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YOUTH SOCIAL CAPITAL: GETTING ON AND GETTING AHEAD IN LIFE

by

Paulina Billett

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Wollongong

2011

Approved by ____
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

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Program Authorized
to Offer Degree ________________________________
Date ____________________________________

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Certification

I, Paulina Billett, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Social Sciences, Media and Communications, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Paulina Billett
16 December 2011.

Abstract

In this thesis, I explore youth social capital. I am interested in identifying what youth social capital is, how it is fostered and reproduced and how this may differ from adult forms. I argue that current conceptualisations of social capital are inadequate to understand the social capital of young people and that these inadequacies have led some youth social capital theorists to label the social capital of young people as defective or incomplete; with some describing young people as possessing 'bad' or 'dark' social capital or being social capital deficient.

I further maintain that the conceptualisation of social capital as existing beyond the processes of class, culture and gender is flawed, as social capital is not fostered and reproduced in isolation, but each of these processes influences the ability of an individual to foster and reproduce social capital by establishing or facilitating the individual's key life circumstances. Consequently, I propose that it is essential to approach its measurement holistically.

Finally, I argue that due to the differences between youth and adult social capital, the indicators and tools used to measure social capital are inadequate for use on a youth population. In light of this, I suggest the use of 12 indicators of youth social capital, which guide my analysis, and two purposely built generators with which to measure youth social capital.

As a result, the main objective of this study was to find answers to three main questions: what is youth social capital? How do class, culture, and gender affect social capital formation and reproduction? What models and tools can be used to measure youth social capital?

In order to do this, I have combined a review on current social capital literature, together with ethnographic research, using data collected from focus groups and more 'typical' social capital tools including a survey and two hybrid generators. This thesis, then, makes use of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to explore the stocks of social capital held by 50 young people of the Wollondilly Shire, south-west of Sydney.

This study concludes that youth social capital does indeed vary from its adult form. I propose

that the social capital of a young person is neither defective nor incomplete, but is instead simply 'different'. This study has shown youth social capital to be vibrant and complex, beyond anything I could have possibly imagined.

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To you I dedicate this thesis.

Introduction

The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they - at some distant point in the future - will take over the reins. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... because the rest of us need all the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties. For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile. - Alvin Toffler (1970:112)

The quote above, while not addressing youth social capital itself, speaks loudly of social capital. Toffler asserts the benefit of 'working together' with even the youngest of individuals to 'solve desperate problems', something that many social capital theorists have attempted to point out. Social capital is often touted as a 'cure all', a magic bullet that can be used to address some of society's greatest problems (Putnam, 2000; Wyn and White, 2004; Somers 2005) and there are countless tomes dedicated to showing how 'civil society' can make problems disappear.

However, conceptualising social capital as a 'cure all' misses its greatest potential, that is, to cast a light on how power can be used by individuals to create change. The 'cure all' conception also fails to note that social capital is not a new solution for old problems, and that the popularity of social capital has grown as a result of a decline in the welfare state and the decentralization of government support (Heberle, 2004; Somers, 2005).

For all its faults, the widely held view of social capital discussed above can still prove incredibly useful and poses some interesting possibilities, including the exploration of youth social life and experience. If we think of it in terms of Toffler's words, youth, through social capital, become active and dynamic agents; their value is in the here and now, rather than in some obscure future which they will one day call their own.

According to de Souza Briggs (1998), all individuals require social capital to navigate life for two reasons: to access social supports, what I term 'getting by', and as social leverage to 'get ahead'. The title of this thesis attempts to reflect the possibilities that social capital offers

young people. Social capital allows young people in their immediate present to 'get on' in life through networking, by finding ways to overcome the structural and economic challenges which the majority of young people in western society face. Social capital also allows young people to 'get ahead', by providing opportunities which the young person can use in order to gain advantages in their life.

What is social capital and why do we need to understand it?

Defining social capital is a complex and sometimes arduous process. Little agreement seems to exist in the field regarding what social capital is, how it should be measured, or what indicates its existence. These discrepancies have made writing this thesis a complex and delicate procedure, in order to clarify exactly what was being dealt with.

Yet for all its difficulties, the concept of social capital continues to endure, and ever more research is added every year to the literature. It has become evident that social capital provides many benefits for communities and individuals, including lowering legal costs (Putnam, 2000) and increasing health and community cohesion (Stone and Hughes, 2002). In terms of young people, these benefits are centred on educational outcomes (Stevens et al, 2007; Coleman, 1988; Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004; Morrow, 2001) and transition to work (Helve and Bynner, 2007).

While the concept of social capital was first used by Alex de Tocqueville in his discussion of American associations (1840), it was not until the 1920's that Lida Judson Hanifan coined the term, during his work with rural school communities in the United States, to describe the workings of the social unit. Since then, social capital theory has been greatly advanced with contributions to the understanding of the concept from a diversity of academic disciplines. However, this great variety in approaches has also meant that the concept of social capital has been plagued with many problems in both conceptualisation and measurement.[1] The difference of opinion between researchers as to the level at which social capital should be

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[1] This will be examined in more depth in Chapter 2.

measured (the micro, macro, meso), or whether it is a resource of the individual or the collective, has further compounded the aforementioned issues, and created some of its own. The result is large variations in definition and identification of indicators within social capital frameworks.

These problems are further exacerbated when looking at the social capital of youth. Social capital is believed to form an important part of the young person's life, being said to help increase school retention rates, promote resilience, improve health, increase a sense of identity, promote family understanding, lower levels of delinquency, and increase the feeling of place within the community. Numerous efforts are currently being made by both government and non-government agencies to increase the social capital of young people. Yet little research has been conducted in youth social capital, leaving the concept relatively undefined. Youth social capital has not only been poorly researched, but has often relied on 'adult' dimensions and indicators to identify and measure it (Morrow, 2001; Whiting and Harper, 2003; Holland, 2008). There is also an enduring trend for social policy and welfare agencies to see social capital as a magic bullet to prevent 'at risk' behaviour (Wyn and White, 2004). Little thought has been given to how youth social capital is fostered and produced, or how issues of class, gender, or cultural background affect it. This leaves a gap in the theoretical understanding of how social capital reproduction can be impacted upon by life circumstances and external influences.

The issues presented above have generated many unresolved conflicts within the field of youth social capital research which require further investigation. Chief among these is the need to ascertain what differences exist between the social capital of youths and adults, and how this affects our understanding and measuring of youth social capital. An evaluation of youth social capital as different to that of adults would also support the assumption that youth social capital cannot be measured by using commonly found indicators, rather, this needs to be done through the use of youth-specific indicators and tools developed specifically with relevance to youth life. An evaluation of the role that class, gender and culture play in the formation and reproduction of social capital is also needed.

A re-evaluation of the effects of using adult social capital as a tool to promote 'appropriate' behaviour is also required, as this may be more damaging than beneficial for many young people, particularly where this is done with inadequate understanding of how social capital and networking occurs. Many new developments are needed in order to successfully increase the knowledge of the youth social capital field, including the identification of the meaning of youth social capital, its measurement, and what life circumstances may affect its fostering and reproduction.

This study will attempt three tasks: to identify what youth social capital is through an in-depth analysis of theory and ethnographic research; to identify how youth social capital differs from its adult form; and then to create a model for the specific measurement of youth social capital. Finally it will attempt to elucidate the role class, culture and gender play within social capital fostering and reproduction.

Why youth social capital?

I became interested in social capital while working as a Youth Development Officer for an agency now known as Community Links Wollondilly. However, my discovery of 'social capital' was by accident rather than design.

In 2003, after the death of my father from cancer, and my wedding two weeks later, I decided to take six months leave from completing my honours thesis as I was keen to return to some semblance of a normal life. As the months dragged on, I decided that I needed to return to work, and felt that social welfare was an interesting option as I could finally put into practice what I had learned in my years spent in academic study. As I did not wish to conduct welfare work in the area I lived in (I had by then heard all the horror stories of workers followed home and the like) I decided to look at opportunities outside the local area. After trawling the internet for a few days, I found what I was looking for: a volunteer position in the Wollondilly Shire, about 30 minutes drive from home.

I knew very little about the Wollondilly and had not been aware of the Shire's existence until I found their advertisement for volunteers. It sounded like an interesting area to work in and I decided to apply. Later that same month, I began volunteer work at Community Links Wollondilly. I was hoping to not only increase my future employability, but also to put into practice the theoretical insights I had acquired in my undergraduate years at the University of Wollongong.

Initially I was part of the youth team, in which I initially had only a vague interest, given that my research was focused on feminism, in particular the exploration of issues facing women working in traditionally male-dominated environments. One of my first assignments was to help create a young mothers group; previous attempts to form such a group had failed. As luck would have it, only a few months into my role I was asked by the centre manager to take on a more permanent role as locum community liaison officer. I took this role on eagerly, as I felt that at long last I would be able to have much desired input into women's welfare through program development and coordination. Later that year, while completing my honours thesis, I became more interested in the youth program and absorbed by the need to find a solution to the failure of the young mothers group, which continued to puzzle me. After a few months and some discussions with the manager, I was asked to take on the role of Youth Development Officer. By that stage I was absolutely engrossed in some of the issues that I could see the young people of the Wollondilly facing (not to mention the failure of the young mums' group), and eagerly changed roles.

As I developed programs and watched the young people around the Wollondilly, I became more and more convinced that there were certain aspects of youth work which were ineffective, and became very concerned about them. I realised that many of the programs we were creating were directed at satisfying key performance indicators (KPIs) rather than the needs of the young people, and that the local Council and Youth Services had conducted little research to ascertain what these needs might be. I began to feel that some of the programs, particularly those that were poorly attended, were not being taken up because of a lack of relevance to the needs of the community we were targeting, rather than because of apathy on the part of the youths.

After discussing some of these issues with other Youth Workers and my manager, we decided that we needed to find out first-hand what the young people of the Wollondilly wanted. In early 2004 I conducted my first youth needs analysis, a survey specifically aimed at finding out the needs of the young Wollondilly community. This was distributed through the local high schools (both the public high school and the private college) and through the Youth Centre programs. Data yielded from the survey seemed to confirm my initial suspicions: our programs were not targeting their needs, but instead were created to satisfy the needs of the funding bodies. The youth team began to use the information collected from the survey to better target the needs of the young people, leading to many new and innovative programs. However something still appeared to be missing: there was a common ground that could not be quite reached, one centred on 'cultural' difference.

I was well aware through my years in academia that class and gender have significant impact on young people's lives (for better or worse) and that welfare agencies had been set up to address some of these issues (hence KPIs centred on community building, provision of information and relationship building). However, culture was a more abstract and not well-recognised parameter for the Youth Workers and funding bodies. The issues of cultural differences between youths and adults became more obvious to me when, facilitating a meeting between young people who wanted to organise a grant for a music competition, I was made aware in no uncertain terms of a lack of 'knowledge' of youth cultural reality.

That day, I had prepared a poster which I felt was very 'in', with all the trappings of what I would expect young people to like – lots of colour surrounding a photograph of youths at a concert. To me the poster looked very appropriate for the intended audience and I took it in expecting to wow my young charges. Little did I know! As soon as I handed it to the leader of the group (a very outspoken young woman), she looked at me and said, 'Sass' (this was the name chosen for me by the young people), 'this poster is lame!' How could this be? I was sure I knew and understood youth culture. Hadn't I been a young person once? After a lengthy chat with the young people, I came to realise that many of the things we did were 'old' and had little relevance to youth life. I decided that the only way this could be addressed was to talk with, and listen to, the young people rather than talk at them.

I spoke to my manager, who informed me that they had wanted to create a youth advisory board as well as a youth focused web page for some time. However, funding had never been provided. We decided to explore options which eventually resulted in the long-awaited launch of the Community Links website. In 2008 Wollondilly Council created a youth advisory board, though its actual contribution continues to be debated by both youth and Youth Workers alike.

Toward the end of my time as Youth Development Officer, I started to hear the phrase 'social capital' used more and more often, by both the funding bodies and in government rhetoric. Eventually, it became part of our KPI targets (sometimes in a very abstract manner), but I remained unsure what social capital was or how we were supposed to tackle the 'building' of this abstract construct. I spoke to my colleagues and manager and I found that, like me, the majority of workers felt unsure of its exact meaning.

I began to research what social capital meant, and came across the work of Robert Putnam, who seemed to speak of an ideal society built on cooperation, social cohesion and reciprocity, and the networking of individuals. I was immediately sceptical.

To me his accounts of utopia seemed hollow, as they ignored the most important issue which affects the cohesion of society: difference. The more I read and referred to the rhetoric of youth development, the more convinced I became that this 'social capital' would eventually become another way in which disadvantaged young people would be labelled as 'bad'. I began to see that at best many of our programs were aimed at normalising the young people, rather than assisting them. What was worse, our attempts to build social capital were ill-targeted and often misguided, and only rarely did any of the explanations I read take into consideration how life circumstances affected a young person's ability to reproduce or foster social capital. In 2006 I decided to leave Community Links Wollondilly for further academic studies, to explore social capital and in particular its effects on young people. What I found was a field which is not only underdeveloped, but a virtual battleground, where young people are labelled and

measured according to adult perceptions of who they are and what adults think they ought to be.

There are several reasons why I chose to study the social capital of youth over that of adults. When I first began to delve into the field, I became amazed at the amount of literature produced on social capital. However, little offered any insights into youth. Most importantly, I came to realise there was little understanding of what social capital was, much less what youth social capital encompasses. Social capital is often analysed in terms of adult qualities such as 'social capital in the workplace', or the 'economic value' of social capital, while young people seemed to appear only in terms of their not having enough social capital. I began to see that social capital functions much like the rhetoric surrounding youth development, whereby young people are seen in terms of deficits (such as lack of skills) that can be rectified if the 'right' connections are fostered.

When I began to relate this to my experiences as Youth Development Officer, I realised that, for one reason or another, certain 'types' of youths (particularly those who we would classify as 'at risk') were labelled as problematic more often than any other type of youth, and would often be the target of suspicion by the police, shopkeepers and the community. In terms of adult social capital, these young people were seen as lacking certain economic, cultural and social resources, which limited their ability to network with the general adult community, placing them at a clear disadvantage. I began to look more closely at one particular program that I was conducting, 'Living Skills', which I believed would help to provide a type of 'testing ground' for the theories proposed by social capital theorists. In this program, the young people learned skills they were seen as lacking, such as interview and job-seeking skills, and were provided with the opportunity to meet and interact with some of the Wollondilly adult community through the engagement of local workshop presenters.

I realised during the Living Skills program that these at risk young people, rather than being disinterested or disengaged as often suspected, were actually the opposite, and took great pride in the accomplishment of something as simple as a twelve-week course. What they gained was

more than just adult respect, or a fleeting sense of achievement, but a kind of mainstream cultural capital which allowed them entry into networks from which they had once been excluded.

The more I observed the young people within the Youth Centre, the more convinced I became that the vast differences between young people and adults meant that it was necessary not only to understand what youth social capital is, but also to construct a model with which to measure it. This thesis represents my efforts to address these needs, by contributing to the definition of what it is and how it can be measured, and providing an understanding of how class, culture and gender affect the chances of young people to build and use their social capital.

Why the Wollondilly Shire?

There are two main reasons why I chose to research in the Wollondilly. Firstly, after the years spent as Youth Development Officer in the area, I felt, and still feel, a connection with the young people of the area. Secondly, the Wollondilly Shire presented a wonderful opportunity to study an area often neglected by local academics in favour of the larger urban centres of the Illawarra and Campbelltown.

I must admit that I became somewhat attached to the young people I worked with as a Youth Development Officer at Community Links. During my time there, I had the pleasure of working with youths from all backgrounds, including victims of sexual, drug and alcohol abuse, young parents, those musically, sporting and theatrically inclined, youths from disadvantaged backgrounds, early school leavers and high achievers. Each young person's individual character and experience made a great impact on me. Through my work I came to realise that young people are not only different from adults, but also from each other. What is more, I realised that each social group differed greatly, having their own sets of attitudes,

behaviours and cultural pursuits which varied significantly, not only between subcultural groups such as Goths, skaters, BMXers, but also across the more 'mainstream' youths.

The young people of the Wollondilly are incredibly dynamic. They occupy a unique position, just as their area does, situated between the outskirts of Sydney and the quiet of the rural highland countryside. They do not characterise themselves as 'country folk', or identify completely with urban culture, hanging (sometimes uncomfortably) in an ambiguous position between both worlds. They also present an enigma; while they remain geographically isolated, subcultural style thrives, with many youths engaging in more typically city-bound dance and skater cultures than the more expected 'produce markets' or gymkhanas with the local pony club. They are terribly protective of their semi-rural lifestyle (they do not want McDonalds to move into town as it would ruin it!) but long for more 'city-like' facilities, such as larger shopping centres and movie theatres, which they feel would enhance the area.

Yet the young people of the Wollondilly, like many young people, crave respect and acknowledgement from the adult community, and lament that they feel undervalued and often misunderstood. I felt that this research presented a perfect opportunity for me to show that the Wollondilly youth have an incredible and very valuable ability to come together to voice their opinions and participate, when given the chance, and to make their life and their community better.

The second reason for choosing the Wollondilly Shire is its geographical location and its neglect by local academics. The Wollondilly Shire is made up of 33 rural to semi-rural villages, its largest township being Tahmoor. It stretches over 2,560 square kilometres, from Yanderra in the south and Appin and Menangle in the east to Warragamba in the north and the Nattai Wilderness and Burragorang Valley in the west. Its large geographic spread means that it is sparsely populated, with an average of only 17 residents per square kilometre. However, unlike most other rural communities, with its close proximity to the Illawarra and Campbelltown (to

the south and west of Sydney respectively) many families have moved to the Wollondilly in search of more affordable housing and better living conditions.

The Wollondilly Shire, like most rural and semi-rural communities, lacks adequate services or venues catering to the interests and needs of young people, including a marked lack of secondary and tertiary educational institutions (see Chapters 6 and 7), or youth-geared entertainment venues such as cinemas.

With the coupling of increased migration of urban families into the area and the lack of resources, the Wollondilly Shire, like many other growing areas, has begun increasingly to show the characteristic signs of a disengaged youth community, prone to boredom, risk-taking, antisocial behaviour, delinquency, and early school leaving. What is more, with the population expected to continue to increase in the shire in the near future, particularly around the existing urban areas of Appin, Bargo, Picton, Silverdale, Tahmoor, Thirlmere, Warragamba and Wilton, the lack of resources and employment for youths will only exacerbate the issues already emerging.

In terms of social capital, the rapid changes occurring in the area will further entrench the disadvantage of the young Wollondilly community over the coming years. A rapid response by local bodies is needed to address these problems, bodies such as local Youth Services and Council. The research in this thesis will hopefully help to not only address some of these issues, but also allow the young people of the Wollondilly to voice their opinions and contribute towards that process.

The focus of this study

What we are seeking to answer are three overarching questions: What is youth social capital? How do class, culture and gender affect social capital formation and reproduction? What models and tools can be used to measure youth social capital?
Each of these questions raises subsidiary considerations, such as:

- What is social capital?
- Is social capital a valid parameter to understand youth?
- How do youth and adult forms of social capital differ?
- What is currently being produced about youth social capital?
- How do issues of class, culture and gender affect the social capital of young people?
- In what ways has social capital been measured to date?
- How do measurements of youth social capital differ from that of adults?

In order to explore each one of these questions, this thesis will integrate academic literature with the firsthand accounts of young people themselves, by presenting the findings of an Australian youth focused ethnographic study involving 50 young people from the Wollondilly interviewed during 2008 and 2009. The study also involves the analysis of youth networks by way of two specifically built youth social capital generators, as well as measurements of the economic resources available to the young people through the administration of a youth-specific survey.

Defining social capital

There seem to be two dominant theoretical conceptualisations of social capital. On the one hand there is Bourdieu's (1986) notion, by which social capital is conceptualised as the potential existing in individuals' networks, which allows them to get on and get ahead in life. On the other hand, there are the works of James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (2000), which conceptualise social capital by its function and have led to social capital being viewed in terms of trust, reciprocity, social cohesion and even institutional effectiveness (Franke 2005). For the purpose of this thesis I will use Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualisation which allows for a

fuller understanding of how class, culture and gender operate in networking. I will expand on the reasons for this choice, more fully, in chapter 4

Designing youth-friendly research

Any study which looks to address issues faced by a particular section of society should ideally be guided by those who it will ultimately affect. In youth research, this has not always been the case. There has been a tendency in youth studies to marginalise the voice of young people. The issue with a large portion of studies focused on young people and children is participants' apparent invisibility and muteness (Hardman, 1973). One of the aims of this thesis is to ensure that young people's voices, experiences and opinions are adequately represented, not only within the research, but also within the construction of the measurement of youth social capital.

Ensuring youth-friendly research tools

In order to ensure that the methods and tools used within this research were in fact youth friendly, several issues needed to be addressed. Primary among these were the need to create participatory research as well as making use of tools which frame young people as subjects rather than objects of research. It is important to acknowledge that formulaic tools such as surveys and generators can at times restrict an individual's agency during research by defining the parameters and the experiences which can be expounded (for example questions chosen by the researcher rather by the participant her/him self) yet, this does not mean that these tools cannot be successfully used in youth research.

As will be discussed later, participatory research is more about the way in which participants are engaged and how the research itself is conducted, rather than the types of tools that are used to collect information (see chapter 5). Participatory research occurs when participants are fully aware of their right to participate or refuse participation during research (see Billett forthcoming). Tools however, play an important role in allowing participants to express their

opinions and can have dramatic impact on the information collected and the findings made. Consequently, it was important that balance could be found between more formulaic measurements of social capital and the right of the young people to openly express their agency.

After consultation with the pilot group I undertook a review, in light of their suggestions and the available academic literature. This served to ascertain the level of participation each of the methods and tools would afford the young people in the research. This led to the use of several methods of data collection in order to ensure that, while more typical methods of social capital measurement where used during research, such as surveys, and generators, participatory research was assured by the use of focus groups as well as by allowing young people the freedom to discuss their generators among themselves.

Furthermore, the consultation undertaken with the pilot group also made certain that the tools being used measured youth social capital, rather than a constructed reality, helping to guarantee the voice and agency of the young people in this study.

Benefits of this research

There are several reasons why this thesis is significant to the field of youth social capital. First and foremost, this thesis makes an important contribution to a better understanding of a neglected field: youth social capital. I intend to clarify what youth social capital is, and to resolve many of the misconceptions currently being expounded about youth social capital. I aim to show that youth social capital is vastly different to that of adults, and that social capital theorists have often overlooked these differences, leading to misconstructions of youth social capital.

A further significant aspect of this research is its elucidation of the often neglected roles that class, culture and gender play in the formation and reproduction of youth social capital. The possible effects of 'social capital fatigue' are also discussed. It is hoped, furthermore, that this thesis will contribute to the formulation of better informed social policy and better aimed

toward the needs of young people. This in turn will afford social welfare and government agencies a better grasp of what youth social capital is, how it can be measured, and the effects class, culture and gender can have upon it, ultimately leading to more effective programs with which to target and enhance youth social

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into two sections: Part 1, Discovering youth social capital: a theoretical approach presents a theoretical overview of youth and social capital literature, encompassing Chapters 1 through 4. Part 2, Discovering youth social capital in the field, explores the second challenge faced by the thesis: the creation of a social capital model applicable to youth life and experience. It concentrates on methodological considerations and the ethnographic research conducted in the Wollondilly Shire.

Chapter overview

Chapter 1 - This Chapter provides an introduction to some of the main features of the historical and current context of 'youth'. *The Concept of Youth* sketches the history of youth studies from the 1920's until today. It reflects on the main schools of thought which have informed youth studies, the Chicago and Birmingham schools, as well as post-subcultural theory, to provide the background to the theoretical underpinnings of this term. In this chapter I also explore the concepts of youth 'at risk' and youth development as commonly used in social policy, and the direct impact of issues surrounding school, the family and the work of welfare agencies. I suggest that the ways youth have been defined throughout history have been largely detrimental, and mark a failure in youth theory to explain the position or life chances of young people. In order to rectify this, I argue that a new paradigm is needed to understand youth, and that social capital can serve this role.

Chapter 2 - Introduces the concept of social capital. This chapter presents the competing conceptualisations of social capital currently in use in academia and how the differences in conceptualisation have shaped our understanding of social capital. It also briefly overviews

some of the problems currently being faced by social capital theorists due to the lack of agreement on what social capital is and on its measurement. This chapter presents the first of three tables I have developed as a typology of social capital. The notion of social capital fatigue and the issues this presents for disadvantaged individuals are also introduced here. This chapter attempts, in short, to convey the fluidity of the concept of social capital, and to alert the reader to the myriad of opportunities and constraints this term presents for the study of social organisation and interaction.

Chapter 3 - Discusses social capital within a youth context. It provides an introduction to some of the key debates about youth social capital which have informed the field. Following an overview of some of the problems faced by youth social capital researchers, I attempt to address these issues by exploring what effects class, culture and gender can have on the fostering and reproduction of youth social capital. This chapter also explores subcultural capital as a resource, rather than as 'bad' or 'dark' social capital. Finally I explore how the disappearance of the 'fourth' environment of the streetscape has affected the ability of young people to network, and how new online environments have risen to fill this gap.

Chapter 4 - Presents the framework for measurement used in the research. The issues faced in current measurements of social capital are addressed: the level of measurement, and dimensions and indicators used. This section also contains Tables 2 and 3, which present the capacity and wellbeing of an individual's social capital, and the value which can be derived from social networks respectively.

Chapter 5 - This chapter covers the methodology of the thesis. It provides an overview of the research process undertaken in the Wollondilly, as well as a justification of the tools and methods used. The research process undertaken is set out in three separate segments: *pre-fieldwork*, *considerations for fieldwork*, and *the fieldwork process*. I cover some of the more common ethical issues surrounding youth research, and provide an overview of the nine focus groups and a discussion of the commonality among the participants. I also address the need for youth-friendly social capital research tools, and explain the two new hybrid generators specifically constructed for the measurement of youth social capital. Justifications for the questions used

in the youth social capital survey are presented in Table 5. There is also a discussion about the operationalisation of the concept of social capital used within this thesis. This chapter closes with the problems and limitations foreseen within the study and provides suggestions as to how these issues may be overcome.

Chapter 6 - Familiarises the reader with the Wollondilly area, discussing the geographical location and key statistical data, gathered predominantly from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 census. In this section I cover twelve different areas key to the understanding of youth life, selected for their relevance to topics raised in focus group interviews. They include housing and development, family type and income, motherhood in the Wollondilly, working in the Wollondilly Shire, volunteerism, unpaid domestic duties, unpaid childcare, education, transportation, crime statistics for the area, and access to the internet.

Chapter 7- This section presents the findings from the focus groups conducted during 2008 and 2009 in the Wollondilly Shire. The issues presented in Chapters 1 to 3 are revisted, making use of the framework for measurement created in Chapter 4. As such this section presents the final challenge set: to measure the social capital of young people. Through the voices of the young participants, this section brings together the theoretical work undertaken in the previous sections and merges it with a practical attempt to discover the social capital of a young community.

Chapter 8 - This section presents the concluding arguments for this thesis and recapitulates its most central aspects. It reviews the objectives and considers whether these have been successfully met, reflects on the research process, makes suggestions for further research, and sets out the limitations of the study. This section also inclues final remarks on the research project.

Part 1 - Discovering youth social capital: a theoretical approach

Chapter 1

The Concept of Youth

Youth historically

Youth is not a standalone concept, but a complex system of meanings and inferences about young people and their place in society. From the early part of the 20th century, youth as a life phase has become an object of intense interest. Psychologist G. Stanley Hall is most often credited with 'discovering' adolescence (Griffin, 1993; Robert, 1983; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). In Stanley Hall's (1904) conception, adolescence was a psychological and physical stage in life, primarily determined by the onset of puberty and the first appearance of a 'normal' heterosexuality. It was also a time when young people attempt to leave childhood behind and redefine themselves as adults. Hall argued that this process of redefinition, coupled with the onset of hormonal changes and sexual desires, made for a highly traumatic period, a period of 'storm and stress' (Roberts, 1983; Griffin, 1993). However, Hall's storm and stress model failed to acknowledge that adolescence was not a universal life-phase, and his psychobiological model was challenged by sociologists as being too narrow.

The term 'youth' is currently used by most sociologists to counter the notion of a psychobiological state with a limited time span. Instead, youth is perceived as a social status, extending from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties, ending with the achievement of independence (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). According to these models, youth can be defined as a period of semi-dependence which young people pass through prior to the granting of adult status (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Youth is not defined by biology, rather, it is a relational concept defined by lack of independence. It is a term used to describe the complex social, economic and cultural inequalities of one of the most dynamic groups within Western societies.

Two main paradigms have informed conceptualisations of youth experience: youth subcultural theory, together with the related concept of post-subcultural theory; and notions of 'risk'. The radical differences in approach between these two perspectives can be accounted for in terms

of their origins. While subcultural and post-subcultural theory, originating from Marxist perspectives, have attempted to examine the concept of youth in terms of the use of deviance as a way of expressing the positions of young people in Western societies. Concepts of risk aim to interrogate the problems faced by youth during development, and society's response to the same, from an individualistic perspective, yet from two different stances. On the one hand, proponents of the 'risk society' seek to explain youth in terms of risk perception by which society is perceived as a dangerous place in which young people are constantly confronted by risk which must be negotiated and solved on a daily basis (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Notions of youth at risk on the other hand explain youth experience from a policy-oriented standpoint and in terms of the risk young people pose to themselves.

Youth subcultural and post-subcultural theory

Youth attitude and behaviour is most obviously represented in youth subculture. Subculture refers to the system of attitudes, behaviours and lifestyles possessed by groups in opposition to the dominant cultural system. Usually applied to 'deviant' or subversive youth cultures, subculture has become a way to explain the alienation of young people from mainstream culture. Not surprisingly, youth subcultures have been of intense interest to sociologists and welfare policymakers since the early part of the century, due to their perceived threat to the dominant social system.

There are three distinctive periods of research into subcultures in the literature. Work at the University of Chicago during 1920s and 1930's opened up the first debates on youth. There was a shift in the 1970s when the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham (CCCS) dominated the field of youth research, followed in the late 20th century by the emergence of post-subcultural theories. According to Blackman (2005), while the work of the Chicago School and the CCCS gave priority to the collective, postmodern subcultural theory's main preoccupation has been the individual. This is problematic insofar as it has resulted in a watered-down theorisation of subcultural theory, which does not account for economic, gendered or cultural difference, or for the political potential of the collective.

The Chicago School

The Chicago School came to prominence under the direction of Robert Park in 1913 (Blackman, 2005) but it was not until the 1920s that youth theory began to appear, when Ernest Burgess begun constructing ethnographic maps of the social and cultural territories of the Chicago population. By the 1920s and 1930s the Chicago School refuted the dominant psychological theories of deviance which claimed that 'delinquency' was a psychological factor. Instead the focus was on delinquency understood within its socio-cultural context rather than away from it, with deviant behaviour being explained as a functional response by youth to their marginalised positions (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004; Blackman, 2005). Later researchers at the Chicago School expanded this notion considerably, creating what is now generally called 'the second Chicago School' (1995).

Figuring prominently in the Chicago School's development of subcultural theory was Robert K. Merton, who introduced his social theory of deviance in 1938 and later revised it in *Social Theory and Social Structure (1957)*. Merton devised a typology of 'structural strain' in which he identified five modes of social adaptation which young people adopt: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. In his typology, Merton offers explanations of deviance based on a rejection of mainstream cultural goals and the means of attaining them. Merton posits that while at one extreme, conformists will accept and adhere to cultural goals and pursue them through legitimate means (such as education), at the other, rebels will reject both mainstream cultural goals and their means of attainment, for example rejecting school and engaging in subculture.

The value of Merton's theory of deviance derives from his argument that it results from the interplay of culture and structure in society (Blackman, 2005). In reacting to negative responses from the dominant society to infractions of its moral code, many subcultures become locked in a process of what Merton (cited in Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004:4) called 'deviance amplification', in which the negative response of the adult society compels the

members of the subculture to commit further acts of deviance, which only serve to further stigmatise their behaviour, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A further notable contribution to the Chicago School's study of subculture was made by Frederic Thrasher (1927), who is credited with providing the foundation for the development of the Chicago School's subcultural theory through his influential conceptualisation of 'delinquent' gang subcultures (Blackman, 2005). According to Thrasher, gang members were situated in what he called the 'situational complex', by which the workings of gangs should be understood in terms of their social relation to other influential social institutions, such as the family, religion and education (Dimitriadis, 2006).

One major flaw in the Chicago School's argument was that, while it did account for ethnic difference, youths were perceived as a homogenous and unified group which struggled and rebelled against the stigmatising gaze of the dominant culture. This perception of a 'unified' or common youth culture did not allow for the complexity of youth social life to be fully appreciated, nor did it allow for the examination of more complex processes such as class division, the individual struggle with dominant culture and difference between groups occupying the symbolic space of 'youth'.

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies

By 1970, the work of the Chicago School was superseded by the research being conducted in England by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. This school, while agreeing with the premise that subcultures allowed for the understanding of deviance as a process, rejected the assumption held by those such as Parsons and Coleman that youth was a homogenous and unified group with its own distinctive culture (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995). The CCCS argued that even though the newly emerging consumer culture made youth appear superficially to be a homogenous entity, it was in fact riven by class divisions and under-privilege: 'unemployment, educational disadvantage, compulsory miseducation, dead end jobs, the routinization and specialisation of labour, low pay and the loss of skills' (Clarke et al, 1976:4).

Notable contributions toward subcultural theory by the CCCS include Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour* (1977), in which he examined working class youth's rejection of formal education in favour of working class jobs. Willis produced an account of 12 working class boys in a midlands secondary school. He argued that the young men, in order to challenge the values and norms perpetuated throughout the school system, formed a distinctive counter-school subcultural grouping which devalued education while emphasising the attributes of manual labour. Dick Hebdige's (1979) *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* has also been hailed as a cornerstone of youth subcultural studies, in which Hebdige equates young people's subcultural style and forms of expression to 'noise', subversive to mainstream culture.

The CCCS' main aim was to explain how working class youth actively expressed their dissatisfaction with life in post-war British society through acts of deviance. The CCCS explained deviant behaviour as a way to 'establish a unique identity and subcultural style, by setting itself apart from the parent culture' (Epstein, 1998), through the appropriation and 'misuse' of everyday objects in 'subcultural style' and bricolage. According to the CCCS, style and bricolage could be seen as ways of gaining empowerment through resistance to the hegemonic culture and resolving (though not always consciously) the unresolved contradictions in the parent culture (Blackman, 2005).

The CCCS has been heavily criticised on a number of fronts, including for romanticising working class youth subculture (Muggleton and Weinzierl, 2003). Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2005) point to the lack of exploration by the CCCS of issues of race and culture. In addition, McRobbie (McRobbie and Garber, 1977) has criticised the CCCS' disregard for young women's involvement in subculture while Thornton (in Blackman, 2005) argues that the CCCS theory of subculture is 'empirically unworkable' and elitist, as well as lacking ethnographical information. Finally, the CCCS has also been criticised for romanticising 'spectacular' youth cultures while ignoring 'normal' youths (Besley, 2002; Cohen, 1980).

Post-subcultural theory

The increased fragmentation of youth style since the 1980s led to new ways of conceptualising youth. These emerging paradigms, classified as post-subcultural theory, are primarily based on the arguments of Max Weber, Jean Baudrillard and Michael Maffesoli. First seen in the work of Chamber (Muggleton and Weinzierl, 2003), the post-subcultural approach has contributed to youth theory by showing how the advent of post-industrialisation and unstructured free time have resulted in a 'clubbing culture', capable of dissolving structural division such as class, race and gender (Blackman, 2005; Readhead, 1993). The creation of 'youth scenes', 'neo-tribes' and 'lifestyles' has contributed to an understanding of youth as a creative and fluid force.

According to Blackman (2005), there are two main stances identified within the post-subcultural paradigm: the first is a challenge to CCCS theoretical conventions by subcultural theorists who propose that subcultures should be seen in terms of club cultures; the second is a complete rejection of the term subculture. It is argued that subcultures should not be seen in political terms but instead as a form of escapism or resistance, often afforded by drug use.

David Muggleton conceptualises DIY technocultural youth formations, in which technocultures are concerned with 'surface' and self-authentication and exist outside the constraints of class, gender and ethnicity, which allows for subcultures to become multiple and fluid (Muggleton, 2000). Sarah Thorton's (1995b) seminal work, *Club Cultures: music, media and subcultural capital*, looks at club culture as 'taste cultures' and questions the value of authenticity and 'hipness'. Finally Andy Bennett (1999) deems the CCCS conceptualisation of subculture as unworkable and instead advocates for an

understanding of modern lifestyles in which notions of identity are 'constructed' rather than 'given', and 'fluid' rather than 'fixed'.

Post-subcultural theory can be critiqued for its neglect of class experience and its reluctance to consider the effects of marginality, alienation and subordination. While post-subcultural theory

presupposes the ability of youths to 'afford' free time and capital to participate in youth 'scenes' and 'lifestyles', it fails to acknowledge that although this picture may ring true for some young people, the majority are still burdened on a daily basis with their (large or small) share of housework and minding younger siblings, homework and, for an overwhelming number, part-time or casual jobs, which severely restrict their opportunity for free time (Hendry et al, 1993). For many young people an uneven distribution of economic resources affects their ability to participate in youth culture, with those who have scarce economic capital unable to fully participate in expensive endeavours such as attendance at concerts and clubs (for example, see Martin 2009).

Youth at risk and the risk society

Youth is often constructed alongside the notion of 'becoming': becoming an adult, independent and mature. Australia has reflected this by approaching youth policy through youth development. Youth development in its language and manner always places young people in the future, and their importance in their value as future cultural and social capital (White and Wyn, 2004). Youth development constructs the attainment of adulthood as a gradual process of independence achieved through passing key milestones. Youth seen as in danger of failing this process are labelled 'at risk'.

Unlike subcultural and post-subcultural theory, the concept of 'risk' explains youth experience and powerlessness from an individualistic perspective, almost always constructed to personalise the risk to the individual's future (Kelly, 2001). However risk is not always viewed in the same manner by youth theorists. As stated previously, proponents of the risk society see risk as an external influence on the young person's behaviour. Discourses surrounding youth 'at risk' on the other hand, while overlooking class, gender and race as central to understanding youth position and behaviours within society, opt instead to treat 'risk' as an individualised choice and responsibility which exists outside these parameters (Kelly, 2001).

Furthermore, discourses surrounding youth 'at risk' are framed by the idea that youth should be a transition from normal childhood to normal adulthood (Kelly, 2001). Hence any youth

behaviour and attitude can be labelled as 'at risk' and subjected to rigorous scrutiny. 'At risk' discourses are described as being centred on two key parameters – a 'humanistic concern', encompassing issues of harm, danger, care and support, and an 'economic concern', focused on the benefits of identifying risk factors and at-risk populations, and the costs of mobilizing interventions on the basis of these (Withers and Batten, 1995). Many young people are constructed as being at risk in terms of deviance, delinquency and a general lack of adult qualities such as maturity.

However, proponents of the risk society would suggest that the risk, rather than residing in the young person's behaviour or being posed by a lack of qualities, actually lays in the extreme changes which our late modern society has undertaken. According to transition theory, for young people to be granted adult status there are three interrelated transitions which must be achieved: the move from school to work; from the family of origin to the family of destination; and from the parental home to an independent household (Coles, 1995). However, research conducted by Hillman and Marks (2002) for the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has shown that the once relatively simple transition 'from education to full-time employment, to moving out of home and into home ownership, from 'singledom' to marriage is no longer the norm for young people' (Hillman and Marks, 2002:31). This has prompted a rethinking of new markers of adulthood.

The ACER report holds that many of the 'old' milestones are no longer being reached by young people as they once were. This 'failure' is said to be occurring due to the changing face of Australian youth's economic and cultural position. The findings of the ACER report come as little surprise: since 1995, full-time youth employment has not increased, meaning that many young people are finding it ever more difficult to make the basic transition from school to work. In fact, as many as 10% of males and 19% of females are at risk of not finding full-time employment within five years of leaving school (the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2006:3). This would suggest that failure to meet these milestones does not reside with the young person but can instead, as suggested by proponents of the risk society, be explained due to the weakening of the traditional links between family, school, work and family of destination.

Failing at school

The roots of school-led intervention for youths at risk can be traced back to functionalist approaches to education. Early functionalist theories such as those of Talcott Parsons (1959) see the school as a bridge between the family and society, which socialises young people into their future adult roles. Parsons also assumes that innate intelligence can be used to explain the unequal educational outcomes of young people (Nilan et tal*,* 2007). According to Parsons, schools also support the needs of the economy, by teaching particular skills as needed by the marketplace, and by channelling young people into appropriate work outcomes according to their 'capacities'.

The idea that schooling somehow represents a meritocracy whereby young people from disadvantaged backgrounds fail academically due to an irrevocable inferiority attributed to their IQ and genetics and which destines them for blue collar jobs has been greatly contested by Marxists (Nilan et al*,* 2007). Functionalist arguments have been criticised in favour of explanations of school failure which are centred on class as a dividing force, exacerbated by the lack of relevance of the school curriculum to working class youth (for example see Willis, 1977). This conceptualisation attempts to explain difference in academic achievement as a form of resistance from working class young people against the discrepancies they perceive within the educational system.

Despite the existence of alternative theories, the Australian educational system continues to adopt a functionalist perspective to explain the school failure of working class youth as an individual problem. According to Valencia (1997) three different cultural explanations can be distinguished for the failings of the poor in the school system: deprivation, inadequate socialisation, and accumulated environmental deficits.
The cultural deprivation theory came into prominence in the 1960s: primarily a sociological and anthropological theory, it attempts to explain the failure of working class youth not as a genetic shortcoming, but by reference to a cultural background antagonistic toward schooling.

Cultural deprivation theory is heavily rooted in Oscar Lewis's (1959) work, *Five Families*. Lewis followed five working class Mexican families through their day-to-day activities and documented their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. He produced compelling evidence of a 'culture of the poor', which rejected schooling alongside the rest of the dominant culture's social, economic and political life (Valencia, 2007). According to Lewis, children from these families are indoctrinated from an early age into a 'culture of poverty', entrenching them to lifelong disadvantage.

The inadequate socialisation model is a slightly different approach to school failure, which argues at its core that the failure of the young person, far from being a personal or genetic attribute, can be attributed to a failure of the family. Family life in this theory is portrayed as abusive and neglectful, thus failing to correctly socialise the child by fault of the parent's 'culture'. According to this theory, the poor's lack of proper stability leads to 'character disorders and arrested development' (Valencia, 1997:134) guaranteeing their inability to attain the appropriate motivation and values necessary for educational achievement (Douglas, 1964). An example of such a character disorder is craving immediate gratification rather than being able to tolerate the delayed gratification that is needed to succeed in school (Valencia, 2007; Nilan et al, 2007).

The accumulated deficits theory postulates that environmental deficits and lack of nurturing from a young age means a lack of development leading to 'cognitive deficits' (Valencia, 1997) which will in time severely affect the ability of the young person to compete in the school environment.

