres in the 1950s to about 7.5 billion passenger kilometres now (DfT 2000). Even over the past 15 years there has been a 42% increase in the distance travelled per person (SEU 2002). Significantly one half of UK adults took an air flight during 2001, with half of those travelling once, one quarter travelling twice and one quarter travelling three or more times in the year (Lethbridge 2002). Personal travel by whatever mode is expected to double again by 2025 (Doyle and Nathan 2001: 3-4) accompanied by significant falls in the

distance walked. The richest quintile of the UK population travels 3.5 times as far as the poorest quintile (Doyle and Nathan 2002: 3-4).

We now relate these increases to a revised notion of access through the significance of social networks (Hampton and Wellman 2001; Axhausen 2002; Urry 2003; more generally, see Castells 1996, on the 'networked society',). What seem important in contemporary life are overlapping and intersecting social networks - in leisure, friendship, family life as well as in work and organisations. And these networks appear to demand intermittent travel, such travel being crucial to forming and sustaining such networks produced through 'moments of co-presence'. 'Thick' co-presence involves rich, multi-layered and dense conversations (Boden and Molotch 1994) and affords opportunities for eye contact with the other that can help establish intimacy. Co-presence has other qualities. Face-to-face conversations enable the talking through of problems, especially the unmediated telling of 'troubles'. In such conversations topics can come and go, misunderstandings can be corrected, and commitment and sincerity can be directly assessed. Especially important is how this enables the building up (but also the breaking down) of trust, something that gets worked at and involves a joint performance by those in such co-present conversations. We argue that social inclusion increasingly demands the capacity to form and develop various social networks sometimes stretching across substantial distances. Being able to meet face-to-face is crucial to continued membership of a network and it matters that members can come together, at least intermittently. Appreciating the networked nature of social life makes the notion of 'access' more complex and less locally focussed.

This also raises a number of wide ranging questions about whether and how the fabric of society - and the networks of which it is composed - might be changing. Various authors claim that societies are no longer based upon 'little boxes', characterised by strong, overlapping membership of different social groups, but are instead organised through a system of 'networks' in which connections are spatially dispersed and where network memberships do not necessarily overlap (see Hampton and Wellman 2001; Axhausen 2002: 9). If networks overlap less there is less likelihood of quick, casual, unplanned meetings (Axhausen 2002: 10). More time has to be spent planning and sustaining contacts with a small proportion of those who are known and in maintaining a minimum level of interaction with many dispersed contacts by phone, fax or email.

The members of social networks thus seem more widespread than in the past, social networks less coherent with fewer people sharing multiple affiliations, and the extent to which memberships overlap spatially is reduced. If this is in fact the case, people will have to travel longer distances in order to maintain the 'same' level of social contact or social inclusion (Urry 2003). Axhausen establishes the *prima facie* case that the increasing importance of social networks, as opposed to life organised in 'little boxes', explains changing travel patterns (2002; Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty 2002).

To summarise then: average distances between members of social, familial and work-related networks have substantially increased since the 1950s; on average, social networks are more spread out and less coherent with fewer overlapping multiple affiliations; more 'work' has to be put into nurturing such networks since there is less

casual interaction; when people do meet face-to-face this often involves travel across substantially longer distances; and the poorer the person the less distance they tend to travel (Axhausen 2002: 9; Urry 2003).

In the next two sections we document the significance of networks within work and family life, networks that in our terms give meaning to the notion of access and social inclusion.

4. NETWORKS AT WORK

In well-known US research Granovetter showed that extensive weak ties of acquaintanceship and informational flows are particularly significant in searching for and obtaining a job (1983). It is these weak ties that connect people to a multitude of outside worlds, providing a bridge to new work-related networks in ways that close friends and family cannot match. The immediate social world is too close. It is the weak more distant ties that need to be ‘accessed’ and sustained. Serious limits are placed on the capacity to job search effectively for those without those weak ties *beyond* family and friends. The suggestion here is that useful work-related ties are of a distinctive form: critically they are unlike immediate bonds of close family and friendship.

