Dealing with disadvantage: Community, place and resilience in girls' identity work

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INTRODUCTION

Discourses of "troubled or troublesome" girls and "problem or at-risk youth" are often associated with young people in disadvantaged communities. These discourses typically pertain to unhealthy, antisocial or risky behaviours relative and are based in "normative epistemologies" (Kelly, 2003, p. 172) which not only define adolescent adjustment and development but also assume "certain preferred or ideal adult futures" (Ibid., p. 172) which in the context of institutional expertise and regulatory systems may pathologise individuals, compounding rather than alleviating disadvantage. In contemporary discourses and governance systems of risk management, the demarcation of risky and prosocial behaviours leaves little room for recognising any overlap between dichotomous youth categorisations. Disadvantaged young people are most vulnerable to being constructed as "other" than the ideal subject positions established for youth and are more vulnerable to social exclusion (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005) and punitive regulation (Muncie, 2004).

How representations of young people and girls in particular conflict with their own sense of who they are and how they want to be seen by others is a central theme of the research discussed in this paper. In broad terms, it aims to contribute to shifting the positioning of disadvantaged young people as problem youth by drawing on concepts of resilience and social capital for understanding young people's perspectives constructed out of conditions of adversity and disadvantage.

Resilience is here defined as positive adaptation despite adversity (Redl, 1969; Werner, 1989). Resilience research is broadly concerned with enhancing young people's potential through seeking understandings which would facilitate resilience building, optimising coping and adaptive mechanisms and minimising detrimental impacts of external conditions. Contemporary theories of resilience primarily focus on protective factors which mitigate the risks of adverse conditions and circumstances, allowing for healthy development where risk conditions would have predicted

otherwise (Rutter, 2001; Werner & Smith, 1992). Without an emphasis on the ongoing processes of adaptation (Schoon and Bynner, 2003), however, the emphasis on potential may be lost to more "fixed" notions of resilience and young people's reinscription within categories of resilient or deficit youth. Social constructivist approaches challenge normative definitions of resilience and the limitations of those personal trait theories which do not take account of subjective as well as "objective" understandings of social context (Ungar, 2004).

Social capital has been associated with resilience in varying ways. Although the literature on social capital includes a number of divergent theoretical positions, the concept typically refers to social networks, built around trust and shared norms, as both resources and conduits for resourcing members (WHO, 1998; OECD, 2001). Social capital has been posited as a buffer to the adverse effects of disadvantage (Vinson, 2004); and resilience is also seen as integral to or a social indicator of social capital (Cox and Caldwell, 2000). Understood as resources for problem solving (Winter, 2000), social capital may function in dialectical relationship with resilience. The aim here is not to argue for a causal link between social capital and resilience in either direction but to apply them as heuristic concepts for understanding girls' articulations of their experience of dealing with disadvantage.

While there is a vast social capital literature which includes a significant focus on families, the analysis of young people's separate networks remains undeveloped. Recent studies have identified the significance of young people's social capital to their pathways and transitions (Raffo and Reeves, 2000; Boeck, Fleming and Kemshall, 2006; Holland, Reynolds and Weller, 2007). Holland, Reynolds and Weller (2007) analyse findings from three UK research projects on young people's transitions – from primary to secondary school; and to higher education; and in constructions of adult and ethnic identities. They argue that the social capital of networks based in and extended from friendship and peer groups, families, particularly siblings (also Gillies and Lucey, 2006), and local community is significant to young people's sense of belonging and to negotiating their way. Networks are important sources of information and assistance for successfully settling into and gaining confidence in new educational or work environments and provide a base from which to build new networks.

