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ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern about the well-being of children in America and the circumstances that surround their growth and development. One explanation for the social problems that confront young people is a decline in the effectiveness of the social institutions that children rely on for support. The decline in effectiveness leads to a decrease in social ties and resources (social capital) that children require to develop into productive adults. This paper presents an overview of social capital, with a focus on the social and cognitive development of children, and what is known about how social capital influences these processes in schools. The paper begins by laying out how others have defined social capital, followed by a discussion of how social capital might be tied to the cognitive, social, and moral development of children. The third section reviews the literature that links social capital to educational outcomes. The paper concludes with a discussion of the usefulness of social capital in explaining and addressing the difficulties that confront American children. The concept of social capital highlights an important and often neglected perspective on children's development. However, not all forms of social capital promote cognitive development of positive social and moral outcomes. (Contains 83 references.) (LMI)

Social Capital and Children's Development: The Case of Education

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Introduction

There is growing concern about the well-being of children in America and the circumstances that surround their growth and development (see, for example, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1993; National Research Council 1993). Underachievement, substance abuse, delinquency, poverty and chronic unemployment plague the lives of many young people, compromising their ability to grow into healthy, successful adults. Moreover, other difficulties, such as premature parenting, homelessness, youth violence, and AIDS, pose threats to children at rates that far exceed the experiences of prior generations of young people. Assessments of youth programs, policies, and activities since the 1980s present a sobering picture of children in America: not only has the quality of their lives failed to improve during this time; for many, their lives have gotten worse (Grubb and Lazerson 1988; Heath and McLaughlin 1993).

One explanation for these problems is a decline in the effectiveness of the social institutions that children rely on for support and guidance. These institutions include not only the family but civic associations, such as schools, youth clubs, religious organizations, and community groups that help young people become adults. Historically, these institutions have had primary responsibility for socializing children and promoting their development. However, demographic and economic trends have eroded the social fabric that these institutions rely on to function effectively, increasingly isolating adults from each other and

the daily activities that shape children's lives (Coleman 1987, 1990; Etzioni 1993). At the same time, there has been a decline in public support for civic organizations that provide children with educational opportunities and guidance outside of the home (Grubb and Lazerson 1988; Heath and McLaughlin 1993). The result has been a dramatic decrease in the social ties and resources that children require to develop into productive and happy adults.

We refer to these ties and resources as social capital. The term, as developed by Coleman (1988, 1990) and Putnam (1993, 1995), highlights the importance of the social relationships and normative traditions that children experience in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities. Strong interpersonal ties and connections to supportive networks of adults critically influences how children grow up, how well they function as adults, and how effectively they can work with others to create a healthy society. In the absence of social capital, Wehlage (1993) argues, children grow up without access to caring adults, adult values, or the civic organizations that can provide them with support and guidance. Instead, we see increasing numbers of normless, alienated and violence-prone youth who threaten not only their own well-being but the well-being of others around them.

Although the concept of social capital has intuitive appeal as an explanation for the difficulties that young people and many communities experience, it is neither well defined nor well understood by policymakers or social scientists. Studies from a range of disciplines -- economics, sociology, psychology, education, and political science -- provide empirical evidence of a relationship between various measures of social capital and socially desirable

outcomes. However, these findings have not been integrated into a theoretical paradigm or a set of propositions about how social capital influences children's development or their experiences in specific social institutions. Clearly, if we are to consider how social capital affects the well-being of children in America, as well as how social capital might be encouraged by public policies and programs, we must know more about it -- what it is, who is most likely to have it, and how it influences the growth and development of children.

We address this task in this chapter, focusing on the social and cognitive development of children, and what is known about how social capital influences these processes in schools. The chapter is divided into four sections. We begin by laying out how others have defined social capital, followed by a discussion of how we believe social capital might be tied to the cognitive, social, and moral development of children. In the third section, to which we bring personal experience through our own research, we review the literature that links social capital to educational outcomes. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the usefulness of social capital in explaining and addressing the difficulties that confront American children. We argue that the concept of social capital highlights an important and often neglected perspective on children's development. However, not all forms of social capital promote cognitive development or positive social and moral outcomes. Much more needs to be understood about social capital before it can be successfully used to promote the well-being of youth and the communities in which they live.

What is Social Capital?

Social capital refers to social relationships that make it easier for individuals to accomplish a task or work with others to achieve a goal (Coleman 1988, 1990). Underlying the concept is the notion that behavior is embedded in a network of social ties and relationships that both facilitate and constrain an individual's actions. These social ties affect behavior directly -- through the exchange of emotional support, information and material resources -- and indirectly -- through norms, expectations and social structures that form the basis for social interactions. Social capital occurs in two broad spheres of a person's life: in the spontaneous relationships that comprise an individual's personal social network and in the more formalized relationships that comprise the public social networks in which people participate.

Personal Social Networks & Social Capital

Every individual has a personal social network, though there are substantial differences in the size of these networks and the types of relationships that characterize them (Cochran and Brassard 1979; Cochran et al. 1990). Personal social networks typically revolve around familial relationships and extend outward to include relatives, neighbors, and friends. For example, when a young mother asks a neighbor to watch a sibling so that she can go to a job interview, she draws on a social resource embedded in the network of personal relationships that she has with others. The extent to which she can rely on that network for child care, a

temporary loan, advice about child rearing, or reassurance and emotional support, affects her ability to perform daily tasks and achieve more long-term goals, like protecting her children and helping them become successful adults (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995).

Most families report that they can rely on someone for help, either in the form of a small loan or some form of non-monetary assistance (Boisjoly, Duncan and Hofferth 1995). Parents ask other parents about classroom teachers in the hope of providing their children with the best educational experiences possible; newly married couples borrow money from their parents so that they can purchase a home in a neighborhood they consider to be good for raising their own children; or a young woman relies on friends and relatives to get a good job or acquire information about career opportunities in another city. While these interactions represent modest exchanges of social resources, their accumulated effect on someone's life chances can be substantial. Studies of socially mobile African-American children, for example, demonstrate that their parents make extensive use of relatives and fictive kin to get information about educational opportunities, monitor their children's behavior, and protect their children from influences that might affect their development negatively (Jarrett 1995).