The importance of such weak ties will vary from one society and social situation to another. Much depends upon the social organisation of work and in this regard we should examine ways in which production is structured. In reaching the conclusion that Britain is a ‘connecting economy’, the Henley Centre argues that: ‘few of us actually make anything: we have meetings, we make presentations, we encourage

people'; hence 'our work is based on the influence we have over our networks' (Justin Worsley, Associate Director, quoted *Leisure Week*, June 15th, 2000; reported Henley Centre press centre). Accessing moments when a network meets up is thus crucial for contemporary work. PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the growth of new 'nomadic networkers' (2000), while Wittel talks of the emergence of a new 'network sociality' amongst the new media workers in central London (2001). Doyle and Nathan describe how the ensuing logic of hyper mobility has set off an explosive growth in instant offices and airport hotels. The latter they describe as perfectly formed conference centres, allowing travellers to stay put, stay over and do their 'business' (Doyle and Nathan 2001). We should though be cautious about how widely these trends apply: many lives are still geographically contained, characterised by stability and local community rather than ever extending networks.

Even so, many organisations claim to have shifted from the 'individual work ethic' to a more networked model, with lots of face-to-face meetings and hence the need to travel (see Evans and Wurstler 2000: 217; Boden 1994: 211). It seems that 'the opportunity to socialise with work peers is a key factor in job satisfaction. Work is about companionship as well as compensation' (Reeves 2002). Moreover, the higher a person's position in an organisational hierarchy, the more significant is the establishment and nurturing of 'complex interpersonal networks' through face-to-face meetings (Boden and Molotch 1994: 273). Doyle and Nathan argue that: 'only via personal travel can members of top management teams position themselves for important face-to-face interactions' (2001: 13).

And even within virtual teams operating around the world Maznevski and Chudoba highlight the importance of face-to-face meetings (2000). Their longitudinal research shows that the temporal rhythm of such teams: 'is structured by a defining beat of regular, intense face-to-face meetings, followed by a less intensive, shorter interaction incidents using various media' (Maznevski and Chudoba 2000: 489). And future workplaces: 'will be highly interactive, not just with technology, but with people. The pacing and sequencing of work tasks will continue to be talk-based' (Boden 1994: 213). This is especially so where emotional, personal or financial activities are involved. It is said that the telephone is best used between persons who already know and trust one another. Overall non face-to-face access is more functional and task-oriented, less rich and complex (Boden and Molotch 1994: 263-7; Urry 2003), letters, memos, faxes and email being less effective in *establishing* long-term relations at work. Indeed virtual business communities seem to require frequent trips (Doyle and Nathan 2002: 8-10), especially since email also appears to increase the 'need' for face-to-face interaction rather than to substitute for it (Hampton and Wellman 2001; Castells 2001: 122).

Thus the nature and organisation of work has implications for the 'networks' involved and for how they are maintained and managed. In some sectors, current developments seem to 'demand' more physical travel than ever before. To the extent that this is the case, those workers who are unable to participate will be socially excluded from such a networked life.

5. FAMILY NETWORKS

There is some evidence to suggest that family life is also increasingly conducted at-a-distance (see Finch and Mason 1993). The need for negotiation and deliberation about how, when and by whom family responsibilities are to be fulfilled is especially marked when 'families' consist not just of clear-cut nuclear families but where households are split through separation and divorce. There is a proliferation of 'family fragments' (Smart and Neale 1999). In these situations, family responsibilities to children or parents or grandparents have to be negotiated across various complex boundaries, of families, step-families, step-step families and so on. Such negotiations over who will do what and when involve complex questions of 'access' often requiring both communication and travel. There are negotiations about which family members are communicated with or seen, the frequency and length of proposed visits, the activities to be undertaken, and the character, form and significance of such meetings.

Accessing a family of this networked type is more inchoate and unspecific than accessing one that lives a 'little box' in which members regularly encounter each other within the immediate neighbourhood. This ease of access was famously documented in classical studies in the East End of London in the 1950s (Young and Willmott 1962) and similarly 'close' neighbourhoods remain in some 'urban villages'. Now however, one in ten UK households move every year and 15% of individuals have a different address from one year to the next. On average, the pattern of family life is becoming more dispersed and networked (PIU 2002: 1). In our research in Birmingham concerned with the introduction of work-place parking charges, we found that people undertook remarkably complex patterns in which their journeys

were entangled with the travel arrangements and the needs of various other 'significant others' within and beyond their family 'household' (Cass, Shove, Urry 2003:).

