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The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing

Social Infrastructure and Social Prescribing

Dr Sophie Yarker
The University of Manchester





What are the neighborhood and social conditions needed to support social prescribing?

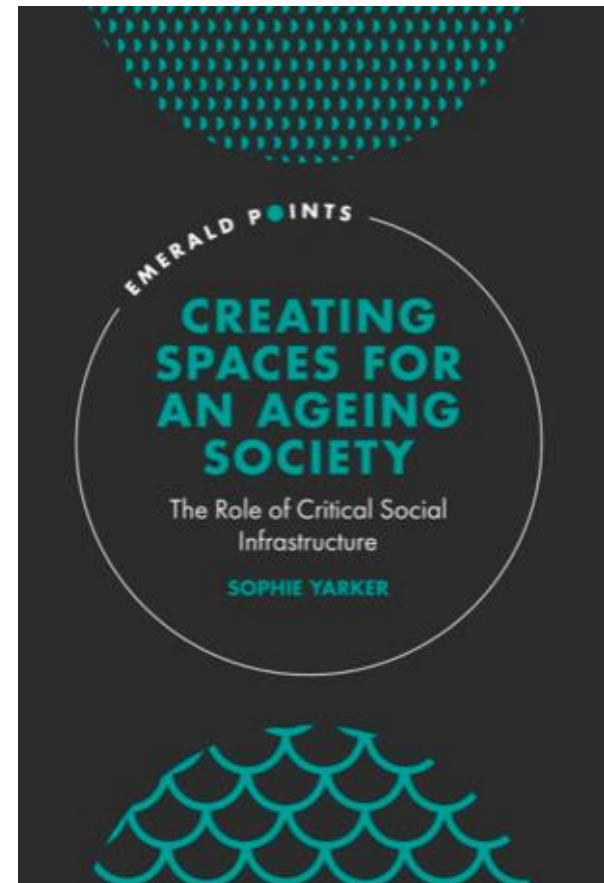


How can an understanding of the role of social infrastructure help us with this?



