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Social and cultural capitol in formal one-on-one mentoring relationships

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Social and Cultural Capital in Formal

One-on-One Mentoring Relationships

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Abstract

In recent years, formal mentorship programs for at-risk youth have grown increasingly in the United States. I investigate the ways in which mentoring models in these programs do or do not address the need to transmit social capital and cultural capital to the youth that they serve. Through observations of mentor-mentee matches, semistructured interviews of mentors and organizational staff, and data collection at two nonprofit organizations with formal mentoring components, this paper explores the ways in which these programs unknowingly set goals to transfer social and cultural capital to their mentees, and how mentors attain these goals.

Introduction

Formal mentorship programs intervene in the lives of youth who are vulnerable for adverse futures typically because of social inequality. Mentorship programs have been shown to produce positive results for these at-risk youth. Different programs, however, have varying objectives for their mentor-mentee matches, alongside distinct mentoring models.

Data collection and interviews at two different nonprofit organizations with mentoring components demonstrated variations in goals for their matches, and moreover very divergent mentoring models. Attaining social capital and cultural capital during childhood has beneficial, far-reaching effects across the lifespan. Both programs' goals implicitly state a plan to transmit certain forms of social and cultural capital. Because it is stated implicitly, however, the mentoring models fail to detail *how* to transmit these forms of capital. Both models approach mentoring differently- length of matches, overall time spent together, paid vs. volunteer mentors- and both lack details about how to attain the goals set for the matches. This lack of detail also allows for a gap in disseminating certain forms of social and cultural capital to mentees in these programs.

Mentors typically create distinct objectives from their program's goals for their mentees after being matched for a significant period of time. Interviews with the mentors, and observations of the mentors with their mentees showed that mentors of these programs provide social and cultural capital to their mentees in varying ways, some inadvertently without thinking of the consequences, and some

purposely, foreseeing the possible benefits. How these mentors provide their

mentees with forms of social and cultural capital is determined by their personal

evaluations of the needs of their mentees, not based on directions of the programs or

mentoring models.

Literature Review

Social Inequality

Youth born into different social classes are presented with varying levels of experiences, opportunities, knowledge, and advantages. Social structural location plays a crucial role in explaining the existence of diverse life experiences among peers, and thus unequal life outcomes (Lareau 2003:236). Childhood is a social and cultural construction, and "every aspect of childhood is shaped by class" (Mintz 2009:290). Class position influences critical components of family lifestyle, which permeates into other fundamental areas of life such as education and future employment. Socioeconomic disadvantage is a prevalent social concern because of the epidemic proportions of chronic poverty and generational poverty. Risk factors such as decreased intellectual development, school failure, behavioral problems, and delinquency are disproportionately found in impoverished youth (Felner, Brand, DuBois, Adan, Mulhall, and Evans 1995:775). Research indicates that one-on-one mentorship has the potential to benefit at-risk youth born into these unfortunate circumstances.

One-on-One Mentorship

Mentoring interventions are growing increasingly across the United States. Mentoring involves partnering a more experienced person (the mentor) with a young person (the mentee) who is most likely at-risk for any of an array of problems, in hopes of the mentor imparting wisdom, support, and guidance to the

mentee. The purpose of these relationships is for mentors to foster protective factors in their mentees to help ensure a better life, present and future. Youth from backgrounds of environmental risk and disadvantage are most likely to benefit from participation in mentoring programs (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper 2002). Outcome studies of long-term, intensive mentoring programs have demonstrated that they hold considerable promise in increasing competence across multiple developmental domains and in decreasing maladaptive behavior (Jackson, Yo. 2001; Thomson and Zand 2010).

Mentoring models vary. Differences include the length of the mentor-mentee relationships, required one-on-one time spent together, whether mentors are volunteer or paid professionals, how they match mentors and mentees, and the goals set for outcomes of the relationships they foster and for the mentees themselves.

