Emancipation and Hope

By
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This article concludes that the best way to trigger the reciprocal relationship between hope and emancipation is to innovate with institutions that jointly build hope and emancipation. Handouts to the poor without nurturing optimism to empower themselves to solve their own problems are not the solution. Neither is a psychologism that builds hope without concrete support and the flow of resources needed for structural change. Cognitive change in how people imagine a better world, micro-institutional change (illustrated here with the "Emancipation Conference"), and macro-structural change must be strategically integrated for emancipatory politics to be credible.

Keywords: hope; optimism; empowerment; restorative justice; child welfare

The structure of this article will be first to discuss how hope has ceased being the virtue it once was and how this may foster disengagement and depression in late-modern peoples rather than emancipation. The essay posits a recursive relationship between hope and emancipation as fundamental to explaining wealth and poverty in capitalist societies. Young people are especially at risk of never learning how to grasp hope through emancipation and emancipation through hope. The article goes on to describe the concrete Californian idea of an Emancipation Conference that applies restorative justice principles to future building for young people in difficult circumstances. These conferences involve an explicit methodological commitment to identifying strengths and building out from them, as opposed to solving problems in young people's lives.

This strategy is then generalized in the idea of Youth Development Circles. It seeks to respond to what is conceived as the dual structural dilemma of human and social capital formation in contemporary economies. The first element of

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the dilemma is that with 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 limits in the capabilities of formal education bureaucracies to make up for deficits that, particularly in the case of social capital, are profoundly informal. More informal, flexibly networked compensatory institutions are needed for human and social capital formation, and this is the idea of the Youth Development Circle. We can be evidence based about experimenting with such ideas, learning by monitoring which micro interventions contribute to structural change (Dorf and Sabel 1998). A politics of emancipation (plans, resources for the poor, and concrete social support) recursively linked to a politics of hope—where hope happens through and with emancipation rather than before it and where emancipation also occurs through hope—may be a common element between the daily micro practice of Nelson Mandela (see Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa's article in this volume) and the Californian Emancipation Conferences.
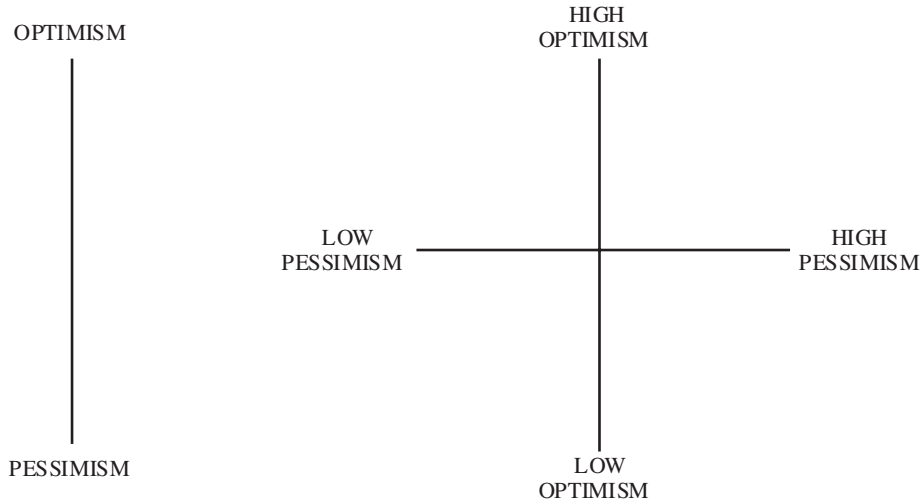
Hope Lost

I recall when our editor discovered hope as an important topic for the social sciences. We were traveling in Europe with our young children. One of the games we played was guessing which vices and virtues were represented in the sculptures and paintings of vice and virtue in medieval cathedrals and in other places where we found such art. We were all best at identifying gluttony. The one we persistently had most trouble with was hope. For citizens of the twenty-first century, hope hardly seems a virtue at all. Worldly wise cynicism and critique seem more plausible candidates than does hope as late-modern virtues. Therefore, as John Cartwright in his article in this volume points out, medieval legends of hope are perfect for parody, as in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

Most people assume that optimism and pessimism are opposite poles of a single dimension. Psychological research suggests this is not the case (Fincham 2000; Garber 2000; Gillham 2000). The factors that reduce one do not necessarily increase the other. Some people experience a lot of optimism and pessimism in their lives, some little of either, others much more of one than the other. It seems that no strong negative correlation exists between optimism and pessimism as in the left side of Figure 1. The right side, where optimism and pessimism are independent dimensions of our experience, is closer to the truth.

