



Inner City Connectedness: Literature Review

**Connectedness in Auckland's Inner-City
Research Project**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of inner city connectedness can be addressed from a range of perspectives. It may be seen from a physical infrastructure perspective which seeks to effectively connect the central city to the suburban areas and the larger city region through networks of highways, railroads, and public transport systems. From an economic development perspective inner city connectedness may be constructed in terms of how the various businesses in the city's economic system work to bring about better-informed decision-making processes that more effectively engage the private sector and rally support to help shape the dynamics of inner city economies. Inner city connectedness from an environmental perspective may be examined by mapping the networks of parks, public spaces, leisure and recreation facilities available to inner city residents, workers and visitors, and which create opportunities for social connectedness. From a social connections perspective, inner city connectedness may refer to the ways in which inner city residents, workers and visitors engage with each other and create networks of support that enhance positive experiences and access to services for residents, workers and visitors. These networks may be facilitated by individuals, community not-for-profit organisations, or public officials, or a combination of these.

These various forms of connection are not necessarily exclusive, and often work together to bring about similar outcomes for the inner city; that is to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of those who live, work and visit in the inner city.

This particular study focuses on the concept of social connectedness in Auckland's inner city. This literature review represents the first part of the report commissioned by Parnell Trust on the experience of social connectedness for Auckland's inner city residents.

The study has four key objectives:

- to critically examine the concept of social connectedness, belonging and community in the inner-city of urban areas;
- to investigate the ways that Auckland inner-city residents experience social connectedness;
- to identify some of the key factors that impact on community connectedness; and
- to establish some of the indicators and consequences of social connectedness.

The literature review explores previous published studies that examine the concept of social connectedness, the outcomes from social connectedness, how social connectedness is perceived and facilitated for residents in inner city environments, and what is understood in this regard in the Auckland inner city context.

This document should be read as work in progress, which will undergo on-going review and will be updated and incorporated with data obtained from analysis of field research.

Ethics approval for the study has been granted by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee [AUTECH], Approval Number 11/62. AUTECH is accredited to the New Zealand Health Research Council.

The review is structured to present ideas and concepts relating to social connectedness in the broadest sense, a range of views on social connectedness, what it achieves, and how it can be fostered. It thereafter considers how social connectedness is perceived in relation to urban and inner city contexts, and examples of programmes that have been developed to facilitate connectedness for residents in those locations. This review was undertaken to help inform the methodology and methods of data collection for the case study of Auckland's inner city.

The review is organised into three main parts. Part One examines the broader concept of social connectedness, and then looks specifically at the relationship between social connectedness and health, inner city youth, and civic engagement. Part Two examines

the challenges of developing social connectedness in urban areas where there is growing geographical and social polarization between the rich and the poor sections of society. We conclude this part by providing a brief review of emerging research in the development of inner city apartment living, which is the primary focus of this study. Part Three focuses on studies conducted on the growth, development and quality of living environment in Auckland's inner city apartments. It begins with a brief overview of the concept of social connectedness in New Zealand context, and then examines some of the factors underpinning the growth of apartment living in Auckland. We have not found any studies specifically on social connectedness in New Zealand's inner cities. This will be the focus of our investigation in the field study.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Extant literature relates social connectedness to social integration at the broadest level, including social networks, social support and belonging, and the development of social capital. Much of the contemporary research in this area derives from Robert Putnam's book *Making Democracy Work* (Putnam, 1994) and subsequent studies such as *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000).

Putnam's thesis is that connectedness is central to the development of social capital which he defines as 'features of social life - networks, norms and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (Putnam, 1995b, p.664). Social capital is associated with collaborative efforts, collective action, cooperation and joint action. In this context connectedness is presented as the relationships that people and organisations form with each other which feed civic elements of their existence; that is their 'connection with one another and with the life of their community' (Putnam, 1995b, p.665).

Putnam explains his argument for connectedness in terms of neighbourhood or local interaction and cooperation. He illustrates this point with reference to David Hume's (1711-1776) account of the predicament of farmers who, while aware of the benefit of cooperating in harvest, distrusted each other too much to do so (Putnam, 1995a, p.61). Putnam argues that it is important to get beyond the potential barriers including those of social status, age, attitudes and social structures in order to create norms, networks and trust that can link separate sectors in the community and span underlying social cleavages. This, he argues, will enable enhanced cooperation and is likely to serve broader community interests (Putnam, 1995b, p.665).

Social networks are fundamental to how Putnam presents connectedness. Social networks could be defined as specific sets of linkages among groups of people. The characteristics of these linkages may be used to understand the relationship that individuals have with each other and their environment, their engagement with civic

institutions and even their help-seeking behaviours. Networks could be viewed like diagrammatic communications circuits, indicating how people are in touch with each other. It must be understood, however, that what is behind those relationships is often more complicated, and that the interactional and morphological characteristics of networks must be distinguished (Cohen & Sokolovsky, 1978, p.548).

Social connections and networks are important avenues for individual's and groups' sense of belonging. Developing a sense of belonging relates to the relationships that individuals develop with each other, with and within their communities, and the physical as well as the social environment (Hill, 2006, p.210; Hill, 2009); and becomes internalised by individuals depending on their perception of the success of those relationships. Maslow (1970) demonstrated that belonging is an essential human characteristic and need. Belonging is, from Maslow's perspective, achieved through a series of interactions that are perceived as pleasant and develops through ongoing relationships that have mutual caring and concern (Maslow, 1970). Belonging is considered by most as an important aspect of mental health and social well-being, and integral in the process of relatedness.

Social connectedness is considered to be facilitated by a range of factors including ties to family and friends, organizational membership, involvement in religious and cultural activities, political involvement, and civic engagement. These connections are recognized as being important from birth and right throughout the life course. Research has found that both 'strong ties' and 'weak ties' play important roles in facilitating connectedness. Strong ties are the connections individuals have with family and friends and those that are valued outside of the family, such as family social relationships with other families and community institutions (Frumkin, Frank, Jackson 2004). Much literature on social connectedness has focused on these strong ties, but the importance of 'weak ties' is also increasingly being recognized. Weak ties are formed through less explicit or intentional relationship links, and are considered to enable individuals to reach beyond immediate family and close friends to those outside one's own social

circle. Ensminger, Juon, Lee and Lo (2009) argue that 'such contacts play an important role in the diffusion of information and resources across society, including links to education and employment' (Ensminger et.al., 2009, p.12).

