



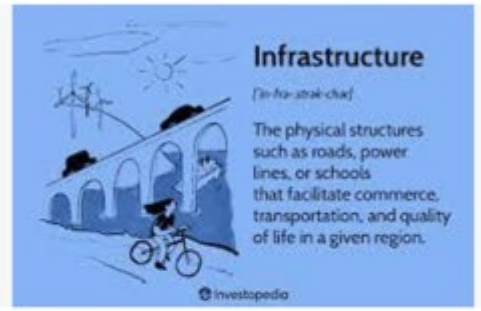
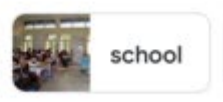
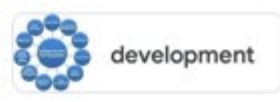
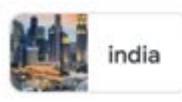
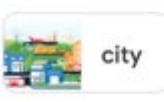
# Critical Social Infrastructure

---

Dr Sophie Yarker

University of Manchester

[Sophie.yarker@Manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Sophie.yarker@Manchester.ac.uk)



### Infrastructure

The physical structures such as roads, power lines, or schools that facilitate commerce, transportation, and quality of life in a given region.

Investopedia

Investopedia  
Infrastructure: Definition, Meaning ...



Council on Foreign Relations  
The State of U.S. Infrastructure ...



Corporate Finance Institute  
Public Infrastructure - Definition ...



Republican Policy  
What is Infrastruct



OECD-Development Matters  
invest in quality infrastructure ...



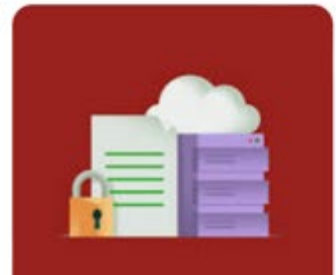
Blackridge Research & Consulting  
Infrastructure: Meaning, Definition ...



BigRentz  
Infrastructure Construction Projec...



Yale Insights - Yale University  
Imagining Future-Ready Infra



What is **social** infrastructure?

The physical spaces and places in our communities where we can have social interactions and develop social connections.





batmantramcat

Follow

764 posts

2,796 followers

2,707 following

**Batman TramCat**

Chorlton's beloved superhero in fur. His life's mission is to bring cheer & joy to weary commuters, shoppers, partiers & all who use his tram stop!



