

Exploring the Missing Links:  
A Critical Inquiry into the Role of Social  
Capital in Australian Regional  
Development

by

Keri Chiveralls

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Social Inquiry/Anthropology

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Adelaide

Keri Chiveralls, 2008

## DEDICATION

For my parents, Keith Chiveralls (a wonderful proof reader as well as father) and Olive Blackman (a wonderful boss as well as mother) who have worked so hard to give me so much and have always been there to love and support me.

For my sister, Sarah who has been a constant source of friendship, inspiration and support, and for her husband Steve who gave me my beautiful niece. And for Freya, whom I hope will always fight for what she believes in and reach for the highest star.

For my Stepfather Dr. Ian Blackman, who proved the seemingly impossible, was indeed achievable. And for his daughter Emma-Kate who is sure to achieve greatness wherever she may seek it but will always be my little step-sister no matter how grown up she gets.

For my beautiful kitty Blade, my Grandparents the Reverend George Nunnerley, Violet and Cyril Chiveralls and my Step-mother Linda Chiveralls (nee Gordon), all of whom I wish could still be here.

And for Flame, my Grandma Muriel Nunnerley, my adopted Nanna Joan Seddon and her partner Mike O'Keeffe, my Dad's new wife Judy Barnes, and Kyla Williams all of whom, to our great relief, are still here.

## **DECLARATION**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

SIGNED:

DATE:

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the labour of my supervisors without whom I simply could not have completed this project. To Associate Professor John Spoehr who was gracious enough to provide me with this opportunity, I thank you for your faith in my ability and your unwavering encouragement and support. To Dr. Adrian Peace, who has been my mentor throughout my academic career, I gratefully acknowledge your input into this work and thank you for your kindness and support throughout my student life. To Dr. Ray Broomhill, who unwittingly inspired much of my undergraduate work, I thank you for your advice and for being such an inspirational scholar. I would also like to thank Dr. Lou Wilson for his input into this project, and for the kindness and generosity he has shown in the time we have been colleagues.

I was very lucky to complete this thesis at the Australian Institute for Social Research with the Departments of Anthropology and Gender Work and Social Inquiry, surrounded by so many inspirational academics and colleagues who make the world a better place every day by virtue of their work. I thank each and every one of you.

I would like to thank the City of Playford Council for their support of this project, along with each and every person from the City of Playford who volunteered their time to assist me with my research. Whether through contributions to the surveys and focus groups, allowing me to participate in council or other community forums, or just sparing me the time for a chat, this research could not have been produced without you. I can only hope the debt has been partially repaid through the production of this work.

I would like to thank my family for always being there for me and for supporting me in achieving my goals no matter how long they may seem to take.

I would also like to thank all of my friends who have been incredibly patient with me throughout this process and helped to keep me sane, especially Amy Buxton, Kyla Williams, Yasmin Hall, Vairi Melberz-Rozitsz, Bradley Lange and Zeke van Kalker. I would like to thank Wojciech Kwasniewski for his patience and support through some difficult times and for the laughter we shared during happier times. I would also like to thank Michael Kazantzis, Stuart Gunn, Chris Vinall and Tim Finney, as without their friendship and assistance I may never have reached this point in my career.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of social capital in Australian regional development. It does so through a case study of one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged regions in Australia, the City of Playford, (perhaps best known as the former City of Elizabeth and home of South Australian Manufacturing). The approach taken involves an examination of the historical roots, more recent academic and political debates, along with the structural political and economic conditions which have inspired the rise of social capital. This is accompanied by an exploration of the application and implications of the social capital approach to development in the City of Playford. Recent years have seen an explosion of interest in social capital theory. Of particular interest to policy makers has been the suggestion that there is a link between social capital and economic development. This argument has lent support to the idea that inequality in regional economic development can be tackled by building social capital in disadvantaged regions. In this thesis I take a critical approach to both the concept ‘social capital’ and the link between social capital and economic development. I suggest that the popularity of social capital may be due more to the political and academic environment in which the concept was spawned, than its ability to address issues of inequality in regional development. The results of the case study in the City of Playford highlight the continuing importance of issues of class and structural inequality in Australian regional development. I argue that contemporary applications of social capital in regional development are not only unable to adequately address such issues, but may also be contributing to their exacerbation. Having drawn attention to the inherently problematic nature of the concept, I then discuss the implications of the research findings for the future of social capital in both policy and social theory.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>1 Introduction: De-Politicising Development?</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Contents.....	2
1.3 Conclusion.....	15
<b>2 Exploring Social Capital: The Birth of the Missing Link</b> .....	<b>16</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	16
2.2 Forging the ‘Missing Link’: The Birth of Social Capital.....	17
2.3 The Weakest Link? Missing Links Remain .....	34
2.4 The Missing Link Endures: Social Capital as Social Science Fiction Cult .....	41
2.5 Conclusion.....	56
<b>3 Politicising Social Capital: The Journey from Theory to Policy</b> .....	<b>59</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	59
3.2 An Anti-politics Machine: Trojan Horse or Third Way Weasel? .....	60
3.3 Localising Development: The ‘New’ Economy, the ‘New’ Regionalism and ‘Urban Entrepreneurialism’ .....	75
3.4 Contextualising Social Capital: Social Capital in Australian Regional Development .....	94
3.5 Conclusion.....	105
<b>4 Studying Social Capital: Towards an Anthropological Political Economy</b> .....	<b>107</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	107
4.2 The ARC and Me: Situating the ARC Project within the Thesis.....	108
4.3 The Anthropological Attitude: An Antidote to Social Capital?.....	118
4.4 An Anthropological Political Economy: Restoring Class in Regional Development Discourse .....	123
4.5 Conclusion.....	128

