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Youth Development Circles

JOHN BRAITHWAITE

ABSTRACT *Restorative justice circles or conferences have shown considerable promise in the criminal justice system as a more decent and effective way of dealing with youthful law breaking than punishment. The social movement for restorative justice has a distinctive analysis of the crisis of community and the possibility of community in late modernity. This paper raises the question of whether this approach might fruitfully be applied to the holistic development of the learning potential of the young and the whole range of problems young people encounter—drug abuse, unemployment, homelessness, suicide, among others—in the transition from school to work.*

THE LATE MODERN STRUCTURAL DILEMMA OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

In the new information economy, it is clear that human capital (the skills of people) and social capital (social skills for interacting with others including dispositions such as trust and trustworthiness) are becoming progressively more important to economic development than physical capital (Dowrick, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Latham, 1998). Young people whose human and social capital remains undeveloped are destined for unemployment. Mostly families with high endowments of human and social capital pass those on to their children. There is a strong correlation between parental involvement in the education of their children and academic performance (Finn Report, 1991, p. 151). For children whose families lack endowments of human and social capital, we rely on state-funded education systems to compensate.

Yet we quickly run up against the limits of the capabilities of formal education bureaucracies to make up for deficits which are profoundly informal (especially on the social capital side) [1]. Our objective in this essay is to come up with a new policy solution to this limitation [2]. At the same time, we want to help solve the problem of children from families with high endowments, but where human and social capital development is interrupted by problems like drug addiction, bullying by peers, sexual abuse, depression and suicide.

Our hypothesis is that both the low family endowments problem and the interrupted transmission problem need a more informal yet more systematic solution than the formal education system can provide. Mentoring programmes like 'Big Brothers' and 'Big Sisters' head in the right direction (reducing drug abuse and violence in one eight-site evaluation (Elliott, 1998, p. xviii)). But they are insufficiently social, communal and plural to deal with the kinds of deficits at issue with reducing youth unemployment, drug addiction, delinquency and suicide.

In terms of social structure, we see the problem as one of a late modernity where:

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(a) nuclear families are isolated from extended families which used to compensate for deficits of nuclear families; and
(b) formal education bureaucracies are too formal to compensate for the social aspects of the deficits that thereby arise—for example, in teaching trust, love, respectfulness.

This structural dilemma of late modernity has crept up on us over the past century. Social historians have shown that early in the 20th century parents much more commonly than today shared child-rearing obligations with extended families, churches and other community networks (Lasch, 1977; Zelizer, 1985). Single parents, who in Western societies are more likely to be black and poor (LaFree, 1998, pp. 147–148), are particularly likely to become 'solo practitioners' of child rearing. Mothers struggling alone to educate their children without support from the village therefore worsen inequalities of race and sex. Remedial policies to spread burdens of informal education and support for children are thus imperative to tackling the inequalities arising from our dual structural dilemma of modernity.

HOW THE EDUCATION SYSTEM CAN LEARN FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The direction for a solution to this dual structural problem is captured by the African proverb that it takes a whole village to raise a child. But this of course begs the question raised by the structural problem; we do not live in villages in the West. Recent experience with restorative justice innovation in the criminal justice system has come up with an interesting solution to a similar structural dilemma of crime control. Criminologists know that crime is a result of failures of informal community ordering (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999) and of social support for young people (Cullen, 1994). Unfortunately, however, most remedial programmes fail because of the structural impossibility of building village solutions in the city or suburb. Neighbourhood Watch seems like a good idea, but the evidence is that it is not very effective in reducing crime (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). One reason is that most of us do not care enough about our community or are just too busy to turn up to Neighbourhood Watch meetings. They work somewhat better in highly organised middle-class communities—where they are least needed in terms of crime.