There are also interesting variations in the nature of networks as people move through the life cycle. Wenger argues that as people age, so accessing a 'support network' becomes more relevant than sustaining strictly 'social networks' (1997). Support networks can, of course, take different forms, providing a mixture of emotional support, companionship, instrumental help and information on a more or less daily basis. In practice, the character of the support network is likely to depend upon the relative significance of local neighbours, local family members, friends living within a few miles that are still mobile, and locally provided formal and informal services.

Thus it seems increasing geographical mobility and the spreading out of social networks has changed what is involved in access to both social and support networks. This means that providing appropriate travel and communications devices is even more essential. Again we see how developments in the structuring of social networks (a process itself facilitated by the existence and availability of new means and modes of transport) constitute a new landscape of 'in-access', one in which the significance of physical and virtual mobility and immobility is redefined.

6. FOUR DIMENSIONS OF ACCESS

Networks seem central to many aspects of social life; people have to 'access' networks if they are to participate in a complex, multiply networked society. Where nodes in such networks are located at geographical remove from where people live or

work, access involves communications and intermittent travel. Hence social inclusion is significantly a matter of overcoming constraints of space at particular moments of time so as to gain access to the informal networks of work, leisure, friendship and family. If the forms of 'networked society' outlined above are indeed generalised, there is, it seems an unavoidable 'burden of mobility' for almost all (Shove 2002). To return to the policy concerns with which we began, we now take stock of four different dimensions of access and of what scope local and central government might have for intervening with reference to each. In other words, we demonstrate the multi-dimensional nature of 'access' and consider the means by which contemporary burdens of mobility might be managed and distributed. This is important not in its own right but in order to indicate the relationship between social networks, infrastructures and patterns of inequality and power.

We identify four key dimensions of 'access' - financial, physical, organisational, and temporal - although setting them out in this way does not imply that they are readily separable in practice (see Church, Frost and Sullivan 2000, and Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty 2001, for parallel formulations).

Financial

All forms of transport require the expenditure of financial resources (even walking needs decent shoes or boots: see Michael 2000). Axhausen's generic catalogue of the 'tools' of mobility indicates the scale of financial resources necessary for social inclusion (2002; and see the DfT transportdirect web site). These include: ownership or use of a car/taxi, bearing in mind the importance of car-sharing/lifts (see Moore and Lilley 2001) as well as the 'motoring poor' (Froud, Johal, Leaver, Williams

2003); availability of a 'point of contact' through ownership or availability of one or more of a telephone/ mobile/ 'secretary'/ email (see Brown, Green, Harper 2002); the ability to purchase intermittent long-distance travel by car/ coach/ train/ plane/ ship; and the resources to stopover and meet up with friends, family or workmates while 'away'. Roughly speaking those who have most access to travel are also those with best access to communications 'at-a-distance' although the low entry cost of the mobile phone, the minute costs of SMS messaging and the cheapness of internet cafes may be altering this relationship (Brown, Green, Harper 2002). In practice, local authorities recognise this dimension in various ways, often subsidising transport for groups such as the unemployed, school children, teenagers, or the elderly.

Physical

There are many physical aspects of access: an inability to get into or to drive a car; the difficulties involved in walking certain distances or within particular kinds of unsafe, unlit, uneven environments; the physical difficulties involved in entering particular sites; limitations on the capacity to read timetabled information; physical constraints upon carrying or moving large or weighty objects and so on. The distribution of physical constraints is of course a function both of design (of cars, of cities, of homes) and of the capacities of potential users (noting of course the importance of those bodily impaired). In policy terms, efforts are made to minimise the extent to which the physical environment obstructs access - for example through building regulations, the provision of 'low rider' buses or special services for those whose capacity to move about is impaired for one reason or another.

