# Scaling Up Connections:
# Everyday Cosmopolitanism, Complexity Theory & Social Capital

**Jenny Onyx, Christina Ho, Melissa Edwards,**
**Nina Burridge, Hilary Yerbury**
**University of Technology, Sydney**

**Abstract**

One of the key questions of contemporary society is how to foster and develop social interactions which will lead to a strong and inclusive society, one which accounts for the diversity inherent in local communities, whether that diversity be based on differences in interest or diversity in language and culture. The purpose of this paper is to examine three concepts which are used in the exploration of social interactions to suggest ways in which the interplay of these concepts might provide a richer understanding of social interactions. The three concepts are everyday cosmopolitanism, complexity theory and social capital. Each provides a partial approach to explanations of social interactions. Through focussing on social networking as a significant example of social interactions, we will demonstrate how the concepts can be linked and this linking brings potential for a clearer understanding of the processes through which this inclusive society may develop.

One of the key questions of contemporary society is how to foster and develop social interactions which will lead to a strong and inclusive society, in short, a rich diverse cosmopolitan community in which people of diverse ethnic and other backgrounds interact and interconnect within the everyday life of the community. While we know that such an ideal cosmopolitan community is possible, and sometimes indeed occurs, we also know that this may be the exception rather than the rule in local communities. The question then becomes, if such a cosmopolitan community is possible, how does it occur? By what processes can we identify the formation of cosmopolitan networks? In order to answer these questions, we need to follow the process that begins with the casual interaction between strangers, the initial interaction between two or more individuals of different ethnic (or other) backgrounds. While many, perhaps most, of these interactions go no further, some may be repeated and extended to include others, thus forming an informal and embryonic network of "others". We argue that sometimes these repeated social interactions are consolidated into wider and deeper relations of trust that form the basis of future collective action.

This paper focuses on the micro processes of localised social interaction that may form the basis of larger, formalised systems of interaction. In order to explicate the basis on which this process occurs, we draw on three theoretical concepts which are used in the exploration of social interactions to suggest ways in which the interplay of these concepts might provide a


ISSN: 1837-5391; http://utsescholarship.lib.uts.edu.au/epress/journals/index.php/mcs
*CCS Journal* is published under the auspices of UTSePress, Sydney, Australia

richer understanding of cosmopolitan formation. The three concepts are everyday cosmopolitanism, complexity theory and social capital. Each provides a partial approach to explanations of the process. We hope to demonstrate how the concepts can each contribute to a greater understanding of the process of a cosmopolitan formation.

**Introducing Everyday Cosmopolitanism**

Cosmopolitanism is understood in a number of different ways. 'Citizen of the world', a phrase whose meaning derives from the word cosmopolitan, has become part of a popular contemporary Western vocabulary. Inherent in this phrase are two strands of thought which underpin contemporary scholarly uses of the term. These are the philosophical or moral strand and the political strand.

The classic conceptualisation of the cosmopolitan argues that an individual's relationship with humanity at large is more important than relationships with others from the same state or nation. Held's cosmopolitanism "recognises each person as an autonomous moral agent entitled to equal dignity and consideration" (Held 2010, p.15). He argues that cosmopolitanism is based on eight principles which he lists as: (i) equal worth and dignity; (ii) active agency: (iii) personal responsibility and accountability; (iv) consent; (v) collective decision-making about public matters through voting procedures; (vi) inclusiveness and subsidiarity; (vii) avoidance of serious harm; and (viii) sustainability (Held 2010, p.69).

A more nuanced approach may come from the notions of thick cosmopolitanism and thin cosmopolitanism which may lead to conceptualisations that are closer to experiences of lived realities, with thick cosmopolitanism existing when all moral claims are justified by showing that they give equal weight to the claims of all and thin cosmopolitanism existing when certain treatments are afforded to all regardless of relationships, but "other kinds of treatment [are given] only to those to whom we are related in certain ways…"(Miller in Held 2010, p. 78).

Appiah recognises the notions of universal concern and respect for difference, but acknowledges that there will be disagreement and conflict from time to time. He uses the notion of the conversation as a metaphor to present an understanding of cosmopolitanism, asserting that "Cosmopolitans suppose that all cultures have enough overlap in their vocabulary of values to begin a conversation," (Appiah 2006, p.57) although this

“[c]onversation doesn’t have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it’s enough that it helps people get used to one another.” (2006, p.85) For Appiah, the starting point for a cross-cultural conversation does not have to be something universal, it just needs to be something the people in the conversation have in common. When we enter into such a conversation with a stranger, this is not a stranger in the abstract but a particular stranger, with whom we may be able to establish a bond of shared identity. The conversation then can become the starting point for understanding things which are not shared. A mark of the cosmopolitan is that they “enjoy” discovering differences and use this “cosmopolitan curiosity” to explore differences and learn from others, or to “simply be intrigued by alternative ways of thinking, feeling and acting” (2006, p.97). They also have the intelligence to look beyond the immediate differences or problem to try to take a broader perspective, seeing that features of their own context may be related to the creation of difference or to the problems of others (2006, p.168).

Beck insists on a break with what he considers the philosophical approach that Held takes. Rather, he envisages a cosmopolitanism which equates with praxis and is closer to a political construct. This cosmopolitanism arises from concrete social realities and recognises difference (Beck and Sznaider, p.386). It causes us to rethink nationalism and globalism, as well as the traditional and the modern. Cosmopolitanism thus is a transformative concept, as it also includes the individual and the local alongside the global. For Beck, the process of "cosmopolitanisation" should be the focus of concern. In his words, this means “the erosion of distinct boundaries dividing markets, states, civilizations, cultures, and not least of all the lifeworlds of different peoples” and it is important that this process takes place in the everyday lives of individuals (Beck 2007).

