MAKING SPACE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

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This paper considers the issue of the spatial patterns of socio-economic exclusion across Australia's metropolitan suburbs. Using an index of relative deprivation based on 2006 census data the paper argues that policies aimed at addressing issues of social exclusion must take more consideration of the links between people and place.

INTRODUCTION

Social inclusion is now on the federal political agenda in a big way. And so it should be. In spite of the economic boom and in the face of a looming global economic slowdown, the incidence of social disadvantage across our cities, towns and regions is increasing, not reducing. As interest rates and the costs of living continue to rise, and the housing crisis worsens, we can expect to see continued growth in the numbers of deprived and excluded Australians.

It is within our large cities that the extremes of disadvantage are often most apparent. Our suburban heartlands reflect the scars of rounds of social and economic restructuring and the impacts of demographic and other changes. The recent closure of Adelaide's Mitsubishi facility continues the suburban social scarring in that city. The other cities have their fair share of suburban socio-economic scars as well. Visually, the distribution of disadvantage across our cities is distinctive. All the cities can be represented by a series of disadvantage hotspots (high relative disadvantage) and disadvantage cold spots (low relative disadvantage).

New national and international socio-economic forces have reshaped national geographies in general and the characteristics of cities in particular, resulting in a range of diverse social and spatial outcomes. The cities of old may have had more clearly defined socio-economic divisions. The contemporary city, on the other hand, is characterised by a new or different set of divisions. These new divisions do not necessarily exist in complete isolation from divisions that have appeared in earlier periods, but rather have developed from these existing patterns. Contemporary patterns therefore reflect the socio-spatial histories of cities. What is different about the contemporary socio-economic patterns are the factors and conditions leading to particular outcomes and the often long drawn out nature of the existence of these factors and conditions.

What we are now seeing, and have been seeing over the past two or three decades, is a complex set of interlinked factors impacting on the social and economic processes underway in cities. Academics have talked about the 'geography and the worried country' and considered the uneven spatial outcomes that have come to be reflected in the daily lives of people and across space in competing places.[1] Federal Treasurer Wayne Swan[2] has talked about the splintering of the nation along spatial lines. Advantage and disadvantage at the level of the individual gets reflected in local communities, neighbourhoods and towns through the uneven spatial impact of advantage and disadvantage on local labour markets, and through the operation of housing markets. In short, changes in social and economic life that have included shifts in economic process and fortunes, changes to the demographic structure and shifts in the welfare state, are linked to the

circumstances in local communities, neighbourhoods and towns because of where particular people live and the nature of their roles in society and the economy. For example, some groups are able to exercise a broader choice, across a wide range and diversity of living environments within Australia's cities because their economic advantage provides them with the wealth and/or capacity to borrow, enabling them to choose to live in high-cost housing market areas. Others do not possess these economic means and have marginal residential choices that are constrained within low-cost housing market locations.

But it is not only this differentiation

Table 1: Variables included in the analysis

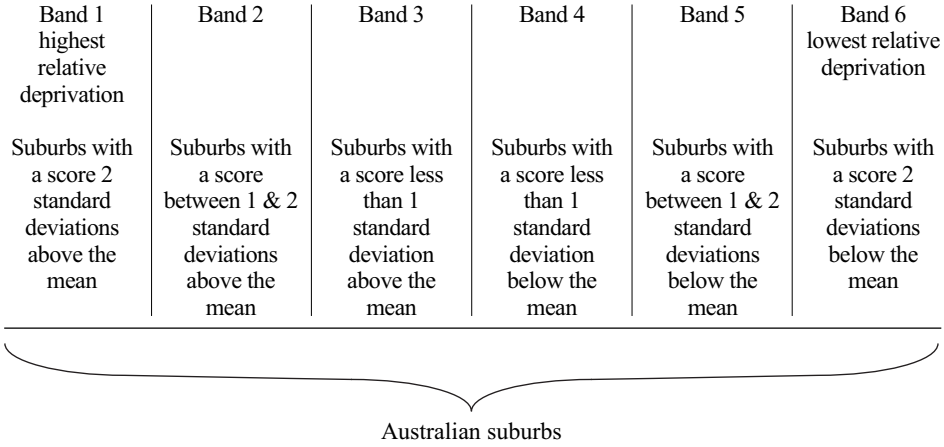
Demographic/household
- indigenous population (per cent)
- persons aged older than 64 years of age (per cent)
- persons requiring assistance with daily activities (per cent)
- recent immigrants to Australia—arrived between 2001 and 2006 (per cent)
- population who do not speak English well (per cent)
- single parent families (per cent)