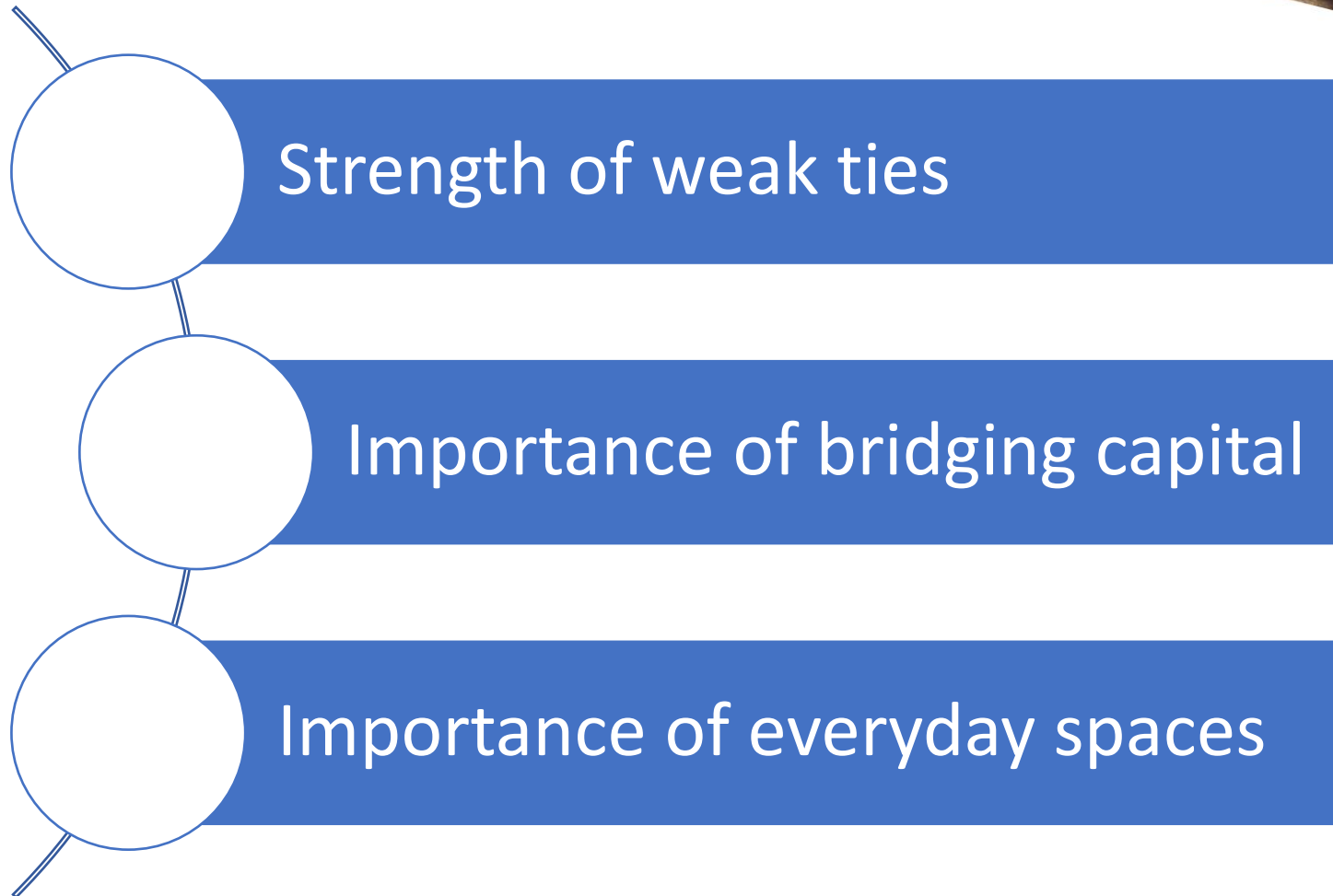
Role of Social Infrastructure

- Social infrastructure, in this book, is defined as the physical spaces and places in a neighbourhood where we have **social interactions and can develop social connections**
- How social infrastructure can support **older people in their communities.**
- Focused mainly on the social connections of older people to support age-friendly places but there is also wider learning here for **community cohesion and development**