He contrasts multiculturalism, which he considers, “means that various ethnic groups live side by side within a single state” with cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is about diversity rather than homogenisation but at the same time it is about coming together in social interactions. “To put it metaphorically: the walls between [individuals, groups, communities, political organisations, cultures, and civilisations] must be replaced by bridges. Most importantly of all, such bridges must be erected in human minds, mentalities, and imaginations (the "cosmopolitan vision") (Beck 2007). We will use the terms everyday multiculturalism and everyday cosmopolitanism interchangeably, reflecting the practice of

Noble (2009) and Wise and Velayutham (2009) although the meaning will be closer to Beck's cosmopolitanism.

Within studies of Australian multiculturalism, there has been a marked shift in the last two decades towards the 'everyday' as a focus of research. Scholars of 'everyday multiculturalism' or 'everyday cosmopolitanism' (e.g. Wise and Velayutham 2009, Noble 2009, Butcher and Harris 2010) have turned their attention to the grassroots, ordinary interactions that occur between people in their daily lives, focusing on social sites such as neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and the like. These interactions, it is argued, represent a lived cosmopolitanism, which sees individuals of different cultures routinely negotiating across difference in order to coexist within a shared social space.

In contrast to the multiculturalism of government policy, informed by older liberal notions of identity politics and group rights, at the everyday level, this literature argues, interactions are much more fluid and pragmatic. While official multiculturalism defines people by their (singular) ethnic identity, in practice, people's identities are multi-layered, and in many cases, ethnic background may be much less important than one's status as a young person, a parent, a local resident, or any number of other identifiers.

The idea of everyday cosmopolitanism also departs from classical notions of cosmopolitanism as a universalistic vision for a transnational republican order, or a moral universalism (Delanty 2006, pp. 27-28), but rather sees cosmopolitanism as situated in the social world, in the everyday processes that make up social life. Delanty emphasises that contemporary cosmopolitanism must be post-universal, shaped by numerous particularisms rather than one underlying set of values (2009, p. 9).

Everyday cosmopolitanism is expressed in moments of interaction across difference, for example, when neighbours exchange home-grown vegetables and recipes (Wise 2009, Hiebert 2002) or gather for driveway discussions (Gow 2005), when school children swap lunches and gifts (Noble 2009), or when women shop and eat together and exchange cooking advice (Duruz 2009). As Semi et al. (2009, p. 69) write, focusing on everyday micro-practices enables researchers to 'resist the temptation to reify actions, relations and categories'. In all of these everyday examples, cultural difference is accepted as normal and unremarkable. Exchanges of goods, information and care create 'micro-moral economies'

(Wise 2009, p. 26) that bring people together, to enable the 'recognition or acknowledgement of otherness in situational specificity' (Wise 2009, p. 35).

Some social spaces are particularly conducive to this kind of cross-cultural interaction. Pratt labels them 'contact zones', or spaces where 'peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations' (1992, p. 7). Meanwhile, Amin describes 'micropublics of everyday social contact and encounter' (2002, p. 959), places such as workplaces, schools, and sports clubs, where people are thrown together and required to engage with each other and work together in a common activity, in the process enabling 'unnoticeable cultural questioning or transgression' (2002, p. 969).

Critics of the everyday cosmopolitanism approach argue that beneath the celebratory descriptions of these spaces for cross-cultural encounter, there is little about the actual *processes* of how cosmopolitanism is being achieved (Valentine 2008, p. 324). Valentine warns of the danger of romanticising everyday encounters, arguing that not every encounter across cultural difference can be counted as 'meaningful contact', or contact that 'actually changes values and translates beyond the specifics of the individual moment into a more general positive respect for – rather than merely tolerance of – others' (Valentine 2008, p. 325). She argues that norms of civility do not necessarily translate into genuine respect for the other, or necessarily lead to more meaningful exchange. Crucially, she asks how the benefits of such encounters can be 'scaled up' beyond the moment (2008, p. 332).

Researchers of everyday cosmopolitanism therefore need a way of examining the conditions under which everyday encounters may be 'scaled up' into something stronger or longer-lasting. This means paying close attention to the processes at work when everyday encounters do coalesce into something more permanent, for example, friendship networks or activist associations. Obviously, most everyday encounters remain at the level of relatively superficial interactions, and it would be absurd to expect all of these to consolidate into a cohesive or purposive structure. However, to the extent that such structures can sometimes enable people to achieve their goals, it is important to understand how they are formed.

Anderson (2004, p. 21) describes the growth of 'neutral social settings' in cities, 'which no one group expressly owns but all are encouraged to share', whether they are markets, parks, malls or hospital waiting rooms. These spaces provide a 'cosmopolitan canopy' where people

are enabled to relax their guard and interact across cultural difference. Race and ethnicity are 'salient but understated' (2004, p. 18). Anderson suggests that repeated exposure to the unfamiliar provides people the opportunity to 'stretch themselves mentally, emotionally, and socially' (2004, p. 29) and anticipates that the model of civility planted in these settings 'may well have a chance to sprout elsewhere in the city' (2004, p. 29).