This paper is based on research completed in 2002 which analysed the experiences of young people from the Glebe public housing estate, in inner-city Sydney. The study aimed to understand young people's perspectives on schooling and truancy and how these related to experience outside school. Twelve months' participant observation in and around the local youth centre, with a clientele of around 300, and interviews with twelve girls, aged 13 to 24, mainly Aboriginal and Anglo-Australians, were primary sources for the study. Dealing with disadvantage is framed as resilience, evident in individual and collective practices, strengths and aspirations. It is argued that the social capital of the girls' networks may be seen as instrumental to their resilience. However, participation in the broader youth network is associated with trouble, suggesting Putnam's (2000) distinction of bonding and bridging social capitals, respectively associated with constraints and conduits to advantages unavailable in or through more immediate circles. The specific contextualisation of girls' participation in networks, at school and in the community indicate a more dynamic relation of social capitals which recognise the interrelations not only of different social groups but of different forms of capital. Here the analysis draws on Bourdieu's (2004) theory of social and cultural capitals for explicating the girls' perspectives. The centralising of girls' perspectives throughout the paper recognises the importance of subjective understandings and how they infuse concepts of identity, agency and social relations. Moreover, this recognition aims to elucidate the interaction of young people, their environment and social processes in ways which also point to specific "societal access routes" (France and Homel, 2006) at the local level. The biographies of disadvantaged young people are not just about their adaptive capacities but as much to do with "routes, opportunities, open doors, or ways forwards that are available to individuals at different points in their lives" (Ibid., p. 298).

GROWING UP IN THE GLEBE ESTATE

Glebe is a socioeconomically divided suburb with the housing estate and low-income families concentrated at the southern end and affluent private households overlooking the bay at the north. Social indicators are significantly contrasted at each end in levels of education attained by residents, rates of employment and unemployment, and

concentrations of home ownership Families First, 2000). Contrasts are also environmental with the southern end marked by elements of degradation including ageing housing stock, periodic vandalism to shopfronts and street furniture, rubbish and litter strewn in lanes, graffiti on walls and fences and broken glass from smashed car windows in side streets off the main road. Although the council is quick to attend to conspicuous street disorder, the estate environment closest to the commercial area is seen as a threat to businesses through customer deterrence. Here the main road of "village" shopping is dominated by cafes, bookshops and alternative lifestyle centres, and is a contentious site in terms of the variety of commercial, private and public interests it serves.

Reflecting the shortage of affordable housing in Sydney and the Department of Housing's priority placement criteria, the Glebe estate contains "a concentration of families…who have a range of support needs" (Ibid., p. 3) including health, mental health and disability support. Since its establishment in the 1980's, the estate has been a focus of identified social problems, including child protection notifications, youth truancy, drug use and involvement in street crime, disturbance complaints, vandalism and car break-ins (Ibid). In interviews with Glebe girls, their depictions of problems faced by young people include the adverse circumstances of families and the estate. They make sense of their own biographies and family problems through a combination of stoic acceptance, critique of families and social conditions in which problems arise and by foregrounding the positive resources of families, friendships, networks and communitarian practices of their neighbourhoods.

Sense of community
The girls' depiction of community distinguishes neighbourhoods, the suburb and identifiable groups. In terms of neighbourhoods, family and friendships, community is described as small and closeknit. Nancy describes growing up in a neighbourhood where "everyone knew each other…You'd go next door for a cup of milk, sugar… things like that. Linda and Jodi comment that young people round the area "all get along" because "everyone's grown up together". However, the twelve girls have little to say that is positive about Glebe beyond the qualities of their immediate relationships, with family, friends and the local youth network, and the everyday practices and activities within them. They are unanimously very critical of Glebe as a

"bad place" because of its reputation for crime and drugs which they attribute largely to cycles of heroin trade in recent years. In all of the interviews, the stigma of place is a recurring theme. While the girls feel enveloped by this stigma, they nonetheless differentiate themselves from others in their identification as Glebe girls. They want to distance themselves from those they see as responsible for the prevalence of drugs and crime; and from those they describe as "snobs", both locals and outsiders who "look down on" them. These differentiations are integral to their identification with their "people", including friends, family and the local youth network.