Families with the largest personal social networks also say that they have helped others in the past (Boisjoly, Duncan and Hofferth 1995). Exchanging social resources creates norms of reciprocity, particularly among friends and non-kin who have no familial obligations to provide one another with assistance. When these obligations result in mutually satisfying exchanges of social resources, they create trust and encourage additional exchanges.

Neighborhood studies show that positive social interactions -- such as borrowing, helping with child care, or informal exchanges of information -- are more likely to occur in residential areas where neighbors are less guarded about their interactions with others. In neighborhoods where trust is low, families are more likely to rely on each other and close relatives for assistance (Cochran and Riley 1988, 1990; Garbarino and Sherman 1980; Wilson 1987).

While access to these forms of social capital does not strictly follow social-class lines, the two are related. More privileged families have more resources to share, broader social networks from which to acquire assistance, and greater access to resources that enhance substantially the effectiveness of their actions (Bourdieu 1986; Lareau 1989, 1994; Lareau and Shumar 1996). Still, the relationship between social capital and class is equivocal. Not all forms of social capital require extensive human or financial capital to be effective. Nurturing or providing emotional support, encouraging someone to persist, sharing an interest in a hobby, or just lending a hand can be a valuable resource during difficult times in a person's life. While privileged families have greater access to specific forms of social capital, studies show that lower-income and working families are also able to use social capital to significantly improve their life chances (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995; Jarrett 1995).

Public Social Networks & Social Capital

So far we have limited our discussion of social capital to interpersonal relationships formed through the day-to-day interactions of family members, relatives, neighbors, or

friends. These forms of social capital occur spontaneously and are not usually considered to be purposefully created or formally constructed (Coleman 1990, 1993). Social capital, however, may also form around networks of relationships that are more public in nature. These networks, unlike the personal social networks in which people participate, have been constructed to pursue a shared goal and may carry with them formal recognition of membership, rights, and responsibilities. Examples are unions, corporations, professional associations, civic organizations, schools, youth associations, churches, synagogues, and temples (Coleman 1990; Sullivan 1995; Putnam 1993, 1995).

Members of these social networks also have access to resources that facilitate action and increase the likelihood that their efforts will be more successful. Thus, a surgeon in one part of the country may call a surgeon in another part to discuss a new medical procedure. Although the surgeons do not know each other personally, there is an implied obligation to assist other members of *their* profession, particularly when assistance furthers the profession's stated goals and purpose (Sullivan 1995). Similarly, the members of one union may contribute to the strike fund of another union. Public social networks make possible a richer and wider exchange of social resources than possible through personal social networks, as they extend an individual's access to social capital beyond that which can be acquired through ordinary, day-to-day interactions.

One characteristic of modern, complex societies is the proliferation of these associations and public networks of relationships (Coleman 1990, 1993). Not only do they

facilitate broader exchanges of personal resources, but they also create more widespread obligations for reciprocity, mutual support, and care. Such obligations are thought to be vital to the health of modern societies, as they encourage the formation of trust between individuals. Trust is a form of social capital essential to the functioning of markets, organizations, and democratic forms of government (Fukuyama 1995; Kramer and Tyler 1996; Putnam 1993). When successful, these interactions create cultural traditions that encourage cooperative behaviors and more positive interactions between individuals throughout society (Putnam 1993; Sullivan 1995).

Public social networks, however, may be limited in their ability to facilitate norms of reciprocity. As they expand, social ties weaken, restricting the power of the group to influence the behavior of its members. Thus, advances in electronic communications have increased dramatically the exchange of information between persons in modern, complex societies -- certainly a form of social capital. Nonetheless, electronic mail-servers provide few sanctions for those who communicate inaccurate or bad information to others, nor do they influence what people do with information that is solicited electronically. While these networks still facilitate action -- acquiring information about some topic -- they do little to encourage or discourage other actions. Some face-to-face interaction, or at least the possibility of being held accountable for actions, is required to promote cooperation and more intimate forms of assistance to others.

Normative Dimension of Social Capital

Not all forms of social capital are personally beneficial or socially desirable. Advice about child care from a relative may be misguided, or support from friends may be so uncritical as to discourage independent behavior (Cochran and Brassard 1979; Cochran et al. 1990). Parental involvement in schools may generate social resources that enhance a school's operation, but it may also alienate families unable to participate in such activities and give privileged families unfair control of valuable public resources (Lareau and Shumar 1996). Juvenile gangs provide their members with access to considerable stocks of social capital, but such capital may be used to promote crime and participation in delinquent behaviors (Jankowski 1991). Even when social capital facilitates actions and the ability of people to work together toward a common goal, the consequences of such actions may not be desirable.

The idea of capital implies the possibility of using social relationships to expand human capability, to make social resources more plentiful and effective in promoting personal and public ends. It is in this sense that we can talk about individual behaviors or public policies as "investments" in social capital. Their value can be judged against subsequent returns, against how much they increase individual productivity and promote positive social conditions (Coleman 1993). Social capital, therefore, has a normative dimension. Public policies, social programs, or organizational practices that facilitate coordination and cooperation, that establish trust and norms of reciprocity, or that create templates for

collective action are thought to be desirable. Those that isolate people, foster distrust, or discourage cooperation are undesirable.

The normative dimension of social capital is an important (though not always easy) distinction to make, especially with regard to children's development. For example, there can be considerable tension between the values and normative expectations that children experience at home and in school (see, for example, Lareau and Shumar 1996; Lightfoot 1978; Waller 1932). While both families and schools are sources of social capital, they do not always serve the same ends, even when both seek positive outcomes for children. Disentangling these purposes and determining which is most desirable has long been a point of contention for public policy (Etzioni 1993; Grubb and Lazerson 1988). We return to his point when we discuss how social capital influences development in schools.

Unique Properties of Social Capital

Social capital has unique properties that distinguish it from other forms of capital (e.g., physical and human capital). Most importantly, it is a collective property or a characteristic of groups of people and not a simple private good. Unlike wealth or knowledge, it cannot be accumulated by individuals. Although individuals may have greater access to social capital due to their participation in specific social networks, their ability to obtain the benefits of these relationships depends on the cooperation of others. An investment, say in a

neighborhood or a school, depends on the willingness (or ability) of many people to help out, abide by group norms and expectations, and acknowledge a sense of mutual obligation.

