

Building 'community' for different stages of life: physical and social infrastructure in master planned communities

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Abstract: Australia's labour market and its cities are changing, along with the nature of housing and community configurations. Major new master planned housing developments are being undertaken to meet demand as cities struggle to cope with increasing populations. Such urban developments are influencing workforce, household and community relations, which in turn drive health and well-being outcomes, and affect social capital and labour market participation. The Work, Home and Community Study aims to explore these outcomes through analysis of qualitative and quantitative data gathered in ten communities across four Australian states. This paper reports findings from the first phase of qualitative data collection. Fourteen focus groups were conducted with men and women who live and/or work at newly developed Master Planned Communities in South Australia and Victoria. Findings indicate that familiarity, availability, and the enabling of social bridges contribute to the development of community and social capital in these MPCs. For individuals at different stages of life these factors were facilitated or inhibited by specific physical and social infrastructures in the MPC and the workplace. At a time when concerns are being raised about the ability of people to combine work, home and community these findings shed some light on the physical and social infrastructures that can enable or constrain the building of healthy communities.

Introduction

The nature of housing and community configurations is undergoing significant change in Australia. As the populations of our cities grow, major developments are being undertaken to meet the demand for housing. The Master Planned Community (MPC) is one response to this need for housing. MPCs are housing developments with a particular focus on shared spaces and 'community'. It is the experience of 'community' for people at different stages of life living in a MPC that is the focus of this paper.

MPCs are usually defined as geographically (and sometimes socially) bounded large scale, private housing developments that incorporate varying levels of social and physical infrastructure. They often have a distinctive look and a formal physical entry (Gwyther 2005a). These communities create new spatial alignments of work and home which affect people's capacity to engage in private and public life. On the one hand they are seen as elitist and 'potential instruments of governmentality' (Dowling and McGuirk 2005, p 3). On the other, they appear to satisfy a yearning for community and safety (Mullins and Western 2001; Mackay 2004; Gleeson 2004b). The implications for policy areas like housing, labour market policy, and community service provision are significant.

Our understanding of the lived experience of community in MPCs in Australia comes from only a handful of studies (e.g. Bosman, 2003, Peel, 1995; Powell, 1993; Richards, 1990). In her qualitative study of two MPCs in Sydney, Gabrielle Gwyther talks about the 'community compact' that exists between residents and the developer in MPCs. It consists of both formal and informal components, including legally binding covenants that ensure certain standards of home maintenance, and social norms that encourage high degrees of civility, friendliness and neighbourhood concern (Gwyther, 2005). The community compact in conjunction with physical and social infrastructure provided or accommodated by the developer, encourages the development of broad social networks. These social networks underpin the development of relational community (Voydanoff, 2001) which builds bridging, bonding and linking social capital (Putnam, 2000; Stone, 2001) for individuals and groups within the development. According to Gwyther, these social networks are stronger and more sustained in MPCs than in other less intensive forms of planned residential estates. Having said this, Gwyther recognises that these communities exhibit levels of bridging and bonding social capital, in terms of social control, trust and reciprocity, that benefit some residents of the MPC, but which have limited benefit for other residents and those living adjacent to the MPC (Gwyther, 2005).

There are two limitations to existing research in this area that we will try to address in our current research. First, discussion of community and social capital in MPCs is very generalised. The level of analysis is usually the whole community and this has resulted in the perception that the residents of MPCs are a fairly homogenous group. It is not at all clear how the MPC is experienced by different groups of people. In particular, how does community and social capital develop for people at different stages of life in the MPC? Second, discussion is often focused on the MPC to the exclusion of other relevant factors such as work. A variety of qualitative research has demonstrated a close reciprocal relationship between working and household life, with the notion of 'spillover' from home to work and from work to home now extensively researched (Hoshschild 1997; Williams 2000; Pocock 2003; Pocock, Skinner & Williams, 2007). Despite the appearance of separation, the MPC is necessarily connected to the experience of work but analysis of this connection is rare in Australia. O'Connor and

Healy argue this is a 'serious inadequacy in urban policy' (2002, vii). Their own spatial analysis of employment and housing linkages (in Melbourne) concluded: 'housing policy cannot be expressed independently of an adequate understanding of the spatiality of jobs and the nature of job-housing links' (2002, vii).

In our research we bring work to the forefront and examine how it interacts with life in the MPC to facilitate or impede the development of community and social capital for people at different stages of life.

Community and social capital: what do we mean?

Community and social capital are two concepts that are somewhat intertwined and equally dogged by definitional variability and ambiguity.

