

BUILDING THE VILLAGE:

**EXPLORING SOCIAL CAPITAL AS THE
VEHICLE FOR STRENGTHENING
RESILIENCY IN YOUTH**

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INTRODUCTION

During the decade of the 90's, youth development thinking was profoundly reshaped by an increased recognition of, interest in, and subsequent focus on, the powerful influence that a child's environment can exert on his or her development on the way to adulthood. In earlier decades, the field was preoccupied by a focus on why kids fail. And it was convinced that providing services aimed at ameliorating the behaviors, risk factors, and other influences that cause kids to fail, would improve youth outcomes. But a growing dissatisfaction, with the disappointing results of these service-based intervention strategies and demonstrations,¹ led many in the field to ponder a different question early in the decade — and that is, How and why it is that some kids *succeed* where others fail?

This new way, of posing the question, led to an increasing interest in the youth resiliency literature and, consequently, to a profound change in the way the field now views the youth development challenge. Whether expressed in terms of risk and protective factors² or developmental assets,³ the field has begun to think beyond the confines of behavioral difficulties, and their antecedent conditions, to focus on the support systems available to youth and on the positive influences those systems can exert on a host of attributes important to youth development. The realization, that those support systems are bound in communities and neighborhoods, has given new impetus to efforts to further explore and better understand the roles that community influences and neighborhood effects play in the lives of young people.

Indeed, it has become clearer to all that youth resiliency is a function of youth environments. And if we hope to one day affect a "material" change in the status and success rates of our young people, we need to better understand how we might intercede in those environments to increase youth resiliency and thereby make neighborhoods and communities more nurturing, more supportive and more protective of positive youth development.

Building a "Village:" Why the focus on social capital?

But how does one think about making an entire community more child friendly and youth supportive? The answer lies in the attitudes and behaviors of neighborhood residents toward their young people and in whether, within those neighborhoods, it is possible to enlist residents in collective efforts to create and maintain a normative structure of positive supports for children and youth. By that, we mean a culture of caring and an expectation, among adult residents in particular, that the welfare of the neighborhood's children will be a matter of shared importance and communal attention. Unfortunately, in

¹ In the National Research Council's seminal 1993 report, its Panel on High Risk Youth proclaimed that inadequate attention to youth environments is the primary reason for the failures of our youth development interventions. See Panel on High Risk Youth. 1993. *Losing Generations: Adolescents in High Risk Settings*. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

² Benard, Bonnie. 1991. *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School and Community*. San Francisco, CA: Northwest Regional Laboratory.

³ Benson, Peter L. 1997. *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

my own recent work, *Spheres of Influence*,⁴ outlining a new framework for community youth development, I have asserted that these positive Community Supports are the least well understood of the three spheres of influence on youth development.⁵

Community supports can be thought of as a function of a community's social capital. As we will explore further below, social capital is an intangible resource that exists in the relationships among persons.⁶ It takes specific form in the level of trust within a social environment and the extent to which people feel connected and obligated to one another.⁷ Many social scientists now believe that this social capital is a major asset in a community's effort to pursue improvement and change strategies to increase community welfare. But it presumes that certain levels of trust, interaction and engagement exist among community residents in order for it to function in this way. It further presumes that people have a willingness and ability to act collectively in the greater interests of their community. Unfortunately, these presumptions fail in many communities, particularly in poor, urban ones; and particularly in regard to supporting their young people.

Simply put, if "it takes a village to raise a child," you first have to have a village — a community that is, in many senses, "communal" — a place where adults share a set of common interests, beliefs and/or goals for themselves, for their young people, and/or for their community, and are willing to organize and maintain themselves, as a group, to pursue and preserve them; a place where residents feel, and can act upon, the connectedness and obligation they share toward one another for their mutual benefit. Indeed, it is the capacity of communities to engender and sustain, in their residents, a sense of collective stake holding in their young people, and consequently, an interest and involvement in issues affecting their welfare that is the focus here.

A Statement of the Challenge

Again, and unfortunately, there is ample evidence, particularly in the distressed communities where at-risk young people live, that this village does not exist — that the social fabric and "neighboring behaviors" of these communities have been strained and torn by the ravages of increasing, and increasingly concentrated, poverty and isolation; and by the arrival of cheaper and more addictive drugs along with the rivalries, the violence and the fear that those drugs introduce. Still, if young people in these communities are to grow into positive adult roles, means must be found to help their communities become more supportive of that growth. Indeed, in *Spheres of Influence*, I conclude that, "strengthening the social fabric of communities may be the transformation most essential to improving the health and welfare of young people in distressed neighborhoods."⁸ In short, we need to build that village. The problem, however, is that no one knows how to do that — yet.