# Types of social infrastructure

## 1. Organised Activity

Religious spaces, leisure centres, community centres

## 2. Commercial Spaces

Cafes, restaurants, shops, pubs, hairdressers, barbers



# Types of social infrastructure

## 3. Outdoor and public spaces

Parks, squares, green spaces, nature trails

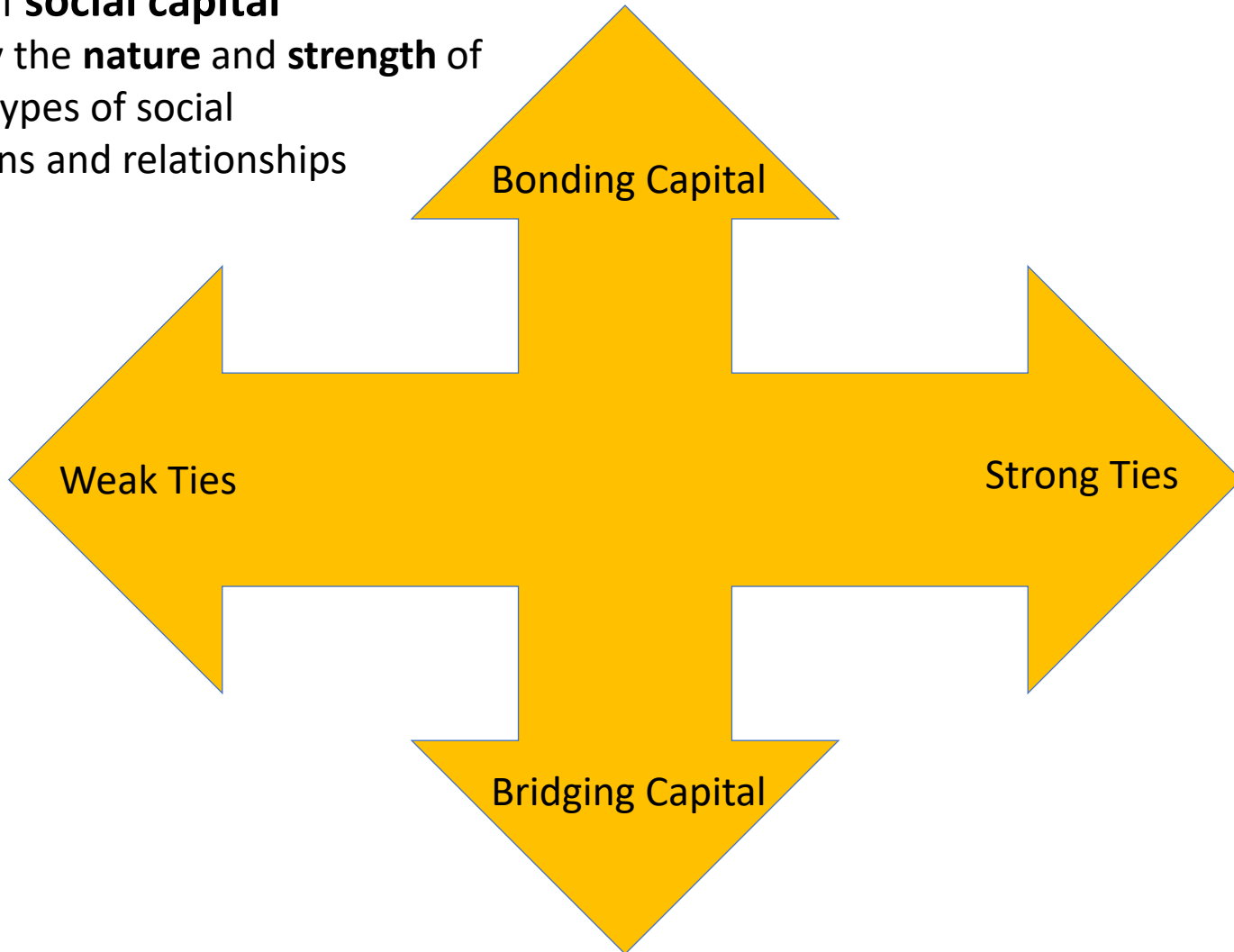
## 4. Public Services

Libraries, public transport, Schools, Post Offices



# Type of social connections

Concept of **social capital**  
to identify the **nature** and **strength** of  
different types of social  
connections and relationships



**Bridging**

Health services  
Parks  
Public transport  
Routes  
Sports & leisure centres  
Enterprise & commercial spaces  
Libraries

