

4 The Time of Our Lives

Temporality and the Life Course

One rainy Saturday in late November, at the International Club, I sat with Molly and her friend, Hazel, at their usual table towards the back of the club. It was very busy inside and the windows were steamed up. She pointed to the paintings on the walls by members — variously of fruit or landscapes, ‘you know there’s some that are really professional now. They sell as they’re quite good’. I agreed with her. She continued, ‘Of course I’d never be able to do anything like that. I get too tired’. Our conversation turned to the subject of Charlotte and Gerald, who were regular faces at the club. Charlotte had recently suffered a bad fall and had been in and out of hospital for a while. Hazel commented, ‘well you know about Charlotte and Gerald don’t you? She’s very bad.... She doesn’t even get to sit out on the terrace now’. Molly added, ‘But I don’t think that enough was done when there were things that could be done. I mean I used to see him walking miles in front of her telling her to hurry up. It’s a shame, she should be looked after’.

A whistle was blown, signalling the end of the library session and Molly swallowed down her coffee quickly. She gathered her magazines such as *Woman’s Own* and *the People* that she collected that morning from the magazine swap offered by the club. She was keen to leave, as the club house was getting too busy. ‘You know us’, she smiled, ‘we have our own little routine — we’re off for our chicken sandwich at the café around the corner’. I looked around and said hello to Bob on the next table, who invited me to sit with him and his friends. He was pondering on the practicalities of moving house as he was selling his house nearby Freila to be with his wife in New Zealand. She had already moved there to be near their children, as she required regular dialysis. Now Bob was trying to make sense of what to do from some advice in one of the free magazines...‘there’s all these regulations, you have to have copies of everything, they can’t just take your word for it. And the law says you need such and such, so you go down to the Town Hall and say, I need this and they say, what’s that?’ he sighed. The biggest problem he faced was in arranging the transport of his two dogs, but he refused to leave until he could take them with him. The other couple sitting with Bob were also planning to move to France soon, and explained,

‘we used to live up in the hills, but found that too isolating. Then we moved down to an urbanisation and hated it. But we’ve been here seven years, it’s just time for a change, time to move on’. I asked them when they’re going. ‘Pfffff! We haven’t even looked at any houses yet, and besides, we’re off to Morocco next week on an International Club trip’. ‘That’s right’, said Tom, cradling a brandy, ‘we’re hoping to sell our wives whilst we’re there’.

I caught sight of Linda, a Scottish woman, at the bar. She was always the life and soul of the party, although today she seemed quite distant and disinterested in my social pleasantries. After a few minutes, she told me abruptly, ‘we can’t stay here any more, my husband’s ill, we’re leaving’. I expressed my sympathies and asked when she was going. She replied, clearly upset, ‘that’s the 500 million dollar question...I just don’t know, it’s all up in the air’.

The last chapter showed great diversity in orientations to lifestyle and place amongst retired migrants in Spain. Nevertheless, this vignette, of a typical social meeting in one of the foreign residents’ clubs shows that one fundamental challenge shapes their lives in Spain: they are all negotiating growing older. The lifestyles they live are influenced — and occasionally violently disrupted — by the irreversible fact of their ageing (Adam 1995). Ageing, a process too slow to apprehend directly (Hockey and James 2003), occurs simply as time passes, which means that perceptions of ageing are bound up with wider questions of temporality. In these migrants’ lives, questions of how people pass their days, their plans for wider vistas of life times and, for some, how long they can even stay in Spain, are influenced by their ageing and as such, merit closer attention. This chapter focuses on time and how it is perceived, experienced and reflected upon, in both people’s daily lives and their imagined trajectories of life.

A central issue to emerge from this examination is that many retired migrants in Spain construct certain stories about time to help to sustain positive ageing self-identities. They describe Spain as a place in which it is felt that time is more flexible, spontaneous and unhurried. Moving to Spain is associated with disengagement from time-conceptions governing former lives, still so evident in the lives of others ‘back there’ in the homeland. Structured time-use and the imperative to beat the clock are presented as conditions of the past, whilst the putative speed of that past is contrasted with the slowness of the retirees’ present. And, perhaps most importantly, this time of the life course is ‘theirs’; experienced as ‘me-time’, rather than life lived at other’s bidding. However, the chapter shows that friction arises in sustaining these temporal fictions, because of contradictory cultural messages around free and structured time. In typical busy working lives, we often yearn to ‘work differently’ (Nowotny 1994: 136) to have ‘more’ time and less time pressure, an experience imagined in retirement. However, on the other hand, too much free time is culturally evaluated as ‘weighty’ and ‘heavy’, informing imperatives rather to ‘kill’ time and avoid ‘stagnation’

(see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). For retired migrants, this contradiction becomes even more pertinent, when considering how as Adam (1990: 128) argues, 'life is lived in relation to our finitude'. Thus I show that whilst rejecting structured time-use is one means of enjoying free time, on the other hand, migrants attempt to 'fill' (rather than waste) time, through routine and planned activities. Contradictory orientations of structuring time use which resonate with ingrained orientations of industrial time as a valuable resource, thereby impel people towards productive time-use long after paid productivity ceases. As a result, some temporal conventions that are expressed as being shed in moving to Spain are simply reintroduced to uphold positive self-identities in people's 'life-times'.