Other scholars emphasise the important role played by key individuals in bringing people together. Wise (2009, p. 24) describes 'transversal enablers', or local personalities who 'go out of their way to create connections between culturally different residents in their local area', often through exchanges of gifts and knowledge to produce relationships of care and trust. Meanwhile, Noble discusses the 'labour of community' (2009, p. 53), emphasising that producing connection between people is hard work, done by individuals with high levels of 'bridging capital' or 'network capital' (Noble 2009, p. 55). In other words, these are people with knowledge of more than one social group, and are adept at facilitating connection and collaboration.

In spite of these glimpses into the processes of everyday cosmopolitanism, there has been little or no attempt to theorise how everyday cosmopolitanism is achieved in overall terms. This is where complexity theory becomes useful.

**Introducing Complexity Theory**

We have identified that "everyday cosmopolitanism" concerns the pragmatic everyday negotiation across ethnic and other boundaries by individuals. At this point, no larger collective or social project is intended, nor would we talk about social networks. In order to understand how social networks may form, we turn to complexity theory. This theory can help explain how small, seemingly random, events can coalesce into emergent patterns without a central controller. When talking about human action this refers to the emergence of new networks and collective action formed from the myriad interpersonal encounters independent of any external authority.

When applied to cosmopolitanism, complexity theory provides us with a starting point to trace connections between individuals within a social space, through a process based view of understanding everyday interactions. When analysing the social system, Cilliers (1998)

focuses on the need to examine the connectedness or dynamic flows between systems. A "connectionist approach" is where the important characteristics are "distributedness, self-organisation and the operation of local information without central control" (Cilliers 1998, p. 141). Through a connectionist approach the aim is to understand how 'lived experiences' within micro communities build or destroy civility, rather than to derive grand sociological narratives regarding cosmopolitanism. Griffin *et al* (1998) argue that the most important implications of complexity theory are situated within the manner through which everyday conversations construct the social realities into which people act. A connectionist approach applied to everyday cosmopolitanism turns the focus to the everyday interactions occurring between individuals within a civil space. Yet the principles of complex systems provide insight into how patterns of interactions may scale up into observable system level behaviours (such as the emergence of a collective, neighbourhood centre or temporary community event).

Whilst the application of complexity theory to the social sciences is largely debated, noted theorists Byrne (1998) and Cilliers (1998) agree upon several widely accepted principles for understanding complex social systems, explaining the nature of complex systems. Table 1 (below) summarises these key principles for complex systems. Considering these principles in light of everyday cosmopolitanism maybe useful for understanding how interactions between individuals and groups within particular social settings emerge and under what conditions they translate into other forms of meaningful social action or social change. These features are emergence, non linearity and self-organisation.

**Table 1: Principles for Complex Systems** (Adapted from Gallopin *et al.* 2001, p. 225).

| |
|---|
| *Multiplicity of legitimate perspectives*: Need to take into account multiple stakeholder viewpoints. |
| *Non-linearity*: Relationships are non-linear resulting in a magnitude of effects not being proportional to the magnitude of the causes. |
| *Emergence*: The "whole is more than the sum of its parts…True novelty can emerge from the interaction between the elements of the system". |
| *Self-organisation:* The phenomenon by which interacting components compete to produce large-scale coordinated structures and behaviour. |
| *Multiplicity of scales:* Hierarchic nature in that each element of the system is a sub-system of a smaller-order system, and the system itself is part of a larger 'supra-system'. There may be strong interactions between levels and different rates of change within levels. Implying plurality and uncertainty. |
| *Irreducible uncertainty:* Reflexive social systems are capable of their own observation and analysis becoming part of the activity of the system, but also capable to influence it in certain ways. This may be through purposive, deterministic behaviour, or less predictable chaotic forms. |

One of the key features of complexity theory is emergence (Chiles *et al*. 2004). Emergence enables us to look beyond extant notions such as class, culture and identity, but rather to focus upon interactions between individuals within a given micropublic. Through understanding how and under what conditions patterns of everyday interactions self-organise to build purposive forms of collective action, or cluster to establish more stable organisational forms (such as shared interest groups), emergence explains "how system-level order spontaneously arises from the action and repeated interaction of lower level system components without intervention by a central controller" (Chiles *et al*. 2004, p. 501).

Self-organisation is the principle that explains the capacity of a complex system to change and adapt to its external environment. Such organisation may emerge through bottom-up locally situated interactions. According to Cilliers (1998) "the capacity for self-organisation is a property of complex systems which enables them to develop or change internal structure spontaneously and adaptively in order to cope with, or manipulate, their environment". Applied to everyday cosmopolitanism this principle explains how information exchanged between individuals within micropublics houses the potential for a process of adaptation to the environmental conditions and an adaptive self-organisation structure. Critical feedback loops allow the interacting networks to constantly evolve in response to the changing environment. It is largely because of this fluid capacity for self organisation that what happens between individuals within simple interactions is greater than the sum of the individual interactions. This principle complements the critique of the philosophical or moral cosmopolitanism, reinforcing that proposed by Beck, and provides greater depth to the understanding of everyday cosmopolitanism. We can identify the development of cosmopolitan networks as situated within the everyday process of building, moving and destroying bridges. Individuals constantly reflect, enact and adapt their interactions with others through information and understanding received through feedback loops enforced through conversation, the media...etc.