Sports & leisure centres  
Schools & nurseries  
Community gardens

**Weak  
ties**

**Social  
Capital**

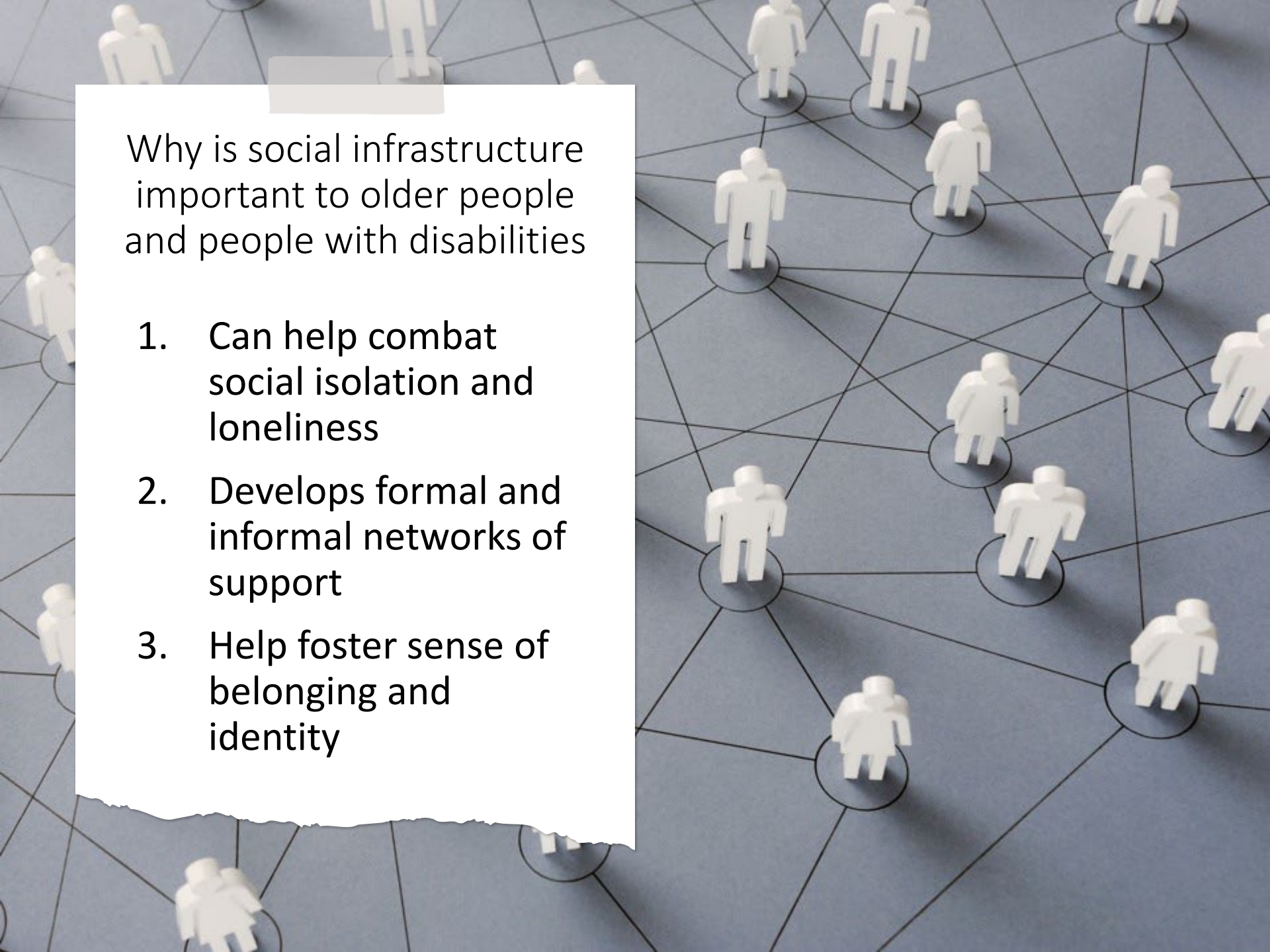
**Strong  
ties**

Driveways  
Lobbies  
Back Lanes

Schools  
Nurseries  
Clubs & associations  
Religious buildings  
Community gardens

**Bonding**





Why is social infrastructure important to older people and people with disabilities

1. Can help combat social isolation and loneliness
2. Develops formal and informal networks of support
3. Help foster sense of belonging and identity

# Can combat social isolation and loneliness

- Seeing others and being seen
- Opportunities for social participations / volunteering
- Low level social interactions are just as valuable as more direct and deliberate ones
- Can create 'an ethics of togetherness'

(Jane Jacobs)

'The sum of such casual, public contacts at a local level, is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighbourhood need' (1992, pp.56).