Analysis of this tension can be aided by considering some relevant work in sociology and anthropology, which sheds light on how notions of time are culturally produced. Much empirical research neglects the detail of time (Rosaldo 1993) perhaps because it is such a 'deeply taken-for-granted aspect of social life' (Adam 1990: 9). However, there is a long theoretical tradition of work on the subject. Durkheim explored the social nature of time, emphasising it as a core category through which humans variously experience the world, whilst Evans-Pritchard (1940) demonstrated how there is variety in the culturally constituted time-universes of different societies. Lévi Strauss also distinguished between 'hot' societies, which internalise their historicity and are governed by a non-reversible conception of time, and 'cold' societies in which people live according to static and cyclical notions of time, although Gell (1992) argued against such cultural variability in conceptions of time.¹ Leach (1966) helpfully explored two ways in which time is apprehended, first through repetition and recurrence of certain natural phenomena such as the rising and setting of the sun. However, the inevitability of death instils a second awareness of time as non-repetitive, linear and irreversible, a 'psychologically very unpleasant' fact (*ibid.*: 125).

More recently, social scientists have suggested that not only should we explore abstract notions of time, but look at the 'timings' of life, or the qualities and experiences of time lived in social, historical and material practices (James and Mills 2005). This directs attention to how time is experienced and understood through metaphorical and symbolic cultural constructs. In Western capitalist societies, time is often conceived as a mechanistic and quantitatively valued resource (Adam 1995). According to Lakoff and Johnson, this is a 'structural metaphor basic to Western industrial society' (1980: 66) in which time is ideologised as something to be saved, wasted, filled, sold and budgeted (Adam 1990: 104–126, Thrift 1996). These beliefs are instilled from early childhood, for example, everyday practices of rewards and punishments are used to impart time-disciplining on the body, so that children come to understand time as 'a commodity which is subject to an exchange relationship based on both discipline and/or liberation' (Christensen, James and Jenks 2001: 203). And it continues through

the life course, as in working lives, periods of labour are exchanged for the free time of holidays and ultimately retirement. For those in paid employment, 'free' time is a compensation that must be earned through work (Clarke and Critcher 1985), a valued resource to be purchased before it can be consumed:

The free time of the holidays remains the private property of the holiday-maker; an object, a possession he has earned with the sweat of his brow over the year; it is something owned by him, possessed by him as he possesses his other objects... (Baudrillard 1998: 154)

Such notions of time as value are, according to Adam, not universal, but a culturally learned and historically developed conceptualisation 'peculiar to a Western way of life' (1995: 64). In 'Time, work-discipline and industrial capitalism', E.P. Thompson (1967) demonstrates, for example, how this conception has developed. His analysis depicts how workers' perceptions of time between the Middle-Ages and mid seventeenth century fundamentally changed, through a shift away from task-orientation in pre-industry towards timed labour. This created a distinction for workers between 'their employer's time and their 'own' time' (ibid.: 61). Time-use became subject to moral evaluations through which it became a sin to waste time in idleness, a notion enshrined in the Protestant ethic and still evident in the contemporary dictum that, 'time is money' (Christensen, James and Jenks 2001: 203). This temporal consciousness and restructuring of work-life laid the foundations for the shift to industrial capitalism, although by the nineteenth century 'labour won some time for itself from capital in order to call such time 'free': free from work and for producing things for the profit of others' (Inglis 2000: 3), as discussed previously. Foucault (1977) also demonstrates how time-management became a technique of disciplining the body. The monastic model used by Benedictine monks (Adam 1990, 1995) inculcated time-discipline through strictly regulated timetables, which were punctuated by the ringing of bells (Thrift 1996). These techniques spilled over to wider society to instil concern for time-keeping which has become taken for granted practice; in twentieth century Western education, for example, time segregation and punctuation is evident in the use of timetables, bells and calendars of the education year (Adam 1995).

Not only are apprehensions of time shaped by culture, but experiences of time may vary by age. Leach states, 'The feeling that most of us have that the first ten years of childhood 'lasted much longer' than the hectic decade 40–50 is no illusion' (1966: 132). Adam argues that this is because the metabolic rate is lower for older people so that 'the experience of the speed with which time passes is consistently different between the young and the old' (1990: 79). The perception of a quicker passage of time for older people is perhaps also heightened by the recent history of Western post-industrial

society, in which technological advances have led to an accelerated culture of speed (Nowotny 1994). This perception of time itself speeding-up, compounded by the ontological knowledge of the universality of the death experience, she suggests creates a deep 'escape' orientation. In relating this argument to the topic here, I explore retirement migration as narrated by migrants as a similar attempt to escape to places that enable them to live in a less frenetic time-world. With these considerations in mind, I consider how time in Spain is understood, articulated and experienced by retired migrants.