In academic and lay definitions, the primary concern surrounding notions of community is the importance of place. To what extent does place, or geographic location, characterise community? While some academics insist community maintain a locational component (Manzo & Perkins, 2006; Philips, 1993), others do not consider shared geographic location a necessary characteristic and define it only as a group of people who are relationally associated, with shared values or common goals and feelings of group identification and belonging (Small & Supple, 2001). Still others suggest that community can be defined in either locational and/or relational terms (Voydanoff, 2001). When we refer to our neighbourhood as a 'close knit community' we are invoking both these notions.

Even more so than community, social capital is a term that defies a commonly understood definition. Most academics agree that social capital refers to the resources that are afforded individuals and groups through social networks and relationships. According to Lin (1999) three elements must be in place for social capital to develop: resources must be imbedded in a social structure, individuals must have access to social resources, and individuals must use these resources. The three main types of social capital that are commonly referred to in the literature and which resonate with the findings presented in this paper include bridging social capital – broad, superficial social connections which are inclusive of diversity, for example, membership of varied social or interest groups (Putnam, 2000; Stone 2001); bonding social capital – restricted, exclusive social connections which may be exemplified by family groups, exclusive social groups built on a specific ideology and, at a negative extreme, gangs (Putnam, 2000; Stone 2001); and linking social capital – social connections that link ordinary people to various levels of administrative or political power (Stone 2001). Membership of a grass roots community group that has access to representatives on the local council is an example of linking social capital.

When thinking about the concepts of community and social capital together community can be considered the social milieu from which social capital develops. If the community provides individuals with the opportunity and capacity to participate in social activities and form social networks, then social capital in the form of trust, reciprocity, support, social control, civic engagement and political empowerment, is likely to develop. If the community does not provide individuals with the opportunity and capacity to participate in social activities and form social networks, then social capital will struggle to develop.

When I talk about community in this paper I will be referring to community that is both locational and relational. In the Work, Home and Community Study we are deliberately focusing on 10 distinct geographical residential areas. We are interested in how community is built (physically and socially) and how social capital is developed for the men, women and children who live in these areas.

When I talk about social capital in this paper I will consider what I think of as the antecedents of social capital, such as opportunity and capacity to develop social ties and networks, as well as indicators of social capital, such as network density, trust, reciprocity, social support, social control and civic engagement.

The Work, Home and Community Project: Phase one

The Work, Home and Community Project is a national study analysing how changes at work, in households and in residential areas are reconfiguring relationships between work, home, services and community for men, women and children. The project is jointly funded by the Australian Research Council, Lend Lease Communities and the Innovation and Economic Opportunities Group at Mawson Lakes. Ethics approval has been obtained from the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee.

Phase one of this project was designed to gain a preliminary understanding of the issues faced by women and men in relation to fitting their work, home and community lives together. In particular, it focussed on how the physical and social infrastructures of the MPC and, to a lesser extent, the workplace, facilitate the development of community and social capital for people at different stages of life.

Methods

Fourteen focus groups were conducted with men and women who reside and/or work in two Master Planned Communities; Mawson lakes in South Australia and Caroline Springs in Victoria. Both sites are newly developed residential communities with diverse housing forms, worker populations, household configurations and service provisions. Mawson Lakes differs from Caroline springs in that it is built around an existing technology park and University campus and is within 12 Kilometres of Adelaide CBD. Caroline Springs, on the other hand, is a classic 'green fields' development 25 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD with no existing employment or tertiary education facilities.

Focus group participants were recruited from existing resident and business lists, via a general email sent to local businesses and institutions and through notices placed on public notice boards. Lend Lease community development managers conducted recruitment activities at each study site.

The 68 participants included 33 women and 35 men aged between 19 and 70 years. Eighteen (55 per cent) women and 19 (54 per cent) men had dependent children, 14 (42 per cent) women and 23 (66 per cent) men were tertiary educated, 31 (94 per cent) women and 32 (91 per cent) men were in paid employment, and 12 (36 per cent) women and 25 (71 per cent) men stated their occupation was managerial or professional.

Participants were living in a mix of household types (sole, dual earner/couple, sole earner/couple, retired, with and without dependents). In income terms they included a disproportionately high number of upper and middle-income earners with an over-representation of professional and tertiary educated workers/residents. A number of participants ran their own businesses from home (sometimes in addition to waged work) and several were self-employed tradesmen or contractors.

Focus group questions were used as a guide to facilitate a semi-structured discussion. They focused on participants' perceptions and experiences of where they worked, where they lived, their communities and the fit between these three things.

Qualitative analysis was carried out using verbatim transcripts of focus groups, notes taken during focus groups and notes made immediately following focus groups. Most groups were attended by two researchers, one facilitating and one note taking.

Transcripts were divided between two investigators and subjected to thematic coding. Investigators then met to discuss thematic coding and collective decisions were made about salient themes and possible relationships between them. Investigators then individually and collectively subjected the data to analytical coding; interpreting the data in relation to the focus group aims and developing an understanding of the meanings and processes surrounding the issues discussed.