A second distinction rests with incentives to invest in social capital. The incentive to invest in financial and human capital rests largely with the possibility of personal gain and the acquisition of private goods. Social capital, however, is a good that people hold in common. Consequently, self-interested individuals may wait for others to invest in social relationships, or limit their costs if they anticipate personal gains will be small. Social capital, of course, shares this characteristics with other public goods, investments in which cannot be explained fully by rational-choice models of behavior (Coleman 1988, 1990; Etzioni 1993). Rather, investments reflect learned moral values, normative expectations, and cultural traditions about how individuals are to interact and work with each other, as well as conceptions of communal responsibilities and obligations toward others (Fukuyama 1995; Putnam 1993). Individuals are unlikely to invest in social capital without normative support for such actions.

Social capital is also more illusive and less tangible than other forms of capital (Coleman 1988). Because currency is standardized, it is easy to identify financial capital and to assign a value to its forms. Similarly, the institutionalization of education and professional training makes it possible to quantify human capital, albeit somewhat crudely, into levels or amounts. Social capital is far more difficult to identify and measure. It encompasses feelings of trust, the mutuality of expectations, shared norms and moral values, all those attributes that facilitate cooperation and an ability to act together. Social capital is a more complex concept

than either financial or human capital, for it embodies aspects of social relationships -- rather than possessions or individual attributes -- that enhance human capability.

How Does Social Capital Influence Children's Development?

Our discussion of social capital has been broad, centering on the ways in which it manifests itself in personal social networks and more publicly constructed social ties, particularly for adults. We now turn our discussion to how social capital influences the cognitive, social, and moral development of children. After describing briefly what we mean by development, we present a model of how social capital influences it. Our model has four components -- participation in (1) personal and (2) public social networks, which we see as the primary way in which social capital influences development, and (3) normative and (4) social structures that create the foundation for interactions and social relationships within these networks.

How Children Develop

Development occurs along two fundamental dimensions: one cognitive, the other social and moral. Each involves a gradual shift away from an egocentric perception of reality to one that is more socially-oriented (Cochran and Brassard 1979). Cognitive development includes the symbolization of experiences and increased proficiency with symbolic systems, like language or music; social development involves the formulation of values, beliefs,

interpersonal skills, and moral habits (Bidwell 1972, 1987). Cognitive and social development are complementary processes, though children may progress along each dimension at different rates. Still, gains in one area facilitate gains in the other, making it important that parents and other caregivers pay attention to each.

When children are young, development is almost spontaneous. They "take in" the experiences that surround them, as they try to make sense of who they are and how they fit in with other members of their immediate families. But as children get older, they become more self-directed, and they seek out new experiences and a sense of their own identity beyond the family. Development, however, remains deeply social, even as children get older. Young people of all ages rely on relationships with others to acquire information, gain assistance in performing complex tasks, gain emotional acceptance, and learn about adult roles and responsibilities that they will experience later in life. Children's development -- cognitive, social, and moral -- depends on the very stuff of which social capital is made. It is the process of enhancing the capabilities of children through their social relationships with others.

Within a developmental framework, social capital can have two functions: it can enhance the capabilities of children, helping them learn better and work more effectively with others, and it can promote the efforts of those who give children support and guidance. The first of these functions highlights how children *themselves* use social resources to perform tasks and accomplish ends; the second highlights how adults participate in exchanges to address child rearing tasks, or work effectively as a group to shape the values and behavior of

subsequent generations. There can be large differences, of course, between children and adults in the ends that they seek. If ends are not shared, at least as broadly understood, development stagnates, or proceeds in directions that are often found to be undesirable (Brofenbrenner 1979).

As we said, disentangling the normative aspects of social capital can be extremely difficult, especially when it comes to children. The same is true of development, whether it be cognitive, social, or moral. There are very different opinions about child-rearing practices, what children should learn inside and outside of the home, and who should be responsible for teaching them (Etzioni 1993; Grubb and Lazerson 1988). Still, we believe that it is possible to agree on general goals for development. Foremost among these goals is preparing children to take on adult roles and responsibilities. Minimally, this requires that children learn how to be more self-sufficient and reflective; how to seek out information and acquire new forms of human capital; that they become competent at working with others and sharing ideas; and that they appreciate and value the civic responsibilities of members in a democratic society. When development increases these capabilities in children, it is positive. When it does not, children develop in undesirable ways that can have tragic consequences both for themselves and for those around them.

Social Capital and Development

How might social capital promote these capabilities in children? Figure 1 presents a model of how we suggest that social capital influences children's development. The three boxes in the middle of the model -- personal social network, public social network and developmental outcomes -- capture the central components of the developmental process. The remaining two boxes -- normative structure and social structure -- identify key aspects of children's social environments that shape the nature of interactions within these networks. The model is appropriate for children of all ages, although public social networks are likely to influence the development of children more as they get older.

Personal social networks. The most immediate influence on development occurs through a child's personal social network (represented by path *a*). When young, the network is composed mostly of parents and relatives, but as children get older this network changes. More and more friends are included, as well as unrelated adults who are not part of parents' networks (Blyth, Hill and Thiel 1982; Blyth and Traeger 1988). Parents are the focal point for social capital at first, because they are the primary source of emotional support, financial assistance, and guidance. Personal interactions with relatives, other adults, and friends also influence a child's development, and these interactions become increasingly important as children enter young adolescence. Relationships beyond the immediate family provide access to an expanded set of role models, educational experiences, and social settings. Such

relationships provide opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and acquire forms of human capital that may be unobtainable in the home (Cochran and Brassard 1979).

Children assist their own development through observation, experimentation, and requests for assistance. Consequently, children's day-to-day social relationships influence how they mature into adults. These relationships provide many subtle (and some not so subtle) lessons about the use of symbols, rules that govern interactions with others, the intent behind behaviors, and probable consequences for future behaviors. They also provide opportunities for children to ask for guidance or assistance in performing tasks. Many developmental activities are uninitiated by adults; rather, they occur naturally, as the by-product of day-to-day interactions, or they are prompted by children's request for help.