EXPERIENCES OF TIME I: 'FREE' TIME

'I don't need to wear a watch here anymore' was a statement made by a respondent in the Costa del Sol in King, Warnes and Williams' study of retirement migration (2000: 119). This was indeed a dominant narrative of migrants repeatedly articulated during my ethnographic research, which suggests that they enjoyed a different sense of time than lived in the past. For some, physical movement to Spain is represented as a juncture distinguishing an entry into this other way of life. As Willy, a village migrant stated, 'the thing is, when you come here, the past is past. It doesn't matter. Nobody gives a shit. That's it. When you step off the plane, it's a new you'. Whether the migration is permanent or involves a more fluid and gradual process of sojourning,² creating a 'new' life in Spain nevertheless is often presented as a major event, a 'career break' or discontinuity in the life story (described by Humphrey 1993: 172). For some this pivotal turning point alters the fundamental meaning structure by which they orientate themselves to the world particularly when the move coincides with a definitive life event. For example, Emma moved following divorce, Molly moved following her mother's death and William decided to move when he was diagnosed with high blood pressure and realised that time was, in his words, 'frittering away'. For others, like Richard, an expatriate executive, there are more continuities between his former and current life, but he still nevertheless refers to how when he writes letters, he has 'to be in the right mood, as in my *previous* life' (my emphasis). This resonates with Biggs, Bernard, Kingston and Nettleton's study of people moving to retirement communities in Britain, who show how the move is cast as an epiphany from which a new life begins (and see also Keith-Ross' 1977 *Old People, New Lives*).

Willy's articulation of 'the past is past' suggests there are possibilities of freeing oneself from past identities and reinventing the self in the present (see discussion in O'Reilly 2000: 81–82 and Chapter 6). Such themes become particularly pertinent when coinciding with retirement, which offers the chance to redefine the self outside of work identities. Movement becomes cast as a temporal and spatial reference point through which nega-

tive aspects of lifestyle and character can be relegated to a former identity. Sharon, a retired social worker, told me, for example, since living in Spain, 'I am more content, less exhausted, I am not the person I was', whilst Davinia, a retired head teacher talks about how 'you don't bring the presence and the pressure of your career and self-esteem. That's a heritage of the past. You have to build a new one'. Similarly, Jim a former builder told me, 'I took early retirement. I worked in Central London as a building man for the dental council. Living there was stressful. Here, I've time to do things: I can take an hour to shave. I was governed by the clock in England'. These accounts are typical in emphasising a past life governed by time-pressures, which is now discarded in favour of a more relaxed orientation to time.

The different sense of time is also demonstrated through a relaxed attitude to planning, as a few people told me, 'I came here [a number] of years ago, and never planned to stay'. This extends also to thought about the future; most people told me that they planned to stay in Spain 'forever', although over time it transpired that some people were simply testing out Spain for a while, and other people curiously upped and left to return suddenly to Britain with very little notice to their friends. Yet their original assertions correspond with a general theme expressed by Chris, who explained, 'there's no point worrying about the future, we'll see what happens' (and see John, Chapter 3). This did not mean the future was unimportant, rather that, as for a few men in particular, the 'see-how-it-goes' approach to life was developed in response to an imagined schedule of estimated or unknown remaining length of one's 'life time'. For instance, Don, a man in his sixties, told me over coffee in his palatial villa overlooking the sea,

We don't worry about the future. We have to live life as it is, as I know in my family genetically nobody lives past sixty-nine years old.... I know the time's coming for me to die. I'm very rational about it. Its all genetically programmed you see, I've got eight more years and I plan for that moment. I'll die before my wife, although she doesn't like to talk about it.

Don's assertion brings sharply into focus that, despite attempts to manage his future, the extent and duration of the present of his third age is in reality, unknown. This means that for retired migrants, assertions of lack of planning, spontaneity and 'seeing how things go' are often actually lived in the framework of a generalised 'retirement plan' (see Ackers and Dwyer, 2002). The plan, contingent on an unknown temporal boundary may involve for some people, 'the idea of subsequent return 'home' at the point at which they needed support or when either partner died' (*ibid.*: 159).

However, this awareness of 'a time left to live' (Jerrome 1992: 50) also powerfully informs the imperative to 'live for today'. It is used to justify life-choices, ranging from the act to migration itself to other consequent

events. For example, when Lilian and Ray (Chapter 3) moved from an inland village to the coast, they lost a significant amount of money. They justified this by observing that, 'shrouds don't have pockets!' And as Don explained further his theorising of his life-span, 'some accuse me of being pessimistic, but that's how I know things to be, and it makes me realise I am here to live, in the *now*'. The fact that this time off has been earned through years of working also informs the notion that this is 'me time'. Having spent years subject to the demands of the work or family routine, Roger, a retired brigadier, explained at the British Legion that his life in Spain was 'pay-back time:' a reward for previous hard work. As Roger expressed, 'you get here, reflect on your life and realise that you've spent all your life doing other things apart from living it. When you get out here, you have to live the reality of life'.