<b>5</b>	<b>Locating Social Capital: Social Capital in the City of Playford.....</b>	<b>130</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	130
5.2	A Tale of Two Cities: From the City of Elizabeth to the City of Playford.....	131
5.3	Social Capital, Governance and Partnerships in Playford: Collaboration or Competition?.....	149
5.4	Industrial Diversification: The Knowledge Economy, Social Capital and Class	158
5.5	Social Diversification: Urban Regeneration, Social Capital and Social Mix .....	167
5.6	Conclusion.....	175
<b>6</b>	<b>Playford Proud: Social Capital and Social Diversification.....</b>	<b>177</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	177
6.2	‘It’s the Little Things’: Defining Community through Social Capital.....	178
6.3	The ‘Wrong’ Kind of Social Capital? Class, Social Solidarity and Social Distance .....	194
6.4	Bridging the Distance? Building Social Capital through Social Mix .....	220
6.5	Conclusion.....	238
<b>7</b>	<b>Playford as a Dual City? Social Capital and Industrial Diversification.....</b>	<b>240</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	240
7.2	From ‘Rustbelt’ to ‘Smartville’: The City of Playford as the New Silicon Valley? .....	241
7.3	‘There’s No Trust Here’: Exclusion from the Knowledge Economy and the Rise of the Informal Economy .....	263
7.4	‘Investing in Inequality’: A Dual City with Dual Economies?.....	279
7.5	Conclusion.....	287
<b>8</b>	<b>Conclusion: Re-Politicising Development .....</b>	<b>290</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	290
8.2	Theoretical Issues.....	291
8.3	Methodological Issues.....	295
8.4	Policy Issues.....	298
8.5	Conclusion.....	304
<b>9</b>	<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>306</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1- Map of Northern Adelaide Region.....	137
Figure 2 – Map of City of Playford .....	139
Figure 3 – Map of City of Playford: SEIFA Index .....	145
Figure 4 – Map of Playford Alive Masterplan.....	169
Figure 5 – Location of Social Capital Survey Respondents .....	260

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)
- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- AISR (Australian Institute for Social Research)
- ALP (Australian Labor Party)
- AMDC (Advanced Manufacturing Design Centre)
- APAI (Australian Post-Graduate Award Industry)
- APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation)
- ARC (Australian Research Council)
- BEC (Business Enterprise Centre)
- CBD (Central Business District)
- CEL (Creating Employment Links)
- CGC (Commonwealth Grants Commission)
- CSHA (Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement)
- DHS (Department of Human Services)
- DSTO (Defence, Science and Technology Organisation)
- DTED (Department of Trade and Economic Development)
- DVD (Digital Video Disc)
- ETM (Elaborately Transformed Manufacturer)
- GDP (Gross Domestic Product)
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems)
- GM/H (General Motors Holden)
- HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme)
- IT (Information Technology)

IMF (International Monetary Fund)

KNWS (Keynesian National Welfare State)

LA21 (Local Agenda 21)

LETS (Local Exchange Trading System)

LGA (Local Government Area)

LMC (Land Management Corporation)

MFP (Multi-Function Polis)

MP (Minister of Parliament)

NADB (Northern Adelaide Development Board)

NAEDA (Northern Adelaide Economic Development Alliance)

NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement)

NASIS (Northern Adelaide Social Inclusion Survey)

NIEIR (National Institute of Economic and Industry Research)

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

QUANGOS (Quasi-Autonomous Non-Government Organisations)

RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force)

SABV (South Australian Business Vision)

SAHT (South Australian Housing Trust)

SASP (South Australian Strategic Plan)

SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Areas)

SES (Socio-Economic Status)

SME (Small to Medium Sized Enterprises)

SOCAT (Social Capital Assessment Tool)

SPNR (Schumpeterian Post-National Regime)

SPSS (Statistic Package for the Social Sciences)

UK (United Kingdom)

UN (United Nations)

US/A (United States of America)

WRE (Weapons Research Establishment)

WTO (World Trade Organisation)