A recent innovation that has been quite successful in solving this problem has been the restorative justice or family group conference (as they are called in the Southern hemisphere) or healing circle (as they are more often called in North America). Actually, it is an innovation that picks up ancient village traditions of justice and adapts them to the metropolis. When a young person is arrested, they are asked who are the people they most respect, trust, love. The most common answers are mum and dad, brothers and sisters and grandparents. But often with children who are homeless because they have been sexually abused by parents, parents will not be on the list. Members of a 'street family' (Hagan & McCarthy, 1997) may be on the list here. But there still may be an aunt, brother, or grandparent who is loved by the homeless child. That child may have been stigmatised by most of the teachers at his or her school, but there may be just one staff member who he or she believes has treated her decently. That member of the school staff, the street family and the few members of the extended family who are still respected are then brought together in a conference. The conference sits in a circle with victims of the crime (and supporters of the victim) to discuss the

consequences of the crime and what needs to be done to right the wrongs that have been done and to get the young offender's and the victim's lives back on track. With a homeless child, it might be agreed that the young offender will go and live in the home of his uncle or his older brother, who will undertake to help him get back into school.

The diversity of supporters for young people in conferences or circles is considerable. There can be elders from an indigenous community, football coaches, ballet teachers, neighbours, or friends who share a hobby. It is this diversity which makes the circle modern and urban. Human beings are social animals. There are almost always other human beings they enjoy interacting with. It is simply not true that most homeless children are alone in the world; they have 'street families' whose company they enjoy. Hagan and McCarthy (1997) found that a majority of their youth living on the streets of Toronto and Vancouver actually referred to their intimates as their 'street family'. Second, human beings find meaning from social identity; there always exist people we identify with or respect. We train circle coordinators who report back that a young offender who is totally isolated should try again, to work harder to discover people she likes or respects, even if it means bringing in the one sibling or uncle who is respected from another city. The late modern sense of community is fragmented across space, but it exists. What the restorative justice circle does is bring that community of care together for the first time in one room. In the quintessentially late modern case, one of the participants may be a friend from cyberspace who the young offender physically meets for the first time. It is wrong to say that these faceless friendships are always artificial and meaningless. Community in the metropolis is in some ways more meaningful than community in the village because it can be based on casting a wide net among a very large group of people to find a few who have very similar interests to our own, such as an interest in the history of Reggae music which would be hard to share in a small English village.

Early evidence is only preliminary, but it is encouraging that these conferences mostly work well in various ways, though we still have much to learn about contexts where they backfire (Braithwaite, 1999). The fact from this literature we want to emphasise here is that when supporters are invited to attend these conferences, they generally come. I do not go to Neighbourhood Watch Meetings, even though I think that would be a public spirited thing to do. But if a young neighbour singled me out as someone they would like to be their supporter at a conference after they had got into trouble with the police, I would attend. Why? The answer is that in the conference case I am honoured to have been nominated by a human being as someone they respect. Second, I am personally touched by their predicament. They are in trouble and they have made a personal appeal to me, so I feel it would be callous to be unwilling to give up my evening for the conference. In short, community fails with Neighbourhood Watch but works with the restorative justice conference because it is an individual-centred communitarianism. This individual-centred communitarianism tugs at the sense of obligation that works in the late modern world of community based on geographically dispersed ties of respect and identification.

To date, the evaluation research evidence is consistent with this conclusion. More than a dozen studies have found participant satisfaction (among offenders, victims and their families) running at over 90% (Braithwaite, 1999, pp. 20–27). Both participant satisfaction and participant perceptions of procedural fairness, effectiveness, respect for rights and equality before the law are higher in conference than in court (Braithwaite, 1999, p. 26). It is premature to conclude whether restorative justice conferences are in fact effective in reducing crime. A number of studies show markedly lower reoffending

rates among young offenders who go to conferences compared to those who go to court (Forsythe, 1995; Chan, 1996). Large parts of such differences are likely to be selection effects—less serious cases going to conferences—in studies with inadequate controls. Burford and Pennell's (1998) study of adult family violence conferences has more impressive controls and found substantial reductions for conference compared to control families in 31 problem behaviours ranging from alcohol abuse to violence against wives or children. Most notably, abuse/neglect incidents halved in the year after the family group decision making conference. Other early studies of victim–offender mediation with more adequate controls (or randomisation) and with positive effects on reoffending were conducted by Schneider (1986), Pate (1990), Nugent & Paddock (1995) and Wynne (1996). Umbreit *et al.* (1994) found results that favoured victim–offender mediation, but which did not reach statistical significance. McCold & Wachtel's (1998) findings were mixed at best, discouraging at worst, findings that are hard to interpret because of unsatisfactory assurance that the randomly assigned treatment was delivered. The Restorative Justice Group at the Australian National University is finalising the largest randomised controlled trial of conferences compared to court for juvenile and adult offenders under the leadership of Lawrence Sherman and Heather Strang. An update of the Braithwaite (1999) review has been completed as this article goes to press (Braithwaite, forthcoming). It reports a surge of new studies suggesting that restorative justice does contribute to crime reduction.