Dealing with adversity

The girls identify adverse conditions in specific contexts of home, school and community. With considerable overlap and reiteration across the interviews, hardships associated with families include conflict, violence and abuse, alcohol and other drug use and addiction, mental illness, having a family member or friends in jail, loss and bereavement, and the intervention of authorities, including schools, police, housing and community services.

Telling their stories of growing up, the girls recount significant events as well as persistent difficulties. For Nancy, her parents' divorce is a key event, preceded by and precipitating several years of moving back and forth between parents and other relatives.

> *There was people around but it was always choppin' and changing. I just sorta went into myself…When they broke up they only worried about themselves. Cause it must have been a big hurt… they didn't care about us for them whatever years.*

As a consequence of "[a]lways choppin and changing and fighting*"*, Nancy attended five different primary schools and in three and a half years of high school she attended six schools, due to the family split and moving around extended family, difficulties at school and her entanglement in family drama, helping to sort out the day to day conflicts and practical family needs. Nancy contrasts the situation of disrupted schooling, conflict and unpredictability with one of her stays with relatives.

> *Their kids go to work, went to school, stable environment, you know? They don't take drugs. I coulda been like that if I was just shown the right way. But fuckin, I went the other way and now I take shit every day, pot and stuff, not cause I want to, it was just the thing to do…Now, it's just bad habits. That's what killed my dreams - or put em on hold anyway.*

Patsy experienced similar disruptions in a cycle of parental mental illness and alcoholism, removal into refuges and foster care, abuse in foster care and moving around friends and family from age sixteen until she secured her own place. From around age ten to sixteen her residence was back and forth between immediate family and out-of-home placement. Throughout this period and earlier during primary school days, she relied on the trusted support of some teachers, the youth centre and friends' families.

> Patsy: *I was a real bad bully at primary school… I'd get to school and just bash someone… just… letting off steam… People knew there was something wrong… [Casey's family], like we all grew up together and they were always there for me and my brothers and sisters. I had a lot of people…Knew something was wrong… And they was always nice to us and kind… It was hard in the foster homes because, me taking care of the younger ones… You'd come home from school and one of them'd be gone to another foster home because the lady couldn't handle it or whatever… And when I was older, Dale's mum. He asked me to go to court with him and I met her. Then months later I got kicked out of one of the girl's where I was staying. I rang her up… and next minute she was out the front in a car to pick me up. So I stayed with them then…*

Patsy contrasts her experience with that of some "upper class" school girlfriends who made her angry when they complained about parents imposing rules and limits or transgressed them.

> Patsy: *I'd say… why do you think [your mother] doesn't want you to go? You know, she cares or whatever. And they'd just go, oh who gives a shit… That really pissed me off… they didn't respect their parents and didn't see what their parents was trying to do where I had so-called parents that just, do what you want, didn't care about what you were doin'… I would like to have had … a parent saying no you can't go out, we're going to the movies… or doing more family things.*

The girls' understanding of what happens in families, at school and in the community, is also generalised as an articulation of social problems associated with the estate. In discussions of truancy, illicit recreations and youth crime, the girls identify individual and family "factors". But because young people's practices are intertwined with the relations of specific contexts (family, school and community) and the drugs, crime and reputation of the area, their summation is that Glebe itself is "bad". This perspective is based not only on personal experience but strongly influenced by an

awareness of others' perceptions of Glebe, and the estate in particular, as a place of social problems and associations with drugs and crime.

> Jodi: *People from my school come from all different areas… They're like, Glebe, isn't that near Redfern… isn't that where there's lots of drugs? An' rah, rah, rah… They stereotype you.*
> Patsy: *…the way the community itself and the police look down on you, that was hard.*
> Aisha: *They don't give kids a chance, just because it's Glebe…bad things happen here. Like, cause, you don't even know the person and you've already hated em. You don't get to even know them yet and so you've judged em wrong.*

Resilience

The girls' responses to and negotiation of the difficult and complex circumstances of their lives are indicative of resilience, of positive adaptation despite adversity (Redl, 1969). Experiences within families and the area generally are both stoically accepted *and* critiqued. Commitment to family is strong though aspects of what has happened to them are rejected in girls' own parenting or future aspirations. While critical of those times when her parents seem unconcerned for her wellbeing and of the disruptions which have thwarted potentially better outcomes in education and work, Nancy is fiercely loyal and claims the importance of family to who she now is.