Yet the sum of the parts cannot predict the whole due to the non-linear system dynamic. Emergence cannot be predicted, nor can self-organisation be predetermined. As Feltz writes, 'its naive formulation is that the whole is more than the sum of its parts' (Feltz, 2006, p. 353) and there are four main variations related to interpretations of 'more than' in the above definition. That constitutive elements are non-additive, that novelty arises out of the interrelations between constituting elements, the patterns of emergence are non-deductible,

and finally that elements evolve in a non-predictable manner. That is, they are non-linear systems (a small divergence in initial conditions leads to significant difference in the evolution of the entire systems, which is evolutionary and unpredictable). Examining the macro-phenomenon cannot give sufficient insight into the emergence phenomenon. But studying locally situated interactions may provide insight into how micro level builds meaningful interactions between individuals and groups within communities. According to Griffin and Stacey:

> it is not possible for committed groups of individuals to intentionally change the widespread patterning of their interaction. All they can change is their own interactions, and from this the widespread patterning will emerge in ways that they cannot intend or fully understand….The aim of the method is, therefore, not one of changing the social 'wholes' but of making sense of the 'live' experience of interaction. As people make sense differently they act differently, and it is this action, in continuing interaction with others, that macro patterns change in emergent ways which cannot be predicted or controlled" (2005, p. 33).

Through examining multiple situated micropublics and the interactions occurring every day we may begin to view some temporary patterns of emergence, or identify some common factors that ignite more purposive action. We can generate propositions regarding how cosmopolitanisation may generate emergent civil societies, rather than reinforce existing patterns of entrenched diversity where 'like' individuals self select into clusters.

Complexity theory, as a bottom-up process based view, sees individuals within communities interrelating with one another rather than starting with macro sociological notions of class and ethnicity. This leads us towards adopting a modified grounded theory approach, because it remains open to the possibility of emergence and, enables us to interpret:

> Human beings as active agents in their lives and their worlds rather than as recipients of larger social forces….that process, not structure, [is] fundamental to human existence; indeed human beings created structures through engaging in processes (Charmaz 2006, p. 7).

Within the context of civil society, our concern is with the coalescing of relationships, between individuals who may be operating as individuals or as members of organisations. This coalescing of relationships creates a fertile milieu out of which may emerge new ideas, formations and intentions for collaborative action. There is an ongoing process from individual agency to creative milieu to emergent network structures and ultimately to formal

adaptive organisational forms. Thus when we apply complexity principles to people living with a common space several new factors come into play. Humans:

- act with intentionality, at least some of the time. Their actions are purposeful.
- act within a social milieu. That is their actions involve others, and are meaningful within that social setting.
- act within a set of supposed common values.

In light of the earlier discussion, complexity theory suggests a number of crucial dynamics that may explain the process of the self-organising emergence of human networks. First, they emerge out of states of disequilibrium, or a tension between disequilibrium and equilibrium in the wider context (Plowman et al, 2007). The early stages of emergence are likely to be marked by conflict, not only between the member agents and some wider social or political issue or event, but also between the member agents themselves. The state of disequilibrium generates a new, creative milieu allowing the emergence of new social formations and the potential to generate innovative solutions to perceived social problems.

Second, this state of disequilibrium draws human agents together. These agents may be individuals, or organisations or both. These agents interact, discuss, and explore options for action. Many consequent actions are small and localised, involving the active initiative of concerned agents. Some of these actions will lead nowhere, but others appear promising, and are communicated to others through positive feedback loops in the embryonic network, which at this stage is little more than a fertile milieu for action. Others hear about the actions and discussions, through word of mouth and/or electronic technologies, and/or media reports. Someone, usually a group, calls a meeting, and a network emerges as various agents share information and agree to further action.

Thus, conflict can be both destructive, but also highly productive in generating new forms of social action. The media (including social media) can be involved in both escalating conflict, but also in bringing people together to find new solutions. One example of this is provided by the 2005 Cronulla riots in Sydney, which saw approximately 5,000 young, largely white Australians gather to ‘take back the beach’, and violently assault anyone perceived to be of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’. The riots marked a low point in Australian multiculturalism, but the subsequent months and years saw numerous community-based responses bringing

people of diverse backgrounds together in joint initiatives. The most prominent of these was the $1 million On the Same Wave program of Surf Lifesaving to encourage young Muslim Australians to become surf lifesavers (SLS 2011). Other initiatives included the Bankstown-based Urban Theatre Projects 'Stories of Love and Hate', a theatre production bringing together youth from the Bankstown and Sutherland areas to create narratives about their experiences of the riots and belonging in multicultural Australia (Sydney Theatre Company 2011). Finally, the Cronulla riots gave rise to a number of school exchange programs between students from the Bankstown and Sutherland areas, who visited each others' schools and learnt about each others' cultures and histories (Reid 2011, Burridge & Chodkiewicz 2010, 2008).

Multiple lines of positive and negative feedback loops (Cilliers 2005, p. 8) are crucial in establishing new modes of operating. That is, through action and interaction people start to develop a collective sense of who they are and how they can cooperate, as well as what actions are not positive and should be avoided. At some stage it is essential that some actions lead to some sort of positive outcome, perhaps partial and temporary, but enough to motivate others. Such results must be communicated to others in the network.

The discussion and forms of actions are volatile and full of uncertainty and potential conflict. Sometimes, conflict may in fact be productive and a source of innovation, for example, when organisations are challenged to become more inclusive towards new constituencies. Surf Lifesaving becoming more mindful of encouraging a culturally diverse membership is one example. However, while disequilibrium may be welcomed and further encouraged, there are also counter forces towards some sort of new equilibrium. Stability within the embryonic network is dependent on the development of 'deep structures' involving shared intrinsic values, and operating principles of the participants. These are attained through the positive and negative feedback loops and held within the dissipated, 'collective memory' (Cilliers 1998) of the emergent network. Normally these will be articulated in terms of a common set of principles or objectives signed off by all participating agents. Thus creative turbulence is contained within an agreed broad set of objectives that are shared.