Income
- median family income ($)
- families with low incomes—bottom 10 per cent of the distribution (per cent)
- median individual income ($)
- individuals with low incomes—bottom 10 per cent of the distribution (per cent)

Housing
- households in public housing (per cent)

Engagement with work
- youth unemployment rate—persons aged 15 to 24 (per cent)
- male unemployment rate (per cent)
- male labour force participation rate (per cent)
- female unemployment rate (per cent)
- female labour force participation rate (per cent)

Figure 1: Continuum of relative deprivation, Australia suburbs



between individuals and households, in the relative constraints within which their housing choices are exercised, that is a significant issue in the social and spatial differentiation that is readily discernable across our cities. Rather, this differentiation in housing choices is in addition to the differences in the potential of people to engage in the labour market. This potential is influenced by, among other things, the supply of jobs and the ability of people to tap into new opportunities, and this potential becomes crucial in that social and spatial differentiation. The patterns of variation in advantage and disadvantage across communities and neighbourhoods will therefore reflect a complex set of both individual and societal-scale issues, and in addition will reflect the stages of communities in the transformation from the past to the contemporary economic, social and demographic era.

CURRENT PATTERNS OF SUBURBAN SCARRING

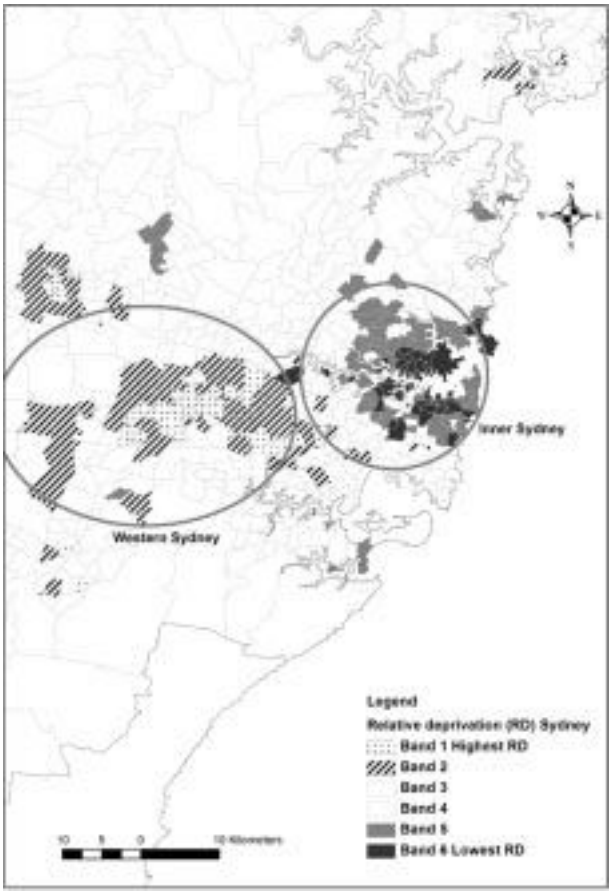
Elsewhere I have discussed the wide ranging spatial patterns of disadvantage or suburban scarring that characterise our metropolitan cities[3] and it is this empirical work that is the basis of this current paper. The empirical investigation uses an index of socio-economic deprivation for Australian metropolitan suburbs.[4] The index is developed using a range of socio-economic indicators that have been drawn from the 2006 census (see Table 1) using a methodology first developed by Langlois and Kitchen[5] for Montreal, Canada and subse-