Now we will seek to translate to education as an institution our analysis from the sociology of crime about what mobilises community. In doing so, we will also attempt to solve one of the problems of restorative justice circles—that the very act of assembling the community of care on the occasion of a youth being in trouble can stigmatise a young person as a troublemaker.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CIRCLES—THE IDEA

The basic idea is to translate the conference/circle from criminal justice into the arena of educational development. Unlike conferencing in the criminal justice system, the idea presented now has not been subjected to any piloting. The main difference is that the circle would be a permanent feature of the young person's life rather than an ad hoc group assembled to deal with a criminal offence. Initially, the circle would be constituted to replace parent–teacher interviews in high schools.

Twice a year from entry to high school at age 12 through to successful placement in a tertiary course or a job (modal age 18), the Youth Development Facilitator (operating from an office in a high school) would convene a meeting of the young person's community of care. This meeting would be called a Youth Development Circle.

The circle would have Core and Casual Members. Core Members would be asked up front to commit, as an obligation of citizenship and care, to try to attend all circles *until the young person is successfully placed in a tertiary course or a job* and to continue to be there for him/her should the young person subsequently request a Circle or get in trouble with the police or the courts. Core members would actually sign a contract to keep meeting and helping the young person until that tertiary or job placement was accomplished.

Core Members would normally include:

- Parents or Guardians
- Brothers and sisters

- One grandparent selected by the young person
- One aunt, uncle or cousin selected by the young person
- A 'buddy', an older child from the school selected by the young person
- A pastoral adult carer from the school selected by the young person (normally, but not necessarily, a teacher)
- A neighbour, sporting coach, parent of a friend or any other adult member of the community selected by the young person as a mentor

Casual Members could include:

- Current teachers of the young person
- Current girlfriend or boyfriend
- Closest mates nominated by the young person
- Professionals brought in by the facilitator or parents (e.g. drug counsellor, employer from an industry in which the young person would eventually like to work)
- The victim of an act of bullying or delinquency and victim supporters

The Circle would commence with the facilitator introducing new members and reading the young person's six-month and long-term life goals as defined by him or her at the last meeting (six months ago). The young person would then be invited to summarise how he/she had got on with the six-month objectives and in what ways his/her life goals had changed in that period. In good circles, this would be followed by a series of celebratory speeches around the circle about what had been accomplished and the efforts that had been made. The crucial skill of the facilitator would be to elicit affirmation for accomplishment and offers of help (as opposed to criticism) when there was a failure of accomplishment. Gathering together for the ritual is all the communal signalling needed to show that accomplishment matters; personal criticism on top of this is only likely to foster rejection of the value of accomplishment. Indeed, through the ritual interpretation of poor accomplishment as a communal failure to give a young person the help they need, young people are less likely to interpret poor performance as reason for rejection by those they initially identify with. Rejection of the rejectors and devaluing accomplishment is less likely when there is a community of care who share the burden to build accomplishment come what may—unconditional support.

Normally, expert adults relevant to the six-month life goals would then be invited to comment (the mathematics teacher on a mathematics improvement goal; the school counsellor on improving relationships). Members of the Circle who had undertaken to provide agreed help towards those goals would be asked to report on whether they had managed to deliver it (Auntie Pat reporting whether they had managed to get together for an hour a week to help with maths homework).

In light of this discussion, the young person would be asked his/her thoughts on goals for the next six months and others would be invited to comment on this topic.

The facilitator would then ask the young person first, then all other participants, if they saw any other challenges in the young person's life where care and support might be needed. Whether new goals were needed to respond to these challenges would be discussed.