Findings and discussion

In presenting these findings I am going to concentrate on the physical and social infrastructures that facilitate social connection and enable social capital for different groups of people living within the MPC.

Physical and social infrastructure

Physical infrastructure refers to the built environment. It includes the buildings and facilities that exist in a geographic area and the physical links between places and people. Social infrastructure refers to the social environment. It includes formal groups and networks that cater to all sorts of social, professional and life stage interests or needs. Physical and social infrastructure can facilitate or impede the development of community and social capital by the way it enables people to come together. Many participants, from both MPCs, indicated that superficial familiarity engendered feelings of trust and safety and a sense of belonging to their community. This familiarity was facilitated by centralised facilities and recreation areas as well as community groups and events that brought people together.

[In my old neighbourhood I] didn't really see a lot of the neighbours, there was no central focus, places you could go and know that you would meet people you knew. Whereas here we've got the restaurants, the hotel and the nursing home where we meet people. Walking our dog, we meet people walking the dog. (ML9,p.48-retired male, MPC 1)

However, if social infrastructure was lacking and movement outside the MPC was restricted then some groups were particularly isolated and unable to develop social networks. One thing that was clear in our analysis of these focus groups was the importance of life stage in the conceptualisation of both community and social capital. The remainder of this paper will highlight the importance of physical and social infrastructure for the development of community and social capital at four distinct stages of life.

New mothers

New mothers need access to services, information and companionship. In particular they need access to the places and people who can provide them with the information, support and care required after a

baby is born. Importantly, this includes formal services such as early childhood centres and informal networks of other mothers. Access to services, information and companionship is facilitated by physical infrastructure, including walking paths suitable for prams, meeting places such as parks, play grounds and cafes, adequate local early childhood services, choice of child care options and adequate transport (public or private); and social infrastructure, including mothers group, new mothers network and play group.

Diagram 1 illustrates the multiple routes via which a new mother can develop social ties with other mothers. Formal services and social groups often act as conduits for social connection, but so too do public spaces designed to accommodate new mothers with pram access, breast feeding areas and nappy change facilities. The arrows in this diagram represent access and connection in a physical and social sense. These social connections are broad and dense and illustrated in the following statement from a new mother:

I'm into the community five days a week. I have something planned every day. It's the walking group, it's the mother's group, its mother's network, its playgroup. (CS5, p.369)

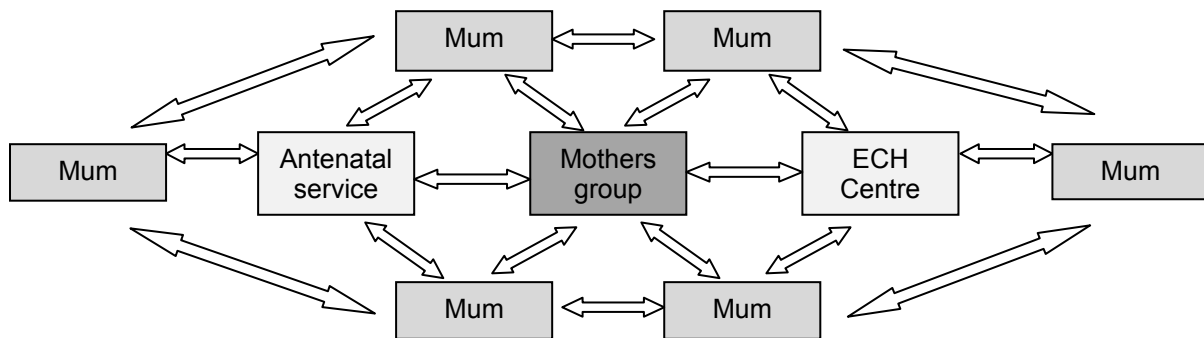


Diagram 1: Avenues to social networks for new mothers

Adequate physical and social infrastructure enhances capability and provides opportunity to develop social ties and become a part of multiple social networks. This is a good example of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). Its benefits for the individual mothers are access to information, companionship, support and informal care. Children and partners are indirect beneficiaries of this social capital, and the larger MPC will benefit because the new mothers become social bridges, connecting their families and friends to the families and friends of other new mothers. As a loosely connected group with a common interest, they also have the opportunity to act together toward mutual goals. For example they may lobby the developer or council for upgraded amenities or services (an example of linking social capital), the benefit of which will reach beyond the individuals in the social network to the wider community.