Table 2: High and low relative deprivation, Sydney

Highest relative deprivation (band 1)		Lowest relative deprivation (band 6)	
Airds	Heckenberg	Alexandria	Manly
Ashcroft	Lakemba	Annandale	McMahons Point
Auburn	Lethbridge Park	Balmain	Milsons Point
Bankstown	Miller	Balmain East	Mosman
Bidwill	Old Guildford	Bellevue Hill	Naremburn
Bonnyrigg	Punchbowl	Birchgrove	Neutral Bay
Busby	Sadleir	Bondi Beach	North Sydney
Cabramatta	South Granville	Breakfast Point/ Mortlake	Northwood
Cabramatta West	St Johns Park	Cammeray	Paddington
Campsie	Tregear	Centennial Park	Point Piper
Canley Heights	Villawood	Chiswick	Potts Point
Canley Vale	Warwick Farm	Coogee	Pyrmont
Carramar	Whalan	Cremorne	Queenscliff
Cartwright	Wiley Park	Cremorne Point	Rozelle
Claymore	Willmot	Crows Nest	Rushcutters Bay
Emerton	Yennora	Darling Point	St Leonards
Fairfield	Canton Beach	Darlinghurst	Surry Hills
Fairfield East	The Entrance	Dawes Point/The Rocks/	Tamarama
Fairfield Heights		Double Bay	Waverton
		Edgecliff	Wollstonecraft
		Elizabeth Bay	Woollahra
		Erskineville	Woolwich
		Fairlight	
		Homebush Bay	
		Kirribilli	
		Lavender Bay	

quently used by Baum[6] in an analysis of Sydney. The index provides a single number for each suburb and using this data I have ranked all the suburbs across the Australian cities into six bands or clusters based on a score calculated using a range of census variables (Figure 1). Band 1 suburbs—those with highest relative deprivation—have a score more than two standard deviations above the mean, while band 2 suburbs have a score between one and two standard deviations above the mean. Conversely, band 6 suburbs have scores more than two standard deviations below the mean, while band 5 suburbs have a score between one and two standard deviations below the mean.[7] Some cities have suburbs in both the most deprived and the least deprived groups while other have distributions that skew towards one end or the other.[8] The patterns can often be confronting to those living in these areas, but they do reflect an uneasy reality.

Figure 2: Relative deprivation, Sydney



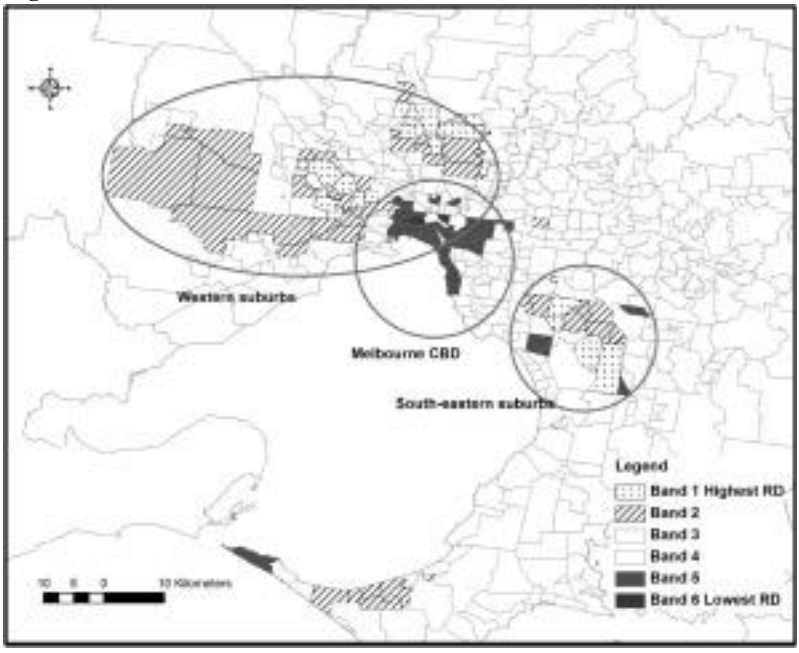
Take Sydney for example. Australia's largest city is also perhaps the most polarised. What I found in Sydney was that Australia's most deprived and the least deprived suburbs were found in Australia's global city (Table 2, Figure 2). Milsons Point on the city's north shore was the least deprived, while only a short distance away Claymore in the city's west held the prize for being the country's most deprived. Although geographically close in proximity (about 40 minutes by car), the socio-economic reality couldn't be more stark. At the 2006 census unemployment in Claymore stood at 31.8 per cent, while in Milsons Point it was just 2.1 per cent. Residents of Claymore (on average) had considerable lower incomes (median individual income $237pw; median family income $530pw) than Milsons point (median individual income $1311pw; median family income $2766pw).