Parents, of course, influence children's development more directly. They do so by monitoring behavior, helping children resolve conflicts, or providing assistance, even when it is not asked for. Parents can also try to connect children to public social networks thought to have valuable resources (path *b* in Figure 1). Parents may aggressively seek out the best schools, teachers, or coaches for their children, or they may make use of ties to personal friends to give them access to rare cultural activities or scarce civic resources. Such assistance, as we noted earlier, provide children considerable advantages in growing up (Jarrett 1995). Those most capable of influencing the development of their children in this way are parents who participate in social networks rich in other forms of capital (Bourdieu

1986; Lareau and Shumar 1996). Path *b* is multidirectional, a point we'll return to when we discuss the effects of participation in public social networks.

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) suggest that children may also benefit from the social capital that parents can access in their own personal social networks (not represented in our model). They found that children of teenage parents developed more positively if their mothers themselves had an active support network that included strong ties with their own mothers, relatives and friends. Such children were more likely to graduate from high school, enter college, be employed, avoid negative social behaviors (premature parenting or juvenile delinquency), and be mentally healthy as young adults. Access to social capital may have helped these teen mothers cope with the stresses of premature parenting, which in turn made them better able to promote the healthy development of their children.

Public social networks. In traditional societies, young people are often apprenticed to parents, relatives, or a craftsperson to learn a trade or be mentored into adult roles. In modern societies, these mentorial relationships are a part of the public social networks in which young people participate: for example, schools, religious organizations, and youth groups (Heath and McLaughlin 1993; Freedman 1993). Ideally, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, and other youth workers perform many of the same functions that mentors and craftspersons do in traditional societies. They provide youth under their care with guidance, advice, and skills helpful to performing adult roles. Mentoring adults serve as important

bridges between the world of children and the world of adults, especially during adolescence, when this transition becomes explicit (Zeldin and Price 1995).

Children who develop strong ties to caring adults through their participation in public social networks experience fewer developmental difficulties. They are less likely to drop out of school (Smith, Beaulieu, and Israel 1992) or to engage in delinquent behaviors (Blyth and Leffert 1995; Hagan, Merkens and Boehnke 1995). They pursue more education after high school, are more often gainfully employed, or otherwise adjust more successfully to the responsibilities of adulthood (Blyth and Leffert 1995). These publicly constructed ties can give children access to social resources that extend beyond those available in the home or neighborhood. Such access can be especially important to children with troubled relationships with parents, or who live in neighborhoods where social and economic hardships are most severe (Heath and McLaughlin 1993; Luthar abd Zigler 1991).

Although mentoring can take the form of one-to-one instruction, it most often occurs in more structured settings, where large numbers of children are clustered to receive similar developmental experiences. In these settings, children develop new relationships, and extend their own personal networks to include friends, classmates, and peers (path *b*). These peer ties give young people their first opportunities to develop social skills and values with individuals of equal status -- creating relationships, exchanging social resources and sustaining relationships over time. The nature of these interactions -- both as they involve peers and the

adults responsible for them -- helps to shape moral conceptions about caring, compassion, and obligations toward others (Chaskin and Rauner 1995; Nodding 1992).

Although moral values and beliefs are also communicated in the home and neighborhood, public social networks can (and often do) provide children with powerful lessons that help to shape their character and moral development. Dewey (1966) thought that schools would be especially valuable in this regard. Within the classroom children could learn moral habits and social skills consistent with democratic principles, particularly if school activities were structured consciously to promote these ends. Unfortunately, few schools actively do this (Etzioni 1993; Nodding 1992), although Dewey's basic observation -- public places promote experiences that strongly influence the moral development of children -- seems valid. Caring, compassion, cooperation, and a sense of civic responsibility, all arise out of children's interactions others. A large proportion of these interactions, especially during adolescence, occur in public social networks.

Normative structures. Normative social structures also shape development (albeit indirectly), by mediating the strength of social relationships and the quality of social resources to which young people have access. This occurs through effects on a child's personal social network (path *d*) and public social network (path *e*). If the normative structure underlying a child's interactions with others is not supportive of development, then the social capital embedded in these relationships will undermine social and cognitive growth. The figure indicates that the paths between normative structures and social networks are multi-

directional. Feelings of safety, security, and trust shape the social relationships that children form with others, and experiences within these relationships in turn influence the norms and values that dominate interactions within networks.

There are many normative structures: the values or goals for development held by members of the public and social networks surrounding the child, the obligations and expectations that define the responsibilities of adults and young people, the safety or trust on which the exchange of social goods is based, and the collective identity that defines boundaries for reciprocal actions and duties. A strong, supportive normative structure focuses the social capital embedded in the relationships that children form with significant others, facilitating the promotion of specific cognitive, social, and moral goals. The normative structure guides the developmental agenda necessary for coordinating actions and social resources. Because adults have primary responsibility for child rearing and considerably more power than children, their values and beliefs dominate the normative structures that surround young people's development. Nonetheless, as children get older, they too contribute to the norms that influence their development.

Seldom are the normative structures that children experience consistent over time and place. Integrating the direct and indirect lessons encompassed by the many social networks in which children participate can be a difficult task for young people (Brofenbrenner 1979). Although some dissonance is surely required for cognitive and social growth to occur, serious inconsistencies between the normative expectations in children's lives can overwhelm them

and their ability to positively integrate experiences. This is especially true as children get older, as they are given increased opportunities for self-direction, occasions to form social relationships with people outside of the family's sphere, and chances to take on adult-like responsibilities. Supportive adults can help young people maintain positive goals at these times, as well as provide guidance and support (Freedman 1993; Heath and McLaughlin 1993; Vondra and Garbarino 1988). Such support is more important as developmental tasks become stressful and more challenging for children.

The impact of negative normative structures on social relationships is shown in studies of how neighborhood conditions influence the personal networks of children and adults (Cochran and Riley 1988, 1990; Garbarino and Sherman 1980; Jarret 1995). In disadvantaged neighborhoods, especially those where safety is a daily concern, families ask for help, or receive it, less often. In such settings, young people have fewer contacts and less positive relationships with non-kin adults, neighborhood children, and classmates (Cochran and Riley 1988, 1990). Families are more suspicious than trustful, and often with good cause. They limit interactions outside of the family because they are uncertain of the intentions of others. This restricts dramatically the available social capital from personal social networks, as both children and adults are less willing to exchange scarce social resources for uncertain ends. Unfortunately, these restrictive normative structures often spill over into the public social networks, further limiting young people's access to social resources that promote cognitive and social development (Heath and McLaughlin 1993; McLaughlin, Irby and Langman 1994).