If no one else raised it, the facilitator would ask the young person and then his/her peers: 'Do your friends and other kids at school help you to achieve your goals or do they sometimes tempt you to do the wrong thing?' Responses to this are discussed by everyone and suggestions for action might be raised.

The facilitator then announces a tea break during which relevant sub-groups (e.g. the nucelar family, the young person's mates) might meet together informally to

discuss a plan of action to propose to the Circle. Everyone is asked to think during the break about whether any new objectives or plans should be considered after the break.

The Circle reconvenes to discuss these issues and ends with the young person reading out his/her new goals and the names of members who have agreed in some way to provide help or support towards them. An adult member should be nominated as responsible for ensuring specific and important things be done on time. The facilitator checks that these adult members are happy to take on these obligations. The meeting is closed with thanks to the participants for their care and citizenship.

Over the years, the emphasis on the Circle would shift from educational and relationship challenges to the challenge of securing employment. With young people who were not doing well at school, special efforts would be made by the Core Members of the Circle to bring in Casual Members who might be able to offer work experience, advice on skill training and networking for job search.

A RITUAL OF LOVE

The foregoing makes the Circle seem a dry affair—rather like an expanded parent–teacher interview. For it to change lives, however, it would have to break out of this formal bureaucratic mould to become a ritual of caring in the way good restorative justice circles work. The literature on restorative justice conferences shows that love is central to understanding what makes them succeed. Nathan Harris's (1999) research on Canberra conferences concludes that reintegration (as opposed to stigmatisation) of offenders is critical to success. The attitude item with the highest loading on the reintegration factor in a factor analysis of offender attitudes toward the conference was 'During the conference did people suggest they loved you regardless of what you did?' In court cases, this item had the lowest loading on the reintegration factor of all the reintegration items. In short, the feeling by the offender that they were in receipt of unconditional love seems a crucial ingredient for the success of circles. And so, we hypothesise, with the Youth Development Circle.

The key ingredient for social capital formation that neither good education systems nor dysfunctional families can adequately supply is love. In conditions of modernity, even functional families lack sufficient ritual occasions to communicate how deeply they care about the child and how much they admire her efforts to develop her capacities. The rituals we do have—weddings, funerals, graduation, bar mitzvahs—are too few in the life of moderns. Village life had various low-key rituals around the campfire to compensate for this. Moderns must create new rituals of love and care that are meaningful in a modern setting and that can transmit modern endowments for success in life. This is the idea of holistic Youth Development Circles.

THEORY OF WHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CIRCLES MIGHT SUCCEED

There is a lot of failure in existing programmes to deal with youth problems such as poor school performance, hatred of the school as an institution, truancy, bullying, drop-out, drug abuse, delinquency, suicide, homelessness and unemployment. They fail because they approach young people as isolated individuals. Youth development circles would not aspire to treat isolated individuals targeted because of their problems (and thereby stigmatising them as individuals). They would seek to *help young people*

develop in the context of their communities of care. The help would not stigmatise as it would be provided universally to young people in a school, not just to the problem students. The young people themselves would be empowered with a lot of say over who those supporters would be. Circles would be a move to find something better than seeking to solve educational problems by one-on-one encounters with the school counsellor, drug problems by individual encounters with rehabilitation services, employment by one-on-one interviews at job placement services, youth suicide by public funding of psychiatrists. Certainly, one of the aspirations of circles would be to embed choices to opt for such rehabilitative services in networks of support that build commitment to make them work. But the aspiration is bigger than that.