Besides these extremes other suburbs with the greatest socio-economic scars are well known, with some being the focus of media attention for all of the wrong reasons. They have been widely commented on by academics in terms of the suburbanisation of disadvantage in the Sydney region,[9] with the suburbs of Western Sydney conjuring

Table 3: High and low relative deprivation, Melbourne

Highest relative deprivation (band 1)		Lowest relative deprivation (band 6)
Albanvale	Heidelberg West	Burnley
Ardeer	Kings Park	Docklands
Bangholme	Lalor	East Melbourne
Braybrook	Maidstone	St Kilda West
Broadmeadows	Meadow Heights	
Campbellfield	Springvale	
Carlton	Springvale South	
Coolaroo	St Albans	
Dallas	Sunshine North	
Dandenong South	Sunshine West	
Fawkner	Thomastown	
Frankston North		

Figure 3: Relative derivation, Melbourne



up symbols of an undifferentiated urban bad land.[10] The suburbs of Airds, Cabramatta, Auburn and Fairfield in Sydney's western suburbs all score highly on the general deprivation index. So do some localities on the city's far north coast including The Entrance and Canton Beach. In contrast to these places, the north shore is where Sydney's wealth belt reside.[11] The suburbs of Kirribilli and Double Bay are included in the Sydney suburbs with lowest relative deprivation.

The other cities have there share of what Brendan Gleeson[12] has referred to (perhaps unkindly) as suburban sinkholes. In Melbourne the suburbs that have been most scarred (those with highest relative deprivation) include those in city's post-war

industrial growth heartlands including Broadmeadows and Sunshine (Table 3). Some of these suburbs are among Australia's places that have been forgotten in recent economic advancements. Others represent residential localities that offer cheap accommodation options and attract low-income low-skilled often marginalised workers who are unable to compete for the types of local jobs that have developed in the area. The Melbourne suburbs at the positive end of the deprivation continuum include East Melbourne, Docklands and Burnley, suburbs associated with Melbourne's new economy activities and the gentrification that has occurred in the inner city. The spatial pattern of deprivation in Melbourne reflects long established trends with extreme relative deprivation located further out and lower deprivation closer to the central business district (Figure 3).

The picture of relative deprivation across Adelaide's suburbs represents the long standing outcomes of earlier periods of economic, social and demographic change (Table 4, Figure 4). Adelaide has no suburbs in band 6 (lowest relative deprivation), but it does have Eastwood and Toorak Gardens in band 5. Adelaide does, consequently, have a much higher relative proportion of suburbs in band 1 (highest relative deprivation). Suburbs with highest relative derivation are located in the city's north and include Athol Park, Mansfield Park and Elizabeth Park and are those places that others have referred to when discussing

Table 4: Band 1 and Band 5 suburbs, Adelaide

Highest relative deprivation (band 1)	Lowest relative deprivation (band 5)
Regency Park	College Park
Angle Park	Dulwich
Athol Park	Eastwood
Davoren Park	Gilberton
Dudley Park	Millswood
Elizabeth	Mount George
Elizabeth Downs	Northgate
Elizabeth North	Springfield
Elizabeth Park	Toorak Gardens
Elizabeth South	Unley Park
Kilburn	Walkerville
Mansfield Park	
Ottoway	
Smithfield Plains	
Woodville Gardens	