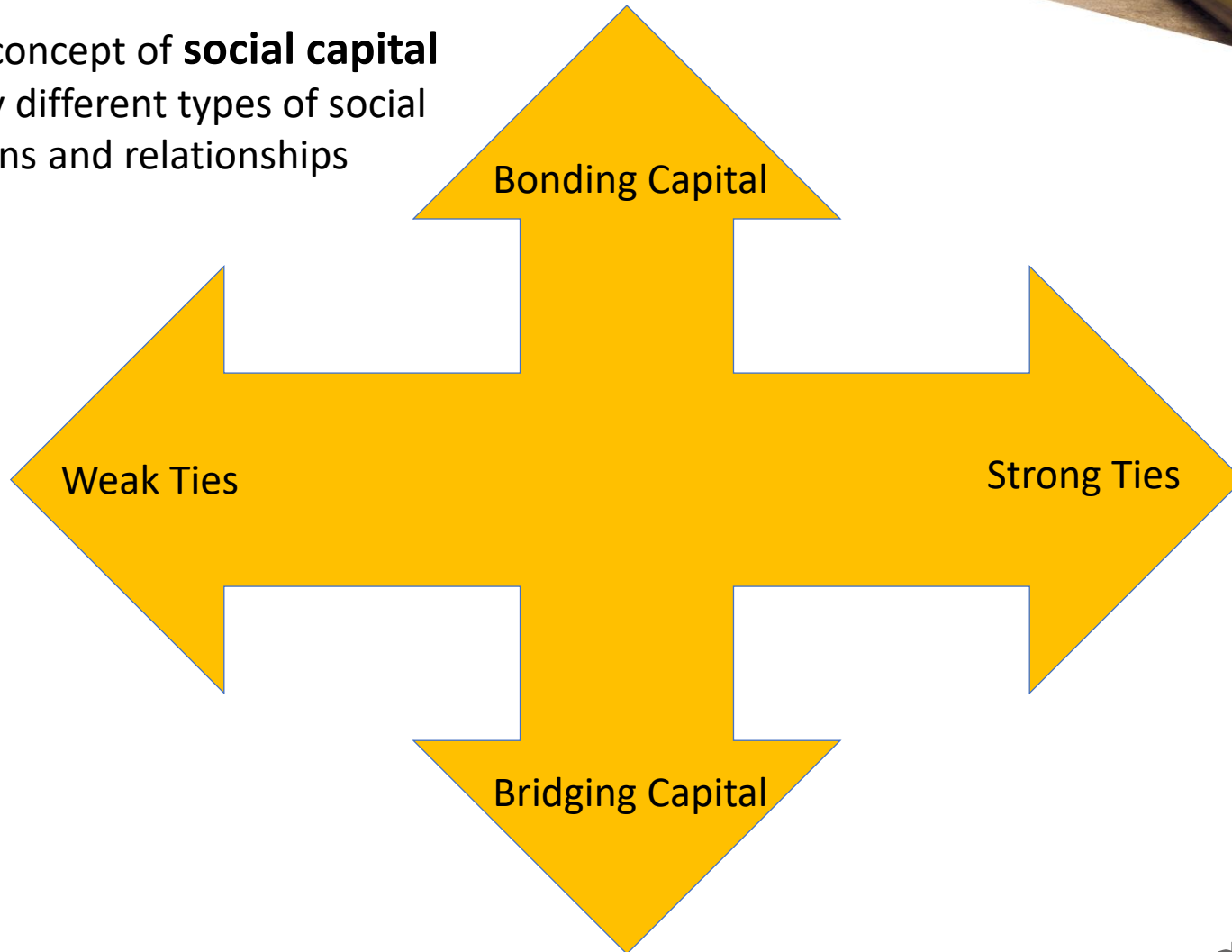


Role of Social Infrastructure



How Social Infrastructure supports Social connections

Uses the concept of **social capital** to identify different types of social connections and relationships



Social Infrastructure and Social Prescribing




Social Prescribing

Formal and informal networks

Social capital

Social interaction

Everyday social infrastructure





Commercial Venues: Cafes & Restaurants

Cheang, M. (2002) 'Older adults' frequent visits to a fast-food restaurant: Nonobligatory social interaction and the significance of place in a 'third place'. *Journal of Aging Studies* 16 303-321.

- Informal interactions with other customers and staff
- Being around others without the expectation or obligation to interact
- Goffman's calls this civil inattention (1963)
- Importance of 'relationships of service'.
- Unassuming and everyday spaces - which can include chain as well as independent venues

Banks and Post Offices

- Still important social spaces.
- 65% of those aged 65 years and older saw the Post Office as very or extremely important to them, ranking it as the second most important community facility after banks, pubs, or community centres (UK Citizens Advice, 2017).
- Important for combating social isolation as well as fraud prevention (Age UK, 2016).
- ‘Passing places’ where people have fleeting interactions
- Inequality of access to these services in the most economically disadvantaged areas.

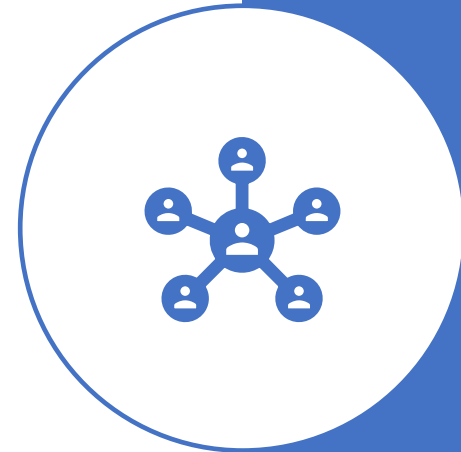
Hairdressers and Barbers

Linnon, L.A., D'Angelo, H., Cherise, MHS., Harrington, C.B. (2014) 'A Literature Synthesis of Health Promotion Research in Salons and Barbershops'. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*. 47 (1) 77-85.

- Social atmosphere
- Unassuming and everyday nature
- Regularity of use
- Trusting relationship developed between clients and staff

Everyday Social Infrastructure

- ✓ All used by a diversity of people on a regular basis
- ✓ All everyday and unassuming spaces
- ✓ All support a range of social interactions – verbal and non-verbal
- ✓ All provide opportunity for weak ties



Social Infrastructure and Social Prescribing

Helps us think about the types of social connections that are important and the spaces where these connections might be developed

Social Prescribing

Formal and informal networks

Social capital

Social interaction

Everyday neighbourhood spaces



Social Infrastructure and Social Prescribing

Bridging social capital is vital for networking silos and creating bridges into other social worlds

Fleeting interactions and weak ties need to be taken as seriously as more involved social interactions and stronger ties

We need an ecosystem of social infrastructure to support different types of social capital – including everyday 'passing' places



Thank you for your time

Sophie.yarker@Manchester.ac.uk

*Creating Spaces for an Ageing Society:
The Role of Critical Social Infrastructure*

