A socio-economic analysis of social inclusion and lifestyle factors in South-East Queensland

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses three questions in relation to perceptions of city liveability; Does social capital in a city vary across different socio-economic groups; Do lifestyle factors in a city vary across different socio-economic groups; Do different socio-economic groups perceive different levels of public sector infrastructure support? The questions were assessed using a quantitative survey to collect data from a cross-section of suburbs from the cities of Logan and Ipswich which included identified areas of high, medium, low and disadvantaged socio-economic groupings. The results generally indicated little differences in relation to social capital, lifestyle and levels of public sector infrastructure support across all groups. However, the highest socio-economic group stood out as being consistently (and sometimes significantly) more negative than others about almost every aspect measured. In fact, it was concluded that this group rather than the lower groups which were socially isolated. Part of the research required the development of a scale for measuring social capital for which support for validity and reliability was found.

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate question addressed by the paper is “do residents from different socio-economic groups experience the city differently”. By socio-economic status we refer to income and social status linked to Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Suburbs have been divided into four categories: disadvantaged, low, medium and high status.

The urban literature has considered whether there is a social divide, if not a balkanisation, across suburbs between the haves and the have-nots. Poorer people tend to gravitate to certain locations with an impact on property values and thus the cycle continues. There is also a view that the poorer suburbs will have less access to social and cultural capital. That is, that the poorer suburbs are more likely to be excluded from social capital. This would affect both the social well-being and quality of life of such poor communities. There is some earlier literature that indicated that higher income people could be the group lacking access to social capital, in that the early moves to the suburbs was associated with building self-contained fortresses with minimal contact with the wider community. Apart from the direct issue of social capital, there is a broader issue about whether different socio-economic groups experience the city differently in terms of the myriad of lifestyle choice available, including using the outdoor space and recreation and leisure activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Liveable cities is a term in vogue, with organizations such as the London-based *Economic Intelligence Unit* giving awards about the most liveable city in the world and a scale on how liveable a list of cities are. For example, Melbourne has been a recipient of the award. Liveability is measured in terms of objective indicators of health, pollution, traffic congestion, crime, housing

affordability and health. Another body, the International Awards for Liveable Communities (supported by the United Nations), makes annual awards to local communities that focus on creating a liveable community (www.livcomawards.com). The "seachange" phenomenon has also increased public interest in desirable living locations (Salt, 2001). A liveable city is a vibrant urban community. It is of immediate benefit to the citizens who receive a higher quality of life and social well being. The significance of a city's liveability goes further. A liveable city encourages the citizens to stay longer in their community and to attract immigrants from other communities, thereby maintaining the vitality of the city. Economically, a liveable city encourages businesses to re-invest in the city and to attract other businesses to re-locate to that city.

Recent urban analysis suggests that capital cities can be considered on the basis of knowledge or creativity (Daniels & Bryson, 2002; Carillo, 2004; Florida, 2003; Komninos, 2002; Landry, 2000; Sim et al, 2002). Innovation and a cosmopolitan lifestyle are alternative ways of describing such cities (Florida, 2003). Sydney and Melbourne are increasingly using the term global city as a term of self-expression, consistent with the Florida (2003) conceptualization of what a modern capital city might aspire to.

In contrast, *satellite cities* near capital cities might be struggling with their identity. Satellite cities have emerged to house city workers and thus often lack direction or control over their own destiny. Synonymous terms for these satellite cities are peri-urban (Dahiya, 2003) or edge cities (Garreau, 1991). Palmer (1971) notes the elaborate planning of satellite towns in London, Tokyo and Paris, and less so in New York. Parisian satellite towns were planned slightly differently. Such centres were intended to develop their own life and not simply become dormitories for Paris (Palmer, 1971, p.81). Satellite cities, by inference, are likely to fall short of an ideal "liveable city" and would be perceived by many commentators as potentially having greater economic and social problems. The paper will provide a fresh perspective on the nature and character of satellite cities, providing more understanding of how such cities are perceived by their own residents. Ultimately this work might make some contribution assisting local authorities to revitalize such cities if there are discernable problems.