It may be that moderns see hope as a vice because when forced to choose between hope and skepticism (which they read as realism), they would rather be realists and skeptics. But they are only on the horns of this dilemma because they falsely think of optimism-pessimism as bipolar. When we view optimism and pessimism as more orthogonal, we might decide that we want to be in the top-right-hand quadrant of the two-dimensional model in Figure 1. For example, if we are scholars, we are best to think our ideas brilliant when we push through our first draft; thinking our ideas are dull puts us at risk of writer's block. Yet if we persist with a rosy view when we rework subsequent drafts, we will not learn from critics

FIGURE 1
OPTIMISM-PESSIMISM AS BIPOLAR VERSUS INDEPENDENT DIMENSIONS

OPTIMISM   HIGH
                                                OPTIMISM

                LOW   HIGH
              PESSIMISM   PESSIMISM

PESSIMISM   LOW
                                                 OPTIMISM

Bipolar Model   **Two-Dimensional Model**

who do us the kindness of reading the draft. When we write second drafts, we can try to cultivate pessimism just as assiduously as we cultivate optimism in the early stages of a project to prevent ourselves from killing ideas in the womb. Neither persistent optimists nor persistent pessimists make good scholars. However, in the scholarly practice of supervising doctoral students, I am convinced that the vice of persistent pessimism is the more common one. Writer's block born of hopelessness is the preeminent cause of collapsed doctoral projects. And the most common error of their supervisors is too high a ratio of critique to encouragement.

Indeed, it is a more generalized pathology of late-modern social science that the incentives in the academy for staying in the bottom-right-hand corner of the two-dimensional model in Figure 1 are too strong. Critique induces less vulnerability than creating something laid open to critique. When the construction site is abandoned because everyone works on the deconstruction site, we find ourselves surrounded by rubble. The good thing about the critique game is that it reveals to us the downside of innovative ideas. It allows us to be more systematic about cataloguing the costs of a new policy, for example. But playing "the believing game" (Tannen 1998) equally has the advantage of enabling us to be more systematic about exploring the benefits of a new policy. It is alternating between the believing

game and the critique game as an institutionalized practice of the academy that allows us to be most systematic about discovering all the positives and all the negatives about an idea. The want of hope to play the believing game in criminology was extreme in Robert Martinson's (1974) review of rehabilitation programs that (wrongly) concluded, "nothing works." Martinson's was the most influential article of the 1970s in this field. Sadly, he committed suicide soon after writing it.

There are, even in the academy, ways of institutionalizing hope—rewarding work on the construction site. The Nobel Prize is an example; you will not win one with a devastating critique. Martin Seligman (2000) is of the view that a social science of hope is a ways off because the academy is part of late-modern society and therefore part of the problem. He points out that in the last three decades of the twentieth century, 46,000 psychological articles were published on depression and only 400 on joy. Moving toward the topic of this article, racism, sexism, and ageism are more popular topics than emancipation. Seligman's plea is for a science of human strength and virtue to balance the science of social problems and vice.

Seligman deplores a world that sheds few tears for the death of Mother Teresa at the same time that it wallows in grief at the victimhood of a Princess Diana—bulimic, anorectic, suicidal, victimized by the infidelity and indifference of Prince Charles, blaming others for her victimhood as manifest in her brother's intemperate, admired speech at her funeral (Seligman 2000, 424-26). For Seligman, the fact that late moderns wallow in such a pessimistic focus of grief (or cannot see hope as a virtue depicted in medieval art) is part of what explains why the risk of depression in U.S. children increased at least tenfold during the past half century (Seligman 2000, 2002) and why youth suicide rates have increased sharply throughout most of the Western world. In addition to correlating negatively with depression, optimism correlates positively with happiness (Myers 2000). Here, the data are not as gloomy as with depression and suicide; after rising strongly in the United States until 1956, happiness has been edging down only slightly for the past half century (Layard 2003). Yet this is surprising given that the improvement in wealth, leisure time, and particularly in health has been extraordinary in this period of history.