Social structures. Social structures influence the quality of available social resources to support children's development. These structures influence development through a child's personal (path *f* in Figure 1) and public social networks (paths *g*). Social structure includes characteristics of families (composition, income, parent's education, or size) and local communities (density of relationships between families, community wealth, average education, or size). Figure 1 shows a connection between normative and social structures, although without a specific causal direction (curved path *h*). Aspects of social structure influence characteristics of normative structures, and visa versa. Although these interconnections are important, we emphasize the independent effects in our model (paths *g* & *f*).

Current interest in the concept of social capital is tied in part to concerns about deterioration in modern family structure and its influence on children. Increasing numbers of single-parent households and employed mothers raises the possibility that children have less access to parents, and correspondingly less supervision, than they need (Coleman 1987, 1994; Parcel and Menaghan 1993). Each is associated with negative developmental outcomes, like dropping out of school (Coleman 1988; Lichter, Cornwell and Eggebeen 1993; Smith, Beaulieu and Israel 1992). Unfortunately, none of these studies looked at how different family structures influenced children's relationships with parents, siblings, or other relatives, so it is impossible to say whether social capital accounts for the negative effects on development. Downey (1995) provides an exception. In study of the effects of family size on academic outcomes (grades, math achievement and reading achievement), he found that

the positive effects of family talks about school, parents' educational expectations for their children, and relationships with parents of children's friends decreased with family size. The study provides some support for the argument that specific family structures "dilute" the effects of social capital in the home.

Socioeconomic conditions (family income and parents' education) also influence children's development (Coleman 1988; Lichter, Cornwall and Eggebeen 1993; Smith, Beaulieu and Israel 1992). Low income restricts the number and type of developmental experiences that parents can provide for their children, and parents' education helps to shape the content of experiences that they do provide (Cochran and Riley 1988, 1990). The same is true of the neighborhoods and communities in which children grow up. Neighborhoods and communities with more financial and human capital have more resources for schools, recreational facilities, youth organizations, and other public goods. Access to these resources, however, does not guarantee that they will be used effectively by adults, or even shared with children in a community. Some amount of social capital is required to use available resources effectively (Coleman 1988).

Thus far we have discussed social networks as if they were single entities, relatively disconnected from each other. Social networks, however, may be interconnected, forming a dense and tightly linked set of social relationships around children and their development. Coleman (1988, 1990) called this type of social structure intergenerational closure, and he argued that it gave adults -- singularly and as groups -- more control over the children in their

community. When parents know one another, for example, it is easier for them to monitor the behaviors of young people, and it is more likely that they will assume some responsibility for other people's children. Children may also benefit from these connections if they facilitate the formation of positive social relationships with adults outside the home, as these adults can also provide them with support and guidance. There is some evidence supporting Coleman's conjectures about the positive effects of intergenerational closure. Studies show that children do develop more positively when their parents know the parents of their friends and classmates (Downey 1995; Furstenberg and Hughes 1995; Lee and Croninger 1994).

Public social networks may also be connected, either through overlapping memberships or policies that promote organizational coordination and collaboration between programs. Natural overlap occurs when members of several public social networks (e.g., civic associations, youth groups, and religious organizations) come from the same communities and neighborhoods. Overlap may also occur, however, by policy, as when attempts are made to coordinate services across service sectors that influence children. Such coordination makes sense in theory, but it is often difficult to accomplish, especially when large bureaucracies are involved. As White and Wehlage (1995) discovered, coordination is most likely to occur on paper, or at the highest levels of organizations, where there is little contact with or actual influence over children's lives. More natural links, particularly those that build on the actual relationships of children with adults, appear to be more effective in influencing young people and their behavior (White and Wehlage 1995).

If structures are too closed, however, they may also inhibit development. Some military schools and religious schools display extreme forms of closure and connectedness, just as do certain small, rural towns and villages (Coleman 1990; Lee, Bryk and Smith 1993). Although parents and adults in this these settings may have considerable influence over children's behaviors, their influence is narrow -- perhaps narrow enough to restrict cognitive growth or social development. Moreover, in closed settings, children may find it more difficult to break free of local prejudices, intolerance, and bias. They may find it difficult to establish positive social relationships with other children and adults because of families histories, past experiences, race, or gender (Heath and McLaughlin 1993). Although dense, tightly linked networks of adults and children are more feasible in small, closed communities, these structures can also restrict development. Positive development, at least of the type that we advocate in our description of how children develop, requires some openness in the social structures that create possibilities for social exchanges and personal relationships.

Social Capital and Schools

Schools and Public Social Networks

Schools are the major public social network that serves children. Schools instruct students in a wide range of technical skills, at a depth that exceeds the financial and human resources of most families. The social bonds that form among children also influence development in powerful ways, particularly during adolescence. Peer friendships provide

opportunities for young people to develop their own identity, to test out social skills, and to cooperate with others of like-status in accomplishing goals (Eccles et al. 1993; Heath and McLaughlin 1993). These experiences are critical to adolescents' development and help them to prepare for adult roles.

Schools have responded successfully to the challenges of modern society in one sense, by providing children with opportunities to develop more advanced technical skills (i.e., to increase their human capital). But they have been less successful at providing opportunities for acquiring social capital. Indeed, we argue that the policies and practices in most schools give little credence to the importance of social relationships and the manner in which these relationships influence the academic development of students. Administrative concerns are typically more responsive to issues of efficiency, control, accountability, and achievement. Our own research shows, however, the importance of social relationships in producing educational outcomes (Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993; Lee and Croninger 1994; Lee and Smith 1996; Lee, Smith and Croninger 1995).

In these studies, we have underscored the social nature of learning. We have demonstrated that students -- *all* students -- learn more in schools with organizational characteristics that are associated with strong social capital; students learn less in schools that do not attend to the importance of how students and adults relate to each other day-to-day. Although the empirical base of research that specifically examines the effects of social capital on students is very thin, some studies of school organization underscore the complexity of

social capital effects. How social capital influences specific groups of students, particularly those from low-income families, depends in part on how valued their development is to teachers and adults in key institutional roles (Lee and Smith 1996; Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch 1995; Marks and Lee 1995). We argue that schools that promote social capital for all their students (and not just the more able or more affluent) see development as a public and not a private good. These schools have specific organizational policies and practices that emphasize a collective sense of responsibility for children's development (Lee and Smith 1996; Newmann and Wehlage 1995).