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The more that we discuss the notion of how liveable a city is, the more relevant is the emerging construct of social capital. *Social capital* is a relatively new construct that builds on the seminal work of Putnam (1993; 1995). It is synonymous with social cohesion and emphasizes inter-personal relationships, social relations, interactions and ties and cultural tolerance (see also Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Productivity Commission, 2003; Robinson 2002). More recent work incorporates the potential role of friends as the "new family" in connecting communities (Watters, 2003). Sometimes a complex construct like social capital is represented by only a partial component, say quality of friendships (Kennedy et al, 1978).

The quality of life literature is relevant also. Many studies of quality of life are reported in the journal, *Social Indicators*. A high proportion of these studies have used objective measures, despite some studies suggesting that subjective measures (based on perceptions) may give more explanation than objective measures (Deiner & Suh, 1997). Further, much of the literature focuses more on the quality of life of the *individual* rather than their perception of *community* well-being (Cohen, 2000). Some literature tends to be micro-based, evaluating a particular health or recreational program (Jeffries & Dobos, 1993). Some leisure researchers have moved past the *individual* perspective to the *community* perspective of the quality of life (Allen, 1990).

The public realm has been proposed as a major influence on social solidarity and tolerance, that is social capital (Gleeson, 2004; Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001; Iveson, 2002). We represent the public realm with two broad constructs, *public infrastructure* (health, transport, utilities) and *nature* (the

natural landscape such as lakes and the bush). A major part of the current study examines how the perception of the public realm assets differs across different socio-economic groups of residents.

A different literature highlights the role of shopping facilities as a force in social cohesion, including urban regeneration (Doyle, 2004; Hollander, 2002; Mitchell & Kirkup, 2003; Rex and Blair, 2003).

In response to the current state of knowledge in relation to city liveability, we sought answers to three questions. Firstly, does social capital in a city vary across different socio-economic groups. Naturally this question requires the measurement of social capital. Secondly, do lifestyle factors in a city vary across different socio-economic groups. Thirdly, do different socio-economic groups perceive different levels of public sector infrastructure support?

METHOD

The context for the study is satellite cities, being in the shadow of larger capital cities and sometimes a point of gravity for disadvantaged groups. Any city could have been chosen for the study but the issue of equity is heightened in satellite cities. Logan and Ipswich were chosen because as satellite cities to the state capital Brisbane there are likely to be social and economic issues that might be seen as challenges. Certainly both cities have major zones of disadvantaged or low socio-economic status groups. The broad aim was to go beyond a superficial classification of the cities and investigate the extent and nature of social capital deprivation or otherwise. Further our aim was to articulate the way various groups did experience the city in terms of lifestyle and access to public sector programs.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the two samples

Education	**Logan %**	**Ipswich %**	**Marital status**	**Logan %**	**Ipswich %**
Years 7-9	5.3	5.4	Married	65.1	65.6
Year 10	20.8	18.8	Not married	34.9	34.4
Year 11	2.9	3.3			
Year 12	18.2	15	*Family status*		
TAFE	21.8	20.1	Children	36.5	43.1
University	30.6	37.5	No children	63.5	56.9
Employment status			**Income**		
Part-time	22.0	24.6	<25999	23.1	20.3
Full-time	46.9	45.5	26000-44999	22.4	22.5
Not in workforce	25.9	25.0	45000-62999	21.2	22.5
Unemployed	5.1	4.9	63000-84999	15.5	17.6
			85000+	17.8	17.0
Gender					
Male	32.0	31.5	**Age**		
Female	68.0	68.5	18-25	6.3	10.3
			26-35	13.5	19.0
Renting			36-45	22.9	25.5
Yes	17.3	19.6	46-55	28.8	20.8
No	82.7	80.4	56-65	20.2	15.8
			66-75	5.9	6.3
***Years*[#]**	15	10	76+	2.4	2.7

[#] Number of years living in the city based on mode

Twelve suburbs have been purposively selected in each city, spanning the disadvantaged, low, medium and high status suburbs. Results are based on sample sizes 490 for Logan city and 448 for Ipswich city. Sample sizes were extracted to match population sizes of the identified suburbs belonging to each of the socio-economic groupings. Results of the demographic analysis (see table 1) showed population consistency between the samples. This highest education level for most respondents of both groups was university. Respondents were also mostly female, married with children and employed full-time. Logan residents had mostly been living in their city longer (ie 15 years), with the Ipswich residents having mostly lived there for 10 years. As would be expected for a survey where we were targeting specific suburbs as examples of different socio-economic groupings, the income distributions were fairly evening distributed.