Organisational

People's ability to access services and facilities depends not just on the forms of transport available but also how they are organised. Thus with regard to the car, availability rather than ownership is key. 'Social inclusion' often depends upon the ability to negotiate lifts with others, such as family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues, or members of other social networks. Access to the car is itself a matter of social organisation (see, for example, Rajé's work on Asian households, 2003). In this context the structuring of networks is doubly significant. A UK study of mobility, public transport and social exclusion showed, for example, that 30% of residents in a New Deal area and 50% of rural residents had at certain times of day access to a car through getting lifts from neighbours (DTLR 2001: Appendix 4).

Where people have no access to a car, then the organisation of public transport is crucial. In our research people hold as important not only the proximity of a bus stop or railway station but the directions the buses travel in, their ability to reach a variety of destinations directly or indirectly, the cost of travelling by bus, the quality of the experience, the conditions of waiting and interchange locations, and above all the service's frequency, reliability and punctuality (Cass, Shove, Urry 2003). These organisational aspects form an inter-related complex highly relevant to assessing when and how the provision of public transport *translates* into inclusion. In other words, do such systems in fact allow people to be part of relevant and important networks and do they allow access a wide variety of goods, services, places and peoples? Moreover, the increased 'privatisation' of public transport means that capitalist commercial drives to capture profitable routes has resulted in a 'splintering

urbanism' (Graham and Marvin 2001). According to these authors, there is growing separation between 'hot' zones, in which the majority of (affluent) consumers are located and whose custom is desired and sought, and cold spaces where the opposite logic applies. With respect to bus services, there is the concentration of operating companies on major arteries or corridors where demand is high, and the neglect of peripheral or rural routes. Graham and Marvin elaborate on this splintering of the city suggesting that the travel-rich will have increasing choices of good public transport, paid for parking spaces or toll-based roads, protected cycle tracks and pedestrian walkways, and a generally 'smart' environment. By contrast, the travel poor and the time-dependent, may have almost no such choices as they wait in unsafe bus stops or unstaffed stations or find it too expensive to get their cars on the road or lack the smart cards necessary to enter premium places (Graham and Marvin 2001).

Temporal

Access also depends upon temporal *availability*. Thus many people will find no 'public' transport before or after working hours, or that services to cheap shopping centres are unavailable when they are free to shop, or that leisure activities have to be curtailed because of the time and frequency of services. Also there is the question of 'time sovereignty' and the degree to which people do or do not have control over, or flexibility built into, their temporal regime. The 'socially excluded' may include those who have extensive resources of time (and therefore a high degree of flexibility), but also the low-paid, for whom the pressures of punctuality reduce their 'time sovereignty' and for whom temporal co-ordination is highly important (Breedveld 1998).

Our research at Birmingham University showed the value people placed on modes of transport that do 'not waste time' (Cass, Shove, Urry 2003). Access is therefore also a matter of timing, time resources and time management. Church and Frost (1999) highlight the importance of time-space organisation in households, a feature Silverstone describes as 'clocking' (1993). By this is meant the patterning of domestic schedules and the routines of coordination around which the household revolves. Spatial-temporal structures of this kind have the dual effect of shaping the character of mobility-related obligations (to be home for dinner by 7pm, to leave the house by 8am in the morning etc.) and the temporal 'resources' available to different members. What seems important is the 'juggling' and relative valuing not only of time but also of money, the availability of different modes of transport and/or means of access and communication for and between different household members.

* * *

The paragraphs above isolate four dimensions of access, the financial, physical, organisational and temporal. By contrast, analyses of transport-related social exclusion are typically based upon a model that views inclusion in terms of people being able to 'get at' pre-defined 'public' goods and services located within pre-determined 'formal' locations/destinations. This model rests on a definition of what excluded people should want or need and obscures the role that social networks play in maintaining a 'good life' and in structuring the meaning of inclusion and participation