> Nancy: *I needed a stable environment. But if you turned it back, I wouldn't want it different cause I am who I am today… I had good parents, don't get me wrong and like, they might drink and that, but no drugs…We had a strict home…that's one thing that probably saved me…They taught me right from wrong, good from bad. They taught me respect, for myself and other people… You gotta have them rules… I got my own rules in my head and I stick by them. Like, you don't do wrong, what you call wrong in your book.*

Similarly, Patsy maintains close contact with family though she now lives with her partner and children. Her reflection on the past is similar to Nancy's: "I've been through it all. It makes you strong". Being an "overprotective" parent reflects the lack of protection she felt growing up but also her determination to "change the things that happened to me to make it better for my kids". Her emphasis on providing material and emotional security for her family and her plans for the future are indicative of her desire that "What in life I have, they got the opposite… a better world":

> Patsy: *The home's got to motivate kids and guide them… I'd like when my kids are teenagers, for them to be able to come to me and say I need money for… whatever and be able to give it to them… That's why, you know, I wanna*

work… I like working. I like meeting people… But also to save for my kids so I can do things for them.

To "snapshot" the young women in their earlier teens may have suggested a very different picture of their lives. As discussed further below, participating in illicit recreations and getting into trouble are just "what everybody does" (Jodi). As younger girls they could be readily labelled "troublesome" and although they still face hardships in their lives, the longer-term perspective enables the recognition of their resilience, as ongoing processes of positive adaptation. Most of the girls have experienced disrupted schooling due to either family issues or truancy, or both. Many young people in the area experience difficulty finding employment because they lack credentials. Though many do find work in the longer-term, their initial experience in the job market is weighted towards unemployment. This has been the case for these girls, though they have been successful in obtaining part-time or short-term jobs. Nancy has moved in and out of work and training programs and although she would prefer "a decent full-time job", she persists with the rounds of applications, manages periods of unemployment with the help of "mates" and does not give up. Patsy's plans are on hold til her children are older but in the meantime her part-time job enables her to make ends meet and provide the food, clothes and treats she sees as essential for her family. Although trajectories are not straightforward, aspirations are nonetheless maintained and the older girls' accomplishments are evident across various career domains such as employment, housing, relationships and parenting.

Despite the difficulties within families and their "troubled and troublesome" behaviour during teen years, the young women emerge as competent life and cultural managers. They articulate pragmatic worldviews, incorporating reflexive insight and critique of their experience, past and present. Sustained commitment to family, friends, work and parenting is indicative of their strengths.

"STICKING TOGETHER": THE SOCIAL CAPITAL OF NETWORKS
The evidence of the Glebe research suggests that social capital is central to the girls' resilience. The support and resources of their networks have been instrumental to their achievements and aspirations, despite the adversities which are their lived experience.

The girls' primary networks of friends and families provide a range of social and material resources. From help with homework to lending or passing on clothes or household items, to providing a couch for the night or an extended stay when needed, they help each other. Pooling funds for nights out or "a feed" and providing babysitting are common practices. Obtaining information and access to services was often by way of an experienced girl accompanying another to the youth centre or other service; for example for housing or job applications, sorting out Centrelink payments, or links to emergency relief such as food vouchers or help paying bills. As Nola says, "The ones that come around here like stick together" and this is about more than socialising together. Practical resources of the friendship networks include emotional support. Talking about the stress of personal and school problems, Sarah says, "I like to be with my friends, [they] make you feel better…takes your mind off it if you stay with your friends". Looking out for each other is seen as just what friends do, be it concerning a minor or major problem.