A quantitative survey was utilised for data collection. Items in the survey instrument were drawn from the literature as well as industry experts. Multi-item scales measured the constructs of social capital, lifestyle factors and public sector infrastructure. Demographic profiling was utilised to segment the suburbs and check for income distribution according to the identified suburbs.

Each of the scales representing the three constructs of interest were evaluated to determine the validity and reliability of the items as representative groups of items. Each of the three research questions was then examined using ANOVA to determine differences amongst the socio-economic groups, with comparisons then made between the Logan and Ipswich sample to confirm the results.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Results and analysis are discussed in relation to each separate question. The Logan and Ipswich samples were considered separately. In each instance, the results of the Logan sample were examined first, with Ipswich data treated as a confirmatory examination of the results.

RQ 1: Does social capital in a suburb vary across different socio-economic groups?
Logan results. Prior to investigating this question, the developed measure of social capital was evaluated. Exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring was used to assess the factor structure. Examination of the inter-correlations showed each item correlating above $r = 0.3$ with more than 30% of the other items (Hair et al 1995). Correlations ranged from $r = 0.3$ to 0.6. Finding Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reaching significance and a KMO level of 0.8 confirmed that the data was suitable for factorisation (Hair et al 1995). A single factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was extracted from the data (eigenvalue = 3.6), accounting for 44% of the total variance in the variables. Examination of the scree plot confirmed this single factor solution (Cattell 1966). All items loaded strongly onto the initial factor, with the lowest factor loading being 0.58. Acceptable internal reliability was also found with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 being above the cut-off of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994).

A composite variable was then created to assess the variance in social capital across the four identified socio-economic groups, using ANOVA. The results of the ANOVA did indicate a significant difference amongst the groups, $F(3,486) = 4.155$, $p < 0.05$. Using the Tukey HSD test, the significance was found to lie only between groups 2 and 4, that is those identified as low and high socio-economic groups. Examination of the means (shown in table 2) also indicated that the means for the lowest three groups were very close with less than a two point difference between them (from 33.9 – 35.3), whilst group 4 (high status group) stood out as being considerably lower.

Table 2 Means for socio-economic groups for social capital

Group	Logan Means	Ipswich Means
1	34.0070	37.1410
2	35.3358	37.0756
3	33.8933	36.1874
4	30.7061	29.1000

Ipswich results. Using the same procedure the social capital scale for the Ipswich dataset was found to be valid and reliable. Items all correlated well (r = 0.3 – 0.7). Factorability was established and a single factor with an eigenvalue of 4.3 was extracted, accounting for 55% of the total variance in the variables. All items loaded strongly onto the factor (lowest = 0.6) and internal reliability was satisfactory (Cronbach Aplha = 0.89).

The results of the ANOVA using the created composite variable of social capital did indicate a significant difference amongst the groups, $F(3,444) = 6.058$, $p < 0.05$. The Tukey HSD test indicated that the significance lie with group 4 which was different to all other groups. No differences lie amongst the other three groups, as seen in table 2.

Hence, the results from both samples demonstrate that whilst social capital does not vary across the three lowest socio-economic groups, there is a lower opinion (which is often significant) of social capital by the highest socio-economic group.

RQ 2: Do lifestyle factors in a suburb vary across different socio-economic groups?
Logan results. Various items were used to measure aspects of lifestyle such as shopping, leisure, recreation and eating. Table 3 summarises the findings in relation to mean scores for a selection of variables across the different socio-economic groups.