Complexity theory in human systems gives leadership a central place, but where adaptive leadership is dynamic and "is the product of interaction, tension, and exchange rules governing changes in perceptions and understanding" (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). This

approach to leadership is in marked contrast to the classical organisational model of leadership which emphasises hierarchy and control (Chiles et al. 2004). Such classical views of leadership rest on the assumption "of organisations as equilibrium seeking systems whose futures are knowable and arrived at by leaders who plan interventions and control behaviors" (Plowman et al. 2007, p. 341). By contrast, within complexity theory, leadership should not be viewed as individuals operating in isolation as they influence their followers, or in terms of individual traits. Leadership is seen as an emergent phenomenon that arises from interactions and events (Lichtenstein et al. 2006). A similar approach (Surie & Hazy 2006) argues that, with respect to innovation, generative leaders create conditions that nurture it rather than direct or control it. In a similar manner, some forms of collective entrepreneurship, involve emergent and/ or dispersed leadership in a social context. This is complementary to the 'enablers' identified in the everyday cosmopolitanism literature (Wise 2009).

We argue that the vast majority of civil society networks are formed from below, emergent from the dynamic and creative turmoil which is driven by social disequilibrium and the search for new responses to current issues and problems. Not all networks will become fully fledged and recognised forms. All such emergent networks will go through a period of formation, much of which will be invisible to the outsider, and lack any coherent shape. Other embryonic networks may remain as informal friendship networks or loose connections between residents of a given area. Such loose networks may remain dormant for most of the time, but have the potential to be activated into more formal networks in the event of an emergency, or need for political action in defence of a threatened amenity. How can we theorise the dynamics of formal networks? The next section uses the concept of social capital to address this question.

But first, to recapitulate: complexity thinking can provide a new and deeper perspective on the phenomenon of everyday cosmopolitanism. The latter provides some insight into the banal, frequent everyday interactions between ethnically diverse individuals in various micropublics. These encounters are routine, and cultural difference is seen as normal and unremarkable. However, most of these interactions lead no further than the immediate pragmatic needs of the participants. Sometimes however, these interactions may be repeated and there is at least the potential for a scaling up of the isolated encounter into something more substantial. Complexity thinking suggests how this may occur. However, there is still

something missing. Ongoing social networks are more than random encounters. They are relations of ongoing trust and mutual support, and potentially of collective social action. To understand more about established social networks and how they function, we need to incorporate findings from the social capital literature.

## Introducing Social Capital

Social capital can be seen as the outcome of human complex systems as they emerge and adapt without reference to a central controller. Social capital refers to human networks of interaction by which energy and information is shared. These interactions are non-linear, multiple, dependent on ongoing feedback loops, and develop a shared history which partly shapes ongoing purposeful interactions. Social capital resides within the network as a whole, not within any individual component of it, although individuals may gain benefit from membership in the network. Of central significance for human complex systems is a sense of shared social purpose and common values. Putnam (1993) defined social capital as "those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions". Bourdieu (1985, p. 248) defined the concept as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition". For Bourdieu, social capital was a core strategy in preserving and transmitting the cultural capital of the elite. Because all forms of capital can be converted into other (primarily economic) capital, social capital was simply one way of preserving class advantage. However other theorists, including Coleman and Putnam, see social capital as a resource (often the primary resource) that is open to all groups and communities.

### *Elements of social capital*

As evidenced by the ongoing definitional debates surrounding the concept, it is clear that social capital is itself a complex, multi-dimensional concept. The key aspects of the concept have gradually emerged from the theoretical and empirical analyses. These include:

*Associational density within the community* – this is one of the key indicators of the structural aspect of social capital as commonly measured (Putnam 1993, 2000; Portes 1998). Community based organisations and associations (including economic, social and environmental enterprises) may facilitate effective responses to crisis or change. A critical mass of cooperating organisations can stimulate creative, resource efficient efforts to achieve

common community objectives. While development within and between community-based organisations can lead to instrumental outcomes in terms of completed community projects, participation in these organisations can also build individual and community capacity, thereby contributing to the development of the other capacity indicators discussed here. Associational density is an outcome of the ongoing process of social capital formation. It is the product of deliberate and formalised interactions within community networks formed over time.

*Participation in community life* – this concerns process rather than structure: signs that people are involved in their community. It involves formal membership in community organisations, but also the informal assistance to neighbours and willingness to engage with community action as needed, on an informal basis (Onyx and Bullen 2000).

*Shared norms and values* – not all values need to be shared but a sense of common purpose is a critical factor in catalysing renewal efforts. The very process of coming together to develop community priorities can provide the impetus for sustained collaborative relationships. The identification of priorities also provides goals which, when achieved, provide a point of reflection for celebration and further learning about how to meet other objectives (Leonard & Onyx 2004). Any sustained collaborative network will depend on not only common priorities and goals, but also a set of agreed operating rules or norms for action. These provide a set of rules for how to operate within the network, but they can also provide barriers to outsiders.

*Trust* – involves more than predictability; it entails a level of comfort and positive mutuality in interpersonal relations (Fukuyama 1995; Misztral 1996). Signs of trust in the community include a low crime rate. Communities are rarely homogeneous and the acknowledgement of difference and the way conflict is dealt with can foster or destroy trust.