In Australia, the adoption of cultural deficit approaches has resulted in various programs to identify youths 'at risk'. One of these is the Flame Tree complex, which was established in 2002 at a high school in the Illawarra region. This project specifically targets youth with 'problematic behaviour … which would otherwise slip off the educational radar' and boasts of its ability to provide a 'nurturing' environment akin to a 'functional family' (Shaw, 2010:24). Flame Tree and its associated projects, while worthwhile, unfortunately still hold at their core functionalist ideologies of cultural deficit which emphasise misbehaviour as a personal

problem, blaming the young person rather than the system. In short, these types of programs attempt to correct the incorrect socialisation of young people by exposing disadvantaged youths to the values and experiences required for academic achievement (Nilan et al, 2007) such as the teaching of expected behaviour, and the value of education.

The deficit approach has been criticised as a 'victim blaming' response, which fails to see that school disengagement and dropping out are not a result of a fault within the student's culture or an at risk practice, but are instead the result of the capitalist economic construction of the educational system, the privileging of the upper classes' knowledge and a show of resistance to the inequality of education by disadvantaged youths (see Chapter 3).

The changes to the labour force, including the demand for flexible employment, the devaluing of unskilled labour and the demand for educated workers has meant that young people have remained dependent on their family for longer (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). This has meant that changes affecting the labour market in late modernity have affected the ability of young people to follow traditional pathways to become independent adults (such as the transition of school to work) in a relatively smooth manner. For these young people, the inability to leave school for full-time employment has meant that they have become 'refugees in the school system' (Wyn and White, 1997), leading to a generation of disinterested and underachieving youth, prone to unruly and sometimes delinquent behaviour. Further, the lack of youth employment has had a knock on effect on other milestones, such as moving away from home, creating delays in transitions and 'adulthood' achievement.

The delay, and indeed the possibility of non-achievement of adulthood, has become a source of much concern for government and welfare agencies. According to Kelly (2001) discourses surrounding 'at risk' provide a narrative technique for attempting to regulate the behaviour and character of young people. For Giddens (1991), risk meta-narratives are always about the colonisation of the future, and the constant monitoring of young people's behaviours for any perceived danger to the successful accomplishment of the youth-adult transition. This has set up the parallel concepts of 'at risk' and 'mainstream'. The idea of youth 'at risk' has led to

institutionalised intervention (by schools and social welfare organizations amongst others) to deal with any 'failures' and to return young people, if possible, to the 'mainstream'.

However, discourses of youth at risk overlook the reasons for the delays in transition which reside with forces outside a young person's control, thus individualising risk and ascribing failure to the young person's disposition rather than what can be seen to be the outcome of societal trends.

Welfare agencies and youth in Australia

Welfare agencies are another sector which attempts to explain youth through at risk discourses. The idea of a welfare state rests upon the 'application of democratic values and principles of equality and fairness to the decisions of governments in the allocation of resources through redistribution of the economic surplus generated by the economy' (Jamrozik, 2009;159). Welfare interventions for youth at risk are primarily based on an economic principal, which explains interventions in terms of savings to communities: 'early' identification helps young people to become well-adjusted, socially contributing individuals, and thereby lessens costs in the future.

Welfare agencies operate within the parameters of youth development and thus attempt to ensure that young people acquire the cognitive, social and emotional skills with which to navigate life. The great majority of the programs deployed by Youth Development Officers and Youth Workers alike hold as a central concern the development of youths through milestones, such as completion of educational training, engagement in the workplace, appropriate observance of social norms and expectations, and above all the achievement of a fluid transition from youth into adulthood. Welfare agencies, and in particular Youth Services, can be seen to be the practical manifestation of society's interest in returning youths 'at risk' to the mainstream. There is also economic interest attached to the normalisation of young people. As suggested by Kelly (2001;25) there is a current attempt by neoliberal governments

to create youths who are 'rational, choice-making citizens (to-be), who are responsible for their future life'.

Accordingly, welfare agencies centre their attention on programs which are reactive rather than proactive, designed under the guise of 'correct choice', but aimed at keeping young people 'off the streets' (and instead in places such as drop-in centres), channelling them into formal education or work, or attempting to re-socialise the young person with activities such as 'life skills' programs to assist their 'reintegration' into the mainstream. These can be seen in part as complying with the interests of funding agencies and the requirements imposed in order to gain funding. In Australia welfare agencies serve governments as a way of keeping poverty and disadvantage away from public scrutiny by addressing perceived problem populations (Jamrozik, 2009). This, coupled with the increased dependence on funding from government bodies such as the Department of Community Services (DoCS) and Family Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) (arguably the two largest funding bodies), has meant that these agencies have become integral in implementing government policy, and act as the 'the human face of the government of the day' (Jamrozik, 2009:136).

Due to the close association between government interest and funding of projects, a very large percentage of youth welfare programs are funded on a short- to midterm basis (usually between 1 and 3 years). This means that a large percentage of youth agencies (Community Links Wollondilly is one example), not only continuously cycle through programs catering to the needs of youth, but also cycle through their Youth Workers. As a result, any real relationship between the young people and the welfare agencies is at best short-lived. The short-term outlook also sets many welfare programs up to fail, as they are only able to provide short-term answers for problems requiring long-term measures. An example of this can be seen in the Community Links Wollondilly 'Youth Connections' outreach program, which was discontinued when funding ran out.

Family

While welfare agencies and schools are important in the overall discourses of young people at risk, these institutions are seen as only secondary to the family. Much of the discourse surrounding youth 'at risk' concentrates on possible shortcomings of youths as consequences of a deficit in socialisation, and attempts to make the family responsible for its perceived failure to create a well-adjusted individual (Wyn and White, 1997). In Australia, there has been a pervasive rhetoric of blaming the family (either partially or exclusively) for the apparent failures of their young. Deficit theories attempt to demonstrate that a lack of cohesion, nurturing or socialisation within the family unit can be a negative force that impacts a young person's future prospects, resulting in deviant behaviour, disengagement and 'at risk' activities. In 1992, the Western Australian Legislative Assembly cited family environment as one of the major categories for risk that can jeopardize 'the achievement of, or transition to, healthy adult functioning' by young people (Colthart, 1996:32). Such interpretations of risk clearly aim to accentuate the family as the primary site of socialization, and attempt to highlight its failure to correctly 'instruct' their young people with acceptable values, attitudes and forms of behaviour, placing the blame for disengagement and deviance outside the inequalities created by the current social and economic system.

As shown by the ACER report (Hillman and Marks, 2002), family formation is no longer a linear movement from family of origin to family of destination, but may in fact move back and forth in a variety of living arrangements including cohabitation, multiple de-facto relationships and/or marriage (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997), rendering much of the current discourse inadequate and outdated. The youth at risk model has created an overly pessimistic attitude whereby 'at risk' behaviour is seen as 'epidemic' and as a result places some young people as holders of a 'glorious' future and others as social problems. Astroth (1993), with a nod to Lofquist, observes that a reliance on a deficit-focused, diagnosed problem model to frame youth behaviour has promoted a narrow as well as negative view of young people. Instead he calls for a shift toward a condition-focused, resiliency model that recognizes and supports the strengths of youths, rather than focusing on their weaknesses.

A new paradigm to explain youth

As stated previously, the term 'youth' should be seen as a complex system of meanings and inferences about who young people are, and what their place is within society. Adults construct youth as a category, and its conceptualisation is often permeated by society's expectations of what young people ought to be rather than who they are. Young people hold an ambiguous place within society, no longer children, but not yet adults, and this ambivalent position proves to be not only youth's greatest asset, but also its greatest disadvantage.

On the one hand, being conceptualised as 'youths' gives young people unparalleled freedom to engage in varied forms of expression through subcultural adoption. On the other, their subordinate status, coupled with the often rebellious nature of subcultural styles, constantly produces them as problematic and in need of adult surveillance and control. Youth has become a significant focus of study over the last eighty years, attracting attention from varied fields in an attempt to understand their experience. Youth theory has often argued on behalf of young people, rather than allowing them to directly engage in discussion, leading to researchers ignoring the complexities of youth everyday life and constructing young people as subjects of study rather than active participants. The result has been misconceptions about youth experience.

When examined closely, all three theories of youth presented above have pitfalls which limit their usefulness as lenses of investigation for the particular needs of this research. While the CCCS provided interesting theories of youth social grouping, including the acknowledgement of class experience as a dividing force, their dismissal of gender as a category which influences youth life meant that young women were often constructed as 'appendages' of their male counterparts within subcultural formations (McRobbie and Garber, 1977), disavowing not only the involvement and contribution of young females within subculture, but also female-specific subcultural formations (see Chapter 3). Furthermore their preoccupation with stylistic 'authenticity' meant that many subcultural groupings were perceived as not 'genuine'.

Similarly, while post-subcultural understandings of consumer culture and their production of fluid and hybrid forms of subcultural belonging has merit, their rejection of class precludes the inclusion of their theory as a lens for this study. The most significant shortcoming of current post-subcultural youth theory is the limited conceptualisation of youth being characterised only by behaviour or consumption, which some such as Hesmondhalgh (2005) have labelled a glorification of consumerism. Not all youths are engaged in subcultures, scenes or lifestyles, and not all young people have the ability to 'hedonistically' engage with consumer culture, given that economic capital continues to be unequally distributed within society. Post-subcultural theory can be faulted for its elitisms because it considers youth lives and experiences of the upper and middle classes, leaving those without the economic capital to participate within the consumer culture conveniently unaccounted for. Functionalist explanations of youth culture render young people as victims of the system rather than as active participants in the construction of their own reality. Theories of cultural deprivation, deficit or at risk promote a view of young people as little more than casualties of their surroundings and in constant need of guidance and support. The Chicago School's construction of a single homogenous group belies the complexity of young cultural formation. Young people, just as adults, are divided not only by class and gender, but also by separating cultural forces including beliefs and attitudes. Just as in adult culture, youth culture is set along hierarchical lines, whereby a young person's affiliation with a particular subculture or even with the parent culture will imbue them with a certain status and power which can be used to 'bargain' in their cultural life.

Youth theory's narrow classification and understanding of youths as a homogenous group, appendages to an opposite gender, as engaged in 'at risk behaviour', belonging to 'scenes', 'lifestyles' and 'subcultures' or engaging in spectacular consumerism, fails to explain the position or life chances of those who do not engage in these activities. The failure of traditional youth theory to take account of wider aspects of youth experience, as well as issues of class, gender and ethnicity, means that a new way to conceptualise youth is needed. One paradigm which addresses the gaps left by traditional youth theory is that of social capital.

Social capital, rather than explaining social life through behaviour, explains it through the constraints and possibilities afforded by networking. As a result, unlike subcultural theory, social capital allows for *all* behaviour, rather than just 'spectacular' behaviour, to have meaning and to be understood in terms of power. Unlike post-subcultural theory, social capital allows for the understanding of class, culture and gender as impacting forces upon a young person's ability to participate in youth culture and the wider culture. And finally, social capital, unlike youth at- risk theories, does not frame young people in terms of future potential, but allows for young people to be valued in the here and now. Furthermore, social capital, in a similar way to theories of the risk society, allows for a deep understanding of how changes in late modernity affect the lives of young people.

As explained in more depth in the following chapters, networking has become of interest for researchers because of the possibilities it affords the individual of social and material 'benefits' which can be used in times of need. By explaining youth social life in this manner, social capital opens up new possibilities for examining the potentials and complexities of youth social life and how these affect the chances of young people to get on and get ahead in life. Through the lens of social capital, youth culture can cease to be defined purely by aspects of behaviour and instead be grounded in the potentials of class, culture and gender, which allows for the fullness of youth experience to be taken into consideration. In order to understand how social capital can help explain the concept of youth, it is necessary to first understand social capital. In the next chapter, I will explain social capital as a concept, followed by an account of youth social capital in action.

Chapter 2

Social Capital

A brief history of social capital

Defining social capital is difficult. Alexis de Tocqueville (1840) first used the concept in his discussion of American associations. In his argument, de Tocqueville was predominantly concerned with the ability for group action and, in particular, how people work together to create change. Yet the idea failed to 'catch' and it took a further eighty years for scholars to once again grapple with this notion. The term 'social capital' was first coined by Lida Judson Hanifan when writing on rural communities in West Virginia in 1916 (Ostrom, 2003; Putnam, 2000). In his work, Hanifan used social capital to define what he saw as 'the good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among individuals and families who makeup a social unit' (Ostrom and Ahn, 2003:22).

Since then, sociologists, economists and political scientists have integrated the concept of social capital into academic thinking, using it to explain and find solutions for many problems, including poverty, disengagement and crime. Contributions to the understanding of social capital have come from social policy, economics, education and even town planning, with notable contributions by Jane Jacobs (1961), who used the term to explain the role of individuals as 'watchful eyes' in maintaining social cohesion in big cities and decreasing crime. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) conceptualised social capital for the first time as a tool of power and class division in his essay *The Forms of Capital*. James S. Coleman (1988) examined the consolidation of social capital in education as a way of reducing high school dropout rates, and Robert Putnam finally placed the concept of social capital on the social agenda in *Making Democracy Work* (1993) and *Bowling Alone* (2000).

Different academic disciplines have conceptualised social capital in different ways. What constitutes social capital, as well as its value, remain topics of much debate. No two disciplines agree on what defines social capital, how it should be measured, or whether it is a property of an individual or a community. For example, some sociologists seem to understand social

capital from an individualistic perspective, as sets of power relations stemming from network connections, which give individuals the ability to influence not only their own future but also those around them. Networking is seen as the ability to coax others to accept and uphold belief systems and social norms in order to maintain relationships with other more influential persons (for example see Bourdieu 1986). From an economic standpoint, social capital stabilises local economies, facilitates cooperative action and lowers legal costs (Putnam, 2000). Within social policy, social capital is a tool which allows a community to come together to solve problems in all aspects of civil life as well as to organise, create and participate in community. In this view, individuals acting collectively help reduce crime, increase community health, wellbeing and participation, and boost community cohesion (Stone and Hughes, 2002:1).

Furthermore, the ontological status of social capital has generated problems regarding its definition, operationalisation and measurement (Willems, 2007). The concept of social capital involves subtle and complex causal mechanisms involving the impacts of class, culture, gender, trust/reciprocity and social norms on networks and network interaction (this will be discussed in more depth in later chapters). As such, many of the mechanisms operating within the fostering and reproduction of social capital are not readily quantifiable or even fully observable, making them problematic when analysing the social capital of an individual.

There is also considerable contention within the social capital literature as to whether social capital is a resource of the community or of the individual, or of both, as suggested by the findings of The World Bank Social Development Family Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network (1998) and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) (2001). This lack of consensus is twofold, with little agreement on what the benefits of social capital are or on how it should be measured: at the individual or the community level; by aggregating information collected directly from individuals; from secondary data; or from information collected from large-scale national surveys. Nevertheless, what can be gleaned from these arguments is that as a resource, social capital has specific individual benefits: assisting people to find employment, increasing reputation and status, and

easing entry into other more important networks in addition to enormous collective normative potential.

Social capital can be seen as the aggregate of actual or potential resources existing within networks. These are the resources which generate the ability of the individual to get on or get ahead in life and which give 'value' to social capital. Networks are characterized by social norms, trust and reciprocity, which enable interactions between individuals. Conceptualising social capital in this way allows for social capital to be seen as a multi-dimensional concept comprising the following: both individual and community networks, which are rooted in human interaction; trust, which creates the basis for social capital to function and be fostered; and social norms, encompassing not only reciprocity but also the moral values and beliefs present within any one community (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993, 1995; Stone, 2001). We will now look at each in turn.

Networks

Networks are fostered as a part of human interaction. When contact occurs between individuals, they form new networks or nurture already established ties, which become valuable 'reciprocity' for future use. For example, neighbours who have over time developed a relationship will find that they are better able to deal with problems that may arise in an amicable manner than those who have had little if any interaction. Networking happens at many different levels, from helping a colleague at work to intimate family discussions at the dinner table. Each network interaction will afford the individual a different set of ties which can be used as needed. The ties present in networks are found in two guises: vertical ties, or those which cut across class and gender systems, and horizontal ties, which connect individuals of homogenous backgrounds. The network relationships created by these ties vary in strength and utility (Woolcock, 1998) generating bonding and bridging social capital.

Bonding social capital is made up of strong ties found primarily in familial and close peer groups, and it generates the deepest ties between individuals (Adhikari, 2008). It is primarily

used as a resource 'to get by'. Horizontal in their nature, these ties tend to be found mainly in homogenous groups of individuals.

Bridging social capital is found in informal and formal networks between individuals of socially dissimilar groups (de Souza Briggs, 2003:2). These ties are weaker than bonding ties and are mainly used as a way of getting ahead, as in the case of individuals looking for work or seeking business partnerships. These ties are vertical because interactions take place between individuals of different class and status systems.

A development in recent times has been the identification of a third form of social capital, known as linking social capital. Linking social capital, unlike bonding and bridging social capital, is said to occur in networking with individuals in positions of authority (Stone, 2003), and refers to the sets of relationships between groups and individuals of different social strata in 'a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups' (Office for National Statistics, 2001:11). Linking social capital is, then, a hierarchical set of vertical ties which can be used by the individual to gain resources or power and exert influence.

At this point the similarities between bridging and linking social capital warrant further examination. Upon inspection, linking and bridging ties can be seen to be, in their nature, one and the same. Linking ties are what enable groups to leverage resources from formal institutions beyond the community (Woolcock, 2001). It has been claimed that these ties, unlike bonding and bridging, work in a power hierarchy and thus need to be conceptualised separately, but viewing bridging ties (and bonding for that matter) as non-hierarchical or able to exert power or influence is in essence naïve.

An example which can elucidate the hierarchical nature of bridging ties can be seen in the networking between members sitting on the board of any community or interest group. While on the outside these groups may seem cohesive and non-hierarchical, one only needs to look at research undertaken on group 'politics' to realise the complexity of the power struggles found in these arenas.

As a result, for the purpose of this thesis, this broader conceptualisation of bridging ties as hierarchical will be used.

Trust

The primary function of networks is their production and reproduction of trust between individuals. For individuals to network with each other there needs to be a measure of belief that what the other person is saying is in fact truthful. Without this trust, to operate and network outside the immediate familial group would be almost impossible. Some measure of trust must exist between individuals who makeup a community for social capital to be fostered. Trust is what smooths out human relations, allowing people to take part in agreements, share resources and rely upon one another. In short, trust is one of the most important components of social capital, being not only a precursor to a successful network, but also an important by-product of networking.

Trust occurs in two guises: 'thick' trust and 'generalised' thrust. Thick trust is the trust placed on individuals with whom one shares bonding networks, such as close friends and family. It is what allows individuals to share precious resources, their time, money and reputation, and it is demonstrated by such actions as leaving one's children with others, or lending a friend a vehicle to run errands. Thick trust is the trust bestowed on an individual after successful close networking has been undertaken over time. Generalised trust, on the other hand, is the type of trust stemming from bridging networks. Generalised trust is the type of trust placed on individuals with whom one may only have had a very brief networking history. It is the trust shared with most members of the community and manifests itself as the expectation of individuals through regular experience that others are honest (Fukuyama, 1995). Putnam (2000) regards generalised trust as having the highest benefit for a community as it allows trust between individuals of all groups within a society. As such, generalised trust has become intricately linked with stronger social cohesion, higher population health and lower transaction costs (Putnam, 1993:200).

Social norms

Culture sets the frameworks for accepted behaviour amongst members of a society and it is comprised of the moral systems, as well as laws, customs and knowledge base existing in a society. Social norms are sets of values and expectations shared by a community. These norms influence the actions and behaviours of those individuals who belong to the community by providing people with a 'template' in which to mould behaviour, by encouraging certain actions over others. Social norms are social expectation which express the appropriateness or inappropriateness of our actions or those of others (for example see Bourdieu 1986). They are what permit the process of trust to occur and social capital to be fostered. For example, in most societies, people consider it morally wrong to harm others for personal gain, and morally right to help those in need. Therefore the norm is not to cause undue harm. Although it may appear on the surface that the process of trust formation and social capital accumulation is based on moral dilemmas or built on the presumption of selfless actions, this is not so. As Putnam (2000) asserts, social capital is not only short-term altruism but also born from long-term self-interest (2000:21). Individuals expect to gain a certain amount of reward for 'good actions', though it may not be obvious or immediate. For example, one expects that when helping a friend move house, the friend will return the favour when one needs help. Social norms are what keep a community together, but norms are also created by culture, just as they help to shape culture itself. Norms and cultural practices embody a circular process in which they continue to create and recreate our social world, and that which builds trust in a community may differ between groups. In short, norms are the set of shared expectations, views and cultural practices that allow for smooth communal living. Without norms, reasonable expectations about others' behaviour could not exist, rendering the formation of trust impossible.

Networking is not a stand-alone social process. As shown by Bourdieu (1986) it is affected by the individual's position in a matrix of class, culture and gender. Class, culture and gender are independent yet interlocking systems which function to increase or decrease an individual's chances to foster and reproduce social capital. As a result, the issues arising from an

individual's life position in relation to these categories will be carefully considered when conceptualising the definition and measurement of social capital in what follows.

In considering the impact of class, gender and culture on social capital fostering and reproduction, it is important to reflect on whether these are distinct or interrelated variables. While class, gender and culture are indeed interrelated in many ways, there is a definite advantage to treating each one independently from the others. By separating these categories, a range of questions arise about their impact and the consequences of this impact upon social capital.

In the following section, we will look at each of these social categories, their impact on social capital, and the consequences of those impacts.

Effects of class, culture and gender on social capital structure

As indicated above, class, culture and gender affect the ability of an individual to reproduce and foster social capital. In fact, these areas of life may represent the biggest advantages or hurdles for an individual when attempting to form reciprocal networks. Table 1 below shows the expected structure of an individual's networks, depending on their levels of economic, cultural and gendered resources. It proposes that individuals who have lower stocks of these resources will more commonly show large levels of homogeneity in their networks as well as having fewer chances to bridge.

Table 1 - Characteristics of social capital

Impacting Forces	Low levels of resources or Homogeneity	High levels of resources or Heterogeneity
Class	Sparse networks and same class background. Networks used to meet everyday needs of life. Scarce economic resources.	Extensive networks from different backgrounds. Networking used for upward mobility. Economic resources are plentiful.
Cultural	Cultural resources are limited and can tend to be of a 'subcultural' nature. May show reduced levels of educational achievements.	Cultural resources are varied and tend to follow dominant patterns of cultural attainment. Educational patterns are complete and may be of high level.
Gendered	Characterised by horizontality. Shows mistrust and generalisations about individuals of opposite gender. May show low levels of formal and informal volunteerism.	Networks show horizontality as well as verticality. Shows trust in opposite gender and no generalisations are made. May show high levels of formal and informal volunteerism.

However, as it stands, this table possesses severe limitations. On the one hand, the deterministic nature of the categories imply that the individual has little choice over his or her life circumstances, and thus, is unable to navigate outside class and circumstance. On the other it only presents 'ideal' forms of social capital, rather than allowing for the difference which can be expected in a population.

The lack of agency ascribed to individuals by deterministic models of social capital has meant that little consideration continues to be given to subversive forms of social capital and the benefits it engenders for those possessing it (for example see De Sousa Briggs, 1997; Bullen

and Kenway, 2001; Botrell 2008). This has resulted in individuals, whose circumstances may be perceived as less than 'ideal', being labelled as social capital deficient (I will discuss this in depth in later chapters). Furthermore, it must be noted that most individuals will show a mixture of these 'ideal' categories within their social capital structures, and that the 'mix' represent the overall social capital potential which the individual possess.

Nonetheless, for researchers, this table can help elucidate the roles class, culture and gender play within social capital formation and reproduction in an individual's life. It can show how our class, culture and gender can affect not only the value of social capital, but also the chances that we have to foster and reproduce it.

Economic capital and issues of class

The ability to foster and reproduce social capital may be more reliant upon having the 'right' background than having the 'right' network. Current theoretical understandings of social networks seem, for the most part, to underestimate the impact that class can have on social capital formation and reproduction. The relationship between class and social capital is of particular importance for two reasons: on the one hand, social capital has been demonstrated to help individuals navigate disadvantage by providing crucial physical and psychological resources which the individual can use to get on in life (Grootaert, 2001; Warr, 2005); and on the other, social networking can act as a stepping stone for social mobility.

Social capital is an important asset in the procurement of life needs. For most individuals, the ability to meet the minimal needs of life is an imperative, but the reality is that many individuals cannot rely on economic resources alone to meet these needs. Social capital has been shown to help individuals to get by and to achieve upward mobility by allowing access to resources at a number of levels. At a bridging level, Van Bastelaer (2000) has shown that social capital in poor societies can help individuals gain entry into 'rotating' saving or credit associations, or to gain credit with financial institution on the basis of 'social collateral' by allowing reputation to take on the role of traditional physical or financial securities. The strong support networks provided by social capital have been convincingly shown to help

disadvantaged individuals to get on in life by providing access to daily necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and emotional support in times of need. Bonding and bridging networks can provide some of the most important resources for impoverished individuals, allowing them to navigate through social disadvantage.

Individuals from highly disadvantaged backgrounds will often show a scarcity of both bonding and bridging networks (see Table 1). This presents a problem, as these individuals not only have less chance to enter new and more lucrative networks, but also face a restriction to the flow of resources due to their lack of bridging capital (Warr, 2005). Their small bonding networks are relied upon almost exclusively to provide the vast majority of resources in order to get on in life, often leading to what can be termed social capital fatigue. Social capital fatigue sets in when individuals continually access the same networks without the ability to replenish them. According to Warr, the recurring utilisation of the same bonding networks by impoverished individuals can 'become more burdensome than the potential benefits that can be delivered' (2005:287) helping to further entrench, rather than dispel, disadvantage. For this reason, individuals who have the ability to access a more extensive set of networks are usually better able to negotiate poverty or social disadvantage by being able to draw from a larger pool of resources, helping to lessen social capital fatigue as well as increasing an individual's chances of social mobility.

According to Nilan et al (2007), social mobility refers to the capacity of an individual to move upward or downwards between class systems, and is typically defined by occupational ranking. Upward mobility is frequently assisted by an individual's social capital, and in particular their bridging networks (Halpern, 2005; Slomczynski and Tomescu-Dubrow, 2005), which can help access job opportunities or contacts. It is worth noting that many social capital theorists, for example Putnam (2000), have suggested the fostering of bridging ties to be superior to bonding. According to Putnam, both bridging and bonding social capital can be seen as 'magic wands'; however bridging social capital is like a 'golden wand' (and thus a desirable outcome of networking) and is needed to solve some of 'our biggest collective problems' (Putnam, 2000:361) by its creation of inclusive networks comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds. In contrast, bonding social capital is like an 'aluminium wand' (Putnam, 2000;

361), and thus a less desirable outcome of networking, able only to 'bolster our narrow selves', causing strong in-group loyalty and strong out-group antagonism. Claims such as those of Putnam have led government bodies to place a strong emphasis upon the fostering of bridging ties within communities. To this end, many artificial mechanisms or programs have been deployed to increase networking among individuals with little regard for how socioeconomic factors may affect the process and final outcomes.

As discussed above, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds characteristically foster lower quantities of bridging networks (Onix and Bullen, 2001; Stone, 2003; Warr, 2005) than their more affluent counterparts. One of the ways governments have addressed this has been through the creation of mentoring programs. During the past decade mentoring programs have become increasingly popular and widespread, particularly in relation to young people. The promise of mentoring programs as social capital facilitators rests on two assumptions: that entry into certain social networks can be achieved by the aid of a mediator, and that the individual will have acquired, through their mentor, the ability to maintain the reciprocal relationship. Interest in mentoring programs has been fuelled significantly by the belief that the positive relationships formed between individuals within a mentoring partnership (even in the short term) can be sufficient to help promote social cohesion and enhance the viability of bridging ties, particularly for individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The benefits stemming from mentoring relationships for impoverished individuals are often seen in terms of positive long-term advantages, such as better connectedness with community and enhanced employment or career development opportunities. However, it should not be assumed that mentoring programs reliably produce positive long-term outcomes for the individual. In their study of mentoring programs for young people, Grossman and Rhodes (2002) found that due to the complexity of relationships present in mentoring, it is likely that the benefits of mentoring emerge only after long periods of time, and as such, shorter mentoring experiences may be more harmful than helpful.

Mentoring relationships cannot be equated with group membership. Members of groups must regulate the access of others to membership of a group so as to minimise the possibility of lapses which could threaten the group's social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). More dominant members will often oversee the 'induction' of new members and assess them for suitability.

Thus entry to new networks and particularly those that yield high benefits, is jealously guarded through social closure (Bourdieu, 1986), usually regulated through the possession of institutionalized cultural capital (such as possession of qualifications, family name, or other specific cultural capital). Social closure can thus present a further problem for persons from impoverished backgrounds. As can be appreciated from Table 1, lack of economic resources can also mean a lack of cultural capital and social status.

Social status can be a restrictive (or enabling) force on an individual's chances to network. As a limiting force, social status is closely related to Bourdieu's (1984) conceptualisation of cultural capital. Bourdieu developed his theories of social stratification based on aesthetic taste in *Distinction (1984)*. In this work Bourdieu asserts that taste (such as in food, culture and art) can be seen as an indicator of class. Consumption trends follow patterns within different social strata, which are directly determined by the combination of the varying degrees of social, economic, and cultural capital possessed by the individual. According to Bourdieu, 'taste' is as much a product of social coercion and cultural position as of the ability to afford 'spare time' in which to pursue 'cultivation'. Thus 'cultivation' is not something which is easily acquired or evenly distributed among society, rather, it is heavily reliant on social position and economic capacity, something that individuals from impoverished backgrounds lack.

For impoverished individuals, then, a lack of cultural resources usually results in stigmatization, as poverty is seen as a lack of character or culture by the 'non-poor' (Warr, 2005), rather than the result of social inequality. Hence these individuals will often find their lack of 'cultivation' a barrier to networking, and this can at times mean the formation of alternative forms of cultural capital with which to navigate their social situation.

Culture

Cultural capital plays a significant role in defining the structure of an individual's social capital, as well as their chances of creating significant bonding and bridging networks. Economic capital has been shown to help 'lubricate' an individual's ability to access these networks and thus build up their stocks of social capital (Bourdieu 1986). However, economic capital alone cannot guarantee entry into all networks, as network belonging also rests upon possession of cultural capital. Cultural capital can be seen to extend to individuals' non-economic social assets, such as vocational achievement, which might help to promote their social mobility beyond economic means. Cultural resources and knowledge can enable or preclude an individual from accessing more lucrative networks. However, it should not be assumed that cultural capital is easily attained. Like all other forms of capital, cultural capital is unequally distributed and available to differing classes in different forms and compositions (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu first introduced the idea of social capital's power and its unequal distribution in society in *The Forms of Capital (*1986). Through his analysis of all three forms of capital (economic, cultural, and social) and their relationship to class, Bourdieu shows cultural capital is one of the central factors which define the positions and possibilities of individuals within society. Bourdieu argued that taste, an acquired 'cultural competence', is used to legitimise social differences by way of demarcating lifestyles by privileging the habitus of the upper classes. Habitus can be explained as the set of acquired patterns of thought, behaviour, and taste.

For habitus to form there must be an economic as well as time investment made by the individual or their family in cultivation. Taste, lifestyles and consumption patterns, far from being 'natural', can be seen to be the result of shared experiences between individuals of similar class systems (Western and Baxter, 2007), which express deeply held and long-lasting values that can be applied to any situation. Thus, acquired habits such as 'manners' can limit or

facilitate an individual's entry into privileged networks by way of social closure, helping to screen or censure 'undesirables'.

Censorship through habitus holds great consequence when considering the ability of impoverished individuals to form meaningful networks, as their habitus can create a very real (though sometimes invisible) barrier when they attempt to bridge with members of differing social classes. According to Featherstone (1987), habitus should not be thought of as operating purely as knowledge but is revealed also by the body, not only in terms of its physical composition in terms of size, shape and posture, but also in more subtle 'signs' such as an individual's way of walking, sitting, eating and even drinking. Breaches in protocol will reveal the individual as an 'impostor', leading to a breakdown in their networking by social censorship.

Cultural capital in its objectified form can also be seen as a barrier to successful networking between the class systems. According to Bourdieu, the physical items that are owned by individuals can also be seen as markers of class, social status, and consumption. The items which are consumed can demarcate class lifestyles 'symbolically' by helping to convey the cultural capital that their acquisition facilitates. For example, the ownership of Elvis memorabilia versus a Cezanne can differentiate between two very different class consumptions. However, possession of objectified cultural capital by ownership of a painting is not enough, as one cannot 'consume' the painting (understand its cultural meaning) unless one has the proper foundation or habitus with which to understand the cultural value.

Finally, cultural capital in its institutionalised form may present the largest barrier to bridging for impoverished individuals. Institutionalised cultural capital is represented by institutional recognition, most often in the form of academic credentials or qualifications. Institutionalised cultural capital, like embodied cultural capital, requires a large investment of time and money, for example the dedication to the pursuit of achievement (Bourdieu, 1986). However, the uneven distribution of economic capital through the classes can prove an obstacle that will preclude poorer individuals from its attainment, helping to further entrench their disadvantage. As shown in Table 1, individuals who have low economic resources will usually also show low

levels of educational attainment. To invest time in educational pursuits, an individual must have the economic resources to do so.

For many individuals, socioeconomic disadvantage may not be the sole reason for their disengagement in cultural pursuits - this can also be attributed to their habitus. The habitus of the subordinate classes has been claimed by Coleman (1988) to produce unfamiliarity with dominant class culture. This unfamiliarity, together with the systematic underprivileging of the lower class's knowledge existent within the education system,[2] can severely reduce the ability of individuals to engage in long-lasting educational pursuits.

As a result, institutionalised social capital is that which is socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed (Bourdieu, 1986), with its value derived from the length of time invested in its attainment, and its scarcity in the marketplace. This privileged form of cultivation can vest its possessor with social status and position, allowing for ease of entry into prestigious or highly lucrative circles, and making it a valuable asset when networking. The biggest challenge in the creation of cultural capital may not be simply the ability to invest time 'free' from economic necessity, as suggested by Bourdieu (1986); the neglect of the subordinate classes' knowledge in the educational system may prove a significant hurdle.

It is the difference in cultural capital, in its embodied, objectified and institutionalised forms that allows difference in class to be appreciated, privilege and difference to form, and social exclusion to become legitimised in specific circles and circumstances. It is 'status' that reduces the chances of individuals to bridge outside their social class.

Status

Status is what allows capital to become synonymous with power. Status is used by Bourdieu to explain the ways in which capital is transformed into status (O'Brien and O'Fathaigh,

[2] For an in-depth discussion of the under-privileging of the working class knowledge in the educational system see Chapter 3.

2004). It is only through status that the other forms of capital become effective and legitimate, and it is within its subtle capacity that networking occurs. It is also the symbolic power of status that allows for particular social networks to become privileged over others by the hierarchical classification of groups or classes, and by the legitimization of distinction and privilege through the strategies (both actual and symbolic) employed by individuals to distinguish themselves from other groups and place them in advantageous positions (O'Brien and O'Fathaigh, 2004). Thus Pichler and Wallace have found that patterns of social capital 'largely reflect and perpetuate the stratification patterns of the society' (2008:1), suggesting that while bridging social capital is more widespread among the high status classes, 'lower status groups tend to resort to bonding social capital alone' (Pichler and Wallace, 2008:7). This would suggest that conceptions of social capital which emphasise the importance of bridging (such as Putnam's) work to maintain rather than dispel class inequality. Following this, as shown in Table 1, members of more privileged classes have access to a wider range of networks than those of lower status in both their formal and informal networks.

Subcultural capital

Individuals from impoverished backgrounds have fewer chances to create or maintain meaningful bridging networks due to their lack of mainstream cultural capital. Many individuals create what can be termed 'subcultural' capital in order to address some of the inequalities present. Subcultural capital was first coined by Sarah Thorton in *The Social Logic of Subcultural Capital (*1995). Thornton explores and expands Bourdieu's notion of capital and distinction in order to show how youths, while lacking adult forms of cultural capital, make up for this deficit through subcultural capital. The concept of subcultural capital has become widely used in social capital research and it is now being used to understand how individuals can navigate poverty.

As a strategy for overcoming poverty, subcultural capital can be conceptualised as both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginalised position in society. As such, subcultural capital stands for an attempt by the poor to cope with and overcome their marginalisation, by deriving value from their cultural knowledge in order to achieve some

success in terms of the values and goals of the larger society. However, the cultural capital of the poor should not be reduced to a 'transmission' over generations of sets of beliefs, values, and skills which are the result of their dysfunctional subculture or culture (Bradshaw, 2006), maintaining them in an impoverished situation. It should instead be seen as the ability of impoverished individuals to create value from their cultural knowledge, to help them gain advantages within their own social situation.

Subcultural capital in this sense means the engagement in subcultural forms and signs that may attract status within an underprivileged system. Often seen as 'bad' or 'dark' capital by many social capital theorists, these subcultural forms are so named because they are seen as providing null value for society, or indeed destabilising it. For example, gang membership, which is seen as a social problem by the more privileged community, could be used by culturally impoverished individuals to bring economic gains and valuable status with which to network, outside unattainable mainstream forms.

Gender

The effect gender has on social capital reproduction has to date been largely ignored. Social capital theorists such as Putnam (1993) and Coleman (1988) have only been concerned with showing how women's contribution to the workplace has had a detrimental impact on both community cohesion and children's welfare (1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005), rather than critically evaluating how being male or female may impact on an individual's chances to form networks. Much social capital research portrays the systems of social capital reproduction - such as networking, volunteering and the transmission of trust and norms through parenting - as genderless operations, where the disparity in distribution of labour and free time between the genders is completely ignored. Men and women do not share labour and free time equally. Women still continue to shoulder the majority of responsibility for housework and child rearing, while also balancing full- or part-time jobs.

In 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) found that women on average carry out between five and fourteen hours of domestic work a week, compared to the average man,

who rarely does more than five. Findings by the Office for Women (OFW) suggest that women who have children are more likely to only work part-time in order to achieve balance between family and work obligations (Warner-Smith et al, 2008). The choice to work less hours affects women in many ways, from their immediate and future earning potential, to their ability to produce solid networks which can be used to get ahead.

The push for a market understanding of social capital as opposed to a sociological one has meant that researchers are more inclined to look at social capital as an unproblematic commodity[3], whereby individual market circumstances can be 'balanced out' by correcting the amount of social capital possessed (O'Neill and Gidengil, 2006). There has been a strong critical reaction to this trend. Theorists have now begun to point out social capital's unequal distribution between the genders, with the use of social capital in the marketplace leading the way.

Volunteering and social capital

In Australia and around the world, the benefits of formal volunteering are increasingly being recognized, with most Australian states and territories targeting volunteer engagement in their strategic plans for social development (ABS, 2006). Volunteerism is often seen as a valuable asset for society and the individual; on the one hand it provides a source of cheap labour for the community and on the other, it is said to provide important networking opportunities for individuals.

For the individual, volunteerism is said to increase feelings of community connectedness, facilitate networking opportunities, and create new skills. As a force for connectedness, volunteerism has been hailed as an important part of civil society, with Putnam considering volunteering, altruism and philanthropy as central measures of social capital. For Putnam, those who are well connected in a community are more likely to donate their time and money (2000), while those who are socially isolated show the lowest levels of volunteer engagement. For most individuals, the socializing aspect of volunteerism can be an

[3] This will be discussed in more depth in following chapters.

important enticement to participation, with the benefits accrued from socializing during volunteering happening over a period of time (Bittman and Fisher, 2006). However, what is frequently not addressed is that while volunteering can benefit both the community and the individual, the ability to volunteer is divided along gendered lines.

Gender affects many aspects of social life; volunteerism is one of these areas. According to the ABS, women are an important source of volunteerism, providing 'the backbone of the volunteer movement' (ABS, 2006), with 36% per cent of women volunteering in Australia compared to 32% of men (Volunteering Australia 2011b). Women also volunteer more hours per year (74 hours) than men (64 hours) (ABS, 2006). Against current trends of social capital theory, a higher propensity to volunteer does not mean that women have larger bridging networks than men, or that their networks are more extensive. The type of participation that men and women undertake in their volunteering activities and the types of associations which attract their volunteer efforts also seem to be divided along gender lines.

Volunteering patterns reflect a larger set of patterns in social capital fostering and reproduction, whereby men belong to core bridging networks that give them access to information about possible job and business opportunities, while women belong primarily to organizations which focus upon domestic and community affairs (McPherson and Smith-Lovin in Norris, 2003) affecting the composition of their bonding and bridging ties.[4]

These patterns are of great consequence in social capital terms. On the one hand, they show that while individuals are able to create pathways which may allow them to bridge with others in society, the nature of avenues for social capital creation, such as volunteer work, can be hierarchically set out. Hence, even in volunteer situations, men continue to occupy privileged positions which bring them the greatest benefits, while women continue to trail behind.

[4] The issues surrounding volunteering, gender and social capital during youth are taken up in depth in chapter 7.

Women in the workplace

Women in the workplace also tend to be in a position of disadvantage. Their position as primary caregivers has meant that for many, their career advancement is often put on hold in favour of caring for their family (FaCHSIA, 2009). Social capital plays an important part in achieving promotional outcomes; however, disrupted career paths mean that many women are unable to form significant bridging ties which can be used to get ahead. According to Metz and Thareneu (2001) women's career advancement can be related to the role social capital plays in the individual's access to employment mobility, which becomes increasingly more important at higher levels, where the ability to 'fit in' with colleagues and engage with others at more senior levels, particularly through mentoring, is essential in obtaining promotions. Further, Metz and Thareneu (2001) observe that women with fewer bridging networks have a greater tendency to feel isolated and find it more difficult to succeed in work environments.

Women as family carers and its impact on social capital

The role of women as carers and workers has also meant that they are under constant pressure to balance work and family. For women, this means less 'free time' that can be spent pursuing personal interests and bridging with others. Lack of free time and an increasing reliance on strong bonding social capital (particularly strong family ties) to help balance work and family responsibilities (Bezanson, 2006), results in women fostering bonding over bridging social capital. Social capital networks largely reflect the way in which women and men differ in their social roles.

McPherson and Smith-Lovin (2003) demonstrate that while American men belong to core bridging networks that give them access to information about possible jobs and business opportunities, American women belong primarily to organizations which focus upon domestic and community affairs. Accordingly, Norris (2003) suggests that time spent with work colleagues and friend leads to increases in formal associations and bridging networks, while time spent with family members and relatives, an activity usually undertaken by women, can negatively affect an individual's ability to join and participate in formal organizations.

This chapter has presented an overview of the history of social capital as well as some of its major ramifications, with particular focus on class, culture and gender. While the findings are compelling, it must be acknowledged that some of these situations may in fact be more relevant to the lives of adults than that of young people. It is important to evaluate these patterns in the light of youth life and experience, to ascertain their relevance and impact on youth social capital, rather than 'overlay' existing frameworks which may not fully articulate the complexities of youth social capital formation and reproduction. This will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Class, Culture and Gender: How does Social Capital Affect Youth?