Isolation is often seen as the reverse side of connection. Where social capital, networks, relatedness and belonging are absent, social isolation is more likely to occur. Isolation may be physical or geographic, when people live a long distance from those with whom they wish to be and communicate with. Many circumstances may account for experience or feelings of isolation, including migration, poverty, illness and disability. Isolation can also be psychological, caused by institutional, social or structural factors such as racism, sexism, intolerance, and power struggles. In such cases it becomes difficult for citizens to connect or relate to others and to have their voices heard (Hopkins & Ewing, 2007).

The concept of social connectedness has been associated with many aspects of human development, such as physical and mental health (Boone-Heinonen, 2010; Ensminger et al, 2009; Ginsburg, et al 2010, Leviton, 2000, Stevinson, et al 2006); education (Beck and Malley, 2003); youth development (Adejuwon and Balogun, 2004, Bernat and Resnick, 2006, Halpern, 2005, Johnson, 1997); and even political participation (Johnson, 2011; Timpone, 1998).

2.1 Social Connectedness and Health

A number of studies have made links between social connectedness and health outcomes. Ensminger et.al. (2009), for example, report that people who are isolated or disconnected from others have a higher risk of dying prematurely, while Hill (2009) reported finding direct correlations between connectedness and mental health among American Indians. In research undertaken to understand the high incidence of suicide of among ethnic populations in the United States of America, Hill found that feelings of belonging were an important factor. Hill's findings suggested that a sense of belonging

has a negative association with suicidal ideation and may buffer the development of depressive symptoms (Hill, 2009, p. 65). This was particularly important because of the importance of connectedness to the American Indian worldview (a sense of identity). In American Indian culture, a person is viewed as an extension to, and is integrated with, a family, community, tribe, and the creation/universe. This worldview emphasizes connectedness and recognizes the interdependence and interrelatedness of everything with the creation/universe. Mayer, Frantz, Bruehlman-Senecal, & Dolliver (2009) reported that connectedness to nature increases attention capacity, positive emotions, and ability to reflect on a life problem. This supported Hill's work that the harmony between a person and the environment was an important factor in defining health and illness for the individual and the community among indigenous people, and impacted on their capacity to cope with change (Hill, 2006).

Cohen & Sokolovsky (1978) reported that the presence of a strong 'psychosocial kinship system' comprised of friends, neighbours, and close associates, was the 'crucial factor' in determining the success of programs addressing the needs of schizophrenics (Cohen & Sokolovsky, 1978, p.547). Their study reported a lower rate of diagnosis and rate of re-hospitalization among people with mental illness living within families (Cohen & Sokolovsky, 1978, p.547). Frumkin et. Al summarise findings from a range of studies, and note that:

Research in public health and psychology shows that loneliness leads to depression, and people with strong networks, beginning with immediate family members extending to friends are less likely to be depressed. ...districts with higher social capital had fewer inpatient and outpatient mental health visits, and lower use of alcohol and drug abuse services. Social capital is associated with decreased violent crime, less frequent binge drinking, lower teen birth rates, and more leisure-time-physical activity (Frumkin et. Al 2004, p.170).

The literature that examines the links between social connectedness and health also has specific reference to young people, their health and youth development outcomes generally (Ginsburg, et al 2010, Halpern , 2005)

2.2 Social Connectedness and Inner City Youth

Research into youth development has demonstrated significant health outcomes among young people who experience connectedness. Markham et.al. (2010) undertook a systematic review of research published between 1985 and 2007 and identified eight sub-constructs of connectedness. These included family connectedness, parent-adolescent general communication, parent-adolescent communication about sexual topics, parental monitoring or regulation, peer connectedness, partner connectedness, school connectedness, and community connectedness (Markham, et.al., 2010, p.S24). They found that these constructs had significant influences on adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and connection with significant others, autonomy – the feeling that their individuality is validated, and regulated their behaviour, and protected young people from potentially harmful behaviours, including sexual risk-taking (Markham, et al., 2003). Follow up studies further indicated that connectedness had a positive correlation with reductions in teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Markham, et al., 2010). This supports previous studies which also found that connectedness has positive long-term behavioural change outcomes relating to health-risk behaviours such as substance abuse and violence perpetration (Bernat & Resnick, 2006, p.S11).

Social connectedness is recognized as a central element of developing positive and healthy youth development practices (Adejuwon & Balogun, 2004; Bernat & Resnick, 2006; Ginsburg et.al., 2002; Halpern, 2005; Luthar, Doernberger, & Zigler, 1993; Markham, et.al., 2010; Markham, et.al., 2003). In these cases connectedness is defined as the emotional attachment and commitment a child or young person makes to social

relationships in the family, peer group, school, community, and/or culture. Young people living in the inner-city face various challenges including familial and personal challenges, the quality of schools they attend, environmental challenges, and the communities in which they live. In particular, youth living in areas marked by poverty face the daunting challenges inherent in youth or adolescents while navigating through the obstacles imposed by an often precarious environment. Halpern (2005) described the life experiences of youth living in impoverished neighbourhoods of America's inner cities as follows:

Growing up in the inner-city changes the normative calculus - including the potential costs - of both experimentation and commitment. It increases the cost of curiosity and enthusiasm. It alters the normative balance between day-to-day preoccupations and long-term goals. It gives particular meanings for money, academic success, and standing out... Moreover, in a host of ways, it limits opportunity to exercise growing capacities... many inner city adolescents' lives have been marked by the kinds of relational experiences...unexpected life events, and crises that pull children off the track... inordinate responsibility to care for self and siblings, loss of family members through separation or death, family or community violence, pressure from gangs, contact with police, juvenile justice, and child-welfare authorities (Halpern, 2005, p. 13).

These experiences often lead young persons to question their self identity and mistrust others, and may lead to young people suffering permanent developmental delays or disruptions (Adejuwon and Balogun, 2004). Environmental challenges brought about by neighbourhood-level characteristics combined with personal and family issues may often lead to feelings of distress, hopelessness and disconnection (Bolland, Lian, & Formichella, 2005, p.294). Consequently, the physical, economic, and social environments of neighbourhoods have direct relevance to the attachment people have to their neighbourhoods (Lannoo, 2008).