Evidence of the positive resources of the girls' networks is important in the context of their positioning within the broader relations of both school and community. Such evidence is often invisible or unrecognised within discourses which foreground marginalised young people as "problem youth". The girls' understanding of how they are seen by others and how they see themselves is depicted as a conflict. Their own experience, particularly within networks, counters the dominant voice of 'others' in the community and outside it. In Jodi's view, dominant representations never acknowledge the positive aspects and resources of the estate: "We don't really hear of the good things that happen in Glebe, we just hear about the bad things".

The social capital of the girls' networks may be seen as instrumental to their resilience as essential accessible resources within conditions of adversity. Important resources made available by friends and family have variously provided a buffer to adverse conditions and enabled the girls to cope and solve problems, including through the function of the girls' network as a conduit to information and social benefits provided by local agencies. In social capital terms, the norms within the girls' networks emphasise loyalty and an ethic of care. Despite and perhaps because of adversities faced by individuals, families and friends, the social, practical and emotional supports reciprocally offered are seen as just what people do. Individuals have learned from

experience that trusted friends and family can be relied upon to help in difficult times and this becomes a guide to their own helping behaviour.

The problem of sticking together

Because the girls' networks overlap with and extend into the local youth network the girls are implicated in the stereotyping of "problem youth"; and they are or have been active participants in the illicit recreations regarded as "the done thing" for young people of the area. They are critical of aspects of the youth network such as the older boys inducting younger ones into illicit practices and the repeat offending of the few and most notorious boys they see as responsible for most youth crime in the area. However, drinking, using other drugs, fighting and getting into trouble are seen as ordinary recreations, part of a tradition.

> Sarah: *If you don't have alcohol, you just sit around...just like, oh it's real boring now, there's nothing to do.*
> Nancy: *In Glebe, it's just the thing to do.*

The norms of loyalty and care evident in the girls' networks similarly operate within the broader youth network. Even though the girls' commentaries often concur with the discourse of "problem youth", they remain loyal to friends who are in trouble, providing practical and emotional support also articulated as "the done thing". For example, Jodi says,

> *I can't change my friends for, just because they do bad things... They might do things differently in their life... you can't sort of run them down because of that.*

With their understanding of how things are for people in difficult circumstances, the girls differentiate necessity as a legitimate justification.

> Jodi: *Maybe sometimes they don't have a choice though, they don't have money so they go and steal. That's their only choice, the last resort.*
> Rose: *There are some kids that aren't on drugs that haven't got enough money for clothes and stuff... so they need to do it.*

Moreover, such rationalisations are further legitimated in the girls' understandings of how differential resources place some young people in criminal categories while others participating in what are seen as common youth practices of drinking and using drugs can "get away with it". On marijuana use, Rose says,

> *There's a lot of people who have money who are on drugs and they can just get it whenever they want. If they don't have money, they're gonna have to go out and steal it.*

The invisibility of "the good things in Glebe" refers not only to the reputation of place and outsiders' perceptions. The girls feel entrapped by stereotypes which are based on the reputation of the local youth network itself but this positioning is understood as the merging of reputations and place.

> Jodi: *Just because you're sixteen, you must do what that sixteen year old did…you know, bashed someone. Oh, you live in Glebe, you're a thug.*
> Sarah: *Or…you go round bashing people or you go round breaking into cars, or –*
> Jodi: *Cause everyone's heard that's what Glebe is… [People] hear the stories like on the news and stuff like that, or things in the newspaper, oh, Glebe's bad, Glebe's bad. And then they hear stories just through friends and stuff, rumours and things like that. Cause everyone's heard . . . You can tell by people's reactions . . . They stereotype you.*

Conflicting orientations of the girls' network practices may be understood in terms of the normative function of social capital (Coleman, 1988). As their networks constitute resources and the means of access to other resources, social capital here may be interpreted as both positive and negative (Winter, 2000), providing social and emotional support and practical assistance but also associated with illicit recreations and trouble.