⁴ Hyman, James B. 1999. *Spheres of Influence: A Strategic Synthesis and Framework for Community Youth Development*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Pg. X.

⁵ The other two spheres represent Programs and Services delivered to youth and families, and the Opportunity Structure that provides avenues for meaningful experiences, constructive use of time, participation and contribution.

⁶ Coleman, J.S. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," in *American Journal of Sociology*. 94: S95-S120.

⁷ Temkin, Kenneth and William Rohe. 1998. "Social Capital and Neighborhood Stability: An Empirical Investigation." *Housing Policy Debate* 9(1):61-88.

⁸ Hyman, Op. Cit. Pg. X.

The challenge relates to how we conceive of investing in community social structures in order to produce or enhance community social capital. This is a difficult question because, while the literature has come a long way, over the last decade, in clarifying how the concept of social capital applies to communities, less is known about how to create it. And though many of the nation's community building efforts are directed towards strengthening social organization, no "science" has yet either evolved, or been applied, that prescribes how this might be done in any systematic and reliable way.

Even more particularly, none of the estimated 55 communities engaged in the nation's Comprehensive Community Initiatives are explicitly focused on youth development or on the need to change the social and cultural norms, attitudes and behaviors that may negatively impact the futures of youth. These types of transformations require looking deep within communities to better understand how to manipulate and deploy their social capital — the role models, the cultural norms, the standards for behavior and discipline, and the levels of social organization and engagement — in order to form the kind of supportive environment in which we might hope to have our children grow and define themselves.

The set of "messages" communicated in these environments, and the meanings youth assign to them, are pivotally important to establishing resiliency — messages that speak to self-identity and self-worth and hence self-esteem; messages that speak to group identity, belonging and participation; messages that speak to competence, efficacy and achievement; and messages that speak to, and condition, youth aspirations and the motivation to achieve them.

So, it is imperative, in this author's view, that we learn more about how communities work and how they can be *made to work* for young people. As such, in the proceeding, we will explore the concept of social capital as a means of discerning whether there are any "handles" in community processes that can offer leverage in increasing the community supports that will foster greater resiliency in our children.

EXPLORING SOCIAL CAPITAL AS VEHICLE FOR BUILDING THE VILLAGE

This paper addresses itself to the challenge of "building the village" (strengthening community supports) as a means of increasing youth resiliency. Its approach to this challenge is propelled by two assumptions alluded to earlier: first, that youth resiliency is a function of community supports (and the "messages" they contain); and second, that those supports (e.g. their strength and quality) are founded, fundamentally, on the attitudes and behaviors of the community's individual (and primarily) adult members. If one accepts these assumptions as reasonable constructions, then it follows that one, if not the primary, goal of community youth development should be to enlist the participation of the largest possible proportion of neighborhood residents in activities that provide positive experiences and impart positive messages to their young people.

There are two questions implicit here. One is: what kinds of positive activities and messages should communities undertake and provide? This is the question that, in this author's judgment, currently occupies most of the field. For instance, I would argue that the Youth Mobilization strategies of AED's Center for Youth Development, and the CCYD Demonstration launched by Public/Private Ventures, Inc., along with the Healthy

Communities Initiative of the Search Institute, are each focused principally on the question: What can/should communities do?

But the second question, which I perceive as the more pressing, yet least investigated, is: How can we increase a community's willingness and ability to act collectively for kids *regardless* of the particular thing(s) it might choose to do? Restated: How can we enlist the participation of entire neighborhoods in becoming more supportive of their young people? This is the question that we will pursue here. In the following pages then, we will explore the concept of social capital, and its various properties and dimensions. We do so in an effort to discern whether the construct offers a useful way of thinking about how people act collectively to produce positive community outcomes more generally and later consider its implications for increasing community supports for youth (building the village). We begin with issues of definition.

What is Social Capital?

The phrase Social Capital is intended to describe an asset — a real resource that can accumulate and that can be drawn upon and put to particular use. The concept serves a useful purpose in social science in that it draws attention to the social structures within communities that economists and other proponents of "rational actor" models tend to ignore. The rational actor model tends to fall short in depicting community behaviors. It assumes that individuals will always behave in ways that maximize their own welfare and, consequently, it fails to account for occasions when groups of individuals act collectively in ways that may subordinate their individual interests for the greater good.