Class effects on bonding and bridging networks

The development of social capital is claimed to greatly benefit young people. Theorists such as Coleman (1988), Putnam (2000), Stevens et al (2007), and Bassani (2007) believe social capital generates many benefits, including helping to increase school retention rates, promote resilience, improve health, increase a sense of identity, promote family understanding, lower levels of delinquency and increase a feeling of place within a community.

According to de Sousa Briggs (1998), social capital plays two very important roles in the life of the individual: social support to get by and cope, and social leverage to get ahead and achieve upward mobility. Similarly for Stevens et al (2007), for a young person, the extent of their networks directly influences their self-esteem, self-control, self-efficacy and their concept of their own ability.

Much social capital research has been critiqued by youth theorists for its lack of relevance to youth life and experience. Whiting and Harper (2003), as well as Morrow (2001 and 2005b), have criticised the use of adult indicators of social capital, such as type of neighbourhood, levels of volunteerism, and civic engagement, which have little relevance to the lives of young people. The portrayal of youths as consumers rather than producers of social capital has also come under attack as being simplistic and failing to acknowledge the complexity of youth life (Morrow, 2002; Whiting and Harper, 2003; Holland, 2008). Moreover, Chakrabarty and Preston (2007) have denounced the use of social capital as an ‘over-coding tool’ used for labelling youth behaviour, while Wyn and White (2004) have attacked the disturbing trend in public policy which looks toward social capital as a magic bullet that can prevent young people from engaging in negative or risky behaviour. Finally, little thought has been given to how youth social capital is affected by issues of class, cultural background or gender, leaving a gap

in the theoretical understanding of how social capital reproduction can be impacted upon by life circumstances and external influences.

Despite this, the arguments for the benefits of social capital have been so persuasive that many governments around the world have begun to turn to social capital in an attempt to manage and normalise youth behaviour, with the Australian government investing heavily in this aim. Every year, millions of dollars are spent by the Australian government addressing 'issues' faced by young people, including homelessness, mental health, education, and delinquent behaviour such as graffiti. Included within these are numerous direct and indirect endeavours by government and non-government agencies to help increase youth social capital. Yet most social capital initiatives are currently underwritten as part of much larger community and youth initiatives set out by funding bodies, meaning that social capital is targeted indirectly. This is in itself problematic. As explained in the introduction, the lack of understanding of what exactly social capital is, how it operates and how to target it has meant that many of the projects that aim to indirectly increase key social capital areas such as network development and community participation are often mis-targeted, badly measured or insufficiently developed.

An example of this can be seen in Community Links Wollondilly. This agency, like most other non-government agencies, has several agreements which indirectly target social capital in their provisos. Community Links Wollondilly's Youth Team is funded by a range of agreements. Each service agreement both explicitly states and alludes to social capital creation and reproduction in its language. This can be seen in the use of classic social capital rhetoric, such as building the capacity of individuals, families, communities and groups (Community Services Grants Program, 2006-2007), and the creation of early intervention programs that aim to build self-reliance, strengthen family relationships, and encourage community involvement (Department of Families Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, attachment B, 2007-2008:1). While it is plain to see that each of these initiatives involves social capital creation, they are set outside social capital theory, allowing for anything to be interpreted and named as social capital. In response to this, a number of programs were created to address these key performance indicators. However, most did not take the nature of social capital into consideration, leading to poorly targeted social capital initiatives.

It is clear that in order to produce social initiatives which properly target social capital, the concept of youth social capital needs to be clarified, and the impact of class, culture and gender on it needs to be investigated. In the next section I will explore class situation, culture, and gender with particular reference to formation and reproduction of youth social capital.

The impact of class on social capital formation and reproduction

The class situation of most young people has been described in terms of the location and type of housing lived in, the overall capacity for parents to support them, the school that they attend, when and under what conditions they enter the labour market, and even the type of leisure pursuits they are able to undertake (Wyn and White, 2004). However, most young people have little choice or input over these vital areas of life, with decisions regarding housing, schooling and leisure activities being determined by the adults present in their lives or their access to community resources, including reliable public transport. The lack of ability of young people to move outside these situations means that they are essentially unable to move beyond their birth class until employment is gained, their studies completed, and independence from their family is achieved.

The inability of young people to move outside their class system, particularly those of disadvantaged backgrounds, has very significant repercussions for their social capital. As shown in Table 1, individuals who possess higher economic resources will usually have larger amounts of bridging networks than those of impoverished backgrounds. According to Bassani (2007), youth who show high levels of bridging social capital can be expected to have high levels of academic achievement, health, and all round well-being, while individuals who have poor bridging social capital in two or more networks are subject to what Bassiani calls 'double jeopardy', meaning that the individual will have the lowest levels of happiness, academic achievement and health.

Social capital and bridging ties can be used as paths to upward mobility. There are three main areas which are considered to help a young person achieve upward mobility: family situation, educational levels and economic advantage. I will explore each of these in turn.

Effects of the family on youth social capital

The family has been examined in regards to social capital in two predominant ways: for its importance as a 'bridge' into networks within the community (Winter, 2000), and as a link to educational outcomes for young people. The family has typically been envisaged in social capital theory as an important initial link to the wider community. Both Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (1995) conceptualised the family as the primary source of transmission and accumulation of social capital and in particular bonding and bridging networks. Social capital in the family includes relationships across generations, between youths and parents, grandparents, step-parents and other family members (Hogan, 2001). Regardless of their class position, families give young people access to intense bonding ties, with parents and close relatives sharing whatever resources are available to them in order to help young people get by and get ahead. According to Coleman (1988), there are three mechanisms by which families transmit social capital to their young: the time and effort invested by the parents, their ties with members of the community, and guidelines of behaviour expectations. Bonding networks in the family are presumed to act as a guide for self-expectations and censure, and as a levelling force, discouraging problem behaviour, encouraging youth community participation, and providing a sense of security, place and identity.

Historically, the family has been represented as the site where young people's behaviour is produced; the outcome of their family situation. According to Stratton (1992) 'bad' upbringing is often perceived as the precursor to unruly behaviour, and is often used to help explain the behavioural problems of youths. Families which fall outside the 'nuclear family' pattern, such as single parents, teenage mothers and divorced families, are invariably the primary targets. Just as the identification of 'at risk' families is contentious, so is the identification of these families as being social capital deficient. According to Halpern (2005), there is strong evidence that groups considered 'at risk' tend to have lower stocks of social capital than the general community, which can affect a young person through the 'inheritance of small social networks and individual psychological resources and traits that the child acquires, or does not acquire' (Harlpern, 2005:250), which can in turn affect their ability to form relationships and reproduce social capital. The dominant proposition behind these claims is that families, while imbuing the

young person with confidence and the ability to trust, also create and set norms and provide social ties with the larger community. Usually, 'at risk' families, as Halpern argues, occupy an economically disadvantaged position, which restricts their ability to invest in cultural capital. However, most of these arguments are set on the privileging of bridging over bonding networks, and do little to account for the resources derived by an individual from their close bonding ties.[5]

Educational achievement, social capital and class

As a link to children's educational outcomes, the family appears to hold great importance. According to Coleman (1988), much of the success in young people's lives can be attributed to strong bonding capital within the family, as well as the existence of close ties between teachers, parents, neighbours and church ministers, with youths whose parents are actively involved in school and community faring far better than those whose parents are not. Conversely, a lack of strong adult presence, insufficient attention, and poor relationships within the family or with the larger community are understood by Coleman as structural deficiencies in family social capital, potentially decreasing educational performance and the ability of the child to profit from the parent's social capital, as well as increasing the chances of dropping out of school.

This convergence between educational achievement and family social capital has been the focus of much social capital research. Youths are often perceived as gaining benefits in education and transition to work from the social capital of adults in their lives (Helve and Bynner, 2007), with strong social capital within the family having positive effects on school retention rates, as well as being an important point of reference for educational expectations (Stevens et al, 2007; Coleman, 1988; Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004; Morrow, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005). Coleman (1988) also asserts that parental levels of education play a large role in a young person's educational achievements, and that career choices for young people tend to follow parental patterns of achievement. He asserts that while middle-class and upper-class youth

[5] Issues surrounding the benefits of bonding and bridging social capital during youth will be taken up in later Chapters in this thesis.

tend to remain at school for longer and thus engage in white-collar jobs, working class youth become early school leavers, preferring to obtain 'working class jobs' rather than continuing to study. Much can be said about the influence of social capital upon young people's decisions to drop out or stay on at school, with senses of belonging, community environment and family cohesion affecting the educational outcomes of youths. However, dropping out of school is not usually a sudden decision to opt out, but the culmination of a far more complicated process of school disengagement. This includes issues with school curriculum and the privileging of certain subjects over others, which may lead to low academic aspiration, poor academic performance, and behavioural patterns considered disruptive (Weis et al 1989*;* Smyth et al, 2004).

The reality for many young people is that poor or interrupted educational patterns can adversely affect their ability to network, which can hamper their chances to achieve upward mobility. Nilan, Julian and Germov (2007) suggest that children from middle- and upper-class families are higher achievers in the education system, due to their familiarity with the dominant class culture, which is essential for academic success, while working class youth tend to struggle due to their inability to correctly reproduce expected norms and behaviours, leading to clashes, disenfranchisement and drop-out. Youths who have experienced poor or interrupted education find it significantly more difficult than higher achievers to find employment or achieve upward mobility, with Nilan et al (2007) showing that young people, particularly those of lower socioeconomic standing who neglect their studies and leave school early, are destined for a life of unemployment, disadvantage and low wages.

Education can be a vehicle for upward mobility, but it is also an avenue for social and cultural reproduction and class division (Bourdieu, 1977; Nilan, Julian and Germov, 2007), which legitimises the rule and privilege of the upper class. An example of this can be seen in the debate surrounding the 1996 'ebonics' controversy in Oakland, California, which centred on 'recognising' African-American vernacular English as a separate dialect, and as a consequence young people of African-American descent being categorized as having only 'limited English proficiency' (Oakland Board of Studies; 1996), situating them at the same level as non-English-speaking individuals and thus in need of immediate attention for improvement.

Phenomena such as this, coupled with the perpetuation of the idea of academic training as superior to trade qualifications and resistance to the integration of practical and intellectual knowledge, has led to many working class young people being labelled as 'low achievers and anti-intellectual' (Dwyer, Wilkinson and Wook, 1984:56). This has inevitably driven many working class youths to become disinterested in school or to drop out all together.

In Australia, education is seen as essential to young people's chances of upward mobility, but many young people, particularly those from working class backgrounds, find their upward mobility hampered by the very system promising deliverance from working class life. According to Dwyer, Wilkson and Woock (1984), the Australian education system, while accentuating the knowledge base of the dominant class, has systematically devalued the skills and knowledge of working class individuals, which has been a factor in the failure and exclusion of working class children in the academic system.

Economic status

Youth who face economic disadvantage find it far more difficult to accumulate cultural capital, make valuable 'contacts', and reproduce the appropriate normative behaviour by which to increase their stocks of social capital. Studies such as that of Stone's (2003) show that social capital often follows patterns of socioeconomic disadvantage, with individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often having fewer networks, showing poor community engagement, and tending to distrust more, with their offspring following these patterns (Harplen, 2005). For young people, socioeconomic disadvantage also means the inability to access youth culture. The capacity of many young people to successfully network with their peers is largely dependent on family income. Poorer youth often find themselves unable to fully participate in 'youth culture'. Their inability to acquire expensive cultural resources, such as iPods, mobile phones and credit, computers, Internet access, and the right kind of clothing, locks them out of much of the culture and networks. For these young people, the lack of economic capital means that they must find other ways to 'fit in', with many finding the needed capital in resistance by networking subculturally.

Gendering social capital

Friendships are an essential part of youth. Through networking with their peers, young people discover how to create, maintain and derive benefits from relationships. However, little has been said about how gender affects networking, and in turn social capital. What is known about youth networking is that youth peer groups are usually made up of relatively homogeneous sets of bonding networks (Cohen, 1977; Cotterell, 1996), and a looser set of mixed-gender bridging networks (see Chapter 7). Accordingly, young people initially form networks with those of the same age and gender. This suggests that the ability to successfully create same-sex friendships can have a deep effect upon youth social capital. Virginia Morrow (1999, 2001, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2005b) has produced one of the best accounts of how gender affects youth social capital. From Morrow's research, gender would appear to impact in three ways: in the avenues opened to youth to reproduce social capital; the type of social capital (and I would also suggest the way it is reproduced); and the value placed by youth on their networks.

Can I sit with you? Gender, school and peer networking

As discussed in the previous section, schools provide young people with valuable opportunities for accruing cultural capital, which can be used by the individual to get ahead in life. Aside from its educational function, one of the most important roles school plays in the life of young people is its ability to bring large groups of youth together under the one roof. It is within this gathering of young people and the resulting possibility of networking that the social capital value of school lies. Socialising and peer bonding commences initially at school, with the school playground being the primary place where peer allegiances are made and broken. The development of friendships at school and the social capital formed therein afford young people a 'community' of sorts. These small-scale social networks can help to engender a sense of belonging (Stevens et al*, 2007)*, and are crucial in providing a feeling of security, trust and support (Morrow, 2001, 2001b and 2003).

Once youths begin their schooling, few choose to bridge outside their immediate friendship

networks. When a friendship is created, youths will often take great care to maintain and strengthen that friendship by reinforcing networking, both on and off the playground. For many young people, the school peer group represents the bulk of their close bonding ties, and youths will often acknowledge fear of being removed from their social group through in-group fighting, changes in schools, or having to 'sit alone' in the class or playground. For the most part, the fear of being alone usually means that groups of individuals will adopt similar styles of dress, modes of behaviour and speech in order to fit in. Youth who experience unwanted exclusion have been shown to present higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well having fewer options for friendship and group membership (Newman, Lohman and Newman 2007).

Aside from affording youth an arena in which they can begin to network, school also plays a crucial role in demarcating and reproducing gender. For the most part, schools arbitrate between different types of femininities and masculinities, allowing for one kind to become hegemonic (Kessler et al, 1985; Pascoe, 2007). These hegemonic genders are then privileged through various practices (including the school curriculum), bestowing value and power upon them. Youths in turn build their own 'gender regime' alongside and within the larger constraints of the school system, and it is through these sets of practices that young people learn what is considered an acceptable or unacceptable gender performance. For example, boys and girls learn suitable ways of interacting with each other through the expectations placed upon them by their peers. Young women who are seen as overtly sexual or overly masculine, or young men who display overtly 'feminine' behaviours, may be ostracised and censured by their peer groups not sitting with them in class or not interacting with them in the playground.

Let's hang out: Gender and networking

The networking which youths begin in the playground is usually further developed outside of school hours, with teenagers spending large amounts of time with their friends on afternoons and weekends. Young people are often observed at both private and public places undertaking either more structured activities, such as sports, or just 'hanging out'. Structured and unstructured activities are crucial in peer networking, as they allow young people to be 'seen to

be seen', and permit the demonstration of adequate youth cultural knowledge by the correct observance of norms and behaviours. For most young people, networking outside of school gives them the freedom to 'prove' their coolness and social worth, and is seen as a crucial part of their everyday lives, with many young people in my focus groups stating that participating in their chosen sport or 'hanging out' with friends were the most important activities in their lives (see Chapter 7). However, the ways in which young people undertake these activities and the value that young men and women derive from them differs. This suggests that social constructions and perception of appropriate gender behaviour plays an important role in the way in which youths participate in structured and unstructured activities.

Sport, gender and social capital

Sports are the most common form of physical activity undertaken by young people in Australia.[6] A recent survey of young Australians conducted by Mission Australia (2010) found that almost three quarters (71%) of participants were involved in sport, followed by arts and cultural activities (31%). Experiences of engaging and participating in sport are of great importance when looking at how young people network and create and derive benefits from social capital. Sport is dominated by gender discourses, including those surrounding gender performances and aptitude on the sporting field. Sporting discourse often depicts women as less suited to sport, and they are often shown as weaker and less able to handle stress (Greer, Harding and Homan, 2009; Schmalz and Kerstetter, 2006). The Mission Australia survey also found that participation in sport differed among the genders, with more young men (76%) than women (almost 68%) undertaking some sort of sporting activity.

The discrepancy in gender participation in sport is largely due to the construction and domination of a male hegemonic ideal in sporting discourse. In sport, the conceptualisation of the 'all-able man' is enacted and glorified, rendering sports grounds a central arena for the

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[6] For the purposes of this study, Coakley's (2001) definition of sport has been used. According to Coakley, sports are '… institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by personal enjoyment and external rewards' (p. 21).

construction and establishment of the dominant/subordinate nexus between the different types of masculinities and femininities (Wellard, 2007; Connell, 2008).

The subordination of certain types of masculinities and femininities to the hegemonic ideal in sport is further emphasised through social constructions of gender and gender stereotypes, which culminate in the notion of 'gender appropriateness' in different sporting activities. Sports which are judged on individual performance and aesthetics, such as gymnastics and dancing, allow for traditional images of femininity and are thus seen as inappropriate for young men, while team sports which have an element of body contact and are physically risky, such as rugby league, Australian football, and basketball, are deemed masculine and thus unsuitable for girls (Greer, Harding and Homan, 2009; Schmalz and Kerstetter, 2006). This is despite the fact that many 'girl' sports are quite dangerous, such as gymnastics and figure skating. As a result, certain sports are perceived as male-only arenas where young women predominantly take part as spectators, while young men prove their masculinity through physical displays of 'manliness'.

For most young men, the correct display of toughness and physical prowess can help to increase popularity and overall social capital value, while those who are unable to perform correctly are often ridiculed by their peers, labelled as 'try-hards' and rejected by the group. Choosing to undertake sporting activities 'inappropriate' to their gender can also have consequences for young women, with many girls being labelled as 'butch' and rejected by other girls for undertaking male-dominated sports.

Nevertheless, many young women and men have begun to reject typical definitions of sporting femininity and masculinity and have begun to encroach upon previously 'forbidden' sporting territories, creating new social norms and values of their own in the face of peer rejection. One such example can be seen in Kelly, Pomerantz and Currie's account of the emerging skater girl culture (2008), which shows how working class skater girls, in their rejection of traditionally 'passive' female forms of participation and the subsequent adoption of traditionally male sporting grounds, have transcended the boundaries of sporting discourse. These young women, through the creation of new codes and norms of femininity have, by increasing their

social 'worth' in their performance of typically male sporting ability, reduced the threat their gender transgression poses to the value of their social and subcultural capital.

Hanging out with friends - Gendered construction of space and its effect on social capital

'Hanging out' is probably the most common and important network building activity that young people undertake with their peers. Hanging out happens at many different locations, including parks, beaches, shopping centres and homes. Hanging out evokes feelings of independence, allowing young people to 'try out' different identities while helping to reaffirm old friendships and create new networking possibilities. However, the places in which hanging out can be performed, the perceived levels of safety while hanging out, as well as the activities young men and women are involved in while hanging out are dictated as much by the individual's life circumstances as by their gender.

The social construction of gendered space includes discourses surrounding the body and the perceived threats to it, in both public and private spaces. While private space, such as the home, is seen as a 'safe haven', public space is portrayed as a dangerous place for youth. Australian research has shown that parents often express fear for their children's safety when travelling to and from entertainment venues (de Vaus and Wise, 1996). This fear was also more often expressed in reference to young women, who are warned about the dangers existing in public space more often than young men (Hale, 1996). The reinforcement of these threats and dangers has led to young women's opinions on personal safety and feelings of trust being severely eroded, restricting the places in which they feel safe to network. Feelings of trust and safety can have a deep effect on the choice of public networking space outside of school hours.

Girls, more often than boys, have been reported by Morrow as being acutely aware of their own as well as their parents' fears for their safety and wellbeing in public spaces (Morrow; 2001b and 2002). Many young women in Morrow's (2001b and 2002) and my own study described feeling fearful or distrustful of their local neighbourhood, often preferring to hang

out at friends or their own homes, rather than face the uncertainty of 'the street'. Hence research has often viewed young women as involved only in what McRobbie and Garber (1976) call 'bedroom culture'. Bedroom culture refers to the way in which girls network outside the male dominated streetscape, by involving themselves in 'teenybopper culture', carried out in the safety of their friends' or their own bedrooms (McRobbie and Garber, 1993; Lincoln, 2004). There is therefore a body of evidence asserting that bedroom culture is how young women create 'feminine' culture, and claim some control and independence over their immediate environment away from the dangers of the 'streetscape'.

However, 'the private' seldom has a uniform or even comparable meaning (Bloustein, 2003). While McRobbie's (1977) assertions on girls' bedroom culture may ring true for many young women, it must also be taken into account that the home is not a 'safe space' for all (for example, victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse), and that the meanings of private space do not apply equally to all young women (see McRobbie and Garber, 1977; Lincoln, 2004; Duits, 2008). For many young women, bedrooms may be shared, and parents may have unrestricted access to these spaces; young women are often restricted in terms of the amount of privacy they have. As a result, girls' networking within the home is often restricted by rules and regulations imposed by the adults in the household, limiting the type of social and cultural capital fostered as well as the manner in which this is done.

Young men, on the other hand, occupy space very differently to young women. The perception by parents of a reduced threat of sexual harm to young men, particularly as boys turn into adolescents (Warr and Ellison, 2000), is usually accompanied by a lessening of parental control. Young men are less restricted in their choice of networking venues than their female counterparts. Young men will tend to use their surroundings more fully, often looking for places outside the home to be appropriated and turned into subcultural arenas in which social and subcultural capital can be formed. The majority of young men in my focus groups spent most of their time with their friends outside of their homes, typically hanging out in the streets, local parks, skating in shopping centre parking lots, or just 'driving around'.

Just as with young female forms then, male forms of hanging out are built around cultural codes and gender expectations. Enacting the correct understanding of gender practices greatly increases an individual's claim to coolness and thus social worth. Male culture (and thus subculture) is generally built around displays of correct masculinity, demonstrated though the renunciation of and differentiation from femininity (Chun, 2005). Young men often embrace a 'tough' attitude around their peers while hanging out, which may include demonstrations of 'masculine prowess' through risk-taking behaviours, such as drinking and fighting, to prove their social worth.

Gender perceptions - The value of friendship

Though young men and women network differently within the private and public realm, what remains constant is that peer networks allow young people a sense of security, understanding and support. Friendships are an important source of social capital, as they provide a bridge to new networks (Holland, 2008). Young people value friendships greatly, and among most youth, an assertion of a large network (whether or not it actually exists) is an important status display. This was also borne out in my own study (see Chapter 7).

Gender greatly affects the way young people network and the value they place on their friendships. Bonding networks, made up of homogenous ties which share both age and gender, are valued by young men for the company they provide in shared activities and sport, and are valued by young women for providing someone to listen to them and provide emotional support (Morrow, 2003). Bridging networks, on the other hand, tend to encompass mixed-age and -gender networks, which makeup a considerable slice of the young person's world. However, unlike bonding ties, the value of bridging ties is affected by both the emotional closeness that can be derived from them, and by differences in gender.

Opposite gender friendships

For most young people, having both male and female friends is of great importance. While further removed in closeness, opposite-gender friendships often afford young people benefits

different to those acquired from same-sex friendships. However, very little has been written on how cross-gender networks benefit young people, with the majority of research to date undertaken on adult cross-gender friendships or on same-sex friendships among youth. My research on the young Wollondilly population showed that having friends of the opposite gender enriched the lives of young people, and that not having friends of the opposite gender was considered by most a social disadvantage (see Chapter 7).

Youth culture and its effects on social capital

Peer groups are a valuable resource of social capital for young people. They provide companionship, understanding, acceptance and protection, as well as being an important source of identity. Young people seek out stronger networking with their peers as they begin to move away from family relationships and seek independence. For many individuals, friends provide the solution for the anxieties of youth by offering reassurance, support and understanding in times of need. Youths occupy one of the most disadvantaged and powerless positions within society; they are financially exploited, but also legally barred from many adult pursuits. Consequently, young people have little adult cultural or economic capital of their own, lack strong adult bridging networks, and are heavily reliant on strong bonding capital with family and friends in order to make their lives work. Little is known of how social capital impacts on the composition and durability of young people's networks, or how this helps to create identity and a sense of belonging. What is known is that young people turn to peers for reassurance, and as a point of reference on who they are and what roles they should perform. For young people, the bonding aspect of belonging creates a sense of security and understanding (Morrow, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2005b); though family is of importance, for many young people their peer groups can take on a familial role.

Most children begin to learn how to relate to each other and how to create social capital at school. By the time children have reached their teens and high school, they have usually aligned themselves to a particular group of individuals with whom they 'hang out' during school hours, who make up the bulk of their friendship network. While the amount of time and effort invested by most youths in networking with peers results in strong bonding ties, the

emphasis on bonding means sacrificing bridging ties with adults, which leads to young people being perceived by adults as disengaged, anti-social and social capital deficient. Consequently, the labelling of young people in terms of their ability to reproduce social capital (and in particular strong bridging ties) as overtly social or anti-social is fast becoming an over-coding tool, used as a means of social control (Chakrabarty and Preston, 2006). The image of the anti-social youth in this context is constructed through the belief that problematic youths are social capital deficient, with 'bad' behaviour among young people viewed as the result of excessive bonding and inadequate bridging networks. Criminal behaviour, gang membership and subcultural engagement are understood as the end result of the bonding process, with bonding ties labelled as 'dark' or 'negative' social capital.

The negative aspects of social capital were first identified by Xavier de Sousa Briggs in *Social Capital and the Cities: Advice to Change Agents* (1997), which warned against an overly optimistic outlook on social networking. In the same year Mauricio Rubio observed the effects of negative social capital for 'juvenile delinquents', and soon after Robert Putnam (2000) echoed this in *Bowling Alone*. These negative implications of bonding networking have led sociologists to talk about 'dark' or 'negative' social capital. Putnam (2000) asserts that solidarity is usually created in opposition, and while this can cause the formation of positive movements such as trade unions, social welfare organisations and community aid, it can also lead to the formation of hate groups, organised crime, terrorism and wartime atrocities. Putnam reduces his argument on 'dark social capital' to aspects of bridging and bonding networks. As described previously, Putnam views bonding social capital as second-rate, and capable of causing many problems within society, including social exclusion and intolerance - what Putnam refers to as the dark side of social capital.

However, the notion of dark social capital is problematic: its negativity or 'darkness' is largely dependent on perspective. The negative aspects of dark social capital can be explained in much the same way as the negativity attached by society to subculture. As with subculture, social capital's 'darkness' is basically born from the creation of moral panic around the types of behaviours believed to be detrimental for society and the individual. The term 'subculture' denotes an organised hierarchy within society, and within this hierarchy, subcultures are

oppressed, subordinate, and dominated (Jensen, 2006). This construction of a problematic form of social capital has meant that young people's capacity to create their own forms of social capital has been largely ignored. While organised crime, gang membership and subcultural behaviour are seen as normative breaches, against society's moral codes, to the individuals involved they have great value as means of fitting in and resolving the experience of powerlessness and isolation (see Portes and Lanholt, 1996). It is this value that creates subcultural capital.

'Dark' social capital or resistance? The enigma of subcultural capital

According to Leonard (2008), subcultural capital enables young people to assert their individuality, create social spaces, and reinterpret their social world outside existing adult values and norms. Subcultural capital is always constructed against the 'mainstream', creating what appear to be conflict, dissention and deviance. Yet the line between positive and negative social capital is not easy to discern, as what may appear conflicting could constitute an enhancement of resources, networks and trust for many disadvantaged young people. This highlights the exclusionary and elitists aspects of normative social capital theories, which fail to see that forms of resistance against mainstream 'normality', such as hip-hop subculture, can be viewed as an alternative form of subcultural belonging that can provide cultural capital (particularly for non-Anglo-Australian youth), by conferring subcultural status outside the normative whiteness of Australian society (Mitchell, 2003).

Subcultural capital, like all cultural capital, is objectified by cultural artefacts and knowledge, such as music, clothing and hairstyles, and is articulated through coolness and being 'in the know' (Thornton, 2005; Jensen, 2006). Coolness entails sets of characteristics anchored in symbology that takes on value in the peer context (Danesi, 1994), helping to define the social world. Subcultural capital is created along the binary of 'underground' versus 'mainstream' (Barker, 2003; Jensen, 2006), and notions of authenticity which rely on the individual's ability to differentiate between the two. Claims to authenticity (emphasizing originality, novelty, creativity, and individuality) are pivotal to youth culture (Barker and Willis, 2003; Mitchell, 2003), and can be seen as claims to social achievement and status, through the ability to

distinguish the commercialised from the 'real' and the outdated from the cool. Accordingly, subcultural capital 'confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder and it shapes the standing of the young in many ways like its adult equivalent' (Thornton, 2005:186). It confers validity and 'worth' to the trappings of subculture and its forms.

The value imparted by subcultural capital to subculture can also invert dominant class structures and enable disadvantaged young people to pursue advantages within their social worlds. For example, in both Bullen and Kenway's (2005) and Bottrell's (2008) studies of underprivileged girls in Australia, it was found that the girls' cultural and social capital, far from being in deficit or impoverished, gave them a sense of empowerment, helped them endure school life, and allowed them to develop support networks to navigate through poverty and disadvantage. Subcultural capital became the means by which these young women were able to assert power and authority in their lives, through the hierarchical positions they were able to occupy in the subcultural world and from which they were able to denote power and status. In short, subcultural capital was the currency they created to resolve the powerlessness and disadvantage they experienced, because they had little mainstream cultural or social capital of their own.

Seen to be seen - the fourth environment

For individuals to form social capital they must come together to network and socialise. Nevertheless, young people continue to be restricted in terms of what they can do and where they can go. Young people are limited in their use of space and participation in activities, by their age and economic situation. Many young people are not old enough to obtain a driver's licence, or lack the economic capital to purchase a vehicle, limiting their transport options, and rendering them reliant on public transport and the accessibility of local venues. Furthermore, many adults perceive young people as only belonging within 'youth space' (school, home, and places where supervised extracurricular activities take place) where surveillance and adult control can be maintained.

For young people attempts by adults to 'normalise' their behaviour restrict what they are able to do, the ways in which they can foster and reproduce social capital, and the places in which this can be done. Surveillance of young people's attitudes and behaviours (particularly subcultural behaviour) results in their actions being classified as risky, anti-social and delinquent; behaviours which must be controlled in order to keep young people and 'the future' safe (Wyn and White, 1997). The surveillance and negative connotations attached by adults to youth behaviour has led to young people reporting feeling mistrusted by the community, experiencing an acute awareness of negative feelings directed toward them by adults (Morrow, 2001b). Feelings of mistrust can lead to the withdrawal of young people into their own communities as a kind of protective mechanism.

The withdrawal of young people from adult surveillance has resulted in young people moving into what Matthews and Limb (2000) call 'the fourth environment'. The fourth environment encompasses 'streets, civic sites, public, private, commercial sites and recreational sites' (Nair et al, 2002:39), all areas which can allow a young person ample unstructured interaction with peers and freedom for subcultural expression. Local public spaces are not only free, with few if any limitations placed on entry, they are also removed from adult surveillance and adult control. For most young people, public space plays an important role in social and cultural capital formation, providing a place where they can 'hang out' and be 'seen to be seen'. Hanging out involves the negotiation of public space (Nair et al, 2002), and involves social activities such as talking, eating and play-fighting (Morrill, Snow and White, 2005), but also involves the open enactment of 'risky' subcultural behaviour such as graffiti, drinking, smoking and drug use. By 'hanging out', young people are able to develop relationships and network with their peers. This allows young people to foster both social and subcultural capital through the enactment of subcultural norms and behaviours. For most youths, the relationships formed 'hanging out' are of extreme importance, with Morrill, Snow and White noting that for many young people, these relationships 'constitute the centre of the universe' (2005:100).

However, few locations remain true public spaces in any real sense: the majority are either public spaces managed by specific organisations (such as parks and nature reserves) or private spaces with public access (such as cinemas and shopping centres) (Hatzopoulos and Clancy,

2007). The increased privatisation of both private and public space results in increased regularisation and surveillance of behaviour and expectations in many of these locales, with shopping centres in particular being telling examples of the private space/public access dichotomy and its effects on young people. Shopping centres are seen as exciting places to hang out by youths (White, 1995), but young people's presence in shopping centres is seldom welcome when they do not occupy consumer roles. According to White, for young people 'the shopping centre is a site for socializing first and consumption second', 'places to be seen' rather than places to shop (1995:36). The need to 'be seen' usually encompasses the enactment of attention-seeking behaviour, meaning that young people in shopping centres often tend to be loud, travel in packs, and display behaviours which most adults would determine to be 'at risk'. The perceived threat posed by young people, together with their lack of economic power, leads to their being seen as 'undesirable' within this private/public environment, and an increase in overt surveillance in the form of cameras and private security staff, alongside government-adopted measures to 'move them on' (for example see Thomas, 2003). The repercussions of this exclusion are that young people feel marginalised, harassed and resentful, as they fail to understand why their presence is so objectionable.

The notion that young people (particularly males) present a risk to others sharing public space has resulted in the right of young people to use public space being contested. Young people have had to find new and creative ways to avoid adult monitoring, with the internet becoming a new ground for youth networking and social capital formation.

The new frontier: Youth and social networking sites

The need to seek new spheres in which to network away from adult control has led young people to move their social worlds to the virtual arena (Lunn, 2007), with email and social networking becoming primary sites of social and cultural capital creation. For many youths the internet, with its relatively low surveillance, presents a perfect site in which to interact outside adult normalisation. The internet is often viewed as an educational asset for young people. While many youths use the internet as a tool for school-related activities and research, it is also utilized as a means to communicate with others and as a form of entertainment. An Australian

study indicates that 68% of youths between the ages of 12-14 years use the internet as a way of sending and receiving messages, 52% use it for leisure, 43% to play online games, and 40% as a means to access and download music from internet sites (ABS 2008). The explosive growth of internet use by young people, together with the lack of adequate control measures and a deficiency in parental computer confidence, has led to a steady stream of moral panics directed at internet use. Chief amongst these are the fears of online predators and cyber-bullying, heralded by the media as primary dangers for child and youth internet users. The exponential rise of internet use by young people has also seen an increase in allegations by the educational and psychological sector that too much time spent online can have other more direct negative effects, such as those listed by Mythil et al (2008), who claim that increased exposure to the internet can have ill effects on school performance, impede adolescent achievement of psychosocial developmental tasks, and led to increases in social isolation.

The impacts on the individual attributed to the internet are various and disputed. The possibility that the internet can produce social isolation and thus reduce social capital has struck a chord with many social capital theorists. The lack of academic consensus on the effects internet use can have on the individual has produced a division among researchers, between those who see the internet as a force for increased community interactivity, and those who view it as an isolating force (Wellman, 2001; Wellman et al, 2001; Quan Haase and Wellman, 2002; Ferlander, 2003; Uslaner, unpublished; Bargh and McKenna, 2004). This division has created three dominant theoretical standpoints, as follows.

A frequently made argument is that the internet is a negative force on social cohesion. The notion that increased internet usage can have detrimental effects on the individual is based on the assumption that spending time online essentially removes people from face-to-face social networks and community, creating social isolation and a dearth of community participation. In this line of argument, the internet becomes a wedge for normal social functioning, minimising the potential networking of individuals and reducing their ability to create social capital (Mythily et al, 2008; Subrahmanyam et al, 2001).

Another view is that the internet is a herald of a new era of social participation. Proponents of this line of thought maintain that internet usage, far from having harmful effects on social

capital and networking, has instead provided new and better ways of participating in society, by allowing individuals the ability to network in new ways (Lin 1999; Barlow, 1995; Wellman 2001). For example, in order to better engage its people, Iceland's constitutional Council is currently 'crowd-sourcing' its new constitution, by posting draft clauses on its website and then inviting public comment, either on its website or its Facebook page, alongisde Twitter and Flickr accounts and a YouTube page to keep citizens updated (Siddique, 2011).

Other theorists see the internet as enhancing already existing networks. While the internet neither destroys nor creates social capital, it plays a supplementary role, helping to enhance and maintain already existing face to face networks (Wellman et al, 2001, Quan Haaseand Wellman, 2002, 2004; Ferlander, 2003; Uslaner, unpublished).

The different impacts the internet has on individuals can be explained in terms of the uses an individual makes of it, which result in varied patterns of influence on social life and social capital. According to Norris and Jones (1998), individuals use the internet in four primary ways: as researchers (those who use it for email and investigative purposes); as consumers (those who shop online, or use the internet as a financial and travel resource); for self-expression (those who discuss views or express opinions via bulletin boards, newsgroups and chatrooms); and as party animals (those who go online to play games and be entertained). The use an individual makes of the internet inflects the impact it has on social life. While use of the internet to access chatrooms, shop, or play games has been found to have consistent negative impacts on civic engagement, trust, and life contentment, use of the internet as a research tool or as a form of expression has been found to have a positive impact (Davan, 2007). While the relative isolation and anonymity of chatroom activity and game play do not lead to strong relationships, socialising with friends and family online (through email or social networking sites) enhances offline interaction, increasing trust, strengthening bonds and filling the gaps between face-to-face meetings (Wellman et al, 2001; Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002; Quan Haase and Wellman, 2002; Ito et al, 2011).

With their strong focus on peer networking, youths make considerable use of social networking sites and email to maintain contact between friends and acquaintances. Social

networking sites are specialised websites where users can create their own profiles, connect to others' profiles, leave comments, and generally network with each other outside daily face-to-face interaction (Barker, 2009; Boyd, 2008). For young people, social networking sites present an opportunity to interact with peers, reinforce pre-existing friendships, and foster social and cultural capital. Online social networking makes available an existing multimedia environment that allows for a rich extension of existing offline social networks. Through the creation of profiles, the adding of friends, uploading of photos and the use of public 'wall to wall' messages and private emails, which take the place of offline conversations, young people are able to interact with one another more regularly than ever before. Thus, social networking sites are used primarily as a tool to stay in touch with already existing friends (Lenhart and Madden, 2007), with youths often making plans to meet in person, or continuing conversations begun in the 'real world' through their online profiles, blending the boundaries of public and private and the online and offline worlds.

With the intense shifts in the public and private spheres brought about by the emergence of the internet, young people today are faced with a continuation of socialisation which has become intensified by social networking and the ready access by individuals to one another's profiles, creating a hyper-public sphere. The public sphere (and thus the hyper-public) plays a crucial role in the formation and enactment of individual identity (Fraser, 1992); it is the place where norms are set and reinforced and common ground is formed between individuals. In the online environment, many 'real world' social norms remain in existence, and breaches of norms and values usually carry a punishment which bleeds into the real world. Furthermore, the hyper-public aspect of social networking also means that a faux pas or breach of a social norm in a 'conversation', comment or photograph on an individual's profile can be 'witnessed' by a considerable audience, exponentially increasing the negative impacts of the incident. Thus, young people are as bound by social and subcultural norms online as they are offline, allowing for online profiles to be governed by the same social hierarchies which regulate 'coolness', helping to reaffirm social norms already in existence in the real world.

Online social networking is then a continuity of 'real world' networking, where social hierarchies are likely to be present and individuals might be brought into the circle of

conversation if the individual is found to be 'cool', or ignored if not (Boyd, 2008b). Young people often take great care in representing themselves in the correct light, with friends, photos and comments being carefully selected and constructed for inclusion in their profiles. When social networking, youths will present the aspects of themselves which they feel will be well received by their peers, and will spend ample time updating and maintaining their online profiles, often changing photos and commenting on one another's walls in order to be seen as 'exciting and cool' (see Lenhart and Madden, 2007).

For most young people, social networking is more than a way of communicating, it is a public display of connections and status which can be used to make an individual look 'cool' and build subcultural capital. What makes online social networking so valuable to young people is not that it allows youths to meet strangers, as is often feared, but rather the ability of social networks to enable the user to methodically and visibly articulate his/her social networks, and accrue value to their actions and expressions by having others witness and acknowledge them as being in the know.

The themes of bonding and bridging networks, and the effects class, gender and culture can have on social capital formation and reproduction, are of crucial importance to understanding youth social capital. These will be elaborated on in the second part of this thesis, in particular, in relation to the findings made in my own research.

Chapter 4

A Framework for Measurement of Youth Social Capital

Creating a youth-friendly framework

This section presents an attempt to create a framework for the measurement of youth social capital, robust enough to address the issues found in the measurement of adult social capital, and applicable to youth life and experience. The objective is to develop this framework so that it is consistent with the definition of social capital that this study is adopting, Bourdieu's conception of social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu 1986:248).

Social capital has emerged as an important concept over the last ten years, not only within the social sciences, but also in economics and public policy, with Robert Putnam's publication *Bowling Alone* (2000) heralding its entrance into mainstream government plans. The amount of research into social capital since the publication of *Bowling Alone* has grown exponentially, resulting in many diverse and remarkable findings in the areas of health, community participation and civic life. However, progress has been hampered by several problems, such as lack of agreement on what social capital is, how it can be observed, and what outcomes it does or does not support. Consequently there is little cohesion as to which types of networks should be considered, making comparison between studies almost impossible (Krishna, 2003).

Furthermore, as suggested in earlier sections, there are differences of opinion between researchers as to the level in which social capital should be measured (the micro, macro or meso), or whether it is a resource of the individual or the collective. The bulk of studies on social capital to date have been conducted at the collective level, usually attempting to measure social cohesion or social belonging, or both, within communities. This can be problematic, as Van Der Gaag (2005) points out, the concept of social capital is much clearer when analysed as a resource of the individual which is embedded in his or her personal network.

This lack of consistency has led to other more critical problems, such as studies based on data derived from the use of tools, surveys and other methods of information collection never intended for social capital research. Examples of this can be seen in the use of large-scale national surveys, the use of secondary data to observe the rise and decline of social capital in a society, and the addition of social capital components to surveys never originally designed to measure social capital (Harper, 2002). As a consequence, many incorrect assumptions have been formed about the 'state' of social capital within particular societies.

There are also some issues relating to social capital dimensions and its indicators. These include discrepancy between the dimensions in which social capital is said to reside, the measurement of by-products of social capital (which confounds what social capital actually is), the use of different indicators between countries and localities, and the value-laden nature of social capital indicators.

Measuring individual social capital

Many social capital theorists have focused on social capital at the individual level (Bourdieu, 1986; Erickson, 1996; Lin, 1999a and 2001; Flap, 2002; Van der Gaag, 2005; Van der Gaag and Snijders 2004; Yang, 2007). Their interest has stemmed from an understanding of social capital as a resource for the individual to attain goals. The advantages of measuring social capital at the individual level are compelling: it is less prone to conflicting conceptualisations, it more closely approximates traditional notions of capital, it offers a simpler and more clearly defined unit of measurement, and it is more often based on network research, a well-established research area (Van der Gaag, 2005).

When social capital is measured at the individual level, it is usually conceptualised as a resource of the individual which manifests in the ability to effect change (for example see Lin, 2001; Flap, 2002; Van der Gaag, 2005; Yang, 2007). Social capital at the individual level has a very clear role within the life chances of an individual. By viewing social capital as the capacity to effect change, social capital's 'double edge nature' (Fischer, 1982) is taken into account, where

social relations between individuals can be both enabling (such as finding employment) and constraining (dressing and behaving appropriately).