Figure 4: Relative deprivation, Adelaide

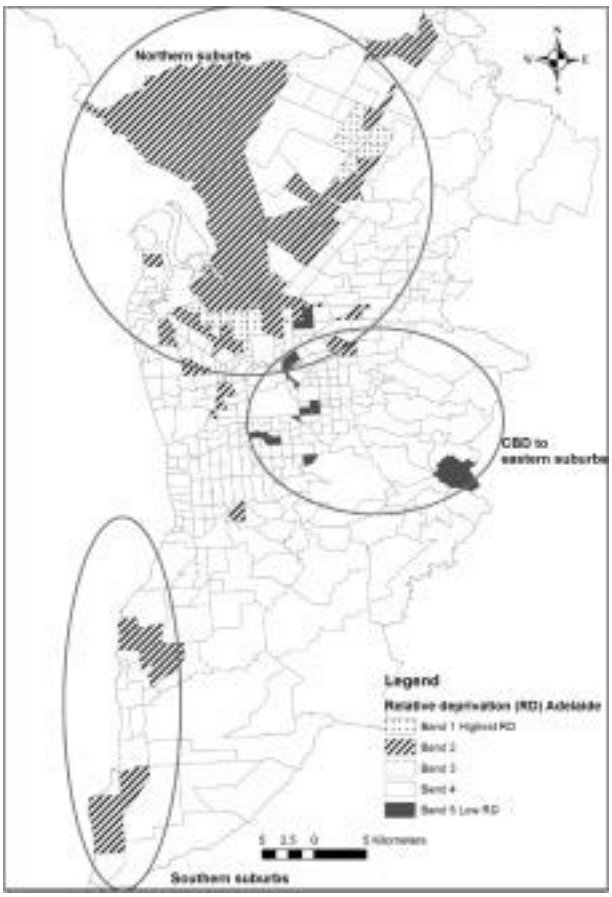
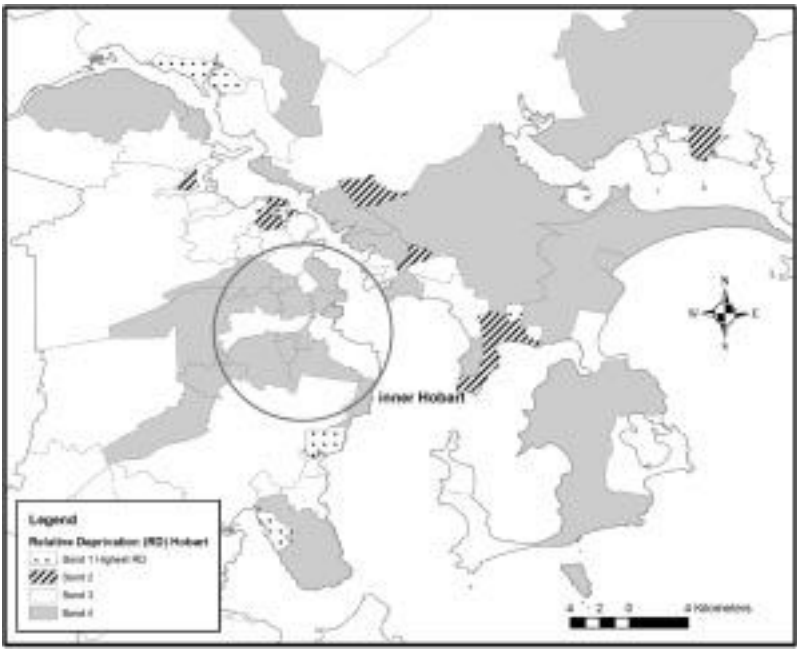


Table 5: Band 1 and Band 4 suburbs, Hobart

Highest relative deprivation (band 1)	Lowest relative deprivation (band 4)	
Bridgewater	Acton Park	Lenah Valley
Clarendon Vale	Austins Ferry	Leslie Vale
Gagebrook	Battery Point	Lindisfarne
	Bellerive	Mount Nelson
	Bonnet Hill	Mount Stuart
	Cambridge	Orielton
	Cremorne	Otago
	Dynnyrne	Ridgeway
	Fern Tree	Sandford
	Geilston Bay	Seven Mile Beach
	Glebe	Taroona
	Granton	Tinderbox
	Hobart	Tolmans Hill
	Honeywood	Tranmere
	Howden	West Hobart

Figure 5: Relative deprivation, Hobart



the results of socio-economic transitions within the city.[13]

Hobart, like Adelaide, has for some time been home to a relatively large socio-economically disadvantaged community (Table 5). Hobart has no suburbs in band 6 (lowest relative deprivation) or band 5. Band 4 suburbs include Bellerive and Geilston Bay. Hobart has more than its fair share of suburbs in band 1. Band 1 suburbs include Gagebrook, Clarendon Vale and Bridgewater. Spatially there is no distinct pattern of relative deprivation. The distribution of Hobart deprivation may be seen in Figure 5.