Youth development literature also reports a range of findings which indicate that youth that experience connectedness are more likely to be actively engaged as members of their households, in their work places, and in their communities, and to be more responsible members of society, gain experience in decision making, interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging (Adejuwon & Balogun, 2004, Ginsburg, 2010). Connected youth are recognized as being self aware; able to reflect on self in relation to others and to discover self by looking outward as well as inward; discuss conflicting values and formulate their own value system; develop feelings of accountability; cultivate a capacity to enjoy life; and participate in activities that enable them to learn self-expression and communicate deeper feelings from within (Riestenberg, 2006). Connected youth are expected to become connected adults who live out fulfilled lives and make positive contributions to their communities and society in general (Lambert, 2004).

Social connectedness – and particularly family connectedness – has been used in health promotion and intervention for women to develop family-focused approaches to healthcare. The disintegration of the family system has been implicated in literature as a risk factor for social problems such as violence and female poverty (Landau, Cole, Tuttle, Clementes, & Stanton, 2000). Health policy planners in the United States, for instance, have attempted to link family systems and family values to social health and community functioning. For example, research into intergenerational family connectedness (indexed through both the number of extended family members with whom one is in regular contact, and knowledge of family history) has made some links between social connectedness and sexual risk-taking in women who are at high risk for STI/HIV infection (Landau et.al., 2000, p.462). These studies argue that family relationships influence behaviour and health in a number of ways, including through knowledge of family heritage, values and themes that are passed across generations through oral tradition.

Consequently, a number of programmes have been developed to promote social connectedness amongst inner city youth. Maunder and Maracle (2005) argued that a connected inner-city builds bridges across generations, social class, ethnicity, gender, and initiated programmes to help create stronger bonds among youth residents (Maunder & Maracle, 2005). They reported on the *Echoes of Inner City Voices* project developed to promote social connectedness among young people within the Winnipeg community. The programme provided mentoring for youth, developed education classes on issues of relevance to inner city youth in transition to adulthood, such as recognizing and developing their talent, employment, and careers. Youth were also mentored on themes of connectedness such as continuity, dignity and opportunity. Other similar projects brought the voices and experiences of street youth to key decision makers in order to ignite change and improve their lives (Maunder & Maracle, 2005). The outcomes for young people included youth becoming much more informed about the different services available in the city, more active participation in the life of the community, and greater opportunities to engage with metropolitan civic leaders and the decision-making structures at the municipal and regional levels.

2.3 Connectedness and Civic Engagement

Social Connectedness within society is considered to be an important precondition for the collective benefit of the community through civic participation and engagement. Putnam demonstrated that this factor was important in research amongst 20 Italian regional governments, where he found that the key factor that differentiated the regions was strong traditions of civic engagement even where communities had identical structures, and regional governance performance. Social connectedness was demonstrated through voter turnout, newspaper readership and membership in community groups such as choral societies, literary circles and sports clubs. Civic engagement was found to be strongest in the region where communities manifested these elements (Putnam, 1995a).

Putnam further noted that strong regional civic engagement comprised of communities where residents were active in community organisations and in their engagement in public issues. He found that where mutual trust, fair acts, obeying of laws, commitments to equality and honesty in community leadership was apparent, regions were observed to value rich networks of organised reciprocity and civic solidarity, civic participation and integrity. By contrast, regions where governance institutions failed were characterized by meager social and cultural associations, with disconnections between community members and civic institutions. In such cases, community members tended to disregard the relevance of engagement in public affairs, and saw this as the domain of 'bosses' and politicians. Consequently, members of the community felt powerless, exploited and unhappy. There was therefore a direct relationship between connectedness and social capital.

Social capital and connectedness have been recognized as preconditions for economic development as well as effective governance. The fostering of sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity (the 'favour bank') nurtures trust, which in turn lubricates social life (Putnam, 1995a). The resulting networks facilitate coordination and communication. They also embody past success at collaboration, and in turn create templates for future collaboration. Social capital is consequently built on by its success. Timpone demonstrated that there was a direct positive correlation between social connectedness and political participation generally, but even more specifically, participation in elections particularly. He stated:

The empirical analysis of social connectedness demonstrates that it is an important element in political behaviour. ... The effect of the direct empirical measure of social connectedness on voter turnout is statistically significant at the .05 level. This supports previous scholars' views that the level of integration into their social milieu is positively related to electoral participation (Timpone, 1998, pp. 64, 68)

Despite this understanding of the value of social connectedness and its importance to building social capital through civic engagement, researchers have expressed concern

that civic engagement has declined in Western countries in recent decades. Putnam noted in 1995 that a number of sources had reported the decline in American membership in voluntary organisations such as PTAs and the Red Cross, in political participation, in group memberships and even in informal socializing and visiting activities (Putnam, 1995b). Such trends were blamed for perceived lower levels of social capital in contemporary American society.

3.0 CONNECTEDNESS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

As noted above, social connectedness is understood as facilitated through weak and strong links, and through informal and formal channels. Social connectedness fits within a number of frameworks for considering 'liveability' and quality of life in particular contexts, and especially in urban contexts. Much of the literature has considered how connectedness is facilitated in city contexts.

City living has become the focus of much research as city inhabitation has grown internationally. UN Habitat (2010) reported that by 2050, 70 percent of the world's population will be located in cities. This proportion will be even higher in developed countries such as New Zealand, where it is expected to be as high as 86 percent (UN Habitat, 2010, p.5). Two major features of urban areas across the world are the crises of identity and social polarization. Social polarization is evidenced by the new physical and social geographies whereby urban space has become a space of contestation between the rich and the poor, and contestation between suburbs and slums. While the suburbs and slums are both located on the fringes of the city, the contest is intensified by the demands for both the poor living in slums and the rich in the suburbs to be physically and economically connected to the city. In developing countries this contest is further characterised by the trade-off of the well-off of the city; between inner neighbourhoods where they work and the peripheral suburbs where they live in social insulation behind 'high walls, fences, and the use of surveillance cameras' (Tiwari, 2009,

p. 561) for reasons of safety. This contest is further accentuated in the process of creating expressways to connect the suburbs of the rich on city peripheries to the city centres, whereby the densely populated slums are cleared thus displacing the slum communities and pushing them to the periphery, juxtaposed against the wealthy suburbs. The contestation between the different spatial geographies of the rich and the poor within major cities illustrates the tensions between the mainstream with the marginalised, and the intricate relationship between physical isolation and disconnection on the one hand, and economic privilege and physical and social connection on the other.