Cultures of disadvantage are grounded in failures of families and peers with whom young people are most strongly bonded to value and nurture learning. Regular out-of-school help with things as simple as reading stories improves literacy. The accumulated evidence of the discipline of criminology is that social support is one of the strongest predictors of crime prevention (Cullen, 1994). The research on bullying in schools shows that it can be halved by restorative whole-school approaches grounded in utilising the social bonds that operate across a school (Olweus, 1993). The evidence from studies of successful job searches is that one-on-one job placement services are less important than access to personal networks of knowledgable people who care enough about the unemployed person to help them with leads, contacts and introductions (Granovetter, 1974). Informal networking seem to be no less the stuff of getting professional, technical and managerial jobs than of blue collar jobs (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1371). Crucial elements of social capital, such as trust and trustworthiness, are learnt in trusting relationships. Yamagishi and Yamagishi's wonderful Japanese programme of trust research shows that trust builds social intelligence, that you have to learn to take the risk of trusting others to learn how to make wise judgements about who is trustworthy (Yamagishi, 2000). It is this kind of social intelligence that makes young people employable. Human and social capital, in short, are constituted by informal circles of social support. The theory of Youth Development Circles is that an institutional infrastructure would be created to foster the emergence of this informal support, that this institutionalisation would also build a citizenship obligation to participate in circles and that the circles would lend ritual power to informal support. Gathering in the Circle creates a sense of an occasion where it is appropriate to raise certain things, to articulate certain emotions of concern or admiration. Heimer and Straffen (1995) have shown that in contexts where those with power are dependent on people who are normally stigmatised, social regulation of those people is in fact highly reintegrative. In their study, hospital staff from intensive care wards treated young black single mothers highly reintegratively—because they were dependent on those young mothers to hang in with their unhealthy babies and take them off the hospital's hands. The Australian convict colony treated convicts in a highly reintegrative rather than stigmatising way because there was a labour shortage which meant the colony was dependent on convict labour (Braithwaite, 2001). As a result of this reintegration, the convict colony became a low-crime society in the 19th century. The Youth Development Circle is an attempt to lock people into a similarly reintegrative institutional dynamic. The only way for the citizens in the circle to end the obligations to attend meetings and offer practical help to the young person is to get them into a steady job or a tertiary institution. Stigmatising them, giving up on them, will be seen in the circle as likely to delay that release.

ENRICHING CIVIL SOCIETY

Circles might help educate all of our children for democracy itself. Democratic deliberation is learnt, but our society does not teach it to the young. Being a beneficiary of care, of cooperative problem-solving when one is young, may be the best way to learn to become caring, dutiful democratic citizens as adults. Such citizens who are creative in co-operative deliberation not only build strong democracies but are also able workforces which attract investment (see Putnam, 1993). The hidden curriculum of Youth Development Circles would therefore be giving the young the literacy to live in civil society, learning to listen, to accommodate the perspectives of others in setting their own goals. Democracy cannot flourish without citizens who are educated for excellence in governing their own lives (Barber, 1992). Youth Development Circles are in sum an idea for deliberative education that democratises education as it serves as an education for democracy.

If a programme of Research and Development of the idea showed that Youth Development Circles did meet some of its aspirations in a major way, it would create a case for a new tripartite view of obligations of citizenship:

1. A citizenship obligation to be the primary supporter of the education and development of any child one parents.
2. A citizenship obligation to be a secondary supporter of more than one child beyond one's own children until infirmity excuses us.
3. An obligation of the state to assign a facilitator to ensure that no child misses the benefits of the obligations in 1 and 2.

These are different from the mostly disrespected obligations to attend Parents and Citizens' Association meetings and bake cakes for them. They are obligations to come along to help a particular child whom they love, to whom they have a professional obligation or who has nominated them as someone the child respects. The citizenship obligation to be a supporter of at least one child should not expire with retirement, only with infirmity. The special wisdom that comes with age incurs a special obligation to spend time with the young for passing on that wisdom to a new generation. As elders have lost their seat at the informal rituals of the campfire, respect for elders has been one of the most unfortunate casualties of modernity. Respect for the elders is the missing cement of modern civil society. Old people feel it and for this reason have enormous untapped reserves of willingness to serve the young.

At the other end of the age spectrum, older buddies of the child are especially important. Buddy selection should be driven by a combination of the child's preference for another she identifies with and by the objective of matching children with weak endowments with buddies having the strongest endowments. This is a strength of weak ties argument (Granovetter, 1973). The child with a network low in human and social capital is given a bridge into the social capital of the network of the buddy with wonderful endowments. For the highly endowed buddy, who has few problems at school, a central issue in her own circle becomes setting objectives about helping her younger buddy to succeed—learning to lead, learning to be a builder of civil society. Endowed children would be taught in the circle how to mobilise their own networks to help less endowed buddies—partly through observing how adult leaders mobilise networks to help *them*. The key idea of the circle is that generational help begets help as a dynamic in civil society.