The failure of the rational actor model can be seen in several illustrations. For instance, the "Tragedy of the Commons" is an example where optimal solutions cannot be reached because individual incentives to over consume a public good (sheep grazing on the Boston Commons) go unreconciled and ultimately reduce the welfare of the entire community. The game of "Chicken" is another example wherein a head on collision can be avoided only if one or both of the contestants "flinch." But because the first to flinch loses, a dynamic is created where neither may flinch and they both may lose.

These dilemmas invariably produce no win scenarios using the rational actor model because the model provides individuals with no mechanism or incentive to act collectively. But people tend to cooperate with each other much more frequently than they would be predicted to. Rational model gaming theorists, who have simulated collective action, have been able to achieve positive scenario outcomes only by imposing strict conditions on the "game."⁹ But the conditions, under which the simulated optimal outcomes are obtained, almost never occur in practice. So, the primary reason we care about the sociology of collective action is that the rational economic paradigm often runs us into a blind alley when applied to community affairs. This accounts in part for the rising popularity of the social capital construct as a way of explaining why it is that people so often cooperate when it may not be "rational" for them to do so.

⁹ Such conditions might require: that there be repeated trials where the results of various actions can be observed and understood; that each participant have perfect information about past actions and the payoffs of those actions; that participants employ tit-for-tat strategies where they agree to do something only on the condition that others do as well; and/or that participant's interests have sufficiently long term horizons to prevent defection.

In the youth development context, similar dilemmas occur. We know for instance that successful parenting in low-income communities often takes the form of family isolation strategies wherein parents practice an "ideology of difference" — a kind of "shielding" strategy that emphasizes separation from others in the community. "We're different. We don't belong here. This is only temporary." And though that may work, in some cases, for particular families, such strategies are an anathema to the optimal goal of building broad based community support for kids. Similarly, the parallel and also common reaction of some neighborhood adults, to seclude themselves out of fear of the streets, may also be a rational response from the individual's perspective but again unproductive from the standpoint of community welfare. For our purposes then, exploring the concept of social capital offers us a means and an opportunity to consider these individual rational decisions and behaviors and discern the conditions under which they might be changed and/or redirected to achieve positive results in communal rather than individual outcomes. But we need to be clear about what these terms mean. So, what exactly is social capital?

Alternative Definitions

Portes¹⁰ attributes the first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital to Pierre Bourdieu¹¹ who, in 1985, 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 institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." This definition suggests that social capital has two parts: the relationships that allow individuals to have access to resources possessed by others, and the amount and quality of the resources themselves. But because it was written in French, Bourdieu's perspective has not gained widespread recognition in the U.S.

Perhaps the two best-known proponents of social capital in the U.S. are James Coleman and Robert Putnam. James Coleman's work states that "social capital is created when relations among people change in ways that facilitate action."¹² Putnam, on the other hand, believes that "social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."¹³

Three critical elements of social capital can be gleaned from these interpretations. The first is that social capital is an asset — a capital asset representing a collection of resources. Of the three authors, Bourdieu is alone in explicitly acknowledging this resource base that social capital represents.

The second implication here is that these resources are embedded in relationships. In other words, the fact that these resources are accessed through relationships is what makes this form of capital "social." Bourdieu and Coleman state this directly while, in Putnam, it is to be inferred from his focus on social networks, norms and trust.

¹⁰ Portes, A. 1998. *Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Society*. Annual Review of Sociology. 24:1 - 24.

¹¹ Bourdieu, P. 1985. the Forms of Capital. In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.G. Richardson. Pp. 241-58. New York: Greenwood.

¹² Coleman, J.S. 1988a. *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital*. American Journal of Sociology. 94:S95 - 121. Pg. 100.

¹³ Putnam, R.D. 1995. *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*. Journal of Democracy. 6:65 - 78.

The third element is the notion that social capital is directed and purposeful. Bourdieu is silent on this point while Coleman clearly conditions the existence of social capital on the facilitation of action and Putnam's formulation implies purpose by asserting that the networks facilitate coordination and cooperation. So, for our purposes, we will combine these insights into a unifying definition: Social capital is an asset representing actionable resources that are contained in, and accessible through, a system of relationships.¹⁴

"Dimensions" (Forms) of Social Capital

Coleman identifies six forms of social capital — six dimensions of our relationships with others that can form the basis for our ability to act: mutual obligations, information, norms, authority relations, appropriable social organization, and intentional organization. In his formulation, social capital can be based on any one or any number of these dimensions. Each is independently sufficient to the creation of social capital.