Various adolescent mentoring programs can be important tools in producing positive life changes for youth (Hamann 1999). Mentors who manage to forge lasting connections experience a shift in their initial purpose. They begin with the intention of being a positive figure in the life of an unknown disadvantaged young person through mentorship. As they get to know this young person, and are able to determine his or her specific needs, the mentor creates individualized goals and forms a desire to help their mentee grow and reach his or her full potential based on these individual needs (Spencer 2006). The importance of these programs and their effectiveness is evident in that outcomes vary with relation to program

characteristics: well-implemented programs produce great results, while poorly implemented programs can have adverse effects on youth (Dubois et al. 2002). With a vast array of mentorship programs, all with similar goals revolving around helping at-risk youth, it is critical that researchers determine the best practices in terms of mentorship models. Is having a role model enough for the mentee to have positive outcomes and success from the match, or are other components necessary in the organization's mentorship model?

Social Capital and Cultural Capital

In order to yield desired outcomes, it may be necessary for programs to establish one-on-one mentoring relationships between youth and adults that not only involve patterns of regular contact over a significant period of time, but that focus on the transmission of social and cultural capital from the mentor to the mentee.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who conceptualized these forms of capital, states that social capital is the resources that one acquires through useful relationships with others (1986:51). These resources or profits can be a network or further connections to other individuals, or the benefits that one can receive from interactions with these individuals. The volume of the social capital one has depends on the network connections he or she can effectively gain. In other words, social capital is "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures," or membership in a group that can

provide benefits (Portes 1998:6). Cultural capital is forms of education, skills, and overall advantages an individual accrues, often used for social and cultural exclusion and social mobility (Bourdieu 1986; Lamont and Lareau 1988:164). It includes background knowledge or a wealth of information that allows individuals to further understand, comprehend and grasp concepts (Hirsch, Kett, and Trefil 1988).

In what settings do individuals acquire social and cultural capital? Research commonly points to the family as the primary group responsible for transmitting these forms of capital to their children. The first network of connections or opportunity one has to gain social capital is from genealogical relationships, or the family (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu (1973:179) states that certain important systems, such as education for example, can only attain full effectiveness if children already have a familiarity with the information because of their family upbringing (see also Lamont and Lareau 1988:164; Sullivan 2001). Characteristically, cultural capital is transmitted from parents to their children. This means that parents have the ability and time to provide their children with background knowledge that helps them in school and other aspects of life. These forms of capital that the family can provide are vital across the lifespan, even into adulthood when individuals desire access to continuing education or need jobs (Hurst 2012:165).

Youth can also acquire these forms of capital in school, although not to the same extent as in the home (Lamont and Lareau 1988:164). Education has an ever-increasing role in determining the composition of children's social networks

(Bourdieu 1986; Furstenberg 2009:322). This refers both to connections with teachers, and with peers. Opportunities to acquire cultural and social capital are vastly impacted by the social class composition of peers and other networks. Thus if a child does not acquire these forms of capital in the home, and are surrounded by persons of the same social class composition in school, the likelihood of gaining the benefits of these forms of capital is slim.

After the family and school, the community is the next setting in which individuals can potentially acquire social and cultural capital (Lamont and Lareau 1988:164). The problem for children born into adverse circumstances is the oppression they experience as a result of the reproduction of the structure of power relationships between classes. Depending on their social position at birth and during childhood, children have differing access to teachers, peers, and neighbors, which can support or diminish their chances of socio-economic attainment (Furstenberg 2009:317). Youth in lower social classes are far less likely to be exposed to the social and cultural capital necessary to succeed in life. "Parents themselves are embedded in very different opportunity systems; specifically they are more or less privileged in the knowledge, skills, and resources that they can provide to their children…they have different levels of human, social, cultural and psychological capital to invest in their children" (Furstenberg 2009:317). If children are unable to gain social and cultural capital from their families or schools, it is unlikely that they will be able to access them from elsewhere in their communities without purposeful intervention.