In arguing for the importance of education in children's development, we focus on secondary schools. Certainly, social capital influences development of children at all ages, but it is during adolescence that social capital embedded in the public social network of school becomes especially important. We organize the findings from these studies into four broad categories: (1) interpersonal relations, (2) normative structures, (3) school organization, and (4) connections to home and community. Interpersonal relations produce social capital. These social ties formed in and around schools can become an important part of a student's personal social network. Studies of normative structures examine how school culture, values, and beliefs influence educational outcomes. Studies with a school organization focus examine how policies and practices promote challenging standards and communal goals. Research that targets connections to home and community emphasizes efforts to coordinate schools'

developmental agendas outward with adults in other social environments important to children's well-being.

Our review is selective rather than comprehensive (see Lee, Bryk, and Smith 1993 for a comprehensive review of the literature on the effects of secondary school organization on teachers and students). Rather, we examine how social capital in one important social setting, the high school, brings about an important but constrained set of developmental outcomes in students (i.e., academic learning, social skills that will make young people better citizens as adults, and commitment to school-related goals). Schools are an essential component of the public social networks provided to children, the primary arena of public support for children's development in modern society. Our aim here is twofold: (1) to understand how social capital influences development, and (2) to speculate how public policies and practices can promote children's well-being through the vehicle of social capital.

Interpersonal Relations

Student-teacher relations. Teachers can be a source of social capital to students. Positive relationships with teachers provide students with emotional support, guidance, and assistance in acquiring school-based knowledge. There is considerable evidence that the quality of relationships between students and teachers plays an important role in development (Eccles et al. 1993; McDermott 1977; Ryan and Stiller 1991; Wehlage et al. 1989). Adolescents who describe their teachers as supportive are more motivated academically and

have more positive attitudes about school. Moreover, Eccles and her colleagues (1993) found that low-achieving students are especially influenced by the degree of support they perceive from their teachers. Support from teachers seems to be most important when students find academic tasks difficult and it is hard to sustain motivation. It is at these times that students most need support and guidance from adults and others around them.

Relations among teachers. Students may also benefit indirectly from social capital that supports teachers, just as they benefit indirectly from social capital supportive of parents in the home (e.g., Furstenberg and Hughes 1995). When teachers can rely on other teachers for emotional support, encouragement, and assistance, they may be able to provide students with more supportive environments and better instructional experiences (Rowan 1990). Schools with strong collegial relations among faculty are more effective than schools in which teachers feel isolated and alone (Lee, Bryk and Smith 1993). In schools where teachers report more collaboration, strong professional ties, and caring for each other's well being, both teachers and students are more likely to engage in desirable behaviors (Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993).

Relations among students. The importance of adolescent culture is well established (Coleman 1961). Peer influences that are aligned with the purposes of schooling can help students develop more positively; a peer culture that is antithetical to the school's purpose can be a powerful force that limits or even distorts children's development (Lee, Bryk and Smith 1993). The amount of time spent with peers has a negative effect on academic achievement

(Csikszentmihalyi and Larson 1984). However, the characteristics of peers mediates the effects of peer interactions (Epstein 1983). Students who spend considerable time with low-achieving students do less well in school than those who do not, regardless of their academic ability. Similarly, students who spend time with high-achieving students do better. Peer interactions in and around school and learning certainly affect development; *how* they influence development depends on the content of the interactions.

Normative Structures

The normative structure of schools strongly influences adolescent development. It sets guidelines for the behavior of both students and teachers. As a result, these norms establish a basis for mutual expectations and collaboration around instructional goals. The public norms and values that a school attaches to its developmental agenda should mobilize efforts and foster commitment around academic ends, as well as facilitate cooperation around that enterprise. Effective normative structures have at least three components: (1) they promote a shared mission with strong academic content, (2) they communicate expectations about teachers' work and student behavior, and (3) they promote a sense of caring or norms of civility (Bryk 1988; Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993; Lee, Bryk and Smith 1993). Although it would seem that all schools should share these norms (as the ostensible purpose of all schools is teaching and learning), in fact, there is substantial variation among high schools in their normative structures (Lee, Bryk and Smith 1993).

High school studies document the positive -- and negative -- effects of specific normative structures. For example, students are less likely to skip or drop out of school where there is a strong emphasis on academics, students feel safe, and discipline is seen as fair and effective (Bryk and Thum 1989). Moreover, the normative structure of high schools can have positive effects not only for students but for teachers (Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993; Lee, Dedrick, and Smith 1989). The teachers working in schools with a shared developmental agenda and an ethic that encourages mutual support (characteristics that, as a group, these authors typified as a "communal school organization") report fewer absences, higher morale, more job satisfaction, and greater efficacy. In schools with weak normative structures, both students and teachers report more negative attitudes and behavior.

An important component of the normative structure of schools is the extent to which adults accept responsibility for the development of all students (Lee and Smith 1996; Newmann and Wehlage 1995). If teachers define their responsibility narrowly, seeing themselves as only responsible for a specific content area or classroom, or hold themselves accountable for the learning of only the most able students, their interactions provide only limited support for development. This can be especially problematic in middle schools and high schools, as students make the transition from grade-specific to subject-specific instruction (Eccles, Lord, and Midgley 1991; Eccles et al. 1993; Newmann 1991). Adolecsents do better when school personnel define their responsibilities for students broadly

(Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee and Holland 1993; Lee, Bryk, and Smith 1993). Underlying the normative structures in these schools is a strong commitment by adults to help children develop into successful adults, particularly those children who are seen as least advantaged academically, economically, and socially.

Communal School Organization

Supportive interpersonal relationships and strong normative structures do not just happen. Rather, they are shaped and supported by specific organizational features of schools. These attributes, which are collectively referred to as communal school organization, can be contrasted to the bureaucratic features of most high schools (see Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993). Organizationally, communal schools are typically small, offer a narrow core curriculum with limited student choice, and are oriented toward providing a common set of experiences for students and adults. Teachers in such schools typically do not see their roles in terms of teaching specialized subject matter, but rather as helping to develop students' character and potential. Bureaucratic schools, on the other hand, are large, offer a broad curriculum with many possible choices for students, and are oriented toward providing diverse experiences. Powell, Farrarr, and Cohen (1985) describe these schools as "shopping mall high schools" because they are organized to maximize individual choices and preferences. Others call them comprehensive schools (Conant 1959).

