Preface

How well people do depends on the range and quality of their connections. The thousands of books and articles spawned by social capital theory have probably convinced even the toughest skeptics that better connected people enjoy better health, faster access to information, stronger social support, and greater ease in dealing with crises or everyday problems. It has convinced many that to understand inequality in well-being we must understand something about the structure of people's connections. And it has inspired hundreds to study the formal structure of these networks, to uncover the patterns in the systems of nodes (people) and ties (relations) that constitute an actor's network.

But networks do not arise out of thin air. People's networks emerge over the course of their routine activities, in the everyday organizations where those activities take place. Every day, women and men drop off their children in childcare centers, head to work in office buildings, eat lunch in cafeterias, pick up food in grocery stores, get manicures in beauty salons, and attend PTA meetings in schools. They kneel down to pray in churches among other believers, play sports in gyms with other sports fans, and discuss politics in neighborhood associations with other concerned residents. Networks do not exist in a vacuum; they are formed and sustained in offices, schools, churches, country clubs, barber shops, gyms, community centers, universities, political clubs, YMCAs, childcare centers, and countless other everyday organizations where people encounter others.

This book's point of departure is the proposition that these everyday organizations matter to not merely the size but also the nature, quality, and usefulness of people's networks. Routine organizations are not merely places, sites where clusters of nodes and ties happen to exist. Instead, they constitute sets of institutional rules, norms, and practices that to lesser or greater extent affect how their members or participants interact, form personal connections, think of one another, build trust, develop obligations, and share information and other resources. In some organizations, patrons routinely encounter many other people; in others, they meet few. In some, they are subject to formal and informal rules that affect the obligations they

feel toward members; in others, they are not. These and many other dynamics affect the nature of the ensuing social relations. That is, the organizations shape, in varying degrees, their patrons' social capital.

This book introduces a perspective on inequality in well-being that considers how people's social capital responds to organizational conditions. Rather than conceiving of networks primarily as nodes and the ties between them, it conceives them mostly as sets of context-dependent relations resulting from routine processes in organizational contexts. Prioritizing context over structure, the book proposes that how much people gain from their networks depends fundamentally on the organizations in which those networks are embedded. It also proposes that individuals receive distinct advantages from being embedded in effective brokers—organizations that, both intentionally and unintentionally, connect people to other people, organizations, and their resources. This book, following the tradition of studying the unanticipated consequences of social action, documents the network advantages that people may gain from doing little more than participating in the organizations that structure their day-to-day lives. In so doing, it identifies many of the often hidden mechanisms that sustain social inequality.

The book illustrates and develops this model through what might appear to be an unlikely case: a study of the experiences of scores of mothers whose children were enrolled in New York City childcare centers. These mothers varied in race, class, education, and lifestyle; most of them worked, but they had little else in common. The book documents that, because of the conditions of their centers, many of these mothers expanded both the size of their networks and the resources available through them. At the same time, the book reveals that how much, if anything, mothers gained depended on the institutional practices of their respective centers. And it shows that the practices of the centers often resulted from larger factors such as policies of the state, something far removed from the mothers' everyday lives. To help assess these mothers' experiences, the book also analyzes a national survey of 3,500 urban mothers and a New York City survey of nearly 300 centers. To help assess whether the experiences of these mothers were unique, the book compares its findings to published studies on how colleges, churches, beauty salons, and many other organizations affect various aspects of the networks of their members. The results make clear that the experiences of the mothers are not unique, suggesting that differences in well-being arise, in part, because of differences in the organizations in which people's networks are embedded.

Writing this book would have been impossible without the help of many people and institutions. I received invaluable course relief from Princeton University and the University of Chicago during the research and writing of the book. Semester-long leaves taken at Columbia University and at New

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Part I

PERSONAL TIES IN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS

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Social Capital and Organizational Embeddedness

Imagine two women, Jane and Victoria, both single mothers of a young child who earn $18,000 a year as cashiers in a department store. While Jane's education ended after high school, Victoria's has continued, and she is currently a sophomore in college. What is Victoria's advantage over Jane?

An economist might expect Victoria to have better prospects because of her investment in human capital, the skills and education she is accumulating in college.[1] This human capital would include not only the knowledge of specific subject matters such as English literature or engineering, but also the general skills that students tend to acquire through their classes, such as how to write clearly, how to investigate a topic using libraries and the Internet, and how to make convincing arguments. This human capital would improve Victoria's future prospects and also her current circumstances, since her research and communication skills would probably help her when meeting immediate needs such as finding a doctor, a babysitter, or subsidized health care.

A sociologist might expect Victoria to reap additional gains from her investment in social capital, the resources inherent in the social networks she is acquiring in college.[2] These resources, which include the information these networks provide and the informal and reciprocal obligations their members may feel toward her, would motivate her to invest in meeting others, such as students and professors. Some students would provide social support; others would connect her to people beyond her socioeconomic background; and her professors would likely guide and advise her, inform her about job and educational opportunities, and recommend Victoria to potential employers. Social capital theory would alert us to the fact that the college is a place not merely to acquire skills but also to make connections.

The theory ignores, however, that the magnitude of Victoria's social capital advantage would depend substantially on the conditions of the college. A college is not merely a place; it is a formal organization with norms, rules, and practices that, by guiding the behavior and interactions of its participants, inevitably shapes their networks. Victoria's network

advantage, I suggest, might be either much greater or greatly diminished, depending on conditions of this organization.

First, these conditions would strongly affect the size and composition of her new network. Social capital theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Nan Lin, when explaining why people made connections, used the term "investment" to emphasize that people made ties because they recognized, or believed, that connections offer advantages. (This helps explain the term "social *capital*.") In doing so, however, they implicitly prioritized, in the process of tie formation, the role of people's choices over that of their environments. While some people certainly make connections because they know it may help them later on, others are shy, reluctant to approach strangers, or uncomfortable with thinking of relations in instrumental terms. The less of a social investor Victoria is, the more her new friendships will depend on how the college structures her interactions with others—for example, on its professors' rules with respect to group projects, on its deans' support of sports teams or student clubs, and on its available cafés, lounges, socials, festivals, and the like. In fact, Victoria may be least likely to make friends with some of the students who, from an investment perspective, might be the most useful. Seniors, being more experienced, knowledgeable, and locally connected, are for many purposes more useful social ties than are underclassmen and women. But Victoria, if she resembles most sophomores, will tend to make friends among sophomores, if for no other reason than colleges tend to structure courses, and therefore opportunities to meet, around cohorts—with seminars reserved for juniors and seniors and introductory lectures intended for first-years and sophomores. Victoria's new social ties would be made not merely *in* the college, but in many ways *by* it.

Second, the organizational conditions of the college would shape the nature of these social networks, including the obligations they carry. James Coleman and other social capital theorists emphasized that the obligations that people feel toward each other tend to emerge informally from within their networks, a process easy to imagine in Victoria's situation.[3] For example, if Victoria resembles most students, then over time she will probably develop informal relationships with some of her professors, who will in turn feel inclined to provide some form of guidance. But not all obligations bubble up naturally from interpersonal relations. Depending on her college, many professors who feel no personal inclination to help Victoria will provide some guidance anyway, because many colleges institute *formal* obligations under which professors are supposed to guide students. Under these obligations, faculty must become available to students for meetings, advise direction in the course of study, provide insight into a future career, write letters of recommendation, and generally provide access

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to the resources characteristic of their roles. If her college strongly enforced such obligations, then Victoria's advantage over Jane would be significantly greater.

Third, the conditions of the college would determine whether, in addition to ties to other people, Victoria also formed ties to other organizations. Colleges can maintain ties to many organizations, and many types of resources may travel across them. Sometimes, these connections might produce little more than access to information from other organizations. The college might make Victoria's job search much easier than Jane's if it provided a "career services" office with a small library with file folders listing contact information for area employers and graduate programs. This targeted, ready-collected, presorted information would be available to Victoria as needed. Other times, the connections might be more engaged, such that the college effectively *mobilized* these connections for its students. If the college cooperated with those management and finance firms that visit campuses each spring to recruit graduating seniors, Victoria's advantage over Jane in finding a well-paying job would be immeasurably greater. Finally, some connections to other organizations would be not so much mobilized as institutionalized, providing access to resources useful to her day-to-day well-being. Victoria might now be indirectly associated with a loose network of organizations that target resources toward those who share membership in organizations such as hers—that is, toward formally enrolled college students. By virtue of her student identification card, Victoria could receive automatic discounts on museum, theater, musical entertainment, and even train and airplane tickets.

In short, Victoria's network advantage over Jane would depend strongly on her college, which might, intentionally or not, either increase it dramatically or diminish it substantially. Colleges are unique organizations, ones that can be as close to a "total institution" as an average citizen is likely to encounter in contemporary industrialized societies.[4] But with respect to their impact on networks, colleges are often little more than especially effective *brokers*, organizations that, through multiple mechanisms, tie people to other people, to other organizations, and to the resources of both.

This book argues that people's social capital depends fundamentally on the organizations in which they participate routinely, and that, through multiple mechanisms, organizations can create and reproduce network advantages in ways their members may not expect or even have to work for. Some organizations are more effective than others, and others are not effective at all. But understanding people's connections—and how much connections generate social inequality—requires understanding the organizations in which those connections are embedded. It requires conceiving of people as organizationally embedded actors, as actors whose social *and* organizational ties—and the resources both available and mobilized through

them—respond to institutional constraints, imperatives, and opportunities. The book proposes a model to understand these processes and illustrates this model by applying it to the case of mothers whose children are enrolled in childcare centers. I believe the childcare center represents an ideal place to examine these questions, because centers tend to be effective brokers while nonetheless differing dramatically in their effectiveness, and because they exhibit a remarkably wide array of mechanisms by which both social and organizational ties are brokered.