When individuals are facing this situation, mentors can be a solution to act as the social capital that mentees' families lack, and additionally provide them with cultural capital. Mentorship programs that focus on these concepts may produce better results than those who do not. Both the amount of time spent in a mentor-mentee relationship and the level of trust consistently have positive effects for youths in terms of social capital and opportunity systems (Gaddis 2012). Mentors can be gatekeepers in institutions that provide access to resources, programs, and services. Additionally, they have connections to other individuals who can offer more opportunities and resources (Furstenberg 2009:326).

Research shows that mentoring can have greatly successful results, but it is essential to determine what is necessary in a match to produce these positive outcomes. Overall, researchers note that there is generally little mentorship evaluation research (Dubois et al. 2002; Furstenberg 2009; Thomson and Zand 2010; Thompson and Kelly-Vance 2001). Additionally, the research that does exist focuses on aspects of the mentoring relationship such as the effects of race-matching (Gaddis 2012), effects of gender-matching (Rhodes, Lowe, Litchfield, and Walsh-Samp 2008), mentor motivation (Latting 1990), the need to foster certain qualities and characteristics in mentees (De Anda 2001), and the strength and connection in relationships (Deutsch and Spencer 2009; Spencer 2006). There are thus gaps in the research, seldom looking into the potential benefits of social and cultural capital in mentoring relationships. While studies have begun to explore the effects of social

and cultural capital transmission from mentor to mentee, further investigation is

needed.

Settings and Methods

I completed a qualitative study that involved collecting data, interviewing employees and mentors, and observing mentors and mentees at two nonprofit organizations that have formal mentorship programs for at-risk youth. In evaluating the data, interviews, and observations, I focused on the evident patterns of social and cultural capital transmission. This project received approval from the Institutional Review Board of James Madison University.

Field Sites

Both sites are nonprofit organizations that mentor "at-risk" youth in their areas, but differ in the components of their programs. The first field site was chosen based on its close proximity to my school, and the second field site was chosen based on my connection to it as a previous intern. The participants of this study are the staff and mentees of particular chapters of these national organizations. Program 1 and Program 2 (pseudonyms used to protect identities), as well as the volunteer and professional mentors, and the mentees. The population being studied is the mentor-mentee groupings.

Program 1 is a volunteer-based organization, with the chapter I observed located in a suburban/rural community. This program specifically matches their mentors and mentees based on interests of both individuals; they typically gender-match when possible and occasionally choose the gender of mentor based on parents' requests. All mentors are volunteers and become a part of the program

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through a process involving an application, background check, and interviews to determine their drive for wanting to be a mentor, interests, and what type of commitment they can make. Community based matches last an average of 21 months (organizational document from Program 1). Once a mentor is no longer a part of the program, their mentee is not re-matched for at least 6 months to avoid a comparison between new and old mentors on behalf of the mentee. These children are put on a waiting list to be re-matched with the "right" person (interview with Executive Director, Linda). [1]

Program 2 utilizes paid, professional mentors. The chapter I observed was located in an inner-city community. Mentors are required to stay in the program for a minimum of 3 years. Each mentee is guaranteed a mentor throughout their time in the program, from kindergarten to high school graduation. All mentors and mentees are gender-matched, and once they enter 6th grade are transitioned out of the Child program which solely uses one-on-one mentoring, into an Adolescent program that continues one-on-one mentoring, and adds a group component in which they engage in facilitated discussions, workshops, and activities with their cohorts (fellow mentees) (interview with Program 2 Mentor, Danielle).

These sites are beneficial for this study because of their varying mentor models, but similar formal mentorship element.

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[1] Pseudonyms are used for all interviews and observations.

Data Collection

Both sites allowed me to have access to the data that they themselves collect, including demographics of their mentees, statistics regarding success of their programs, and surveys that they conduct. These data come from surveys and studies conducted on the sites to show accrediting organizations, headquarters, and boards of the various programs.

I conducted nine semi-structured interviews: two staff members from each program, in addition to three mentors from Program 1, and two mentors from Program 2. Interviews focus on the goals these organizations set for their mentor-mentee matches and for the mentees themselves, specific and additional goals mentors have for their mentees, how they help them to attain these goals, and what activities they do with their mentees and for what purpose.