Australia's two sun-belt capitals

Table 6: Band 2 and Band 6 suburbs, Brisbane

Highest relative deprivation (band 2)		Lowest relative deprivation (band 6)
Beachmere	Loganlea	Brookwater
Caboolture South	Macgregor	Newstead
Carole Park	Nathan	
Churchill	Redbank	
Dinmore	Richlands	
Donnybrook	Riverview	
Gailes	Robertson	
Goodna	Sandstone Point	
Inala	Stretton	
Karawatha	Sunnybank	
Kingston	Wacol	
Leichhardt	Woodridge	
Logan Central		

(Brisbane and Perth) have substantively different levels of relative deprivation when compared to the other main capitals. Both cities are considered to be presiding over states which are on the up-side of Australia's two-speed economy. Brisbane has no band 1 (highest relative) deprivation suburb. The floor of Brisbane deprivation is band 2 (high relative deprivation) (Table 6). The suburbs of Inala and Logan Central have the highest levels of relative deprivation in the Queensland capital, together with localities on the northern extremes of the Brisbane region such as Caboolture south, and other places such as Nathan and Robertson, located adjacent to the Griffith University campus.[14] Two suburbs are included in the band 6 suburbs—Newstead located on the northern bank of the

Figure 6: Relative deprivation, Brisbane

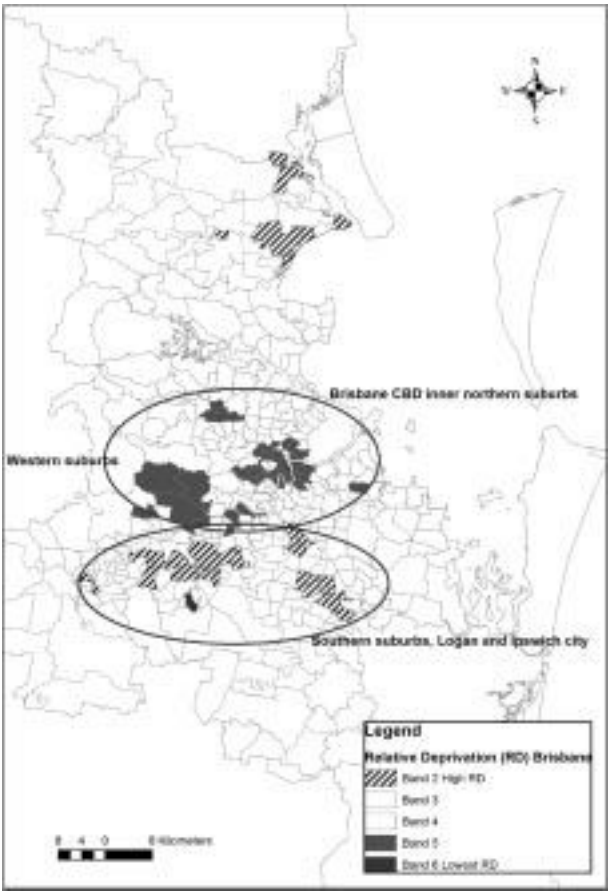


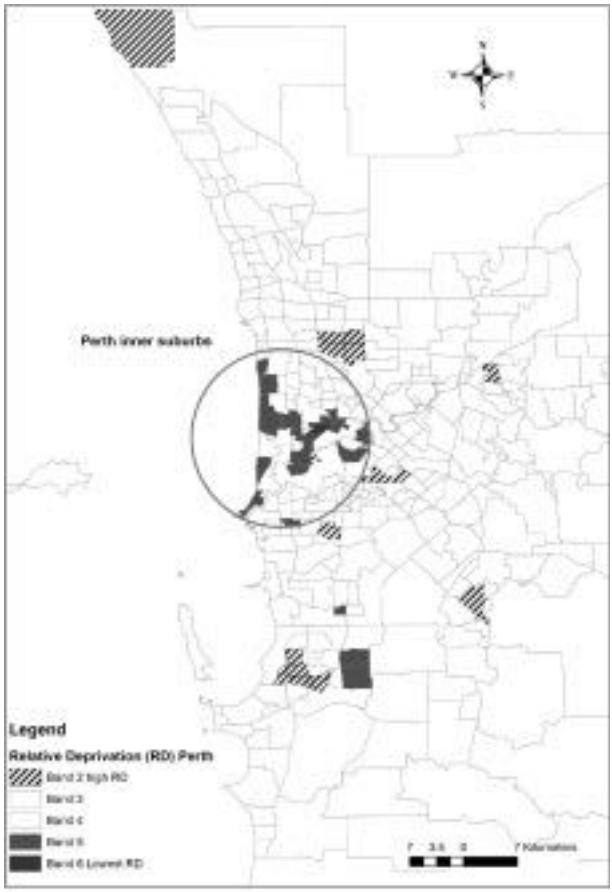
Table 7: Band 2 and Band 6 suburbs, Perth