THINKING ABOUT R & D ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CIRCLES

In a sense R & D has already been under way since 1991 as restorative justice circles rather like these have been operating in Queensland schools to deal more narrowly with delinquency and behaviour problems (Cameron & Thornborne, 2000). The preliminary evidence is most encouraging (Braithwaite, 1999).

The first priority with R&D more specifically focused on Youth Development Circles would be disadvantaged high schools. Success there could lead on to pilots in primary schools and high schools that are not disadvantaged. Preliminary trials should be qualitative and process oriented. Experimentation would be needed with different ways of running Circles, different invitation lists, different kinds of follow-up, different kinds of training for facilitators. Evaluation measures would have to be piloted.

Then perhaps 10–20 volunteer pilot schools might learn how to manage Youth Development Circles for at least 50 students. An independent review committee might then report to government on whether the preliminary R & D to that point was sufficiently encouraging to proceed with random assignment of say 2000 Year 8 students, 1000 to Youth Development Circles, 1000 to traditional parent-teacher interviews. Each school would then be able to compare at least 50 Circle students with 50 students who continue with traditional parent-teacher interviews. Randomisation would ensure that the two groups were identical in all respects except the Circle intervention.

Data would be collected from these 2000 students (with informed consent from students and parents) annually on:

- School marks
- Self-reported enjoyment of school and learning
- Truancy
- Bullying and victimisation by bullies
- School-reported behaviour problems
- Drop-out
- Employment after drop-out
- Strength of family bonds
- Homelessness
- Self-reported drug use
- Self-reported suicide proneness and depression that predicts actual suicide and attempted suicide (though statistical power may not be sufficient in the latter case even over 10 years for 2000 cases)
- Self-reported delinquency
- Police-recorded delinquency

The process of monitoring these outcomes should continue until evidence of failure or success is clear. Clear failure can be revealed quite quickly under this methodology. Clear success on unemployment reduction would require a decade of follow-up for 12-year-olds.

At any point during this decade, it might be decided that the accumulated weight of the evidence was sufficient to resource the program beyond the experimental schools. In the first instance, these might be volunteer schools invited to innovate on improving the successful experimental protocol.

WHY THE COST OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CIRCLES MIGHT BE SELF-LIQUIDATING

Youth Development Circles would be costly. The biggest costs would be born privately by the citizens who gave time to the Circles, to being mentors to young people, to helping them find jobs, to helping them with their science experiments. A cadre of Youth Development Facilitators would also be a substantial burden on the public purse. The off-setting saving on both fronts from replacing parent-teacher interviews would be modest.

However, the offsetting economic benefits of having a more employable workforce, a more socially skilled and committed workforce, might be massive in comparison. The most obvious benefits are with those children who have cost the criminal justice and youth welfare system over a million pounds by the time they are teenagers by virtue of their delinquency and drug abuse. As a universal programme Circles would seek to give problem-free children the social support to set themselves ever-higher goals for excellence, to discover that it might not be uncool after all to be a 'try-hard'. The hope is for enhanced economic performance by nurturing innovation and accomplishment at the top of the curve as well.

The intangible benefits of job creation through acquiring more innovative business leaders with enhanced social intelligence and educational accomplishment acquired as a result of Circles would be impossible to measure, except through the crude proxy of how wealthy these individuals are ten years on. However, the reduced levels of crime, drug abuse and unemployment among 1000 experimental children compared to 1000 control children over 10 years of follow-up could be readily costed and measured against the cost of running the Circles for those 1000 children.

CULTURAL PLURALISM IN IMPLEMENTATION

Obviously there would be great cultural variation in the appropriate ways of implementing Youth Development Circles. One of the depressing things about working on new approaches to tackling unemployment through education or nurturing capital investment in some other way is that they invariably seem more feasible in rich nations than in the poorest nations where investment is most needed. The institutional innovation therefore becomes another way the gap is widened between rich and poor nations. Youth Development Circles are a rare case where the reverse may be true. We have assumed the worst in our analysis—that there exists no village that can be mobilised as a resource to raise a child. But of course in the poorest of nations there are still villages. Creative institutional design might link human and social capital development to persisting extra-familial networks. These networks might be harnessed as an underexploited comparative advantage of pre-modern societies in modern conditions of capital formation.