Bonding and bridging social capital

For the Glebe girls, networks may function as normative structuring relations providing but also constraining access to certain resources, perhaps warranting Putnam's (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital contrasted as networks which are inward or outward looking, homogeneous or heterogeneous and exclusive or inclusive (p. 22). Bonding social capital is associated with the solidarity of localised groups whereas bridging forms provide external linkages, particularly associated with obtaining advantages unavailable in or through more immediate circles. However, these "are not "either-or" categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but "more or less" dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital" (Putnam, 2000, p. 23).

While the Glebe girls' networks arguably constitute bridging social capital in their links with community agencies and girls' mutual help in negotiating government services, their strong bonding social capital may be seen as delimiting mainstream

options. Truancy is a case in point. The difficulties encountered at school provide a rationale for staying away or leaving. The network is an alternative "place" to school because "In Glebe you know you'll always find someone who'll just be sittin' around" (Jodi). Experiences in and out of school merge in the construction of the value of these alternatives. The youth network is seen as preferable despite the acknowledged importance of schooling particularly for employment credentials, because it offers belonging and status seen as unavailable at school. Educational difficulties are exacerbated when school is experienced as a primary site of pejorative stereotyping. The girls critique the value of the curriculum, academic pressures and those teachers who "don't care" but more vehemently reject "being looked down on" because they "do not fit the image" or meet the "high standards" required. Sarah sums up:

> *School is background…where you live…who you hang around…It's not just about work. Most of the time it's about social stuff…They treat me like I'm low…They're so stupid in the way they react to where you live…I hate it.*

Within the youth networks analysed by Holland et al. (2007) "bonding and bridging social capital are interwoven and interdependent" (p. 113). Similar characteristics are identifiable in the Glebe girls' networks in the capacity of bonding social capital to support bridging social capital. However, the Glebe girls' articulation of schooling experiences suggests that bridging networks may also reinforce the significance and value of bonded networks because what they encounter at school stymies their aspiration for, and the capacity of bridging social capital to support, "getting ahead" (De Souza Briggs, 1998, cited in Putnam and Goss, 2002, p. 23). The recontextualisation of social capital within the school, may reinforce *and* blur distinctions of bridging and bonding forms through the relations of identifiably different groups. It is not that the girls have no bridging social capital; rather, the relations of *cultural* capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) in the schooling context effect marginalisation of the girls, emphasising, from their perspective, the limited value of their social capital, bonded or bridging, in that context.

RECOGNITION: RELATIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL, DISADVANTAGE AND RESILIENCE

Bourdieu's (2004) conceptualisation of interdependent fields and forms of capital makes for better understanding of the present case study. The cultural capital of

individuals and groups has a central role in reproduction in the cultural field of education, though as schools confer educational credentials the effects of this institutionalized objectified form of cultural capital (including conversion to or providing supporting resources for economic capital) reach beyond the immediate cultural field with reproductive effects in other fields. While social groups are identifiable both in schools and communities on the basis of known and assumed differential capitals – social, cultural, economic and symbolic - perhaps the most significant Bourdieurian concept for understanding the social relations of different groups is that of *recognition* itself. Social and cultural capital inheres in recognition of social and other capital exchange values, of prestige or status systems and the interpersonal and network requirements of ongoing mutuality. "Exchange transforms the things exchanged into signs of recognition and, through the mutual recognition and the recognition of group membership which it implies, re-produces the group. By the same token, it reaffirms the limits of the group" (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 22). Embodied cultural capital is recognisable in, and accrues further recognition through, marks of distinction. In the Glebe context, the girls' and others' recognition of differences and distinction are evident in the girls' discussion of the stigma of place, stereotyping as problem youth and the social divisions of the area. Sarah depicts this social differentiation as