Making the most of the 'here and now' is articulated as facilitated by living in Spain, where people express that there is an intrinsically slower tempo of life and opportunities for more 'quality' time. Migrants following in the footsteps of social scientists such as Lévi Strauss, distinguish different time-qualities of 'traditional' and 'modern' societies, narrating their move from Britain to Spain as a migration from a place governed by a rapid, linear, chronologised time to one with a slower temporal order. This idea gains support through place-based myths propagated in tourist brochures and publications that describe life in Spain as unchanged over centuries, evident in the repetitive nature of the ritual year in Spain. Mintz observes that life in 'tradition-minded Spain' observes 'a yearly round of feasts, fairs and holy days' (Mintz 1997: xiii), and, whilst processes of development might threaten to disrupt notions of an unchanging canvas, much of this part of Spain's touristic appeal continues to rest in images of unchanging traditionalism (Oliver 2002, Barke and Towner 2003).

An important contributing factor to this image of Spain's orientation to time is the ubiquitous stereotype of the '*mañana*' temporal dimension, which refers to a spirit of completing tasks without care for the pressures of time. It refers to how plumbers, builders or electricians might promise that work will be done tomorrow (*mañana*) but in reality they mean an unspecified time in the future. This laid-back image of Spanish (and particularly Andalucían) life has some veracity; Spanish friends commented on their relaxed regard for time as a positive characteristic. Interestingly, it was also described as a feature which set them apart from incomers who, for instance, were observed to continue to eat at fixed times throughout the day. A Spanish woman referred to how, 'my friends like to ask me about our customs, about the festivities or times for eating and things like that... they try to adapt to Spain. But, you know, they always keep their customs of their meal times and such'.³ And yet, as she intimates, the principles of a more flexible approach to time and adoption of *mañana* are sometimes positively appropriated by migrants (see O'Reilly 2000: 114); Marco, an

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Italian estate agent who sold properties to expatriates, spoke of this condition when he said,

Where in England could you get an atmosphere like this? You LIVE! You have to learn how to live it. I see people in my office buying property, and they sit there, nervously twiddling, not knowing they do it. They're still in the rat-race. When I come back from London, honestly, it takes me three days to get back to normal.

The relaxed, flexible and laidback approach to time-use in the town and village is contrasted to a Northern Europe or a Northern Spanish regard for time, where, as Bill explained one day in the American Club, everything works '*en punto*' ('on the dot'). Reg, overhearing Bill talking added, 'Britain is a go-getter society', he said, 'everything is timetabled and planned. It's all set, with no freedom. That's why I left there. I got fed up with it'. Barbara, who lived in the village also confirmed, 'I hate the time element that you have in England...here you can bask in the freedom'. In fact, as Marco suggests, to fight against the relaxed approach to time in Spain is seen as futile and frustrating, whilst to adopt it engenders a sense of belonging (and is used by migrants to contrast themselves with tourists engaging in hurried activities, Gufstafson 2002). Sally, for instance, referred to her alteration of character in moving; originally a buyer for a large pharmaceutical company, she was now retired in a house in the centre of the village:

I've become more tolerant and easy-going, I think because you *have* to. You just have to accept the fact that the Spanish like to talk and use the shops as a meeting place. People push in or pop around and then they are chatting for ten minutes. That's nice though...in England, they've forgotten how to talk.

Sally's observation implies that the regard for time used by local Spanish people is reminiscent of a way of life that used to exist in England. Certainly a sense of temporal traditionalism and timelessness is read in the rural heritage (see Fabian 1983, Oliver 2002 and Lund 2005). Not only does this support ideals that in moving to Spain migrants see themselves as moving 'back in time', but the non-urgent Spanish approach to time is projected with moral qualities. The unhurriedness is read as evidence of community, and reflections are tinged with nostalgia for a more moral bygone past of rural England (see Chapter 5).

This is, however, a very fragile vision, as romantic ideals of a timeless place are under threat through regional development. A real estate agency recently put up a sign in front of the village that pierces these ideals through its grand statement, '*bienvenidos a Freila, el futuro está aquí*' ('Welcome to Freila, the future is here'). The timelessness is seen by migrants as giving way to a fast-paced progress-oriented vision of change. For example, after

being away from the village, on my return, I walked through the village and saw Anya, from Germany cleaning her car. She reminisced about her time in the village, explaining how when she arrived for a short-stay many years ago with only a few suitcases, she had little known she would end up staying for life. But she complained, 'I don't know if it's to do with getting older or its just being here, but life seems so busy these days, everything is changing so quickly'. In the face of these changes, many retirees I knew engaged in practices that defied the effects of change and upheld ideals of past 'community'. Many still left their doors open and Joy, for instance, indignantly refused to lock her car doors when we drove back to the village inland where she used to live. These practices, symbolic of community values of the past are particularly important in respect to feelings of personal security in ageing. Sally told me,

It's a lovely feeling to know you can leave your door open, and the kids run in and out. Here, the kids are respectful of the elderly and aren't afraid of looking soft. It reminds me of what we've lost in England... You could never lie dead in your house here, because villagers always ask if they've not seen you for a while.