Hope Solves Problems

Want of hope is implicated in our learning to be helpless in the face of adversity (Seligman 1975). Hope is not much use on its own. Satterfield (2000) argues that it is most adaptive when combined with integrative complexity, that is, the capacity to contemplate the complexity of problems, seeing them from multiple perspectives. One reason high-hope people overcome helplessness is that they more clearly conceptualize their goals than low-hope people (Snyder et al. 1991). They also cope more adaptively because they generate alternative paths to their goals, especially when the path they try first is blocked (Irving, Snyder, and Crowson 1998; Snyder et al. 1991). Most critically, from the perspective of integrating the critique and believing games, the psychologists tell us that optimists have a superior ability to attend to and elaborate negative information and to then use this information to

revise their coping strategies (Aspinwall and Brunhart 2000). Hope engenders more active coping, reduces denial, and prevents disengagement from stressful situations (Alloy, Abramson, and Chiara 2000). Paradoxically, for those obsessed with the virtues of pessimism for correcting errors, the adaptiveness engendered by hope means that optimists are actually quicker to disengage from unsolvable laboratory tasks (Janoff-Bulman and Brickman 1982). It follows from this that optimists need their pessimistic side. What seems to lead people to become depressive and helpless is not so much pessimism, which is contingently healthy, as "pessimistic rumination" (Satterfield 2000, 354-55), an inability to flip out of pessimism into optimism.

Learned helplessness, disengagement in the face of stress, failures of active coping, and failures of persistence are particularly prevalent among the poor and the oppressed. This is the first connection we make between emancipation and hope. Emancipation is about freeing people who are weakened by domination so they become strong. The strategy I seek to explain for enabling the emancipation of dominated people is to institutionalize spaces that cultivate and celebrate their strengths. Such spaces might recursively institutionalize hope and emancipation.

The Recursive Relationship between Hope and Emancipation

To many people, Nelson Mandela was the most inspiring leader of the twentieth century because of the extraordinary circumstances of his twenty-seven years of imprisonment in which he kept the flame of hope burning within his heart, kindling embers of hope in those around him. Clifford Shearing and Michael Kempa's article in this volume reminds us of the form and significance of Mandela's hope in emancipating the people of South Africa from apartheid. Hope in the face of overwhelming odds of oppression is a vital part of the makeup of the political vanguard for emancipation. Yet the mass of peoples under the yoke of long-term oppression experience the hope of the political vanguard only in very partial ways. For them, the political dynamic needed is more one of emancipation breeding hope than of hope breeding emancipation. This is the much longer running struggle that Mandela well understood and that South Africa still faces today—genuinely tackling the poverty of black people so they might have a sense of optimism about their future.

Both the hope ⇒ emancipation and the emancipation ⇒ hope dynamics are important in the politics of liberation, with the former being more important for the political vanguard, and the latter, for transforming the conditions of the masses. The antislavery movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries instilled its activists, with the implausible hope that slavery could be overthrown. Finally, it was overthrown, or mostly was. Yet still in the twenty-first century within the nation that is the world's economic powerhouse, large proportions of its former slaves remain in despair because of remorseless poverty. Drug abuse is one widespread

response to the hopelessness of long-term unemployment. Crime is another. While short-term unemployment has an equivocal relationship with crime, long-term unemployment is among its strongest predictors (Pratt, Braithwaite, and Cullen forthcoming). One reason for this is that short-term unemployment does not necessarily engender hopelessness—indeed it actually generates some benefits for crime prevention through improved guardianship of homes (Cohen and Felson 1979). But when unemployment persists, people eventually give up on their own futures and, more important for crime, on the futures of their children.

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It follows that any society with an incomplete transformation from slavery to emancipation, apartheid to liberation, colonial oppression to independence, must invest in institutions that nurture the reciprocal building of emancipation from hope and hope from emancipation. What form might such institutions take? That is the question this article seeks to address. I will argue that institutions designed to confront long-term unemployment among the young, as well as educational disadvantage when it first sets in, are of particular importance.

The challenge of designing institutions that simultaneously engender emancipation and hope is addressed within the assumption of economic institutions that are fundamentally capitalist. This contemporary global context gives more force to the hope nexus because we know capitalism thrives on hope. When business confidence collapses, capitalist economies head for recession. This dependence on hope is of quite general import; business leaders must have hope for the future before they will build new factories; consumers need confidence before they will buy what the factories make; investors need confidence before they will buy shares in the company that builds the factory; bankers need confidence to lend money to build the factory; scientists need confidence to innovate with new technologies in the hope that a capitalist will come along and market their invention. Keynes's ([1936]1981) *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* lamented the theoretical neglect of "animal spirits" of hope ("spontaneous optimism rather than . . . mathematical expectation" (p. 161) in the discipline of economics, a neglect that continues to this day (see also Barbalet 1993).