Close observation however reveals that this is not a list of like items. The first four dimensions seem to be "elemental" in nature (i.e. fundamental and perhaps irreducible components of social capital) whereas the last two seem to derive from the first four. For instance, it may be, that obligations, information, norms and authority are the bases upon which social relations are built and that "appropriable social organization" is about somehow directing those relationships or capacities to some particular purpose. Similarly, "intentional organization" is a deliberate attempt to create a forum for collective action toward a specific end.

The difference between these latter two dimensions seems to relate to the base strength of the relationships on which the collective action is being built. Appropriable Social Organization assumes a fairly strong network of existing relationships whereas Intentional Organization assumes much weaker ties, or none at all. Still, there seems to be a difference in kind between the first four and these latter two items in Coleman's formulation. Below we describe these dimensions in more detail and speculate on their utility across the various contexts to which social capital is often applied (e.g., between individuals, families, organizations, neighborhoods, communities and states).

Mutual Obligation, as a dimension of (basis for) social capital, reflects the expectation that persons will act according to explicit or implicit agreements they have with one another. Person A does something that benefits person B and that, in turn, becomes the basis for person A's entitlement to a claim on some future action or service from person B. Trustworthiness and one's ability to accumulate and hold "debt" influence this form of social capital.¹⁵

¹⁴ We should be clear here that social capital is an asset that can also manifest itself in negative ways. Organized crime, street gangs and the Klu Klux Klan are examples. But from a community perspective it would be interesting to speculate as to whether having negative social capital may be better than none at all. Perhaps the potential to redirect negative forms of social organization to positive purposes might be better than having a community be socially disorganized. It may be, for instance, that even depleted, crime ridden neighborhoods may have capacity for positive action if means can be found to redirect whatever organizational energies might exist there.

¹⁵ There are likely other forms of obligation however that do not conform to this "rational" approach of transaction and exchange. Person A, for instance, might do a service because it is expected rather than in anticipation of a return. This may be an example of action driven by norms and less by "mutual" obligation. In this case A may be fulfilling an obligation to himself, his community or his profession to behave in certain prescribed ways.

But it is conceivable that the value of mutual obligations, and its transactional focus, as a basis for forming social capital, may decline as the numbers of persons involved increase. Stated another way, it is easier to conceive of favors being swapped between and among individuals and families, for instance, than it is between and among institutions, neighborhoods, communities and states.¹⁶ And the implicit "pairwise" character of this dimension suggests that it may not be useful for our purposes in building the village. The practical difficulty inherent in finding a "least common denominator," among scores of pairwise obligations, precludes aggregating this form of social capital to the scale of an entire neighborhood. But, as we will discuss later, mutual obligation can be a powerful asset for connecting children, youth and families with resources that meet their more discrete goals and needs. And it follows then, that the larger and more diverse a family's social relations, the greater will be their potential access to a wider array of resources through this form of social capital.

Norms can also be a source of social capital. To the extent that they may influence behavior (i.e. constraining/sanctioning negative behaviors or encouraging positive ones), norms can have powerful effects on community life and collective community aspirations and action. Shared norms and values allow us to anticipate each other's behaviors and to expect certain things from one another because of our shared understandings. Those shared understandings, in turn, can add power to our relationships and can enhance our ability to act either as individuals or in groups.

But, unlike mutual obligation, it is likely that the power of norms, as a basis for creating social capital, is greatest at larger aggregations of people and action. For instance, what matter most, in the individual transactions cited above, are the preferences persons A and B have for the objects, services and/or terms of exchange. They probably care very little about what they have in common — norms, values or otherwise. At higher levels of participation and benefit, however, the exploitation of shared norms and values is, not only a powerful incentive for organization and action, but the very basis upon which civil societies are built. As such the establishment of new norms and expectations for adult and youth interactions and behaviors lies at the heart of our quest for the village.

Information becomes a form of social capital to the extent that relationships may impart knowledge that, in turn, facilitates action. For example, jobholders can be a source of social capital for job seekers needing information about job openings. But unlike the former two dimensions, we might expect information to be an important component of social capital regardless of how micro or macro the "stakes." Even in individual transactions, person A and person B must each have some information and understanding about what each possesses (objects or services) that can be the basis of the exchange. And similarly, at larger aggregations, information is also the critical element in the determination, clarification and communication of the issues to which social organization and social capital might be applied.