The present chapter makes the case that the mechanisms by which organizations broker social and organizational ties can be studied systematically, and that childcare centers represent an ideal site in which to identify many of these mechanisms. The chapter proceeds in four parts. First, it briefly reviews and critiques the social capital perspective, identifying the questions the theory has failed to answer and explaining the consequences of this neglect. Second, it identifies the three basic assumptions on which this book's alternative, the organizational embeddedness perspective, rests.[5] Third, it briefly summarizes the implications of these assumptions, specifying *what* aspects of people's networks are affected by organizational conditions, *how* they are affected, and *why*. Finally, the chapter explains why childcare centers, and the experience of mothers within them, constitute an ideal case to examine these questions.

SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY

The Theory

Social capital theory argues that people do better when they are connected to others because of the goods inherent in social relationships. These goods—the social capital—include the obligations that people who are connected may feel toward each other, the sense of solidarity they may call upon, the information they are willing to share, and the services they are willing to perform. People who are socially connected therefore have recourse to a stock of "capital" they can employ when needed. The term "social capital" was first used in this sense by economist Glenn Loury. However, the intellectual roots of the theory lie more firmly in the works of Bourdieu and Coleman. In recent years, Lin has worked harder than anyone to develop a formal theory of social capital. These three authors, Bourdieu, Coleman, and, Lin, define social capital in somewhat different ways, but they all conceive it as the resources that inhere in social relations.[6]

Bourdieu defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less

institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition"—that is, as the resources one derives from belonging to a network.[7] Bourdieu believed that people possessed varying amounts of different kinds of "capital," such as cultural capital (knowledge of high art) and economic capital (possession of financial resources). As a result, he argued that social capital included any type of resource available through one's social ties: the "volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected."[8]

Coleman defined social capital as the obligations, norms, and information available to a person from her or his network. To understand Coleman's definition, it helps to know that his intellectual mission was to develop a model of social behavior that was both sociologically compelling and rooted in the idea that actors are rational.[9] Thus, he explained, "If we begin with a theory of rational actor, in which each actor has control over certain resources and interests in certain resources and events, then social capital constitutes a particular kind of resource available to an actor."[10] The first of these resources was the set of obligations a relation might feel: "If *A* does something for *B* and trusts *B* to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in *A* and an obligation on the part of *B*."[11] This obligation becomes a resource that actor A can employ in the future. A second resource was the presence of norms that encourage people to help each other: "A prescriptive norm within a collectivity that constitutes an especially important form of social capital is the norm that one should forgo self-interest and act in the interests of the collectivity."[12] If a group has a norm that people should forgo their self-interest, then an actor within it can reliably turn to others in the group for help when needed. A third resource was information, the knowledge that people to whom an actor is connected possess.

Lin defined social capital as the "resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions."[13] Lin's objective was both to synthesize the work of earlier theorists and to fit the theory formally into social network analysis, something Bourdieu never did and Coleman only began to do. In fulfilling this objective, Lin assumed that actions are not only purposive but also rational. Lin, following Coleman and Bourdieu, argued that four types of resources constitute social capital: information, the influence that networks have over people, the social credentials that networks can impart, and the personal reinforcements, essential for mental health, that networks provide actors. Lin has contributed to a large body of work showing that people who have access to these resources have better mental health and reach higher positions in the occupational ladder.[14]

In sum, while the authors differed in the specific resources they included under the rubric of social capital, they all agreed that social capital referred to resources people derived directly from their social ties.

The Missing Question: How Do People Make Social Ties?

These researchers have spawned a massive literature on the benefits of social capital.[15] But the researchers devoted little time to an important question: how do people make the social ties that provide access to these resources? Coleman sidestepped this question; Bourdieu devoted but a few paragraphs to it; and Lin, who wrote perhaps more, ultimately did not answer it.[16]

Lin did not explain how people made social ties because his model, in which networks result from investments, made the question irrelevant. Lin believed that people act rationally, motivated by both instrumental and expressive needs. For either reason, actors invest in social relations with an eye to the returns: "[The] theory . . . suggests that actors . . . are motivated by instrumental or expressive needs to engage other actors *in order to* access these other actors' resources for the purpose of gaining better outcomes."[17] That is, the model explicitly proposed that people make connections because of the gains they anticipate. However, the model did not *show* this to be the case—the proposition followed naturally from Lin's assumptions that actors tend to behave purposely and that social capital is an effective investment. From this perspective, asking why people make ties inspires as much curiosity as asking why they make money; people do it because they know it is good for them, which is to say that rational actors do what is rational. And since the *why* question was answered in rational terms, the *how* question became trivial, resulting in a programmatic neglect of the processes by which people form useful ties.

Bourdieu also wrote about how people form ties and stated that networks result from investments. However, what he meant by "investments" was ambiguous, so why he did not say more about how people form ties remains unclear. In his most extensive comments on social capital, Bourdieu argued that the "existence of a network of connections is not a natural given, or even a social given."[18] Instead, it results from people's deliberate efforts. "In other words," he explained, "the network of relationships is the product of *investment strategies*, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term."[19] By one reading, Bourdieu is arguing that people strategically enter into social relationships because these will be useful in the future. This is not only consistent with Lin's argument; it is Lin's reading of Bourdieu. In fact, Lin argues that an "investment" perspective is the common thread across *all* major social capital theorists.[20] By a

different reading, Bourdieu is arguing that, regardless of how they are formed, new ties effectively end up being an investment. This second reading, which is considerably more generous to the author, can be justified by noting that in other works Bourdieu has argued that many actions tend to be habitual, rather than purposive.[21] Nevertheless, I do not believe Bourdieu resolved this tension.[22] So, whether his model made the question irrelevant or he simply never came to address it, Bourdieu did not articulate the mechanisms by which people make connections. At most, he explained that it requires "unceasing effort."[23]

The assumption that social ties result from investments was abandoned by many later social capital researchers, especially those whose research did not involve formal mathematical modeling. Today, authors differ in how much emphasis they place on this assumption, as Charles Kadushin noted when evaluating the idea of investment in social capital theory.[24] Nonetheless, the theoretical lacunae it generated persist in most of the later works: in their devotion to studying the *consequences* of social ties, many researchers have taken for granted the processes from which ties arise. As a result, recent reviews of research on social capital have found little to report about how actors form ties (despite the fact that recent research by formal network analysts and experimental psychologists provides tools with which to answer this question).[25]

Why The Missing Question Matters

Not asking how people form ties creates important problems. First, it leaves unanswered a critical question in the study of network in-equality: what mechanisms account for it? A theory of network inequality cannot be content with demonstrating that social ties are useful: if some do better because they have more ties than others, then it certainly seems important to understand why they have more ties. For example, recent studies have tried to determine, using advanced statistical techniques, whether having connections helps people find jobs.[26] Researchers increasingly acknowledge, to their credit, that to properly answer this question they must take into account unobserved differences among people that determine who is well connected in the first place. As a result, research-ers have examined ways of statistically controlling for these differences. This solution, however, addresses only half the problem: how people make ties is not merely a statistical nuisance to "control away"; it is a substantive process to understand. Knowledge comes about not only from demonstrating associations but, more important, as Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg maintain, from explaining the mechanisms that give rise to them.[27]

Consider that, without knowing how network inequality arises, developing the means to reduce it becomes impossible. Some believe that social capital theory "blames the victims" for their problems, since it could lead one to the conclusion that if only people bothered to network more effectively, then social inequality might be lowered. More important, critics maintain that the theory's focus on personal networks comes at the expense of the study of larger structural forces. In fact, the theory can be faulted for leaving practitioners at a loss, since one remains unclear about how to decrease differences in the number of useful connections to which people have access.[28]

Second, while this book's concern is the social capital of individuals, this question also informs our knowledge of the social capital of neighborhoods and of nations. At the neighborhood level, Robert Sampson and his colleagues have argued that collective efficacy, the willingness of neighbors to get involved in local problems on behalf of the common good, reduces neighborhood delinquency.[29] When neighbors are willing to call the police if they see something suspicious or scold young people they witness vandalizing street corners, they make it difficult for people to perpetrate street crimes. Sampson and colleagues have found that collective efficacy rises when neighbors tend to know one another. How do neighbors come to know one another? Why do people know more of their neighbors in some areas than others? Unpacking this process is critical to understand what gives rise to collective efficacy. A similar concern motivates this question at the national level. Political scientist Robert Putnam has argued that over the last several decades the United States witnessed a decline in civic participation and collective social capital, as people spend less time in the company others, even when conducting recreational activities such as bowling. To know why people are more likely to bowl alone, it is important to know how people normally make friends with whom to bowl, and why some have more such friends than others.[30]

Third, as I discuss in this book, how a person forms and sustains a tie can affect the social capital to which she has access. That is, many of the obligations people feel and the resources they feel willing to provide others derive from the contexts that gave rise to and sustain their relationships. Of these contexts, none is more important than the organizational context.[31]

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THIS BOOK

This book proposes an alternative model that first asks how people make connections and argues that a major part of the answer lies in those organizations in which people participate routinely.[32] The book examines how the resulting social capital is affected by these organizational contexts. And

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it argues that participating in organizations that effectively broker social capital improves people's well-being. The model rests on three assumptions, each of which I discuss with some care: first, that actors may form ties either purposely or nonpurposely; second, that forming ties either purposely or nonpurposely depends on the context of social interaction; and third, that the context of interaction can be shaped significantly by organizations.[33]

Actors May Form Ties Either Purposely or Nonpurposely

Earlier, I described the proposition by social capital theorists that actors invest in networks with an eye to their gains. That proposition suggests that people make ties as a result of purposive actions geared toward the benefits of acquiring social capital. However, people may form new ties through at least three other types of action. To understand what these are, we must distinguish purposive from nonpurposive acts, and global from local action.