None of this is to deny the point in Peter Drahos's contribution to this volume that public hope must be grounded in truth rather than falsity. To flourish, capitalism must *enculturate optimism*, an attitude that risk taking will pay off frequently

enough to justify taking risks. But equally, it must *institutionalize pessimism*. When optimism is enculturated, individuals are cognitively optimistic about economic success; when pessimism is institutionalized, the economy is transparent, so that optimistic claims about particular investments are subject to open public critique by analysts who are informed by accurate audited accounts. When the accounts are proven false, law enforcement is institutionalized. Enculturated optimism engenders a vibrant innovative economy; institutionalized pessimism brings about an economy where the choices concerning which innovations to back can be grounded in data of reasonable quality, or at least something better than mere spin. Institutionalized pessimism most critically requires a rigorous social science that tests the empirical speculations in articles like this about what works in emancipating people from poverty.

Given the nature of contemporary capitalist economies, hope is not only important at the commanding heights but also vital for any underclass that seeks to throw off the shackles that persist in holding it down (see Sasha Courville and Nicola Piper's article in this volume). Just as confidence is imperative on Wall Street, likewise a remote Australian Aboriginal community needs hope to invest their energy in building a modest tourism, fishing, or arts and crafts business that might lift them out of poverty. They need it to invest in an ever-growing number of years of education for their children if those children are to lift the next generation out of poverty. As they look back on generation after generation of their ancestors' persistent poverty, that hope to invest in education is hard to muster. Many Aboriginal people in Australia stick with the alternative cycle of hopelessness that bequeaths substance abuse and crime. This in turn begets imprisonment and suicide or release with a criminal record that renders an Aboriginal person even more unemployable: a criminal record increases unemployment—see Hagan (1993), Western and Beckett (1999), and Pager (2003). Is there an alternative to this cycle of hopelessness and immiseration? A cycle of hope and emancipation? The beginning of an alternative we can glimpse is the appropriately named "Emancipation Conference" in Santa Clara County (Silicon Valley) in California. Given the difficulty of enculturating hope in the cynical conditions of late modernity among those who are poor, alone, and vulnerable, the Emancipation Conference institutionalizes a special space to nurture hope.

We might say that the worry about capitalists with money to invest is to check their spontaneous optimism by institutionalizing the pessimism of audits and other devices to render transparent the manipulations of markets. The worry about welfare clients without money is that they are stigmatized by much spontaneous pessimism; this needs to be checked by institutionalizing optimism.

The Emancipation Conference

When in 2002 I attended a session of an American Humane Association meeting on Emancipation Conferences, I arrived with a misguidedly politicized interpretation of what emancipation meant in California. I learned that it meant release of

children from the supervision of the court in foster-care cases. As two black teenagers explained their experience of their emancipation, at first I was amused at my misunderstanding. These young black women were not speaking of emancipation in a sense that had any resonance with the emancipation of their forebears from slavery. They were simply being emancipated from foster care so they could set themselves up in their own apartment, freed from the supervision of foster parents. But then as they and the program administrators explained the Emancipation Conference, my interpretation of the phenomenon flipped back to a politicized reading of the conferences as indeed an emancipatory practice.

Here is how the conferences work. The young person basically sets the agenda, even deciding what food will be ordered—often pizza—empowerment that does not meet the tastes of all attending adults! Invitations to attend are issued to all the supporters nominated by the young person as those they would like to attend to support them and come up with practical strategies for their emancipation plan. Agenda setting occurs through the simple device of asking the young person to write down before the conference five goals they would like to set for themselves as they make their own way in the world. The conference facilitator "keeps the introduction simple": "We're here to find out what your goals are and see what we can do to help you achieve them." Then the assembled stakeholders—foster families, natural parents, friends, welfare workers—move through an agenda of the goals that were set by the young person generally in advance of the actual meeting.

In advance of the conference, the young person has also been asked to nominate either five strengths they have or five things they want in a friend—what they would want a friend to be like. Discussion of these opens the conference and very often leads to the conclusion that some or all of the five virtues that the young person values in their friends count among their own strengths. Participants sitting in the conference circle are then asked to add their thoughts on the strengths of the young person. This is the strengths-based philosophy of Emancipation Conferences. We all have strengths—hope and commitment issue by building out from those strengths. Many kindred restorative-justice care and protection conferences for children have a strategy that combines the identification of both strengths and concerns: this would seem more consistent with being simultaneously optimistic and pessimistic as in the top-right quadrant of the two-dimensional model in Figure 1. However, when Santa Clara County experimented with an agenda of concerns as well as strengths to open the conference, it was found that adults in the circle focused too much on the concerns. Hence, a risk emerged that instead of building out from strengths, the conference would start by pathologizing young people who have already experienced too much of that in their short lives. The tendency in such cases is for problems to overwhelm strengths. If the young person identifies fixing a problem as one of his or her personal goals, fine, then it becomes part of the agenda. In practice, the conference is thus conceived as a strategy for preventing the encounter from sliding down from the top-right quadrant to the bottom-right (high pessimism, low optimism) quadrant of the two-dimensional model in Figure 1.