Social capital approximates traditional notions of capital, and measuring at the individual level allows for the examination of social capital's uneven distribution within society. According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital, like other forms of capital, is available to different class groups at different rates and different compositions. As seen in Chapter 2, these compositions are affected by issues of class, culture and gender, which help shape not only the composition of the individual's social capital, but also its 'transactional' effectiveness, increasing or decreasing the individual's ability to foster and reproduce social capital, and the chances of the said individual being able to successfully affect those around them.

Quantifying social capital at the individual level also eliminates the issues surrounding the authenticity of measures. As shown above, there are legitimate concerns as to the reliability of measuring social capital through aggregation.

There are three examples of individual social capital measurement of particular relevance to this study, those of Flap (2002), Lin (2001) and Yang (2007). Flap, Lin and Yang have all proposed key features which not only determine the makeup of individual social capital but also define it. According to Lin (2001) and Flap (2002), individual social capital is defined by three dimensions:

- The number of people in the individual's social network
- The resources these network partners give access to
- The availability of these resources to the individual.

Yang (2007), in contrast, has proposed that individual social capital is made up of four groups of features:

- Basic features, made up of social relations that include the total number of individuals in a network, the number of intermediaries, as well as the strength and frequency of contact between members
- Specific features which involve the relationship between individuals who personally know each other, such as kin, friends, colleagues and association members
- Generalised features which specify the relationship between individuals not known personally
- Structural features of social relations: centrality, cohesiveness, structural holes.

Though these conceptualisations vary somewhat in their focus, what they share is the fact that they see social capital as a resource rooted in social relationships between individuals. I will take this as the starting point for the identification of dimensions for the purpose of this study.

If social capital consists of resources embedded in social networks, then these resources need to be identified. For the purpose of this thesis, resources will be conceptualised as any tangible or intangible, potential or actual support provided by an individual's network (whether emotional or physical, mainstream or subcultural), which presents an individual with the ability to get by and achieve mobility.[7] By recognising that these resources are created and maintained within social interactions between individuals, it becomes clear that the dimensions within which social capital exist are:

- Social interactions
- Network belonging
- Network assets

[7] Mobility here is not meant in a normative fashion, for instance in relation to education and employment, but instead refers to any way in which an individual's life can achieve mobility and recognition, e.g. status gains within 'deviant' behaviour.

The reason for choosing these dimensions rests on their ability to allow for an individual's tangible opportunities to foster and reproduce social capital, or the ability to activate the potential existent within it. Accordingly, these dimensions involve the following:

- Social interactions: the number of interactions which an individual has with others over a specific period of time, as well as the type of relationships
- Network belonging: the types of networks (bonding/bridging) in which the individual engages, as well as their overall integration and spatial proximity
- Network assets: The number of networking partners in a network, and the type and number of resources to which networking partners give access.

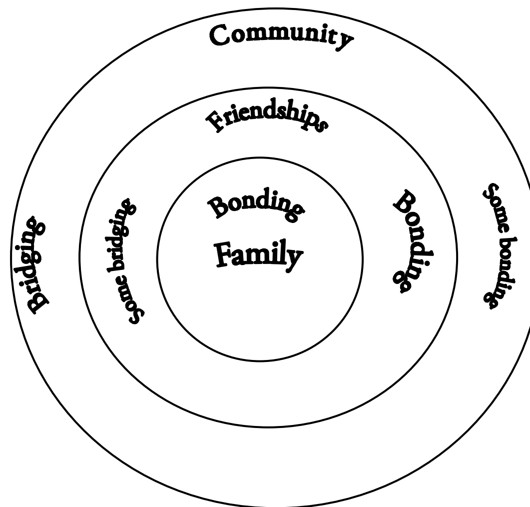
Indicators of social capital

Indicators are the measurable components in social capital research. As discussed in the previous section, the number and type of interactions an individual undertakes are of critical importance. Consequently, any indicators of social capital should aim to measure these two characteristics of networking.

The number of interactions which an individual undertakes is straightforward enough to measure, for example, counting the number of times an individual has been to a friend's home for dinner. However, measuring the types of interaction conducted by an individual is a little more complicated. As discussed in previous chapters, ties between individuals come in two guises, bonding and bridging. These ties give the individual access to different types of social capital that can be either used to get by (bonding) or used as social leverage to get ahead (bridging). Hence what researchers should aim at 'discovering' is the type of interaction an individual regularly undertakes.

Individuals primarily network in three main spheres: family, friendships, and community. Figure 1 show the nature of the tie which an individual could be expected to derive from each of these areas[8].

Figure 1: Areas of social networking and social capital derived.



As can be seen, each area of social life allows the individual to network and attain different types of resources. Thus there are some indicators which could aid in the measurement of the type of interactions an individual is making. These are:

- Participation in family and kinship
- Participation in community and civic life
- Participation in friendships

Each of these can then be measured in terms of the number of networking partners, the amount of networking (strength and frequency of contact) and the type of resources this tie provides (bonding or bridging) .

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[8] It must be noted that these representations are ideal types and an individual's networking may differ.

While these three general categories of indicator and their related questions can help examine the number and types of interaction undertaken by an individual, they do little to help the researcher measure or assess other significant issues relating to the social capital of the individual: the capacity and wellbeing of networks, the value drawn from these, and how class, culture and gender affect an individual's ability to foster and reproduce social capital.

In order to construct indicators for these characteristics of social capital, we need to consider the arguments made in Chapter 2 (and further developed below).

Measuring the capacity and wellbeing of social capital

Measuring the capacity and wellbeing[9] of social capital is difficult. After all, the capacity of social capital to produce outcomes, such as reciprocity, or to fatigue, is an intangible feature of social capital. The capacity of social capital to produce outcomes for the individual is tied to the quality of social relations, which can be calculated through the trust and reciprocity that arises from the observance of social norms (Stone, 2001). Individuals can only activate their social capital in the presence of trust and reciprocity, that is, when the other party feels the obligation to return a favour when called upon, or when the other party feels certain that the individual will be able to reciprocate in future (such as when lending money).

Through investigation of the social capital literature, Stone suggests that the measurement of trust and reciprocity should be conducted as behavioural outcomes rather than as the actual norm or the individual's perception of norm observance. Consequently when measuring the quality of social relations, what it is aimed at is the exploration of the individual's perception of trust and reciprocity as feelings of belonging to a community or group and their perceptions of others. However measuring this may prove difficult as it can be complicated to quantify trust and reciprocity due to their subjective nature.

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[9] 'Wellbeing' refers to the resilience to social capital fatigue, examined in Chapter 2. That the individual may have accessed a network in the past does not mean that the network will be able to yield assistance in the future.

While it may be difficult to quantify amounts of trusts and reciprocity, it does not mean that the capacity of an individual's social capital is unmeasurable. Instead what can be measured is the likely capacity of an individual's network to provide access to resources as required, such as access to lucrative networks (for example business partnerships) or shelter, which the individual may be unable to access otherwise (see Table 2).

Furthermore, what Stone fails to account for is the wellbeing of an individual's social capital and for the likelihood of social capital fatigue. As shown in Chapter 2, social capital fatigue may have already happened before the individual is aware of it, and it may not manifest itself until the next time the individual attempts to activate a network. This can present a problem, as the individual's networks may seem more robust than they actually are. Although the ability of a network to offer assistance can be measured through the number of instances a person has been able to effectively activate the resource existent in that particular network, this does little to elucidate the wellbeing of the network itself. Finding ways to overcome this apparent gap between measurement and reality is needed.

Social capital fatigue occurs when a network has been used to a point where it can no longer yield any benefits (see Chapter 2). The only way to avoid social capital fatigue is to foster a number of networks which can give access to the same type of resource, allowing for 'capital replenishment'. However, simply counting the number of networks which are possessed by an individual is not enough, and alternative ways of examining network connectivity are required. Table 2 shows a typology of social capital capacity and wellbeing, with particular emphasis on the issues of class, culture and gender as discussed in Chapter 2. These factors can be measured in order to ascertain overall social capital capacity and wellbeing.

Table 2 - Capacity and wellbeing of social capital

Impacting forces	Low capacity and wellbeing	High capacity and wellbeing
Class	May possess small homogenous sets of networks which may only give access to analogous resources. Resources may have shown signs of fatigue.	May possess a range and multiplicity of bonding and bridging networks giving access to variety resources.
Culture	May possess few cultural capital networks; they may be homogenous across age and type.	May possess multiple networks giving access to broad number of cultural resources which may be heterogeneous across age and type.
Gender	May have strong same-gender networks giving access to homogenous networks.	May have a mix of networks giving access across gender.

This table focuses on the number of networks the individual possesses, which can help to ascertain the capacity of their social capital to bring about benefits and to avoid social capital fatigue. By using this table as a typology with which to compare items from the ties and assets generators (discussed in depth in Chapter 5) a picture of the individual's social capital can be formed.

This table, together with the aforementioned tools, can yield important information as to the propensity for social capital fatigue to occur. Consequently, using these tools together allows for assessment of not only the number of resources an individual possesses but also the benefits which they may be able to derive from the networks, allowing for the capacity and wellbeing of social capital to be observed.

The value of social networking

The value[10] of social capital was briefly reviewed in Chapter 2. The value of social capital is largely dependent on the individual's standpoint: no two individuals will derive the same value from the same network. This is corroborated by the findings presented in later chapters. Table 3 indicates the value of the social capital an individual can derive from their networking, depending on their particular situation.

Table 3 - Value of social capital

Impacting force	Low resources or homogeneity	High resources or heterogeneity
Class	May show homogeneity among networks. Use of networks for everyday needs.	May show heterogeneity among networks. Use of networks for upward mobility.
Culture	Networks reduced and subcultural in nature.	Cultural resources are varied.
Gender	Limited to same gender individuals. Value of networks resides in protection.	Social networks show horizontality as well as verticality. Value of networks resides in the ability to fit in, as a centring force and for career advancement.

Table 3 indicates that the value derived by an individual from their networks will usually be in relation to their needs, such as the need to find employment and economic security, or the need to eat or find shelter on a daily basis. Each of these needs can be fulfilled through the activation of networks which will give access to those assets. Similarly, the value of networks in relation to cultural capital is also dependent on individual needs. As discussed earlier, cultural

[10] Value is used to refer to the value which an individual can extract from their social capital, for example, as a way of getting on in life, rather than as social leverage.

capital can assist an individual in networking and mobility; a deficit in more mainstream cultural capital can, at times, be circumvented by the possession of subcultural capital, which may act as a buffer for any deficit experienced. Hence the pursuit of subcultural types of endeavours may be seen as a way in which to derive benefits unavailable in their mainstream form.

The following measures may therefore be useful when analysing the value of social networks:

- Use made of social network – subsistence or mobility
- Type of cultural pursuits – mainstream or subcultural
- Makeup of gender networks – homogenous or heterogeneous

Indicators of classed, cultural and gendered social capital

Finding indicators of class, culture and gender may appear to be a straightforward process for observing the social capital of an individual. As shown in Chapters 2, indicators of class such as postcode, income and job status have all been used in social capital research, with social capital tools such as the position generator largely dependent on indicators of class position to make inferences about the overall resources available to the individual. Culture has been determined in many social capital research papers by the individual's possession of mainstream or subcultural forms (see for example, Bullen and Kenway, 2005), while gender is generally determined by demarcation between male and female.

Class, culture and gender are important indicators of life circumstance (see Chapters 2 and 3). However problems can arise from the use of single indicators to reveal an individual's particular life circumstances. While some studies have endeavoured to measure some aspects of life circumstance, their use of a single dimensional explanation for class, culture and gender has not provided enough in-depth exploration of the dimension under study. For example, by measuring only postcode, it may be incorrectly inferred that the individual has high or low economic resources, but individuals within poor neighbourhoods may be solvent and choose to remain in a particular area out of choice rather than financial constraint. Similarly,

subcultural alignment may occur from a conscious choice to remain within that subculture (for example those in their 50's still living hippie lifestyles) rather than being a deficit in mainstream cultural resources. This suggests that measuring life situation through a single indicator of each dimension does not allow for real depth of analysis.

In order to ascertain what type of indicators may be useful in the analysis of life circumstance, we must turn our attention to Table 1 in Chapter 2, and Tables 2 and 3 above. While Table 1 deals with the characteristics of social capital, Table 2 deals with the capacity and wellbeing of the social capital held by the individual and Table 3 deals with the value derived from social capital networks. By observing the typology created by these tables, clear multiple indicators of the effects that class, culture and gender can have on social capital can be extrapolated. These are:

- Economic resources - plentiful or scarce
- Primary use of networks - subsistence or upward mobility
- Type of networking - bonding or bridging across classed, cultural and gendered background
- Size of networks - plentiful or scarce
- Size of cultural networks- large or small
- Type of cultural pursuits – diverse or unvarying , mainstream or subcultural, educational patterns
- Makeup of networks - homogeneity or heterogeneity
- Signs of social capital fatigue - networks plentiful or scarce, inability to activate networks

By using these multidimensional indicators of the individual's life position, a more rounded picture can be created which relies on multiple sources of information. This helps to avoid measurement problems such as biased or incorrect statements.

Adapting the social capital framework for a youth context

It is not enough to create a strong framework for the measurement of social capital – it is also essential to ensure that the framework being used relates to the life experiences of the group under investigation. If we are to avoid the many problems encountered in social capital research projects surrounding youth, it is imperative that the framework is not only tested for rigour in measurement, but also for its ability to take into account the particularities of youth social life and thus youth social capital.

Youth social capital is very different to adult social capital. When researching youth social capital, we must ensure that dimensions and indicators allow descriptions of the intricacies of youth social networking. If we look at the dimensions presented above, and integrate them with the information provided in Chapter 3, it can be clearly seen that the dimensions presented – social interactions, network belonging and network assets – are particularly suited to youth social capital.

However, in terms of capacity and wellbeing and value derived, some adjustments need to be made to allow a proper interpretation of youth networking. In terms of capacity and wellbeing, young people usually tend to network with those of their own age; hence a lack of adult networking in favour for engagement in their own community should not be seen as marking a lack of capacity in social capital but rather should be judged in light of the discussions made on networking in Chapter 3. Similarly, when examined the value derived from social capital networks can differ between youths and adults, for example in this research it was found that as young people derive status from other sources than occupation, the primary value derived from having friends from an opposite gender was as a centring force and for their 'different' point of view, rather than as a career advancement strategy. These two modifications enable a well-rounded framework from which to construct definitive indicators of youth social capital.

Indicators of youth social capital

As suggested above, the use of indicators to measure youth social capital must allow for the fullness of youth life and experience to be properly represented. Consequently, some further 'adjustments' may need to be made.

Participation in community may be too narrow an indicator to encompass youth social life due to the narrow definitions placed on the meaning of community by many social capital theorists. Often, young people who do not engage in adult-defined parameters of community, such as school activities or the local surf club, may be typecast as deficient in social capital. However, by including one more indicator focused on youth community participation, the potential normative weight of this indicator can be overcome. For example, participation in youth community can be taken to mean participation to 'community'-orientated projects such as the building or maintenance of 'dirt jumps' for the local BMX or mountain bike group. Similarly, a narrow definition of participation in civic life can also be a hazard. In social capital research, civic life is often measured through participation in political life and activities such as voter turnout (for example see Putnam 2000). Young people, for the most part, are unable to participate in political life due to their institutionalised exclusion from it. Young people are relegated to peripheral participation in political life: for example petition signing and graffiti to make any political statement. This has led to the erroneous argument that young people are at best apathetic toward political life, and at worst completely disengaged.

In order to show the political engagement of young people, the indicator must encompass not only voting as a primary indicator of civic engagement, but also the other forms of political engagement which young people undertake, and which may include subversive action such as graffiti or occupation of 'adult' space such as the shopping centre. Consequently, it is proposed to use participation in youth forms of political activity (including petition signing, donations and lobbying, as well as engagement in subversive action such as protests and graffiti)[11], to give

[11] The indicators of youth political engagement may need to be adjusted for differences between countries and the types of political activity undertaken by their young population.

a wider scope to youth political engagement. Finally indicators of class, culture and gender must also be analysed for their relevance to youth networking. When we look at the typology, all 8 indicators can be easily used to inform youth life experience without the need to alter or modify any of the categories discussed above. Consequently, these indicators, together with the data that can be collected from the social capital capacity and wellbeing and social capital value tables can in fact help to give a well-rounded view of a young person's social capital.
As a result, the framework for the measurement of youth social capital that will be used in this thesis will be:

Dimensions of social capital

- Social interactions
- Network belonging
- Network assets

Because these dimensions are affected by issues of class, culture and gender, indicators of a young person's life position will also be taken into account to elucidate the context in which social networking is taking place.

Indicators of classed, cultural and gendered social capital

The primary indicators of youth social capital suggested are:

- Type of networks - bonding/ bridging
- Number of networks present
- Participation in family and kinship
- Participation in friendships
- Participation in community and civic life

However, as discussed in previous sections, due to the narrow definitions currently being used in social capital theory for denoting participation in community and civic life, two further indicators may be needed in order to fully account for youth life and experience:

- Participation in youth community life
- Participation in youth-centred political activity

Another indicator which may be useful when attempting to measure the social capital of young people pertains to the use which is yielded from their networks. This may allow the researcher to ascertain the importance bonding and bridging may play within the life of the young person. Consequently it is recommended that 'Primary use of networks - subsistence or upward mobility' is also used as an indicator for the measurement of youth social capital.

Finally, the roles which class and culture play in the formation and reproduction of youth social capital are significant as they have been shown to clarify the context in which social networking is taking place. Accordingly it is suggested that the following indicators are considered for inclusion.

- Economic resources - plentiful or scarce
- Size of cultural networks- large or small
- Type of cultural pursuits – diverse or unvarying , mainstream or subcultural,
- Educational patterns- incomplete or completed
- Gender spread of networks- homogenous or heterogeneous

Chapter 4 concludes the theoretical sections of this study. Part two of this thesis will cover the empirical sections of this study, including the methodology, overview of the Wollondilly, the findings made in the field, advice for different sectors and conclusion.

Part 2 - Discovering youth social capital in the field

Chapter 5

Methodology

Most youth studies focus primarily on understanding how young people become healthy adults, rather than considering youths in and of themselves. This view stems from a belief that both youth and childhood are nothing more than a phase of human life, a transitory moment which one must pass through in order to become a fully functioning member of society. Inevitably, young people are most often defined by those attributes which they are said to be lacking and striving to gain; reliability, dependability and most importantly, rationality. These are thought to be achieved through maturity and proper socialisation. It is not surprising then, that social research has a tendency to overemphasise how young people *become* rather than how they *are* social persons (Qvortrup, 1991; Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta and Wintersberger, 1994).

As discussed in previous chapters, there has been a tendency in youth studies to marginalise the voice of young people. Historically, the majority of youth research carried out until the 1980s focused on researching youth rather than researching *with* youth (Fraser et al 2004; Heath et al, 2009). Consequently, the problem with a large portion of studies of young people's and children's lives is their participants' apparent invisibility and muteness (Hardman, 1973). Typically, social research constructs adults in the role of experts, and youth and children as the objects of research (Fraser et al, *2004*; Tisdall, Davis and Gallher, 2009), with young people's voices and experiences suggested rather than fully expressed. This has led to misunderstandings and over-generalisations regarding youth's production, interpretation and reproduction of culture, as well as placing them in the role of passive receivers rather than active constructors of their own identity and cultural/social reality (Fraser et al, 2004).

However, when youths become the direct focus of investigation rather than being seen through their links to the adult world, the status of youth and childhood takes on a new range of meanings, contexts and possibilities. This allows for young people to be seen as active

participants in the production, interpretation and reproduction of cultural meaning and knowledge (Greene and Hogan, 2005) rather than as passive receivers.

Effective youth research must be conducted in a manner that addresses issues of agency and selfhood (Mcleod and Malone, 2000). It should endeavour to ensure that young people are significantly involved within the research process itself (Hart, 1997). After consideration of these issues, it was decided that the methods used in this research should allow young people to put forward their own views and experiences in a genuine manner, and attempt to limit the dominance of the researcher as much as possible.

The importance of ethnography in youth studies

Ethnography can be described as the 'study of people in naturally occurring settings by methods of data collection that capture their ordinary activities and the meanings attached to these' (Heath et al*,* 2009:99). Ethnographers argue that human behaviour occurs within a context which is impacted upon by external social processes (Burns, 1997). In order to fully grasp the cultural meanings attached to behaviours, research should be carried out within this context. Consequently, fieldwork is a vital element of ethnographic investigation, shaping the design of all ethnographic studies.

Ethnography by its very nature is not an overnight process, but requires the researcher to conduct fieldwork over a period of time, in which the researcher becomes acquainted with the workings of the group under research (Fetterman, 2010). By following this process, the researcher is able to build rapport and trust with the group under study, as well as being able to develop further hypotheses or theories about the group in question[12]. Ethnographic enquiry is not a linear process, but continually invites the researcher to maintain a recurrent process of research, evaluation and investigation which further increases the researcher's understanding (O'Reilly, 2009). Many social studies have used a fusion between ethnography and qualitative methods such as surveys. This fusion not only allows for a legitimacy of findings through

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[12] This will be further investigated in relation to the critique of insider/outsider status.

quantitative data analysis, but also the use of ethnographic qualitative data can help to inflect conclusions based on quantitative data, and thereby assist in the integration of macro and micro levels of explanation (Short and Hughes, 2009). For these reasons, I have also chosen to 'meld' ethnographic studies with more commonly used quantitative social capital research tools, such as surveys and generators, in order to gain a more rounded picture of youth social life and networking.

As discussed above, there has been a historical tendency for youth studies to position young people as subjects rather than experts; this, together with impersonal methods of research such as surveys, has meant that youth research has too often contributed to the marginalisation of young people's voices rather than their inclusion. However, ethnographic methods, by their ability to give a voice to youth within their own local context through 'verbatim quotation to give "thick" description of events' (Fetterman, 2010) imply that the voice and experiences of young people can become a central rather than a marginal aspect of the research process.

In the case of youth social capital and its possible impacts, the centrality of the voices of youth is of particular importance, as the context of youth networking is impacted by social, economic, political and educational processes which are generally out of their control (for example, changes to employment law, school-leaving age, or curriculum). Such processes are completely adult-dominated, with young people often rendered 'invisible' through institutionalised exclusion. Ethnographic methods can help researchers understand how these processes affect young people. Work such as that of Willis (1977) in *Learning to Labour* and McRobbie and Garber (1976) on girl's 'bedroom culture' are exemplary in this regard, not only providing fascinating accounts, but also yielding ground-breaking insights.

A strength of ethnographic study is that it can also help to elucidate the meanings attached to more intimate aspects of youth social life which are often carried out and formed within relatively private settings (as in the case of girl bedroom culture). These behaviours can be difficult for researchers to observe unobstructed. Ethnographic studies such as those conducted by McRobbie and Garber (1976) and Geroge (2007) have shown that these methods can make visible otherwise unnoticed attitudes and behaviours which enhance our

understanding of youth cultural practices. Consequently ethnography, which allows for the exploration of contexts of cultural production within intimate settings, is a valuable tool within youth social research; it affords the researcher the opportunity to explore young people's lives within context and as lived experiences.

The final reason for adopting ethnographic methodology was the need for this study to be conducted in cultural proximity (Hodkinson, 2005). In the case of my research, my experience as the former Youth Development Officer within Community Links Wollondilly meant that I had worked among the young people for a number of years. In fact, many of those who participated in the study were well known to me, allowing me an intimate knowledge of not only their backgrounds and the youth cultures they participated in, but also of the many challenges that they had faced over the previous seven years. Ethnographic study gave me the best possible opportunity to allow the voices of the young Wollondilly community to be heard in this study. By using ethnographic research methods, young people's actual life experiences could be acknowledged.

Triangulation

The use of more than one data collection method is called "triangulation" (Burns and Grove, 1993; Kellett, 2005). The use of a variety of methods allows the researcher to show that data results are not the outcome of a singular incidence (Kumar, 1999), but are instead the result of several attempts yielding the same outcomes. Triangulation was used in this study to gain a rounded view of how class, gender and culture affect youth social capital formation and reproduction. The methods that were used to gather data included focus group interviews, a survey, participant observation, and two hybrid generators (ties and assets) in order to correlate and validate results.

The Research Process

One core aim of sociological study is to interrogate and understand power relations (Fraser et al, 2004). Accordingly, the study's main interests are centred on two key objectives: how youth form and reproduce social capital, and how class, gender and culture influence these processes. The research process for this thesis can be broken down into two broad categories, the pre-fieldwork and the fieldwork process.

Pre-Fieldwork

In order to meet these two objectives, information was initially sought through a wide ranging literature review on social capital in general, and youth social capital in particular. Literature was also reviewed concerning how young people develop networks with both their peers and with adults, how class and culture affect their ability to network, and how young people's perception of their place within society can positively or negatively shape their networking. During this stage, the types of tools which could be used for social capital research were also identified, and assessed in terms of their relevance in a youth context.

Once the literature review was completed and tools decided upon, an outline of the framework of measurement was constructed (see Chapter 4). At this point it was necessary to move into the field in order to investigate firsthand what youth social capital actually is and how it affects young people. As I already had a network partnership with Community Links Wollondilly, I decided to take advantage of my existing field knowledge and proximity to many of the youth cultures present in the area and carry out research in the Wollondilly Shire.

In August 2008, I met with the Youth Workers of Community Links Wollondilly to begin advertising the research program and to engage their participation and collaboration. By September 2008, I had conducted the pilot focus group to gain feedback as to the ease with which survey, and ties and assets generators could be completed, as well as on the relevance of

the focus group questions to youth life experience. The instruments were adjusted according to the feedback received before the 8 subsequent focus groups were conducted.

Considerations for the fieldwork process

In order to study how young people form and reproduce social capital, it is necessary to explore how young people network in a 'physical' sense, that is, how youths interact in their friendship groups, and more abstractly, how networking is shaped by an individual's classed, gendered, and cultural background. In order to gain observations of young people in their friendship groups, it was important that the research be undertaken in locations and at times where young people gathered naturally in their networking groups. The importance of conducting research in youth-friendly environments is well established (Heath et al, 2009). No venue is completely neutral; any situation will 'confer advantage on one or other party in the interview to the disadvantage of the other' (Heath et al, 2009:93). Therefore, it is essential to choose spaces in which young people can feel comfortable and power differentials can be addressed.

It can be difficult for youth researchers to present young people with a choice of venues (Heath et al, 2009) and in the case of this research (as discussed previously) there are no major shopping complexes in the Wollondilly where young people can hang out. Young people gather in diverse locations, which can be anywhere from the local skate park, to friends' homes, which meant that venue options were highly limited. In consultation with Youth Workers, it was decided that sites such as the local Youth Services, the school, the church (that some of the participants attended) and the rural fire brigade's hall (situated across the road from the Wollondilly Shire's main sporting complex) would make suitable spaces to conduct the interviews, as these venues where often frequented by young people.

The second consideration, choosing time slots where young people were commencing or concluding structured activities (such as team sports, the Living Skills project, their studies and

church choir group) or just hanging out (as in the case of the skater boys outside the Youth Services), was also important, as this would allow for friends to continue socialising together while participating in the focus group. It also allowed the researcher to observe network interaction and dynamics. Pizza was provided at the gatherings to create a relaxed atmosphere, where the young people could 'have a chat' rather than feel as if they were being interviewed. This led to excellent group participation, with 9 two-hour focus groups being conducted.

Another important issue was the empirical exploration of how class, gender and culture affect social capital formation and reproduction. This required a more analytical approach. Rather than observations of interactions, it was necessary to undertake in-depth analysis of the physical and emotional resources available to young people, as well as a comprehensive analysis of their views, beliefs, attitudes to their social worlds, and conception of their place in the adult society. In order to do this, surveys, focus groups and visual mapping were used. There was also a need to ensure that these activities did not become a burden, but instead were seen as a fun activity by the participants. With this aim in mind, participants were encouraged to chat and compare their generators, if they wished, which led to the majority of participants thoroughly enjoying the process, with some asking if they could take part in the subsequent focus groups[13].

The fieldwork process

The fieldwork process was a lengthy yet rewarding experience. The groups, for the most part, were conducted during the evening, when young people were most available. The exceptions were the Life Skills group, which were conducted at the Youth Centre during activity time, and the school groups, which, at the preference of the school principal, were conducted during school hours due to bus timetabling issues. Young people were recruited through two principal means: by invitation or self referral. Invitation took three guises: participants were invited 'off

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[13] While young people often asked if they could take part in a second focus group, no participant was permited to take part in more than one focus group.

the street' by the researcher, by their peers who were participating in the focus group, or through the Youth Services and school to participate in the project. Youth could also self-refer, by coming to the allocated focus group times and sitting in.

All participants were given information sheets about the project and were asked to sign a consent form (regardless of their age), in line with the informed consent aims of this research and with Ethics Committee requirements. Participants under the age of 16 were also required to submit a parental consent form before participation.

Before focus groups commenced, I took the time to engage with the participants. That many of the participants were well known to me from my time as a Youth Development Officer at Community Links Wollondilly was of great help in establishing rapport and trust with the participants. After the initial rapport-building activity, the participants were given their coding number and were asked to fill in their survey, assets generator and ties generator. Once this activity was completed, the focus group was conducted over an informal chat, where pizza and drinks were provided. At the end of the focus groups, participants were asked if they wanted any of the material withdrawn. Before leaving the focus group, each participant was presented with a gift voucher as a way of thanking them for their valuable time.

This gesture was highly appreciated by the participants, with one commenting 'WOW this is really nice! They normally give us nothing for our time! Thanks heaps!' (Collin Group 1, Wollondilly rural Fire services).

Insider/Outsider Status

Much has been written within ethnographic research about 'insider/outsider status', in relation to the level of legitimacy individual researchers can claim in understanding a particular group's experiences. Early positions on insider/outsider status held that when conducting research, a researcher can only occupy one of two positions in relation to the group under study, insider or outsider, and that each of these positions provide the researcher with a set of advantages

and disadvantages in the field (Merriam et al, 2001). However this position is not fixed, but ever shifting.

Insider/outsider status has held particular importance within youth research. There has been ample criticism of earlier youth research that privileged the position of the researcher over youth's social and cultural experience. This elitist approach served to largely disavow the voice and experiences of young people, by constructing them as 'the researched other'.[14] Unsurprisingly, later youth researchers began to reject the knowledge of 'adult experts' by setting up the insider/outsider debate differently, whereby adult 'experts' are classified as 'outsiders' and thus incapable of being able to speak adequately on behalf of young people. The outsider status of the researcher then places young people on the opposite side of the dichotomy, as insiders, who hold legitimate knowledge of the group's life experience.

The construction of insider/outsider status, instead of being seen as fixed, can be seen as an ever-shifting position which needs to be negotiated on an ongoing basis (Merriam et al, 2001; Sherif, 2001; Hodkinson, 2005). Debates on the shifting nature of the insider/outsider status rose to prominence after Merton's work in 1972 on black scholars challenging the supremacy of white experts (Hodkinson, 2005; Naples, 1996). Merton held that since individuals hold numerous statuses simultaneously, 'we are all of course insiders and outsiders, members of some group but derivatively not of others '(Merton, 1972:22). The point is relevant to ethnographic youth research: not all researchers are seen by youths as outsiders, for example those who, while no longer 'youths', continue to be engaged within a particular subculture. Instead their insider/outsider status is continually negotiated and renegotiated on the basis of their ability to claim insider status by showing intimate knowledge of the cultural group under research as a legitimate marker of belonging.

For my own research, this was an important point for consideration. Having been a Youth Development Officer within Community Links Wollondilly, I had not only seen firsthand the struggles of the young Wollondilly community, but also had the opportunity to work with a

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[14] See Chapter 1 for an in-depth discussion of this issue.

diversity of young people and cultural groups within the community. This, I felt, gave me intimate knowledge of the area and the issues faced by the young people living there, but what I found instead was that, while some of the problems faced by the young people were the same, many had shifted and new ones arisen. While I was a familiar face whom they trusted (and thus an insider), my lack of up-to-date knowledge placed me as a definite outsider, as at times issues which I considered salient (such as the continued upkeep of the BMX track by Council) held little current relevance for the young people of the Wollondilly. For all the networks and rapport that I had built during my time as Youth Development Officer, by the time I was finally back on the field in 2008-2009, I found that I was placed in a peculiar position by the young people and the Youth Workers, as an 'insider' and an 'outsider' simultaneously, a situation which needed to be carefully negotiated.

While my insider status did indeed facilitate the cooperation of the young Wollondilly community in the project, it was not enough to guarantee that they would agree to participate in the study or that the issues I was proposing to examine would hold interest or relevance to their current situation. It became important to me to not only revisit some of my earlier assumptions as to the possible needs and struggles being faced by them, but also to build rapport with many of the participants, particularly those whom I had never come into contact with before.

This took three forms: I first gathered up current information about the changes that had been experienced by the young people over the last few years from the Youth Workers at Community Links. Second, upon initially meeting, I ensured that I had enough time to engage with the groups of young people, allowing them time to ask questions of me, tell me about themselves, and to establish some level of rapport before moving on to the focus group. Finally, I ensured that the young people could put forward their own ideas as to the issues they saw as pertinent to the Wollondilly rather than asking them to engage with questions based on my (predetermined) interests. This helped the young people trust me with their accounts, as well as allowing them to tell 'their own story' in their own voice, rather than being constrained by a preconstructed set of questions of uncertain relevance.

Gaining informed consent

As explained in the preceding section, informed consent is a key aspect of creating ethically sound youth research. Informed consent refers to a young person's ability to freely choose whether to participate in research, without coercion or intervention from adult parties. According to Heath *et al* (2009), ensuring that informed consent is secured from young participants before a research project is undertaken validates young people's agency by supporting their ability to make decisions. Consequently, informed consent should be gained from participants before research has begun, and should aim for participants not only agreeing to participate without coercion or fear of repercussion, but also understanding the nature of the study itself.

Informed consent was of critical importance in this research. In order to achieve this, young people were asked to read an information sheet which clearly and comprehensively stated the aims of the project, as well as some background information on what social capital is and its importance in young people's lives. This sheet explained the methods of study, and how they could lodge complaints or find further information about the project. It was made available to all participants, regardless of age or the need for parental consent for participation. It was observed that many of the young individuals were excited by the prospect of being able to have the final say on their participation, and many took the time to ask questions about the research process, which they may have been uncomfortable or curious about beforehand.

Obtaining informed consent is only a starting step to fully ensuring the young people's agency is not only respected but fully acknowledged. It is also necessary to ensure that young people, once the research has begun, feel in control of the process from beginning to end. It was deemed important to not only obtain informed consent at the beginning of the research process but also to further emphasise the right of young people to express their agency through 'process consent'. Process consent, according to Heath et al (2009) refers to the acknowledgement, by both researcher and participants, that consent is an ongoing negotiation and that participants have the right to withdraw from a research study at any point and that consent is not to be assumed on the basis of initial consent (Heath et al, 2009). The right of

any young participant to withdraw part or all of their contribution to the study was openly acknowledged in the participant's consent form and information sheet. The participants had complete autonomy over their data: at the end of each focus group young people were once again given the opportunity to withdraw all or any of their information provided until all data was coded. All participants in this study chose to allow the responses to be included.

Parental consent for under 16's

Research involving young people under 16 often raises ethical concerns about youth's abilities to understand what the research process entails, and thus whether their own consent is sufficient for participation (Fraser 2004; Australian Government, 2007; Heath et al*,* 2009). These fears are usually centred on the possibility that youths could be coerced into participation, the likelihood of conflicts of interest, or the possible risks which research may pose to young people. Research bodies in Australia have paid particular attention to the importance of ensuring that young people, especially those under 16, are protected from the possible hazards of youth research.

Parental consent posed important ethical questions for my own research. Having worked as a Youth Development Officer for many years, I have come to realise that the protections placed on youth can greatly limit a young person's sense of agency. Thus, for me, it became imperative to try to balance both the needs of the Ethics Committee with the right of the young people to choose to participate without adult intervention. This line of thinking posed an important question in terms of ethical concerns: when is a young person's own judgement mature enough to give consent for research?

A review of the literature on this subject showed that the definition of capacity to consent is incredibly problematic, with little agreement as to when a young person is deemed able to consent (for example, see National Health and Medical Research Council Australian Research Council and Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2007; Alderson and Morrow, 2011). There are however some points of agreement: for example, when a young person's own judgement is deemed insufficient to give consent for research (as with those considered

mentally disabled or young children), it is essential to gain parental consent in order to ensure that the young person is protected from harm and coercion. However, when looking at a general population of youths, deciding when parental consent is necessary becomes much more difficult. As acknowledged in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Health and Medical Research Council Australian Research Council Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2007), young people mature at different rates, making it almost impossible to create an age cut-off when parental consent is no longer necessary. While a theoretical basis was impossible to determine, it was important to take a more pragmatic approach to a minimum age, by consulting with my research partners and the Ethics Committee. Consultation with Wollondilly Youth Workers suggested that the minimum age should be set at 16, which would bring the research in line with the requirements of the funding bodies for minimum age of consent. It was decided, in consultation with the participating Youth Services and after approval from the University Ethics Committee, that research involving those less than 16 years of age would need to be approved by parents/guardians before participation could take place.

Attaining the consent for participation from a parent or a guardian for those under 16 years of age was an essential part of the research process and design, and became a key issue during fieldwork. There were two concerns: to ensure that parents were given enough information about the research and procedures to give informed consent, and the need for parental consent to be given before the young person's arrival at the focus group. In order to ensure this, the letters and consent forms were assessed by both the university Ethics Committee and by the Youth Workers of Community Links Wollondilly and modified according to the feedback received.

The second concern, ensuring timely consent, proved to be more difficult than first expected. In order to achieve this, the cooperation of both the school and Youth Services was instrumental. Even though the Youth Services and the school cooperated fully in the process, gaining consent from parents/guardians was at times challenging. Even with early preparation, there were times when young people would forget their parental consent notes, which meant

attempting to contact parents to either sign new forms or bring in old ones before individuals could participate.

The need for parental consent for those under 16 did much to impede and frustrate spontaneous participation. For these young people, it became impossible to self-refer, 'walk off the street' to join a focus group, or be invited by a friend to participate at short notice. In order to allow these young people to participate, it was necessary to implement unexpected and on-the-spot processes to gain parental consent. On more than one occasion, I was faced with youths so desperate to participate that attempts were made to contact parents in order to gain signatures, minutes before the start of focus groups. At other times, due to the insistence of young people, and with the backing of the group, it was necessary to push back the focus group by fifteen minutes to allow the youths to rush home in order to gain a parent's consent to participate.

This experience underlined the need to carefully consider the age in which a young person should be allowed to consent on their own behalf. It also further highlighted that consent should never be reduced to that which can be given by parents alone, as all young people, regardless of their age, should have a chance to evaluate and choose whether to participate in any study of their own free will and fully understand their rights and responsibilities.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are high on any ethics agenda (van den Hoonaard, 2003), although they are difficult outcomes to achieve, even if all procedures set out by ethic committees are carefully followed (van den Hoonaard,2003; Wiles et al, 2006). The problems of confidentiality arise during focus groups primarily due to participants sharing their views within a group rather in a one-on-one interview setting, making their views and participation identifiable to more than just the researcher. Similarly, the use of recording devices during focus group interviews can also present problems for confidentiality, as even if the moderator can ensure that individuals do not use their names during voice recording, through assigning

pseudonyms or numbers to identify individuals, other identifiable features such as voices, or faces in the case of video recordings, still allow for individuals to be easily identified.

For many young people, the right to speak about certain subjects (such as drug/alcohol use, or views on teachers or Youth Workers) without the fear of being identified was of utmost importance. Many young people interviewed were anxious to find out how their identities would be protected, and in particular many wanted to know how I would ensure that all voice recordings remained anonymous. Ensuring the highest possible degree of anonymity and confidentiality became key considerations. After discussions with the Youth Workers and the pilot group, it was decided that it was important to ensure that any queries the participants had in regards to confidentiality were addressed in an honest and open manner. Individuals were fully aware that anonymity and confidentiality, while not absolute due to the above mentioned issues, would be maintained to their highest standards.

It was decided that at all times the participants would use their code number as their 'default' name (which was also to be written in the survey and assets and ties generators) to safeguard their identity; that all participants would be made aware of their right to withdraw all or any information provided during focus groups; and that as an added measure, the numbers used in coding information would later be changed to pseudonym names when writing up data. Furthermore, in line with ethics regulations, all data was kept in a locked cabinet to ensure that the researcher alone could access raw data which still bore identifiable features.

Use of gift vouchers and other incentives

While some researchers disagree with the practice of giving youth rewards for participation and see it as a form of 'bribery' to increase participation rates, offering some kind of reward to young people for their contribution has become common practice among youth researchers (Heath et al, 2009). Proponents of this practice such as McDowell (2001 and 2003), instead of perceiving it as a 'bribe', see it as an important acknowledgement of the time and effort invested by young people.

In line with McDowell's views, I also felt young people should be thanked and acknowledged for their valuable contribution to research. Thus the young people who took the time to participate were treated to pizza while attending the focus group, as well as being presented with a small gift voucher ($30.00) at the end of each focus group. Youth were not told of the gift voucher or pizza until the end of the focus group process, to ensure that the gesture was seen purely as a thank you, rather than as an enticement for participation.

The giving of gift vouchers was not well received by all. The high school in which this study was partially undertaken decided against allowing the use of gift vouchers as a thanking gesture, and asked that instead the young people be given certificates of participation which could be handed out during assembly. After discussion with the deputy principal of the school, this method of reward was agreed upon.

Youth-friendly social capital research tools

In all, 50 young participants took part in the Youth social capital: Getting on and getting ahead in life project. Below is a breakdown of their participation by age and gender

Table 4- Description of participants

Participants Age	Female	Male	Participation in Assets generator	Participation in Ties generator	Participation in survey	Participation in focus groups
14	6	4	10	10	10	10
15	4	11	15	15	15	15
16	9	2	11	11	11	11
17	5	5	10	10	10	10
18	3	1	4	4	4	4
Total	27	23	50	50	50	50

Analysis of data

As both quantitative and qualitative data was collected, data analysis took two forms;

Qualitative information was analysed for patterns which pinpointed to themes, common experiences and/or perceptions held by the young people. The questions included for qualitative research were:

- Why do you choose to sign a petition or give to some charities over others?
- What were some of the thing you spent your money on last week?
- Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark?
- Does your area have a reputation for being safe?
- Do you feel the community values young people?
- What is there to do in your area?
- Do you use the Internet? How?
- What groups are there in the Wollondilly Shire (such as emo, skegs, Goths etc…) do you feel you belong to any in particular?
- What is your favourite activity?
- What kind of things do you like to read?
- Who has left school and why did you leave?
- What do you think of school? Do you feel school is important for young people?
- Do you think men/women can be trusted?
- Would you get into a car with a boy or group of boys you new?
- Are male/female friends important to you?
- How are male friends different to female friends?
- Do you feel male friends can understand you as much as female friends?
- What is the main difference between female and male friends?
- What do you think about people of other nationalities?
- Do you think people of other nationalities can be trusted?
- Do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?
- Do you enjoy living among people of different life styles?

- If a stranger, someone different, started at your school, do you think they would be accepted?
- If you were going out with someone of a different nationality/colour to your parents/guardians, do you think your parents/guardians would be accepting of it?
- If you had had three wishes that could improve the lives of young people, what would you wish for?