Participants for inclusion in the interviews and ethnographic observations were selected by the site-contact from each location, based on staff and mentor availability (a convenience sample). I selected whom to observe and interview from the group chosen by the site-contact of each organization. I observed five pairs of mentors and mentees: three from Program 1, and two from Program 2. To get an encompassing sample, I used a male gender-matched pair, a female gender-matched pair, and a female mentor to male mentee pair from Program 1. From Program 2 I observed a male gender-matched pair in the Child program, and a female gender-matched pair in the Adolescent program. My observations were a crucial aspect of

viewing the intentional and unintentional actions and communication between the mentors and mentees, and the interactions between the pairs.

Limitations

Utilizing a convenience sample for the mentor-mentee observations, in addition to the limited time and number of interviews and observations I was able to conduct, restricted this study.

Additionally, my personal background and upbringing could affect my perceptions and allow for biases.

Findings

Patterns found in both observations and interviews involved the individualized goals mentors create for their mentees outside of the program goals, and the transferal of social and cultural capital in mentor-mentee matches. I focus on how the program goals and mentoring models implicitly state plans to transfer social and cultural capital, and how these forms of capital are transmitted from mentor to mentee.

Demographics of Mentees Served

To fully recognize the potential impact and importance of mentors in the life of the mentees in these programs, it is vital to understand whom these organizations serve.

Program 1 serves youth in their community who are typically impoverished, struggling academically and/or behaviorally, and have been involved in or are vulnerable to engaging in risky behavior. In 2012, 10% of youth in the program had a parent in prison; 76% were eligible for free or reduced lunch; 51% were in single parent homes; and 86% of mentees lived at 125% of the poverty level or below (organizational document from Program 1). Program 1 also takes children whose parents do not speak English, and therefore characteristically do not have reinforcement of what they learned at school in the home. Mentees are referred to the program, typically by a teacher or other school official (interview with Linda).

Program 2 serves a similar subset of youth in their community, and chooses the "most at-risk" youth from the local school systems (interview with Director of Development, Laura). Of the youth that they serve, 98% receive free or reduced lunch; 84% live in single parent households; 58% are children of teenage mothers; 45% have a parent who has been or is incarcerated; 48% have had no caregiver employed in the last year; 27% live in some form of foster care; 25% have been exposed to substance abuse; 33% have an individual education plan with their school; 18% have been physically abused; and 11% have experienced homelessness (organizational document from Program 2). Mentees are chosen for the program based on these characteristics, and after staff members observe them in their classrooms for behavior and social concerns (interview with Laura).

The youth of these programs, and the mentees that I observed, are at-risk for dropping out of school, engaging in illegal activity, becoming teenage parents, and in general experiencing adverse circumstances and poor life outcomes, as the odds are stacked against them.

Program Goals

Each program sets specific goals for match outcomes, and have differing mentoring models.

As stated by its Executive Director, Program 1 aims to provide one-to-one support to children so that they can be "the best that they can be, *forever*" (interview with Linda). The organization's goals are to ensure children's success

through accomplishments in school, completing their education, avoiding risky behavior and staying out of the criminal justice system, avoiding teenage parenthood, building confidence, creating a better sense of future, and helping them form better family relationships through an individualized, one-on-one connection with a mentor match (interview with Linda). Based on the volunteer resources that they have, their mentoring model is to utilize these mentors in a minimum of a year and a half match. Volunteers are expected to spend time with their mentees at least once, weekly, engaging in various activities (interview with Match Support Specialist, Jacquelyn).

Program 2 has three very pronounced goals: to have their mentees avoid the juvenile justice system, avoid teenage parenthood, and graduate from high school (or receive a GED equivalent) with a plan for their future (interview with Program 2 Mentor, Danielle). Their mentoring model involves pairing a mentor who has at least three years of previous professional experience with at-risk youth, with a mentee in the program, and guides them towards accomplishing these goals. Their twelve year, long-term comprehensive approach involves professional mentors who can channel their time and energy into small caseloads, and have the ability to provide a minimum of four hours weekly to each mentee.