In training around these Californian conferencing programs, facilitators are sensitized to see strengths as well as concerns in the lives of vulnerable people. In one exercise, a picture of a family scene is presented to the training groups: it includes trash all over the floor, an unmonitored baby about to pull an iron down from an ironing board, and preadolescents drinking and eating pizza. Unsensitized neophytes like me find it hard to list many positives about the family that can be seen in the picture. We are obsessed with the obvious negatives. We find it a revelation when others point out that because the iron is on, there is electricity, and the family is probably paying its bills. The fact that the iron and ironing board are set up indicates some pride in appearance. The baby is recorded as looking well fed and healthy, the preadolescents are getting along well together, and so on.

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The point here is that in these Californian restorative-justice programs, an explicit methodological commitment exists both in training and in the conference process to being strengths-based. Some critics in the restorative-justice movement think that directing the conference to systematically catalogue strengths first involves too much domination of the structure of the agenda by the professional. If the stakeholders agree to focus on problems first instead of on strengths, then they should, on this view. So how do we read the stories that Californian and Oregonian conference facilitators tell of families insisting "we have no strengths" and then being pushed into a process that ends with a photograph of the family in front of a long list of strengths they have written up? We can read them positively as strength reinforcing or negatively as stories of agenda setting by professionals that is too directive, too disempowering of stakeholder process control. Ultimately, we can and should be evidence based about this. Cases can be randomly assigned to a strengths-based agenda versus conferences that are less process directive in this respect, to test whether participants feel more or less empowered under the two approaches. Moreover, such research can test the hypothesis that by building out from strengths, we actually solve more problems than by focusing directly on the problems.

After the strengths of the youth have been identified, the discussion in Emancipation Conferences then turns to how the strengths can be deployed to achieve the

youth's nominated goals. The participants identify the needs that require support from others. Next, they write emancipation options on sheets of paper. In light of all this, the young people then present their emancipation plans. Supporters in the circle discuss ways of strengthening the plans and offer support to realize them. Timelines are agreed upon and a follow-up conference is scheduled for thirty to ninety days in the future. A crucial element of the support network is the Independent Living Program of the County of Santa Clara. Its goal is articulated as the following: "To empower foster youth by providing them the skills necessary to transition to independence." A wide range of skills training is available through this program from budget management to Internet skills, preparing a resumé, safe sex, job interviewing, and avoiding traps in rental housing. A scholarships fund is also available to young people participating in the program, and an Emancipated Youth Stipend is available for use only on tuition, books, counseling, food, housing, car insurance, clothing for work, vocational training, items for children of the emancipated young people, and parenting skills. The networks of support from both other youth and adult specialists, combined with the emphasis on learning self-sufficiency skills, seemed impressive as a hope-building strategy. The best way to give a more concrete impression of how the conference unfolds is to give an example of an actual Emancipation Conference Summary. This can be found in the appendix.

In the literature distributed at the workshop I attended in California, it was explicitly stated that the purpose of the Emancipation Conference was to "provide the youth with hope, resources, and a plan. It empowers the youth to determine and set their own goals." These young people, who were often on probation, troubled by substance abuse, abused in their past, teenage mothers, and on a trajectory of intergenerational poverty, seemed inspired by Santa Clara County's attempt, as explained by the testimonials of young people who had experienced it, to secure hope through emancipation. While the feature of these conferences that I am finding attractive is the way the strength-based mobilizing of resources combines hope with emancipation, Victoria McGeer's article (this volume) might also provoke the thought that the empowerment features of restorative justice might avert the underdependence on self of "wishful hopers," while its social support features might help avert the underdependence on others of "willful hopers." McGeer's art of good hope is responsive hope—a way of hoping animated by care and interdependence. Responsive hope might be institutionalized by the creation of spaces where young people expect compassion, where care for the self is nurtured by experiencing care from others.