While some of these questions also yielded quantitative information (for example the age and gender and total number of young people who felt safe after dark or total numbers who used the internet as researchers, gamers, or expressive) the main focus on qualitative analysis was for focus on group narratives on issues which were considered more complicated than could be accurately tabulated by a statistical program such as JMP.

Qualitative information was analysed through the statistical software program JMP. This included all information from the survey, some of the data yielded by primarily qualitative items and statistical data from the assets and ties generators (for example the number of adults present in their generators). Data pertaining to the ties and assets generators which helped to measure depth and breadth of networks was calculated by carefully triangulating the names in the ties and assets generator for proximity and use of the network.

This provided a well-rounded approach to the analysis of the vast and complex data set collected.

Youth focus groups

Focus groups are small groups that permit open discussion among the members on a specific topic (Lewis, 2000; Kruger and Cassie, 2000). Designed around planned discussion, focus groups aim to obtain group perceptions on particular topics in a non-threatening manner. Focus group interviews are a popular way of doing research with youths; in fact, it has been suggested by some youth researchers that 'group interviews should be the default option when interviewing young people' (Heath et al, 2009). Using focus groups has the advantage of

helping to reduce the isolation and powerlessness which can be experienced by some participants and of mitigating, to a degree, the power that the interviewer can assert over a group. Fine and Weiss (1998 in Heath et al, 2009) have also noted that the group interview can be empowering and more supportive to young people than other forms of research.

Recruitment to the focus groups took place in a variety of ways. This included one of the two local high schools, and the local Youth Services, chatting to groups of young people and inviting them to participate or allowing participants to 'self-refer' or invite friends to participate. The variety of recruiting methods meant that the focus groups (and consequently the information collected from these) were both varied and representative of the young people of the Wollondilly Shire.

Open and negotiated invitation

There is a marked difference between an 'open' and a 'negotiated' invitation extended to a group of young individuals. In terms of power relations, an open invitation, which is made to a group of young people outside of any adult control, is a far more empowering experience than one made through a negotiated invitation, through adults (in the case of the thesis, the local schools and the youth service). During an open invitation, individuals are able to make a decision based on their own judgement, greatly increasing their sense of agency. However, this type of invitation also carries the danger of low or no participation rates, meaning that many researchers prefer not to use this type of invitation and instead opt for a more structured negotiated invitation.

In a negotiated invitation, a researcher approaches a group which may be able to 'negotiate' the invitation of the participants by contacting the members who may be of interest to the project. With negotiated invitations, participants, and in particular, young participants are more likely to suffer some form of coercion. For example, teachers may not acknowledge the right not to participate in the program, or place importance only on the 'send home' information sheet for parents, rather than gaining informed consent from the participants themselves. This can be detrimental in that participants' sense of agency can be eroded and their right not to participate

may be disavowed. For these reasons, any invitation extended for this research through an institutional body (such as the school or Youth Services) is considered a negotiated invitation. It was ensured that these participants were made fully aware of their rights before focus groups could take place.

The focus groups are listed below according to their invitation type. The features of each group are discussed individually.

Groups 2 to 5 – open invitations

Group 2 was invited 'off the street '. It was made up of young males aged between 14 and 18 who classify themselves as 'skaters '. These young men comprised a group of about 10 to 15 young males that habitually 'hung out' outside the Youth Services car park for the lack of somewhere 'decent for skating' (Ryan 15, Wollondilly Youth Services car park). In my initial conversation with these young people, I was told that they were often harassed by shopping centre management and police for skating in or near the shopping centre complex, and had thus decided to move into the Youth Centre's car park in order to avoid the constant persecution. I invited them to take part in the study. Some, while willing to participate, had to be excluded due to the lack of parental consent; others declined the invitation. From these, four young participants chose to take part in the focus group after gaining parental consent (for those under 16). The insights provided by this group were numerous and proved to be a valuable contribution to the success of the project.

Group 3 - While not deliberately set out as a gender specific group, was formed by young three women from very mixed backgrounds aged between 14 and 17. While two of the participants self-referred, the third was invited to participate by the researcher at the end of an activity run by the services. The diversity in the young women's backgrounds contributed an interesting variety of viewpoints, and being an all-female group, it was easier for the girls to speak to each other and confirm their individual experiences of life as young women in the Wollondilly. In the case of this group, the three girls were virtually unknown to each other and the dynamics

which formed between the three young women through the focus group process were insightful and thought-provoking, to say the least.

Group 4 - Consisted of three young mothers (one with a severe disability). The three young women attended the Youth Services as part of a Young Mothers Group as well as being engaged with the Wollondilly Family Support Services. The young women were aged between 15 and 18, and their babies were all under the age of 2. The participants provided a unique insight into the difficulties faced by young mothers, financial and emotional. Their description of their feelings of alienation, and inadequacy, and the lack of partner and familial support were moving and provocative at the same time. Their contribution helped to not only elucidate the struggles faced by young parents in the Wollondilly, but also provided fascinating insights into the sense of estrangement felt by the young women toward both the adult and youth communities and the repercussions of this for networking.

Group 5 - Was comprised of eight friends from the local church youth group. Consisting entirely of young women aged between 15 and 18 years, the group was held in the local church before choir practice. This group more than any other showed the dynamics between 'best friends', as many of the young women, while friends with all participants, had a keener sense of friendship with one or two other individuals who they derived support from them when answering questions. Interesting observances were made of not only the larger but also the smaller, subgroup dynamics.

Groups 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9 - negotiated invitation

While the young people from group 6 attended the service on a regular basis and the young people of group 1 had attended the youth service at some point, the young people comprising groups 7 to 9 all attended the same private high school. These groups differed from previous examples in that they were engaged for participation through a negotiating institution. Consequently, the majority of these groups were undertaken during school hours. While more structured, these groups provided valuable insight into the dynamics which occur within and outside a classroom environment. I was not only able to speak to the students during the time

which we held the focus groups, but also to observe their behaviour through unobtrusive research during recess and lunchtime breaks (in the case of the school groups) or smoking time (for the Youth Services group). Consequently, being able to carry out the research within the structured environment not only provided me with important information as to how young individuals network within their own private peer groups, but also within the larger context of the school.

Group 1 - The pilot group, was recruited through the local Youth Services. The individuals would be classified as predominantly but not exclusively high achievers at school. This group was comprised of six young people, three males and three females, aged between 15 and 18, who were either related through kinship, as in the case of two participants, or belonged to the same friendship group, which aided group cohesion. This group were not only interviewed in order to collect information pertinent to the research, but also gave feedback on the language and relevance of the focus group questions, ties and assets generators, and survey questions, as well as helping to inform the focus group process itself. The suggestions that came about from this experience were taken into consideration in improving the tools used for the subsequent eight groups. Consequently, this group was pivotal in ensuring that the tools used for the data collection were both theoretically and pragmatically relevant in relation to social capital and networking.

Group 6 - Was comprised of nine young people, six males and three females, aged between 15 and 17, who participated in a Living Skills program at the Wollondilly Youth Services. This program holds particular interest for me, as I had actually created the program years earlier while working as Youth Development Officer at Community Links Wollondilly. While some of the faces still engaged in this program were familiar to me, the circumstances or their engagement with the program had changed. Some of those newly engaged in the program had been involved previously in the juvenile justice system. All participants were unemployed and barring one young male, none were engaged in any type of formal education. In some cases, the young people and their families had a long history of engagement with welfare services and would for the foreseeable future continue to rely primarily on their friends and the workers at Community Links Wollondilly for support. For one of the young men in particular, this was

of importance as he had been left homeless several times and had to rely on his friends to provide accommodation and on the Youth Workers to help him gain welfare payments and to advocate on his behalf. This group, unlike others, also showed the largest divisions in trust between males and females: the young women felt largely censured by the young men. In order to overcome this, the young men were asked to step out of the room for a short time while the young women gave their answers to questions regarding gender issues.

Group 7 - Was comprised of just three individuals: two girls and one boy from Year Eleven. Aged 16-17, they were particularly interesting to hear from as they were about to enter the final phase of school, and were preparing for more 'adult' responsibilities. What they would do with their future weighed heavily on their minds and 'coloured' much of their response.

Group 8 - Consisted of 10 young people in Year Ten, five males and five females aged 15-16. This group of young people faced many challenging decisions. For many this was the last year of their school career, with some opting to leave school at the end of the year for apprenticeships or other work. Those staying faced the prospect of choosing subjects which would hopefully lead either to university entry, or to their chosen career path.

Group 9 - Was be made up of Year Eight students attending one of the local schools. This group included five males and four females aged between 14 and 15. For these young people, their main concern was 'hanging out', as prospects of adult life, such as employment, seemed very far off and not warranting concern at present.

Focus group questions and participation

A range of questions were used in the focus groups in order to determine the impact of class, culture and gender on youth social capital fostering and reproduction (for a full list of questions see Appendix 4).

The questions posed to the individuals drew from a number of approaches. While the majority of the questions posed were open-ended and designed to stimulate discussion, some

closed questions were also asked to gain specific information and increase data reliability (Stewart et alet al, 2007). Leading and neutral lines of questioning were used, as well as a semi-structured approach. This involved the moderator in the group discussion, but individuals were encouraged to interact among themselves in a free manner. This semi-structured approach meant that while focus groups were able to cover a large range of topics, the nondirective aspect of the interview allowed participant views to be fully expressed.

Finally, it was important to ensure that participants in the focus groups felt that their contributions were valued and that they had an equal chance to participate. Individual member were invited by the moderator to contribute their opinions, and though discussion was very open, it was necessary at times to draw out timid members of the group to ensure that their views were also heard. However, within this type of interaction, participants were always able to decline answering the questions posed.

Using generators

Three types of generators are most commonly used in social capital research: the position generator, the name generator and the resource generator. While they all focus on the collection of information pertaining to social networks, they differ in their approach and the manner by which data is collected (Flap, 1999; Flap et al 1999-2003). These generators are discussed below.

The position generator

The position generator (Appendix 3) is one of the most widely used survey instruments for the measurement of social capital at the individual level (Lin and Dumin, 1986; Lin, Fu and Hsung, 2001). In its typical structure, it is based on the idea that a list of positions in the form of occupations can be used as cues to report on both the number of networks and number of social resources possessed by an individual. It is predicated on the idea that occupational prestige is an indicator of social status: the higher the occupational prestige of the individual's networks, the more extensive the financial and cultural resources the individual is assumed to

possess. The main advantages of this type of generator are that it is 'easy and economical, and the questionnaire can be systematically adjusted for different populations' (Van Der Gaag and Snijders, 2005:4).

However, the position generator is of little use or value in youth research. In Australia, no child may be legally employed before the age of fourteen years and nine months. Further, a large portion of young people over the legal employment age are still in formal education, or otherwise remain out of employment by choice. This means that position is of little application to young people as the means of deriving 'status'. Thus the position generator is of limited use in youth research.

Nevertheless, job prestige is still important when considering parental job status and income. As discussed in previous chapters, a young person's class situation can be described in terms of the overall capacity of their parents to support them, including their accommodation, the school that they attend, and the leisure pursuits they are able to undertake. Consequently, parental employment and income are directly related to a young person's class position and chances for upward mobility, making parental circumstances an important measure for the study of youth social capital[15].

The name generator

The name generator (Appendix 1) is the oldest, most comprehensive, and most commonly used measurement of individual social capital (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2003; Van der Gaad and Snijder, 2005; Flap et al*,* 1999*;* Marin and Hampton, 2007*)*. The name generator charts an individual's social networks by creating a 'social inventory' which can be crossed-checked. According to Van der Gaag and Sniders (2003 and 2005), the name generator can help yield highly detailed and informative social capital descriptions in terms of both types of relationships and resources.

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[15] Parental occupational position was measured through the survey instead of making use of the position generator.

The biggest drawback observed in the use of name generator is in the amount of data it can yield. Usually administered as part of the interview process, the name generator can be cumbersome at times for both researcher and interviewee, as the amount of data can become both enormous and superfluous due to the multiplicity of networks which can give access to the same or similar resource (Flap e*t al* 1999*;* Marin and Hampton 2007*)*. However, the constantly shifting nature of young people's networks increases the validity of the study of multiple potential networks. For young people, friendships are tenuous at best, and many young people can experience the loss of a complete friendship network through in-group fighting (see Chapter 3). Thus for young people there is very real value in the cultivation of several networks which can give access to the same or similar resources, as a possible insurance against network loss and social capital deficit. Accordingly, despite its potential generation of cumbersome data, the name generator has some distinct benefits for youth research.

The resource generator

The resource generator (Appendix 2) was created as a way of circumventing the problems with the position and name generators (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2005). Combining the positive aspects of the position and name generators, the resource generator discards their more problematic aspects by using clearer and more focused resource items and by omitting name identification in questions which can create cumbersome data (see Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2005).

Consequently, the resource generator, instead of charting social networks or job prestige through a questionnaire, maps specifically accessed resources which are available to the individual. This covers different aspects of life which have been previously determined by the researchers as theoretically valid for the group under study. The availability and tie strength is then checked against the proximity of the tie (i.e. family member or acquaintance) (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2005), helping to map out the individual's social resources. The main advantage of this instrument, like the position generator, lies in the speed with which it can be administered and the ease with which the responses can be interpreted.

The resource generator, then, relies on the selection of items which can be taken as representative of the general social capital of individuals (Van der Gaag and Snijders, 2003). This presents problems since the actual 'makeup' of youth social capital is contested, and this can lead to misrepresentations of or assumptions regarding youth social life.
Some resources measured within the resource generator though, such as status, wealth and power, are of relevance to both youth and adults, warranting their measurement.

A hybrid generator for youth

The limitations of the position, name and resource generators rendered them of limited use when examining youth social capital, due to the intrinsic differences between youth and adult life. However, since measuring the spread and density of youth networks is important, I have chosen to take the most relevant sections of each of the above mentioned generators and created new 'hybrid tools' for the measurement of youth social capital. The design of these hybrid tools encompassed two stages: development and adjustments. The majority of the development occurred before the focus groups were conducted. Adjustment of both generators was made before their use in the field in light of the findings made in the pilot group.

Development of the ties generator

Most social capital researchers agree that social capital should be measured through the use of more than one generator, as often the use of a single generator creates unreliable information, including key variables such as size and density (Marin and Hampton 2007, Flap et al, 1999).

As discussed above, each of the three commonly used generators attempts to measure a slightly different aspect of networking: the position generator measures status, the name generator depth and breadth of networks, and the resource generator access to specific network items. With this as a point of departure, I will now outline the construction of hybrid tools.

The conferral of status, for young people, occurs in a different manner than that of adults: through the possession of large friendship networks which help the young person to validate their own social capital. However, it is almost impossible to assign status to any particular defining characteristic of an individual, making the measurement of status in young people a difficult process. However, individuals who hold 'prestige' within youth circles will tend to have larger friendship circles and their opinions will be valued more than those of other individuals. When mapping a young person's status it is important to chart the depth and breadth of their friendship circle as well as their 'relevance' within other individuals' circles. This can be achieved through name identification and positioning.

The ties generator was created to measure both depth and breadth of networking, as well as status within a group (see Appendix 6). Similar in its use and makeup to the name generator, the ties generator works by asking the participants to place the name of any individual that they consider important in their life by proximity; the closer the individual is to the 'me' square, the closer the bond is between the two individuals. While this can at times yield large amounts of information, it has the advantage of being a fast way for the individual to map their own social networks without researcher bias. Furthermore, working with young people, where this tool can be given for completion during a focus group that includes their friends means that each individual participant's network reality is mapped, also in addition to their overall status within the group.

The ties generator can yield other information aside from status and network depth and breadth. It can also be used to measure network diversity through the age and gender spread of the individual's networks. By including the age and gender of the people placed within the ties generator, important clues can be derived in terms of the effects class, culture and gender can have on the makeup of youth social capital, further enhancing the value of this tool. However, the ties generator still does not elucidate access to resources and possible network multiplicity, two essential features under investigation, which suggests the use of a further generator.

Development of assets generator

As discussed earlier, an individual's access to resources are of particular importance. This can prove difficult to establish in a youth setting due to the uncertain nature of youth social capital. However the theoretical discussions provided in Chapter 3 and 4 can help to reveal specific resources which may prove essential for a young person in attaining goals in life.

These items include:

- Trust
- Help
- Friendships
- Familial closeness

To capture access to these resources, an assets generator was created, similar to the exchange name generator, and comprising fifteen questions relating to these specific items (Appendix 7). The names provided through the asset generator give a clear picture of the multiplicity of networks giving access to the same resource. However, they can also be correlated to the answers given in the ties generator and focus group interviews to further enhance understanding of the individual's overall social capital structure.

Adjustment

Once the new tools were developed, they were tested by the pilot group for ease and relevance. This testing determined that while the assets generator needed very few changes beyond the clarification of Question 6, the ties generator needed more specific information to be provided by participants for it to give an effective picture of youth networking. Consequently, participants were asked to provide additional information relating to name: age, nationality, postcode (if possible), and relationship (friend, cousin, neighbour etc), so as to better map their overall networking.

Surveys

Surveys are one of the most popular methods of quantitative social research (Heath et al*, 2009*). For the most part, surveys can be a cost-effective research tool, allowing the researcher to collect large amounts of data in a standardised format while providing relative ease of analysis (Tisdall et al*,* 2009), leading to larger case studies and more representative samples. Unsurprisingly, the usefulness of surveys has not been lost to social capital researchers, with most attempts at measurement using surveys to measure trust and networks within a society. However, not every survey is effective in measuring social capital: many social capital researchers warn about the use of secondary information or non-social capital specific surveys, which can lead to problems in the measurement of social capital (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, when attempting to measure youth social capital, it is important to use a survey which is both social capital specific and youth specific.

Surveys have also been shown to be a popular mode of research by young people (Hill, 2005; Heath et al*,* 2009). For young people, the most important advantage of a survey is its high level of anonymity, which presents an opportunity for those who may not feel comfortable sharing their views in an open forum, such as a focus group, to participate in research (Heath et al*,* 2000; Tisdall et al, 2009).

Surveys which are poorly structured or badly designed, or those which involve little youth consultation, can lead youth to find them boring or an intrusion in their lives rather than wanting to participate in them (Tisdall et al, 2009). Many young people, on being faced with a 'boring' or badly designed survey will choose to give incorrect answers 'as a joke' or simply give the answer that they feel would be expected (Hill, 2005; Heath et al, 2009). The misleading information so collected can greatly reduce the viability of a study.

Consequently, it was of utmost importance that this study used a survey which not only addressed the above mentioned issues, but also targeted its specific needs. The survey was used to gather background information about the individual which could not be easily discerned through the focus group or the ties or assets generator, i.e. data on class, cultural

assets and the individual's gender. The survey also aimed at collecting information about the specific indicators of youth social capital outlined in Chapter 4. It can be broken down as follows.

Table 5- Survey questions breakdown by class, culture and gender

Impacting forces	Indicators	Relevant questions
Class	Economic resources	Suburb Postcode Bank account ownership Savings Employment status Place of employment Travel - national and international Parental occupation Type of home lived in
	Educational patterns	School attended Private lessons - sporting or other pursuits Highest education level reached Current school year attended Attendance at other educational institutions and type of course
Culture	Cultural pursuits: mainstream or subcultural	Hobbies and interests Ownership of cultural items including iPods, mobiles etc[16] Internet access Access to social networking sites Leisure pursuits – hours spent reading, surfing the net, watching TV etc Use of mobile phone, home phone, SMS, email, including frequency and amount Knowledge of musical instrument
Gender	Individual's gender	What us your gender

[16] For a full list of items please see Appendix 5.

This survey also shed light on background information about the participants which could further elucidate the particular composition of their social capital. These included:

Area under investigation	Question
Other background information	Age Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent Nationality Knowledge of second language Birth country of parents Main language spoken at home Length living in local area Home life composition Help in finding work

37 questions were chosen for inclusion within the survey[17]. In order to ensure that it was relevant to young people once it was drafted, the survey was initially presented for evaluation to the Youth Workers at Community Links Wollondilly. After their feedback, it was given to the pilot group to evaluate. The survey was then modified as per the pilot group's suggestions before being disseminated to the final eight groups.

Operationalising the concept

As mentioned in Chapter 4, it was important for this thesis to find a definition of social capital as a multidimensional concept affected by issues of class, gender and culture. For this reason, Bourdieu's definition has been adopted: 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu 1986:248). To operationalise a concept means to define it in terms of what can be measured (Bouma and Ling, 1996). In regards to social capital, it is the type and size of networks that an individual possesses which

[17] A full list can be found in Appendix 5.

can be empirically measured. These networks are characterised by trust and social norms, which in turn are influenced by class, gender and culture (see Chapter 2).

In order to further illustrate what is and what is not included within this definition of social capital, I will now turn my attention to the key elements which makeup this definition, and how they are influenced by issues of class, gender and culture.

Networks

These are comprised of the bonding and bridging networks possessed by the individual, which include relationships with family, friends and the wider community. Class, gender and culture affect networking by limiting or enabling the individual's ability to enter more 'lucrative' social networks.

Characteristics which affect networks

Norms

These are the moral systems, as well as the laws, customs, reciprocity and knowledge base existing in a society or held in common between individuals. An individual's class, gender and cultural position affect social norms indirectly, through the individual's navigation or acceptance or rejection of social norms, rather than the set of norms per se.

Trust

Trust is what smooths out social interaction. Trust occurs in two guises: 'thick' and 'generalised' trust. Thick trust is the trust placed in individuals with whom one shares bonding networks, such as close friends and family. Generalised trust is the type of trust stemming from bridging networks. It is the type of trust placed in individuals with whom one may only have had a very brief networking history. Class, gender and culture affect an individual's level of trust by increasing or decreasing the individual's propensity to trust in others.

Some problems and limitations foreseen within this study

Some problems which could be foreseen for this research included researcher bias, travelling distance, data collection using tools or methods not suited for social capital research, the lack of suitable tools with which to measure youth social capital and lack of literature currently available dealing with youth social capital. However, none of these problems are insurmountable. I will now consider each in turn. As explained in previous sections, much youth research has been plagued by researcher bias. The positioning of young people as objects of research disavows young voices and experience, by emphasising topics and experiences of interest to the researcher rather those being researched. While all studies are indeed constructed through the lens of the researcher's interests, care should be taken that these interests do not overshadow the social reality of the group under scrutiny. Consequently, it is imperative that while the researcher maintains control over the project, an ongoing process of consultation is undertaken with those under study, to ensure the relevance and representativeness of the study to their own experience.

Travel issues can also prove to be a problem in ensuring participation for the youth of Wollondilly. As shown in chapters 6 and 7, lack of adequate transportation is a very real issue for the community; consequently, in locating venues for the focus groups, it was important to ensure that they were easily accessible for the young people, and conducted at times when public transport would still be available to them if necessary.

Further problems are those of data collection using tools or methods not suited for social capital research, and the lack of suitable tools with which to measure youth social capital. It was essential that the tools used within this thesis not only suited the measurement of social capital, but also that they had particular relevance to youth social capital. It became immediately evident that there was a need to create new tools with which to collect information about youth social capital. However, this meant that the tools used in this study were largely untested in the field, and that some required some level of modification after the initial pilot group was conducted.

While there is a plethora of information on social capital, to date there has been little research undertaken on youth social capital. Of the few studies that have been carried out, many have been criticised for their use of adult dimensions and indicators, or their lack of relevance to youth life and experience (Whiting and Harper, 2003; Morrow, 2001; Morrow, 2002). This thesis thus represents an attempt to go some way to correct this trend, in that it identifies youth social capital through both theory and the voice of young people.

A final limitation of this study was directly related to time constraints and scope of the thesis, which rendered a number of other issues unbaled to be explored:

- While this thesis focused on issues of class, culture and gender, it did not explore issues arising between ethnicities. Due to the largely homogenous nature of the sample, it was almost impossible to assess how distinct ethnicities may affect youth social capital. This presents an important area for further study.
- Religion has been seen by many as important in the formation of social capital. However, the relative lack of religious participation by many of the young people in the Wollondilly, compounded by time constraints, meant that religious participation was not addressed.
- While this thesis explores the impact of gender on youth social capital in some depth, this has been done only in terms of the gender dichotomy of male and female. A further exploration of gendered expression through a broader conceptualisation may be needed to ascertain the full impact of gender performance on networking.
- Issues surrounding sexuality were only explored in a very indirect way. However, the information gathered would seem to suggest that sexuality, and more specifically sexual orientation plays a part in the social networking of young people. Consequently, the impact of sexual orientation on social capital is a further area of study.
- A further possible limitation of this study is the use of a single area for the study of youth social capital. While this allows for a concentrated consideration of a particular location and is efficient as regards temporal and economic constraints, this may limit the generalisation of the findings to other areas.

- While every attempt has been made to create a broad set of indicators which may be used to measure the social capital of young people, it must be acknowledged that there will probably be significant variations in the study of youth social capital between countries, which may require adjustment of the indicators proposed in this thesis.
- As with any study, the data could present some measure of bias. It is possible that some individuals may have given an over-inflated account of their social networks (perhaps due to peer pressure), or answered survey questions inaccurately or misleadingly.
- Finally, due to this framework being created specifically for use on a small population, there may be a need to revise its application for larger studies of youth social capital.

Chapter 6

Looking at the Wollondilly Shire

In this chapter I will shift my focus to the Wollondilly Shire to give a snapshot of the area where the research was undertaken. The major background resource is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) information, including the 2006 census data[18] as well as further statistical reports (by the ABS and other government bodies) produced during the period in which this research was undertaken.

The Wollondilly Shire

The Wollondilly it is made up of 33 rural to semi-rural villages, with its largest township being Tahmoor. It stretches over 2,560 square kilometres, from Yanderra in the south and Appin and Menangle in the east, to Warragamba in the north, and the Nattai Wilderness and Burragorang Valley in the west. The extensive geographic spread means that it is sparsely populated, with only 17 individuals on average residing per square kilometre. In 2006 (ABS 2007), the Wollondilly Shire had an estimated residential population of 40,000 persons. From these, 13% of residents were born overseas, with just 5.3% speaking a language other than English at home (ABS, 2007). In terms of indigenous population, the Wollondilly Shire encompasses three areas of traditional land: Dharawal, Dharug and Gundungurra Countries. Since 1998, there has been a steady increase (17.4%) in the indigenous population of the Wollondilly (Wollondilly Shire Council , 2011). By 2008, 2% of the population identified as Indigenous (ABS 2007).

In relation to young people, the Wollondilly Shire has a relatively high proportion of youths aged 12 to 24, in comparison to other areas. In 2006 it was found that a larger proportion of

[18] The ABS census is the national census undertaken every five years in Australia by the government. While it is acknowledge that the information on the ABS census can at times be problematic, as some of these figures may potentially be unreliable (e.g. self-reporting and under or over-estimation of hours), it still provides the largest, best and most reliable secondary source of data available.

young people aged 12 to 17 lived in the Wollondilly Shire (10.2%) than in the Sydney statistical division (7.9%) (ABS, 2007). By 2008, there were slightly more young males (1,788) than young females (1,666) aged 15 to 19 living in the Wollondilly.

Housing and development

The Wollondilly is still considered rural to semi-rural; however, this does not mean that there is little development happening in the area. The Wollondilly is quickly expanding. In 2006, there were almost 13,000 households recorded on census night. Of these, 29% were couples, and 21% had four or more related individuals living at the same address, a slightly higher rate than that in the Sydney figures of the same year. 16% of households had one person living at the address.

The increase in development in the Wollondilly has seen a rise in average house prices, with the 2009 September quarter reporting an increase of 5.5%, to a median price of just over $401,000 (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils 2010). However, while the increase puts the Wollondilly Shire on par with the greater Wollongong metropolitan area, the increase in average house price is still modest when compared to the Sydney housing market. In 2006, the median housing repayment was $1,733 per month, with the median weekly rent reaching $200. The majority of those renting did so through a landlord (24%), with only 7% stating than they rented from the Department of Housing or from a housing co-operative/community or church group (3%) (ABS, 2007). The affordability of housing, coupled with the Shire's proximity to Sydney, has meant that the Wollondilly has attracted many couples and young families to the area. This, however, has led to much of the Wollondilly being considered a 'dormitory' suburb, whereby a large portion of its residents travel for work outside of the area, with Council figures (2009) showing that just over 60% of those living in the Wollondilly need to travel outside the Shire for work.

For young people, the development occurring in the Wollondilly is not unwelcome. Many of the participants in the study complained about the lack of facilities available to young people, and wanted to see growth which would bring in big investors, such as shopping malls and

movie theatres to the area (see Chapter 7). Furthermore, many of the young people felt the lack of employment within the area to be a key hurdle, further emphasising the area's 'dormitory' status as a key problem.

Family type

By and large, families[19] are the main type of household seen in the Wollondilly, with 10,705 families residing in the Shire in 2006 (ABS 2007). This is followed by lone person households (2,008) and group households (177). The majority of families were comprised of couple families with children over 15 years of age (6,023 or 44%), followed by couples with children under 15 years of age (4, 181 or 30%), and finally couples without children (3, 524 or 26%). There was a sharp contrast in the number of single parent households in the Wollondilly, with 778 single parent families with children under the age of 15, followed by 574 single parent families with children over the age of 15.

While the majority of families reported having non-dependent children or students over the age of 15 (1,588), many still reported having dependent students or children over the age of 15 (488), while 413 families reported having a mix of both dependent and non-dependent[20] children over the age of 15 living at home. From these, more young females (738 or 54%) than males (626 or 46%) were dependent students, while more males (2,523 or 53%) were non-dependent on parents (2,205 or 47%) (ABS, 2007), perhaps reflecting the more positive attitude held by young women toward schooling found in this study.

For the majority of young people in the Wollondilly, the main composition of family type was an 'intact' family (5,269 or 87%), followed by other family types (including step and blended families) accounting for less than 5%.[21]

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[19] These figures include same-sex families as per the ABS 2007 census figures for 2006.

[20] According to ABS, a non-dependent child is a person 'aged 15 years or more, who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster child of a couple or lone parent usually resident in the same household, who is not a full-time student aged 15-24 years, and who has no identified partner or child of his/her own usually resident in the household' (ABS 2007).

[21] These figures exclude single parent families as per ABS 2007 census figures.

Children born by mother's age

As birth rates have continued to decrease in Australia, there has been an intense interest from government in encouraging pregnancy.[22] The total fertility rate in Australia reached its peak in 1961, when the average was 3.5 children born per woman. However, by 1976 the live birth rate had dropped below replacement levels to 1.75 births per woman (Drago et al*,* 2009). The Australian government has estimated that the proportion of the Australian population aged between 15 to 64, which makes up the bulk of our labour force, will continue to fall to around 59% by 2051 (ABS 2002) placing an increasing strain on both the economic and welfare sectors. As a result, in May 2004, in an attempt to lift flagging birth-rates, the Australian government announced a 'Baby Bonus' policy, paying women $3,000 per new child. This bonus was neither means- nor age-tested. While the effectiveness of the bonus in terms of increasing pregnancy rates has been widely debated, figures have shown that in the period between 2000 and 2008, live birth-rates in the Wollondilly increased slightly (Wollondilly Shire Council Website).

In the Wollondilly, while births have increased somewhat, since 2004 the average number of births per woman have not. In 2004 the Wollondilly Shire recorded 533 live births, however by the 2006 census, births had increased to 558, and by 2008 there were 602 births recorded. Nevertheless, the average births per woman in the Wollondilly have remained constant since 2004 at just 2.1 births per woman recorded (ABS 2007). In 2006, the majority of women in the Wollondilly had two or more children during their lifetime (59%), with 10% of women aged 20 or over having one child, and 17% having no children at all. While women aged 49 and under tended to lead statistical figures, with three or less children born to them (60% for the younger cohort, compared to 42% for the older cohort), women 50 and older had a higher propensity to have given birth to four children or more (58% for those 50 and over as

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[22] The government has used two main tactics in order to address the falling birthrate: the creation of the baby bonus discussed in this study, and an increase in skilled immigration. Consequently, during the Howard years, immigration increased to 160,000 individuals per year (Roskam, 2007). This was reduced by 14%, from 133 500 to 115 000 in mid-March 2009, due to the global economic downturn. However, this has been further reduced in the 2009-2010 period, to 108 100 places (National Communications Branch, Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010).

opposed to 40% for those 49 and younger), mirroring the birth trends for the rest of the country. Whether the slight increase in figures was a direct result of the baby bonus or not remains unclear; however, figures suggest that the baby bonus may have had a modest impact on birth rates throughout the country (Drago et al, 2009).

While the advent of the baby bonus was welcomed by many soon-to-be parents, it became controversial due to its possible impact on young women. The introduction of the baby bonus saw vocal anxiety in the adult community about an increase in teenage pregnancy due to the money on offer ($4000 in 2006, increasing to $5000 in 2010). This was further fuelled by current affairs programs presenting young women who wanted to get pregnant for the bonus. This negative perception, coupled with intense pressure from the public, eventually led the Australian government to change the baby bonus policy for young mothers in 2007, with the money no longer being given as a lump sum, but instead as 13 instalments over 6 months (AAPT, 2006). Despite the perception held by the adult population, birth rates for young women remained low: in 2006, birth rates for teenage mothers aged 15 to 19 in the Wollondilly represented just 1% of the statistical population. Live birth rates to teenage mothers for 2006 suggest that while much fear and concern was harboured in relation to the baby bonus, for the young people in the Wollondilly the baby bonus had no major impact or lasting effect, with the vast majority (99%) choosing not to have children.

Family income

Family income, as shown in previous chapters, is an important part of the social capital puzzle. According to Wollondilly Shire Council (Wollondilly Shire Council website, 2011) drawing on 2006 ABS figures, the Wollondilly had a 'smaller proportion of high income households (those earning $1,700 per week or more) as well as a smaller proportion of low income households (those earning less than $500 per week) than Sydney'. Only 31% of Wollondilly households had an income exceeding $1,700 per week. The number of families (12%) earned an income between $1,000 and $1,100 per week. Worse affected were single parent families, with the majority earning between $500 and $649 per week.

These figures suggest that children in single parent families are often faced with more economic hardship than those living in couple families, and that the pressure to increase economic stability in the family may in fact drive many young people to seek employment (either full-time, part-time or casual) to supplement their needs. Consequently, many of the Wollondilly youth, and in particular those from lower income families, often lamented the lack of suitable employment in the area, with many young people unable to find and secure ongoing employment (see Chapter 7). This, as will be discussed in later sections, can be highly problematic, as young people unable to find employment may find their ability to gain bridging networks (in the form of recommendations) severely curtailed.

Working in the Wollondilly Shire

A number of people employed within the Wollondilly worked in the manufacturing services industry (14%), with retail and construction following closely at 11% each. The majority of the working population recorded their role as technical or trades based (18%) and clerical and administration (15%). In the 2006 census, the median weekly individual income recorded for individuals in the Wollondilly was just $502 (ABS, 2007). This figure was below the minimum weekly wage of $511.86 set by the federal government in 2006, suggesting that many individuals, and in particular young people, were in 2006, and are even now, living below the poverty line.

In 2006, 71% of the Wollondilly population aged between 25 and 74 years were employed on a full-time basis. Of these, 88% were males and 50% were females. For those aged 25 and over, the largest employment sector was the manufacturing industry, which employs 32% of the adult population, while the construction sector employed 24%. This remained true for both genders, with both adult males and females showing their highest employment rates in these areas.[23] The majority of adult females in the Wollondilly reported being employed in clerical and administrative roles (31%), followed by professionals (22%). For adult males, the primary

[23] Figures collated from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 census data.

roles were recorded as technicians or trade workers (27%), and machinery operators or drivers (18%). Only 12% of males recorded their occupation as professional (ABS, 2007).

In 2006, there were 3,789 young people earning a wage in the Wollondilly. Out of those, 2,004 were males and 1,785 were females aged between 15 and 24. Young people aged 15-19 were often unemployed in the Wollondilly, with 36% of females and 35% of young males reporting a negative or nil income in the 2006 census. Young people aged 20-24 were more likely to be employed, with only 5% of males and females reporting a negative or nil income. However, the majority of young people earned incomes below $600, per week with young females being over-represented in this bracket (73%) compared to young males (54%). Young people tended to be employed more often on a part-time basis (47%) than full-time (44%), with the number of young women aged 15-24 recorded as employed part-time (63%) much higher than that for young men (38%) (ABS, 2007).[24]

For the most part, young people in the Wollondilly aged 15-24 tended to be employed in the retail sector (20%), and food services sector (20%) for youth 15-19 years of age, followed by the manufacturing and labouring industries (14% each). In relation to gender, young males 15-19 are most often employed in the manufacturing (18%) and construction (20%) industries, with similar figures following through to the 20-24 age cohort (19% and 24% respectively). For young females aged 15-19, the main sector of employment was retail trade (34%), followed by accommodation and food services (27%). For females aged 20-24, the primary employer remained the retail trade (22%). The second largest employer was the health care and social assistance industry, employing 13% of young women (ABS, 2007). The implication of these figures is that the majority of young people aged 15-19 in the Wollondilly are engaged in low-paying, unskilled employment in order to make ends meet.

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[24] This figures are arguably the result of what Guy Standing calls the 'feminisation' of labour, which refers to both the increase in a flexible female labour force, and the increased displacement of men from traditionally masculine positions.

Unemployment

In the 2009 December quarter, the Wollondilly Shire recorded an unemployment rate of 4.7% (Macarthur Region Organisation of Council's 2010), an increase of 1% on the previous year's figures. This was still significantly lower than the national statistical figures of 5.5% presented by the ABS in the same month (ABS, 2010). Unemployed individuals 25 -74 years of age made up around 21% of the statistical population of those unemployed, with more females (27%) than males (19%) looking for work, and more females seeking part-time employment (78%) than their male (22%) counterparts (ABS, 2007).[25] Similarly, in Australia overall, more females than males remained unemployed in Australia, with 14% of females compared to 9% of males being unemployed. Statistics for part-time employment in the Wollondilly also mirrored national findings, with more women (69%) than men (31%) seeking part-time employment.

Young people in the Wollondilly followed the employment trends of adults, with young females (51%) being unemployed slightly more often than males (49%). Furthermore, young women aged 15-24 were also less likely to seek full-time employment than young males (38% to 62% respectively) (ABS, 2007), while 54% of young women compared to 46% of young men sought part-time employment.

With the rise in unemployment, looking for work may yet become more difficult for the youth of the Wollondilly. Many young people in the Wollondilly, and even across Australia, will at best be pushed further into part-time and casual situations, or at worst out of the workforce altogether, further entrenching their disadvantage. Many social capital theorists suggest that an increase in social capital may help to curtail some of these negative outcomes. While young people who show higher levels of access to bridging networks may be able to secure employment more easily through the activation of their networks (for example, asking family friends to employ them), they need to first assess the appropriate networks to activate this aim

[25] Figures collated from information provided in the ABS 2007 Census report on labour force status by gender and age.

(having a family friend who owns a business). Without doing so, gaining employment will prove just as difficult no matter how large their bridging social capital maybe.

Voluntary work

Volunteering has been seen by many (e.g. Putnam) as a cornerstone of social capital building. Consequently, no study of social capital would be complete without an analysis of its effects. Volunteer work is an activity often overlooked within the community. Yet every year thousands of individuals volunteer their time to government and non-government organisations. In Australia, in the period between 2005 and 2006, over 5.4 million people donated their time to volunteer activities, with those living in Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory having the highest volunteer participation rates (38%). Out of those who volunteered during 2005 to 2006, those aged 35 to 44 years were the most likely to volunteer (43%). This decreased steadily reaching its lowest point for those aged 85 years and older.

In 2006, 730 million volunteer work hours were donated to groups and organizations around Australia (ABS, 2008b). From an economic standpoint, for the government, volunteers represent a significant cost-saving strategy, with the majority of volunteers donating their time to the not-for-profit sector (84%), and 14% to the government sector. The four most common types of organisations to which people volunteered their time were sport and physical recreation, education and training, community/welfare, and religious groups (ABS 2006). In regards to gender, women tend to volunteer their time more often than men. In total, 36% of women volunteered in Australia compared to 32% of men in 2006 (Volunteering Australia 2011b). Women also volunteer more hours per year (74 hours) than men (64 hours) (ABS, 2006). On average, women are more likely than men to volunteer to community or welfare-related agencies, and to participate in education, health-related or religious voluntary groups, while men are more likely to contribute to professional or union organizations and sports-related groups (Bitteman and Fisher, 2006).

There has been much concern about the rates at which young people volunteer in their community. This concern has been mostly led by the misconception of young people as self-

centred and disconnected from their community (see Chapter 3). Contrary to this perception, statistical data shows that, young people are increasing their volunteering activities (ABS, 2006). The Australian Youth Council has suggested that the belief that young people do not engage in volunteering activities may stem from the narrow definition of volunteering:

> *An activity which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken, to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion, for no financial payment in designated volunteer positions only.* (Boessler and Ding, 2010)

This definition is too narrow to include many volunteering situations in adult life, such as picking up and dropping off other people's children at school, as with car pooling, let alone youth volunteering, such as helping to maintain the local skate park. Instead, the Australian Youth Council suggests a more youth-friendly definition of volunteering, which would take into account a wider range of youth volunteering activities, such as school-based volunteering. Hence for the purpose of this thesis, Volunteering is defined as the donation of free time, skills and energy by an individual to an institution or project which is seen as worthwhile by the group or community in which the individual is involved. It may include projects which are not considered official (such as creating bush tracks for horse or bike riding) for any length of time which benefit a person or group(s).

In regard to Wollondilly youth, if 2006 census figures are taken into consideration, adults (20 years of age and over) appear to outnumber young people in volunteering activities (16% to just 8%), suggesting that young people have a very poor participation rate in volunteering activities. However, while these figures may seem disappointing, and have led many in the community to believe that Wollondilly youth are disengaged, they may in fact give an inaccurate representation of the young population engagement in volunteering. By using a more youth-friendly definition, such as the one suggested above, volunteer rates for young people increase exponentially.

Findings from this study have shown that when a broader definition of volunteering was applied, a large percentage of young people from all backgrounds contributed in some way to

their community. These findings, which will be fully explored in the following chapter, suggest that young people, far from being disengaged, are in fact engaged within their own 'youth community' by volunteering in projects and programs which are of benefit and interest to them.

Home care and unpaid domestic work

For many people, home care and unpaid domestic work makes up the whole of their daily duties. However, unpaid domestic labour is often overlooked, although it has a very real economic value as a way to 'increase profit by reducing the wage bill while at the same time encouraging consumerism' (Glazer, 1984:42).

Unpaid domestic labour is most often carried out by women, with the ABS reporting that in 2006 women on average carried out between 5 and 14 hours of domestic work a week, compared to the average man, who rarely performed more than 5. These figures are true of most generations, with women of all age groups, excluding the very aged, more likely to perform domestic labour than men. Unsurprisingly, the Wollondilly shares this unequal composition.