In our case, the village metaphor requires that a shared set of positive messages be communicated to and through neighborhood adults to neighborhood children and youth. What is important here then is achieving some level of consistency and density to these community messages. Be it block-by-block or neighborhood-by-neighborhood, communities need a shared set of expectations and standards for youth achievement and behavior. Even if these "rules" are largely unspoken, expectations that are both

¹⁶ Exception might be taken with regard to treaties or agreements between and among nations.

clear to youth, and consistent across adults, are an important component of community supports and an important contributor to resiliency in young people.

Equally important is the density of these expectations – that is, the larger the proportion of neighborhood residents subscribing to them, the more effectively they can be communicated and reinforced. Thus, a fundamental issue, in exploiting information as a source of social capital, is how to build or enhance community structures that are capable of enlisting substantial resident participation in formulating and transmitting positive development messages.

Authority relations involve the ability to influence others to do things on the basis of status differentials. Person A is able to obligate person B to do something by virtue of a superior claim or status relative to person B (e.g. person A is above person B in a hierarchy). This particular dimension is different from our usual notions of social capital as involving "lateral" relationships — that is, relationships among equals — as opposed to vertical ones. (This dimension also raises the question of whether social capital is something a group has or something a person has.) Authority relations can be the basis of "group" social capital to the extent that group members are willing to voluntarily acknowledge and accede to a form of organization based on leadership from some structure of hierarchical relations.

But these authority relations may be more effective, as bases for social organization and action, at lower levels of participation and benefit. Within the hierarchical structure that may exist among certain individuals and/or within families and organizations, authority relations may be very effective means for achieving positive outcomes. But in the less hierarchical world of neighborhoods, communities and states, authority relations probably work less well as catalysts for public action. As an example, neither my neighbor, nor my Mayor nor my Governor can compel me to get involved in a community issue or community organization.

In the context of our village, this dimension can be useful to the extent that means can be found to expand the authority structures established, for children and youth, by and within neighborhoods. In the vast majority, parents are clearly the primary authority figures for children and youth. But are there ways to encourage larger numbers of other neighborhood adults to assume more effective roles (*en loco parentis*) for neighborhood children, for instance?

Appropriable Social Organization and Intentional Organization are also regarded by Coleman as forms of social capital. But, as argued earlier, they can be more usefully thought of as means of redirecting the relationships that have their foundations in the first four dimensions. The conceptual value of "appropriable social organization" derives from the focus it provides on whether and how relationships built around a particular dimension or set of dimensions can be appropriated for, adapted to, and/or redirected towards, a particular goal. Consequently, it raises questions about the fungibility of relationships, that are grounded in one set of issues or circumstances, to other ends and purposes.

Intentional Organization, on the other hand, forces us to consider what it takes to create or strengthen social capital where we presume relationships are weak or do not exist. Thus intentional organization is a deliberate effort to erect/strengthen a structure of relationships to address a particular need or issue. And again, the difference between

these two dimensions appears to be whether relationships (built on norms and trust, information, mutual obligation and so forth) already exist and are relatively strong, or are relatively weak or have to be built from scratch.

Functions of Social Capital

In addition to its varying forms, the literature suggests that social capital also has two differing functions, bonding and bridging.¹⁷

Bonding capital is thought to function as a cohesive force in maintaining existing relationships. It does so by reinforcing and exploiting the bases of those relationships — things such as shared norms, values and objectives and/or common interests and/or characteristics such as ethnicity, culture, race, and religion. There is a vast number of factors that underlie human relationships and, presumably, each can be exploited to some extent to promote bonding. And by reinforcing the basis for our relationships, bonding capital gives them the potential to be long term and fungible across a variety of social issues and contexts. Indeed, it can be argued that bonding capital is the thing upon which Coleman's formulation of appropriable social organization relies. Coleman's appropriable social organization is premised on the ability to redirect existing bonded relationships.

This maintenance function of bonding capital is also important to promoting stability, civility and order and to establishing and enforcing social norms. Coleman provides the example of wholesale diamond markets in New York City where hundreds of thousands of dollars in gems may be confidently loaned out between merchants, for private appraisal and inspection, without any formal protections against fraud or theft.¹⁸ This is so because of a social structure among the merchants that is strongly "bonded." New York's diamond market is Jewish, with a high degree of intermarriage, living in the same Brooklyn community and attending the same synagogues. It is essentially a closed community and these close ties through family, community and worship provide the bonds that facilitate the market and enforce norms for integrity in business.