If the physical and social infrastructure of the MPC is inadequate, for example, if there is a lack of services or existing services cannot cater to the needs of the population, new mothers would find it harder to access care, information and each other, they would be more likely to be lonely and poorly supported and their capacity for social agency would be limited. They would lack social capital and the consequences would be felt by their children, their partners and the wider community. Diagram 2 illustrates how lack of formal physical and social infrastructure reduces avenues to social networks for new mothers and increases reliance on existing services. The consequences of poor access to social networks and adequate care and information are illustrated in the following quote:

I had a woman stop me out in the street one day. She was in such a state; she's got a baby in the pram and had walked the streets until she bumped into somebody else with a pram because she needed advice from another mother. She was having trouble breastfeeding and her baby was constipated and she had such a bad experience with the health nurse...I mean that's when people do stupid things when they get desperate...That's exactly why the mother's network was set up, someone had actually done something stupid. They drowned their baby. (FG 5. p409)

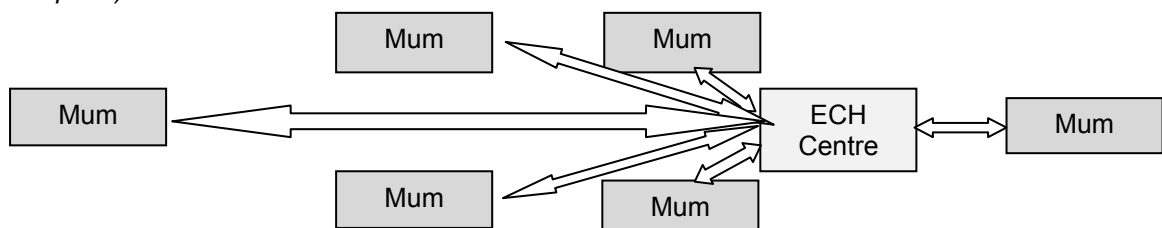


Diagram 2: Inadequate physical and social infrastructure for new mother

There are two significant lessons to be learned from this tragedy. First, Physical infrastructure such as parks and footpaths cannot compensate for a lack of social infrastructure; both are needed to build a healthy community. Second, In the face of tragedy, or even just a perceived lack of social infrastructure, it is a combination of bridging social capital with its horizontal social ties between concerned residents and linking social capital with its vertical social ties between residents and the hierarchy of Lend Lease in this case, that empowers and enables a community to acknowledge a problem and identify a way to avoid a similar tragedy in the future. In the case of Caroline Springs they immediately started up a new mother's network which identified all new mothers in the area on an ongoing basis, and invited them to participate in the network which offered friendship, information, support and referral.

The physical and social infrastructure of the MPC combined with physical and social infrastructures of work to either enhance or undermine the capacity of new mothers to make social connections. For some, the convenient location of their workplace and the flexible working arrangements meant that returning to work after maternity leave was an easy transition that accommodated the social needs of the mother and her baby. For others, the location of work or the unaccommodating working arrangements undermined their capacity to develop social relationships within the community, as was the case for this mother:

...because of a bit of pressure at work and pressure at home, I went three days a week and that lasted probably about six months and I finished up in April and returned to my two days simply because the juggle, you just can't squeeze everything in, I thought I was going to go round the twist ... not being able to keep up with the housework and constantly being ratty with the kids, I mean the kids are at an age that you do need to spend quality time with them, they're learning all the time, if you don't put the time, they get ratty as well and just, your work suffers, your home life suffers ... you'd always be spending time rushing here and rushing there and interrupt sleeps and they just get out of a routine, they don't get as many play dates with friends and things like that or you know, outings to the zoo or you know, just nice things, visiting grandparents, there just wasn't time for any of that sort of thing anymore.(CS 5 p.83)

The MPC's we studied are particularly attractive to young families or people considering a family. It is not unreasonable then for developers and the local labour market to consider the needs of young families when planning their physical and social infrastructure. Those businesses that deliberately position themselves near new housing developments should acknowledge the life stage of their employee base by accommodating their needs. Family friendly work place policies such as flexible working time and parental leave make it easier for new parents to combine work with the demands of a new baby (Pocock, 2006). Efficient public and private transport routes between work and home and accessible parking near work at all times of the day should also be considered by businesses who are concerned about the life stage needs of their employees (Dobbs, 2007).

Dual income family

Families with two parents working full time or at least long part-time hours need access to other children and parents. The children of working parents need opportunities to develop social ties with other children and adults in their local area, and parents need opportunities to develop social ties with other individuals and families in the area. Children can act as social bridges (Roos, Trigg & Hartman, 2006) but their capacity to bring adults together can be enhanced or constrained by the physical and social environment within which they live. Focus group participants identified many examples of physical infrastructure that can facilitate access to children and other parents, including, choice of local preschools and primary schools, easy parking around schools, comfortable waiting areas in schools where parents can talk, local after school care, safe walking and bike paths between homes and schools, local parks and playing fields and efficient transport options (public and private) to areas of work. Participants also identified social infrastructures that can facilitate access to others, such as consideration of working parents in the timing of parent association meetings and other events that might bring parents together, breakfast events for school students and parents, local sporting clubs, anything that necessitates parents hanging around with nothing better to do than talk while their children are engaged in some activity.