In 2006, over 30,000 hours were devoted to unpaid domestic labour by adults in the Wollondilly, with 82% of individuals undertaking some amount of unpaid domestic work per week. The majority of adults carried out 5 to 14 hours of unpaid labour per week (27%), with 18% carrying out less than 5 hours per week and 17% performing over 30 hours per week. 16% of individuals reported performing no domestic labour whatsoever during the week. Those aged between 35 and 44 most often perform domestic labour (25%), with those 85 years of age and older performing the least (1%).

In relation to the time spent engaged in domestic labour per week, men in the Wollondilly most often perform less than 5 hours of unpaid domestic labour per week (28%) compared to

women (13%). Women spent the largest amount of time in domestic labour, with 30% of women working 30 or more hours on unpaid domestic labour, compared to 8% of men. Women aged 35 to 44 showed the highest representation rate in the 30 or older cohort (27%), while men aged 55-64 had the largest propensity (23%) to work 30 hours or longer in unpaid domestic labour. Men aged between 35 and 54 were most likely to engage in the least number of hours in domestic labour per week, with 24% of these men performing less than 5 hours of domestic work per week compared to women. Women aged between 20 and 34 were the most likely to undertake 5 hours of domestic labour or less (31%). The largest disparity between adults was found in non-engagement of domestic labour. Men were far more likely to engage in no domestic labour at all (16%) than women (6%). From these, men aged 55-64 (15%) were the likeliest to not engage in unpaid domestic labour. Similarly, women in this age group were more likely than other women to not engage in unpaid domestic work (16%), and together with women aged 20-34 (13%), were the most likely to not perform unpaid domestic labour during the week.

In relation to young people aged 15 to 19 in the Wollondilly, the majority (64%) performed 5 hours of domestic labour per week or less. 13% performed 5 to 14 hours of housework, 2% did 15 to 29 hours per week, and just 1% performed 30 or more hours of unpaid domestic labour per week. 32% of young people surveyed in the 2006 census described not engaging in any type of domestic labour per week. Young women and men, like their adult counterparts, also showed an uneven distribution of time spent in domestic work. While both genders showed around the same likelihood to engage in unpaid domestic work, on average young women undertook more hours of domestic work than young men. 65% of young women undertook less than five hours of domestic labour per week, compared to 63% of young men.

As domestic work hours increased, the number of hours worked by young men decreased more rapidly than for young women, with 15% of females compared to 11% of males engaging in 5 to 14 hours of domestic labour per week. 3% of young women and 1% young men undertook 15-29 hours of domestic work and 1% of both young women and men undertook 30 or more hours of domestic labour per week. However, the biggest disparity was

found, as with adults, in not undertaking any domestic labour during the week, with 57% of young men compared to 37% of young women exempt from domestic duties, replicating patterns of division of labour at home which may be seen in youth 19 years and under.

The census statistics serve to highlight the discrepancies between myth and reality which surround young people. As discussed in Chapter 2, young people are often constructed around an idealised illusion of freedom, whereby youths are possessors of unparalleled free time. However, as suggested earlier, young people are not only burdened by school and part-time work, but also by their (large or small) share of housework and caring for younger siblings. This severely restricts their opportunities for free time. These figures also show that young women's free time may be more adversely affected than young men, with young women not only finding themselves undertaking a larger share of the housework, but also finding opportunities for free time decreasing with age.

Unpaid childcare

Much has been said about the impact affordable childcare can have on parents. In 2005, the HILDA report found that having access to affordable, good-quality childcare is 'an essential tool in achieving high workforce participation, maintaining work/family balance and providing good developmental outcomes for children' (McNamara et al*,* 2005). However, the lack of availability coupled with the high cost of childcare in Australia has meant that many parents have been forced to rely on relatives or on one of the parents (usually the mother) to provide unpaid childcare.

In the 2006 census, it was found that 10,233 persons undertook unpaid childcare for their or another person's child in the Wollondilly. Of these, 74% undertook unpaid childcare for their own child, 13% undertook unpaid care of someone else's child, and 17% undertook care of their own as well as someone else's child (ABS, 2006). The older cohort (55-64) were the most likely to undertake the care of someone else's child (32%), suggesting that there is a heavy reliance by parents upon grandparents for unpaid childcare.

Women (58%) more often than men (42%) undertook unpaid child care duties. The majority of women undertook care of their own children (47%), with far less women caring for the children of others (10%), and a small number undertaking the care of both their own children and those of others (2%). Men took care of children less frequently, with the majority also undertaking unpaid care for their own children (22%) and seldom taking care of children not their own (5%), or both their children and those of others (1%). Men and women aged 35-49 are more likely to undertake unpaid child care than any other age group, however, after the age of 64, those undertaking unpaid child care drop significantly, reaching less than 1% by the age of 85. 55% of males and 47% of females aged 20 and over undertook no unpaid childcare on a regular basis.

In relation to young people, around 10% undertook some type of unpaid child care activity in 2006. The majority undertook care of someone else's child (8%) with less than 1% undertaking care of their own child, and 1% undertaking unpaid care both of their child and those of others, suggesting that many teenagers have a share in the care of younger siblings. Unpaid care of children also mirrored adult populations when analysed by gender, with young women (9%) more often than young men (5%) caring for children. Furthermore, young men (15%) were more highly represented than young women (11%) in the group that did not look after children on a regular basis, suggesting that young women are more likely to be asked to shoulder the responsibility of caring for younger siblings.

Education

In the ABS 2006 Census, the majority of people aged 20 or over living in the Wollondilly had completed their School Certificate as their highest educational level (42%). This was closely followed by those who had completed their High School Certificate (36%) with 83% of the population having finished Year 10 or higher. 18% of the population stated having no education beyond Year 9, and less than 1%stated that they had not attended school at all (ABS 2007). The majority of males aged 20 or older had completed at least their Year 10 Certificate or higher (76%) by census date, with only a small percentage having left school before gaining at least their Year 10 School Certificate or equivalent (16%). From these, 30% of males had

achieved a Year 12 qualification, and 40% a Year 11 qualification. 17% of males had not attended school beyond Year 9 (at around 14 to 15 years of age). The majority of females over the age of 20 had completed at least Year 10 or higher (77%), with 35% of females having achieved Year 12, and 5% having finished Year 11. Only 15% of females had not completed schooling beyond Year 9. For the most part, individuals over the age of 25 do not often attend further full-time study, with only 20% attending either a technical and further education institution (TAFE) or University.

In relation to youths, there were 5,525 young people aged 15- 24 living in the Wollondilly in 2006. Of those, 3,172 young people attended a secondary educational institution, and 37% of 15-24-year-olds had completed Year 12 or equivalent by census night 2006 (ABS, 2007). There are two schools servicing the area: a local publicly funded high school based in Picton, and a private-high school in Tahmoor. For the most part, young people tend to attend government schooling (59%) over non-government educational institutions (41%). The local government high school was established in 1958, and in February 2009 there were 1210 students enrolled at this school 'an increase of 23 students on the previous year' (Picton High School webpage, 2011). Of these, 598 were boys and 612 were girls. Unlike the government funded school, the local high school, which caters from pre-kindergarten to Year 12, was established only recently (2004), and has 600 enrolments to date (Wollondilly Anglican college webpage, 2011). The disparities between the schools are immense, with the facilities of the college far exceeding those of the local government-funded high school (including air conditioned classrooms). For many of the young people, attendance at one institution or the other is purely based on economics, and those who can afford it are able to provide their children with a very different schooling experience.

Another major issue facing the pupils in the Wollondilly relates to the close proximity of the two schools. Tahmoor and Picton are close to each other. As discussed above, the Wollondilly Shire is extensive, and lack of public transport is a major obstacle for the youth of the Wollondilly. Many young people travel extensively to and from school on a daily basis, and many need to travel outside the Wollondilly in order to attend educational institutions. It was estimated by Wollondilly Shire Council that approximately 75% of young people aged 12-17

travel outside the Shire on a daily basis to access educational facilities (Wollondilly Shire Council website, 2011)

Adults who undertook tertiary studies in the Wollondilly most frequently completed a Bachelor degree qualification (44%), with those completing an advanced diploma or diploma closely following (42%). Women more than men tended to be engaged in further study, with 66% of women attending a tertiary institution, compared to 34% of men. Furthermore, women more so than men tend to attend on a full-time basis, with 22% of women attending full-time, compared to 15% of men. Finally, a slightly larger percentage of the Wollondilly population (49%) aged over 25 attended TAFE rather than university. Of those choosing to undertake tertiary studies, women were just as likely to attend university (50%) as TAFE (50%). Men who had engaged in tertiary studies more often recorded attending TAFE (53%) rather than University (47%). Women more often than men tended to complete an education beyond certificate qualification (61% to 39% respectively) with the majority of women completing Bachelor degrees.

For the most part, on leaving secondary education, young people in the Wollondilly tend to attend TAFE (57%) rather than university (43%). Of these, more females (59%) than males (30%) attend university.[26] Information collected within this study suggests that the difference between the tertiary choices of young people may be due to young men wanting to enter trades which are usually male dominated, rather than more 'feminine' roles. Upon entering tertiary studies, the majority of young people choose to become part-time rather than full-time students, which may be due to the pressure of combining work and full-time study in order to subsist. In 2006 there were 555 part-time students, compared to 527 full-time students attending tertiary educational institutions. Coupled with the employment figures from the Wollondilly, this would suggest that many students need to work and study on a part-time basis.

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[26] Figure compiled from 2006 Census data on Type of Educational Institution Attending (Full/Part-Time Student Status by Age) by Sex (ABS 2007).

Transportation

Transportation is a key issue in the Wollondilly; its rural and semi-rural status means that much of the area is covered by farmland and national parks. Many of the villages in the Wollondilly are isolated, with train stations only servicing the southern part of the Shire, including Menangle, Douglas Park, Picton, Tahmoor and Bargo (Wollondilly Shire Council website, 2011). The northern suburbs of Warragamba and Silverdale are accessed by a direct train service to the city via Penrith station. However, reaching the station still requires public or private transport. Train services within the Wollondilly are also sparse, with train services available once every three hours at most. People with a disability and the elderly are also at a disadvantage when using the Wollondilly Shire's train service: no train stations in the Wollondilly Shire are currently fitted for wheelchair access or lifts (Wollondilly Shire Council websit, 2011).

Due to the scarcity of train services in the Shire, privately operated bus companies currently service many of the villages. The majority of these, though, primarily deliver a school bus service, offering morning pick-up and afternoon drop-off, with no services operating in school holidays (Wollondilly Shire Council website, 2011). Unlike many of the outlying villages, the Picton to Bowral loop is serviced by government buses. This service, like all others, is scarce, with the buses terminating at 7.40 pm.

The lack of reliable public transport, coupled with the need to travel large distances for work and study, has meant that the Wollondilly Shire has an intense reliance on private transportation. MACROC Council figures (2004) show that the majority of those living in the Wollondilly (over two thirds) travel to work with the majority relying on private transport to travel to work. Not surprisingly, motor vehicle ownership[27] among Wollondilly individuals is high, with 71% of households owning more than one vehicle (ABS 2007). The majority of individuals (79%) in the Shire travel to work or school through one method of transport (most

[27] Excludes motorbikes and scooters as per ABS 2001 census data.

often by car). However, 3% still need to use two or more methods of transport to travel to work on a daily basis.[28]

For young people, the lack of transportation represents a very real difficulty. For those under the legal driving age, their reliance on public transport or someone to drive them around means that at times getting to where they are going can be problematic. As shown in the findings, the majority of young people felt that the lack of reliable public transport not only placed them at a disadvantage, but also posed dangers to their personal safety. Not surprisingly, 76% of young people 16 years and over interviewed for this study reported having a driver's license or permit. Of those aged 16 years and over who participated in this study, 82% of females compared to 63% of males reported having a driver's license or permit.

The large amount of young people on the road is also not without dire consequences, with the Wollondilly Shire recording substantial amounts of roadside fatalities in their young population, prompting the Council to begin improving road infrastructure. The Council has also initiated a driver awareness program aimed at Year 11 students named 'U turn the wheel', 'to address the alarming number of devastating injuries and deaths in road crashes for young people especially in the under 21 age group' (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011)[29].

Crime in the Wollondilly

In 2009, the Wollondilly experienced over 3000 reported incidents of criminal behaviour. Of these, the five most prevalent types of crimes were malicious damage to property (446), break and enter of a dwelling (164), harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance (161), non-domestic violence related assaults (142) and thefts from motor vehicle (129) (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, 2009a). The Wollondilly Shire is a 'hot spot' for criminal incidents compared to the rest of NSW, including those relating to domestic violence (top 10 and 20

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[28] Collated from ABS 2007 census figures, method of travel to work by gender.

[29] While Wollondilly Shire Council has continually lobbied federal government for an improvement of its public transport services, little has been done. Consequently, Council has looked for other ways in which to address the dangers faced by young people on the roads.

percentile), stealing from a dwelling (top 10 and 20 percentile), break and enters (top 20 and 30 percentile), malicious damage to property (top 10 and 20 percentile), motor vehicle theft (top 10 and 20 percentile) and graffiti (top 10 percentile) (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics 2009b).

More generally, Table 10 (see Appendix 8) shows the breakdown for alleged criminal activity[30] (by arrest) in the Wollondilly during 2009 (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics 2009). Adults in the Wollondilly aged 20 and over had a higher incidence of criminality (62%) when compared to young people aged 10 to 19 (38%). Of these more males (91%) than females (9%) were alleged to be involved in criminal activity. Adult men were found to be involved in all but one type of criminal activity and in much higher proportions than women. Women were represented in break and enter, domestic violence assaults, and motor vehicle theft only. Overall, men in their 20s were most likely to commit offences (28%) while women over 40 led statistics for criminal behaviour among female adults.

Young people in the Wollondilly also had a high incidence of criminal activity. Young men, just as with their older counterparts, led statistics compared to females, with young men represented in all criminal categories. Young women were only involved as perpetrators in assaults (domestic violence and non-domestic violence related), break and enter, motor vehicle theft and malicious damage to property. While young people had higher rates of theft (including non-dwelling break and enters 69%, theft from a motor vehicle 64%, theft from a retail outlet 83%, and theft from a person 100%) when compared to adult statistics, their representation in violent crimes (including assault and malicious damage to property) was considerably lower. However, young people's criminal behaviour, perhaps due to its public visibility, is still touted as more prevalent than other types of criminal activity, with young people often being the target of safety concerns.

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[30] No data could be found in relation to convictions resulting from these arrests.

Using the Internet

The Internet has become an important part of many people's lives, and in particular young people, with a large portion of youths using this medium as a source of information, and more importantly as a socializing tool. For the young people in the Wollondilly, the importance of the Internet is no different, with youths spending much of their time on the Internet socializing with friends via social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, and MSN (see Chapter 7).

ABS figures show that out of the 12,886 households in the Wollondilly, a large proportion have no Internet connection (30%). Of those possessing an Internet connection, the majority (40%) owned a broadband connection. However, this is lower than the national average of 64%. 27% of those Wollondilly households with Internet access were on dial-up connections, and 3% stated 'other' as their Internet connection option (ABS, 2007). With more and more services moving away from face-to-face interaction into the digital world, for many people in the Wollondilly the 'digital divide' is becoming a real problem, preventing their full participation in civic life.

The youth of the Wollondilly Shire face many challenges, not least of which is the geographical isolation of their area. In the next section, I will explore the issues presented as part of the statistical overview of the Wollondilly Shire in light of the lives and experiences of the young people of the Wollondilly. Doing so will clarify the impact these issues have upon social capital formation and reproduction.

Chapter 7

Findings

This chapter considers the dimensions of social capital in light of the findings made in the study of your social capital. It is comprised of three sections, the first overviews the sample, the second discusses the findings made in light of the primary indicators of youth social capital: type of networks - bonding/ bridging, number of networks present, participation in family and kinship, participation in friendships, participation in community and civic life, participation in youth community life and participation in youth-centred political activity. The third and final section examines the indicators of class, culture and gender respectively, within which I examine the delicate interplay between these categories and the three dimensions of social capital (network belonging, social interaction and network resources). Hence the 12 indicators of social capital nominated in Chapter 4 guide my analysis of youth social capital here. Data collected from focus groups, survey and hybrid generators will be examined in developing this picture. This chapter, then, makes use of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to explore the stocks of social capital held by 50 young people of the Wollondilly Shire.

Overview of the sample

As explained previously, the focus groups were undertaken in the Wollondilly Shire over a period of 12 months from 2008-2009. Fifty young people participated in 9 focus groups. The table below provides a description of the participants in terms of their gender, age and postcode cluster.[31]

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[31] Postcode clusters are used because many suburbs in the Wollondilly share the same postcode, making it impossible to distinguish between individual suburbs.

Table 6 - Descriptive statistics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	23	46%
Female	27	54%
Age:		
14	10	20%
15	15	30%
16	11	22%
17	10	20%
18	4	8%
Ethnicity:		
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	3	6%
Australian[32]	49	98%
Other	1	2%
Postcode cluster:		
2560	1	2%
2570	1	2%
2571	16	32%
2572	11	22%
2573	17	34%
2574	4	8%

[32] Due to the complex nature of migration and identity, the young people could describe their nationality in their survey in any manner they chose rather than a prescribed way (see survey), however minimal guidelines were given. "Australian" was explain to identify any individual born in Australia or 'naturalised' as Australian (regardless of country of birth), however the young people were free to hyphenate their nationality (for example Scottish-Australian) if they so chose.

As can be seen, there was almost even representation of males and females in this study. Similarly, there was also a fairly even representation across age groups. In terms of ethnicity, findings would support the suggestions made in the previous chapter of low ethnic identification within the Wollondilly, with most of the young individuals identifying as "Australian". Similarly, the participation of indigenous people was roughly in line with expectations arising from ABS data, with 6% of young people within this study identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. In terms of postcode clusters, highest representation was seen from the postcodes shared by the most densely populated areas of the Wollondilly such as Tahmoor, Picton and Bargo, once again following the statistical patterns of population density.

Type of networks - bonding/ bridging

It became evident during focus groups that for young people, having strong bonding and bridging networks with those of different ages, genders and ethnic backgrounds corresponded with consistently higher academic aspirations and school retention rates, better levels of mainstream community engagement, and more overall trust than youths who had less bonding and bridging networks.

When the spread of bonding versus bridging networks in their ties generators was observed, it became clear that the majority of young people foster bonding over bridging networks (see table below). For most of young people in this study, peers formed the bulk of their networks; they provided support and understanding as well as being a source of comfort and assistance in times of need. Analysis of the ties generator also demonstrated that for the most part, in young people's lives, bridging ties with adults were made up primarily by more 'distant' family members, (usually in the form of uncles, aunts and grandparents) or family friends who predominantly appeared in the second circle of the generator. Very few adults appeared in the outer circle (26%) and usually only one or two individuals were identified. In terms of adult bridging ties, this circle was predominantly populated by individuals who played a key peripheral role in young people's lives such as bosses or teachers.

When their assets generators were analysed, it was found that for young people, it was their friends, or close family who they utilised in order to get on and get ahead in life. In fact, the majority of those surveyed stated that their friends could be counted upon to do them a favour (86%) or help when in serious trouble (86%), were trusted with their most important secrets (74%), could be called upon for help (70%) and to discuss their worries (68%). In very few instances (less than 20%) adults outside the immediate family where asked for help and once again these where usually found to be family friends, bosses or teachers.

These findings would thus suggest, as done in previous chapters, that young people extract value primarily from their bonding networks. However, bridging capital is not worthless in terms of young people's life, but instead still plays a large though peripheral role in the lives of young individuals, that is in helping to enable upward mobility. This will be discussed more fully under participation in family and kinship.

Number of networks present

Young people were found to usually possess fairly extensive networks, with an average size of 18 individuals recorded in their ties generator. Supporting the findings of previous studies of social capital, a very clear connection could be seen to exist between the amount of networks a young person can make claim to and the overall social capital they are able to mobilise.

As suggested by Bourdieu (1977), social capital can be used as leverage which gives the individual the ability to exhort influence over others. In terms of young people, this usually translates to the recognition by others of being 'cool' and the capacity to censure. It was observed during focus groups and by triangulating with the young people's ties generators, that while youths with larger networks expressed their opinions more fully, youths who had smaller networks, or were on the margins of a group, would be more prone to express their opinions less frequently, agree with the rest of the group more often, or have their answers censured by the rest of the group during focus groups, in a sometimes overtly aggressive manner. Examples of this can be seen in Focus Groups 2 and 3.

Group 2

P- do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?

Keiran- … like we don't go over there and blow up like their buildings and stuff, but they come over here and like, oh yeah it's Australia lets blow up all their buildings…

Scott- that hasn't happened here dick head!

Blake and Andrew laugh at Keiran…

Group 3

P- what is your favourite activity?

Tabatha- flying an airplane

Lucy- (cynically) have you done that before?

For these young people, their lack of status within their own group meant that their answers were not only questioned but also openly censured, affecting their social and cultural worth.

This suggests that at least during youth, status and power, is derived from the possession of extensive networks rather than through (parental) job status. The more popular a young person is perceived to be by their peers, the higher their chances to influence the opinion of others.

Participation in family and kinship

Since Coleman's work on social capital inheritance, social capital theorist have often been concerned with the ability of families to give their young appropriate links to the larger community. Viewed through this lens, the family unit is an important source of both bonding and bridging capital for young people (see chapter 3) to help them get on and get ahead in life.

In terms of bonding capital, family was found to play a central role. As has been discussed, friends make up the bulk of a young person's networks, however for most, family is an essential support. The majority of those who participated in focus groups placed their family members in close proximity to the 'me' square in the ties generator, as well as reporting family

in their assets generator as people they could trust with their secrets (46%), ask a favour from (58%), and go to for help (64%). The majority of young people nominated their parent as their closest tie over other family members in all three areas (44%), followed by siblings (20%), aunts/uncles and grandparents (6% respectively). Interestingly, if only one parent was recorded, in the assets generator, mothers (90%) were much more likely than fathers (just 14%) to be looked to for help, a favour, or keeping secrets. While these results could be seen as giving strength to some of the claims made by those such as Coleman and Putnam about the necessity for women as caretakers of family, caution should be exercised, as these results could emanate from society's perceptions of mothers as nurturers rather than a mother's actual role within social capital formation.

As has been shown in previous sections (see chapter 3), young people seldom bridge with adults outside of their family and this study certainly supported this assumption. Of those who did bridge with adults, it was done primarily with family friends, teachers (who at times were also classified as family friends) or bosses. However, this does not in any way mean that young people have no use for bridging social capital; in fact it plays a major, though peripheral role in their lives. For first-time job seekers, bridging social capital is essential. A lack of work experience (not to mention educational qualification level) means that young people's work prospects are usually very restricted. For many employers, while young people may represent a source of cheap labour, employing them also means taking on an 'untested' and inexperienced worker. For first time job seekers, the use made of and their access to bridging capital is of extreme importance, as recommendations from family and friends can be an essential part of securing the first job. Thus the success or failure of many youths' job-seeking endeavours rests on the stock of bridging capital their bonding networks have.[33] A young person's chances of employment increase or decrease according to their networks' bridging potential.

However as described in earlier chapters, not all families follow these ideal patterns of inheritance, and while this study supported the hypothesis (however, I argue on the side of

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[33] That is, the individuals in the young person's bonding networks activate bridging networks on the young person's behalf.

caution in the findings). For those such as Halpern (2005) families who do not possess bonding and in particular bridging networks to community bequeath on their young a form of devalued social capital (see chapter 3)[34]. This theory was particularly relevant to the young people from groups 2, 4 and 6. These three groups had three fundamentally relevant characteristics to the current discourse of 'at risk' families as described by Hapern: they were classified as low SES, the youths were largely disengaged from education and employment, and most of their families had a long history of engagement with welfare service providers. Most of these youths had extremely small bonding and very few – if any – bridging networks. The lives of most of these young people revolved around an intimately connected, socially homogenous circle of friends and immediate family, which offered support and understanding but little else. Predominantly, these youths seemed to follow parental patterns of unemployment and economic disadvantage. Most came from single parent households, where the majority of caring parents were unemployed (69%). Not surprisingly, these three groups showed extremely low school retention (38%) and high unemployment (81%) rates.

In terms of social capital, those such as Halpern (2005) would describe them as having inherited 'deficient' social capital from their families which has affected the size of networks. For these young people their limited ability to network as young individuals will more than likely mean future struggles in the fostering and reproduction of social capital to get on and get ahead in life[35].

While these results are compelling, more longitudinal research is required to ascertain the final impact the inheritance of small familial bonding and bridging networks can have. As caution in earlier chapters, a young person's social capital is a constant self-project and should not be reduced to that inherited from their parent. Furthermore, the inheritance of small networks should not be seen as a precursor for failure, or that reduced networking is the dominion of the poor. Instead poor networking among family, while admittedly is usually strongest among

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[34] While this study supported to some degree the presumption that size of cultural network is of importance in social capital formation, I would argue on the side of caution in the finding as, while young people do derive benefits from their family's networking, a young person's social capital should not be reduced to that which their family can provide.

[35] though only a more extended longitudinal study would be able to accurately measure the impact

disadvantaged individuals, should be seen as a 'gap' only, which young people may 'fill' by either fostering strong bonding among friends to help navigate disadvantage or by creating bridging capital with others on their own accord.

Participation in friendships

In terms of youth social capital, a young person's peer group may be the most important set of connections they can have. As has been examined previously, young people rely most strongly on their bonding networks to get on and ahead in life. When their ties and assets generator were examined, these bonding ties consisted primarily of friends. During youth, an individual's peer group is one of the strongest agents of socialisation (Furze et al, 2012) shaping life and the value of the individual's social capital at many levels- how to act, what music to listen, what to wear as well as who should be considered worthy of association, making peers the main points of reference on 'coolness' and being 'in the know'. As a result, the peer group acts as censor of behaviour and taste (see Chapter 3), as well as establishing the value of social capital by providing young people with a normative model that is outside the family, but still in their social world (Thornton, 1995). In terms of bonding social capital, upon examination of both the ties and assets generators it became clear that, for most young people, their peers play a central role in their personal life and are essential in the formation of strong bonding networks. Indeed, for some, peers held such importance that several recorded their intimate peer group as 'close family' in their assets generators or would place them in closer relation to the 'me' square in the ties generator than their parents or siblings.

Consequently, participation in friendships is an important indicator of youth social capital. Individuals belonging to the same social group consistently dressed in a similar style, shared similar interests, and used language which was particular to their group in order to express their group membership. Most striking was the example of Group 6, in which the boys dressed in an almost uniform manner (skater shoes, t-shirts, board shorts and caps), had similar piercings and hair styles, and frequently used euphemisms particular to the group, such as 'chat' (to refer to things they did not like), as central forms of expression.

An interesting finding made in this study was that peer groups (and thus bonding networks) are not uniform, but are set out hierarchically into 'best friends' and 'friends'. Each bonding 'tier' plays a slightly different role in the life of a young person. Best friends (as identified in their ties generator), would sit together and share closer body proximity than with the rest of the group (this was observed in both genders). When participating in the focus group, best friends would often refer to each other, usually through eye contact, to give strength to their arguments. Friends on the other hand acted as 'censors', with youths using the larger peer group to confirm (rather than support) the appropriateness of their responses. Individuals, who found that their answers were not well received by the rest of the group, would often modify their answers accordingly. One such an example can be seen in Blake. Having taken part in a previous focus group, Blake happened to be at the Youth Centre on the day another focus group took place. Though he did not join this second group, Blake spoke in private with me about how he felt that some of his answers had not been completely 'honest' when he had attended the earlier focus group, as he had wanted to 'fit in'.

'Yeah, that was funny how things went, like I'm not that bad… I just did it because they were all saying it like…you know' (Blake, Group 2, Private discussion, Community Links Wollondilly)

For Blake, fitting in with the group was valued above and beyond his own personal view, which rather than defend, he chose to suppress. Making his view 'fit in' with that of his group was a small price to pay for the sake of maintaining his place within the peer group and avoiding ridicule.

Furthermore, as has been suggested by Bourdieu (1986) status is important in the mobilisation of networks to reach desired ends. In terms of young people the importance or 'status' as attached to network size was most clearly observed during the time in which the young people filled out their ties generator. Usually, as soon as youths were given instructions for filling out the ties generator, most young people would begin to furiously recall out loud as many names

as they could even before they were given their papers. The majority of youths took great care in filling their generators with as many names as possible. Those who felt their generators to be lacking would either turn to friends to ask for names of individuals who they know, or would awkwardly return their folded papers while uttering excuses such as 'I couldn't remember all my friend's names' (Sally, Group 8, local high school), or 'there are just too many to remember right now' (Josh, Group 9, local high school).

Many youths also showed unease and curiosity about where their name had been placed by their friends, and would often ask to see their name in their friend's generators before penning that friend's name in their own, in an attempt to ensure reciprocity, have their name added in their friends generator, and as a way in which to assert their popularity within the larger group.

Participation in community and civic life

Community and civic participation has been hailed by many, such as Putnam (1993, and 2000) as the bedrock of social capital. Those who connect with others in their society are said to have better levels of health, connectedness and life outcomes. However, young people suffer restrictions on how they can participate and engage with society on the basis of their age (for example how and where they can volunteer their time). The low visibility of young people in community has led some to postulate that young people are either completely disengaged from their community (see chapter 3) and thus deficient in bridging social capital.

Findings from this study actually suggest the opposite: Young people, at least in the Wollondilly Shire, have a tradition with community and civic engagement, albeit different to that of the adult community. For the most part, the young people who attended the focus groups were exceedingly concerned about their community. For most the problems they saw as affecting their area (such as drugs and delinquent activity) were of great relevance to their lives. The majority of Wollondilly youths viewed disengagement and deviance as problematic; most of those interviewed singled out youth 'gangs' as 'undesirable' elements of youth community and some felt they gave the rest of them 'a bad name' (Aimee, Group 3, Rural Bush Fire Services Hall).

Unlike what could be assumed from traditional social capital literature, for the majority of the participants, engagement with their community was an important part of their lives, with many openly looking for opportunities in which to engage. 60% of the young people interviewed reported having undertaken some type of volunteer work over the last 12 months. For the majority of individuals surveyed, the greater part of their volunteering efforts were concentrated on school-based activities (such as bands, sporting, and fete events) and almost all interviewed (98%) had been engaged as contributors or spectators in one or more of their town's main events (Steam Festival, Youth Week and Youth Council). However unlike adults, their contributions to community were usually undertaken for only a few hours at a time, a significant difference to the typical adult patterns. However, young people still mirrored adult engagement in terms of gender, with young women (9%) slightly more likely to volunteer their time than young men (8%).

While at first glance, it may be puzzling that young people would identify such strong desire for engagement in community activities, yet their ties and assets generator show such low levels of bridging ties with adults in their community, this could be explained in terms of focus. For young people, focus on networking is in regards to their identity project, and while they may form important bridging ties to their community through their volunteer involvement, these may not be seen as necessary (and thus as relevant for inclusion in their ties and assets generator) as their friends and peers. Consequently, while young people may engage in community, they may on the surface appear as bridging capital deficient. In terms of the measurement of social capital among youth population, these findings further highlights the importance of using more than one indicator of social capital to achieve a well-rounded picture of a young person's social life.

Participation in youth community life

As was discussed in the previous section, participation in community and civic life is seen as one, if not the most, important indicators of social capital. However, little thought has been given to the importance participation in youth community may have for the fostering and

reproduction of social capital during youth. As discussed in previous chapters, for youths to form social networks, they must be able to prove their social worth through 'coolness' and 'being in the know'. For most young people, being able to demonstrate participation in youth community, show correct knowledge and having youth cultural goods which are seen as 'cool' by the group is an important, though sometimes unseen precursor to accessing social networks.[36] Youths who were unable to acquire items of cultural value (such as certain brands of phones, clothing or skateboards) or found they were unable to participate in cultural pursuits (such as attendance to concerts and movies) tended to have fewer friends and be relegated to the outer edge of the friendship group. When interviewed, youths who were able to buy cultural goods or experiences which were considered desirable by their peers were often eager to talk about them in front of their friends, and were suitably rewarded with praise and interest by their peers. For example:

Group 5

P- how often do you attend concerts?
Angela- I am going to Coldplay next year
Everyone- ohhhh, wow!
P- and how much were they [tickets]?
Angela- (smiling) oh I think about $100.00 a ticket

As can be seen by the above, Angela's ability to participate in the concert was highly valued; she was able to impress her peers and gain their admiration by attending an event considered desirable. As suggested in Chapter 4, 'participation in youth community activities', such as concerts, is an important indicator of the existence of youth social capital.

What is considered 'cool' among youths is of course not uniform among all peer groups. It became evident from interviews that while some trappings of youth culture could be said to be almost 'universal', such as concert attendance, having the 'right' clothing and hairstyle, the form which this takes is usually individual to each group's agenda. For example, while all

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[36] For a discussion of how objects gain their "coolness" status please see Chapter 3.

youths valued the ability to attend concerts equally, the type of music that they valued differed between the groups. While attending a Britney Spears or Pink concert may help a youth accrue valuable admiration among those in Groups 5, it would incur very little social worth among the youths in Groups 2 or 6 and may even incur a negative value. Similarly, while the display of several boldly placed body piercings was highly regarded by youths of Group 2 and 6, they would have had the opposite effect on the more 'mainstream' groups. Consequently, the trappings of coolness vary amongst groups, allowing individuals to gain social and cultural 'kudos' by being able to access and display the trappings of their group's unique culture.

Finally, the internet was also seen by the young people of the Wollondilly as an important way in which to participate in youth community life. In the Wollondilly, the Internet was used primarily for socialising with friends. The bulk of those interviewed used social networking sites such as Bebo, Facebook, Twitter and MySpace (74%), while only a small proportion (21%) used email as a way of networking with their friends on a daily basis. The use of the Internet as 'expressive' (see Chapter 3) has meant that the Internet has become a tool to enhance and maintain already existing face-to-face networks, rather than being an isolating force.

For the young people, socialising via social networking sites was a valuable tool, allowing quick dissemination of information between friends.

Natalie explains:

'I can get on Facebook and see what all my friends are doing, what parties they've been to and stuff… I can also put up my own stuff like photos and videos and everyone can look at them' (Natalie, Group 8, local high school)

Few of the youths interviewed emailed their friends regularly as a way of maintaining 'online communication', with many feeling that email was an 'old' and limited technology. Prue explains:

'I don't email very often, it takes ages to send videos and photos to all your friends!' (Prue, Group 5, Picton Anglican church)

The preference for social networking over email can be explained in terms of the convenience and 'visibility' of networking. While social networking sites allow for the quick and evident dissemination of up-to-date information about the user to large numbers of individuals, email does not allow for the building of status in the same way. Social networking sites have social advantages in terms of popularity and status which email cannot hope to offer, leading to its declining use (Boyd, 2008; Boyd, 2008b).

The low availability of reliable broadband in the Wollondilly is problematic due to young people's heavy reliance on the Internet to keep up with their friends and socialise after school. As more 'real life' resources (such as some entry positions in supermarket chains) move further, and in some cases exclusively, into virtual domains, young people who have poor or no access will be severely affected Their access to the emerging cultural resources valued by young people will be restricted, and a 'digital divide' between those who can gain adequate access and those who may find themselves unable to participate will become increasingly evident in the Wollondilly, affecting youths ability to foster and reproduce social capital.

Participation in youth-centred political activity

Just as with participation in community, political participation is also viewed as an important part of the social capital project. However, young people are prevented from full participation in political life due to their age. Never the less, young people still find ways in which to participate within what I call youth-centred political activity, (see Chapter 4). Almost all young people (over 90%) had participated in political life through short-term forms of youth political engagement, such as petition signing, and charitable activities such as donations and fundraising (for example donations to Greenpeace , or petitions to upgrade facilities in the Shire) which they believed relevant. Even youths who showed high levels of disengagement, such as those of group 6, still found time to engage with their community on issues that they believed to be of high relevance; with many (63%) signing

petitions for upgrades to the Bargo skate park. This indicates that youths are not really disengaged, as it is usually proposed, but rather engage in different ways to adults.

However at times, the young people's ability to engage only partially in political life meant a severe source of frustration. Most young people interviewed lamented the lack of local access to desirable youth venues, such as cinemas or shopping centre complexes, which forced them to travel to Campbelltown, a half-hour drive or one-hour train trip, in order to attend. The replies given by these youths embodied a very real sense of frustration and resentment. The lack of venues available for young people to socialise in was acutely felt by many, and over 50% of those interviewed believed it related directly to the indifference of adults toward the needs of the young people in the community. For some, such as Jasmine and Erica, the disregard of young people's needs in the Wollondilly Shire had led them to the conclusion that the adult community simply did not care for their needs, or that they would only be accommodated under adult 'terms':

'I don't know, they don't want to change anything, like for the young people coming into this area, like all the people (adults) want the area to stay the same' (Jasmine, Group 5, Rural Fire Services)

'Yeah like some people say there is like a mini-arcade at the pub, but like what kid wants to hang out at the pub with all the drunk people and stuff…' (Christina, Group 3, Picton Anglican Church).

Their lack of political influence meant that little could be expected to change and led many to look for excitement in 'delinquent' activities.

<u>Group 6</u>

P- what is there to do in your area?

Brad- shit all

Peter- smoke drugs

Jarrod- ride scooters

Dean- that's all there is to do around here…

Group 1

P- what is there to do in your area?

all laugh

Leanne- nothing!

Ella- catch the train and go to Campbelltown

Max- laughing, oh yeah…

P- so that's pretty much the same for everybody, nothing to do around here?

Max- parties… Yeah that's about it

all laugh

Declan- hang about

Max- yeah hang about…work… laughs

Ella- cause mischief

All- yeah! (laugh)

Even when young people 'rallied' to attempt to create change through youth political activity, their lack of political power often meant failure. An example of these was seen in the petition for improvement of the local skate park by one of the youth in group 6. While he had rallied many young people and even some parents to his cause, their petition for the improvements to the skate park had been largely ignored resulting in only very small improvements made to the 'kids' section of the skate part, which to them provided very little use.

P- so what happened with the petition in the end

Brad- Nothing... they just ignored it

Jarrod- yeah they ignored it and all the money just disappeared...

Not surprisingly, when asked if they could have one thing to improve the lives of young people in the Wollondilly, a large proportion of youth wished for things to do and places to go. Paramount among these were safe places in which to hang out, more shops, better transport services, and youth oriented entertainment venues such as cinema complexes. However, the

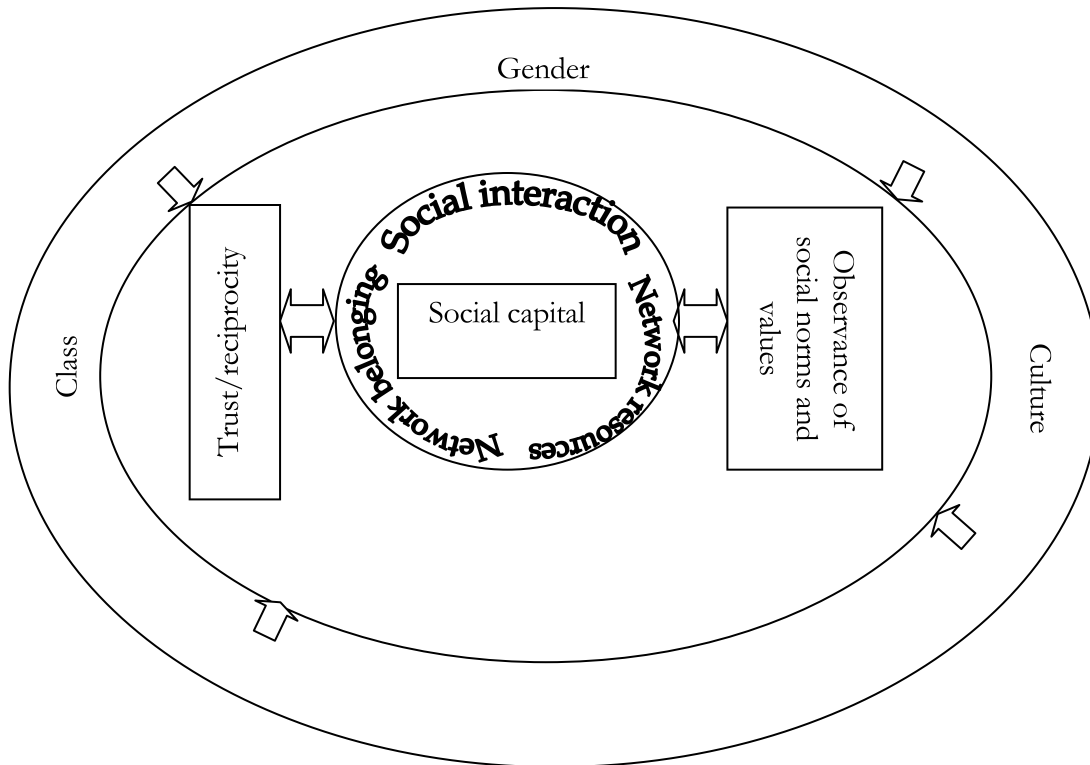
lack of ability to fully participate in political life meant that for the most part, the wishes of these young people would go largely unanswered, meaning that unless their stocks of bridging capital could be activated through their parents or other adult members in their networks little, if anything, would change.

Indicators of class culture and gender

Having discussed the findings made from the data yielded from the primary indicators of social capital, in this section I turn my attentions to indicators of class, culture and gender. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the main objective of this study was to find answers to three main questions: what is youth social capital? How do class, culture, and gender affect social capital formation and reproduction? And what models and tools can be used to measure youth social capital? While the first and last questions have been dealt with in preceding chapters, how class, culture and gender affect young people's formation and reproduction of social capital still needs further consideration.

Figure 2 shows how the ability to reproduce and foster social capital does not stand alone, but exists within the processes of class, gender and culture. Each of these dimensions influences the ability of an individual to foster and reproduce social capital by establishing or facilitating the individual's key life circumstances.

Figure 2: Impacting Forces



Similarly, trust and reciprocity, and observance of values and norms, are influenced by life circumstances, which can help or hinder an individual's ability to network. As a result, the ability of individuals to create social interaction and meaningful networks, and their ability to derive benefits from these networks, is largely determined by the individual's life circumstances. The levels of trust and reciprocity held by and for the individual, and their willingness to accept and uphold the society's social norms and values are similarly determined by life circumstances (which is to say, by the matrices of class, culture and gender).

As explained in previous chapters, class, culture and gender play an important role in the formation and reproduction of youth social capital. Analysing social capital through these, has been argued, helps to clarify the context in which social networking is taking place. Accordingly I will look at the finding made in relation to each indicator:

Economic resources - plentiful or scarce

As discussed in Chapter 3, economic resources are indicators of youth class position. As a result, to identify how class situation affects the networking and composition of youth social capital in the Wollondilly, it was necessary to distinguish between youths of different class positions and the resources they were able to access. After consideration of a number of factors, the participants in this study have been characterised as either having high or low socioeconomic status (SES) which is dependent upon a number of factors (including suburb, parental job status and parental income).