There is a lesson in this example that closely parallels our quest for the village. Like the diamond merchant community, the village is a metaphor for a closed environment where personal connections, communal obligations and behavioral expectations are well established, known and respected throughout the enclave. In either case, these shared understandings should function both to promote aspirations and behaviors that are positive and constructive for the community; and to sanction and inhibit behaviors that are negative and destructive to the community. In the context of urban neighborhoods, we could easily imagine better child and youth outcomes if there were ways to duplicate the interconnectedness of relationships in New York's wholesale diamond market.

In fact, Coleman speaks to these parallels directly. He suggests that the existence of these norms (in the wholesale diamond market) and their strength are results of "closure" in the community's social structure. In this formulation, bonding promotes the

¹⁷ In *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*, the authors, in interpreting Putnam, define two main types of social capital, "the type that brings closer together people who already know each other (we call this bonding capital) and the type that brings together people or groups who previously did not know each other (Putnam called this bridging capital..)." See, Gittel, Ross and Avis Vidal. 1998. *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications

¹⁸ Coleman, Op. Cit. Pg. S99.

formation of norms but closure determines their strength and effectiveness. The term closure is intended to suggest the degree of inter-connectedness in a social structure. Figure 1 illustrates the point.

Figure 1 represents two communities, (a) and (b), of parents and children. The point labeled A represents the parent of child B, and likewise, point D is the parent of child C. The vertical lines in each "community" represent the relationships between each parent (A and D) and each of their children (B and C) respectively. The horizontal lines represent relationships between peers — between the children B and C at school or in the neighborhood, and between the parents A and D in the community, at work, church or some other venue.

FIGURE 1

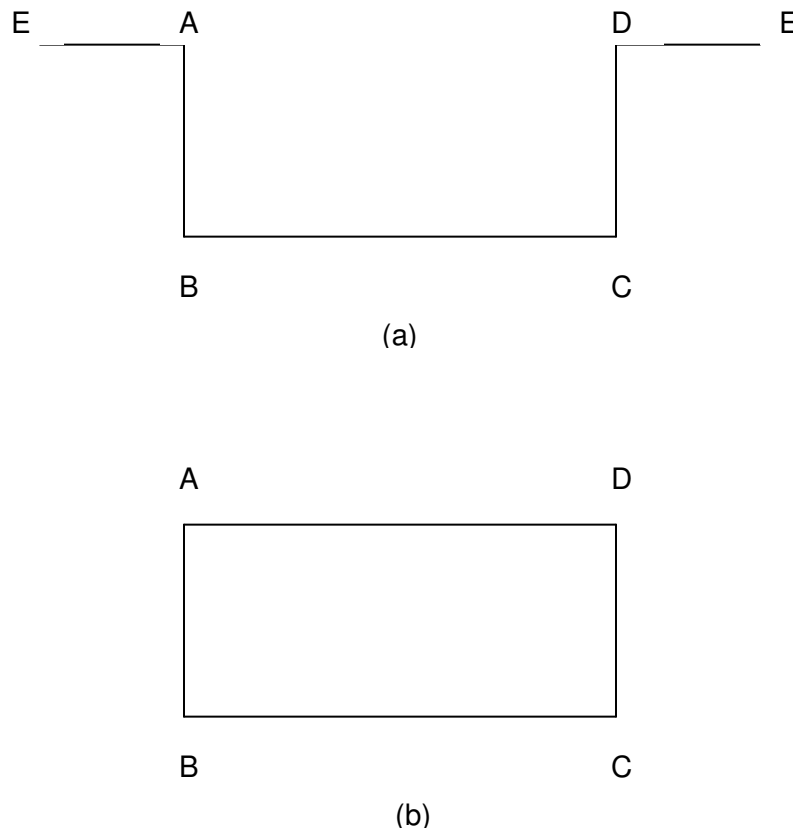


Fig. 1. — Network involving parent (A,D) and children (B,C) without (a) and with (b) intergenerational closure. Taken from: Coleman, J.S. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," in *American Journal of Sociology*. 94: S107.

Communities (a) and (b) differ, however, in the presence or absence of connections between the parents of these children. In (b), the parents' friends are the parents of their children's friends, while in (a), they are not. The consequence of this closure in (b) is a greater potential to monitor and guide the children's activities and behaviors and an

increased level of control over the kinds of exposures and influences to which they may be subjected. Parent A is reinforced by parent D in guiding and sanctioning child B's behavior and likewise for parent D and child C. Moreover, parents A and D become interchangeable as monitors and authority figures for both children. This suggests that increasing the level of closure in neighborhoods can reinforce and strengthen the norms and authority relations aspects of the community's social capital and hence its community supports for kids.