Table 3 Means of lifestyle factors for Logan

Variable	1	2	3	4
Recreation - physical				
Bikeways and paths	4.6529	4.6489	4.5767	**4.2394**
Walking paths	4.8204	4.9394	4.9865	**4.6333**
Recreation – leisure				
Outdoor recreation[1f]	4.9229	5.2825	5.3245	**4.8455**
Green belt	5.6236	5.6971	5.7233	**5.3939**
Outdoor enjoyment[1d]	5.3178	5.3920	5.5822	**4.9061**
Natural wonders	4.5089	4.7131	4.7663	**4.1818**
Leisure activities[1a]	4.4197	4.6401	4.4405	**3.5727**
Leisure activities for older residents[1e]	4.1777	4.4358	4.1153	**3.5727**
Food and drinking				
Eating and drinking est	4.8650	5.0701	4.7724	**4.3000**
Night life	3.0306	3.3912	3.1405	**2.9061**
Cafes [1c]	5.1070	5.2825	5.1773	**4.4545**
Shopping				
Shopping establishments[1a]	5.9484	5.9832	5.7049	**4.5727**
Local shopping[1b]	5.3306	5.3255	5.0607	**4.6030**
Markets[1g]	4.7694	**4.3693**	**4.1399**	4.5424
Homeware stores[1a]	5.7892	5.9321	5.6129	**4.7545**
Other				
Cultural events[1b]	4.4197	4.3555	4.1466	3.6636
[1] significant difference found				
[a] group 4 different to all other means [b] difference between group 4 and groups 1 & 2 [c] difference between group 4 and groups 2 & 3 [d] difference between groups 4 & 3 [e] difference between groups 4 & 2 [f] difference between groups 1 & 3 [g] difference between group 1 and groups 2 & 3				

Perceptions about lifestyle factors were found to vary amongst the different socio-economic groups, most particularly in the areas of leisure and shopping. Noticeably, in many cases the differences were found to exist between group 4 (highest socio-economic) group and the other lower socio-economic groups. In fact, the highest socio-economic group was found to be generally considerably more negative overall. This can be clearly seen in table 3, where the lowest mean for each item has been bolded. In addition, there was very little difference in the means for many of the lifestyle items amongst groups 1 and 3. For example, there is less and 0.1 of a point difference between groups 1, 2 and 3 for 'bikeways and paths' and 'green belt'.

Ipswich results. The results were then retested using a second dataset collected from the Ipswich area (see table 4). As with the Logan sample, the highest socio-economic group (group 4) were found to be more negative, with very little differences found amongst the other three groups. Unlike the Logan sample however, the differences were less frequently found to be significant.

Hence, in relation to lifestyle, some significant differences do arise and these are mainly due to the highest socio-economic group (group 4) being more negative than other groups. Further, although some differences are not found to be significantly different, group 4 is consistently the most negative of the groups towards lifestyle for 90% of the items across the two samples, as identified in tables 3 and 4.

Table 4 Means of lifestyle factors for Ipswich

Variable	1	2	3	4
Recreation - physical				
Bikeways and paths	4.0744	4.4994	4.2857	**4.0000**
Walking paths	4.5897	4.8452	4.6923	**4.4450**
Recreation – leisure				
Outdoor recreation	5.4872	5.6071	5.2637	**4.8450**
Green belt	5.4744	5.5827	5.3841	**5.0950**
Outdoor enjoyment[1d]	5.4218	5.6905	5.2912	**5.1450**
Natural wonders	4.9474	4.9643	**4.7857**	4.8950
Leisure activities [1d]	4.4744	4.6845	4.2253	**3.7450**
Leisure activities for older residents[1d]	4.5000	4.6244	4.1868	**3.7450**
Food and drinking				
Eating and drinking est[1c]	4.5769	4.8214	4.4885	**3.4950**
Night life	2.7936	3.2554	3.0874	**2.4450**
Cafes[1a]	5.0487	5.1726	5.0659	**4.0450**
Shopping				
Shopping establishments	4.1026	4.2202	4.3077	**3.0950**
Local shopping [1b]	4.3449	4.4821	4.5659	**3.4950**
Markets	4.2949	4.3631	**4.1643**	4.3950
Homeware stores [1c]	4.7436	4.8750	4.5978	**3.6950**
Other				
Cultural events	5.1026	4.9702	4.9940	**4.4950**
[1] significant difference found				
[a] group 4 different to all other means [b] difference between group 4 and groups 2 & 3 [c] difference between groups 4 & 2 [d] difference between groups 2 & 3				

RQ 3: Do different socio-economic groups perceive different levels of public sector infrastructure support?

Logan results. Items relating to government programs and services, local government activity, transport and utilities were measured to examine differences in socio-economic groups about levels of public infrastructure support. Results of analysis of means across the four socio-economic groups are reported in table 5.

Whilst the highest socio-economic group once again stood out as being most negative about services, few of the differences were found to be significant. Hence, similar perceptions are shared

amongst the groups in relation to government infrastructure. Of particular interest was the finding that group 4 was significantly more negative than all other groups in relation to 'public health care access' and 'educational facilities'. One would expect that it would be the lower socio-economic groups who would be more likely to access public health facilities and yet they were considerably more positive about such services. Group 4 was also more negative about educational facilities, indicating perhaps a perception amongst this group that private school education was 'better'.