Neither organization explicitly states that their goals include transmitting the precise concepts of social and cultural capital to their mentees. Additionally, neither organization states that in order to attain the goals that they have set, that they should help their mentees get there in part by transmitting social and cultural

capital to them. However, both organizations do inadvertently express a desire to impact the youth they serve by providing them with these forms of capital.

Program 1's goals of creating success in school currently and ensuring future high school graduation for their mentees are both examples of cultural capital. Additionally, the program's objective to help the mentees improve family relations is a way to increase their access to social capital. Program 2's goal to have all of their mentees graduate from high school or attain a GED equivalent also targets cultural capital. Furthermore, the component both mentoring models share- matching each mentee with a mentor- is providing the mentees with social capital: an individual from whom they can receive benefits and further resources as a result of their interactions.

While it is clear what objectives the organizations expect of the mentors and their matches, it is unclear how they expect them to attain these goals. Both programs' goals implicitly state a plan to transmit certain forms of social and cultural capital. However, the mentoring models do not detail how mentors should reach the goals that they set, how to transfer capital to their mentees, or to what extent. Program 1 attempts to help their mentees succeed in school and consequently graduate from high school, avoid risky behavior, build confidence and a better sense of future, and have better relations with family members. Their mentorship model states that the way they do this is to match each mentee with a mentor, for a minimum of one and a half years, spending time together once weekly. Aside from the clear social capital of providing the youth that they serve with a

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mentor, there is no further detailing of social-capital-related goals or objectives. Nowhere does it state that in order to help them attain these goals, mentors should provide them with a greater network (social capital), or with background knowledge, skills, and new opportunities (cultural capital). Program 2 hopes to support their mentees in avoiding the juvenile justice system, avoiding teenage parenthood, and graduating from high school. The stated way that they plan to accomplish this is by providing them with a 12-year long commitment from the program and mentors, i.e. provide them with a role model. However, their mentoring model does not state that in order to help them attain the three goals, that they will purposely provide them with beneficial connections to outside individuals and networks, help them gain new skills, provide them with background knowledge that can benefit them in school and elsewhere, or grant them opportunities that other people in their lives cannot provide them with. While both programs unintentionally plan on transferring social and cultural capital to their mentees, *how* they are supposed to do so, and to what extent, is not explained within the mentoring models.

Individualized Goals

During my interviews, it was apparent that the mentors of both programs were aware of the goals that their organization sets for interactions with the mentees. When asked, each mentor was able to relay what the objectives were. However, it also became evident that these mentors had additional, personal long-term goals for their mentees, and even more specifically intentions for their

interactions during my observations. Evan, a mentor from Program 2, is matched

with a mentee, Will, a 7-year-old who is facing extremely adverse circumstances.

Having grown up without his parents around, his grandmother has raised him. His

grandmother is unemployed, and unable to help him with his academics. Will is one

of the many in Program 2 who live beneath the poverty line. Will's older and only

brother has spent time in a juvenile detention facility, and the organization

suspects he is involved in gang activity. When I asked Evan what his specific goals

for Will were, he explained without hesitation that:

> My mentee needs serious help with reading. Studies show that once a
> child hits 3rd grade, if they are behind in reading they will continue to
> struggle catching up. I incorporate reading books, and even reading
> anything in his surroundings into our time together (interview with
> Evan).

Although Program 2 explicitly states academic achievement (graduation) as a

program goal, this specificity of focusing on reading was determined by Evan after

getting to know his mentee well enough to understand his needs. This was

exemplified in their interactions I observed, when even at a park Evan would ask

his mentee to read warning or instruction labels on various jungle gym structures

before letting him play on the (field notes). Leah, a mentor from Program 1,

described her personal goals for her mentee, Christina, as well: "I want Christina to

feel more comfortable around people; you know, bring her out of her shell. She is

very shy. Her teachers even tell me how quiet she is in the classroom." When I

asked Leah how she was helping her mentee to accomplish this goal, she explained

that she takes her places that require her to interact with both children and adults, and encourages her when possible to introduce herself to children at said locations (interview with Leah).