Examination of social connectedness in cities of the developed world indicates that connectedness, identity and social capital need to be analyzed and understood within the context of race and ethnicity. Literature has shown that social and economic marginalization of indigenous peoples in major cities impact on their capacity for social interactions, identity and feelings and experience of connectedness. La Prairie's research into Canadian inner cities, for example, reported that indigenous populations living in the inner cities of Canada were more likely to be least connected to families and communities. They were also more likely to be poorer, less skilled, and less educated than other Canadians; and most likely to be over-represented in correctional institutions and more involved with the criminal justice system (La Prairie, 1995, p.30). Bedolla and Scola (2004) stated that race is fundamental and constitutive to the structure and function of social capital and connectedness in the United States. They argued that studies on social capital have failed to address the structural factors underlying its development and the role of gatekeepers in the process of determining the potential connections people can make. They contended that race was an important factor in terms of who Americans felt comfortable with, and with whom they wanted to spend time. It therefore affects the attachment a person feels to their community and the ways in which they want to act upon that attachment. They further argued that because racial customs and attitudes are intimately related with the development of social connections - the element crucial in the creating and maintaining of social capital - for America

cities where race is a significant issue in defining 'peoplehood', racial understanding provided insights into associational membership and collective activity (Bedolla & Scola, 2004, p.7). Bedolla and Scola therefore postulate that developing an understanding of the influence of race in social connectedness may be a way for marginalized communities to circumvent the limitations created by socio-economic status and become more politically engaged, for the benefit of the city as a whole (Bedolla & Scola, 2004, p.15).

Approaches to understanding and developing social connectedness can be understood in terms of a model of tiers (Caplan & Harvey, 2010). These approaches include the *external tier* which refers to how a city is linked to other external geographies and the influences that come from beyond the boundaries of the town. Such influences may be enshrined in laws and procedures like national policies, rules and regulations or they could be national or regional politics or historical or cultural significance (by reputation). External factors could isolate or connect a city because they could lead to or affect the degree of immigration. Isolation can hamper the transfer and uptake of ideas resulting in economic development and subsequently to economic stagnation.

The second tier refers to what happens in the city itself (*internal tier*) and how different aspects of the city are interlinked; such as what happens in the town that attracts investors and what are the attitudes across population segments of the city. What is the interplay between elected and public officials, between government, business elites, and the rest of the city residents? Viewing a city through internal inter-connectivity brings forward issues around impacts of migration, economic styles, internal relationships and decision-making processes. The key issue here is whether there is a culture of cross-subsidizing or internal solidarity.

The third tier examines the connectedness at the household level. It makes the linkages between household demographics, household economics and participation channels for individuals (*household tier*). Eventually, this level of analysis reveals the way services

can most easily, appropriately and affordably be supplied to city residents (Caplan & Harvey, 2010).

Social connectedness underlies neighbourhood interaction, senses of community and belonging in urban areas. Bean, Kearns and Collians refer to the 'traditional rhythms of community life' which imply regular and spontaneous interaction between community members facilitated by open urban design. They refer, for example, to mutual physical spaces such as porches, front yards and shared courtyards which enable 'neighbourhood interaction and natural surveillance' (Bean, Kearns & Collians, 2008, p.2833). Such built environments enable interactions to occur 'naturally' and non-intrusively between residents in close proximity.

The notion of place making is linked to social connectedness in this respect. Knox discusses place making in terms of people's sense of place of their residential environment, noting that 'people's experience of everyday routines in familiar settings leads reflexively to a pool of shared meanings' (Knox, 2005, p.2). Knox argued, therefore, that urban design needs to foster 'routine encounters and shared experiences'. These would provide opportunities for:

... informal, casual meetings and gossip; friendly bars and pubs and a variety of settings in which to purchase and/or consume food; street markets; a variety of comfortable places to sit, wait and people-watch; a sense of ease with changing seasons; and, above all, a sense of belonging, affection, hospitality, vitality and historical and cultural continuity (Knox, 2005, p.2).

Accessibility is likewise identified as an important factor in fostering inner city connectedness. Bean et. al. argue, for example, the benefits of being able to walk easily within the neighbourhood environment and helping people feel connected with a place. They argue that walking is a highly social activity because it 'allows interaction with strangers, as well as other neighbourhood residents and acquaintances' and provides opportunities for people to interact as they walk together (Bean et. al., 2008, p.2844). They further argue that walking enables people to feel more connected to a physical

location, as a comfortable and safe place to be; '(W)alking places were perceived to be local, safe, aesthetically pleasing and separated from busy traffic. Accordingly, they were vital and social places' (Bean et. al., 2008, p.2845). In their research into walking in Auckland, they found that it appeared that walking 'facilitates deep bonds' with places. Research participants reported that they felt a deeper 'connection' with places that they walked rather than drove through, with some people feeling that walking regularly through particular areas helped them feel that 'it's part of your space' (Bean et. al., 2008, p.2845).

The relationship of urban design to the physical activity of residents has been the focus of attention of public health researchers concerned with the influence of environments on physical activity patterns (Badland, Kearns, Witten & Kearns, 2010). Badland and Schofield noted in their research that 'local streets have been consistently identified as the most common place for engaging in physical activity' (Badland & Schofield, 2005, p.178), and concluded that 'consistent positive correlations existed between physical activity levels and mixed land use, density, and street connectivity' (Badland & Schofield, 2005, p.179). In follow up studies, Badland, Kearns, Witten & Kearns extended their research to investigate how the relationships of people with public open spaces influenced their physical activities patterns (Badland et. al, 2010). They found that 'a positive relationship exists between neighbourhood walkability and physical activity infrastructure availability in public open spaces' (Badland et. al., 2010, p.823). These studies reinforced the importance of people's connectedness with their physical environment in nurturing health and wellbeing, and their ability to connect socially with others.

