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S Y D N E Y

# The social domain influence on early childhood development (ECD)

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# Will cover

- Methodologies for social domain data collection

- Analysis challenges and triangulation

- Preliminary findings – social and mixed

# Social Domain

- Social capital
  - Bonding, Bridging, Linking
  - Trust, participation, networks

- Neighbourhood attachment

- Crime
  - Safety

- (Diversity)

# Measuring the domains…
# a mixed methods approach
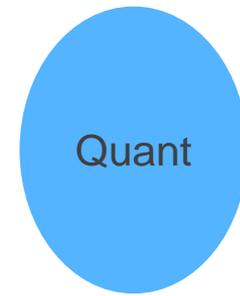
| | Qual |
|---|---|
| Qual | Quant |

| | Method | Source/s | Type | Governance | Physical | Socioeconomic | Service | Social |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Stakeholder interviews** | Primary data | Qual | x | x | x | x | x |
| 2 | **Parent focus group** | Primary data | Qual | x | x | x | x | x |
| 3 | **Practitioner focus group** | Primary data | Qual | x | x | x | x | x |
| 4 | Policy documents | Primary data | Qual | x | x | x | x | |
| 5 | Service survey | Primary data | Quant | | | | x | |
| 6 | **Community survey** | Primary data | Quant | x | x | | x | x |
| 7 | GIS and park audits | Primary data, Existing data | Quant | | x | | x | |
| 8 | Service template | Primary data, Existing data | Quant | | | | x | |
| 9 | Community demographics | Existing data | Quant | | | x | | |

# Analysis

- Preliminary analysis focused on matched pairs of on and off diagonal disadvantaged communities; disadvantaged communities where children do comparatively poorly (on) and comparatively well (off).

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stigma is greater in the ON-disadv than OFF+. | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 3. FALSE |
| Sense of community (a different issue to stigma) more evident in OFF+ more than ON-disadv | 1. TRUE | 3. FALSE | 3. FALSE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 3. FALSE | 1. TRUE | 4. NOT SURE/ N/A |
| ON-disadvantaged communities are perceived as having greater risk of crime | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 1. TRUE | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL |
| Bonding capital more evident in Off+ LCS than on-disadv | 2. NEUTRAL | | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | | 3. FALSE | 1. TRUE | |
| Bridging capital more evident in Off+ LCS than on-disadv | 1. TRUE | | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | | 4. NOT SURE/ N/A | 4. NOT SURE/ N/A | |

# Strongest finding - Stigma

- Participants described the communities as having reputations associated with high crime and/or drug use, high levels of public housing and high levels of unemployment.

- *So [community] is pretty much a suburb that a lot of people [...] try to avoid. In terms of living, they wouldn't buy houses there if they could avoid it. It's got probably a higher density of housing commission homes. (Stakeholder interview ID83)*

- These communities had direct negative impact on children:

- *It's like Josie, her daughter she started up at [school in neighbouring suburb] and all the kids automatically said, "Your mum's a druggo, she deals drugs" and Josie's daughter is going – "no she doesn't". (Parent focus group - FG15)*

- *We do sports outside of [community] […] but when we get asked where we live, we try not to say [community] because as soon as you say it they look at you like, "Oh. Really?" My son got teased first year of football. You're from [community], go away, go to a different team. (Parent focus group FG30)*

# Stigma

They also had indirect impacts through parents:

- *[…] people who don't live in the area tend to look down on some of these suburbs. I know sometimes people have said to me […] "Where do you live?" and I've said [name of suburb] they can sometimes go "oh" – you know that look. But I mean I think it's a great place to be but I do still think there is that stigma in this area. (Parent focus group FG15)*

- *Even taxi drivers, if you say, "We're going to [name of suburb]." "Oh..." […] It's automatically, "Oh, you live there…." (Parent focus group FG10)*

- Many participants did not share the stereotype of their community:

- *I heard a lot of bad things about the area in the process of moving here. I honestly haven't seen it. (Parent focus group FG29P)*

# Stigma – triangulation issues

- Stigma was NOT hypothesised in the literature to be a community factor influencing child wellbeing.

  - However there is some literature attesting to the fact that stigma does have negative impacts on community residents.

- Stigma was not addressed directly in the community survey, and there is no objective measure of stigma.  Some proxies could be:

  - Mobility; people leaving the community or wanting to leave

  - Perceptions of crime

  Some of the assertions relating to stigma can be tested quantitatively:

  - Housing Density

  - Crime rates

  - House prices

- Interestingly these did NOT concur with community perceptions.

# Sense of community

- Tested in focus groups, interviews and survey

- True for 4 pairs but false for 3

- Deeper analysis reveals the reasons:

  – In some communities social and/or physical isolation of the community created stronger bonds within the community but also the conditions for poor EC outcomes.

  – This included lack of access to resources and services outside community.

  – Linked to stigma; those living in the community rejected by peers outside community.

- Census results:

- Off diagonal positive local communities are more transient than On diagonal Disadvantaged local communities (higher % of people have stayed in the same suburb 1 year ago.

# Diversity

Hypothesis; More diverse areas will improve child wellbeing.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Level of SES (economic) diversity is greater in Off+ LCs.** | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 3. FALSE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 3. FALSE |
| **Level of cultural diversity is greater in Off+ LCs. (or greater in ON-adv than OFF-)** | 2. NEUTRAL | 3. FALSE | 3. FALSE | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 3. FALSE | 3. FALSE |
| **Level of age diversity is greater in Off+ LCs. (or greater in ON-adv than OFF-)** | 1. TRUE | 4. NOT SURE/ N/A | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 2. NEUTRAL | 4. NOT SURE/ N/A |
| **Housing affordability becoming more of an issue in the OFF+ than ON-disad LCs: higher SES families moving into area and displacing more disadvantaged groups.** | 2. NEUTRAL | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 2. NEUTRAL | 4. NOT SURE/ N/A | 2. NEUTRAL | 1. TRUE |
| **Housing affordability: OFF+ is more desirable leading to less affordable housing than On-disadv.** | 2. NEUTRAL | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 1. TRUE | 2. NEUTRAL | 3. FALSE |

# Diversity

- Only economic diversity differentiates on and off diagonal positively

- Age diversity – no finding

- Cultural diversity – negative finding

## Why?

- Links to findings on bonding capital and housing affordability

  - On-diagonal communities are either more diverse with new immigrants/refugees or inter-generational entrenched poverty.

  - Perceptions of more high density social housing in on diagonal disadvantaged communities

  - Place for parents to congregate – park or community centre – was very important.

  - Off diagonal positive tend to have pockets of aspiring families – sometimes causes conflict with resident communities.

# Conclusion

- Social domain, interacting with physical and economic, showed the most findings in differentiating on and off diagonal disadvantaged communities.

- However this may be because findings are largely based on subjective perceptions of community members and stakeholders.  Social environment is experienced more intensively than other domains, especially for parents of young children.

- Not all hypotheses were confirmed, and often there were reasons for this in specific communities.

- Thus generalising across communities is problematic.

- Triangulation of data – qual and quant, perceptions and facts – adds to level of robustness.

# Questions and comments

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