> *two different ends of Glebe. Like, there's the good half and then there's what everybody says is the bad half...I live down in the bad half.*

Distinctions of habitus as embodied cultural capital resonate more with the Glebe case study than distinctions of bonding or bridging networks. In the sense that "[d]ispositions that are given a negative value in the educational market may receive very high value in other [contexts]" (Ibid., n.5, p. 27), the differentiation of students recognised by the girls, and culturally and institutionally recognised by their schools, implicates symbolic capital as well as material resources in the appropriation and accumulation of capitals across contexts. The differentiation of the young people of the estate may thus be understood as positioning reinscribed in the social relations of their own and others' social and cultural capital. Recognition may thus function as a mechanism for privilege or social marginalisation. Marginalisation in specific contexts of school and community arguably compound and constitute adversities faced by disadvantaged young people.

CONCLUSION

In a community where the public housing estate has long been associated with social problems and its "problem youth" have been associated with truancy, illicit recreations and juvenile crime, it is difficult for young people to avoid "bad reputation". The Glebe girls' experience of stereotyping and the stigma of place may be reinforced by the policing and intervention of social and regulatory agencies. In many ways private lives in the estate are made public not only through conflicting social, residential and commercial interests of the area or young people's visibility in street based socialising and recreations but also through differentiated forms of social recognition. Such contexts represent a challenge for community development work not only in differentiating individual, family and social problems in the context of differential constructions of them and within the complex social relations of the area. It is a challenge to recognise individual and collective strengths and achievements when they are often hidden behind more visible and publicly recognised social problems and assumptions about young people by virtue of growing up in this milieu.

Demarcations of positive and negative social capital and bonding or bridging networks may serve to reinscribe disadvantaged young people within the discourse of problem youth. Though orientations of the Glebe girls' networks may be seen as conflictual, the interrelationship with the youth network also constitutes an enhancement of resources, trust, reciprocity and recognition. Despite elements of resistance to the problematic aspects of the youth network, the girls bonds with it are strengthened when articulated in relation to others' perception of them. They defend and rationalise their participation in the youth network as reaction to outsider critiques and their own recognition of their marginalised and subordinate social position. The youth network constitutes an alternative centre when mainstream domains of youth participation are seen as places of *mis*recognition and because the network provides status seen as unavailable at school and outside their own networks in the community. Social marginalisation is recognised by the girls as embedded in the material and social problems which constitute their disadvantage but is experienced as the denigration of their identity. Conversely, participation in their networks enhances capacity and opportunity for expression of personal and social identity.

Understandings of the Glebe girls' perspectives are standpoint dependent. While the girls may readily be problematised within the social problems of the estate, within their networks they obtain status and recognition. In the girls' articulation of their experiences social capital may be seen as significant to their resilience. Shifting positions may be necessary not only for recognising the value of social capital in this context but also for recognising the relations of social capital*s* within the interrelations of different social groups and distinctions of cultural and socioeconomic status. In this context, the girls' perspectives also suggest that social capital may be subtractive to resilience both in terms of how others perceive them and in the marginal power relations of their social capital relative to others'. Even though they thrive on recognition within their own networks, their pride can readily transform to shame and anger in the face of outsider denigration evident in Aisha's concern about being prejudged and all of the girls' resentment at "being looked down on".

That some resistance may be necessary for marginalised young people's resilience presents a further challenge. In the girls' attempts to counter negative stereotypes, critiques of education and problem-solving orientations their strengths despite adversity are evident. However, when these attempts involve resistances and when alternative centres involve illicit practices, girls' legitimate social protest may go unrecognised. Recognising resilience thus requires a contextualised understanding of young people's perspectives and of social processes pertinent to specific communities. It may also entail a broadening of definitions or indicators which confine resilience to individual traits without regard for social and relational constructions of both adversity and resilience. In this regard, the strengthening of disadvantaged communities may be as dependent on recognising and shifting relations of privilege as it is on building on identifiable strengths of the marginalised.

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