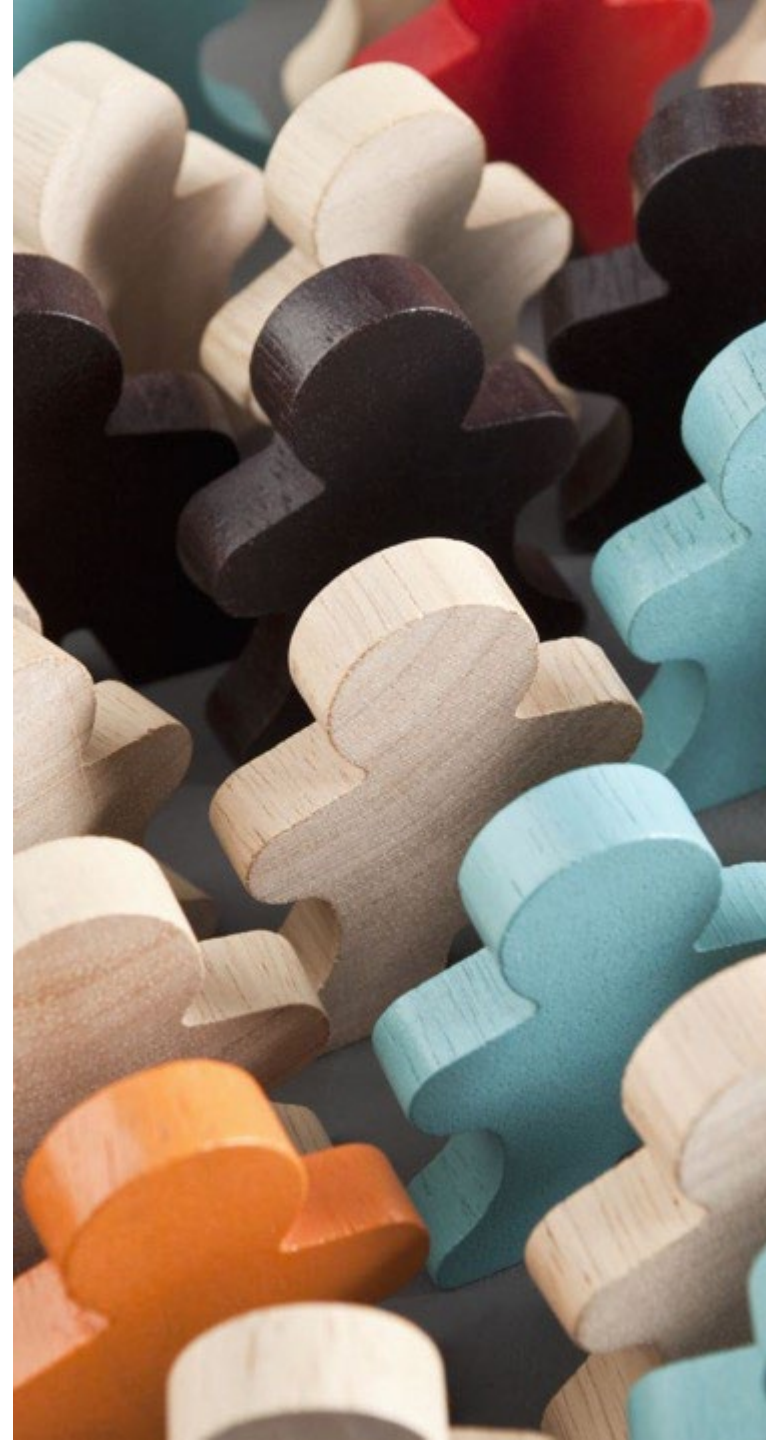
Develops formal and informal networks of support

- Basis of mutual aid and neighbourhood support
- Accessing information
- Role of staff in social infrastructure



# Can foster sense of belonging and identity

- Especially important for people from marginalized groups of identity and/ experience
- Attachments to local community through use of social infrastructure



## Importance of Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure is about more than having places to socialise. It is about wellbeing, belonging and visibility

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

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

Thank you for your  
time

Passenger help point