Highest relative deprivation (band 2)		Lowest relative deprivation (band 6)
Armadale	Kwinana Beach	Dalkeith
Balga	Medina	Subiaco
Bentley	Midvale	
Calista	Mirrabooka	
Crawley	Murdoch	
Girrawheen	Parmelia	
Karawara	Two Rocks	
Koondoola		

Brisbane river and adjacent the CBD and Brookwater in Brisbane's west. The spatial distribution of relative deprivation in Brisbane shows concentrations of higher deprivation in the southern suburbs and lower relative deprivation north of the river and closer to the city centre (Figure 6).

The other sun-belt capital, Perth, has been at the heart of the mining boom that has driven the Western Australian economy in recent times. The distribution of relative deprivation across the city is similar to Brisbane with less extreme deprivation than would be statistically expected. Perth has no suburbs in band 1 (Table 7). It does have suburbs in band 2 including Karawara and Bently, together with Crawley (adjacent to the University of Western Australia). The suburbs with lower deprivation include Subiaco and Dalkeith (band 6) and Cottesloe and Leederville (band 5). Spatially, higher relative deprivation tends to be located further from the central city (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Relative deprivation, Perth



HEALING THE SUBURBAN SCARS?

This suburban scarring is an unnecessary blight on our society and flies in the face of Australia's notion of a fair go. It's also wasteful. There can be little debate that the

social and human capital endowed to individuals within these disadvantaged communities represents a significant waste of resources.

To address our suburban socio-economic scars we need to make space for social inclusion. We need to make space in our mindset for a more socially inclusive society. This must then be a high priority for society and for government. And we need to manage our space more carefully so that we can reduce the socio-economic scars that blight our metropolitan landscapes.

We can no longer rely on policy that only focuses on the individual or the family. People-based policies, while necessary components, are not in themselves sufficient. It is important that we pay attention to the health of places, the homes of communities and individuals. Policies that attempt to build a more socially inclusive society must account for where people live and their connections with (or exclusions from) the wider city. Socially inclusive policies need to also be space- or place-based.

Place-based policies can include the much debated social mix programs which aim to overcome the concentration effects that arise when significant numbers of disadvantaged individuals reside in any one area.[15] But they also can include local job creation schemes in areas where employment, at a suitable skill level, is the missing link in the inclusion/exclusion debate[16] or some mixture of local community and job creation. Here the solution is in the complex links between housing availability and job location in the wider metropolitan development process.[17] As an example Healy and O'Connor have argued that:

> ... in the long term it is likely that more sustainable and equitable outcomes in terms of economic development in the metropolitan area will involve attention to job growth and community facilities in the middle and outer suburbs.[18]

It is of course difficult to precisely differentiate between polices that might be people related and those that might be place related. It is, for example, not entirely clear-cut that factors such as being able to access appropriate suitable employment or suffering a housing affordability problem is a product of an individual's personal situation or the place or community they reside in. Chances are it will be a mixture. Making sure we have the mixture right is therefore an important issue confronting those who enter the social inclusion debate.

Regardless of what the right mix might be—and it will differ from place to place and by circumstance—we need to realise that Australia is far too prosperous to continue failing its most deprived citizens and that real and sustainable action is required to address the unequal and deprived conditions that exist in our metropolitan cities. We need to understand that a focus on space and place is indeed an important component of developing sustainable social inclusion. We need to make space for social inclusion both in our policies and in our minds.

Acknowledgements

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