Carly, a mentor from Program 1, informed me that she tries to:

…show Kevin (her mentee) that college is fun, even though he is pretty young. His oldest brother for some reason talks badly about education to him, and Kevin really looks up to him. So I take him to a lot of fun events at my school (interview with Carly).

I observed this match at a college basketball game at Carly's school. Kevin's face lit up when he entered the gymnasium. Carly took a couple of opportunities to remind him that she went to these games to support her college, and pointed out all of the college students filling the gym and enjoying themselves (field notes).

Overall, statistics show that these programs are able to create successful matches. In 2012, Program 1 collected survey evidence from both mentors and mentees stating that 95% of matches concurrently felt they had a strong or very strong relationship (organizational document from Program 1). Furthermore, 33% of community-based mentees showed an improvement in their expectations of college based on survey questions regarding their feelings towards it; 54% showed an improvement in their sense of social acceptance by their peers; 50% showed an improvement in their grades; 60% maintained or increased confidence in school abilities; and 63% maintained or increased disapproval of unhealthy behaviors (organizational document from Program 1). Program 2 has had an 83% reduction in

teen parenthood rates; 78% reduction in youth incarceration; and a 97% promotion rate in school for the 2011-2012 academic year (organizational document from Program 2). The commitment made by the mentors is evident, but what are these mentors all doing similarly? What patterns arise between these mentors aiming for similar goals?

Patterns of Social and Cultural Capital

A common thread in both the interviews and observations was the purposeful and even unintentional opportunity structures that mentors provided to their mentees, access to various individuals, opportunities, and resources that can impact mentees in a positive manner immediately and in their future. It quickly became apparent in my research that mentors themselves serve as pinnacles of a greater network of connections that have the ability to provide knowledge, experiences, and various life chances (assistance in attaining education, networks, experiences, and opportunities that could help in future attainment of jobs, acquisition of wealth, happiness, etc.) to mentees that they are not getting from their families. Mentors are important not just because of their positive influence and existence as a role model, but because of the opportunities they provide for their mentees that they otherwise would not have had. Moreover, mentors take the initiative to determine how to accomplish the programs' goals, and subsequently how to provide their mentees with social and cultural capital, because their organizations' mentoring models lack detailed explanations.

As mentioned in the literature review, social capital is the resources or further networks that arise out of relationships with useful individuals (in this case, the mentors). Cultural capital is information, knowledge, education, skills, and advantages that individuals accrue as a result of people in their lives who are able to transmit these to them. I found patterns of how social and cultural capital are intentionally and unintentionally transferred from mentors to mentees.

Danielle, a mentor from Program 2, discussed in our interview how common it is for Program 2's mentees to have never left the neighborhood they were born in, even though transportation outside of it is easily accessible on foot or through inexpensive forms of transportation. She explained that she tries to spend less time with her mentee at the organization's office space (which has rooms for matches to spend time in), and more time exploring the city. Danielle stated that the mentees "just need an adult who is willing and able to take them to these places," referring to any of a plethora of close sites outside of their neighborhood. Danielle informed me that her mentee Toni, whom I observed her interacting with, was one of the many involved in the program who was only exposed to new places because of the efforts of their organization. When I asked Danielle where she had taken Toni in the past, she listed various museums in the city, parks, a photography center (a hobby Toni takes an interest in), and a zoo (interview with Danielle). During my observations, Toni was thrilled when Danielle reminded her that their next activity was going to be a group scavenger hunt around the city. When Danielle told Toni she was going to be in charge of her team's camera, the initially reserved and quiet

Toni became very talkative, expressing her interest in the activity (field notes).