Increases in the use of transport and communication technologies have been noted as dampening opportunities for social connectedness. Knox argued that the development of communications technology has removed much of the traditional means of communication that fostered social connectivity. He argued that this has affected cities to the point that they have become 'inauthentic and "placeless"' (Knox, 2005, p.4). He

presented the 'slow cities' movement as a means by which communities can rediscover the 'culture of place' of what have become too fast-paced and 'sanitized' city areas. This is based on creating built environments and social patterns which create calmer, less polluted environments and regenerate traditional patterns of interaction and engagement between city residents; something Knox argues remains important to people in the fast-paced world of today.

3.1 Social Connectedness in Inner City High Rise Apartment Living

The distinctive characteristics of the inner city are recognized as having substantial influence over the connectedness of individuals and groups residing there. Inner city living contexts are understood to be characterized mainly by high density dwellings or apartment living. This distinctive physical environment is especially viewed as holding sway over the possibilities for connectedness. Research into apartment living since the 1990s postulate that there are strong links between the architectural design of apartment buildings and social connectedness or social exclusion, the health and well-being of residents (Carroll, et. al. 2011, Henderson-Wilson, 2008; Hopkins & Ewing, 2002, Witten et. al., 2009). This is important considering the rapid increase in high-rise apartment living in major cities of the world in recent decades. The physical environment and how residents perceive and negotiate it has been shown to have an important influence over connectedness and the development of feelings of community and belongingness in inner city contexts.

High-rise apartment living has increased exponentially in recent decades. Henderson-Wilson (2008) reported that in Melbourne, for example, there were approximately one dozen high rise apartment buildings in the CBD at the beginning of the 1990s, but by 2003 there were over 100, a more than a three-fold increase between 1996 and 2000 (Henderson-Wilson, 2008, p.1). Costello (2005) on the other hand reported that in the period 1962-1970, 21 high-rise estates were developed by Victoria state government

within inner Melbourne as part of slum reclamation programme to develop public housing to meet the growing number of families needing state housing. However, these were not necessarily the choicest places to live, as Costello quoted Tibbits who described them as symbolizing 'community fear of social and cultural disharmony', and Stevenson who suggested that they 'produce family breakdown, delinquency and a variety of social problems' (Costello, 2005, p.53).

Notwithstanding, inner city high-rise apartment living continued to grow in many Australian and New Zealand cities. Similar increases were reported in Sydney and Auckland, and even Dublin, Ireland reported 30,000 apartments built between 1994 and 2002, and a further 42,500 between 2002 and 2004 (Hanlon, 2006, p.11).

In many cities ownership of high-rise apartments is mixed, shared between private ownership and/or rented and government housing. There is also a complex mix of residents/occupants ranging from people on limited incomes with complex physical and psychological needs, to multi-million dollar penthouses. Thus while traditionally public high-rise living in Australian cities was associated with social disadvantage and disorder, this perception has shifted considerably as high-rise living has become, and is increasingly promoted as a symbol of affluent living and vital for ensuring cities are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. This is negotiated around the inner city context which is increasingly understood as a centre for consumption and entertainment (Wyly, 2009). This also creates the inner city as a potential site of contestation, where the needs and desires of residents can be contested by those seeking short term entertainment and opportunity in the area.

Henderson-Wilson's PhD study into inner city apartment living 'Living High But Healthy' showed that connectedness was influenced by the nature of apartment dwellers' residence. High-rise residents' sense of connectedness varied according to their tenure, access to natural environment, the design of their units, and the apartment building itself. The study found that those who owned their apartments typically felt a stronger sense of community and in contrast, residents in short term rental tenure felt

less connected to their community and to other residents (Henderson-Wilson, 2006). This relates to Cummings, DiPasquale and Kahn's (2001) research in Philadelphia, which suggested that tenure had an influence over the efforts residents made with their home and in their local communities. This perception was reinforced by local government policies, as they noted that the City of Philadelphia 'has long encouraged home ownership as part of its overall community development strategy' (Cummings et. al., 2001, p.7).

The design of apartments has also been found to be an important factor for residents' feelings and experience of connectedness within their apartment buildings and communities. Henderson-Wilson's study referred to above also reported that connectedness was fostered where apartment complexes were appropriately designed to accommodate resident gatherings and opportunities for residents to entertain. This led to the establishment and nurturing of social networks and the development of strong sense of belonging, social capital and enhanced residents' wellbeing (Henderson-Wilson, 2008, p.9). Other design factors considered to impact on feelings of connectedness and sense of community include the surrounding physical environment of apartment buildings, the building's location within the broader inner city urban fabric, and where residents have opportunities to access open (green or built) spaces and conduct formal gatherings (Gifford, 2007, p.11). Connectedness was by contrast suppressed where apartment building designs did not provide secure communal spaces, and other design features such as visually screened common areas gave the impression of the possibility of crime and perceptions of insecurity within apartment complexes (Gifford, 2007).

Non-physical factors were also found to have important influence on the quality of apartment living and feelings of connectedness of residents. Henderson-Wilson, for example, reported that community newsletters and regular means of communication amongst residents had the potential to enhance information sharing, the development

of friendships and support networks. Henderson-Wilson summarized some of these factors thus:

...social connectedness can be strengthened in inner city high rise developments through community development initiatives such as community and rooftop gardens, cultural events, special interest groups and informal restaurant gatherings... Additionally, community gardens provide residents opportunity to interact with a range of people. These could be introduced in all inner city high-rise housing developments to develop a sense of social connectedness and to create a more socially inclusive urban environment (Henderson-Wilson, 2008, p.10).

Familiarity and friendship was considered by Gifford to be variable amongst apartment dwellers and to be moderated by a range of factors. He reported that proximity tends to be a major determinant in social relationship development amongst apartment dwellers, with residents tending to become familiar and friendly with residents on the same floor but having a more distant relationship with residents on other floors (Gifford, 2007, p9). He also identified other studies which showed where a sense of community was apparent, but had been fostered by connections made outside of the residence; for example where colleagues or schoolmates lived in the same area (Forrest, La Grange & Ngai-Ming, 2002, cited in Gifford, 2007, p.10).

Ethnic differentiation may also impact on feelings and experiences of connectedness in inner city contexts. Increased international migration as well as rural-to-urban migration has made inner cities hubs of new migrant communities. The dynamics of cross-cultural interaction, therefore, has significant implications for the experience of connectedness for inner city residents of diverse ethnic communities.