Theorists such as Robert Merton refer to an act as purposive if the perpetrator was motivated by an objective, such as requesting an application (act) in order to apply for a job (purpose). Often, the objective motivating an act is rational; in fact, rational choice theory assumes that actors tend to act in pursuit of rational objectives.[34] However, the objective may be rational or irrational, self-interested or altruistic, individual or collective, psychological or cultural.[35] Consider, for example, that people can deliberately act in ways that harm them. All that is required is some purpose. By contrast, a nonpurposive act has no conscious objective. An example is the act of laughing.[36]

An act may be defined either *globally* or *locally*, depending on how narrowly we draw the boundaries around it. A global purposive act, for example, is to attend college with the objective of obtaining a diploma; a very local one is to sign the registration card containing a semester's list of courses. Global acts constitute bundles of local acts; consequently, they may result from multiple or even contradictory motivations, even when they are guided by one overarching purpose. The overarching purpose of college attendance may be to obtain a diploma, but other, subsidiary purposes may include escaping from home, feeling good about oneself, yearning for new experiences, or finding someone to marry.

Depending on their purpose or lack thereof, people may form ties as a result of at least four types of action. First, an actor may form a tie when the purpose of her action is to make a tie. That is, an individual may introduce herself to another to either have more connections or gain access to his or her resources. This idea, the core of the investment perspective, reflects the common usage of "network" as a verb.[37]

Second, an actor may form a tie when the purpose of her action is to accomplish some other objective. That is, making a tie may be a by-product

of the pursuit of another aim. Consider a local example: in a grocery store a man waiting in a long checkout line asks the one standing before him for the time. The other responds and starts a conversation that finishes with an exchange of phone numbers and an invitation to have coffee. In this case, the time-seeker formed a tie even though "networking" was not his purpose; the relationship was triggered by an act whose (local) purpose was to learn the time.[38] Consider a global example, which might illustrate more common circumstances: a churchgoer volunteers at a summer block party that serves as a fund-raiser, and consequently meets several of her neighbors. Her (global) purpose was to raise funds for her church; meeting her neighbors was a by-product.

Third, an actor may form a tie when her action had no purpose other than itself. Sociologists have defined an act as *expressive* when it is perpetrated for its intrinsic value, when conducted for its own sake rather than in pursuit of an objective. Many of the actions that we consider emotional, such as laughing, sighing, or crying—when they have no ulterior purpose—are expressive. And they can lead to new ties in informal social situations. Consider an example: a teenager awaiting his turn at a barbershop overhears a barber crack a joke, to the client whose hair he is trimming, about the presidential election; the teenager laughs, prompting a reply from the barber that leads to a conversation and an informal relationship. The teenager's laughter had no purpose; it was strictly an expression that triggered a conversation and relationship.[39] While this teenager's act was locally expressive, globally expressive acts also often form and sustain social relations, according to sociologist Georg Simmel. Simmel believed that much of what makes us human is our practice of "sociability," the state of associating with others for the sake of association, a state in which "talk is a legitimate end in itself."[40] Just as we cry for the sake of crying, Simmel would argue, we often talk for the sake of talking, not in pursuit of some other objective or even for the sake of making ties.

Fourth, an actor may form a tie when her action had neither a true purpose nor even itself (expressively) as a purpose. In these actions, purpose plays no role whatsoever, because they result from preexisting dispositions. Such an act may be defined as *habitual*. While Bourdieu's writings on social capital relied on a model of purposive action, his books on cultural capital examined what he called the "habitus," the set of cultural dispositions to act, accumulated over an actor's lifetime, that embody both a person's own history and that of the group, class, or society of which she formed part. In this model, people act as a result of their customary predispositions.[41] These often operate locally. Consider an example: a woman at a bus stop sees a man bring his forearm to his face and sneeze. She instinctively blurts, "Bless you"; he thanks her, and a conversation ensues. Her act did not,

properly speaking, have a purpose (even if later, when prompted, she might explain that her blessing was the polite reaction). Nor was it expressive, the way laughing or crying are intended to express a feeling. Instead, her "Bless you" was blurted out of habit(us). Predispositions also (and perhaps more commonly) operate globally, since global actions that result from habitual tendencies may either place or not place people in situations where meeting others is likely. For example, in the crowded grocery store, suppose that two shoppers see an opportunity to cut the long checkout lines, as one cashier is about to open a register. One cuts; the other does not even think about it—cutting was not his predisposition. Only the second man is likely to meet other shoppers, as they commiserate over the perils of rush-hour shopping.[42] When acts are habitual, expressive, and perpetrated for other purposes, forming ties is often unexpected, resulting from social interactions in the presence of strangers. In these three types of action, forming ties, by definition, is a by-product.

In sum, people can make ties when it was their purpose, when they had a purpose other than making ties, when their purpose was nothing but the act itself, and when they had no purpose at all at the time of social interaction. These four circumstances must form part of any model of tie formation that considers the motivations of the actor.[43]

Forming Social Ties Either Purposely or Nonpurposely Depends on the Context of Social Interaction

The fact that people may form ties when doing so was not necessarily their intention makes clear that understanding how their actions lead to new connections requires knowing something about the context of social interaction. And the less purposely actors pursue social connections, the more they must know about their context. Specifically, they must know whether, how, and under what conditions they interact with others.[44]

First, forming social ties depends on *whether* actors interact at all—that is, on the availability of opportunities to interact with strangers. Among the first researchers to make this point explicitly were Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, who argued that the root of friendship formation lay in the opportunities people had to interact.[45] Since then, this idea has been proposed and demonstrated many times, perhaps most systematically by Peter Blau and Joseph Schwartz, who relied on it to ground their network theory of contemporary society.[46] For example, sociologist Ray Oldenburg argued that people will find it difficult to meet more than just a few of their neighbors in the absence of informal gathering places such as cafés and neighborhood bars. And Maureen Hallinan has found that elementary and junior high school students tend to have more friends if they are

enrolled in larger classes. In fact, opportunities to interact may be critical even for purposive social investors. For example, William J. Wilson argued that people in poor neighborhoods looking for jobs will find it difficult to develop middle-class networks because they lack opportunities to interact with them informally, an argument consistent with the evidence.[47]

Second, making ties depends on *how* actors interact with others: how long they interact, how frequently, how intensely, and while performing what activity. Two of these modes of interaction have been shown to be especially important: how frequently and while performing what activity.

The consequences of frequent interaction have been the foundation of several lines of research, especially those inspired by Robert Emerson's exchange theory and by George Homans's theory of the group. Emerson believed that repeated exchange between people reduced their mutual uncertainty, while Homans believed that repeated interaction between two parties heightened their mutual affection.[48] In support of these ideas, social psychologists have shown in controlled experiments that the more frequently two people interact, the closer they become and the more they trust each other.[49] I suggest that when strangers, for whatever reason, encounter each other repeatedly, they become increasingly likely to develop a friendship. For example, if two neighborhood residents repeatedly see each other at a local diner, with each successive encounter they are more and more likely to become friends, as sociologist Mitchell Duneier chronicles in his study of men's friendships in a Chicago restaurant.[50]

Equally important is the activity being performed. People may form ties when engaged in many activities, as the earlier examples of the shoppers and the passengers at the bus stop illustrate; but not all activities produce new ties in equal measure. Sociologist Scott Feld has defended the significance of "focus," which he defined as "any social, psychological, or physical entity around which joint activities of individuals are organized."[51] A "focus of activity" may result from a common concern, such as when two mothers in a childcare center start a conversation about their children's progress, or two black men waiting at a barbershop begin to debate the best means to avoid razor bumps. The common focus—childcare or grooming—provided each pair a topic around which to start a conversation, a natural entry point to the relationship. Relationships often arise around a common object of attention.[52]

Third, forming social ties also depends on the conditions under which people interact. I refer specifically to the degree of *competitiveness* and the degree of *cooperation*. When interaction is competitive, the parties are struggling over a particular good or resource, such that one will acquire it, or acquire most of it, or acquire it first. Competition makes opponents out of actors, undermining trust and the formation of friendships. As the stakes

increase, the chances of tie formation decrease quickly. Consider two job applicants waiting at a small lobby for their respective job interviews. While they might strike up a friendship as they wait to be summoned, the probability that they will do so becomes lower if each of them knows why the other waits; even lower if the firm will offer only one position; and lower still if, in the current job market, no other openings have emerged in many months.[53]

The dynamics of cooperation differ substantially. In cooperative interaction, the parties work jointly to accomplish a collective goal. Cooperating with strangers, I suggest, tends to produce friendships. In experimental settings, social psychologist Edward Lawler has shown that when people successfully accomplish joint tasks, the cohesion of the group increases.[54] For example, when two new mothers at a childcare center are asked to collaborate on a fund-raiser, their need to coordinate and find a way to work together should increase the chances that they become friends.