Danielle intentionally transmits cultural capital to her mentee. She purposely takes

Toni to educational and recreational places that she hasn't been able to go to. These

experiences function as cultural capital because Danielle is exposing Toni to

knowledge and opportunities that she otherwise would not have. Being exposed to

such opportunities can give her background knowledge that can impact her in

school, provide motivation to avoid risky behavior, and further opportunities to see

and experience new things that can help her be prepared and excited for a

successful future, furthering her life chances. While opportunities like this can help

Toni in different areas of her life, including background knowledge for her

education, Danielle determines how to achieve the goal of helping her mentee

graduate from school (cultural capital) because Program 2's mentoring model does

not state how to achieve this.

During my interview with Program 1 mentor Bryce, he listed the activities he

engages in with his mentee, such as hiking, going on trips to a nearby arboretum,

and fishing. His reasoning for bringing his mentee to these locations was because

his mentee enjoys outdoor activities (interview with Bryce). Bryce is thus

transmitting cultural capital to his mentee, Lamar, through experiences that can

open his eyes to things he has never had the ability to see or do, and thus further

his intellect and life view. With no mention of purposely exposing his mentee to

opportunities he otherwise would not have, this is a clear example of unintentional

cultural capital transmittal. Bryce is impacting Lamar's life by taking him outside

of his local community, and uncovering experiences and parts of the world that Lamar has never seen. Consequently, this could help to encourage and motivate Lamar to set high goals for himself and make bigger plans for his future than he would otherwise. Bryce is presenting Lamar with knowledge about new locations, nature, and different skills (such as fishing). By showing his mentee new places and teaching him new things, Bryce is providing Lamar with important cultural capital that can have far-reaching effects. Furthermore, Bryce makes the decisions of what to do with his mentee to help attain the goals the program sets, because the mentoring model does not elaborate beyond matching the pair.

Most mentees are not provided with circumstances and opportunities to attain this form of capital in the home. Evan, as mentioned earlier, focuses on giving his mentee chances to read in order to assist him in building his reading skills and vocabulary. In this sense, Evan is acting as a substitute in transferring cultural capital, because his mentee's family does not have the resources to do so. Moreover, Program 2's mentoring model does not inform mentors to transfer cultural capital to their mentees by engaging in the specific activities of reading books and reading anything in the surrounding environment. Similarly, Carly, who brings Kevin to various college events, is purposely exposing him to events and opportunities that will broaden his horizons and give him a sense of college life, something his family is unable to provide. Although providing Kevin with a new opportunity is not stated in the mentoring model, Carly still did it as a way to

expose her mentee to an experience he had never had, implicitly providing him with cultural capital.

It appears that the mentors in these matches serve as the social capital that consequently provides cultural capital to their mentees. The connection and attention that Program 1 mentor Leah has provided to her mentee, Christina, similarly to the other mentor-mentee matches, is a beneficial relationship that Christina can learn from and gain social skills in addition to social networks. Christina, who is typically shy and keeps to herself, has been able to gain peer networks because of Leah's encouragement to communicate with children her age at events they attend (interview with Leah). Additionally, these peer networks come from different social classes than her own, which can also benefit her. Although it is not stated in her program's mentoring model, Leah is not only acting as social capital, but also encouraging Christina to broaden her connections and thus acquire more social capital. This mentor took the initiative to achieve what the mentoring model lacks.

Danielle, a mentor in the adolescent group of her program, told me about one of the opportunities they give to their mentees. Mentors or staff members connect their high-school aged mentees to individuals who can provide them with internships. Additionally, Program 2 continues to host workshops throughout the mentees' placements to help them improve in their various internships (interview with Danielle). This is a clear form of intentional social capital, because these at-risk youth are provided with critical opportunities for work experience that can help

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them build their confidence currently, and can aid in preparing them for a career in the future. These internships can also help them to create more social networks, and thus receive more social capital.