The general perception is that inner city residents are single people or couples without children rather than families (Hanlon, 2006), and that apartment living may not be suitable for children (Carroll, et. al. 2011). This is because of the perception that high-rise apartments are unsafe for children and limit their possibilities for physical activities and social interaction. Carroll et. al. observed that international studies of high-rise

living from the 1960s to the 1990s reported pathological impacts of high-rise living on children and mothers in particular (Carroll et. al., 2011, p.355). Some of the key factors contributing to these 'pathological impacts' include isolation, loneliness, increased psychological strain and symptoms of psychiatric disorders. Costello, for example, noted that high-rise living was historically considered to be 'anathema to the Australian way of living' and commonly considered unsuitable for families with children (Costello, 2005, p.51). Many developers also tended to focus their apartment market on households without children. However, as city centres have intensified, more families have been attracted to inner city living and the needs of families have become integral to urban planning.

3.2 Developing Social Connectedness in Inner Cities

A range of policy approaches and programmes have been developed to attempt to ameliorate the challenges of social disconnection within inner city contexts. Some of these include urban planning strategies and the development of urban infrastructure.

Physical infrastructures include the development in efficient intra-urban transportation, networks of parks and recreation facilities to improve urban living environments, and the development of urban infrastructure that connects places of employment and inner city living areas. There is the proposition that inner cities that are more efficiently connected by infrastructure tend to offer better opportunities for residents to be more socially connected.

Information and communications technology, for example, has been shown to increase social connectedness within high-rise inner city residential estates (Hopkins & Ewing, 2002). It is generally argued that information and communications technologies have a huge potential to contribute towards reducing isolation and increasing connections between people (Chayko, 2007). Inner city isolation can take various forms, including geographic isolation caused by illness, disability or old age; and may also be caused by

racism, intolerance or power struggles which prevent certain sections of inner city residents from actively engaging with and within their communities. The development of information and communications technologies is considered a viable avenue to improve the social, economic and environmental circumstances of inner city communities and strengthen their capacity to access and engage within their communities and networks.

The *Reach for the Clouds* programme developed in Atherton Garden estate in Melbourne, Australia illustrates how access to information and communications technology can enhance connectedness (Hopkins & Ewing, 2002). Atherton Garden, a high rise residential estate, received on-going negative media publicity because of the high crime rate including drug trade that plagued the community. Atherton Garden's population was predominantly new migrants, many of whom had limited English language skills, were unemployed, and were income support dependent. Many of the Australian born residents were also predominantly low income and dependent on government income support, while some had mental and physical health issues. As a result of long-term unemployment many families were caught up in inter-generational cycle of poverty.

The community was isolated from neighbouring communities which led to lack of resources coming into the community. Because of language barriers, many of Atherton Garden residents retrenched into their own ethnic groups living on the estate which constituted their main social networks; which further inhibited the development of neighbourly ties within the community. Furthermore, fear of violence and robbery and other crimes in the community prevented many people from using common facilities such as stairways, laundries and playgrounds, and attending community events. There was no real sense of an Atherton Garden community. Instead some residents saw themselves as belonging to small, generally ethnically-based communities (Hopkins & Ewing, 2002, pp.90-92).

While there are ongoing arguments as to whether online communities only lead to further social isolation and reduced psychological well-being (Chayko, 2007; Wellman,

2001), the *Reach for the Clouds* project sought to enhance social capital and community well-being by encouraging communication between these disparate groups. The primary focus of the programme was to establish online communities which could then be translated to social connectedness in the real world. It sought to provide computer access and connectivity by training residents on the use of computer hardware and software. The project developers also hoped that through mixing and mingling of residents in the computer-training rooms this could develop into person-to-person relationships that would flow on to longer-term relationships within the estate and beyond.

Having examined the concept of social connectedness in international literature, it is useful to explore how this concept has been used and understood in New Zealand.

4.0 SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS IN NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

In New Zealand connectedness is considered the building block of social capital and a well functioning society. New Zealand's Ministry of Social Development defines social connectedness in the following way:

Social connectedness refers to the relationships people have with others and the benefits these relationships can bring to the individual as well as to society. It includes relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, as well as connections people make through paid work, sport and other leisure activities, or through voluntary work or community service. These relationships and connections can be a source of enjoyment and support. They help people to feel they belong and have a part to play in society. People who feel socially connected also contribute towards building communities and society. They help to create what is sometimes called "social capital", the networks that help society to function effectively (Ministry of Social Development, 2010, p.110).

In seeking to measure social connectedness in New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development has identified six key indicators. These are focused broadly around considering how well people are able to – and do – keep in touch with others; trust others; and feel they belong either through informal connections with others or by carrying out volunteering work. The indicators are presented in the table below:

Indicator	How measured	Findings
Telephone and internet connectedness in the home	2006 Census (respondents general population): Separate measures of access to telephone and internet in home	Generally very high for New Zealand; highest in Wellington and Auckland (approx. 80%).
Contact with family and friends	NZ General Social Survey (respondents over 15 years age): Contact with family and friends who don't live with respondents; perception of whether this is 'about right'	60.1% reported 'about right' for general population; differences between ethnic groups (Maori lowest, Asian highest); Auckland region highest of all regions at 64.6%
Contact between young people and their parents	Youth 2000 and Youth '07 surveys (respondents 12-18 year olds): Questioned whether they have enough time with Mum and/or Dad	57% general population; lower levels specific to Mum and Dad individually. Main reason for not enough reported as parents' work. Most positive reporting from European/Pakeha respondents.
Trust in others	Quality of life survey 2008 (respondents 15 years and over): questioned whether people 'can usually be trusted' or 'can almost always be trusted'	78% responded positively; high compared internationally; ethnic differences with European/Pakeha reporting highest (79%); Asian lowest (71%); regional differences with Manukau lowest levels of trust reported (68%)
Loneliness	Quality of Life survey 2008 (respondents 15 years and over): respondents questioned whether they felt isolated or lonely 'sometimes', 'most of the time' or 'always' during last 12 months	16% general population responded positively including 15% reporting 'sometimes'; some correlation with quality of personal health; ethnic differences with Asians reporting highest level of loneliness (24%); Auckland, Waitakere and Manukau amongst highest general reports (19-20%) along with Hamilton and Tauranga
Voluntary work	NZ General Social Survey 2008 (respondents 15 years and over): question whether done voluntary work for a group or organization in last 4 weeks	33% general population responded positively; significantly different rates ethnically, with Pacific peoples 42%, European 32%, Asian 28%. Regional differences; Auckland, Canterbury 31% compared with South Island (excluding Canterbury) 39%.