Emancipation for All Young People— Youth Development Circles

Stumbling into that California workshop at a restorative-justice conference, where I happened to be a speaker, was yet another confirmation of how unimpor-

tant we intellectuals are in the global social movement for restorative justice, where practice persistently proves to be ahead of theory. A year earlier, I had published in the *Oxford Review of Education* (Braithwaite 2001) a proposal for "Youth Development Circles" that included many of the concepts the Santa Clara Emancipation Conferences were already implementing! It is nevertheless of some value to rehearse the theoretical framework I brought to a proposal for this kind of innovation. It was that hope and emancipation in the knowledge economy increasingly depend on human capital (the skills of people) and social capital (skills in interacting with others including dispositions such as trust and trustworthiness). 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 that are profoundly informal (especially on the social capital side): (1) nuclear families are isolated from extended families, which used to compensate for deficits of nuclear families; and (2) formal education bureaucracies are too formal to compensate for the social aspects of deficits that thereby arise (Braithwaite 2001, 240). This was characterized as the dual structural dilemma of human/social capital formation in late modernity. It was proposed that a third institution beyond family and school—the Youth Development Circle—was needed to extricate us from the horns of this dilemma.

Implementation of this idea was envisaged as taking the following form. Twice a year from entry to high school at age twelve through to successful placement in a tertiary course or a job (modal age eighteen), 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 and would replace standard parent-teacher interview evenings.

The circle would have core members and casual members. Core members would be asked up front to commit as an obligation of citizenship and care to try to attend all conferences until the young person is successfully placed in a tertiary course or a job and to continue to be there for him or her should the young person subsequently request a conference, slide into long-term unemployment, or get in trouble with the police or the courts. Core members would actually sign a contract to keep meeting and supporting the young person until that college or job placement was accomplished. Core members would normally include (1) parents or guardians; (2) brothers and sisters; (3) one grandparent selected by the young person; (4) one aunt, uncle, or cousin selected by the young person; (5) a "buddy," an older child from the school selected by the young person; (6) a pastoral adult carer from the school selected by the young person (normally, but not necessarily, a teacher); and (7) a neighbor, sporting coach, parent of a friend, or any other adult member of the community selected by the youth. Casual members could include (1) current teachers of the young person, (2) current girlfriend or boyfriend, (3) closest friends nominated by the young person, (4) professionals brought in by the facilitator or parents (e.g., a drug counselor, an employer from an industry in which the young person would eventually like to work), and (5) the victim of an act of bullying or delinquency and victim supporters.

Rather like Emancipation Conferences, it was proposed that the conference would commence with the facilitator introducing new members and reading the youth's six-month and long-term life goals as defined by him or her at the last meeting (six months previous). The youth would then be invited to summarize how he or she had done with the six-month objectives and in what ways his or her life goals had changed over the past six months.

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Normally, expert adults relevant to the six-month life goals would then be invited to comment (e.g., the math teacher on a math improvement goal; the school counselor on improving relationships). Members of the conference who had undertaken to provide agreed kinds of help toward those goals would be asked to report on whether they had managed to deliver it (e.g., an aunt reporting whether they had managed to get together for an hour a week to help with math homework).

In light of this discussion, the young person would be asked his or her thoughts on goals for the next six months and others would be invited to comment. Goals would be reset and a plan devised to meet them with nominated people to provide specific forms of support, as in the Emancipation Conference. Over the years, the emphasis on the conference 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 conference to bring in casual members who might be able to offer work experience, advice on skill training, and networking for job search.

Youth Development Circles do not aspire to treat isolated individuals targeted because of their problems (and thereby stigmatize them as individuals). They seek to help young people develop in the context of their communities of care. The help would not stigmatize 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. Like Emancipation Conferences, the aspiration was for a more holistic move to find something

better than seeking to solve educational problems by one-on-one encounters with the school counselor, drug problems by individual encounters with rehabilitation services, employment by one-on-one interviews at job placement services, or youth suicide by public funding of psychiatrists.

If Youth Development Circles get commitments from the people whom the young love and respect to meet and help regularly until they get a job or a college place, then not only is it plausible that more of them will actually qualify for those jobs and places, but they also might be more enriched by their education along the way and freer of problems like drug abuse that drain their hope. Being a beneficiary of emancipatory care and of cooperative problem solving when one is young may be the best way to learn to become compassionate democratic citizens who support the emancipation of others as adults. Such citizens who are creative in cooperative deliberation not only build strong democracies but also are able workforces that attract capital investment in the conditions of capitalist information economies (see Putnam 1993, 1995).

In good circles, hope would be nurtured by celebratory speeches around the circle about what the young person had accomplished toward his or her goals. The crucial skill of facilitators would be to elicit affirmation for accomplishment and offers of help (as opposed to criticism) when there was a failure of accomplishment. Hope would be sustained through the ritual interpretation of poor accomplishment as a communal failure to give young people the support they need. As in the best families, hope can be sustained through unconditional support and burden sharing. But hope is also sustained through emancipation into adulthood with a job, life skills, and social support that are the best safeguards against poverty. The Youth Development Circle proposal is for a more universal approach to the amalgam of hope promoting emancipation and emancipation promoting hope that we see in Santa Clara with foster-care cases.