We conclude then that the degree of inter-connectedness among community members is an important ingredient in the formation and enforcement of community norms and expectations and that increasing this level of connectedness may be a key strategy for building community supports for children and youth. And there are immediate and practicable implications. Specifically, this suggests the need to create more links — both horizontally, between and among more adults, and particularly parents, in order to foster more intimate neighborly contact one with another; and vertically, between adults and children, so as to generate more familiarity and connection between larger numbers of neighborhood parents and neighborhood children and youth. In this scenario, bonding capital functions to promote the formation of norms and closure functions to strengthen those norms and expectations and make them enforceable and effective in promoting the desired social order — community supports for youth.

Bridging capital, on the other hand, is about bringing people together to form *new* relationships. This "bringing together" is an active and intentional act and not just a random, evolutionary, or happenstance phenomenon. Indeed, bridging capital is understood to be purposeful and transaction focused — based on the utility of a particular relationship or set of relationships to the attainment of a specific goal. In other words, and by contrast to bonding capital's focus on maintaining existing relationships, as a resource for establishing order, bridging capital can be thought of as the link to new relationships and to missing resources that may be needed to get things done. As such, it is particularly useful in connecting individuals and groups with capacities, expertise and information not available through their current networks. At the same time, however, its transaction focus makes it necessarily short term and limited in its application to issues, objectives and exchanges that lie outside of the original goal or transaction. Community policing offers an example of this type of capital.

Community Policing involves the residents of a neighborhood or community in "bridging" to each other, and to their local police precinct, in an effort to assist in the abatement of neighborhood crime. Research suggests that this application of social capital is associated with low levels of neighborhood crime¹⁹ and that it can effectively inoculate neighborhoods against the migration of crime from other hot spot areas that may be targeted for police intervention.²⁰ But research also suggests that community policing is not a good vehicle for creating sustainable social capital.²¹ The primary reason is that, if the effort is successful, the incentive for coming together in the first place is removed, and with it goes the energy that residents invested in operating collectively. Unless

¹⁹ Sampson, R.J., S. Raudenbush, and F. Earls (1997) "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy." *Science* 277: 918-24.

²⁰ Clarke, R.V., and D. Weisburd (1994). "Diffusion of Crime Control Benefits." In R.V. Clarke (ed.), *Crime Prevention Studies*, Vol. 2. Monsey, N.Y.: Criminal Justice Press.

²¹ Bennett, Susan F. 1995. "Community Organizations and Crime." *The Annals of the American Academy*:539. May 1995. Pg. 78.

people find another basis for their relationship, the culmination of the transaction (accomplishment of the goal) causes bridging capital to dissipate.

Moreover, we can reasonably conclude that it will be difficult to redirect that energy to other uses. For example, there is no basis for assuming that the energies devoted to a successful community policing effort in poor communities could be "rewired" to address other community needs such as improving educational accountability in the public schools, for instance. Why not? Well, for starters, the residents active in community policing tend to be older, retired persons for whom watching the neighborhood is a familiar and "uncostly" civic pastime that can be performed from the comfort of a living room chair. By contrast, volunteering in schools requires a much higher investment of effort with higher associated costs. Moreover, this relatively elderly population, with few if any remaining school aged children, may have little by way of residual interests or stakes in public education.

So, bridging capital, as shown through this example, may be relatively short lived and not be very fungible. There are certain circumstances under which this may not be true but those circumstances require finding, within a "bridged" relationship, a basis for bonding. If, for instance, through the community policing effort, participating residents expanded beyond their functional relationships into social ones as well, one could imagine friendships being formed that could be both lasting and the basis for action on other issues of mutual interest. In this case, relationships that would have begun with bridging would have transformed themselves into bonding relationships and, as bonding relationships, would be more appropriable to other uses. Still, our general conclusions remain the same — namely, that, to be sustainable, social capital must itself be built on sustainable relationships, bonding capital, and that social capital built on bridging bases alone will necessarily be short term and of limited value beyond its initial impetus.

In the youth development context, this suggests that bridging capital cannot be the basis for the kind of village-building and socialization spoken to above. Instead bridging capital can be viewed as a vehicle for connecting children, youth and families with the things they need — public assistance, jobs, housing, college admissions, legal services, etc. It is a mechanism for accessing and exploiting the knowledge and other resources possessed by others in the community who lie outside of but may be accessible through our immediate relationship networks. And again, it follows that the larger an individual's social network, the greater the potential to access bridged resources.