Table 5 Means of levels of public sector infrastructure support for Logan

Variable	1	2	3	4
Government programs/services				
Community centres	4.4580	4.7934	4.3859	**3.7848**
Public health care access[1a]	4.9019	5.0730	4.6994	**3.9364**
Health needs of old	4.1955	4.3066	4.0982	**3.6030**
Educational facilities [1a]	5.2529	5.2920	5.2638	**4.0879**
Police	**4.3796**	4.8533	4.4540	4.8152
ESL services	4.3987	4.4350	4.2331	**4.1182**
Local government				
Rates	**3.9771**	4.2248	4.0982	4.0273
Easy info on rates/bills	5.1745	5.1752	5.1098	**5.0879**
Sound decisions	4.2847	4.3715	4.1411	**3.8485**
Residential services	5.1955	5.2847	5.2822	**4.6030**
Transport				
Adequate parking	4.6541	5.0219	4.7669	**4.3909**
Adequate public transport	3.6541	3.6708	3.4601	**2.8455**
Adequate road networks[1b]	4.5013	4.5036	4.5460	**3.6636**
Maintenance of roads	4.3675	4.5328	4.4540	**4.0303**
Utilities				
Reliable energy supplies	4.6796	4.9708	4.9018	**4.2697**
Other				
Ready access to tradespeople	5.2650	5.3277	5.2025	**4.6636**
Promoting community[1c]	4.9019	4.6204	4.4724	**4.0273**
[1] significant difference found				
[a] group 4 different to all other means [b] difference between group 4 and groups 1 & 3 [c] difference between group 1 and groups 3 & 4				

Ipswich results. Upon examination of the Ipswich sample means (see table 6), very little difference was found amongst the groups in relation to government infrastructure, although the highest group (group 4) continued to be negative.

Hence, generally the different socio-economic groups do not perceive different levels of public sector infrastructure support, although the highest socio-economic group (group 4) are consistently more negative on most items than other groups and account for most of the significant differences that do exist.

Table 6 Means of levels of public sector infrastructure support for Ipswich

Variable	1	2	3	4
Government programs/services				
Community centres	4.4231	4.6786	4.3132	**3.9950**
Public health care access	5.0500	5.2554	4.8571	**4.6450**
Health needs of old	4.3192	4.5280	4.1962	**3.9950**
Educational facilities [1a]	5.5115	5.4994	5.4505	**4.4000**
Police	4.8833	5.0232	5.0929	**4.2000**
ESL services	3.9974	4.1577	4.1066	**3.7450**
Local government				
Rates	3.6526	3.6655	3.6313	**3.4500**
Easy info on rates/bills	5.1910	5.2667	5.1588	**4.3950**
Sound decisions	4.0244	4.3149	4.4005	**3.6950**
Residential services[1a]	5.4474	5.5411	5.5989	**4.3950**
Transport				
Adequate parking	**4.1910**	4.5232	4.5165	4.2500
Adequate public transport[1b]	4.1526	4.3440	3.5758	**2.7450**
Adequate road networks[1c]	**3.0756**	3.6720	**3.0824**	3.7950
Maintenance of roads	3.8321	4.0470	3.8901	4.0450
Utilities				
Reliable energy supplies	4.9731	5.2435	5.1044	4.3950
Other				
Ready access to tradespeople	4.7936	4.9696	4.8511	4.9450
Promoting community	5.1654	5.0280	5.0549	4.6000
[1] significant difference found				
[a] group 4 different to all other means [b] difference between group 4 and groups 1 & 2 [c] difference between groups 2 & 3				

DISSCUSSION

One of the aims of the paper was to test a new construct of social capital. The construct scale did meet the usual statistical tests of reliability and validity. The construct has passed all of these tests across both the cities. Interestingly, when social capital was measured by socio-economic in the two cities, there was no statistically significant difference across the bottom three groups, that is, the disadvantaged, low and middle socio-economic groups had fairly similar levels of social capital. It was in fact the high socio-economic group that had significantly lower social capital than the other three groups; and this applied in both cities. So while the literature often expresses concern about the disadvantaged and low socio-economic groups being excluded from the social milieu, this does not seem to be the case for this study.