Diagram 3 illustrates how children, if given the opportunity, can facilitate the development of numerous social ties between adults in a locational community.

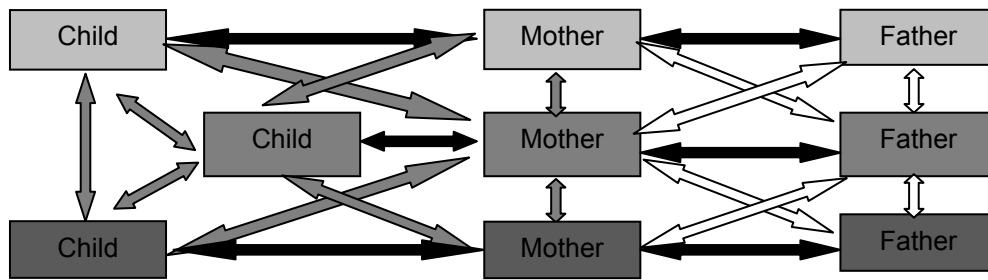


Diagram 3: Developing social ties through children (darker lines indicate closer social tie)

Co-location of school and home is key to the process depicted in diagram 3, as illustrated by the following statement from a working mother whose son remained at school in his old suburb after moving to Caroline Springs:

When I moved here I knew nobody... my son was still at [his old school] so I didn't get to meet anybody for three years, then when he finally did move here, he made friends with the older boys, not the younger boys ... So it took ages and ages sort of for us to assimilate in. (CS5, p.154)

This woman's degree of social connection in the first few years she lived in the MPC is depicted in diagram 4:

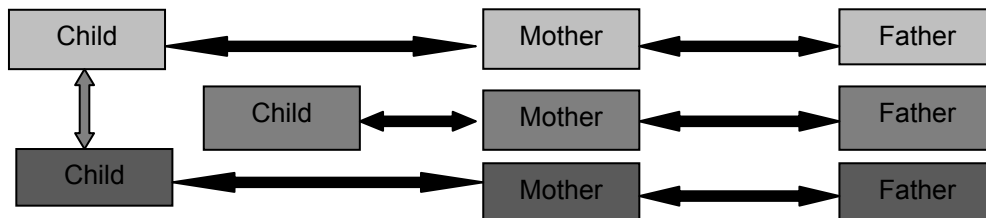


Diagram 4: Impoverished social ties due to lack of connection with other children in local area

While there may have been community around her she had no way of accessing it. For some, lack of access arises out of the way home and work is configured. The following quote from a woman who had recently changed from full time to part time work illustrates the potential social impact of two parents working full time. Having two parents working full time in a family often had social consequences for the children, the parents and the family as a unit.

[My job] was starting to impact on the kids. Can I ask how you noticed the effect on the kids? What did you see? Stress in the kids like sleeping problems and homework. Not coping with school, not being able to be involved with sports activities, like not having a lot of friends in the community. (CS7, p.88)

Many of our participants reported changing their working arrangements in response to perceived negative effects on their family. In most cases it was a lack of social embeddedness in their local community, either of their children or themselves, that prompted the change. It was clear though, that when decisions were made to limit participation in the labour market in order to meet the social needs of children or the family, it was usually mothers who stepped back. Once they did, their options were limited, particularly in CS where there are limited work opportunities in the local area and very poor prospects for a career. As one woman said:

Career advancement and things are important to me you can't really find that on this side of the city to be honest, (CS7, p.152)

Even in ML where the labour market has breadth and depth, the bulk of career jobs are in IT and Defence which favour men and, in the case of defence, fail to provide flexible working arrangements that would accommodate family and community. For many women living in these MPC's the need for both time and money means employment options are limited. Home based businesses were a common solution for many women who recognised the incompatibility of living in their MPC and having a job in the city:

The whole reason behind starting this business [was] for a bit of a life plan being able to work from home and have children and be able to pay off the mortgage and do all those other wonderful things you need to do (CS7, p.78)

In CS in particular, women are removed from career and so a 1950's stereotype of the family is being perpetuated. By separating children's activities from good employment opportunities for women,

mothers (and it usually is mothers) are forced to choose between a career in the city and a job close to home.

There is evidence from recent research in the UK that suggests that women are disadvantaged when it comes to transport, both public and private, and that this disadvantage affects their ability to engage in work (Dobbs, 2007). This disadvantage also affects their ability to engage in social and civic activities thus reducing their connection to others and limiting their social capital. Issues about transport are the responsibility of the developer, local council and state government who together determine transport needs in terms of roads, parking and public transport. It is also the responsibility of the employer, who decides where to locate their business and whether or not to accommodate the transport deficit that many women face (Dobbs, 2007).