Democratic Experimentalism for Hope and Emancipation

Such universalism would be an expensive new burden for a seemingly overburdened welfare state. Yet the *Oxford Review of Education* article argues (see also Braithwaite 2002) for an experimental evaluation strategy that would reveal whether the fiscal savings from dealing with reduced levels of crime, drug abuse, welfare dependency, and the like would in fact exceed the cost. Attempts are being made to launch pilot projects in the United Kingdom by Professor John Visser at the University of Birmingham and in the United States by Professor Gale Burford at the University of Vermont as first steps to such understanding.

Surely, it involves a total failure of policy imagination for us to persist firmly in the belief that long-term unemployment is an inevitable facet of capitalism and that evidence-based policy experimentation cannot deliver cost-effective ways of lifting people out of long-term unemployment. One radical but hardly implausible

possibility is a welfare state that invokes the contracted citizenship obligations of core Youth Development Circle members to reconvene a decade after they thought they had acquitted their responsibilities to a young person because in his or her late twenties that person has fallen into long-term unemployment. Youth Development Circles could never be a solution to long-term unemployment that befalls people late in life. But given that most of the roots of long-term unemployment are in the first decades of life, Youth Development Circles, if the experiments worked, might be no small partial solution.

The defeat of hopelessness and poverty also requires many more deeply structural solutions: a tax system that more effectively makes the rich pay their fair share of the burden of providing hope to the poor through access to quality education and health care; rooting out racism through effective regulation of discrimination and various other measures; at the global level, an International Monetary Fund that eschews doing the bidding of the business elites of rich states in favor of policies that strategically lift up the poor (Stiglitz 2002); an intellectual property order that does not rip off the poor in information economies where the monopolization of knowledge embeds wealth (Drahos, this volume); and more. As important as such macro-structural reform is, structural reform efforts will fail unless they are buttressed by a politics of hope. Obversely, as Peter Drahos (this volume) argues, a hope that is illusory or advanced only at the level of psychologism or slogans is crushing in its implications. The challenge is to forge institutions that marry hope to actual emancipation as Mandela partially did with institutions like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In a more micro way, the County of Santa Clara also mutually reinforces hope and emancipation through its Emancipation Conferences. Democratic experimentalism (Dorf and Sabel 1998) might progressively uncover a path to linking such micro accomplishments to more macro, more universal approaches to confronting the big threats to full citizenship (like long-term unemployment). Learning about possibilities for macro-societal transformations by monitoring micro collaborations is the hopeful message of democratic experimentalism.

Conclusion

In Peter Drahos's contribution to this volume, the dangers of private hope are revealed. It can be exploited by the commercially and politically cynical. The result is failure, disillusionment, and people in desperate circumstances who give up on their futures and the futures of their children. One remedy Drahos discusses is checking hope with reason and evidence: so that hope can be real because it is realistic. Emancipation Conferences accomplish this by the reality check of people who care about the future of the young person and who have relevant kinds of specialized expertise, discussing Emancipation Plans to make them realistically achievable. So young people with poor high school records who say they want to go to Harvard can be given realistic advice on where they might get admission to higher education and what further steps would be a possibility later if they did

extremely well. Three features of the hope-building strategy of Emancipation Conferences are a protection against the concerns voiced by Peter Drahos:

1. Hope building is embedded in conversational reality checking by bringing into the circle people with the relevant knowledge.
2. The target of hope building is not selected by a commercial or political predator upon that hope. Rather, it is the person whose hope is built who selects assistants in hope building by bringing them into the circle.
3. Hope is not built up as a purely psychological or motivational strategy. Rather it is built recursively with plans, social support, and resources for highly concrete forms of practical emancipation. It is an emancipation-hope strategy rather than a hope strategy.

Conferences with these three features might be a possibility in the emancipation of every child from the confinements of adolescence, just as it might be a possibility as an emancipation-hope strategy with every adult released from a real prison, be they a Nelson Mandela or a common thief. None of them can find emancipation from the constraints that confine them without hope; all of them are at risk of a downward spiral into deeper hopelessness when dreams are dashed for want of institutionalized planning of emancipation strategies that are realistic. That downward spiral continues to be the legacy of slavery in the United States, violence and racism against Aboriginal people in Australia, and apartheid in South Africa. Its preventability is redolent in Mandela's scheming with both his colleagues and his jailers on Robben Island. Emancipation Conferences are just one example of a strategy for jointly institutionalizing hope and emancipation. Yet its institutional elements and its training strategies are evocative. I hope that writing about it might inspire even more ambitious, evidence-based instiutionalizations of belief and critique toward emancipation.