Social capital can exist in both types of schools (communal and bureaucratic), although there is evidence that it is far more plentiful in communally organized schools. Moreover, in communally organized high schools, students from less advantaged homes do better; they learn more and are less likely to drop out of school or engage in undesirable behaviors (Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993; Bryk and Thum 1989). Why? Several reasons stand out. Students have more supportive relationships with their teachers, and they experience a normative structure that sets high standards for the conduct and performance of all students. These findings suggest that a major way that communally organized schools nurture social capital is by structuring the interactions of students and adults in ways that maximize opportunities to develop strong, supportive relationships around academic goals. These relationships can be especially important to children who may have less capital -- social, economic, and human -- available to them elsewhere.

Schools with a communal organization do not require homogenous student backgrounds to function well, though similarity certainly increases the likelihood that families will have shared values and experiences (Coleman 1990). The relationship between student background (e.g., average socioeconomic status or racial/ethnic makeup of enrollment) and communal values and organizational practices is explained by taking into account other factors that differentiate the organizational structures of communal and bureaucratic schools (Bryk and Driscoll 1988). Social capital, of the type fostered by the communal principles that undergird such schools, can be nurtured in low-income and high-income schools, in schools

with high, low, and diverse minority enrollments. The family background of students is but one component; organizational practices of schools that encourage positive social relationships, communal goals, and high standards of performance also count.

Much of the research in which communal and bureaucratic schools have been contrasted has been structured around investigations of the particular efficacy of Catholic high schools (especially Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993). However, more recent work investigating the same organizational contrasts has suggested that it is the organizational practices of such schools, rather than whether they are public, private, or religious, that accounts for the positive outcomes for students who attend schools with a communal organization (Lee and Smith 1995, 1996; Lee, Smith and Croninger 1995; Newmann and Wehlage 1995). These findings offer solid empirical support for the value of public policies and practices that promote social capital. Organizational characteristics of schools that reflect higher levels of social capital, as we have defined it in this chapter, are linked to positive developmental outcomes for all adolescents, but particularly children from disadvantaged social backgrounds.

Connections to Home and Community

Developing social capital around education can happen in several ways. In addition to efforts to develop communal organizational structures in schools, efforts to link families, neighborhoods and schools are also shown to promote social capital (Coleman 1994; Comer 1980; Epstein 1994, 1995; Muller 1993; Nettles 1991). When parents and other community

residents are actively involved in classrooms and schools, positive consequences accrue to both teachers and children. However, the consequences of parent involvement do not necessarily flow equally to all children. In schools serving students with a broad range of social backgrounds, low-income or minority parents are not always encouraged to participate in meaningful school activities or programs. White parents, particularly from middle-class backgrounds, seem best able to capture the benefits of parent involvement for their children (Lareau 1989, 1994; Lareau and Shumar 1996). Such parents can often draw on an extended network of well-placed relatives and acquaintances to enrich the educational experiences of their children or to resolve their children's problems in the classroom. The same supports are seldom available to lower-income parents, who typically must rely on networks that are smaller in size and less comparable in educational background with their children's teachers (Lareau and Shumar 1996; Snow et al. 1991).

Nonetheless, when teachers and parents form broad coalitions around the well-being of children, good things accrue to students from all economic and social backgrounds (Comer 1980; Epstein 1994; Nettles 1991). These activities create norms and expectations that flow to schools and from schools to students. They also help to establish and coordinate a single developmental agenda for young people, one that bridges children's experiences in different social environments. Creating and sustaining these benefits requires a comprehensive effort that supports the active enagagement of adults in the education of children (Epstein 1994, 1995). Unfortunately, such activities become much less common as children get older, and

are quite unusual in high schools. However, this type of involvement can have benefits for both students and the communities in which they live. It can create a forum in which to consider broader concerns, such as the social and economic health of neighborhoods and communities, as well as to promote social capital supportive of collective actions that have broader social consequences (Putnam 1995; Wehlage 1993).

Social Capital and the Problems of Youth

Theoretical and Practical Values

Does a paucity of social capital explain the problems of American youth? Certainly, there is empirical support for the notion that social capital influences children's development. Many studies report a positive influence on desirable outcomes for young people from access to adults who can provide them with emotional support, guidance, and assistance. Children who come from families, attend schools, or live in neighborhoods in which social capital is weak have more trouble making a smooth transition into adulthood. Quite simply, and not surprisingly, when children can rely on adults for support in multiple social environments, they do better.

Social capital, therefore, has both theoretical and practical value in addressing the problems that young people experience in America. The concept of social capital provides a theoretical thread to bind together a large body of literature about how children develop in modern society. We have drawn insights from many different studies and conceptualizations

of how social relationships impact social and cognitive growth -- conceptualizations, as far ranging as, family social networks (Cochran and Brassard 1979; Cochran et al. 1990), social support systems (Garbarino and Sherman 1980; Vondra and Garbarino 1988), community-based services (Heath and McLaughlin 1993; White and Wehlage 1995), resilient youth (Jarret 1995; Luthar and Zigler 1991), moral development and civic awareness (Dewey 1966; Nodding 1992) and communally organized schools (Bryk and Driscoll 1988; Bryk, Lee, and Holland 1993). What binds these studies together is the fact that they all demonstrate that social relationships *matter* to children, not only in the home but in the many social environments in which they interact with others.

We also argue that social capital has practical value for designing interventions meant to benefit young people. Central to the model around which we organized the chapter is an assertion that children benefit from participating in public social networks and that benefits increase as participation grows. Schools, religious organizations, youth associations, and community-based groups provide children with valuable developmental experiences. The relationships that young people form with adults in such settings create bridges that help smooth an often rocky transition to adulthood. Schools occupy a central position in these relationships. We argue that they can and should provide much of the social resources required to promote children's development. Schools can do so by creating and sustaining communal social environments, promoting solid academic and professional goals, and nurturing a sense of common obligation and responsibility between students and adults.