The climate also bears considerable influence on the apprehension of time passing. The seasonal climate changes are dramatically evidenced in the landscape as the mountains bear the different colour and vegetation of the seasons. During the year, the high season (see Chapter 6) is experienced to 'drag on' because of the heat. At this time, clubs often stop programmed activities, migrants return to Britain for visits and as Judy explained, 'the place fills up with strangers' (contrasting with Brody's (1973) observations of tourists' summer visits helping to affirm local identities in a village in the West of Ireland). The winters in Southern Spain can also be quite unpleasant and incredibly cold. When I went to visit Judy, for instance, in March in her apartment, she asked me what the weather was like outside: 'it might look sunny, but once you get out...it's been the coldest winter on record in Spain for quite some time', she explained. During cold spells, Elizabeth lit all her fires and had additional direct heating from gas stoves, but this did little to combat the coldness emanating from the cool stone walls. Yet despite these dramatic differences in climate, the longer duration of the sunny period in between adds to a qualitative perception of stretched time. Sarah, for example, told me in mid-October, 'in Britain at this time, everything's closed, people are wearing grey raincoats. Here, you can sit outside from April to November, and have the freedom to watch the stars in the evening'.

The feeling of having 'more' time is also created through the different daily and weekly rhythms in Spain. Perceptions of slower, unstructured time are aided by the breakdown of former sharp demarcations of 'work-time' and leisure time amongst retired migrants. People joked that they forgot which day of the week it was, as there is no particular qualitative

difference in the ways the periods of weekdays and weekends are spent. In this part of Spain, there is a long break in the middle of the day (between around 2 p.m. and 4.30 p.m.) when shops close and some workers return home for dinner. Rachel, a semi-retired woman in her fifties, told me as a result how she felt, 'there are two days in one in Spain. You get up, do your things, have a glass of wine at lunch time, have a siesta then get up, and it's like you've got another day as the shops are all open until 9 or later. It stretches the day'. At a lunch meeting that had started at 12 p.m. and still had the odd straggler at 8 p.m., I was also told by Joy that 'time here is elastic'. We had arranged to meet later that week for the village fiesta, and although she told me it was to start at 10 p.m., she added, 'you know the Spanish, you've lived here for a while...it doesn't mean a thing'. And indeed I found myself going along to impromptu and unplanned events, and whilst this element is common to most ethnographic research, here spontaneity is mentioned by migrants as particularly characteristic of the context. When I bumped into Rachel, a woman in the village, she broke her prior dinner arrangements to spend time with me saying, 'that's what I love about Spain; the spontaneity. I'm supposed to be going for a dinner with the girls, but I'm sure they'll understand'.

EXPERIENCES OF TIME II: PRODUCTIVE TIME

Although I have shown that moving to Spain is equated with adopting a less structured and pressured temporal order, it is also the case that prior associations of 'timed social life' (Adam 1990) are not so easily disregarded. I have shown that the finite life span informs an imperative to live for today, but it can paradoxically become more difficult to uphold such a carefree attitude to time when one considers it will ultimately come to an end. The tension is expressed by Mary, who I referred to in Chapter 3. Living alone, she described herself as, 'a batty old woman in the studio' as she fought an increasingly difficult battle to maintain her large house in the country. Occasionally, she questioned this existence. Going over these thoughts during a series of visits, she explained that her motivation was to feel a sense of productivity from her life before she died:

I feel that, you know as you get old, that perhaps you haven't done anything...that you'll look back on your life and it was a washout. I suppose I'm trying to stop it being a washout. It's like I want to look back and say that I've achieved something. That's it, I had a choice at some point, I either went to the beach, arranged to meet for coffees, played board-games, or I threw myself into something like this. At least now, before I die, I'll have a couple of properties to sell.

Mary's explanation reveals a concern for productive time, formed in response to the acknowledgement of 'time as the boundary to life' (Adam 1990: 30). Yet here however, the spectre of time 'running out' reinstates the cultural valuation of time as a finite 'resource' or a quantity discussed previously, which can be squandered, wasted or used inappropriately (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Amongst retired migrants, deep rooted cultural myths and moralities about time use are very much in evidence, whereby too much unproductive time is presented as dangerous, and leading to 'stagnation'. Chaney observes that, 'the standard assumption has been that an excess of free or unstructured time will create a variety of 'problems' culminating in the possibility of self-disintegration' (1995: 212). Jahoda (1982) shows how time structure is vital for psychological well-being and its absence, for example, in conditions of unemployment, 'is seen as presenting a major psychological burden' (Haworth 1997: 25). And Deem confirms that for some older women, having 'time on their hands', 'far from being a scarce resource, comes to be dreaded' (1987: 115).