In sum, independent of their own intentions, people are more likely to form ties when they have opportunities to interact, when they do so frequently, when they are focused on some activity, when they are not competitors, and when they have reason to cooperate.

The Context of Interaction Is Shaped Significantly by Organizations

Finally, I assume that these elements of interaction—whether, how, and under what conditions people interact—react to the organizations in which people participate.[55] This book defines an organization as a loosely coupled set of people and institutional practices, organized around a global purpose, and connected, both formally and informally, to other organizations.[56] It considers routine organizations in which people, whether patrons or employees, have opportunities to interact with others, such as childcare centers, barbershops, diners, Internet cafés, colleges, firms, synagogues, YWCAs, bowling alleys, and recreation centers. Three issues in this definition demand attention.

First, an organization refers to both the actors who compose it and the institutional practices that organize their behavior. A childcare center is composed of teachers, directors, parents, children, and janitors and institutional practices such as teaching, pickup and drop-off, play time, after-lunch napping, and PTA meetings. An organization's *actors* influence tie formation to the extent that they determine how people interact, such as when a center director asks parents to introduce themselves to one another at a PTA meeting.[57] An organization's *institutional practices* also influence tie formation to the extent that they shape social interaction. Practices, however, may be "institutional" in two different senses, one normative and one cognitive.

An institution in the normative sense may be defined, following Victor Nee and Paul Ingram, as "a web of interrelated norms—formal and informal—governing social relationships."[58] That is, an organization may enforce rules and norms that its actors feel compelled to follow, such as a requirement that all new college students participate in first-year orientation or the norm that congregation members should fund-raise for the church. Since organizations can enforce compliance under the threat of lost membership, they can motivate participants effectively. An institution in the cognitive sense may be defined, following John Meyer and Brian Rowan, as "classifications built into society as reciprocated typifications and interpretations."[59] These institutions are not mandates but categories, generally taken for granted, through which actors interpret their world and social interactions. Whereas normative institutions tell actors how they ought to behave, cognitive institutions shape their perception of their circumstances. Such cognitive understandings shape, for example, whether coworkers perceive one another primarily as competitors or, instead, as members of the same team. For example, while some clothing retailers do not pay their workers on commission, others do, implicitly encouraging competition even though there is no "rule" or "norm" mandating competitiveness. Either normatively or cognitively, organizations may institutionally encourage social interaction that is limited or frequent, competitive or cooperative.[60]

Second, while organizations may have a global purpose, the people who compose them may be motivated by separate or additional objectives and beliefs, resulting in a collection of actors with multiple purposes. In this sense, the various actors and activities of an organization constitute a loosely coupled entity.[61] Consequently, understanding what motivates people in an organization is more complex than simply knowing its purported objective or function. A childcare center may be more than a place for childcare; a mosque, more than a site for prayer. For example, while a beauty salon might pursue the global objective of earning profits by setting hair and decorating fingernails, a given beautician might be motivated, on a daily basis, by the wish to spend time in the company of others or to sustain an informal support group among neighborhood women.[62]

Third, organizations may be tied to other organizations through multiple arrangements that vary in many elements, such as their complexity, stability, authority, and formality.[63] I assume that these organizational ties will affect the attitudes and behavior of actors within the organization. Particularly, external organizations that possess strong authority may motivate people within an organization to institute practices that build or sustain social ties among its members. For example, a philanthropic agency may donate a large sum to a community college provided that part of it is used to build a gathering place for students.[64] In this respect, the community

college was externally motivated to establish a place likely to build social capital.

In sum, the context under which people interact can be shaped by both the actors and the institutional practices that constitute an organization, which may be motivated by internal and external factors.

OTHER ASPECTS OF PERSONAL TIES

The preceding assumptions make clear why organizations may affect whether and how people *form* ties. But they also provide a way to understand how and why organizations may affect other aspects of social capital. First, people may not just form but also sustain, strengthen, or weaken their relations to others either purposely or nonpurposely. For example, globally habitual actions that repeatedly place people in the company of others may sustain their relations even when the actors fail to make "unceasing efforts" to do so. People sustain friendships at gyms with others whom they only see at gyms, because they patronize gyms repeatedly. Second, the context of social interaction—whether it is frequent or infrequent, focused or unfocused, competitive or noncompetitive, and cooperative or noncooperative—is likely to affect the *quality* of the ensuing relations: how strong or weak ties are, how much the parties trust each other, and what resources, services, information, or support the parties are willing to provide. For example, people may more willingly trust and help others when their interaction takes place in noncompetitive contexts. Third, both the actors and institutions that compose an organization may not only regulate activity but also impose obligations, enforce pro-social norms, and encourage organizational members to share resources. For example, if a church encourages cooperative interaction, it helps build pro-social norms (a form of social capital), as researchers have documented in recent years.[65]

Fourth, what is true about organizations' motivations to form social ties is likely true about their motivation to form *organizational* ties. That is, just as a center director might be motivated to form connections among mothers, she might be motivated to form connections between mothers and external organizations. Such ties rarely form part of social capital analyses, but they may constitute, I suggest, a major source of goods and information.

In short, I argue that (1) organizational contexts affect most aspects of social capital, including whether a person makes ties, what kind of ties she makes, whether the goods in those ties are available to the person, and how those goods are acquired; (2) organizations may affect social capital either purposely or nonpurposely, and through the influence of either actors or institutional practices; and (3) organizations, or their members, may be

motivated to affect social capital by either internal or external pressures. The three arguments represent answers to three questions on the impact of organizational embeddedness on people's ties: *what* is affected, *how*, and *why*. I briefly summarize these implications, before turning to the case study, the childcare center.

What Organizational Contexts Affect

Social and Organizational Ties

By shaping their participants' interactions and activities, organizations can shape the extent to which they form either social or organizational ties. Organizational ties, such as Victoria's ties to external libraries and employment firms, have formed little part of social capital theory, but they represent an important advantage potentially available through an organization. In addition, organizations can shape the nature of the ensuing relationships, including their strength or weakness, and the resources available through them.[66]

Resources, Access, and Mobilization

We have seen that social capital can refer to different kinds of resources embedded in social networks. Bourdieu, Coleman, Lin, and others included the following: information, services, material goods, trust, obligations, and pro-social norms. Organizational contexts may affect not only ties but also these resources—specifically, whether a person has access to them and whether she makes use of them, which scholars have called, respectively, *access to* and *mobilization of* social capital.[67] Organizations affect the former by influencing whether people form ties to the people or organizations that possess the goods; they contribute to the latter to the extent that they enact, enforce, or encourage trust, pro-social norms, supportive services, information sharing, the provision of services, and the distribution of material goods. One must not neglect the importance of people's agency: some actors mobilize connections more effectively than others, and some will take greater advantage of the network resources available in a given organization. However, I suggest that mobilization does not depend solely on how willing a person is to use her ties; mobilization is mediated, and sometimes perpetrated, by organizations.[68]

Organizational context may also affect what scholars have called negative social capital.[69] For example, scholars have noted that group solidarity may restrict individual freedoms or place stringent demands on members, such as when religious institutions forbid their members from marrying outsiders. Through mechanisms such as the threat of lost membership, organizations may enforce norms or practices that result in such consequences.

How They Do So

Brokerage

To capture the many ways organizations can shape social ties, an effective umbrella term is *brokerage*. The notion of brokerage enjoys a distinguished lineage in sociology; a broker is generally defined as the actor who brings two previously unconnected actors together. In recent years, Ronald Burt has demonstrated convincingly the importance of brokers in organizational contexts.[70] In this book, brokerage is the general process by which an organization connects an individual to another individual, to another organization, or to the resources they contain. Since here the broker is an organization, and since brokerage involves connecting people both to other people and organizations and to their resources, the process of brokerage may be significantly more complex than in person-to-person situations. Yet the term succinctly captures the heterogeneous set of practices by which organizations function as connectors. Organizations broker connections in many different ways; however, these may be categorized as either actor driven or institution driven and either purposive or nonpurposive.[71]

Actor-Driven and Institution-Driven Brokerage

Actor-driven brokerage is the process by which a person in the organization connects people to other people, to other organizations, or to the resources of either; institution-driven brokerage is the process by which an institution, in the normative or cognitive sense, brokers any of these connections. For example, when a college professor (actor) teaching a seminar requests that students introduce themselves to one another, she is connecting persons to other persons; when a librarian (actor) obtains for a student a difficult-to-find book from another library, he is connecting a person to the resources of another organization. These constitute forms of actor-driven brokerage. But when an STD clinic automatically refers a client testing positive to a social support agency, it is institutionally connecting a person to another organization.