There is more work to be done if the approach sketched here is to be useful in practice. Most immediately we need to know more about where people want to go, why (see Kenyon, Lyons, Rafferty 2002), and what are the constraints upon making

and forming networks and holding meetings. This is difficult to achieve but one method is to focus upon ‘blocked desire’, especially when people cannot meet what they take to be important obligations of co-presence. Localised studies in Newcastle have, for example, invited respondents to identify locations they felt obliged to visit to undertake certain predefined activities like shopping, meeting friends and family, child care, education or health care. Recorded difficulties in fulfilling these obligations relate to where the respondent lived, to the social geographical location of key facilities and the radial routes that characterise the physical infrastructure of the city (Moore and Lilley 2001: 22-3). Our research on the partially ‘demand-responsive’ Super 8 bus service in Lancashire is also instructive. Since the bus is indeed responsive, its routes reveal otherwise invisible patterns of demand. While our study showed that the mostly elderly users describe their journeys as ‘just’ for shopping, or just to ‘pop into’ Garstang (the ‘hub’), it also identified a multitude of other ‘needs’ including visiting a spouse in a care home, crossing the district to visit friends, going to a café (as the focus of a shopping trip), attending a community centre, art classes, getting to work, visiting a doctor, pleasure trips, tourism, and going to the pub. As this list of ‘social obligations’ indicates, the range of what it is that the otherwise ‘excluded’ may be trying to access is varied and may only be revealed through new infrastructures that uncover existing networks – but ones that are in a state of disrepair – or that finally make new (desired) connections possible.

6. CONCLUSION

As far as we are aware no studies within the UK seek to determine the diverse nature of these four dimensions of access within a local area, or across different sectors of the population, let alone any that examine them at a macro level. There are though a

small number of analyses that begins to deal with the policy implications of certain aspects of this argument. For example, Bradford City, in conjunction with Friends of the Earth, has developed a method for mapping of levels of car ownership, along with bus routes graded according to the frequency of service (Pennycook et al 2001). This is used to reveal localised areas in which there are very distinct and varied problems of access (and see Nottingham 2000). Hampshire County Council has also attempted to provide geographical maps of overall 'accessibility' taking into account both private and public transport infrastructures (2001: 40).

By adding a temporal dimension to these spatial representations, it is possible to characterise the hot and cold spots of transport provision. Just such a temporally sensitive scheme is suggested by Church and Frost (1999) who propose 'that a GIS based system should provide a locally based view of access mapping (by address) the location of facilities such as post offices, shops and transport infrastructure (bus stop, rail station) which would allow calculations of the average time required for travel to these locations from within the area investigated' (quoted Scottish Executive 2000: Section 7.1). A cumulative indicator could then identify the total time taken to access a specified range of services and facilities. This would allow the identification of localities suffering from access problems; the extent to which areas characterised as excluded through other indicators suffer from poor access to facilities and services; and could possibly also provide a means to assess the impact of transport measures implemented to address these access problems (Scottish Executive 2000; Section 7.1). While it is important to add the temporal dimension, such exercises remain focused upon a limited concept of access (the ability of pre-defined social groups to reach pre-defined destinations). It is useful to know about the spatial and temporal

dimensions of public transport provision, but the challenge of linking this to the social networks of which people want to be a part – and of simply knowing where people want to go - remains.

Overall then we have shown that there is a welcome new awareness of the spatial and mobility related aspects of citizenship or social inclusion and that this new concern is expressed, in the UK, through the discourse of access. We have argued that the concept of access is complex and should not be limited to describing the exclusion of predefined social groups from certain formal or public services. In relating notions of a networked society to an analysis of how leisure, family and work life have (on average) become more far-flung, more extended and less overlapping we identify the increased ‘mobility burden’ of society and some of the implications for the concept and discourse of ‘access’. In reflecting on the four dimensions of access, we note different routes through which local authorities might influence people’s ability to engage and participate. We argue that initiatives in transport, planning and communications should promote networking and meetingness (and minimise missingness) amongst those living, working and visiting particular places. By defining social exclusion and inclusion with reference to the networks and practices of which people want to be a part we have made two important moves. First, we avoid making specific judgements about what it is to be an active and involved member of society. Accordingly, social inclusion is about being part of the networks that matter to the persons involved. Second, we consider the relation between social exclusion, mobility and access to be a dynamic one, and one that plays out at the level of society as a whole. What counts is the texture and density of the networks of which societies

are comprised for it is within and with reference to this fabric that the capacity to engage in different sorts of mobility does, or does not, matter.

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