In many communities, the church plays a very important bridging function either formally by providing structured counseling and other programs of family assistance, or informally, as a venue where members can interact and "discover" the resources contained and accessible through some of their church relationships. An implication for the village is the need to provide more forums and venues for community interaction. If we can find ways to enlarge the networks of acquaintances that are available as resources to parents and families, we might expect to increase the social capital available to them and hence the potential for bridging to connect them to resources that meet their various needs.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR BUILDING THE VILLAGE

It has been our contention in this paper (as many others have also concluded) that youth resiliency is a major factor in determining why some kids succeed in circumstances where many others fail; and therefore, that bolstering resiliency in the nation's urban, poor and disadvantaged children is an imperative for our national efforts to significantly improve youth outcomes. But we have also asserted that youth resiliency is a function of youth environments and we appropriated the idea of "building the village" as the metaphor for the challenge we believe we face in strengthening the community supports that foster resiliency in young people.

The village metaphor describes a culture of caring and nurturance — a social order where there exists a normative community expectation that each and every adult has a responsibility (*en loco parentis*) for the welfare and guidance of village children; and where these norms govern the relationships between adults and children. And though it may not be reasonable to think that such a social order can be replicated in its entirety in today's urban context, there can be little doubt that increasing the amount of positive and nurturing contact between neighborhood adults and children will have positive results for youth futures. The challenge of course is to enlist a substantial proportion of neighborhood residents in a collective effort to provide positive activities and messages to their young people.

Our explorations of social capital and its definitions, dimension and functions all suggest that, in general, merely enlarging the social networks available to residents of poor neighborhoods would permit increased access to resources and improvements in their welfare. So, whether our concern is for the futures of neighborhood youth or any other community issue, one conclusion we can draw from this discussion is that providing more venues and incentives for more social interaction and connection among neighborhood residents is worthwhile and, I would argue, compelling.

But in the specific interests of youth, our discussion suggests that an *additional* challenge involves creating a positive youth development culture within neighborhoods — a culture that establishes new norms and expectations for adult relationships and for adult relationships with children; a culture that has high levels of closure in the neighborhood social networks (particularly of parents and children) and consequently, where adults are empowered to act as authority figures for youth; and a culture that transmits positive messages and provides positive activities for its young people. Establishing this culture means finding ways to build bonding capital around the issue of positive youth development — ways to rewire (appropriate) existing relationships to the cause of children and youth.

In severely depleted neighborhoods, it may require intentional organizing to strengthen relationship structures that may be weak or to build them where they may be lacking. In either case, it means finding ways to promote more social interaction and involvement between and among neighborhood residents and their children; and creating opportunities for residents to "bridge" to persons and organizations with access to the information and other resources to meet their varying and more specific needs.

The question that still remains, however, is "how?" How do we go about generating a higher level of community involvement in, and hence, communal responsibility for, the development of its young people? How do we create a greater sense of obligation and

connectedness among larger numbers of proximate adults and parents that can be instrumental in providing strong community supports for kids? These are difficult questions to be sure but they are not beyond our understanding. At this juncture, what is needed is a coherent conceptual vehicle that would assist a systematic exploration — an analytic framework that would allow us to better understand how and why (e.g. under what circumstances) people will band together, and subordinate their immediate individual interests, to pursue a greater communal benefit. Such a framework would help us formulate hypotheses and other researchable questions around which we might devise a set of well-reasoned intervention strategies whose efficacy could be tested through demonstration research.

For example, we need to better understand how to create the kind of civic engagement, connectedness and trust that this village metaphor implies. How can we encourage residents of distressed communities to expand their relationships and to be/get involved with larger numbers of adults and children outside their homes? We need to explore which organizations, venues and forums can be effective conduits for encouraging, expanding and maintaining these social networks. We need to discern strategies for how communities can craft, transmit and maintain a set of positive messages across large numbers of neighborhood residents and, through them, to neighborhood children and youth. And we need to explore what kinds of supports and "protections" resident adults will need to become more aggressively engaged in the lives of neighborhood children and youth?

These are but a few of the many difficult issues likely to arise in conjunction with our quest to build the village and provide the kinds of community supports that will help poor children become more resilient. But considering the paucity of results we have obtained to date by focusing almost exclusively on service strategies for youth development, the potential payoff of further research and program development in this area would seem sufficiently high to warrant our commitment to it. It is therefore the recommendation of this author that investments be made in the construction and testing of a framework for community youth development that can provide a systematic exposition for how communities can go about building effective community supports for children and youth through investments in community social capital.