Purposive and Nonpurposive Brokerage

The act of brokerage may be purposive or nonpurposive, depending on whether the broker intended to connect people or to attain some other objective. The professor who asked students to introduce themselves certainly acted purposely. Other instances are neighborhood association meetings where participants, sitting in a circle, are asked to introduce themselves to the group, or office parties where employees are asked to affix name tags

to their clothing. While such strategies vary in their effectiveness, they do not differ in their purpose: to form connections among participants. I emphasize that personal motivations may operate independently of global organizational purposes and that brokerage may involve other types of connections. While a Dominican botanical drugstore might pursue the global objective of earning profits by dispensing ethnically specific medication, a given pharmacist might be motivated, on a daily basis, to help new immigrants transition to American society by tying them to resource agencies—that is, to connect people to the resources of another organization.[72]

Much of this book explores the interesting and important nature of nonpurposive brokerage, whereby an organization had no intention of forming ties among participants or patrons. In the sociology of complex organizations, several researchers have studied related ideas, including Charles Perrow, whose concept of "normal accidents" suggests that organizational systems may unwittingly be designed such that accidents are inevitable, and Diane Vaughan, whose idea of "normalization of deviance" captures how small, daily acts over time result in mistakes an external observer might find to be rationally avoidable.[73] Both authors believe that institutionalized practices produce unexpected consequences. In the present context, nonpurposive brokerage may occur in multiple ways. For example, many neighborhood laundries, to ensure that washers and driers are continuously available, do not permit their patrons to leave clothing unattended, forcing them to spend hours sitting and waiting in the company of others. The laundry's purpose was efficiency; an unintended consequence, socialization among neighbors. In a study of dormitories for returning World War II veterans at MIT, researchers found that simple architectural design decisions, such as how many apartments to place on one floor or how far apart to situate the staircases, affected friendship formation, with the strongest ties forming among those living close enough that unplanned encounters were frequent.[74] Many circumstances or practices common across organizations, such as waiting lobbies or collective tasks, create similar possibilities of unintentionally brokered connections.[75]

In sum, organizations may broker ties through mechanisms that may be either actor or institution driven, and either purposive or nonpurposive.

Why They Do So

The discussion to this point should make clear that organizations may broker connections for multiple reasons, depending on who does the brokering and whether it is purposive. This discussion nonetheless benefits from distinguishing motivations *internal* to the organizations from those *external* to it. Internal motivations include the personal goals of the members, as in

the case of the Dominican pharmacist, and the institutional imperatives necessary for organizational survival, such as a struggling church's thirst for cash from fund-raisers. External motivations may derive from funders, professional associations, and the state, which may encourage or mandate practices that in the end contribute to local social capital. For example, a philanthropic organization may grant several hundred thousand to a not-for-profit childcare center, provided it institutes a parent association or collaborates with a neighborhood agency aimed at helping women with domestic abuse.

One important implication is that few external entities are able to exert stronger influence than the state, which can impose regulations with the threat of fines, penalties, decertification, or incarceration. As a result, it is possible that state pressures may be so powerful that they increase social capital in measurable ways. This book suggests that such pressures do, in fact, produce some forms of social capital under some circumstances.

EFFECTIVE BROKERS

We have seen that when people participate in organizations, they encounter a set of actors and institutions that, through varying mechanisms, may alter their social capital in ways that could be beneficial to their well-being. The sheer number of factors at play would seem to suggest a rather haphazard process, one in which the accumulation of social capital remains an unwieldy amalgam of practices, institutions, and motivations impossible to study systematically. On the contrary, I submit that organizations exhibit regular patterns that would lead us to expect some of them to be systematically effective brokers—so effective that, through their effects on social capital, they can measurably improve the well-being of their participants.

What such patterns are depends on the types of ties being brokered, whether social or organizational. With respect to social ties, effective brokers are likely to exhibit, among other traits, (a) many opportunities for (b) regular and (c) long-lasting interaction, (d) minimally competitive and (e) maximally cooperative institutional environments, and both (f) internal and (g) external motivations to maintain those opportunities and sustain those environments—particularly such practices that would likely contribute to organizational survival. With respect to organizational ties, effective brokers will likely demonstrate (a) resource rich and (b) diverse organizational networks in which (c) transferring resources fulfills the objectives of multiple constituencies. Among effective brokers, these newly acquired ties and the resources gained therein would observably, even if unexpectedly,

benefit participants. One organization that, on average, is a remarkably effective broker is the childcare center.

CASE STUDY: MOTHERS AND CHILDCARE CENTERS

Childcare centers are often thought of as the impersonal alternative to family care, as the place where formal rules overwhelm informal relations. Yet for a study of how people make and use the connections that matter to their well-being, few cases are more appropriate than that of mothers of children in daycare centers. Childcare centers are strategic study sites, ones that, because of their uniqueness, allow us to observe processes that would be difficult to examine in other settings.[76] They are ideal for theoretical, substantive, and methodological reasons.

Why Centers?

First, childcare centers, as described throughout this book, tend to be remarkably effective brokers for the mothers whose children they service. They broker both social and organizational ties, and their brokerage is associated with greater material and mental well-being, bringing to light the concrete implications of organizationally embedded networks.

Second, childcare centers provide an important methodological advantage, the analytical leverage to unravel why some organizations are more effective brokers than others. Even though the *average* center is a rather effective broker, the variance is high, and many centers are terribly ineffective at connecting mothers either socially or organizationally. This wide range is due in part to the diverse array of organizational forms that centers can take: childcare centers may be for-profit or nonprofit, privately or publicly funded, corporate or family run, and secular or religious, yielding a rich variety of configurations and institutional practices. This organizational heterogeneity is matched by few other organizations in which one might conduct such a study. Churches, probably the most commonly studied organization among urban sociologists, are always religious nonprofit entities; firms, the most commonly studied entity among organizational sociologists, are always profit-oriented businesses. Childcare centers allow us the analytical leverage to observe the role of multiple sets of pressures while holding the type of organization constant. A different type of methodological advantage is that centers provide a unique opportunity to study tie formation as it happens. Since a new cohort of families enrolls in childcare centers every year, it is possible to study the formation of new networks just as it is happening, something difficult to accomplish in other settings.

People in churches, for example, have often known each other for years, making it difficult to examine how participants think about people they are just beginning to meet.

Third, mothers of young children remain one of the most important populations in the study of well-being and networks, as evidenced by classic studies such as Elizabeth Bott's *Family and Social Network*, Carol Stack's *All Our Kin*, and Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein's *Making Ends Meet*.[77] Mothers of young children have more to gain from supportive or resourceful ties than do people at almost any other point in the life cycle, since having a new child undercuts parents' free time, increases their household costs, and introduces the many unpredictable events, crises, illnesses, and accidents to which young children are prone. While fathers are increasingly affected, it still remains the case that mothers bear most of the burden of caring for young children. At the same time, most mothers of young children today either work or actively are looking for work, as I document in chapter 2. Consequently, at the moment when new friends might be most useful, mothers have the least time to make them.

In fact, the childcare center has become an increasingly important organization because births to unmarried mothers have reached historic highs, at 36% in 2004 for all unmarried mothers. Among Latinas the rate is 46%; among African-Americans, 69%.[78] It has become especially important to low-income mothers since the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which eliminated the old welfare system, instituted a work requirement, forcing mothers to find childcare arrangements. Among organizations relevant to unmarried mothers, the childcare center is one of the most crucial.

Data Sources

This project is based primarily on four data sources (see table 1.1). This multilevel, multimethod project employed both qualitative and quantitative data sources collected from both individuals and organizations. The integrated nature of the design provides the means to untangle the mecha-

Table 1.1. Principal data sources for the study.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Individual level	Fragile Families and child well-being study ($n \sim 3{,}500$ mothers)	In-depth interviews (67 mothers and some fathers)
Organizational level	Childcare Centers and Families Survey ($n \sim 300$ centers)	Center case studies (23 centers)

nisms through which centers broker mothers' social and organizational ties while identifying how prevalent and how distributed at least some of these mechanisms are. I describe each data source briefly below. For details, see appendices B and C.

The quantitative, individual-level data set is a national panel survey of approximately 3,500 mothers of children born between 1998 and 2000 in 20 large U.S. cities. The survey, named the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, or Fragile Families, is representative of all mothers of newborns in U.S. cities larger than 200,000. Mothers were interviewed at the time of their child's birth and when the child was one, three, and five years old; the study described n this book employs the last two waves of the survey. Mothers were asked questions regarding their demographic characteristics, their use of formal childcare centers or alternatives, and their friendships in and out of childcare centers. The Fragile Families survey allows us to compare basic network characteristics of mothers who use childcare centers and those who do not and to test a few of the ideas developed from the qualitative studies about the factors affecting tie formation.[79]

The quantitative, organization-level data set is my Childcare Centers and Families Survey, an original study of approximately 300 centers randomly sampled in New York City in 2004.[80] The survey, which I commissioned after conducting preliminary fieldwork, contains data on the organizational structure of childcare centers, basic institutional practices, opportunities available for parents to network, services provided other than childcare, referrals to other organizations, ties to other organizations providing resources, the characteristics of those organizations, and other organizational variables. The survey, which I will refer to as the Childcare Centers survey, allows me to paint a basic picture of the average characteristics of childcare centers in a major city, to observe the level of heterogeneity, and to test several of the hypotheses developed from the qualitative studies.

The qualitative data consist of case studies. For the qualitative, organization-level data, two research assistants and I interviewed the directors or other supervising personnel of 23 childcare centers in New York City. The centers were selected to exhibit a range of income and racial characteristics, particularly among blacks, whites, and Latinos. In 11 of the centers, a plurality of children was white; in five, it was black; in seven, it was Latino. Nine of the 23 centers were publicly funded by either Head Start or New York City's Administration for Children's Services. We interviewed directors and other center staff on their motivations for establishing interorganizational ties, the nature of those ties, opportunities available to network, basic institutional practices, and the general resources available to parents. We also observed parent meetings, field trips, and other practices and center characteristics. The case studies allow us to detail the particular mechanisms by which centers broker connections,

adding subtlety to the basic pictures painted by the quantitative data sets and generating the core hypotheses about the nature of organizational brokerage.