It should be noted that it was not full time work per se that proved the enemy of community and social capital for these participants. Rather it was a combination of working time that did not fit with children's social time (children often cement their social relationships with play dates after school, between 3-5pm), long commutes and jobs that required excessive overtime or weekend work. It was also the physical location of work, its proximity to home and school that facilitated or inhibited the ability of children to act as social bridges for their parents. This is indicated in the following quote from a father at Caroline Springs:

*A lot of the guys that work where I work, they live around this area too. We can see each other and things like that. Sometimes give lift to each other...It's overlapping for me. We [also] have a great relationship because of the school. We get friendships through it. [We've met] six or seven families and we every so often, every six months we have lunches together, dinners together. **So the school has been very important for that?** I think the school relationships, friendships that you made out of your kids are lasting relationships (CS6, p.982).*

When two parents work full time or long part time hours, particularly in jobs that are not located near their home, opportunities for making social connections in the neighbourhood are reduced for the parents as individuals, and often for their children. However, if the physical and social infrastructure of the MPC and the workplace enable working parents to minimise travel time and maximise flexibility through flexible working arrangements as well as flexible community arrangements, then access to child and adult social networks will be easier for these families.

One of the key benefits of dense social networks between generations within a geographical location is what Sampson (1999) has called intergenerational closure. Intergenerational closure encourages a degree of social support and social control within the community. In other words, when lots of adults know your children either socially or even just by sight, then you have lots of adults available to both support and sanction your children when you are not around. Though they did not use such academic language, our participants acknowledge the benefits of intergenerational closure as indicated by the following statement from a working father of one young teenage boy:

We look after each other's kids. So if we see one of the kids doing something wrong [we do something about it]. (CS6, p.313)

Of course one significant barrier to intergenerational closure is the absence of adults or children in the community setting. The following discussion of teenagers will highlight the consequences to individuals and communities when certain groups are not visible or available in the local area.

Teenagers¹

Teenagers need access to each other and to recreation and entertainment in their local community. They also need access to adults in their local community. Like many women, teenagers are disadvantaged when it comes to transport. Physical infrastructure that was considered necessary for teenagers included amenities such as skate parks, sporting grounds and entertainment hubs. A mixture of targeted and shared spaces that are integrated within the physical spaces of the MPC were considered ideal. Targeted transport provision that links teenagers with the things they do within and outside the MPC were also considered essential, particularly by residents of Caroline Springs who are more isolated from surrounding areas than residents at Mawson Lakes. Necessary social infrastructure included organised social events that focus on bringing teenagers together (such as skate competitions, dance events, music events) as well as social events that appeal equally to teens and other sections of the community (such as markets and music festivals).

The key to social connection and therefore the development of community and social capital for teenagers is the sharing of space and time. Local amenities that cater to the needs of teenagers

¹ Teenagers were not included in this phase of data collection so the findings presented here reflect the views of adult men and women. These findings will guide subsequent phases of data collection with teenagers aged 11 – 17yrs.

provide opportunities for social connection among teens and if these amenities are integrated into the physical and social infrastructure of the area as a whole, they provide opportunities for intergenerational closure. The local adults and the local teenagers become familiar with each other at the very least, and this increases feelings of trust and responsibility which result in support and sanction when necessary. Diagram 5 illustrates the social opportunities available to teenagers who live in an area with adequate physical and social infrastructure.

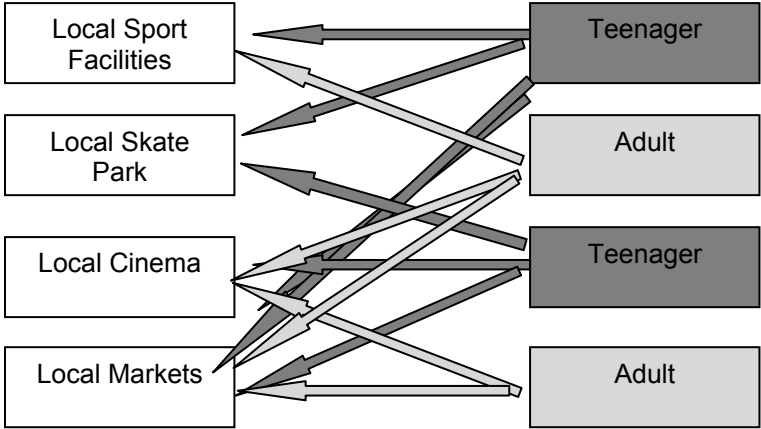


Diagram 5: Opportunities for intergenerational social interaction through shared use of infrastructure

Although we did not conduct focus groups with teenagers for this phase of the study, adult residents were quite clear about their concerns for teenagers, and for the community as a whole, when teenagers had nothing to do. The following quotes are indicative:

- One thing I hear other people talking about with kids older than mine, that there's nothing to do because they have no good public transport. They can't just tootle off somewhere else very easily. (CS3, p.265)*
- That's the end result I think, if you don't give them something to do they'll just get into trouble. (CS 5 p.282)*

It was clear that adults living in these MPC's were very concerned about the impact of unoccupied teens on the community in general. A key issue was security, with hoons and drug dealing behaviour threatening personal safety as well as financial and status security (these behaviours were likened to the behaviour to be found in poorer nearby suburbs from which some of our participants had moved).