Adapted from: Ministry of Social Development (2010).

The above framework is presented as being applicable across all communities and living arrangements in New Zealand. It follows, therefore, that a connected city in New Zealand is understood as one in which 'people enjoy constructive relationships with others in their families, whanau, communities, iwi and workplaces; families and communities support and nurture those in need of care; and people are able to access information and support' (Ministry of Social Development, 2010, p.110). In researching social connectedness in Auckland's inner city, these indicators will provide a useful framework for analysis.

4.1 The Auckland inner city context

Inner city living in Auckland is as old as the history of the city, beginning at the time of the town's formation in the 1840s. The rough scrub-ridden countryside encouraged settlement close to the water front and port in early decades, which led to the development of residential accommodation within what is today's central business district (CBD) area. Spurred by vigorous commercial activity the town grew rapidly, and by 1853 up to 8000 residents were living in the inner city area (Chalmers and Hall, 1989, p.84). While the political and commercial elites created housing in the upper ridges, housing for the ordinary workers was concentrated in the valleys and side-streets off the main commercial area. The inner city in the early period of the city's development was at times crowded, inconvenient and even precarious, but the location nevertheless continued to be important for housing even as the town spread and joined up with suburbs over the following decades. Over time, however, influences of predominant cultural thinking which idealized housing on what became known as the 'quarter acre dream' led many early residents to seek more permanent housing in suburban areas (Friesen, 2009), and housing in Auckland's inner city tended to be perceived as transitional rather than long-term.

Despite the long history of inner city housing, the contemporary context for living in Auckland's inner city/CBD became established only since the mid-1990s. Prior to the 1990s Auckland's inner city was dominated by commercial buildings which flourished following the property boom in the 1980s (Murphy, Friesen & Kearns, 1999). The inner city came to be perceived primarily as a place of business and enterprise rather than a location for housing, and declines in the residential populations in the inner city were welcomed as a positive contribution to 'the reorientation of central city retailing towards the tourist and day-time inhabitants' (Chalmers and Hall, 1989, p.88). However, a combination of forces in the late 1980s contributed to shifts in focus on developing the inner city and the reinvention of housing in the inner city. Some of these forces included the 1987 economic crisis triggered by the share market crash which led to a slump in commercial activity and property leasing, the liberalization of building codes and of planning practices in the late 1980s, a regional growth strategy that favoured residential intensification, and changes in international migration policy, which boosted migration from non-traditional areas such as Asia, and particularly from China (Friesen, 2009). The share market crash created a surplus of commercial space and old office buildings that could be inexpensively converted into residential apartments. Increased immigration to New Zealand and the subsequent settlement of most of these new immigrants in Auckland created further demand for apartment living, as this was a familiar lifestyle for many immigrants coming from countries such as China, Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong.

Another factor that encouraged the re-establishment of inner city living was housing affordability. Carroll, Witten and Kearns argued that when the prices of average houses skyrocketed and 'the median house price 6.9 times the median annual household income' this contributed significantly to poorer families moving into cheaper apartments in Auckland's central business district (Carroll, Witten & Kearns, 2011, p.357). Morrison and Morgan further contended that the growth of inner city living was directly encouraged by municipal authorities as a means to 'decrease commuting time, [create] a more vibrant street life, increase demand for local retail services and denser

labour market for office staff' (Morrison & Morgan, 1999, p.378). This was supported by Costello who argued that in the case of Melbourne:

High-density residential housing has also become a legitimised response to concerns about increasing suburban sprawl. As such, high-rise housing fits neatly into urban consolidation models and is now considered to be integral to the production of economically sustainable cities (Costello, 2005, p.50).

Furthermore, the development of high-value inner city apartment especially in the Viaduct Harbour and other choice water front areas in the mid-1990s to the 2000s could be considered as the spill over from gentrification of the inner suburbs such as Ponsonby, Grey Lynn, Freemans Bay and Mt Eden in Auckland, albeit encouraged by other forces such as the development of the Viaduct harbour in preparation for the Americans Cup Yacht race in 2003.

These combinations of factors helped inner city high-density living housing to break through the stigma of the 1960s and 1970s when it was considered a den of the urban poor.

Once re-established, the growth of Auckland's inner city housing was exponential, resulting in 92 percent increase in the resident population in Auckland's CBD from 1991 to 2006 (Murphy, 2008). During the same period 16,000 apartments were constructed in Auckland's CBD as inner city apartment living expanded rapidly.

The demand for inner city living was further boosted by the growth of Auckland, and New Zealand generally, as a centre for international students. Friesen noted that one of the factors driving demand for apartments in Auckland's inner city was the growth of international education in New Zealand. The development of international education from the mid-1990s as a major export earner for New Zealand made Auckland a major host for a substantial proportion of international students. In 2007, for example, over 49,400 international students were registered as living and studying in Auckland (Collins, 2010, p.942). According to Friesen,

Many international students chose Auckland as a destination because of its size and diverse population, and the CBD was particularly attractive because it is the location of two largest tertiary institutions and the location of many English language schools and private Training Establishments [PTEs] (Friesen, 2009, p.67).