In Spain, I was often warned by other foreign residents of the dangers of unoccupied time or spending too much time on my own. Angela, a younger woman who had given up work early, cautioned, 'all the time here, it makes you think a lot and you can become introverted and worry too much what other people are saying about you' (see Chapter 6). Jim, a retired teacher told me how the bar-owner in the village had warned him of the dangers of 'getting sucked-in'. He had been told that if he went 'with the flow' too much, the inevitable late nights in bars and late morning starts would be unsatisfying. By pointing out that he had seen people 'wasting' their lives, the bar-owner reaffirmed the moral valuation of time as a resource. Ironically therefore, despite migrants' refrains about 'not wearing a watch', sentiments claiming efficiency in time use are asserted in equal measure. As Clarke and Critcher (1985) point out, even in 'free' time, existing modes associated with the realm of work are woven into workers' leisure (also see Nowotny 1994). In this way, leisure time is still cast as something that should still be used 'properly' and constructively, so a spectre of time-disciplining and a work ethic still influences retiree's lives in Spain. It also forms the basis of a defence against perceptions of migrants indulging in permanent tourism (see Chapter 7). As Judy showed during our first meeting, she was concerned to defend herself against the notion that 'we all sit around drinking gin and tonics all day'. She also pointed out on another occasion how annoyed she was at people who come from a nearby town to the history club lectures and 'get there halfway through'. She said, 'It's no good not being there from the beginning, they haven't got the thread and try to catch up, but it disturbs the speakers'. On another occasion, a dispute had been caused in the meeting room at an urbanisation after a Spanish lesson overran into the next group's time-slot by five minutes. And such attitudes may be surprising to visitors who have the impression that the retirees live with little regard to the clock. Amanda explained,

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People expect you to be the same as them. You know I had a couple of visitors and by the end they were in a mood with me, saying, 'what's the matter with you?' But I just didn't want to stay up all hours all of the time. For them, its two weeks, but you know, for us, well we could end up doing that all the time.

In Spain, temporal structures are created anew because predictable daily or weekly routines and habits offer a form of security following migration, an event which alters prior circumstances of 'practical normality' (Misztal 1996: 108). In particular, the adoption of voluntary roles in the clubs can compensate for the absence of statuses in retirement (Jerrome 1992, noted in Hepworth 1998). As King, Warnes and Williams (2000: 148) point out of living in Spain,

Individuals may find themselves living in what J.G. Ballard (1996) calls an 'affectless zone', without conventionally defining activities and structures (work, family, neighbourhood etc.) This allows them to invent new roles for themselves. One role which is adopted by older people, some time after their arrival is that of a volunteer.

Voluntary activities may include running charity events, working at the charity shops, producing newsletters, printing tickets and menus, arranging events, running fundraising appeals and organising campaigns. Yet, as others have shown, for older people in retirement communities, talk of full schedules and busy lives becomes a regular refrain in their lives (Fitzgerald 1986, McHugh 2000). Cruikshank notes how Sun City resident's 'race with time' is met with social approval (2003: 159) whilst Ekerdt (1986) speaks of a 'busy ethic' akin to the work ethic in retirement (see Chapter 5).

As a result of engaging in many new activities, it is common to hear a conflicting narrative amongst retired migrants, that rather than time slowing down, it 'flies'. The claim is used to deflect the possibilities of stagnation, boredom and apathy, which are accusations sometimes levelled at others. For instance, Suzanne complained, 'It's the way people live here, day-in day-out, sitting around with nothing to do with their time apart from sit around and talk about the fact that they do nothing'. Charlie, a man in his eighties, also spoke sceptically about the 'people who come and pretend they are not growing old...who try and live in the past, although time is speeding up...who have no real interests...and get very, very bored'. Other judgements about time-use were typically addressed at the often younger foreign *alternativos* (hippies) who as Joy explained, were seen to do nothing of value with their time and 'expect a free ride'. Alternatively, migrants like her, felt they had *earned* the break. This no doubt placed me in a difficult position; I felt myself that I had to justify being in Spain because I had not earned the right. One day, for instance, I was caught sitting on a bench in the town reading a Spanish magazine during a break

between interviews in the exhausting heat of the day. Tony, a retired British friend, was passing by and called out, 'so this is what they call research is it?' As a result, I often worked long hours to compensate for this perception and felt curiously satisfied when a club member, busily sorting through club business first sighed, 'we don't have a minute, we just don't have time to spare', but then exclaimed in response to the queries of another, 'Who's she? [pointing to me] She's is here to study us...No, she's a hard worker, she doesn't play all the time'.