The qualitative, individual-level data set consists of 67 in-depth interviews conducted by my research assistants and me with parents, most of whom were mothers, in a subset of the case study centers. Our objective was to understand, from the parents' perspective, whether and how they had formed ties in the center, how they understood these relations, and under what circumstances they mobilized these ties. The interviews yielded the richest data of all, providing a clear window into how ties are formed, what types of ties these are, how trust and obligations operate, and how useful the connections truly are for those purported to benefit from them.

This book stands with the sociological tradition in which the key to understanding social processes is uncovering the mechanisms that give rise to them—in this case, the mechanisms producing and reproducing inequality in personal networks.[81] I use the quantitative survey of mothers to frame the findings in New York City and to empirically assess whether childcare center participation is associated with larger networks and greater well-being. The three remaining data sources I use to examine the mechanisms that give rise to this association. To the extent it uncovers how brokerage operates in centers, the book will have met its empirical objectives.

WHAT FOLLOWS

The chapters of the book are arranged in four parts. Chapter 2 concludes part I by making the case, using the national survey of urban mothers (Fragile Families survey), that childcare centers tend to be effective brokers for the average mother, generating personal connections strongly associated with greater well-being. Parts II and III, which constitute the core of the book, answer the core empirical question: how did childcare centers shape the mothers' social and organizational ties?

The chapters in part II examine how centers affected mothers' *social ties*. Chapter 3, "Opportunities and Inducements," asks why mothers so frequently made new friends in their childcare centers, given the demands on their time that most of them reported. Chapter 4, "Weak and Strong Ties," asks whether the friends mothers made in centers were typically close friends, acquaintances, or something else. Chapter 5, "Trust and Obligations," explains why some mothers' support networks in the center were, in fact, larger than their friendship networks. It shows that participating in the center built trust even among mothers who did not know each other personally, revealing how trust and obligations respond to formal imperatives sustained in organizational contexts such as centers.

The chapters in part III examine how centers shaped mothers' *organizational ties*. Chapter 6, "Ties to Other Organizations," examines why mothers' most useful ties were not always social. Shifting the focus from the mother to the center and its relationships, the chapter reveals that many centers were formally tied to other organizations—nonprofit entities, businesses, and government agencies—that provided material and nonmaterial resources to center parents. Chapter 7, "Organizational Ties and Neighborhood Effects," asks why centers bothered to establish these relationships with other organizations and what role location played in this process. Examining one aspect of the persistent "neighborhood effects" question, the chapter examines whether childcare centers in poor neighborhoods were less well connected than those in nonpoor neighborhoods, as would be expected by standard theories about organizational capacity in poor areas.

Part IV extends the discussion beyond the confines of the childcare center. Chapter 8, "Extensions and Implications," documents the presence of several mechanisms uncovered in this book—such as repeated and durable interaction, the assignment of cooperative tasks, the institutionalization of trust, and the application of validation, storage, referral, and collaboration—among churches, diners, bathhouses, beauty salons, colleges, and other routine organizations. In so doing, it makes a case for the importance of organizational embeddedness in the study of personal networks. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the organizational embeddedness perspective points to different kinds of questions in the current study of social inequality.

I conclude this introduction by clarifying what this book does and does not purport to accomplish. This book probes personal networks as understood by the people who form and sustain them, and in the day-to-day organizational contexts in which these processes take place. The book does not constitute a standard social network analysis of the mothers' personal networks, a project in which relationships are conceived mainly as nodes and the ties between them. The focus is not structure but interaction, thus revealing those elements of social capital that formal structural analysis largely sets aside. In addition, this book is not a study of children or child-care, issues that have been studied many times before.[82] It is also not, finally, a study in the organization of centers—an examination of how centers balance their books, hire and fire staff, select managers, develop curricula, or strive to meet government regulations. Organizational sociologists will learn little from this book about the issues that have traditionally concerned them—in fact, I employ their concepts, and those of formal network analysis, to inform and enrich our discussion.

Instead, this book examines one aspect of the relationship between the center and the mother: how the former shapes the social and organizational

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ties of the latter. It makes a case for a revaluation of social capital theory, and offers a related but alternative perspective on personal ties, one concerned less with choices than with contexts, less with "unceasing efforts" than with structured interaction, less with purposive action than with unexpected gains. It uncovers how the manifold advantages that people gain from their networks may derive from little more than those organizations in which they happen to participate routinely.

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Becker (1964).

2. Coleman (1988); Bourdieu (1986).

3. Coleman (1990); for a recent review of the sociological and philosophical issues involved in the study of emergent processes, see Sawyer (2001).

4. The term "total institution" was used by Goffman (1961) to describe a system that encompasses and regulates all aspects of a person's life.

5. Few have done more to develop the concept of embeddedness than Mark Granovetter (1985). My use of the term, however, differs from his. Granovetter refers to the embeddedness of people in social networks, which he believes should be taken into account in the study of economic action. This book is concerned with the embeddedness of personal networks in organizational settings, which I believe should inform the study of well-being. While Granovetter argues that we study the embeddedness of people in social ties, I suggest we examine the embeddedness of the ties themselves.

6. Loury (1977); Bourdieu (1986); Coleman (1988); Lin (2001a; 2001b). See also Ronald Burt (2005). Other major researchers examine the social capital not of individuals but of communities and nations. Among these, the most influential are Robert Putnam (2000) and Francis Fukuyama (1995). For a critique, see Alejandro Portes (1998).

7. Bourdieu (1986:248).

8. Bourdieu (1986:249). Despite the fact that social capital might be most important concept in his oeuvre, Bourdieu spent the least amount of time unpacking it (Bourdieu 1980; 1986). By contrast, he devotes several books to the ideas of the field, habitus, and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977; 1984; 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

9. Coleman (1990).

10. Coleman (1988:s98).

11. Coleman (1988:s102).

12. Coleman (1988:s104). Coleman believed that norms, to be effective, required closure, such that different actors in the group were tied to one another. Naturally, since the actor is also subject to the norms, this social capital is not unconstrained. "This social capital . . . not only facilitates certain actions; it constrains others" (Coleman 1988:s105).

13. Lin (2001a:29).

14. For example, see Lin, Vaughn, and Ensel (1981); for a review, see Lin (1999a).

15. For reviews, see Portes (1998); Putnam (2000). There is vast body of scholarship on the relationship between social ties and access to resources in urban settings (for reviews, see Small and Newman 2001; Newman and Massengill 2006). These works do not address social capital theory, but cover related issues. Among the most influential is Carol Stack's *All Our Kin* (1974), which found that African-American mothers in the poor urban community she studied did better than expected because their social ties provided everyday support in raising children. Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein (1997) found that more than three-fourths of the poor women they interviewed relied on their social networks to access cash contributions to make ends meet, regardless of whether they were employed. Silvia Domínguez and Celeste Watkins-Hayes (2003) found that the inner-city black and Latina women they interviewed rely heavily on kin and nonkin ties to gain access to social support, cash, and other resources. William J. Wilson (1987) argued that one of the most important reasons that living in concentrated poverty leads to disadvantage is social isolation. By this theory, the residents of poor neighborhoods suffer because many of the most valuable resources—particularly those regarding employment—are contained in the middle class. Other relevant works include Massey and Denton (1993); Anderson (1990, 1999); McRoberts (2003); Pattillo (2007); Pattillo-McCoy (1999); Rankin and Quane (2000); Smith (2007); Kasinitz (2000); Kasinitz and Rosenberg (1996); Klinenberg (2002); Small (2004, 2002); Tigges et al. (1998).

Much of the scholarship has focused on neighborhoods and the resources available to people collectively, such as better police protection. In a series of studies, Robert Sampson and colleagues have shown that neighborhoods with dense social ties and a willingness to cooperate to attain common goals tend to experience lower crime rates, arguably because they are better able to access both formal and informal social control (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Sampson and Groves 1989; see also Peterson et al. 2000; Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). In a study of a predominantly Puerto Rican poor neighborhood in Boston, I showed that strong ties among neighbors helped create an affordable housing community and obtain several organizational resources, such as a credit union and a recreation center (Small 2004). There are many more studies on these questions (for reviews, see Small and Newman 2001; Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002).

In addition, the immigration literature has produced a number of studies of this question. The literature on ethnic enclaves has made compelling arguments for the importance of dense immigrant networks for the well-being and mobility of immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Zhou 1992). Raymond Breton's (1964) concept of "institutional completeness" points to the importance of both social connections and organizational resources in immigrant communities.

16. Social capital theorists might have turned to at least three bodies of work to examine this question. Mid-century social scientists such as Theodore Newcomb (1961), Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton (1954), and later Scott Feld (1981) wrote important works on the friendship formation process. These argued that the key lay in social interaction, a perspective shared by this book. A second literature is the work on "meeting and mating" by standard social network analysts (Verbrugge 1977; Kalmjin and Flap 2001; see also Briggs 2007). More recently, social network analysts have begun to develop dynamic models by which transformations in entire networks (including the

addition or loss of ties) are examined over time. For examples, see the work of Kathleen Carley (1999; 2003) and Tom Snijders (2005) (c.f., Hallinan 1978).