Appendix
Santa Clara County Emancipation Conference Summary

Youth's Name: Jane (not the real name)
Participants: List of 10 participants' names
PURPOSE: To develop an emancipation plan

YOUTH'S STRENGTHS

Jane is determined to finish high school
Jane is fun and she is sweet
Jane has most of her documents already
Jane is loyal and makes strong bonds with others
Jane enjoys the company of others
Jane is independent and able to do things on her own
Jane is creative
Jane takes initiative
Jane is caring and helpful
Jane makes others laugh
Jane is humble
Jane shares with others
Jane is trustworthy and is always there for her friends
Jane gets embarrassed easily
Jane encourages younger children and is a mentor for them
Jane is determined to get where she wants to be
Jane is not a follower
Jane has strong options
Jane has a big heart
Jane is dependable and is on time to appointments
Jane is motherly with small children
Jane is able to face difficult situations and is able to move forward
Jane is focused
Jane has courage
Jane is a fast learner and is good with Wicca
Jane is a good writer and artist
Jane is resourceful
Jane likes to do craft work
Jane likes to keep busy
Jane sews well

GOALS

Jane would like to either join the army or attend college
Jane wants to acquire a part-time job if in college
Jane would like to live with one or two of her friends
Jane wants to get a driver's license
Jane wants to live in Florida

YOUTH'S NEEDS

Jane needs the support of her family, friends, and Marisa
Jane needs a job in order to earn some money
Jane needs lots of love
Jane needs safe housing
Jane needs auto insurance and a car
Jane needs medical and dental insurance
Jane needs to get a bank/savings account and learn money management skills
Jane needs a phone, clothing, and transportation
Jane needs a high school diploma
Jane needs to study for the military testing (ASVAB)
Jane needs to continue getting mental health counseling

EMANCIPATION OPTIONS

HOUSING

Live with friend #1 or live with friend #2
Apply for transitional housing with Bill Wilson and/or Unity Care
Alum Rock housing locator
Shared housing
Army
Job Corps
Live with Marisa and her grandmother

SCHOOL

Job Corps
West Valley College
Graduate from high school—June 14, 2002
Financial aid application
Scholarships
Yes program with ILP participation
Army
Driver's training (behind the wheel)
ILP workshops

EMPLOYMENT

Army
Job hunting (Jane's own search)
ILP money management skills
Job Corps
Job Coach ILP
Career testing
Resume

MEDICAL/DENTAL

MediCal
Mom's insurance until 25 if a full-time student
Army
Job Corps

DOCUMENTS

California ID
Social Security card
Birth certificate
Insurance cards
Immunization records
Vision plan
Dental card

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Marisa
Mom
Sister
Jenny
Margie
Steve
Sara
Auntie
Veronica
Ron
Zina

Emancipation Plan

Things to Do	By Whom	Date to Be Completed
Housing		
Research Job Corps	Jenny, Jane, Sara	21 February 2002
Complete Transitional Housing applications	Jane, Mom, and Marisa; EMQ Team will follow up	19 February 2002
Research the cost of shared housing expenses with friend 1 and friend 2	Jane	15 February 2002
Education		
Apply for financial aid (FASFA)	Jane and Rachel	1 March 2002
Turn in application to West Valley College	Jane, through high school program	15 March 2002
Attend ILP Workshops	Jane	Start 2-25-02, ongoing
Driver's training	Jane and Rachel	After 16 classes
Study for the ASVAB (Air Force Test)	Jane and Steve	Start 2-22-02, ongoing every other weekend
Employment		
Job hunting	Jane	Start 02-16-02
Contact Sonja House (employment counselor)	Jane and Rachel	Last week in March
Medical and Dental		
Remain on Mom's insurance until the age of 25 as long as she is a full-time student	Jane and Mom	Start 02-16-02
Other options		
Apply for MediCal Receive free medical care in Air Force or while in Job Corps	Jane and Mom	As needed
Documents		
California Identification		Completed
Social Security Card		Completed
Birth Certificate		Completed
Insurance Card (medical)		Completed
Dental Card and Vision Plan	Mom to give to Jane	8 February 2002
Immunization records	Jane will obtain records from her high school	As needed
Circle of Support		
See above list	Jane	Ongoing and as needed
Follow-up Conference:	Jane and guests	End of March 2002

FACILITATOR'S COMMENTS:

It was a pleasure to facilitate this conference for Jane. We wish you much success on your plan, and we look forward to seeing all of you again in March. Thanks for all of your hard work.

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