As shown in Chapter 3, the most commonly used indicators of class situation for young people are the overall capacity of their parents to support them, the location and type of housing, the school that they attend, when and under what conditions they enter the labour market, and the type of leisure pursuits they are able to undertake. These, Bourdieu suggest (1986), influence an individual's ability to form and reproduce not only economic, but also cultural, and bridging social capital. Bridging capital is formed across class (as well as age and gender groups). Those with high SES had clear economic advantages over their less affluent peers, which in turn had positive effects on their ability to create bridging networks. On the whole, larger stocks of economic capital also meant that high SES youths were able to network with more widely, being able to participate in a larger range of cultural activities (for example international travel) and as suggested by Coleman (1988), their families, due to the transmission of social capital (see Chapter 3), often exposed them to larger and more diverse networks. As can be seen from the tables below, youths from high SES had larger bridging networks. They also networked with adults and the opposite gender more often than those of lower SES (Table 7).

Table 7 - Mean number of adults in ties generator by affluence set

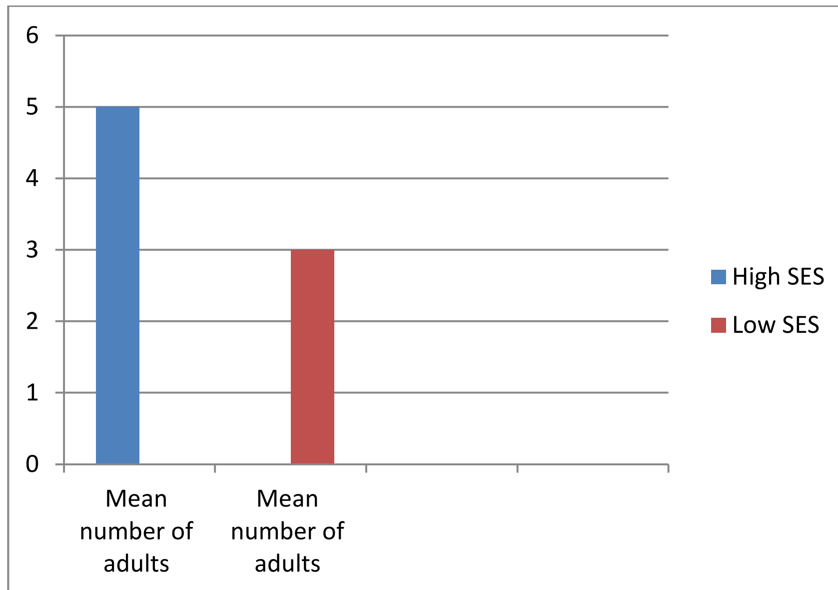
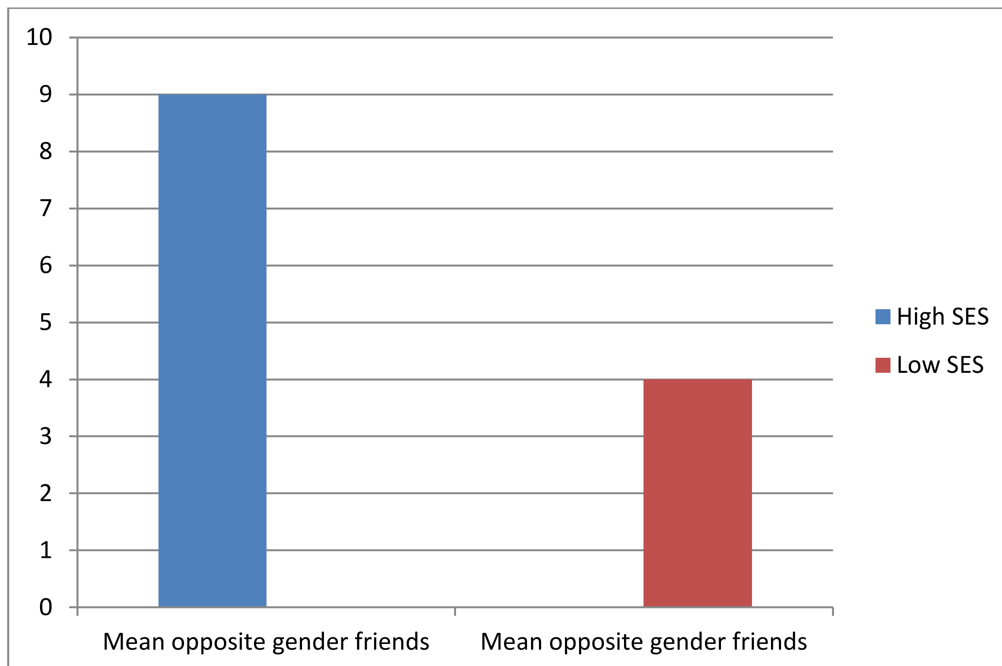


Table 8 – Mean number of adults of opposite gender in ties generator by affluence set



Thus the high SES youth often demonstrated higher levels of interpersonal communication skills than individuals from less affluent backgrounds, they felt more positive about their place in the world, and their dreams and aspirations were more focused on less self-centred pursuits than their low SES counterparts.

Another important marker of class which impacts upon and is impacted by social capital is the condition which young people enter the labour market. Job status has long been used in measurement of adult social capital as a primary indicator of the overall value of social capital an individual possesses as well as their ability to bridge (please see Grootaert). While for young people entering the job market, status is of little importance (after all the majority do so usually only in menial positions), the condition, that is the help they are able to receive, may as discussed in the previous section, have direct impact in helping them to find employment faster an under better conditions. In the Wollondilly, jobs for young people are scarce, and during focus groups, it became evident that many participants resented this fact, with some, such as Connor and Isaac, including them as their 'wish' for the youth of the Wollondilly. In fact, the survey demonstrated a large percentage of young people were currently unemployed (62%), with figures showing that more young females (54%) than males (45%) were unemployed. This was in line with the previous chapter's ABS figures, which showed females more often unemployed than males. When jobs could be found by young people (just 36% of those interviewed were employed), they were usually within the retail sector (63%), with a minority working elsewhere (37%).

While unemployment may be a choice for some, for others it was a disheartening situation, with little hope of remedy. As expected, a large number of respondents relied on their parents for income, restricting their ability to freely engage in leisure pursuits. Not surprisingly, while all young people had a relatively low rate of employment in the Wollondilly, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to have used their own initiative, rather than bridging ties in job-seeking, with 44% of participants with low SES reporting no help in finding work compared to 20% of high SES.

Education is another important indicator of class as well as being an essential precursor to the successful fostering and reproduction of social capital. As suggested by Bourdieu, social capital is not formed in isolation, but is instead part of a larger set of conditions which include the ability to produce and reproduce economic and cultural capital (See chapter 2). As a result, education and the completion of it, is an important indicator of an individual's stock of cultural as well as social capital.

In Australia there are two main tertiary pathways after secondary schooling; university, where an individual undertakes undergraduate and postgraduate education, and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions, where individuals complete trade based vocational tertiary education courses. However, the young people of the Wollondilly are faced with several issues when looking at secondary education. As indicated above, there are two schools which serve this area: a local public school, and a private College. For the majority of young people, attending the College meant the ability to access better services and facilities. However, attending a private school was out of reach for many.[37]

Similarly, tertiary and further education was difficult for many young people in the Wollondilly, particularly those of low SES, with students wishing to pursue further education needing to travel to either the Illawarra or Sydney to attend university, TAFE or other training institutions. This may further disadvantage many youths from impoverished backgrounds, who lack access to a vehicle or cannot afford the bus or train fare to travel, thus being prevented from engaging in further education. Not surprisingly, this study found that youths from high SES had better school retention rates (96%) than low SES individuals (59%) and that aspiration to attend further studies where higher for high SES youths. For young people of high SES, this means the ability to increase their stocks of cultural capital above and beyond their low SES peers, giving them a clear advantage to achieve social mobility and to create better social capital connections in future years.

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[37] A phone call to the school revealed that in 2011, fees started at $6,390 for Year 7 students, increasing each year to $6,530 by year 12. However, Year 11 was by far the most expensive year, costing $6,980 once all fees and charges were met.

Size of cultural networks- large or small

Size of cultural networks proved to be an interesting dimension of social capital. While I believe that more longitudinal studies need to be undertaken in order to fully understand its impact in later life. In terms of young people, the size of cultural networks did not affect their stocks of bonding capital. It was found that most young people possessed (as may be expected) only modestly sized cultural achievement, and for most, this was concentrated on either school, sports and/or the undertaking of another 'pleasure' cultural activity such as reading or playing a musical instrument. Few individuals surveyed had travelled extensively either within Australia or outside the country minimising the potential benefit of the current use of this indicator.

Nevertheless, what was observed was that young people who possessed slightly larger sized cultural networks tended to have more bridging networks and felt more valued by their community. This may be in turn related to their higher exposure to the larger community and or positive experiences, such as contributing to school bands or sporting events which gave them some notoriety among the adult community.

Type of cultural pursuits – diverse or unvarying, mainstream or subcultural,

The type of cultural pursuit a young person chooses to undertake can impact on the type of cultural and social capital they are able to foster and reproduce. While in the previous section I have shown how the ability to engage and demonstrate 'coolness' by the possession and participation of cultural goods and experiences can aid in the fostering and reproduction of social capital, the inability to pursue a wide variety of cultural pursuits can, by default, create obstacles for its formation.

Groups 6 are prime examples of this. For these young people, life seemed to 'work' slightly differently than for other youths their age. They had very little economic capital which could be squandered on the pursuit of 'typical' youth cultural pursuits, such as going to the movies or concerts. Their inability to network appropriately with other young people meant that they

possessed smaller bonding networks to depend on to help them get on in life, and their families could only give access to few if any bridging networks to help them get ahead.

However, somehow, these young people made their lives 'work.' Overall they seemed happy and did not look at their lives in terms of 'missing out, but instead, just living differently. For them, engagement with their close friends was paramount, not only as a source of friendship, but as a method of survival. For example, all the young men in Group 6 found support among their peers in times of need. All had been homeless at some point in the last 18 months. Rather than living on the streets, these young men had found shelter with one another until they were able to go home or find a place of their own. They also shared what little economic resources they had, and during my time interviewing them I witnessed youths asking one another for 'loans' in order to purchase goods from the store across the street.

Due to their inability to foster and reproduce mainstream forms of culture capital, these young people turned to what has been termed 'subcultural capital' (Thornton 1995) to give value to what would otherwise be an impoverished form of social and cultural worth, whereby youths did not need to flaunt the expensive consumer goods which were the normal trappings of the more mainstream groups, but gave higher value to sporting prowess and subversive attitudes. For example

Group 6

P- tell me, do any of you know how to drive?

All together- yeah!

P- how did you learn how to drive?

Brad- stole a car

Tyson- paddy Bashing[38]

Peter- stole a car and drove it home (glances around with a satisfied look)

All laugh

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[38] This term refers to the practice by many young people of taking a vehicle out in the rural paddocks and performing "tricks" such as doughnuts etc at considerable speed.

Jarrod- paddy-bashing (smiles and leans back on his chair)
(lively conversation ensues)

In answering, the boys displayed pride at having used illegal means in order to learn how to drive. For them, having undertaken a deviant and dangerous endeavour and having 'gotten away with it' was something to be boasted about and a source of amusement.

For the young girls of Group 6, their 'delinquent' behaviour attracted much the same status value as that of the young men. Some of the girls in Group 6 derived their status from approximating the boys' behaviour, such as Maggie who had stolen a vehicle with one of the other girls and proudly reflected on it:

(Following on from the above conversation)
Maggie- stole a car and drove away, got a caution for it…
Tyson to Maggie- you really stole a car?
Maggie- yeah we did with Katie (smiles proudly)
Alice- smiles
Tyson- oh!

Both Maggie and Katie were thus able to prove their social worth to the other members of the group and were rewarded with respect and admiration for their accomplishment.

Interestingly, it was observed that as young people perceived themselves as moving away from youth and into childhood, they begin to look at engaging in what they perceived as more 'adult' forms of cultural pursuits. An example of this was seen in the young mums group. For the young mums of Group 4, every day represented the navigation between the status of youth and adult and as such the young girls expressed the need to move away from 'childish' pursuits in order to better suit their new adult status. Becka explains:

'Ahm… it used to be *Dolly* and stuff like that, but now like since having a baby and stuff it's like changing, I'm like an older person and I now read those *Woman's Day* things ...' (Becka, Group 4, Community Links Wollondilly)

As can be seen, these girls felt that having their babies had turned them into 'adults' and thus had adjusted their leisure pursuits to suit what they believe to be 'adult culture'.

However, while these girls felt adult-like and believed they should be treated as such, they nonetheless experienced intense rejection from the adult community, which they failed to comprehend and experienced as a source of constant discontent.

Group 3

P- do you think adults value young people?
Becka- some people treat you like shit for having a baby too young and stuff
Ellie- yeah, they think that you did it for the money
Becka- some people don't get in that predicament just because of the money, like I didn't, I just fell pregnant. I'm not that sort of person… So people then look at you and say to you that, oh you only did it for the money and stuff like that, but it's not that way…
Ellie to Becka- do you get filthy looks?
Ellie- yeah, I do all the time…

Much of the rejection was felt to emanate from the issues presented in the previous chapter surrounding the baby bonus, where many adults believed the young women had become pregnant only in order to receive the bonus.

Not surprisingly, for these girls, being perceived to be good parents by adults was an intense source of pride, and they relished the few occasions on which this happened. Becka explains:

'....but then you are getting compliments from your case workers 'cause you are doing a good job, like I get that from Jenna my case worker, she says stuff like, 'I didn't think you were

doing such a good job but you are doing great, keep up the good work!' And that makes you feel better…' (Becka, Group 4, Community Links Wollondilly)

Further compounding the young mothers' sense of isolation was the sense that, just as they did not quite fit into the 'adult' world, due to their newfound responsibilities and economic pressures they could no longer fit in to girl culture either. While the majority of other youths surveyed (over 90%) attended concerts or movies in their spare time, these young women found themselves hard-pressed to not only find the time but also the money to participate in youth pursuits such as going to the cinema or attending concerts. When asked how often they went to concerts or the movies, the young mums replied as follows:

Becka- you don't have time when you've got a baby!
Christina- can't afford it!

All these girls, although unable to participate in 'youth culture', had found since having their babies that they had become more popular among their peers than before. Upon having their babies, all had experienced old friends and acquaintances attempting to contact them to renew friendships. However, for Becka and the other young mums, this renewed contact was generally unwelcome. They often felt that their friends were only contacting them to get their money and did not understand their newly complicated lives. As such, the girls in the young mothers' group felt that unlike their new friends, their old friends did not understand their new 'adult' status.

Becka to Christina- did you find that friends that you had a falling out with ages ago, when they knew you had your baby bonus came back and you just knew that all the wanted was your money
Christina- yeah
Becka- 'cause I had heaps of falling outs at school, like I virtually had no friends and then all these people came knocking on my door when I had my baby, like 'hey how are you do you want to go shopping??!!!'
Ava- they don't understand that it [the money] is for the baby and not for you…

For these girls, while their new status made them appealing to other youths, their only desire was to 'hang out' with other young mums, in whose company they felt valued and could find support and understanding.

As can be seen, engagement in cultural pursuit points to more than just the type of cultural pursuit a young person is willing to undertake, but can be a very successful technique for the fostering and reproduction of social capital. For young people of impoverished backgrounds, whose social capital in a mainstream sense is severely devalued, subcultural capital can be used as a strategy to create value outside of mainstream norms. Consequently, measuring value only in mainstream pursuits, as is often done in social capital theory, can create a picture of these young people as social capital deficient, when instead the value they accrue from their subcultural capital is just of a different kind.

Educational patterns- incomplete or completed

As suggested in chapter 3, school is one of the most important sites for the creations and reproduction of social capital during youth. At school, young people learn not only how to interact with each other, but also accrue valuable cultural capital which can ease entry into profitable networks in later life. According to Bourdieu (1986), the level of social capital an individual is able to mobilise is directly related to their stocks of economic, cultural or symbolic capital - the larger their stocks of economic, cultural and symbolic capital, the larger their social networks ought to be. This study certainly supported this assumption. While not in every instance, youths from higher SES more often than their less affluent counterpart showed the hallmarks of cultural capital accretion such as higher levels of educational achievement and scholastic aspirations, international travel or literary interest. These youths also tended to have larger bridging and bonding networks, as well as seeming more content with their community than less affluent youths.

Furthermore, as suggested by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), familial patterns of educations also seemed to increase or decrease the willingness of young people to stay in education for longer. It was also observed that youths who had at least one parent who had attended university were much more likely to want to attend university themselves (57%) than those whose parents had TAFE or no tertiary training (30%). These youths also had higher school retention rates (100%) than those whose parents had attended TAFE or had no tertiary education (70%). Finally, more university-trained parents (75%) helped their offspring with homework than those who had attended TAFE or had no tertiary training (70%), maximising their children's educational engagement and the transmission of educational culture. The marked difference between the two sets in school retention rates and academic aspiration closely follows parental patterns of achievement, whereby middle and upper-class youth will remain at school for longer and eventually engage in white-collar jobs, while working class youth become early school leavers, preferring to obtain working class jobs rather than continuing their studies (Willis, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986).

Youths, particularly young males from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, were often observed to resist and rebel against educational culture in favour of subcultural engagement. Most striking are the transcriptions made of two particular groups when compared to those of other groups. Group 2 was a group of 'skater' boys who normally 'hang' at the Youth Services parking lot. Group 6 was a gender-mixed group, recruited from one of the activities being run by the local Youth Centre. Both groups showed the hallmarks of what 'youth at risk' literature would denote to be 'typical' at risk behaviour, including early school leaving and drug use (for example see Kann et al, 1993; Apte et al, 2003). These groups, more than others, showed a lack of understanding of educational culture and demonstrated how working class youths can feel excluded by the school system currently operating in Australia.

Group 2

P- what do you think of school? Do you feel school is important for young people?
Boys- (together) it's crap!

Blake- oh no, I guess it's kind of fun coz you get to see your friends all the time and there are some subjects that are all right but some that just get annoying, like I reckon art is kind of all right and tech, but like some of the other classes….

Andrew- I like woodwork

P- (to Scott) are you at school still?

Scott- shakes his head

P- when did you leave?

Scott- ah… uhm… when I was like 14

P- o.k, so like year 7 or 8?

Scott- yeah year 8

P- yep, and why did you leave?

Scott- ah coz I was doing OTEN[39] here (Youth Services)

P- so you did the OTEN here?

Scott- yeah

P- did you finish it?

Scott- oh don't know

P- so you don't know if you finished it? Did you get your school certificate?

Scott- shrugs

Scott- then I ended up going to TAFE

P- yep, and what have you done?

Scott- oh, first aid, ahm fitting and turning, ahm did some weird year 9 thing

P- ok so like a bridging type of thing...

Scott- yeah, like a math and English thing and that's about it

Andrew- (cutting in) my favourite subject is languages

P- your favourite subject is languages!

Andrew- yeah, it's a bludge

Blake- yeah, it's like a bludge period and it's fun to annoy our gay teacher

They all laugh

---

[39] 'Open Training and Education Network' is the distance education and training provider of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) NSW.

P- (to Scott) did I ask you why you left school?

Scott- oh because the teachers were bastards

P- so you had had enough of the teacher's kind of thing?

Scott- nah I got kicked out

Scott- well I didn't get expelled or nothing, just got asked to leave…. Yeah long story…

Group 6

P- what so you think of school? Do you feel school is important for young people?

Maggie and Alice- yes, you can't get a good job without it! (Christine nods)

Robert– it's not important

Jarrod- school is shit, teachers are bad

Robert- you can get a job without all the crap they teach you, like algebra, what that hell is that gonna help you with?

Tyson- it's maths…

Robert- yeah well so… it's irrelevant

P- so who has left school and why did you leave?

Robert- got kicked out

Tyson- I left

Jarrod- coz it's chat there[40]

Brad- I got kicked out

Dean- yeah, pretty much

Maggie- got expelled

P- any other reasons why you guys left?

Peter- I just ditched coz it was too hard

Alice- I'm still at school, but I'm on a break…

P- so do you think you'll go back?

Alice- I think I will leave

P- (to Christine) do you think you will go back?

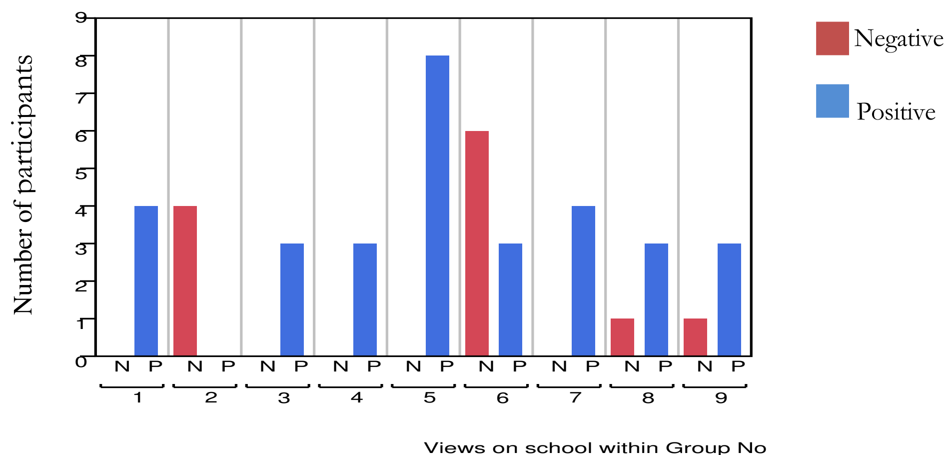
Christine- nods

---

[40] Chat is their group's euphemism for 'crap'.

These two groups' disregard for education was evident in their view of schooling. Table 9 shows the differences in perception of schooling held by the different groups. 'P' represents a positive view of school while 'N' represents a negative view. As can be appreciated, these two groups had an overwhelmingly pessimistic view of education when compared to other groups.

Table 9 - Perception of schooling by group



All youths in these two groups came from disadvantaged (low SES) backgrounds. The majority had left school early (Year 9 or earlier), and only two had been able to secure their school certificate. For most of these young people, school held little importance or relevance to their life, and most could not see value in education for their future life chances. Interestingly, the girls, while acknowledging the importance of schooling in an individual's future, were willing to walk away from their education, suggesting that while they could see the benefit of the institution, the problem lay in their inability to successfully navigate the educational system itself. The boys later voiced their desire to attend TAFE and learn a trade.

<u>Group 6</u>

P- will any of you go to uni TAFE?

Brad- inaudible

P- so you don't want to go to TAFE?

Brad- no I want to

Peter- TAFE

P- so what kind of course do you want to do at TAFE?

Tyson- metal

Jarrod- metal or mechanic

P- so why go to TAFE?

Tyson- to get a job

Brad- yeah

Peter- nods

For these young men, education has little value except insofar as it may lead to some other productive outcome, such as employment. Even while the boys only recognised minimal value in education, those few who had attempted TAFE in the past had dropped out for one reason or another. Sadly, the inability of these youths to reproduce educational culture meant that their current and probable future educational outcomes remain low, and their employment prospects in all likelihood very poor.

Finally, while for most of the young people interviewed during this study the relevance of education was generally not lost, and school held particular importance in terms of enabling the achievement of upward mobility (87%). Another incentive for attending school is its social aspect. Socializing was found to be the second most desirable quality of school for young people, with the majority of both young women and of young men stating that socializing was a key motivator for attending school. These findings are not surprising, as most youths spend at least six hours per day at school learning and interacting with their peers, making school one of the primary sites of socialization.

The young people explain:

Group 7

P- what do you think of school? Do you feel school is important for young people?

Jessie- education, 'cause we are all thinking about what we would like to do after, but I think lots of people like school because of the social aspect

Anna- I'd say the same thing, because I know in the summer I like get bored, coz we get eight weeks [of holidays] and stuff

Jessie- yeah

Group 8

P- what do you think of school? Do you feel school is important for young people?

Tamika-it gives you social skills

Stuart- Yeah I have specially noticed the social skills[41] because I was home schooled until half way through last year…

Group 5

P- (to group), so what do you think is the main importance of school?

Kylie- learning

Abbie- learning social skills

All nod

It is not surprising then, that the friendships formed by young people at school feature predominantly in their lives. Analysis of both assets and ties generators, showed that the majority of close networks consisted of individuals befriended at school. In around 95% of cases, the closest circle to the 'me' square was made up predominantly of school friends and immediate family members, with both young women and men showing this result. In most cases individuals who did not belong to the school peer group were placed outside the primary circle, meaning that those outside the school peer group hold less relevance in youth social life. Findings such as these further emphasize the connection between youth social capital and school, amplifying the importance of nurturing these networks. School for young people is not

[41] It was interesting to note the use of the phrase 'social skills' by many of the young people. This phrase is not value-neutral and has many connotations attached to it (for example, see LeCroy, 1983). It indicates the internalisation of current discourses on acceptable human behaviour and rules of conduct.

only a place in which to learn what is 'required' in order to succeed in adult life; it is also an important site for young people to create and accumulate social capital for future use.

Gender spread of network- homogenous or heterogeneous

Gender affects almost every aspect of our lives including how we network and the type of social capital we are able to mobilise. In terms of current social capital theory, due to the focus on adult populations, the main emphasis on social capital has been, from a bonding sense, to highlight the importance of women as family carers or from a bridging stance the benefits for women in the workplace to bridging with male colleagues (see chapter 3). However, during youth, bonding and bridging between the genders affords very different sets of values, than those expected in adulthood and are centred on the young person's identity project and the value a young person can extract from their opposite and same gender friendships .

The value of friendship: same gender networks

The majority of those interviewed placed great value on same gender networks, with most young people's friendships being developed with those of the same gender. The value of same or different gender networks is still not greatly understood in social capital research, as for the most part the emphasis has been placed on bridging rather than bonding ties. However, bonding ties are of great importance to young people, allowing them to find common ground with other individuals, and acting as a means of forming their identity (see Chapter 3). Three of the tools used to gather data for this study - focus group interviews, and the ties and assets generators - were used to investigate the role of gender in the life of young people and its effect on networking. The findings show marked gender-related differences in the emphasis placed on friendships. These differences relate to both the individual's gender and their network's gender, and show some unexpected features.

As suggested by Morrow (2003), young men primarily value friendship for the ability of friends to provide company and 'someone to do something with'. Scott and Blake explain:

P- what is the difference between your male and female friends?
Scott- well they [male friends] want to do more things you want to do... and you always get in trouble with the chicks
Boys- yeah
Blake- well yea, I don't know, like with guys you can kind of get along with and stuff and do stuff with, like skate and stuff....

While descriptions of male friendships such as the one above were indeed found to be largely 'activity-based' and at first glance uncomplicated, these friendships were also less extensive and lacked the level of intimacy and emotional support experienced in female friendships. The young men in the focus group often expressed feeling restricted in their ability to get emotional support from their male peers, due to a code of 'manliness' which prevented them from seeking and giving emotional support with their male friends. Jacob explains:

'Guys just punch each other, get over it! I think if I went to one of my good guy friends, I don't think they would care too much' (Jacob, Group 2, Community Links Wollondilly)

Although accounts such as Jacob's helped to reaffirm the suggestions made in previous chapters on the negative impact of stereotypical ideals of masculinity on emotional expression, this does not in any way mean that young men are in themselves unable to experience intimacy in friendship or express emotion. The findings of this research suggest rather that young men do this in a more subtle way. For example, young men often would speak of friends telling them to 'man up'. However, for many of them, and in particular those most disadvantaged, their friends provided much needed emotional support. For example, for the young men of Group 6, their friends made up a quasi-familial group which they could turn to in times of need. Most of these young men placed their male friends in close proximity to the 'me' square and often spoke of them as family. Furthermore, analysis of assets and ties generators showed that for the majority of males, their same-gender networks provided a large support structure, with over 90% trusting their friends for help, in times of need.

Another common strategy employed by many young men when seeking emotional support was to approach those of the opposite gender. For the majority of those interviewed, their opposite-gender networks held as much value as same-gender friendships. As such, for many young men, female friends provided the intimacy and security they needed in order to discuss emotional issues.

'I feel that female friends understand me better, because I don't talk to guys about you know... personal stuff' (Joseph, Group 1, Rural Bush Fire Services Hall)

'It's good to have someone to talk to that is not a bloke...' (Jacob, Group 8, local high school)

'You can whinge to them [girls] about stuff!' (Paul, Group 9, local high school)

Thus, for the majority of young men, the main difference between their male and female friends was essentially delineated not only by the activities they could share, but by what they could or could not talk about with a friend.

Young women's friendships on the other hand could be seen, as suggested by Morrow (2001b), to have a strong inclination toward emotional support, and often conformed to ideas of femininity which frown upon open female aggressiveness and celebrate female compassion. These are some examples of what the girls had to say about their same-gender friends:

'You can get really close with girls' (Jossie, Group 7, local high school)

'I think with female friends if you are looking for an opinion on a situation or if you want to go over something and talk about it then that's a lot better...' (Aimee, Group 3, Rural Bush Fire Services Hall)

'Yeah girls are more close to each other; girls sit down chatting and stuff' (Steph, Group 5, Picton Anglican Church Hall)

Female friendships however are far from uncomplicated, and were also found to be hierarchal and exclusionary (Goodwin, 2006). During focus group interviews young women, more than young men, demonstrated a 'pecking order' with the more dominant young women voicing their opinions more loudly, and exercising their ability to censure lower status girls by either a look of disapproval, by questioning their answers, or more commonly by talking over them. For example, following the conversation about the favourite activities of the girls in Group 3, when Tabatha spoke of flying an airplane Lucy questioned her ability to do so, and roundly censured her.

<u>Group 3</u>

Lucy- (cynically) have you done that before?

Tabatha- yeah....

Lucy and Aimee- (while Tabatha is still talking) they look at each other and roll their eyes

Lucy- cuts off Tabatha by giving her answer

During most focus groups, both male and female participants identified female interpersonal relationships as far more complicated than male/male or male/female interrelationships. For the most part, young women were perceived as more vicious, and more prone to psychological undermining and bullying, than their male counterparts. The young people explain:

<u>Group 9</u>

Erica- yeah sometimes guys are better than girls

P- in what way?

Erica- they are not bitchy and stuff

Other girls- (nodding in agreement)

<u>Group 5</u>

Kylie- If it's an all girls group it ends up getting really bitchy

All laugh

Kylie- Like girls are centred on being bitchy

Abbie- yeah

The notion of a 'bitchy' aspect to young girls networking was a recurrent narrative through many of the groups with bullying becoming prominent in many conversations surrounding 'female only' friendship groups. While bullying was not a specific focus at the outset, the study of the young people's gendered experience of networking yielded some very compelling results that extended beyond simple in-group fighting. In fact, in some cases, bullying constituted extreme forms of psychological and physical 'warfare' particularly between young girls, which not only led to the demise of almost all networking for the victims, but also had severe repercussion for their cultural and economic capital, sometimes altering their future life decisions. This made bullying a more salient concern than first anticipated. For the majority of young women and young men interviewed, bullying and in-group fighting was something that they observed from the periphery (over 80%). However, a number of my respondents (and more young women than young men) reported being bullied, with some of the young women revealing that they had been severely bullied at some stage during their time in high school. The young men did not seem to experience bullying at the same level, which suggests bullying at school may be a gendered issue, with around 30% describing spiteful or malicious behaviour as a 'girl' problem. However, this could conceivably be due to young males reporting bullying less frequently or downplaying its effects in line with the 'code of masculinity', or young women over-reporting cases of bullying.

It has been suggested that young men and women experience bullying in different modes, with young men often using overt physical displays to bully, while women maintain ongoing personal harassment, with psychological aggression used more often than physical displays (Besag, 2006). The young people in my study seemed to confirm this suggestion. That is, young men and young women experienced bullying differently, and young men tended to bully each other in an overt manner (but often over a shorter term), with open acts of aggression. Young women's bullying appeared more often to be psychological in nature, ongoing and relentless. Rather disturbingly, in some cases, in-group fighting and bullying had become a ruling force in their lives, with some such as the young women of Group 4 giving disturbing accounts of bullying which had led to complete withdrawal from school and social life.

Group 4

P- who has left school and why?

Christina- basically because all my friends were attention seekers and making my school life hard

Becka- that was the same with me, like they all became my friends in Year Seven but then all of the sudden they were at me all of the time wanting to hit me constantly, and I was like, how can I… and then one day I went to the girls toilet, this girl was hiding behind the (inaudible) and then she just jumped up and grabbed me and told me that if you come back I am going to kill you, so I just left and I didn't tell my mum for a whole year…

On a lesser scale, this problem was also faced by some of the other girls:

P- What do you hate about school the most?

'Probably all the bitchiness' (Shakes her head and shrugs) (Samantha, Group 1, Rural Bush Fire Services hall)

'Girls can be so bitchy… they can be so "clicky", they can be really mean' (Tabatha, Pre-focus group discussion, Group 3, Rural Bush Fire Services Hall)

These findings about bullying and its influence on the victims' social capital are compelling, and raise some very important questions not only for future research, but also for the safety and welfare of the young community. I was shocked and saddened by many of the accounts and feel that there is still much that can be done to safeguard young people against the more serious types of bullying such as those encountered by Christina and Becka. However, for many young people, safety was not only an issue at school; it was also commonplace for them to feel unsafe in the Shire.

Such accounts not only debunk the emotionally supportive 'sisterhood' usually assumed of young women's peer groups, but also support the idea of the 'code of niceness'(Rose, 2007), whereby young women, in order to maintain a superficial appearance of 'niceness', will engage

in subtler aggressive behaviour, such as gossiping and spreading rumours, rather than being openly aggressive toward their counterparts.

The opposite gender - friendships between boys and girls

The makeup of gendered networks is believed to be an important indicator for the measurement of social capital value (see Chapter 4). For young men and young women opposite-gender friends were of great importance. The majority felt that the opposite gender offered significant networking value which could not be found among those of the same gender. For young women, the value of friends of the opposite-sex rested on their male friend's ability to do things which they felt could not be done with their similar friends, and for their honesty.

<u>Group 3</u>

P- How are male friends different to female friends?

Tabatha- Well they usually have different opinions than girls and they have different subjects to talk about...and there are some things that a guy would do with you , like skateboarding, that the girls wouldn't do

Aimee- yeah I would say that they [guys] would muck around more with you than girls and they don't get as worked up about things as girls do, they are more straight to the point with the way they think about things and yeah...

Tabatha and Lucy- True, that's true....

<u>Group 7</u>

P- how are male friends different to female friends?

Anna- honest, they are brutally honest

P- male friends?

Anna- yeah

Jossie- but that is a good thing coz if you are like... hmmm I don't know

Anna- yeah coz if I go to one of my male friends and say does this look good on they will just go nah, but girls are like, yeah, that's all right...

All giggle.

For others, the main importance of having male friends was to enable young women to break away from the stereotypical female behaviour that they felt became entrenched in female-only groups. Lucy and her friends explain:

Lucy- yeah I reckon if you hang out with girls all the time, then you become one of those really obsessed super girly girls, like, hey! Look at my eyebrows! They are all uneven like
Aimee-yeah!

For these young women, the 'girly girl' was not something to be aspired; the ability to have male friends who they could do more 'outgoing' activities with made the difference of being able to break through the stereotype. In addition, male friends were also valued by females for their ability to bring a different point of view to problems or to help them understand 'male' behaviour; in short, they were valued as points of reference to the male world. Finally, the majority of girls felt that talking to their female friends would usually generate answers that would be delivered to please rather than being genuine. Many women felt that their male friends; while more abrupt in their answers, would also in the majority of cases be more sincere or direct than their female counterparts.

An interesting observation studying relation to this is that an individuals' socioeconomic situation may in fact affect their ability to create cross-gender networks. The table below shows the difference in opposite gender networks between individuals from high (H) and low (L) SES. By triangulating the data in both the survey and in the ties generator, it was observed that individuals from low SES tended to have fewer opposite gender networks, with a mean of five opposite gender friendships compared to those of high SES, who had a mean of 11. Class, therefore, likely plays a role in the individual's ability to network across gender.

Chapter 8

The Road Ahead

This thesis set out to research what youth social capital may be, how class, culture and gender affect its formation and reproduction, and how youth social capital may be measured.

Through a review of current social capital literature, combined with the insights provided by the young people from the Wollondilly community, I was able to begin teasing out what youth social capital is, and how this may differ from its adult counterpart, and begin to understand how class, culture and gender may impact on the ability to foster and reproduce social capital. The insights gained also led to the creation of a model and tools for measurement appropriate to a youth context, and three typology tables, with which to further understand social capital. As a result, this study represents a step forward for our understanding of the social capital of young people.

What follows is a summary of some of the central themes of this thesis.

To the beginning and back again – reviewing the objectives

When I first set out to gain a better understanding of youth social capital, I did not anticipate how difficult it would be to do so. The concept of social capital is difficult to define; this is compounded when looking at the social capital of young people.

Unexpectedly, I stumbled upon a field that is hailed for its potential, but well known for its lack of consistency. At times I felt a little like Alice, stumbling down the rabbit hole to a land filled with uncertainties. My confusion only increased when I attempted to grasp the social capital of young people, which is both poorly researched empirically and inadequately developed theoretically. Consequently, I began this thesis by going back to basics: exploring the meaning of 'youth' since the early 20th century and the changes the concept has undergone in the last 100 years. I suggest that while many improvements have been made in the way that young people are conceptualised within sociology, room for development remains. I argue

that the shortcomings of the current theories of youth have elided the changes that have occurred to the once 'simple' transitions between childhood and adulthood due to the changing context of society in late modernity, the wider aspects of youth experience as well as issues of class, gender and culture, and that a new way to conceptualise youth is needed. I contend that a concept of social capital that rather than explaining social life through behaviour, explains it through the constraints and possibilities afforded by networking, can fill this gap.

To understand what youth social capital is, it was necessary to look at social capital in the broader context. Through doing so, I realised that contemporary social capital theory has significant problems, affecting not only its definition, but also its measurement. Social capital has begun to be conceptualised by many as a highly desirable attribute, but there is little exploration of how this type of 'capital' is distributed across society. Social capital theorists are often so preoccupied with the concept that they neglect the issues which affect the formation and reproduction of social capital. The lack of consistency across studies relates to how social capital is defined and conceptualised, but as such also extends to what could be taken to indicate its presence. Such is the extent of this inconsistency that the term is in danger of becoming meaningless.

In order to resolve these issues, it was necessary to establish how social capital is perceived and measured, to reconsider the concept of social capital (particularly in relation to youth), and to interrogate the challenges posed by the effects of class, culture, and gender on networking. Consequently, I defined a typology with which to better grasp the composition of social capital, as relating directly to the network resources an individual possesses. In this way, social capital can be shown, like all other forms of capital, to be unevenly distributed and accessed by individuals, and unequally shared across cultural, class and gender systems.

In light of these findings, I explored the significance and meaning of the concept of social capital in youth life, by drawing out the complexity regarding its fostering and reproduction, as well as the distinctions present between the social capital of young people and adults. I briefly explored the current 'push' by government and non-government agencies to increase the social

capital of youths, which is largely based on the idea that young people, unlike adults, are 'works in progress'. As such, the social capital of young people has come to be considered an incomplete or 'unfinished' project, one requiring the guidance of adults to be successfully completed. Attempts to measure the social capital of young people have too often relied on adult dimensions and indicators, which bear little relevance to the lives of young people. Hence the social capital of youths has come to be seen as defective (as in the case of 'dark' or 'bad' social capital) or problematic, creating a dichotomy of superior versus inferior forms of social capital.

I argued throughout that this is incorrect and highly damaging. I proposed that the social capital of a young person is neither defective nor incomplete, but is instead simply 'different'. Youth life is unlike that of adults, and as such the social capital fostered by young people reflects these differences. Until young people begin looking for employment, they have little need for the bridging ties which assist adults to create upward mobility. Until this time, they rely on intense bonding networks in times of need or to increase potential. Their cultural assets are different to those of adults, with typical markers of status, such as academic achievement or job title, playing little significance in youth life, which is instead governed by codes of 'coolness' and being 'in the know'. Finally, gender affects the ways in which young people network, and the places where this is done.

This entailed a rethinking of how social capital is conceptualised and measured within a youth context. In this research I have constructed new youth–specific social capital measurement tools, informed by contemporary theory on youth and by the realities faced every day by young people. I have suggested three dimensions in which social capital can be said to reside: social interactions, network belonging, and network resources. Each of these affords young people the opportunity to foster and reproduce social capital, or the ability to activate the potential existent within their stocks of social capital.

I have also suggested 12 indicators which may be used to measure youth social capital: participation in family and kinship, participation in friendships, participation in community, participation in youth community projects, participation in political and social causes, type of

networking, cultural background and gender, economic resources, primary use of networks, cultural pursuits, educational patterns, gender make–up of networks, and amount of cross-gender networks. These encompass not only the effects of class, culture and gender, but also account for some of the complexity of youth life. Youth social capital is very different from that of adults. It is also vibrant and complex, beyond anything I could have possibly imagined.

Final reflections in the research process

The research process for this thesis was challenging. For the most part, the two largest problems presented themselves in the theoretical context: the lack of depth of understanding of the impact of life circumstances in current social capital literature, and the lack of understanding of youth social capital.

Many of the theoretical propositions presented in this thesis, such as the effects class, culture and gender have on social capital, have to my knowledge never been extensively tackled within a single academic text. Determining how this might best be achieved therefore entailed engaging the vast literature on social capital, which comes from varied and at times contradictory academic disciplines. In reality, very little is known about what affects social capital, or how it is distributed across class, culture and gender, or what may lead to social capital 'demise', beyond a simplistic explanation of lack of networking. Hence, my attempt to construct a new lens with which to examine social capital from a multiplicity of directions, led to the tables of typology, characteristics, capacity and well-being and value of social capital. There were also specific issues in terms of the social capital of youth. The lack of understanding of youth social capital presented two incredible challenges. The first was the need to 'overlay' a concept which is usually used in an adult context over the lives and experiences of young people, and the second was to construct and deploy a wholly new model specifically for the measurement of youth social capital. Here a major problem presented itself: how do I measure something in the field when I need to create the tools with which to measure it? The answer became a conundrum. To successfully fulfil this aim, I was obliged to bring together and synthesise the current information available on social capital, the little

information which exists on youth social capital, and the information from fieldwork interviews.

The fieldwork thus became one of the three pillars of the framework for the measurement of youth social capital. As a result, rather than conducting the focus groups within a short period of time, it was necessary to do this over a protracted period, with about a year elapsing between the first pilot group and the final group. Within this time, new areas were identified which may warrant future examination for their implication in the understanding of youth social capital (these will be discussed later this section). In light of this, it was evident that any model created for the measurement of social capital would remain, at least for the purposes of this research, a work in progress. As more data is collected in future, this model will no doubt need adjustments. However, what I have achieved is not only an increase in the knowledge of youth social capital, but also the 'fledgling' model which has been created with which to build that knowledge. Hopefully this is a starting point from which we may begin to effectively measure the social capital of young people.

Summary of findings

The findings presented in this thesis regarding how young people network challenge the notion of a social capital deficient youth and help bring into context how life chances and changes within society, such as those explained by Furlong and Cartmel (1997) can affect a young person's networking . Among these were the findings relating to how young people of disadvantaged backgrounds use their social capital to navigate poverty, how class affects the composition of social capital and the way in which the individual is able to foster and reproduce social capital. These are discussed below.