*Agency* – all the evidence points to the significance of agency or a "can do" attitude in within the social network (Onyx and Bullen 2000a; Johannisson and Olaison 2007; Williams and Guerra 2011). Human interaction is marked by intentionality. It is not enough simply to maintain networks of mutual support. What is also required is that they be mobilised into action, that is, that human complex systems may take the initiative in their own development. Communities that assume control over their own destiny are better able to deal with crises

and natural disasters, as well as their own disadvantage. What is important is resilience, a capacity to act, and to learn from this action.

Social capital is about the connections between people, the rules they agree to follow together and the trust they have for others. If these connections are strong, then the network and the community in which they live and work can achieve much. Collective agency, a "can do" attitude, makes many things possible.

> To the extent that individuals and groups operate within different contexts and arenas, the density of the networks and the bridging links between networks increases. The connections, the networks and the arenas themselves are dynamic, constantly forming, reforming, shifting over time (Onyx and Bullen 2000b, p. 128).

Thus social capital, in its dynamic interpretation, is more about process than structure. Networks are constantly forming and reforming; the process is iterative in that further use may enhance the capacity for trust, reciprocity and social agency. However, social capital theory in itself, while useful, does not explain how these networks come to be formed in the first place. Complexity theory and the concept of emergence are important as they allow us to focus on the micro-level interactions between individuals. But an understanding of how mature networks operate is also important. For this reason, both complexity thinking and social capital are integral to understanding the formation of ongoing cosmopolitan networks in the local community.

**Relationships of Social Capital to everyday cosmopolitanism and complexity theory**

To summarise thus far, everyday cosmopolitanism reflects the ordinary interactions that occur between individuals of different cultures routinely negotiating across difference in order to coexist within a shared social space; complexity theory helps explain the process by which complex self organising networks emerge; while social capital describes the potential impact of mature ongoing networks within human communities. While the three concepts address different phenomena, they are all concerned with the *process* of social interaction as well as the potential result of ongoing interaction. All identify the central role of active agency and personal responsibility. The three concepts also identify the importance of some form of positive feedback loops, that potentially increase (or decrease) the available trust. However, the process of interaction is not a linear one, but is rather one that emerges through negotiation from the perspective of everyday cosmopolitanism and through the iterations that

lead to emergence in complexity theory. The formation of networks is central to each of these concepts.

As outlined above, everyday cosmopolitanism is the normal, everyday, banal interaction of citizens across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Such interactions involves the everyday negotiation between individuals as they go about their business within shopping malls, public transport, schools and leisure centres. They are seen as unremarkable by those engaging in them, and they do not necessarily lead to the formation of ongoing or formalised networks. But they *may* do so under certain circumstances, and indeed the growing literature on everyday cosmopolitanism suggests that they often do generate informal and formal networks. Complexity theory describes how they do so.

There is no general agreement that living in a diverse neighbourhood will lead to tolerance as Allport proposed (1954). Putnam (2007), for example, argued that empirical evidence suggests that diverse communities display lower ethnic tolerance than mono-cultural ones do, that is that linguistic and cultural diversity do not expand cosmopolitanism. Uslaner (2010) found, using trust as an indicator of everyday cosmopolitanism, that trust was lower where people of different ethnicities inhabit the same geographic area but where contact between them is nonetheless limited due to segregated clusters of housing. However, in neighbourhoods that were both culturally diverse and where people did not live in segregated clusters of housing, trust levels were much higher.

There is also no general agreement that taking part in shared activities will lead to the formation of networks. Both Noble (2009) and Wise (2009) describe actual empirical exemplars of early formation of informal networks. The example used by Wise involves the development of shared information and energy between neighbours in Sydney. This emerging network revolved around the sharing of domestic plants and recipes required for the preparation of meals that were Italian, Lebanese and Indian. In this example of everyday cosmopolitanism, we have what started out as a series of simple transactions between individuals. But the transactions were repeated, and expanded to involve other neighbours over time. The emergent network gradually developed a shared history, a set of shared interests (values around food) and a growing sense of trust and mutual participation/ reciprocal assistance.

Thus, the sustained practices of everyday cosmopolitanism may lead to networking and the creation of trust. And the creation of trust may lead a network to organise activities which encourage collaboration for mutual benefit, for example, clearing a local laneway of weeds. It could lead to the creation of a group presence, for example if one neighbour suggests that others involved in everyday interactions join together to attend a local multicultural centre or if someone organises a street festival. At this point, there may be no obvious leadership involved, but clearly there is agency. Leadership may emerge at the next step, which is likely to be the establishment of an associational identity. Although complexity theory provides insight into the process of emergence, and everyday cosmopolitanism is concerned with everyday practices, social capital recognises the importance of associations in the sustainability of social capital within a community.

In highly culturally diverse cities, such as Sydney, there are countless examples of everyday cosmopolitan interactions evolving in a decentralised manner into more or less formalised networks. These networks are likely to coalesce around issues of shared interest or shared concern, not diversity per se. The catalyst for action may be a perceived gap in services within a community, a critical incident that may demand a community response or an institutional policy directive that requires action.