What was not clear was the extent to which they wanted teens to be integrated into the community fabric. The research on intergenerational closure would suggest that integration would result in the broad and superficial social connections that best foster positive social capital (Sampson, 1999).

Lack of provision in terms of social and physical infrastructure fosters negative forms of bonding social capital as the teen group become isolated from the main community because they must travel out of area to find recreation – in these out of area places they are not recognised as part of a wider social network. Care and control forces cannot be exerted. They are physically and symbolically out of sight and out of mind. When they are visible, they are often seen as loitering because the physical and social infrastructure of their local community does not accommodate them well. With nothing to do and nowhere to go teenagers congregate together. If they gather in groups within the MPC other residents feel threatened and feelings of safety and trust are eroded. If they gather outside the MPC they are beyond the support and control mechanisms that may exist in their residential area and this can have the effect of decreasing their identification with the broader residential community and increasing their bonding social capital. This is all well and good as long as the supports and controls they offer each other conform to the accepted norms of the society they exist in. If not, the teens become an 'issue' for the MPC and surrounding areas. Diagram 6 illustrates what the social fabric might look like in this instance:

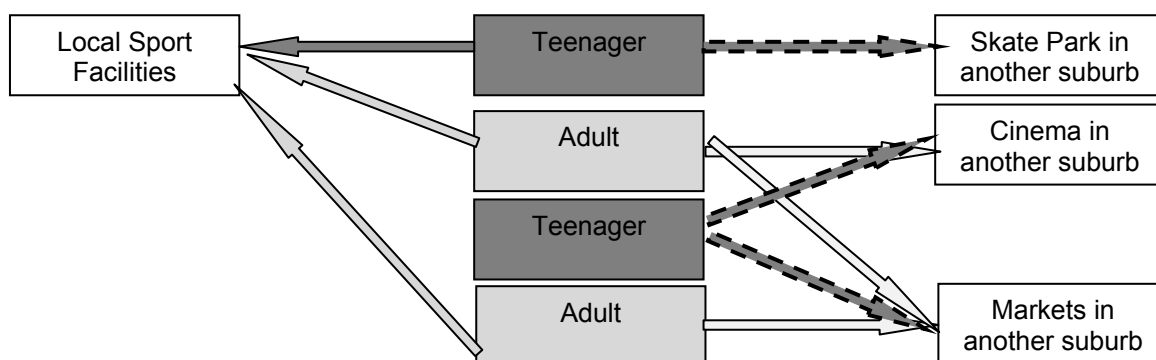


Diagram 6: Lack of opportunities for intergenerational social interaction resulting from few shared facilities and events in local area (broken arrows indicate poor access due to lack of transport options)

In this diagram there is a lack of overlap between the adults and teenagers. Except for sporting facilities, there are few shared spaces and therefore few opportunities to socially connect. Even sporting activities are restricted if they require expensive equipment or attendance fees. If the transport options between the MPC and surrounding areas are limited, then opportunities to be occupied outside the community are also restricted and teens become a local 'problem' for other residents.

Interaction between adults and teenagers, and the ability to develop intergenerational closure, is also affected by work. Shared time is the critical issue when it comes to work. If adults are not available to share communal space (such as sporting fields or internet cafes or town centres where multiple amenities are co-located) then a well appointed MPC will only satisfy the entertainment needs of teenagers. Flexibility in the community and the workplace can ensure that teens and working adults cross paths on a regular basis. Workplaces that are co-located with residential developments can also consider the teenagers in particular when planning community involvement.

Older people

Similar to teenagers, older people want access to each other and to various forms of activity in their local community. Unlike teenagers they will not congregate on street corners and look threatening if these needs are poorly met. What they may do however is become isolated in their homes, so the out of sight out of mind analogy fits here as well as in the discussion of teenagers. Like many women and teenagers, Frail older people are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to transport.