Collins further argued that Auckland's inner city was a popular choice for international students because it is close to the two main universities in Auckland which are located in the inner city. Moreover,

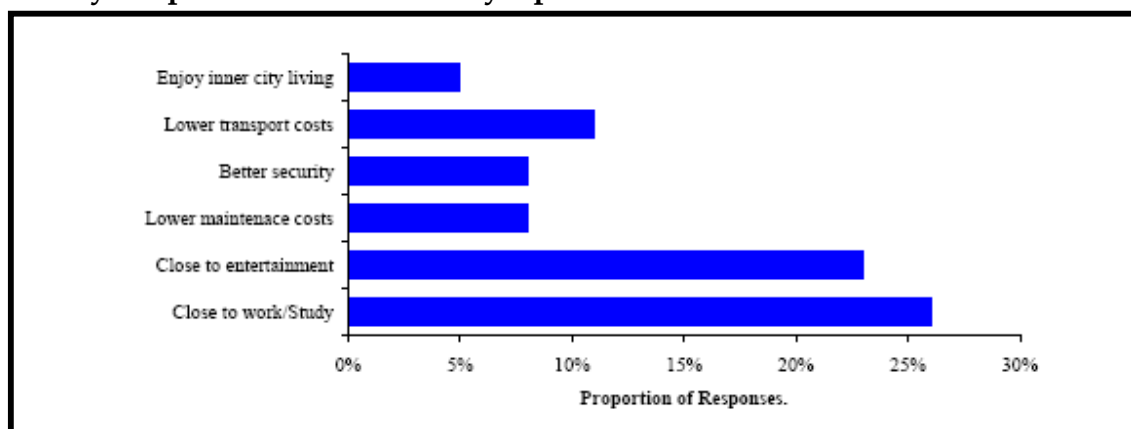
... the concentration of low-cost newly-built apartment developments in the CBD; and the provision of socio-cultural resources ... as well as the more general availability of entertainment amenities. Many students living in suburban accommodation found distance a significant barrier to their everyday lives and transport a cost that motivated them to choose to live within the CBD. ... particularly female students, also often noted that they felt more vulnerable in suburban areas of Auckland because of its relative 'emptiness' and the lack of street-lighting at night. There was also a perception that suburban areas were less friendly towards Asian students and that negative encounters with members of the host population were more common outside the CBD where Asian students are more visible (Collins, 2010, p.945).

The combination of factors such as the internationalization of the inner city living environment, the liberalization of shopping and licensing hours, and the development of a 'café culture' further enhanced the appeal of the inner city as a place to live. These developments led to greater efforts by city authorities to rejuvenate the inner city environment to attract more visitors and residents into the CBD in direct response to competition from sub-urban shopping centres.

Empirical studies that examine residents' reasons for choosing to live in the inner city identified a number of factors including the convenience of living in the Auckland CBD, the sense of security and safety that apartment living afforded, the sense of community

within the apartment building (amenities and common space in the apartment building), a good building manager who took care of the maintenance of the building and enforced the rules, and not having to do maintenance such as mowing lawns (Heslop et. al., 2004). These reasons are presented in the following graph from a study commissioned by Auckland City Council (Auckland City Council, 2003, p3)

Why People want to live in City Apartments



Source: Auckland City Council, 2003, p 3

Within the Auckland inner city there are differentiations in the quality of apartments and apartment living. Murphy noted that the quality of inner city apartments can be identified through geographical differentiation (Murphy, 2008). Much of the heavily concentrated apartments which were developed through the 1990s in the Hobson/Nelson Street areas were smaller in nature and of lower value, whereas the waterfront area contains high value more spacious apartment and townhouse complexes. Friesen associated these higher value constructions more with gentrification of the inner suburbs than with the higher-density apartment complexes in the inner city area (Friesen, 2009).

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Research into the Auckland inner city has not explicitly focused on social connectedness. However, a number of studies examined in this literature review provide some insight into the nature of connectedness and the factors that may enhance or inhibit it. For example, a number of reports from evaluations of the quality of living for inner city residents identified a range of 'liveability' factors. Bennett and Isaacs (2009) used these factors to develop a 'liveability index' for New Zealand apartment living. They created a framework which identifies the following groups of liveability factors:

Quality: design and construction of dwellings to ensure that health and safety of occupants is not at risk;

Indoor environment quality: comfortable and healthy indoor environments - acoustically, thermally and visually;

Governance: maintenance and management of dwellings to ensure they are safe, clean and healthy;

Configuration: privacy and connection to outdoors; space to adequately carry out day-to-day tasks;

Community: location of dwellings in safe, inclusive and well-situated communities; proximity to green spaces, local amenities, work and transport. (Bennett and Isaacs, 2009, p.62)

These liveability factors will be useful in developing an understanding of the environments that enhance a sense of identity and community among apartment residents.

Furthermore, a Building Industry Association (BIA) report (Heslop et al, 2004) investigated how the construction of apartment buildings impacted on the quality of living for the residents. Although the study focused mainly on the physical construction of apartments, it also noted a number of 'liveability' factors affecting residents' sense of community, such as their feelings of safety, security, and accessibility to their apartments, the quality of communal facilities, parking, public transport, and the

quality of outdoor spaces such as balconies. Considering these factors that enhance a sense of community will be useful in developing a framework for analysis of the experience of connectedness among inner city residents. For example, public transport and parking would be particularly significant factors in the experience of connectedness because they have direct implications for residents' feelings of isolation if friends, family and other relations and acquaintances were unable to visit in their apartment homes.

Property management professionals working with inner city residents also identified communal spaces as important facilities for enhancing a sense of community as they enabled residents to socialize with each other and with their visitors. They framed communal spaces as 'an important part of liveability, (in) particular where apartments were small in size', noting that "having some kind of communal/social/activity space outside the apartment can help mitigate the negative aspects of living in small apartments, particularly for first time apartment occupants" (Heslop et. al., 2004, p.41).

Murphy argues that the construction, ownership, management and maintenance of inner city apartments have had significance influence on the living experiences of residents (Murphy, 2008). This supports the findings from Heslop et. al. (2004) referred to above, who identified the role of building managers as critical in creating a sense of community in apartment buildings. Heslop et.al. (2004) argued that good building managers created systems that facilitated residents' comfort and familiarity with their surroundings and that enabled residents' perceptions of connectedness and belonging in their community. In apartment blocks where the building manager could be relied upon to 'ensure the security, good sense of community within the apartment building and the upkeep of the apartment building standards' (Heslop et.al., 2004, p.17) residents were more likely to experience a sense of community.

There is no doubt that residents who feel part of a community are more likely to engage with others in the community to form relationships of trust and develop networks within and outside of their immediate communities. They are also more likely to seek

and access social and community services, engage with local agencies, organisations and civic authorities, and also more effectively participate in decision-making on issues affecting their lives. The field studies for this research will investigate these key themes that have emerged from the literature review.

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