I will use Bali as a brief case study for two reasons. First, some readers will be familiar with the culture because it is a tourist destination. Second, it is an extreme case of the comparative advantage I have in mind since modernisation came so late to Bali. Due to its lack of good ports, the Dutch did not bother colonising the southern half of the island until 1906. In Bali *every* citizen is a member of a banjar, the traditional social hub of village life. This has been true since at least AD 914 (Eiseman, 1990, p. 72). The banjar is both a physical meeting place and a social organisation for cooperative work groups, education, Hindu religious instruction[3], family and community health plan-

ning, management and conservation of the environment and various other cooperative efforts in a village. But even in the large city of Denpasar everyone belongs to a banjar. Indeed Eiseman (1990, p. 88) reports that banjars do such a good job of both adult and child literacy training that there are some banjars in Denpasar without a single illiterate member.

That said, things are far from rosy in Bali, especially with the collapse of the tourist industry in the wake of the Indonesian instability since 1997. While banjar-level commitment to basic education in literacy and Hindu teaching is high, motivating high levels of formal education, constant innovation to find more efficient practices to traditional economic activities (in agriculture for example) often is not the stuff of banjar enthusiasm. Yet surely if the Indonesian state wants to enthuse the populace of Bali about encouraging their children into higher levels of educational accomplishment, into a learning-innovation culture, then the banjar stands ready as the vehicle for accomplishing that. In the Bali context, banjars could graft Youth Development Circles as a banjar institution, and this might give them more clout in human and social capital formation than could ever be hoped for in Western cities.

CONCLUSION

Youth Development Circles are a policy idea to address the dual structural problem of human/social capital formation in late modernity. This is that (a) intergenerational ties that compensated for human and social capital deficits of the nuclear family have unravelled and that (b) formal education bureaucracies cannot compensate for such deficits when they are informal, when they are about love and dependent on intimate circuits of endowment-building beyond the school. This is best accomplished by bringing into a circle around the young person a combination of those she most loves and those she most identifies with—in the hope that the latter will in time come to count among those she loves and those who most encourage her to strive for her goals. It is a hope for a world where funerals become rituals that honour us not only for the care we have extended to our children, but also for the love and help we have granted to children in circles, children we have embraced into our own family, friendship and economic networks, particularly during old age. The idea is to multiply the meaning of care and intimacy in a life through better institutional sharing of the burden of parents during their period of peak load by asking peers and older citizens to work harder at passing on their wisdom during the periods when their burdens of care are lowest. In turn, if Circles succeed in extending ripples of love, we might hope that when children blossom into young adults some might share some of the burdens of care for the old folk who have shown love to them. At both ends, this might help relieve the inequitable burdens of care currently born by post-motherhood women.

The programme we are proposing would not be cheap. Problems such as youth crime and drug abuse involve a staggering cost to the community and there is encouraging evidence now from meta-analyses that educational development may have a significant impact on these problems (Pearson & Lipton, 1999). Moreover, Youth Development Circles are a type of programme that is amenable to random assignment of a sufficiently large number of cases to assess readily measurable costs (such as salaries) and benefits (such as crime reduction) with impressive statistical power. Hence, a government bold enough to spend an eight-figure sum on a decade of R&D would be in a position to ascertain with a high degree of confidence whether my hypothesis that benefits would

far exceed costs is wrong. The magnitude of the policy objective of upgrading human and social capital might justify the boldness of the experimentation proposed.

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NOTES

[1] One alternative kind of program that seeks to confront this challenge is the Responsible Citizenship Program in Canberra schools. It invites parents and supporters of children to participate in a process that makes conflict resolution an explicit part of the school curriculum. The program's hidden curriculum is building responsible citizenship (see Morrison, forthcoming). Another is the Lewisham Primary School connect project in Sydney (Blood, 1999).

[2] And in doing so we do not seek to devalue existing approaches to building school–community, professional–public partnerships for problem solving, such as those mentioned in the last footnote.

[3] Non-Hindu banjar members are excused from these aspects of banjar obligations.

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Correspondence: Professor John Braithwaite, Law Program, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200, Australia.