One of many examples is the rise of resident action groups. These groups gained widespread prominence in the city of Sydney in the 1970s when developers unions and residents confronted each other against the backdrop of the city skyline. The issues transcended class and ethnicity, age and gender. One example of local resident action was the No Aircraft Noise campaign in Sydney's inner west. Meanwhile, Sydney's Western suburbs are seeing a proliferation of culturally diverse, self-organised youth artistic networks, particularly those associated with hip hop, film-making and other urban arts (see Vanni 2011). Some of these actions culminated in the Urban Theatre Project mentioned earlier. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the coalescing of various diverse interests and backgrounds can be seen in the formation of the Sydney Alliance (Sydney Alliance 2011), which is itself an alliance of various religious groups, unions, and a variety of people and groups of different ethnic origin.

## Conclusion

In all of these examples, people from diverse cultures have come together to pursue common interests, and in the process, transcending cultural borders and rendering difference

unremarkable. In some cases, social networks have proven more or less durable, and have been productive in enabling individuals to achieve shared goals. In other cases, these networks have become more institutionalised, and have attracted official recognition or support. But understanding the emergence of the networks requires close attention to the processes of interaction between key individuals within specific social settings. In this sense, concepts of everyday cosmopolitanism, complexity theory and social capital can, together, provide a productive framework for analysing these processes of network formation.

This is not to say that all such examples of everyday cosmopolitanism will ultimately lead to prolonged and meaningful social change. Clearly most do not. Most casual interactions remain casual, superficial, instrumental to the specific intentions of those individuals. However, even these casual exchanges are valuable in rendering ethnic diversity unremarkable, and so facilitating social tolerance. But some interactions may lead further to ongoing networks of trust and informal neighbourliness. These networks are also in a sense unremarkable, but together help form an inclusive and productive community. Some networks go still further and develop into more institutionalised, formal groups. Some may become ongoing interest groups, while some may become activist groups with a social change agenda. We are not suggesting such a linear succession occurs, yet we open the question regarding how, when and even does everyday interaction emerge into different forms of social networks.

We have outlined three conceptual frameworks that together may help explain how ethnically diverse citizens may come to form ongoing networks within the community. This framework provides a research agenda. It remains to be established that the casual interactions of "everyday cosmopolitanism" can in fact be taken further to the formation of stable and purposeful networks and ultimately to social change. We do not yet understand the conditions under which this is most likely to happen. We have much in the way of rich descriptions of everyday encounters. Building on this research requires an understanding of when and how these encounters can have a more lasting legacy. We propose that applying complexity theory and theories of social capital can be productive in this endeavour. Together the application of this theoretical frame may assist in specifying how social interactions may lead to a strong, inclusive cosmopolitan society.

## References


Allport, G. 1954, *The Nature of Prejudice,* Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.

Amin, A. 2002, 'Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with diversity', *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 34, no. 6, pp.959-980.

Anderson, E. 2004, 'The cosmopolitan canopy', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences,* vol. 595, no.1, pp. 14-31.

Appiah, K.A, 2006,*Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, W.W. Norton, New York.

Beck U. 2007, 'A new cosmopolitanism is in the air' www.signandsight.com/service/1603.html Accessed 2 May 2011

Beck, U. and Sznaider, N. 2010, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol.61, Supplement s1, pp. 381-403

Benhabib, S. 1992, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Routledge, London.

Bourdieu, P. (1985) 'The social space and the genesis of groups', *Social Science Information*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 195-220.

Burridge, N. and Chodkiewicz, A. 2010, 'Challenges in addressing cultural diversity: Approaches in schools', *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations*, vol 10, no. 3 pp.281-294.

Burridge, N. & Chodkiewicz, A. 2008, *Representations of cultural diversity in school and community settings.* Sydney: University of Technology, Sydney. Available online: http://www.rilc.uts.edu.au/projects/diversity.html

Butcher, M., & Harris, A. 2010, 'Pedestrian crossings: Young people and everyday multiculturalism', *Journal of Intercultural Studies,* vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 449-453.

Byrne, D.S. 1998, *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences,* Routledge, New York.

Charmaz, K. 2006, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.

Chia, R. 1999, 'A rhizomic model of organizational change and transformation: Perspective from a metaphysics of change', *British Journal of Management,* vol.10, pp. 209-227.

Chiles,T. H., Meyer, A.D. and Hench, T.J. 2004, 'Organizational emergence: The origin and transformation of Branson, Missouri's musical theaters', *Organization Science*, vol. 15, no. 5,pp. 499-519.

Cilliers, P. 1998, *Complexity and Postmodernism: Understanding Complex systems,* Routledge, New York.

Cilliers, P. 2005, 'Knowing complex systems', in Richardson, K.A. (ed.), *Managing Organisational Complexity: Philosophy, Theory, Application*, IAP, Connecticut, pp. 7-19.

Cilliers, P. 2002, 'Why we cannot know complex things completely', *Emergence: Complexity and Organization,* vol. 4, nos. 1-2, pp. 77-85.

Coleman, J.S. 2000, 'Social capital in the creation of human capital', in Dasgupta, P. and Serageldin, I. (eds.), *Social Capital: A multifaceted perspective*, The World Bank, Washington DC.

Delanty, G. 2006, 'The cosmopolitan imagination: critical cosmopolitanism and social theory', *The British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 57no.1, pp. 25-47.

Delanty, G. 2009, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination: The Renewal of Critical Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Duruz, J. 2009, 'Eating at the borders: Culinary journeys', in Wise, A. and Velayutham, S. (eds.),*Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 105-121.

Feltz, B. 2006, 'Self-organisation, selection and emergence in the theories of evolution', in Feltz, B., Crommelinck, M. and Goujon, P. (eds.), *Self-Organization and Emergence in Life Sciences,* Springer, Dordrecht, pp.341-360.