To combat slippage into 'wasteful' time, retired migrants also reintroduce their own personal time-discipline through new self-imposed rituals. Catherine, a woman who had taken early retirement, was infamous for her extended visits to bars, but still talked of her need to reintroduce a timetable into her life that was familiar to her from her former life. She said, 'I still like to live the same as before, you get used to your routine don't you? I make Thursday the day to go into the town, otherwise you say you'll slip down there [on other days] and then aimlessly wander about'. Meanwhile the cycle of seasonal migrants' movements, who return to the UK for summer, help impart a calendrical rhythmic organisation into migrants' leisure experiences. The clubs run according to a timetable that mirrors the Northern European education systems' term-times, in which activities are planned between late September/October and May/June (high season) with a break for Christmas and Summer. A woman at the International Club described in December, 'we've broken up for Christmas now', using identical expressions used to describe the educational year in Britain. Furthermore, yearly rituals such as the Remembrance Day and Thanksgiving Dinners are marked by a meal that is held in the same venue, following the same format annually. Once a month, at the American Club, birthdays are also celebrated with champagne and cake, a practice which O'Reilly (2000a) suggests creates a feeling of continuity in the transient community. As the opening example showed, Molly followed her visit on Saturday to the International Club with a chicken sandwich afterwards at the same café with her friend. After my six months absence, she said, 'oh nothing changes, we're still here, we're still going for our chicken sandwich afterwards'. The routines break up, structure and organize time and as Jerrome (1989) points out, rituals found in associations for older people help to ground aspects of self-identity which may have been threatened by change.

Nevertheless, like Molly, I also found comfort in the regularity of club activities to give structure to hours, days and weeks that were otherwise stretching limitlessly ahead. I found myself adopting a weekly round that included International Club on Saturday morning, American club on Saturday lunchtime, Tuesday morning: Spanish lessons, and Labour club or International Club on Tuesday lunchtime. Wednesday lunchtime I would go to the British Legion, Thursday I would again go to Spanish lessons, on Fridays would be the monthly British Legion luncheon and monthly lectures of the fine art club were on Sunday evenings. Others also referred

to their own busy schedules which were constructed according to their own preferences. Such routines create a reference point for the individual whilst the habitual nature of the meetings helps to establish trust relationships in this transient arena (see Chapter 6). Yet it is interesting to note that although migrants lived in their own routines, they often distanced themselves from this impression, as they evaluated routine negatively as a form of stagnation or monotony seen in others' behaviours, particularly amongst older people in the homeland (see page 83).

Indeed, Hazan's (1980) study of elderly Jews in London shows how repetition of activities in their socially insular world became a means of effectively freezing their social condition. It creates a kind of timelessness, which helps to halt problems of ageing and deterioration. Similar findings are observed by Huby in an East London day-centre, who points out that although the participants see themselves very differently, to the outside world, 'the impression [is] of a group of people suspended in an eternal present of bingo, reminiscence groups and day-trips' (1992: 41 and see Golander's 1995 work on nursing wards). In Spain, the time-rich environment is broken down into repeated standardised chunks of productive time, which stretch and disrupt linear time conceptions, as well as instil comfort because this is the way things have always been done. Again and again, when I returned, it was suggested that nothing changed, but at the same time *everything* did, especially in the composition and well-being of people attending the clubs. And, whilst the impact of regular change is downplayed through ritual, its positive benefits are nevertheless paradoxically asserted as introducing novelty in the social scene. Thus, whilst on the surface, as Molly maintained, nothing changes, the American club president Belle, explained, 'It's always changing, there's always fresh faces...as one lot dies, another lot comes, it certainly stops it being boring!'

The two orientations I have identified thus far towards both free and newly structured time, however create practical dilemmas for migrants in their choices about time-use. Taking on new work roles is a means of being productive and filling time, but this approach nevertheless chafes with the orientation identified previously towards spontaneous 'me-time', in which one spends one's time at one's own bidding. In this light, taking on new responsibilities again may simply contradict these principles; Sharon, for instance, the retired social worker believed that she had become 'more selfish' following her move and explained, 'No. Now I feel that I can't waste my energy on organisational activities here. I feel like I've done my bit before and ended up a total wreck'. She also emphasised the value of retirement time through being choosy with her acquaintances and engaging only in worthy new friendships as she stated, 'at my age, I won't put up with nonsense from other people'. Furthermore, Lilian and Ray (see Chapter 3) were involved in helping out at an ecumenical centre for some time, as Lilian was formerly a nurse, but she explained,

It became too much of a commitment. When you are retired, you want your time to be free. You can say, 'I've done my bit, now's the time for myself. You know, to go swimming in my own personal swimming pool, the sea, and enjoy myself!

As a result, there may be difficulty of fragmentation which many older people's clubs face (see Jerrome 1992 on UK-based clubs). When I met Judy attending the clinic as a voluntary translator, she acknowledged how much time she had to sacrifice just in order 'to keep things going'. Although Judy finds great esteem in her work, she acknowledges that the time investment is not always reciprocated by others, and told me, 'mostly, people come because they are retired and they don't want to get things going, and then when we do, of course people are always dying off'. This corresponds with the difficulties faced by the Anglican parish committee, who faced difficulties in stability when new priests came for short terms one after the other because, as the churchwarden explained, 'we don't have the cash to make long term investments in the priests...they're constantly changing'.