Class effects

While analysis of class has come under attack from postmodernist theorists, class is still a valid and relevant parameter in understanding the life chances available to young people (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). Class affects young people both indirectly and directly. Indirectly, social class affects young people through the ability of their parents to support them, the location and type of housing they live in, the school that they attend, when and under what conditions they enter the labour market, and the type of leisure pursuits they are able to undertake. Parental educational levels also have a dramatic effect upon a young person's educational aspirations and outcomes, with youths from 'academic' families often hoping to achieve higher educational outcomes than those who did not.

Young people of higher socioeconomic backgrounds, more often than their less affluent counterparts, were found to have a better ability to create bonding networks, due to their ability to network with peers more frequently, alongside their being able to afford pursuits such as concert attendance more often. Youths from more affluent backgrounds also possessed larger stocks of bridging capital than those in less affluent backgrounds. For these young people, having strong bonding and bridging networks with those of different ages, genders, and ethnic backgrounds translated to consistently higher academic aspirations and school retention rates, better levels of community engagement, and more overall trust than youths who did not. Patterns of educational achievement and affluence also seemed to affect a young person's levels of cultural capital outside of the educational arena. Hallmarks of cultural capital accretion, such as higher levels of international travel or literary interest, were higher among youths who had at least one university educated parent that those who did not. As such, young people from higher socio economic backgrounds where able to more easily discern a pathway through life, helping to minimise the sense of risk experienced. Not surprisingly, these young people often appeared to 'feel' more stability in their lives and often felt more secure than their less affluent counterparts in their choices for the future.

However, this should not be taken to mean that youths from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are somehow social capital deficient. For these young people, subcultural capital

provides a very real mechanism with which to overcome the presence of low economic and cultural attributes[42] and provided these young people with a pathway in which to navigate 'risk'.

Peers and status within the social group

For young people, peers are the main points of reference on 'coolness' and 'being in the know'. The peer group acts as the arbiter of behaviour and taste which provides the young individual with a normative model outside the family. Young people primarily network in small groups; the intimate peer group is constituted by a close group of individuals who makeup the bulk of their bonding networks at home and school. They provided support and understanding as well as being a source of comfort and assistance in times of need.
As expected, a youth's perceived popularity by their peers can be measured in terms of the amount of overall friendship networks they have. Youths who have smaller networks or are on the margins of a group are also more prone to be 'censured' than other more popular young people. They also express their opinions less frequently and agree with the rest of the group more often. This poses a very real challenge when attempting to form social capital, as these youths need to establish not only a networking relationship with other individuals, but must also continually prove their worth to the overall group.

This indicates that peers may have greater significance in youth life than previously thought. Socialising was found to be the second most desirable reason for attending school, with the friendships formed by young people at school featuring prominently within their lives. At times the desire to remain at school could be traced back to peer 'inclination' rather than parental achievement, suggesting that youths who belong to more academically minded peer groups have a higher chance of academic success.

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[42] While this thesis can postulate on the short term effects of subcultural capital, more longitudinal analysis would indicate the long term benefits of subcultural capital in youth populations.

Participation and disengagement

Very few youths within this study appeared genuinely disengaged from family or adult community, with most just engaging in a different manner. For the most part, the young people were exceedingly concerned about their community, feeling that the problems they saw affecting their area (such as drugs and delinquent activity) had great relevance to their lives. Contrary to popular belief, for the majority of young people, engagement with their community is an important part of their lives, with many young people in this study openly looking for opportunities to engage. Even youths who might be regarded as disengaged contributed to projects they felt were relevant to their lives. This research suggests that young people engage in a different manner than adults, a basic difference that needs to be taken into consideration when analysing the social capital of youths.

Gender and social capital

For the most part, gender affects the way in which young people network, as well as their perceptions of their surroundings. Gendered networks can be broken down into same-gender and opposite-gender networks. The value of these is still not greatly understood in social capital research. This is due in part to the emphasis placed on bridging over bonding ties (for example see Putnam 2000). However, bonding ties are of great importance to young people, allowing them find common ground with other individuals and helping them in establishing their identity. Another factor is the ambivalence as to whether cross gender friendships within a peer group are best classed as bonding or bridging ties, or both. Opposite-gender networks were highly valued by young people, giving them a different perspective as well as providing a grounding force.[43]

In regards to schooling, gender can affect the desire to pursue higher academic studies, with more young women than men desiring to continue to tertiary education. This would suggest a

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[43] The significance of opposite-gender friendships is further discussed later in this chapter.

possible correlation between 'female privileging' within the current curriculum and the desire to continue further education. Higher status academic subjects, such as maths and science, are often valued by young women more than young men, with more hands–on subjects such as woodwork and technical drawing viewed more favourably by young males. The young people's views on future careers seemed to fall in line with this observation.

Another emergent issue affected by gender was bullying. While this research did not set out to study bullying specifically, it found that bullying certainly affected a young person's ability to network. Young women in this study more often reported bullying than young men, and the bullying they described was more injurious than the bullying described by the young men. A large percentage of the young people described spiteful or malicious behaviour as a 'girl' problem. Female bullying usually being of a more intensity; longer duration and more psychological nature (for example see Lloyd, 2005 and Harris 2004). However, more research is required to establish the extent to which this is a gendered issue and its effects on the social capital of young people.

Feelings of safety were another area of difference between the genders. Young women more often than young men feel fearful of their surroundings. This affects the way in which young men and women network, with the young women in this research more often networking in safe spaces such as the home, thus validating McRobbie's and Garber's (1976) work on girl 'bedroom culture'.

Consumption and cultural capital

For young people to network effectively, they must be able to prove their social worth through 'coolness' and 'being in the know'. These characteristics are usually embodied in both personal attributes and objects of consumption, which can help to increase social worth. Youths who find themselves unable to acquire items of cultural consumption tend to have fewer friends, and are often relegated to the outer edge of their friendship circle. It was observed in over 70% of instances that young people who had lower response rates in their survey to cultural goods questions also tended to have much smaller sets of networks in their ties generators.

Cultural goods, of course, are not uniformly distributed. While some modalities of youth culture could be said to be almost 'universal', such as concert attendance or having the 'right' clothing and hairstyle, the form which this takes is usually relatively distinct at the local level. Consequently, what may hold high cultural worth for one group may have very little or no value to another.

Delinquent behaviour as capital

Delinquent behaviour is often considered problematic and largely counterproductive for a young person. However, the findings from this research would suggest that this is not always the case. For some young people, lack of economic and cultural capital can present a very real challenge, yet they still make their life work by maximising the social and cultural capital they possess. For most of these young people, their intense bonding ties provide a way around poverty and disadvantage by allowing access to resources when needed. Delinquent behaviour for these youths is a way of proving their social worth outside the confines of mainstream society (see Chapter 7).

Hanging out

Hanging out is an important part of youth. It allows young people to network and develop relationships. However, the privatisation of the shopping centre and the streetscape leads many young people to feel alienated and persecuted by the adult community. In this context online interaction becomes salient, where youth communities thrive through the technological possibilities afforded by online social networks. Often viewed by adults as a negative influence on young people (for example, as the cause of depression or isolation), the Internet was found in this study to allow young people the opportunity to continue to network with others across time and space[44]. The rise of the net coupled with the decline of the streetscape implies that rather than being an isolating force, the Internet has become a tool to help enhance and

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[44] I do however feel that in light of the findings made about bullying, more research is undertaken on online networking and continuation of bullying in cyberspace and the effects this can have on a young person's social capital.

maintain already existing face-to-face networks (Wellman et al, 2001, Quan Haaseand Wellman, 2002; Ferlander, 2003; Uslaner unpublished).

Areas for further investigation arising from the findings

While the findings made within this thesis are diverse, there were several which merit further investigation in future social capital projects. More in-depth investigation is recommended into some of the initial results presented.

1. **Youth engagement within the community** - As described previously, young people are often thought of as disengaged from their families and communities (see Chapter 3). However, findings from this study postulate that young people are not disengaged, but rather engage differently to adults. Consequently it is suggested that further research is carried out in order to determine how young people are currently engaging within their community, how this helps to strengthen a sense of belonging for them, and how such considerations may help to open up possibilities for further youth participation.

2. **The impact of bullying was a distressing finding of this study** - While this is an unexpected finding, in light of the accounts given by the young participants, bullying may in fact play a major role in the inability of some individuals to form meaningful networks. It is imperative that further research is undertaken regarding the effects of bullying on networking, school retention and cultural capital formation, but most importantly the possible social capital demise which can occur through continued bullying. Future findings made on this topic would have important ramifications for the welfare and mental health sector.

3. **The use of opposite - gender friendships as emotional resources by young people** - While most research is conducted on same-gender networking during youth, this thesis suggests that opposite-gender networks hold particular importance for young people. Rather than explaining their need for the opposite gender in terms of

romantic interests, most young people interviewed looked toward their opposite gender friends as 'reflective' resources. This was particularly important to young males, who found emotional comfort in their friendship with young women. This suggests that opposite gender friendships may play an important role in the networking of young people.

4. **Subcultural capital** - Findings made on the deviance as subcultural capital suggest a very important area for future social capital research. While subcultural capital is often seen as 'dark' or 'bad', findings from this thesis suggest the converse is true. Subcultural capital is a very valuable coping mechanism for many young people, and in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds; labelling this type of social capital as nefarious or insidious risks labelling these young people as deficient and problematic. More research should be carried out in this area to determine the exact value this type of capital has and how this may translate to positive rather than negative outcomes.

5. **The impact of the disappearance of the streetscape, lack of transport and amenities** –Lack of networking spaces means an inability for young people to foster and reproduce social capital. Further study into the effects of the disappearance of the surveillance-free streetscape, lack of transport and amenities can have on young people's networking may prove invaluable in our understanding of why young people have begun to network so heavily online, and will give insights as to the future repercussions this may have for the social capital of young individuals. Research on this topic would also prove valuable for social policy makers and town planners when faced with the need to provide 'youth spaces' and adequate facilities within a community.

6. **The Internet as a social resource** - The Internet proved to be a valuable resource for young people to network. The current push to surveil the net and in particular social networking sites frequented by young people may prove largely detrimental. Tightening and control of these spaces due to the fear of 'predators' has meant that a new moral panic has been created, which threatens to curtail young people's sense of

agency as well as the environments they can access. It is important that we identify the impacts surveillance has on the ability for young people to effectively network on social networking sites.

7. **Social capital fatigue –** While social capital fatigue was not directly investigated in this thesis, the implications arising from its existence are compelling. As such social capital fatigue is an area which is suggested for future research.

Interrogating social capital theory

While social capital has proven to be a strong model for understanding the life circumstances of young people, problems remain. As shown throughout this study, social capital as a model of social exchange through bonding and bridging is persuasive and precise. The model is extremely spare, elegant and concise, and can easily and reliably be framed mathematically, allowing for a quantifiable and thus 'observable' view of social networking and its benefits. This no doubt contributes to the appeal the social capital model holds for those working in social policy, who may find more abstract sociological ideas unworkable. However, it is precisely within this political aspect of its deployment, in terms of social policy and purported economic benefits, which the problems arise.

As suggested in early chapters, in the current political climate social capital is often operationalised as a way of 'fixing' a perceived deficiency in young people. As a result, the networking of young people, instead of being seen in terms of benefits and advantages, is viewed in terms of disadvantages and deficit.

The conceptualisations of social capital emerging from Putnam's work reproduce the long-standing binaries of 'good' and 'bad' characteristic of social science historically (for example, gemeinschaft versus gesellschaft, mechanical versus organic solidarity, rural versus urban communities, and now bonding versus bridging ties). This invites dangerous preconceptions by viewing bridging ties as allowing entry into more profitable networks – without any

consideration of how class, culture and gender may affect the individual's ability to enter these networks in the first place.

Concluding remarks

In concluding this work, it is pertinent to return once again to the Alvin Toffler quote with which it began:

The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they - at some distant point in the future - will take over the reins. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... because the rest of us need all the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties. For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile. (1970:112)

As Toffler suggests, young people in western society are often treated with a mild disdain at best, and a complete neglect at worst. However, young people are a dynamic force, which continuously transforms and reshapes our society. Yet at the same time they are largely powerless, and often misunderstood.

The powerlessness of young people arises from their position in society, usually at the periphery of social life. This is often due to the view that young people's capacities are limited and that their full potential is not yet completely realised, but will instead be fully developed somewhere in the future. Consequently, the lives and experiences of young people are often simplified or even mythologised.

Youth theory has often fallen foul of this, with young people being narrowly classified either as a homogenous group, belonging to 'tribes' or 'lifestyles', partaking in 'at risk' behaviour, or simply engaging in spectacular forms of consumption. These perspectives do not help to explain the realities of youth social life, but the concept of social capital may present a way forward. Through social capital, young people are seen as active agents, able to contribute to

their communities in a proactive way. Applying the lens of social capital can assist in transforming the image of youth as a transitory phase in life, to one of young people being seen, as Toffler intended, as valuable contributors to our society, as innovative individuals, who manage to deal with what can sometimes be extremely complex worlds.

Advice for different sectors

Implications for academics

The conceptualisation of social capital in academic circles remains plagued by shortcomings. These include a lack of rigorous conceptualisation of the concept (Krishna and Uphoff, 2002); an indifference to how life dimensions, such as class, culture and gender, may affect the formation and reproduction of social capital; a disregard for how social capital differs across diverse groups; and the issue of divergence on its level of measurement, its dimensions and indicators (see Krishna 2003*,* Yang 2007, Lin 2001). For academics, this has several implications, including notably the 'watering down' of the concept to a point where anything may be called social capital (Lin et al*,* 2001; Heberler, 2004).

These issues are further compounded in the study of youth social capital. As discussed in Chapter 3, youth social capital theory has often been criticised as being too simplistic (Morrow, 2002) or ill-targeted (see Morrow, 2001 and Whiting and Harper, 2003). This thesis represents an attempt to address the particular issues currently faced in measuring social capital for youth. It suggests a strategy for understanding social capital from an academic standpoint, and a framework for its measurement. Arguably, this thesis has considerable relevance in the academic world, constituting as it does one of the first dedicated examples of the conceptualisation and measurement of youth social capital in Australia.

The role of the academic in youth social capital theory

The role of the academic and social capital theory could be said to be twofold: academics should centre their efforts on attempting to resolve the problems currently encountered in the conceptualisation and measurement of social capital, rather than focusing on what type of social capital is of most benefit for the community or the individual. This will allow the conceptualisations and measurement of social capital to be established on a strong theoretical framework.

However, I also believe that academics should act as critical advocates for young people, particularly in relation to social capital. As suggested in this thesis, the conceptualisation of social capital sometimes borders on naiveté, as with the privileging of bonding over bridging ties and the generalisations about dark social capital. Furthermore, critical evaluation of current social capital theory is paramount, given the important distinctions between how young people and adults accumulate social capital and the ends to which social capital is put.

Finally, academics should also attend more closely and critically to the neo-liberal agenda to normalise the behaviour of young people in an attempt to reduce future social and economic costs.

Implications for the policy and welfare sector

Social capital has been claimed to have many benefits for individuals and communities alike. It has been argued that social capital can help to reduce crime, increase community health, wellbeing and participation, boost community cohesion (Stone and Hughes, 2002), stabilise local economies, create cooperative action, and lower legal costs (Putnam, 2000). These features have made social capital an appealing paradigm for policy makers and Welfare Officers. However, the rush to increase social capital has been made with little consideration of its still under-articulated theoretical and empirical grounding, meaning that many social capital policies have been mis-targeted, ignoring important issues such as the roles played by class, culture and gender in social capital formation and reproduction.

These issues are further compounded when looking at strategies to enhance the social capital of young people. Consequently, this study carries some important implications for both policy and welfare sectors. It presents one of the first in-depth studies of youth social capital in Australia, and may provide policy makers and Welfare Officers with the tools to create well researched and targeted social capital initiatives, and measure their results.

The role of the policy maker in youth social capital strategies

Young people are more than just a 'future'; they are an important part of our society in the here and now. Paradigms such as 'youth at risk' are harmful to many young people because they treat 'risky' behaviour as individualised choice and conduct which exists outside class, gender, and cultural context (Kelly, 2001).

In terms of social capital, the current focus on youth is not on the youth themselves, it is instead directly related to their value as the future cultural and social capital of their society (White and Wyn, 2004). Consequently, the attitudes and behaviours of young people are often used as 'barometers' with which to measure the health of society (see Chapter 1). However, the differences in youth and adult culture can at times result in moral hysteria. There is a near continual process of placing blame on young people for the ills of society, illustrated by the demonisation of mods and rockers in the 1950s, hippies in the 1960s and 1970s, emos and ravers in the 90's, and the perception of a 'loosening' of youth sexual values in the 00's. It is important in this context for policy makers to carefully consider whether social capital is sufficiently developed at a theoretical and empirical level to be used within social policy.

Any social capital policy should carefully consider the differences that exist between the social capital of youths and adults, and the differences between particular youth cultures. Such an approach will aid in the formulation and targeting of social capital policy, and enable the consideration and inclusion of the differences in benefits which different groups accrue from their bonding and bridging networks. When policymakers ignore class, culture and gender as impacting forces upon youth social capital, misconceptions are created regarding the influence social capital has on the life chances of the individual. As discussed above, situating social capital outside these impacting forces makes social capital appear to operate like a 'magic bullet'. In order to create a complete picture of youth social capital, policy makers must ensure that class, culture and gender are included as areas of study in their own right, and that their effects on the social capital of young people are taken into account.

Finally, policymakers need to consider the tools used to measure youth social capital. Previous chapters have discussed how some measurements of youth social capital make use of tools or indicators which are neither suited nor designed to measure it. This has led both to misinterpretations of what youth social capital is, and the fostering of the belief that youths are either social capital deficient or are fostering the 'wrong' types of social capital. Only tools which have been specifically designed to measure youth social capital should be used in its measurement.

This will lead to well researched and developed youth social capital policy.
Policy makers may also wish to aim to incorporate the following in relation to the social capital of young people:

1. Policies to increase consultation with young people at all levels (federal, state and local) on projects which are targeted at young people, and in particular those targeted at minority or disadvantaged groups.
2. Policies aimed at promoting the already existing participation of young people within their community.
3. Policies that address inequalities in political participation for young people.
4. Policies that increase youth access to youth-specific venues and services relevant to young people (such as adequate public transport).
5. Policies that facilitate the bonding social capital of young people.

The role of the Welfare Officer and Youth Worker

While policy makers create the boundaries for program development, it is welfare and youth officers who develop the programs deployed within a community: consequently, the role of the Welfare Officer and Youth Worker is crucial to the implementation of policy which targets social capital. However the biggest hurdle facing Welfare Officers and Youth Workers alike is the lack of understanding of what social capital is, how the outcomes of projects targeting social capital may be measured, and how social capital may be fostered. This thesis may provide a way forward for this.

In this thesis, I have looked at youth social capital in a more critical light than has been done in the past in the Australian context. The insights gained on how class, culture and gender affect the social capital of young people should prove of value to welfare and Youth Workers when developing programs with which to target the social capital of different groups of youths. I have also provided a framework for the measurement of social capital, which should be adaptable for use by Welfare Officers and Youth Workers in the field.

Not all the lessons learned for the welfare and youth sectors come from intellectual findings; many came from the voices of the young people themselves. The voices of the young people cited in this study have raised many issues salient for both Welfare Officers and Youth Workers, and may impact on the scope of youth social capital targeting programs. Young people:

- Want to feel valued by their community
- Want their contributions to the community acknowledged
- Want to be treated with respect
- Want to be consulted on issues that affect them
- Want to be provided with adequate services

These wants can be addressed at the ground level by well-targeted programs to encourage youth consultation, and may moreover foster bridging ties to the young people in the community. Welfare Officers and Youth Workers may wish to consider developing the following in relation to the social capital of young people:

- Programs that seek to engage young people and establish rapport with Welfare Officers and Youth Workers
- Programs that acknowledge the diversity of young people within a community
- Programs that acknowledge the contribution of different types of youth cultures within the community (such as in the celebration and promotion of Youth Week)

- The creation and fostering of community based programs which are led by young people, rather than adults
- The development of programs which include a diverse range of young people in the decision-making process within the community
- Programs that ensure that young people are able to effect change within their community rather than serving as 'sounding boards'
- Programs that encourage the consultation of young people on issues that affect them
- Programs that foster the interaction between youths and adults in an aim to debunk the stereotypes which exist about young people
- Programs that aim to target the provision of adequate services for young people.

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Appendix 1 - Name Generator/Interpreter.

(Reproduced from; Flap, H., Snijders, T., Völker, B and Van der Gaag, M. 1999-2003)

The answers to the Name Generator questions were coded onto a separate sheet (list A) which accompanied each questionnaire. The answer sheet uses a matrix which could be easily populated with information.

During name generating, only the names of network members that were supplied by respondents were recorded (full names, given names, or initials were allowed as responses and was the choice of the respondent). Of each identified network member the question from which this name resulted was directly coded. If a certain person had been mentioned before as a response to an earlier question, extra columns corresponding to those earlier questions were marked on the sheet.

In a second stage of the questionnaire, the name interpreting part, a set of interpretative questions was asked for each network member identified on the list.

NAME GENERATING QUESTIONS

1: CONTACT-PERSON FOR CURRENT/LAST JOB
Now we get to a question that is important to discover your personal relations. I would like to know who helped you getting this job. May I have the first name and the first letter of the family name of the person that helped you get your current/last job? We will come back to this person later.
Interviewer: fill name on list A and mark column NG1.

2a: ASKING ADVICE
If you have a problem at work, whom do you go to for advice? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG2a. If the name is already on the list because it has been mentioned before, only mark column NG2a. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned.
2b: GIVING ADVICE
How is it the other way around? Are there also people who come to you for advice regarding problems that they have at their work? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG2b. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG2b. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned. If Ego has a job that involves giving advice, ask about advice giving that is not directly connected with his/her position.

3: SOUR SOCIAL CAPITAL
At work people not only cooperate, but also bother each other. How is that in your situation? Have any of your colleagues lately disturbed you in doing your job? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG3. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG3. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned.

4: DIRECT COLLEAGUES/COOPERATION

Who are the two colleagues with whom you work most often? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name (or initials) of those colleagues?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG4. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG4.

(This question was followed by statements regarding the work relationships with the nominated colleagues, to whom the respondent was invited to react.)

5: BOSS

May I have the first name and the first letter of the family name of your boss?
Interviewer: put the name on list A and mark column NG5. If the name is already on the list because it has been mentioned before, only mark column NG5.

6: HELP TO GET HOUSE

I would like to know the first name and the first letter of the family name of the person that helped you get this house, or from which you directly bought the house.
Interviewer: put the name on list A and mark column NG6. If the name is already on the list because it has been mentioned before, only mark column NG6. (This question was followed by a question asking how this person helped in getting the house.)

7: HELP WITH SMALL JOBS IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

If you are busy with a small job at home, and you need someone that gives you a hand - for instance if you need furniture moved or a ladder held, whom do you ask for help? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG7. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG7. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned.

8: 'KEYS'

Is there someone from outside your household that keeps a spare key to your house? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG8. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG8. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned.

9: DIRECT NEIGHBOURS:

Who are your direct neighbours? We mean the people that live closest to you; for instance people live directly right, left, above or under your house? I would like to have two names of the people living directly next to you. For clarity, can you also give me the numbers of their addressee?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG9. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG9.

Neighbours are from house number _________ and ____________

(This question was followed by several other questions regarding direct neighbours with a focus on mutual contact, activities that were shared, annoyances and actions taken in cases of annoyance.)

10: VISITING OTHERS
Many people sometimes visit others in their leisure time. Who do you go to for a visit? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: put the names on list A and mark column NG10. If the names are already on the list because they have been mentioned before, only mark column NG10. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned.

11: 'CORE' NETWORK
Life is usually not only about going out and enjoying company. Everybody needs someone to talk about important matters from time to time. With whom did you discuss important personal matters during the last six months? May I again have the first name and the first letter of the family name of those persons?
Interviewer: check whether the names of those persons have been already mentioned. If names have been mentioned before, only mark column NG11. Otherwise, record the names and mark column NG11. A maximum of 5 names can be mentioned.

12: OPEN NETWORK QUESTION
Let's go through the list of names we have made together. Is there anybody else who is important to you and whose name is not yet on the list? If yes, I would like to add this person to the list. What are the activities that you usually share with this person?
Interviewer: write the name or initials on list A and mark column NG12. Write the activities Ego shares with this person down below

Name interpreting questions

The following questions all refer to network members identified with name generator questions 1-12, as recorded on list A.

Interviewer: answers to all of the following questions should be recorded on list A.

I would like to go through the list of people we have made once again.

1. Which of these persons is a woman?
Interviewer: in column 'Sex' in list A, mark every woman.

2. How old are these persons?
Interviewer: in column 'Age' in list A, record ages.

3. How are you connected to these persons?
Interviewer: hand over CHART 'Role relationships', record the corresponding numbers in column 'Role' of list A. If Ego is connected to someone in more than one way (for example, as friend and neighbour), record this in adjacent columns (max. 3 role relations)

1) Partner
2) Parent
3) Child
4) Parent in law
5) brother/sister
6) Another family member
7) Friend
8) Boss
9) Direct colleague
10) Another colleague
11) Someone who is working for you
12) Someone from the neighbourhood
13) Direct neighbour
14) A fellow club/association member
15) Acquaintance

4. Do you know the religion of these pe
Interviewer: record in column 'Religion'

1) Roman Catholic
2) netherl. protestant
3) 'reformed'
4) other
5) none
97) I don't know

5. Which of these persons is married, or lives together with a partner?
Interviewer: put marks in column 'Married' on list A for persons having a partner.

6. Which of these persons has children that still live at home?
Interviewer: put marks in column 'Children' on list A for persons having children living at home.

7. How often do you usually have contact with these persons?
Interviewer: record corresponding codes in column 'Freq' in list A.

1) every day
2) every week
3) every month
4) every three months
5) less frequent
6) we rarely see each other

8. How long have you known these persons?
Interviewer: record the duration in years in column 'Duration' of list A.

9. Where, and at which opportunity did you first meet these persons?
Interviewer: record corresponding codes in column 'M1' on list A.

1) during my education
2) at a club or association
3) at work
4) at kin's
5) at friends'
6) at my place
8) in the neighbourhood
9) at a place to go out
10) in church
11) during holidays
12) at a party
13) elsewhere

7) at their place

10. Where, and at which opportunity do you usually meet each other nowadays?
Interviewer: record corresponding codes in column 'M2' on list A.

1) during my education
2) at a club or association
3) at work
4) at kin's
5) at friends'
6) at home
8) in the neighbourhood
9) at a place to go out
10) in church
11) during holidays
12) at parties
13) elsewhere

11. Which of these persons lives within a radius of five kilometres from your house?
Interviewer: put marks in column 'GeoDis' on list A for persons living within 5 km radius from Ego.

12. On a scale from 1 to 5, can you indicate how much you like these persons? Mark persons you like very much with a 5, and persons you don't like with a 1.
Interviewer: record corresponding marks in column 'Liking' on list A.

13. Can you also indicate how much you trust these persons? Mark persons you trust very much with a 5, and persons you don't trust with a 1.
Interviewer: record corresponding marks in column 'Trust' on list A.

14. Do you think that five years from now you will still have a relationship with these persons? With whom do you think you will not have a relationship five years from now?
Interviewer: put marks in column 'Future' on list A for persons Ego thinks there won't be a relationship with 5 years from now.

15. How intensive is the relationship with these persons? Mark persons with whom the relationships is very intensive with a 5, and persons with whom the relationship is weak with 1
Interviewer: record corresponding marks in column 'Intensity' on list A.

16. What kind of education did these persons complete?
Interviewer: record corresponding marks in column 'Education' on list A.

17. Which of these persons has a paid job at the moment?
Interviewer: put marks in column 'Job' on list A for persons that have a paid job at the moment.

18. What is the occupation of these persons? If they do not have work at the moment, I would like to know their last occupation.
Interviewer: record the occupation of each person on list A. If the person is still in education write 'school' or 'study' instead of the occupation.

19. Finally, I would like to know whether some people you know also know each other. How well do the following persons know each other? Do they know each other, and if yes, do they get along well or do they avoid each other?
Interviewer: hand over CHART 'network members among each other'.

1 = persons avoid each other

2 = persons don't know each other
3 = persons hardly know each other
4 = persons know each other well
5 = persons know each other well and get along well

Interviewer: Select from list A the names first mentioned after name generator questions

2a: asking advise
2b: giving advise
3: sour social capital
7: help with small jobs in and around the house
8: 'keys'
11: 'core' network

And record them in column 'name 'of the matrix below.
If a person has already been mentioned, select the second or third name following from that name generator question (etc). It is the intention that is (if possible) 6 different persons emerge in the matrix below.

Read the names in the following way; 'does person no. 1 know person no 2', also for no. 1 and no. 3, and no. 4, and so forth, and record their codes specified on CHART 9 in the corresponding cells of the matrix below.

	How well do persons no. 1 to n6....		.... Know persons no.2 to no.6?				
NG	Name	1	n.1 and no. 2	no... and no.3	no... and no.4	no... and no.5	no... and no.6
2 a		*2*					
2B		*3*					
3		*4*					
7		*5*					
8		*6*					
11		*7*					

Appendix 2 - The Resource Generator: Social Capital Quantification with Concrete Items.

(Reproduced from; Van der Gaag, and Snijders 2005)

1. can repair a car, bike, etc.
2. owns a car
3. is handy repairing household equipment
4. can speak and write a foreign language
5. can work with a personal computer
6. an play an instrument
7. has knowledge of literature
8. has senior high school (VWO) education
9. has higher vocational (HBO) education
10. reads a professional journal
11. is active in a political party
12. owns shares for at least Dfl.10,000
13. works at the town hall
14. earns more than Dfl.5,000 monthly
15. owns a holiday home abroad
16. is sometimes in the opportunity to hire people
17. knows a lot about governmental regulations
18. has good contacts with a newspaper, radio- or TV station
19. knows about soccer
20. has knowledge about financial matters (taxes, subsidies)
21. can find a holiday job for a family member
22. can give advice concerning a conflict at work
23. can help when moving house (packing, lifting)
24. can help with small jobs around the house (carpenting, painting)
25. can do your shopping when you (and your household members) are ill
26. can give medical advice when you are dissatisfied with your doctor
27. can borrow you a large sum of money
28. can provide a place to stay for a week if you have to leave your house temporarily
29. can give advice concerning a conflict with family members
30. can discuss what political party you are going to vote for
31. can give advice on matters of law (problems with landlord, boss, municipality)
32. can give a good reference when you are applying for a job
33. can babysit for your children recoded name generator items
34. you can pay social visits to
35. can discuss intimate matters with you
36. can do small jobs around the house
37. keeps a spare key to your house

Appendix 3 - Position Generator Items, Associated Occupational Prestige and Socioeconomic Indicator Values.

(Reproduced from; Van der Gaag and Snijders T 2005)

Before asking you more questions about your work and your daily activities, I would like to know which occupations you have contact with. I have here a list of different occupations. Does anyone in your family have one of those occupations? Anyone among your friends? Among your acquaintances? With 'acquaintance' I don't mean the salespersons you come across in the shop, but somebody that you have a small talk with or would have a small talk with if you meet him/her on the street and that you know by his/her name.

Interviewer: Begin with asking whether Ego knows a family member in that occupation. If yes, move on the next question. If not, then ask about friends in that occupation. Only if not, ask about knowing an acquaintance in that occupation. If Ego says that somebody is both a family member and a friend he or she should be counted as a family member.

Job Function		Family	Friend	Acquaintance	no
1	Doctor	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
2	Cook	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
3	Engineer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
4	Higher civil servant	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
5	Construction worker	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
6	Director of a company	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
7	Manager	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
8	Teacher	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
9	Estate agent	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
10	Trade union manager	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
11	Lawyer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
12	Mechanic	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
13	Bookkeeper/accountant	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
14	Scientist	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
15	Policy maker	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
16	Musician/artist/writer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
17	Information technologist	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
18	Police officer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)

19	Secretary	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
20	Insurance agent	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
21	Foreman	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
22	Nurse	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
23	Farmer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
24	Lorry driver	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
25	Postman	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
26	Engine driver	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
27	Sales employee	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
28	Unskilled labourer	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
29	Cleaner	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)
30	Hairdresser	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0)

Appendix 4 - Focus Group Questions

1. Who owns a mobile phone?
2. Do you have a plan or prepaid?
3. How much would you spend on your phone a month?
4. Who pays for your mobile phone?
5. How many of you have or are getting their licence?
6. Tell me, who has taught you how to drive?
7. Do/did you have private lessons? Who pays for them?
8. How many of you do charity work? Tell me about the work that you do?
9. When was the last time you gave a donation or signed a petition? What was it for?
10. Why do you choose to sign a petition or give to some charities over others?
11. Tell me where do you get your pocket money from?
12. What were some of the thing you spent your money on last week?
13. What is the most expensive item of clothing you own?
14. What hobbies do you have?
15. Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark?
16. Does your area have a reputation for being a safe place?
17. Do you feel that the community values young people?
18. What is there to do in your area?
19. Do you use the Internet? How?
20. In the past year have you ever taken part in a local community project or working bee?
21. When was the last time you attended a community event? uch as Rock Tock, Steam Festival etc..?
22. What groups are there in the Wollondilly Shire (such as emo, skegs, Goths etc…) do you feel you belong to any in particular?
23. What is your favourite activity?
24. How often do you attend concerts or go to the movies?
25. What kind of things do you like to read?
26. Who has left school and why did you leave?
27. What do you think of school? Do you feel school is important for young people?
28. Will you go to TAFE or Uni?
29. What will you study?
30. Do you think men/women can be trusted?
31. Would you get into a car with a boy or group of boys you new?[45]
32. How many of you have a close friend of the opposite gender (i.e. male/female)?
33. Are male/female friends important to you?
34. How many close male friends would you say you have?
35. How are male friends different to female friends?
36. Do you feel male friends can understand you as much as female friends?
37. What is the main difference between female and male friends?
38. What do you think about people of other nationalities?
39. Do you think people of other nationalities can be trusted?

[45] This question was asked of females only.

40. Do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?
41. Do you enjoy living among people of different life styles?
42. If a stranger, someone different, started at your school, do you think they would be accepted?
43. If you were going out with someone of a different nationality/colour to your parents/guardians, do you think your parents/guardians would be accepting of it?

Last Question:

44. If you had had three wishes that could improve the lives of young people, what would you wish for?

Appendix 5 - Survey

About You

1. What is your?

   Gender______ Age_____________

   Suburb______ Post Code________

2. Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No

3. What Nationality are you? ____________________

4. Do you speak a second language? Yes No

5. Do you have a bank account?
If yes, how much is in it? $0-$199 $200-$499 $500-$999 $1000-$4999 $5000-$999 1000+

6. What school do you/did you attend? ___________________________

7. What is your highest education level? (please circle one)
I'm still at school (state year) ________________ I completed Year 9 or under
I have my School Certificate I have my High School Certificate

8. Are you attending any courses at TAFE Other (please specify) ______________
If yes - What is the name of the course?

____

9. Are you employed? Yes No
If yes - Are you employed as? Casual Part-time Full-time Other (Please state) ______________

Where do you work? ________________________

Who helped you get the job? ________________

10. Do you have any of the following and what price range is it?
Ipod $0-$99 $100-$299 $300+

Mobile phone $0-$99 $100-$299 $300+

Bike $0-$99 $100 $299 $300-$999 $1000+

Skateboard	$0-$99	$100-$299	$300-$999	$1000+
Stereo	$0-$99	$100-$299	$300-$999	$1000+
Digital Camera	$0-$99	$100-$299	$300-$999	$1000+
Game Console	$0-$99	$100-$299	$300-$999	$1000+
Video Camera	$0-$299	$300-$999	$1000-2999	$3000+
Printer	$0-$299	$300-$999	$1000-2999	$3000+
Scanner	$0-$299	$300-$999	$1000-2999	$3000+
Computer	$0-$299	$300-$999	$1000-2999	$3000+
Laptop	$0-$299	$300-$999	$1000-2999	$3000+
Car	$0-$4,999	$5,000-$9,999	$10000-$25,999	$26000-$39,000+

11. Where do you access the Internet? Home School Other (please specify)______

12. Do you have a:
MySpace page Facebook page Other (Please specify) __________

13. How many hours per day would you?
Watch T.V __________ Listen to the radio_____

Surf the Internet____ Play Video/computer games _______

Read_____ Play sports________

Other hobbies or interests (please specify) ________________________________

14. How often do you use a mobile phone?

Everyday Most days Some days Rarely Never

15. How many calls would you make per day? _________

16. How often do you SMS?

Everyday Most days Some days Rarely Never

17. How often do you use a home phone?

Everyday Most days Some days Rarely Never

18. How many SMS would you send per day? ____________

19. How many calls would you make per day? ____________

20. How often do you use a computer?

    Everyday Most days Some days Rarely Never

21. How often do you email?

    Everyday Most days Some days Rarely Never

    How many emails would you send per day? __________

22. Do you play a musical instrument? Yes No

    If yes, which one? ____________

    Do you take private lessons? Yes No

    If yes, who pays for them? __________________

23. Are you involved in any sports? Yes No

    If yes, which sport(s)? __________________

    Do you get paid coaching lessons? Yes No

    If yes, who pays for them? _____________________

24. Do you undertake any other activities

    If yes, which ones? _____________________

25. What was the last place you travelled to nationally? ________________

26. Have you ever been to any other major city? Yes No

27. Have you ever travelled overseas? Yes No

28. If yes, where to?

    ____

About your parents/guardians

29. Did your parents or guardians immigrate to Australia? Yes No

    If yes, where from? ________________________

30. What is the main language spoken at home? _________________

31. Do your parents/guardians speak a second language? Yes No
If yes, which one? ___________________

32. What are your parents/guardians' occupations?

Female_______________________ Male_____________________

33. How many hours do your parents/guardians work?

Female_______________________ Male____

About where you live

34. How long have you lived in your local area? ____________

35. Circle the answers that best describe your situation

I live with my family I live with a foster family I live with family other than my parents

I live by myself I live with my partner I live with friends
I live with my parents and grandparents I live in a single parent household

I live in a same gendered parent household Other situation (please specify)

____

36. Circle the answers that best describe your situation
My parents are together My parents are divorced My parents are separated

I have brothers or sisters I have step-brothers or sisters I am a single child

My brothers or sisters- live with me do not live with me

My step-brothers or sisters- live with me do not live with me

I have a step-parent who- lives with me does not live with me

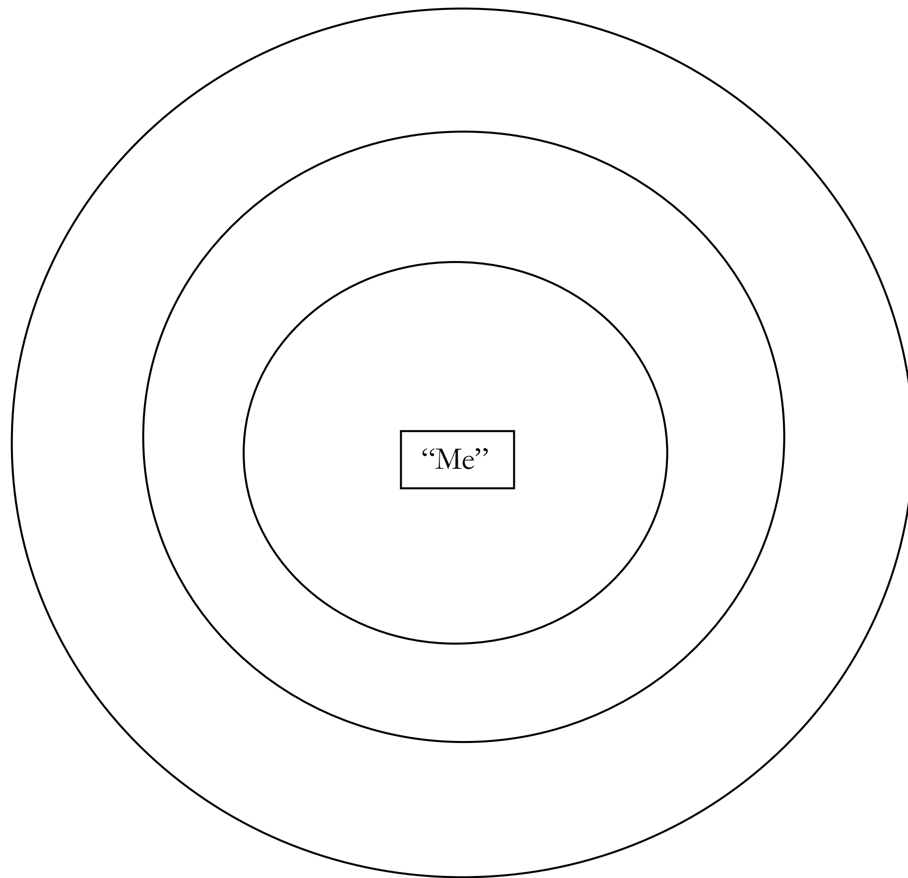
37. Circle the answers that best describe your situation
I live in a rented property I live in an owned property I live in government housing

I am homeless Other situation (please specify) ____________________

Appendix 6 - Ties Generator

Instructions - Place the name of all the people you consider friends or acquaintances on the sheet. The closer to the 'me' square, the closer you are to that person. For each person, please give their name, age, how you know them, their suburb (if you know it) and their nationality.

Figure 2: Ties Generator Diagram



Appendix 7- Assets Generator Questions

Please write down the name or title (Mrs, Mr, coach etc) of as many people that you can think that you would:

1. Trust with your most important secrets
2. Ask for help with your homework
3. Go to for help
4. Ask to help you get work
5. Consider friends
6. Consider close family
7. Ask a favour from
8. Have helped in the last month
9. Have discussed important matters within the last six months
10. Regularly hang out with
11. Know well enough to chat to but not well enough to phone
12. Trust to be there to help you if you ever got in trouble
13. Talk on the phone regularly
14. Email regularly
15. Sit at school with

Appendix 8 - Table 10 - Age and Gender of Alleged Offenders Proceeded Against by NSW Police for Incidents of Selected Offences, Wollondilly[46]

Alleged offender's gender	Alleged offender's age	Assault - domestic violence related	Assault -non-domestic violence related	Robbery	Break and enter dwelling	Break and enter non-dwelling	Motor vehicle theft	Steal from motor vehicle	Steal from retail store	Steal from person	Malicious damage to property
Male	10 - 17	12	5	1	6	6	3	7	5	1	23
	18 - 19	2	8	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	1
	20 - 29	17	11	2	7	0	2	1	1	0	24
	30 - 39	24	6	0	1	3	3	3	0	0	5
	40 +	20	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
	Total	75	39	3	19	9	9	11	6	1	63
Female	10 - 17	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
	18 - 19	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	20 - 29	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
	30 - 39	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	40 +	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	12	2	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	8
Total	10 - 17	15	7	1	7	6	4	7	5	1	27
	18 - 19	3	8	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	2
	20 - 29	19	11	2	8	0	3	1	1	0	24
	30 - 39	26	6	0	1	3	3	3	0	0	7
	40 +	24	9	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	11
	Total	87	41	3	23	9	12	11	6	1	71

[46] This table excludes "missing/unknown" statistics.