This is not to say that the lower socio-economic groups do not have particular problems and personal and social needs. On the contrary, in these suburbs people earn lower incomes, have higher unemployment, are more likely to rent, have lower valued homes and so on. That is confirmed by our demographic data and was also the basis by which the Australian Bureau of Statistics classified those areas with the codes that we used. Woodridge and Kinston for example, in Logan, are *economically* deprived districts.

Unexpectedly, our results are starting to question the extent to which disadvantaged and low socio-economic groups are *socially* disadvantaged. If social capital is used as the benchmark, then within the two cities studied we reject the notion that these two lower socio-economic groups are socially deprived. In terms of the perceptions of the residents in these two socio-economic groups, the way they view the friendliness of the city, family-orientation, cultural diversity and safety, is not radically different from the middle Australia group. The implications of this need further debate and investigation.

In contrast, it seems to be the high socio-economic group that has a social exclusion issue. This finding applied to the high socio-economic status group in both Logan and Ipswich. Our results are tempered by the small sample sizes of the high socio-economic group in each city. The indication is that their social capital is less than the lower three groups. Why does the high socio-economic group feel less included, socially? Part of the answer is geographic; the high socio-economic suburbs chosen in this study were not in the core of the city but on the fringe (closer to either Brisbane or the Gold Coast). A second potentially powerful argument could be that the residents in high socio-economic suburbs are not socially connected to the rest of the predominantly lower income suburbs. This is our measure of social capital. Residents in high socio-economic suburbs may be more emotionally connected to the adjacent, relatively more prosperous, cities, or simply to no more than their own suburb or even their own home. This could imply a relatively more isolated, even lonely lifestyle. Some early sociological studies of the development of the new suburbs in America did paint the picture of a world built within the fortress of the family home. There is a need to look at the relative position of the high socio-economic groups in other cities, with less concentration of the lower two socio-economic groups.

Are there different lifestyle patterns across the four socio-economic groups? In essence there were relatively few differences across the lowest three groups. That is, perceptions towards nature, walkways, leisure activities and recreational activities were remarkably similar across the three lower socio-economic groups in both cities. There were few exceptions to a similarity in lifestyle perceptions across the disadvantaged, low and middle groups. The middle group had a slightly higher perception of shopping establishments in Ipswich compared to the lowest two groups, but this finding was reversed in Logan. There were even fewer cases where the same pattern occurred across the two cities. Exceptions were markets and homeware shops having lower perceptions among the middle socio-economic group. The main point of difference was the high socio-economic group versus the other three; consistently the high group had lower ratings of the lifestyle factors. This result mirrors the social capital findings above. The high socio-economic group is least happy on all fronts.

Differences in the perception of groups to government services were also examined. For this category there were even fewer differences across the four socio-economic groups. Generally the high group had the lowest perceptions of public infrastructure services, though the difference was not as great as with the lifestyle factors. The differences were least with reference to local government services and utilities (electricity).

CONCLUSION

The paper addresses some of key questions about the way different socio-economic groups experience the city. Our aim was to collect empirical evidence to shed light on this question. Previous literature often implies that the disadvantaged and low socio-economic groups have less inclusivity in society.

Perhaps surprisingly, there was very little if any indication that the disadvantaged and low socio-economic groups perceive themselves as excluded from society. These two groups differed little from the middle socio-economic group and indeed fared better than the high socio-economic group. These findings applied to both Logan and Ipswich. Similar findings related to lifestyle patterns (such as leisure and recreation) and to perceptions of the adequacy of public infrastructure (local government, health and transport for example).

It was expected that the two lowest socio-economic groups might perceive themselves as suffering some degree of social deprivation, but that was not borne out. In broad terms, the two lower groups seem to be living fairly normal “middle Australia” lifestyles. For reasons given, it is the high socio-

economic group that seems to be relatively socially isolated, but only in degree, not kind. Our findings are restricted to two satellite cities in South-East Queensland, so we do not generalise past this boundary at this point. The norms used for comparison are mainly within city, rather than a national benchmark.

Our results do not reject (and indeed they confirm) the economic deprivation of the disadvantaged and low socio-economic groups, but they do develop a new perspective about which groups in cities are socially disadvantaged and how low, medium and high income Australians lead their lives in their city of residence.

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