Moreover, others may find that they lapse in their commitments as they are influenced by the holiday ambience and relaxed approach to time. For instance, the secretary of one club was unable to present financial reports in time for the annual meeting because he went on a three month holiday at short notice. Again this left older and longer established people to bear the brunt. I visited Judy, for instance, on a Thursday when she was given the task to complete the editing of the newsletter of the American club before it went off to print the day after. She had very short notice for this task, because the person assigned to do the job had also decided on the spur of the moment — without warning — that he/she was going away on holiday. Judy said, 'at the moment I'm trying to shed jobs, not take them on....but nobody's interested in taking things over'. And Joy, suffering badly with arthritis at the time, found herself running around town putting up posters for a forthcoming event at the Cultural Centre. When I went to visit her, she said she felt exhausted and complained, 'my friend told me to delegate. Good idea, but what happens when there's no one who wants to be delegated to?' The time-consuming 'work' can be physically and mentally draining, particularly amongst people who are older and health considerations may make the job more time-intensive and affect how easily the job can be done.

Moreover, in this type of 'work', time is given voluntarily, and 'payment' is through rather more abstract terms such as others' gratitude. Favours based on temporal rather than material investments create unspecified return obligations, and the fact that people's time is spent arranging other's enjoyment (in club trips and activities) renders it particularly grating on occasions when little or no gratitude is shown for the work involved. For instance, Sandra felt other club members showed a lack of commitment

and when I pointed out that they probably appreciated her time, she said, 'Thanks! Thanks! You don't expect thanks for doing this task. Nobody gives you thanks!' And yet on another occasion, Judy was upset when she informed Sandra that she couldn't attend an important meeting of the British Legion. She recounted to me how Sandra had dismissed her breezily with an 'Oh don't worry', as if it didn't matter in the slightest... 'Well, if I'm so easily missed, I wonder why I bother at all', she expressed. The allocation of 'me-time' is judged by the same principles of use-value as in Britain, and when little remuneration is felt, the time investment is likely to be reconsidered.

BETWEEN TIME NOT THERE/THEIRS: FREE TIME IN LEISURED RETIREMENT

The chapter shows that in the light of past influences of time-bound working lives and in the face of new expectations associated with this stage of the life course, time assumes a particular salience. Migrants express desires to inhabit more relaxed temporal modes than their previous lives allowed. Moving to Spain is articulated as a move towards a more self-determined approach to time: a move away from lives in which time is controlled by others. This idea is spatially mapped out in comparisons of Britain and Spain, with migrants praising what they perceive as a 'Spanish' flexible approach to time-use, which is appropriated for their experiences of leisure, and this is contrasted with the time-poor 'rat-race' of Britain (or other place of origin). However, although knowledge of the finite and limited time of the lifespan to some degree underpins this drive for 'free' time, it also fosters an opposing orientation, which encourages more productive and routinised time use. Not only has this time off been 'earned' through work, and thereby still judged as having intrinsic 'value', but free time, although much desired, can be a poisoned chalice, becoming weighty and provoking boredom and apathy, which are especially important to avoid in a good retirement experience. Thus to avoid the possibilities of wasting time, a temporal disciplining that governed many people's former life still influences their time-negotiation. The structured 'inward notation of time' (Thompson 1967: 57) impinges into leisured existences, too deeply embedded to be completely disregarded.

As a result, in retirees' lives, there is a tension ensuing between free and structured time. And this dilemma occurs precisely because of the particularities of the Western life course, as migrants are squeezed into an extraordinary condition between time as 'not theirs' (devoted to their working lives and families) and time as not there (inevitable mortality). The 'me time' of retirement becomes valued as incredibly precious and precarious, with much to be squeezed in, a fact all the more ironic given that it is also paradoxically a time of 'earned' relaxation, in which it is, for once, socially

acceptable to slow down. Yet, rather than purely experiencing time slowing down through moving to Spain (although as I have shown, this is indeed one side of the coin), there is equally a paradoxical pressure to pack more in, and this creates a feeling that time is speeding up. As Viv complained, 'I'm so busy, that's the thing living here, time goes so fast. I'm not just talking a day or week, but months'. And Lilian asserts that she has 'less time' in Spain and now owns a filofax, a symbol of timetabling that she had never possessed before she came out to Spain. Perhaps this productive activity is pursued with such great gusto to overcome an association of ageing with 'slowing down' (see Chapter 5). Certainly all of this, in summary, suggests there is a paradox at the heart of retirees' experience of time: the ideal of a positively ageing existence is one in which time is apprehended as passing both more quickly *and* more slowly, of having more time but yet less time. It is curiously a desire to have time in abundance (as Janet stated, 'more time to do things') but yet simultaneously 'no' time (as Elizabeth stated, 'time? It just goes').

The next chapter explores how similar contradictory tensions are felt in negotiating bodily ageing, as people experience both a freedom from societal expectations, yet also create new obligations for managing ageing and dependency.