Imperfect Explanation

A concept wanting more specificity. We are excited about the concept of social capital, both in terms of its theoretical and practical implications, but we also recognize that it is a difficult concept to pin down. To describe how social capital influences social and cognitive growth, we drew on research from a wide range of theoretical perspectives and disciplines. Most of these studies, however, never use the concept of "social capital" in their research designs or explanations of results. Rather, we have imposed our own template onto their designs. The "binding glue" of these studies is that they emphasize the importance of social relationships in accomplishing tasks. But very few of them are tied directly to a single definition or set of propositions about how social capital works.

We constructed our model to provide some components of a unified conceptual framework where it did not seem to exist. However, many of the relationships described remain to be elaborated and tested. How, for example, do specific social structures influence the likelihood that children will seek assistance from adults, or that adults will extend support to children? What precisely is the relationship between social structures and specific value sets, particularly those that encourage cooperation, collaboration, and coordination between adolescents and adults? How do adolescents "orchestrate" the many personal and public social networks in which they participate? Does dissonance across these environments facilitates or hamper social and cognitive growth? At what point does it disrupt the positive development of children? Clearly social capital is a "concept in development." While

inadequate social capital may explain many of the problems that young people face today, without a clearer understanding of what we mean (and don't mean) by the construct, we will realize little of its explanatory or practical value.

A decline in social capital? Although almost everyone agrees that many of the ideas we have drawn together into the social capital "web" are in decline, we emphasize that any relationship between social capital and development is more complicated than a simple "decline" or "erosion" model suggests. Much of the evidence supporting an erosion in social capital comes from studies of changes in social structure -- historic trends in residential mobility, women's movement out of the house and into the workforce, changes in family composition and economics, and shifts in the social makeup of specific neighborhoods and communities (see, for example, Coleman 1987, 1994; Wilson 1987). Other trends, such as the development of a distinct youth market in movies, videos, and merchandise that glamorizes violence and anti-social behaviors, also suggests a decline in values associated with civic responsibility and social well-being. These trends present a troubling picture of young people, a picture in which the moral fabric of society is unraveling around us and young people are falling through the mesh that once supported their growth and development.

Drawing causal conclusions from the examination of trends is risky, however. For sure, the trends are suggestive, but the implications of these trends for the efficacy of increasing social capital is far from clear. The examination of trends says little about the *quality* of relationships between children and adults, or how the *amount* of support that adults

provide youth has changed over time. Not all changes have been bad, moreover. A decline in some forms of social capital, particularly those based on rigid social boundaries, prejudice, or insularity should be welcomed. Previous decades witnessed greater involvement in religious organizations, civic associations, and youth groups (Putnam 1995). There was also a clearer set of values, more respect for people in positions of authority (Etzioni 1993), and more stable and continuous family relationships (Coleman 1987, 1994). Nonetheless, many of these social and normative structures changed because they were discriminatory, unsupportive of development, or simply failed to provide people with any sense of moral purpose.

Understanding the importance of these historic trends requires a clear understanding of what precisely has changed, and how those changes influence the manner in which children interact with each other and adults. Our own belief is that the most important change may well be a renewed interest and understanding in the importance of social relationships in promoting the well-being of children, as well as the well-being of adults, schools, and communities. Such a voice is a welcome entry in debates about our civic responsibility toward children and the social institutions that provide them with support and guidance. We have suggested that when public policies and practices draw children and adults into a shared organizational life, as they do in some schools, they can be powerful mechanisms for enhancing individual and collective actions. Understanding how public policies promote social capital -- as well as weaken it -- is one of the most important challenges that we face as citizens and parents.

Multiple forms. We have also argued that different forms of social capital influence development differently. Some forms may actually hinder cognitive growth. Social capital in the home, for example, can be supportive of learning, but social capital in the school is more directly related to how well students acquire academic knowledge and technical skills. Moreover, tightly-knit parental networks may help in controlling undesirable adolescent behaviors, but they may also constrain children's aspirations to move beyond the expectations and beliefs of their parents.

We argue that children's development requires different types of social capital to flourish, beginning with social bonds in the home and expanding to include social relationships with other children and adults in specific organizations and the surrounding community. As children get older, these latter forms of social capital take on added importance. Unfortunately, we still know very little about how these forms influence specific developmental outcomes, or how social capital in one social setting influences social capital in another.

Although we focus on education (particularly secondary schooling) in this chapter, we recognize that other social environments in which children grow up are also important, as are other developmental periods. How, for example, does social capital influence the development of young children? Are social networks in preschool settings like Head Start, or in elementary schools, important to development? What are the most important forms of social capital in the home, the neighborhood, the community? Which forms of social capital

have negative impacts on young children's well-being? Are there ways of diminishing negative impacts without sacrificing other benefits? Is there, for example, an optimal balance between tight, supportive social relationships that provide children with emotional support and more loosely structured networks that promote exploration, change, and growth?

Centrality of Schools

By focusing on education we have emphasized our own commitment to the importance of school organization to both social capital and children's development. Like classical theorists, progressive philosophers, and the general public, we have faith in schooling as a powerful tool for enhancing individual abilities and the well-being of society. One way to do this is by helping children develop the skills required to work effectively toward productive common ends, and by helping children develop a sense of communal consciousness as they enter adulthood. This is, of course, the vision that Dewey (1966) had for American public schools, a vision that we have yet to realize. Schools of the type that Dewey imagined -- schools rich in social capital, communal experiences, and civic purpose -- are rare, though as we suggested earlier there are some schools like this. Our own explorations in Catholic schools have provided us with evidence that schools of this type exist, even in inner-city neighborhoods where these characteristics would seem particularly difficult to develop and sustain.

As society's more pervasive and enduring intervention, schools can provide an important service to individuals and the communities in which they reside by being fonts of social capital. Such schools can enhance children's development and create a foundation for collective actions aimed at improving social conditions. To move schools in this direction, members of society must be willing to invest in children's development, not only their own but also the development of other people's children (Grubb and Lazerson 1988). Although we are still not sure exactly how to create and sustain social capital, we have some idea of what it looks like in high schools with communal organizational forms. Such schools provide a glimpse of Dewey's vision of education at the center of civic life, a vision of worth pursuing for ourselves and America's youth.

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