17. Lin (2001a:xi, emphasis added). In his comprehensive exposition of social capital theory, Lin allowed some nuance by granting that noninstrumental motivations could lead to tie formation: "Instrumental actions are those actions taken for the purpose of achieving certain goals. The distinctive feature of this class of actions is that the means and ends are separate and distinct. A typical example is the search for a job or a person. Expressive actions are taken for their own sake: the actions are both means and ends, and are integrated and inseparable. Confiding one's feelings is a typical example" (2001a:58). Yet despite this distinction early in his book, Lin's main theoretical exposition is almost entirely devoted to instrumental actions.

18. Bourdieu (1986:249).

19. Bourdieu (1986:249; emphasis added).

20. Lin (1999b:30). See also Lin (2001b); Spies-Butcher (2002).

21. Bourdieu (1977; 1984); Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992).

22. To be clear, it is certainly the case that Bourdieu argued for a relational sociology organized around fields, in which relations mattered more than individual decisions, and in which dispositions—in the form of habitus or "internalized capital" (Bourdieu 1984:114)—contributed to social inequality in ways actors did not articulate (Bourdieu 1977; 1984). But I do not believe that Bourdieu resolved all of the contradictions in his work on social capital, and this is one of the sources of contradiction. In fact, the cited passage alone suggests that Bourdieu is struggling with the model, since he argues that networks result from "investment strategies" aimed at "usable relationships" but then also adds that these strategies may be "conscious or unconscious." How exactly can a "strategy" be "unconscious"? Bourdieu never answers. One would be forgiven for believing that Bourdieu was trying to have it both ways. It is not surprising that formal modelers (e.g., Lin 2001b; Frank 1992) are more comfortable than sociologists in general and ethnographers in particular with the idea that Bourdieu might be arguing that networks result from deliberate investments, since that seems suspiciously close to a rational actor model.

23. Bourdieu (1986:250). Bourdieu argued:

> The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed. This work, which implies expenditure of time and energy and so, directly or indirectly, of economic capital, is not profitable or even conceivable unless one invests in it a specific competence (knowledge of genealogical relationships and of real connections and skill at using them, etc.) and an acquired disposition to acquire and maintain this competence, which are themselves integral parts of this capital. (1986:250)

In an act surprising for an ethnographer, Bourdieu conceived of these relations in the abstract. This resulted from his focus on "the field" and his aim at developing an all encompassing field theory in which forms of capital mattered depending on the field in which they were deployed. The problem is that Bourdieu the theorist got the better part of Bourdieu the participant observer, leading to a theory that neglects that social capital can be reproduced by organizational settings, independent of direct efforts of its beneficiaries.

24. Kadushin (2004).

25. Portes (1998); Burt (2005).

26. Mouw (2003; 2006); see also Granovetter (1974); c.f. Smith (2003, 2005, 2007).

27. Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998).

28. See DeFilippis (2001); see also Wilson (1997).

29. Sampson, Morenoff, and Earls (1999); Sampson et al. (1997).

30. Putnam (2000).

31. A different critique focuses less on social capital theory than on formal social network analysis. Some have argued that social network analysis tends to neglect how people form ties at the expense of studying the nature of network structure or the consequences of networks (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). I believe there is merit in this critique. However, scholars such as Carley (1999; 2003) and Snijders (2005) in recent years have been studying network formation within the context of dynamic models.

32. Many traditions in microsociology have focused on routine organizations and the experience of everyday life (Adler, Adler, and Fontana 1987). Erving Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and Harold Garfinkel's (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology* represent two of the most prominent traditions in this general line of research. While the model advanced in this book is informed by Goffman's work on the efforts actors make to negotiate interaction, it is not, as will become evident, a treatise strictly in Goffman's dramaturgic tradition. And while it is informed by a situationist approach to interaction, it does not propose the radical situationism of Garfinkel's ethnomethodological tradition, in which "indexicality" is the primary analytical tool.

33. As I discuss in appendix A, I did not develop this model abstractly to subsequently test on childcare centers. On the contrary, much of the model was the result of a recursive, dialectical interaction between theorizing and data analysis that took place over several years and was informed by much of the classic and recent literature on formal network analysis (e.g., Newcomb 1961; Lazarsfeld and Merton 1954; Hallinan 1976, 1979; Carley 1999; Snijders 2005). The reader will note that the model begins with the individual, not the group, as the unit of analysis. Other perspectives on social capital examine group dynamics (Coleman 1990) or national trends (Putnam 2000). As I discuss throughout the chapter, other authors in network analysis have emphasized the importance of organizational context. For examples, see Brass et al. (2004); Popielarz (1999); Hallinan (1976, 1979); Hallinan and Sorenesen (1985).

34. Merton (1936). On purposive action, see Weber (1978); Coleman (1990); Kadushin (2002); Elster (2007). On rational actor theory, see Elster (1986); Green and Shapiro (1994).

35. I recognize that many varieties of rational action theory exist, and that some would incorporate conditions such as altruism into their conception of rational behavior (Elster 1986; Green and Shapiro 1994). I do not find all of these efforts successful, but that debate does not alter this discussion. Certainly, actors sometimes make ties for explicitly rational or instrumental reasons. The point is that they do not always do so.

36. Merton (1936) refers to such acts as "behavior" rather than "conduct." Elster (2007) makes a similar distinction, reserving the term "action" for acts motivated by a purpose. I believe the term "nonpurposive action" is clear enough for this discussion.

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37. Lin (2001a).

38. For an interesting discussion of interpersonal dynamics in grocery and convenience stores, see McDermott (2006). McDermott discusses the role of race in complicating these interactions (2006:66ff.).

39. One could argue that the laughter was purposive and that the purpose was to release stress. I suggest the key is that there was no objective separate from the action. If there was a purpose, the action itself was it. Lin (2001a:58) argues that this type of action is also purposive but that the difference between this action and instrumental action is that in the latter the means and ends are separate, while in expressive action the means and ends are the same. I do not find it useful to refer to expressive actions as purposive—one seems to dilute the idea of "purpose" by using it to characterize the laughter that follows a joke, even if the laughter ends up making the person feel better. In the end, this is a semantic distinction, one that would not affect this discussion. (A different way of making this point is to state that I maintain that purposive action should be consequentialist, while Lin does not impose this restriction. See Elster [2007:81ff.].) It will always be difficult for sociologists to ascertain purpose, except at the extremes.

40. Simmel (1971:137).

41. Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990).

42. Personal experience inspired this example: when comparing the last two cities in which I have lived, I noticed that Chicagoans cut in front of others—when waiting in line, when crossing the street, when driving—a lot less frequently than do New Yorkers.

43. Certainly, distinguishing purposive from nonpurposive acts may sometimes prove elusive. At times, an actor might have a global purpose but act nonpurposely at the moment she or he encounters others. The lawyer who attended a conference in order to network might, when talking to a particular attendee, be performing a purely expressive action, one in which her prior intentions had been forgotten. In addition, actors do not always know or understand why they act, and even their post facto explanations might amount to little more than rationalizations. In the end, the distinction between purposive and nonpurposive acts is most useful at the extremes, since people sometimes clearly have objectives and other times they clearly do not. Finally, note that by considering both purposive and nonpurposive action, the present model implicitly avoids presenting a single set of motivations for the formation of new ties (but see Kadushin 2002).

44. My general orientation toward social interaction owes something to Goffman (1959; 1967), whose thinking informed an earlier version of the models in several chapters of part II.

45. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954). See also Newcomb (1961); Huckfeldt (1983); Blau and Schwartz (1997).

46. Blau and Schwartz (1997) probably introduced one of the most systematic propositions, in a study of cross-cutting social circles in contemporary society. The proposition was one of the two basic assumptions guiding their book:

> [R]ates of social association depend on opportunities for contact (A-2). It is
> virtually self-evident that people cannot become friendly unless they have an
> opportunity to meet. However, the postulate implies more than that. It posits

that the extent of contact opportunities governs the probability of associations
of people, not merely of casual acquaintances but even of intimate relations,
like those of lovers. A clear implication of this assumption, which can serve as a
means for testing, is that *spatial propinquity*, because it increases the chances of
fortuitous contacts, enhances the probability of friendship and even marriage.
(Blau and Schwartz 1997:29)

47. Oldenburg (1989); Hallinan (1979) Wilson (1987). An interesting feature of
Hallinan's study is her finding that "open," as opposed to "traditional" classrooms
resulted in fewer friendships. Open classrooms presumably provided more opportu-
nities for interaction; however, they also integrated highly heterogeneous students
under a single room and instituted other practices that affected social interaction.
See Hallinan (1976, 1979); compare to Hallinan and Tuma (1978). Other studies of
social relations in restaurants and bars include Duneier (1992); Anderson (1978);
May (2001). On the general importance of organizations for tie formation in urban
settings, see Fischer (1982); also Taub et al. (1977). On the evidence for Wilson's
argument, see Fernandez and Harris (1992); Briggs (2007); Small (2007a); compare
Smith (2007).