Physical infrastructure that was considered necessary for older residents of these MPCs included site planning designed to attract residents from across the life span (homes built for retirees and frail elderly as well as families), good intra site transport such as a community bus (for shopping days etc) as well as good public transport in and out of the area, good quality walking paths that consider the safety needs of older residents, amenities that accommodate the frail elderly (ramps, room for walkers etc), adequate health care services and associated retail outlets, physical spaces for older people to come together (halls, clubs etc). Social infrastructure considered necessary included social groups that cater to the time available to older people and the interests of older people, sport and recreation facilities that cater to the needs of older people, active encouragement by the developer for community makers (recognition, amenity availability) and community news letters to keep people informed of local activities and services.

Older people can often be the glue that binds local communities. Because they do not work, they are rich in time. Time that can be spent chatting to neighbours, keeping an eye on things during the day when many of their neighbours are at work and pursuing social activities in their local area. For some this time affluence is well supported by financial security and good health, which allows them to choose how they spend their time. When they choose to spend their time in what we have called 'community making' or 'community taking' activities they develop broad social networks that result in the development of social capital at an individual and local area level. This is illustrated in the following quote from an older woman who moved from the country to Mawson Lakes following a divorce:

I've made a huge effort because I felt really dislocated...to combat that I made the effort to go on the Progress Association Committee and to join things and started going to church... I really worked at it ... [then] last year just after I set up my own business I tripped over my cat, shot through the door and broke my ankle which is just like the worst time you can probably have. But, it was a fantastic story... some of my lovely neighbours brought my bed downstairs next to my office and the church organised food for three weeks and so there I was in my office and I

could hobble out with my crutches and open the gate and then neighbours could come and check on me and bring food and all that. Just startling. I invite neighbours to dinner and they invite me to dinner and so we have that lovely networking thing happening (FG1, p221)

For some older people, frail health or financial insecurity restricts how time is spent and if the physical and social infrastructure of their local area is inadequate, these people will have few opportunities to get out and make social connections. The following quote demonstrates this point well:

I knew of one woman that lived here and her and her husband, they weren't very mobile but had nothing to do during the day and they've moved into a neighbouring suburb and into a retirement village to have daily activity and stuff going on. (CS3, p.326)

Diagram 7 illustrates the importance of physical and social infrastructures in the development of social ties for older people. If access to services or other people is unavailable (through poor transport, lack of services or social opportunities) then older people may become isolated.

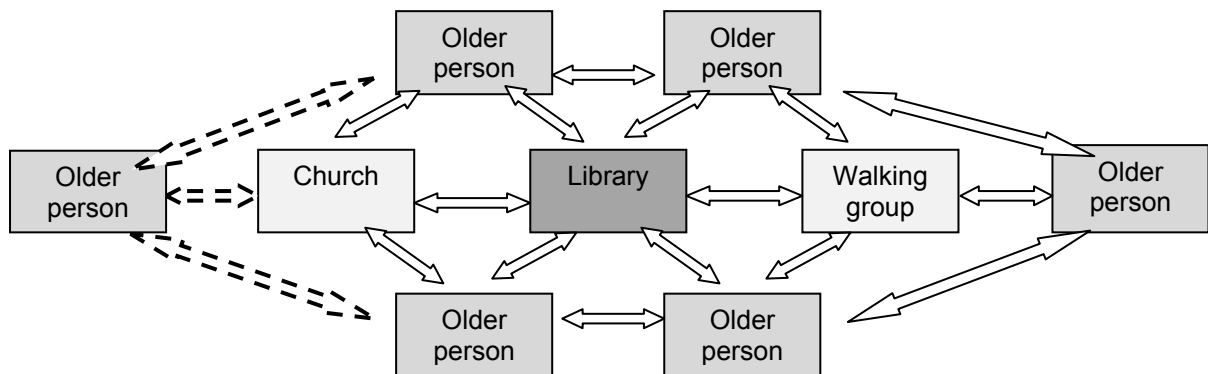


Diagram 7: Avenues to social networks for older people (broken arrows indicate poor access)

Many of the physical and social infrastructure needs of older people mirror those of teenagers; however it is important to acknowledge that the space and time issues are different.

Conclusions

'Community' and 'social capital' are not generic notions. They have physical and social components which occupy time and space in different ways for different groups of people. The people living within the MPCs studied here did not represent a homogenous group. While they all identified clear needs for social connection within the MPC, the physical and social infrastructure needed to support this social connection was idiosyncratic.

We need to acknowledge that residential developments such as Mawson Lakes and Caroline Springs are going to be made up of residents at various stages of life and that community and social capital for the whole will only develop if the various groups are given access to opportunities to make social connection within their life stage group and outside their life stage group. Although social capital as a notion may be difficult to pin down, the physical and social infrastructures that facilitate access to social opportunities within MPCs and other residential areas are knowable – we only need to ask.

This first phase of data collection for the Work, home and Community Study highlighted the role of work in the development of community and social capital, however, more efforts need to be made to understand how workplaces and employers can facilitate social connection within residential areas and therefore have a positive impact on the development of community and social capital for their employees.

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