Fine, R. 2007, *Cosmopolitanism*, Routledge, London

Fukuyama, F. 1995, *Trust: the Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, Penguin, London.

Gallopín, G.C., Funtowicz, S., O'Connor, M. and Ravetz, J. 2001, 'Science for the twenty-first century: from social contract to the scientific core', *International Journal of Social Science,* no. 168, pp. 219-229.

Gow, G. 2005, 'Rubbing shoulders in the global city: Refugees, citizenship and multicultural alliances in Fairfield, Sydney', *Ethnicities*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 386-405.

Goldstein, J. A., & Hazy, J. K. 2006, 'Editorial introduction to the special issue: From complexity to leadership and back to complexity', *Emergence: Complexity and Organization,* vol.8, no.4, pp. v-vi.

Griffin, D., Shaw, P. and Stacey, R.D. 1998, 'Speaking of complexity in management theory and practice', *Organization*, vol.5, no.3, pp. 315-339.

Griffin, D. and Stacey, R.D. 2005, *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations,* Routledge, New York.

Halpern, D. 2005, *Social Capital*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Hiebert, D. 2002, 'Cosmopolitanism at the local level: The development of transnational neighbourhoods', in Vertovec, S. and Cohen, R. (eds.), *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 209-223.

Held, D. 2010, *Cosmopolitanism; Ideals and Realities*, Polity, Cambridge.

Johannisson, B. and Olaison, L. 2007, 'The Moment of truth – Reconstructing entrepreneurship and social capital in the eye of the storm', *Review of Social Economy*, vol LXV, no. 1, pp. 55-78.

Lichtenstein, B., B, Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., Seers, A., Orton, J. D., & Schreiber, C. 2006, 'Complexity leadership theory: An interactive perspective on leading in complex adaptive systems', *Emergence: Complexity and Organization,* vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 2-12.

Medd, W. 2002, 'Complexity and the social world', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, vol.5, no.1, pp. 71-81.

Melluci, A. 1995, 'The Process of collective identity', in Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (eds.), *Social Movements and Culture*, UCL Press, London.

Misztral, B. 1996, *Trust in Modern Societies*, Polity Press, Cambridge, MA.

No Aircraft Noise 2011, 'No Aircraft Noise Party', http://www.noaircraftnoise.org.au Accessed: 15 May 2011.

Noble, G. 2009, 'Everyday cosmpolitanism and the labour of intercultural community', in Wise, A. and Velayutham, S. (eds.),*Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 46-65.

Onyx, J. & Bullen, P. 2000a, 'Measuring social capital in five communities', *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 23-42.

Onyx, J. and Bullen, P. 2000b, 'Sources of social capital', in Winter, I. (ed.) *Social Capital and Public Policy in Australia.* pp. 105-135.

Plowman, D., Solansky, S., Beck, T., Baker, L, Kulkarni, M., Travis, D. 2007, 'The role of leadership in emergent, self-organization', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol.18, pp. 341-356.

Pratt, M. L. 1992, *Imperial Eyes*, Routledge, London.

Putnam, R. 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Putnam, R. 2000, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Putman, R. 2007, E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century: The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 30, pp.137-174.

Reid, C. 2010, 'Will the 'Shire' ever be the same again? Schooling responses to the Cronulla Beach Riot', *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Journal*, vol.2, no. 1, pp. 47-62.

Semi, G., Colombo, E., Camozzi, I., & Frisina, A. 2009., 'Practices of difference: Analysing multiculturalism in everyday life', in Wise, A. and Velayutham, S. (eds.),*Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 66-84.

SLS (Surf Lifesaving) 2011, On the Same Wave, http://www.sls.com.au/who-we-are/community-programs/inclusion/on-the-same-wave, Accessed: 4 November 2011.

Surie, G. and Hazy, J.K. 2006, 'Generative leadership: Nurturing innovation in complex systems', in J. K. Hazy, J.K., Goldstein, J.A. and Lichtenstein, B.B. (eds.) *Complex Systems Leadership Theory: New Perspectives from Complexity Science on Social and Organizational Effectiveness*, ISCE Publishing, Mansfield, MA., pp. 349-366.

Sydney Alliance 2011, 'Sydney greets its Alliance', online, Accessed 4 November 2011 http://www.sydneyalliance.org.au/news/2011/09/16/lets-make-the-city-greater-the-sydney-alliance-has-founded/

Sydney Theatre Company 2011, 'Stories of Love and Hate', http://www.sydneytheatre.com.au/stced/2011/stories-of-love-and-hate, Accessed: 4 November 2011.

Uslaner, E. 2010, Diversity, segregation, Trust and Altruism. Paper delivered to Cosmopolitan Civil Societies, University of Technology Sydney.

Valentine, G. 2008, 'Living with difference: Reflections on geographies of encounter', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 323-337.

Vanni, I. forthcoming, 'Walking in the suburbs: networks and affective borders in the work of young Australian film makers', in Axford , B. and Huggins, R., *Cultures and/of Globalization*, Cambridge Scholar Press, Cambridge.

Williams, K. and Guerra, N. 2011, 'Perceptions of collective efficacy and bullying perpetuation in schools', *Social Problems,* vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 126-143.

Wise, A. 2009, 'Everyday multiculturalism: Transversal crossings and working class cosmpolitanisms', in Wise, A. and Velayutham, S. (eds.),*Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 21-45.

Wise, A. and S. Velayutham (eds.) 2009, *Everyday Multiculturalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.