48. Emerson (1976; 1981); Homans (1950); see also Blau (1986/1964).

49. Lawler (2001); Lawler and Yoon (1993).

50. Duneier (1992). The obvious critique of this proposition is one that dogged
Homans after publication of *The Human Group* (1950), that people may like each
other *less* the more they encounter each other. For both empirical and theoretical
reasons, this critique has held little sway. First, while the critique identifies what
could happen, it does not reflect what actually happens. The experimental literature
has consistently confirmed that repeated contact increases positive affect and trust,
rather than the opposite (Lawler 2001). Second, it is not theoretically difficult to
imagine why this would be the case. People assess each other with every subsequent
interaction. At early hints of discord or noncompatibility, actors tend to avoid each
other. Repeated interaction and, by extension, friendship require the tacit approval
of the parties.

51. Feld (1981:1025); see also Feld (1982; 1984). Feld believed that shared rela-
tions to a common focus "create positive sentiments indirectly [by generating]
positively valued interactions" (1981:1017). In this respect, Feld borrowed heavily
from Homans (1961), who maintained that repeated interaction tends to create
positive sentiment among members of groups. A similar idea was proposed recently
by Randall Collins (2004), who argued that when people perform emotionally
charged, ritual acts together, they develop strong bonds among themselves.

52. While Feld's has been one of the most fruitful models of tie formation in
network research, the strength of the model is undermined by the slippery nature of
the term "focus." In a later paper with William Carter, Feld elaborates on the term;
they write, "Foci of activity take varied forms, including families, workplaces, volun-
tary organizations, and neighborhoods, but all have the common effect of bringing
a relatively limited set of individuals together in repeated interactions in and around
the focused activities (Feld and Carter 1998:136). The problem with the term "focus"
remains, since it conflates a lot of different types of entities under the term "activity,"
including a neighborhood, a workplace, and even a family. These are not all

organizations, nor are they all places, nor are they all groups of individuals. Since all of these entities must shape the formation of ties through somewhat different mechanisms, the single common mechanism underlying the process remains vague. For the present purposes, the most important limitation is the model's failure to distinguish organizations from other types of entities. Later chapters describe how organizations shape the formation of friendships in specific ways, because they can regulate the frequency of activity, the constitution of the potential friends to be made, the activities they do together, and the like.

53. Oldenburg makes a related point regarding competition when he argues that "third places"—cafes, bars, restaurants—help build community, in part, because they are "levelers," spaces that eschew hierarchy and competition in favor of equality (1989:23). See also Jacobs (1961).

It is important to note, as Simmel (1955) has, that competition and antagonism are not synonymous. Simmel would argue that competition is not so much *against* the opponent as *for* a particular prize, such that conflict, in competition, is indirect. As a result, competition does not necessarily create enemies; in fact, there is such a thing as "friendly competition," and there are multiple social situations where competition and cooperation coexist, such as race car driving in teams of independent drivers, courses were students work in groups but are graded on a curve, or primary presidential elections where candidates must compete against each other but cooperate to overcome the opposing party. The most important element of competition to friendship formation, I argue, lies in the size of the stakes. As the stakes increase, the conflict inherent in competition becomes increasingly direct.

54. Lawler (2001). Lawler termed this process "relational cohesion."

55. Several studies in the social network tradition bear evidence to this point explicitly in the context of friendship or tie formation: Hallinan (1976, 1979); Hallinan and Tuma (1978); Popielarz (1999); see also McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook (2001).

56. Scott (1995).

57. I emphasize that any actor in the organization may shape social interaction, regardless of whether the actor is a client, employee, manager, or any other form of participant—even if, within the formal hierarchy of the organization, these actors do not constitute critical members. Consider how a college student might form social ties: the college's vice president for strategic planning might be less important than the students who organize bimonthly "meet-and-greets," since the latter have greater influence on the student's social interactions.

58. Nee and Ingram (1998:19). See also Nee and Brinton (1998).

59. Meyer and Rowan (1977:341).

60. The work on institutions in the normative sense can be traced to Emile Durkheim (1897/1951), whose perspective focused on the influence of norms on behavior and also influenced Coleman's (1990) functional conception of social capital. The work on institutions in the cognitive sense can probably be traced to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman (1966), and ultimately Immanuel Kant (1781/1965). On some of the perils of institutional analysis, see Lynne Zucker (1977). The work on institutions is one of the most effective ways to conceive of the role of culture. Readers will note that I have largely avoided the term "culture," even though throughout the book I am effectively discussing cultural practices. The term "culture"

has referred to sufficiently heterogeneous phenomena that the discussion benefits from the clarity of more specific language (Lamont and Small 2008).

61. Meyer and Rowan (1977); Nee and Ingram (1998).

62. The recent *Barbershop* films, centered on the activities at a neighborhood barbershop and starring Ice Cube, make this point explicitly about the role of the barbershop as an institution. See also Delgado (1997; 1998); Furman (1997).

63. Laumann, Galaskiewicz, and Marsden (1978); Levine and White (1961); Galaskiewicz (1979, 1985, 1999); Ebbers (1997); Benson 1975; Small (2006).

64. The Frist Campus Center, a student gathering place at Princeton University, was built under such conditions with funds provided by the Frist family. On authority in inter-organizational relations, see Aldrich (1976); Pfeffer and Salancik (1978).

65. On social interaction and friendship in gyms, see Wacquant (2004). On churches and cooperative action, see Ammerman (2005); Berrien et al. (2000); Chaves (2004); McRoberts (2003); Lichterman (2005). Lichterman emphasizes the importance of what he calls "group customs" for the success of such efforts. An additional issue is worth noting. My discussion of what "other aspects of personal ties" are affected by organizational conditions takes place strictly within the context of *personal* ties, or, at most, what networks scholars would consider dyadic relations. Social network analysts have examined how organizational conditions may affect entire networks structures, including factors such as the number of cliques or the degree of hierarchy. These issues are far beyond scope. For research in that tradition, see Hallinan (1976, 1979); Hallinan and Tuma (1978).

66. Several studies have examined these ties in the context of urban inequality. See Chaskin et al. (2001); Marwell (2007); Small (2006).

67. Lin (2001); Smith (2007); Bourdieu (1980).

68. In a recent study, Smith (2007) has argued that mobilization also depends on the conditions of the dyad, wherein relations characterized by low trust for structural reasons will undermine people's willingness to mobilize their connections when looking for jobs.

69. Portes (1998).

70. On brokerage, see Simmel (1950); Burt (2001; 2005); Chaskin et al. (2001); Pattillo (2007). Burt (2005) has probably written more than anyone in recent years on the concept of brokerage. Burt defines a broker as an actor who occupies a structural hole, that is, the actor lying at the intersection of two or more separate networks. Burt believes, and has shown, that brokers have advantages over other actors, because brokers have access to information and ideas from both networks. My conception of brokerage differs in three important ways. First, we are concerned not with individuals, but with *organizations* as brokers. Specifically, we are concerned with how an organization connects an actor to either another actor or another organization. Second, we are concerned with how brokerage affects the brokered actor, not the broker. At issue is whether an actor has much to gain by being tied to the right organization—that is, to an effective broker. Third, Burt's empirical work takes place in a competitive setting, where some employees are better evaluated than others, and an actor's well-being is, by definition, relative to that of others. We are concerned not with advantages compared to others in the organization with whom an actor competes, but with advantages deriving from organizational membership and participation.

71. Obstfeld and Borgatti (2008) have argued that we should shift from a conception of brokers to one of brokerage, and think of this as a process, not a state. Their perspective is very consistent with that in this book. In social network analysis, the broker is often identified simply as the actor occupying structural holes, with the many implications for her or his relations to others assumed, rather than examined.

72. Delgado and Santiago (1998).

73. Perrow (1984); Vaughan (1996).

74. Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950).

75. Interestingly, while Coleman said little about how people form ties, he did argue that social capital (by which he meant especially pro-social norms and the presence of trust in a group) often emerged as a result of collective actions perpetrated for other purposes (1990:311ff.). That is, he explicitly incorporated nonpurposive organization into his conception of social capital. However, he did not bring this insight into the study of how individuals form connections, and later researchers such as Lin did not follow through on this work. In the end, his general aim to develop a purposive theory of action might have won out (Coleman 1986).

76. Yin (2003); Small (in press).

77. Bott (1957); Stack (1974); Edin and Lein (1997).

78. U.S. Census Bureau (2008:table 85).

79. Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, and McLanahan (2001). The study maintains a website with current information: http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/.

80. See Small, Jacobs, and Massengill (2008).

81. Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998); Morgan and Winship (2007).

82. One of the best among the recent studies is Ajay Chaudry's (2004) *Putting Children First*. For an economic perspective on childcare, see David Blau's (2001) *The Childcare Problem*. On the relationship between caregiver and employer, see Julia Wrigley's (1995) *Other People's Children*. On the consequences of types of childcare for children, see National Center for Early Development and Learning (2007); NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2002). There are many others.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. On its face, the question seems to continue the unfortunate tendency, in commentary on mothers and the workforce, to pit the well-being of the mother against that of the child. Mothers, by one logic, must choose to either selfishly pursue their careers or selflessly devote themselves full-time to their young children, since nothing but the latter constitutes full parenting (Hays 1996). And, in fact, this chapter sets aside one rather obvious consequence, that for a mother to employ childcare increases the number of hours she can work for pay and, thus, the income to which she has access. Nevertheless, the findings in the chapter ultimately undermine the distinction between the interests of the mother and those of the child; they reveal several important and neglected consequences that centers may have on the well-being of the mother, child, and household often in ways parents did not anticipate when they decided to employ formal daycare.

2. Although our primary concern lies more in the differences among centers than in their average effect, finding that centers do, on average, improve well-being would