Whether intentional or unintentional, it is evident that mentors in these nonprofit organizations with formal mentoring components present their mentees with a consistent relationship with an important individual who can offer experiences and knowledge that the mentees' families lack. Over time, mentees accrue vital social and cultural capital. Although nowhere in the mentorship model of either program does it explicitly state how to transfer these forms of capital from mentors to mentees, mentors themselves still serve as social capital that expose mentees to resources and other forms of social capital and crucial cultural capital, which in turn provide opportunities and knowledge to help them currently and in the future.

Conclusion

Social inequality impacts the life circumstances individuals are handed, and the opportunities and knowledge youth are given. Formal mentorship programs, among them Program 1 and Program 2, have increasingly become tools used to intervene in the lives of at-risk youth, vulnerable characteristically because of their adverse life circumstances.

Both programs set goals for match outcomes, and have differing mentoring models. Program 1's objectives are to help the youth that they serve to do well in school, complete their education, avoid risky behavior, avoid teenage parenthood, have higher confidence, and have improved family relationships. This organization's mentorship model states that they accomplish this through individualized, one-on-one connections with volunteer mentors, in a minimum of a year and a half match. Volunteers are expected to spend time with their mentees at least once weekly. Program 2's objectives are to have their mentees avoid the juvenile justice system, avoid teenage parenthood, and graduate from high school (or receive a GED equivalent) with a plan for their future. This organization's mentorship model states that they achieve this by pairing a mentor who has at least three years of previous professional experience with at-risk youth, with mentees in the program. Each mentee is guaranteed a twelve-year commitment in the program, from kindergarten through high school graduation.

Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of social capital – resources and/or further networks one acquires through useful connections with others – and cultural capital

– forms of knowledge, information, education, skills, experiences, and advantages an individual accumulates – are indispensable in the lives of maturing children (Bourdieu 1986). Those in disadvantaged conditions tend not to gain these forms of capital that are typically acquired in the home from family members.

Neither organization plainly states that their goals include transmitting social and cultural capital to their mentees. Additionally, neither organization explicitly states that in order to reach the targets that they have set, that they should assist their mentees get there in part by transmitting social and cultural capital to them. The mentoring models of both programs implicitly include transmitting cultural capital (furthering education) and social capital (forming a beneficial relationship with a mentor). However, the mentoring models of both programs also lack a clear explanation of how to utilize forms of social and cultural capital as ways to attain the goals that they set. Neither mentoring model incorporates purposely providing them with beneficial connections to outside individuals and networks, help them gain new skills, provide them with background knowledge that can benefit them in school and elsewhere, or grant them with opportunities that other people in their lives cannot provide them with. How the mentors attain the goals, and what beneficial activities they engage in with their mentees, is up to their discretion. The mentoring models of both programs do not detail how mentors should attain the goals that they set, how to transfer social and cultural capital to their mentees, or to what extent. Consequently, the organizations and their mentoring models do not fully explore the range of different types of social

and cultural capital that could be included. Outside of the unintentional forms that the mentorship model provides, there are many more possibilities- providing mentees new opportunities, exposing them to locations they have never been to, teaching them new skills, connecting them to external beneficial connections with individuals, etc.

Mentors in Programs 1 and 2 concurrently work towards the goals the organizations set for their mentees, and set personalized objectives for their mentees once they get to know their specific needs. These same mentors intentionally and unintentionally transmit forms of social capital and cultural capital to their mentees, although neither program openly states the necessity of social and/or cultural transferal within matches in their mentoring models. The mentors of these programs provided these forms of capital in varying ways, some inadvertently without thinking of the consequences, and some purposely, foreseeing the possible benefits. That these mentors provide their mentees with new networks, opportunities, experiences, and knowledge are decisions established on their personal evaluations, not based on what the programs tell them to do. Additionally, the ways that they do so are also based on personal decisions of the mentors, not on directions from the mentoring models.

Implications for Further Research

Because social capital and cultural capital are both vital for youth to thrive currently and as they grow, it is important that they gain these forms of capital

from some source. Nonprofit mentoring organizations find that investing in the lives of at-risk youth can have positive, far-reaching effects. It is crucial to determine what is necessary in a match to produce the best outcomes. Mentors in formal, long-term mentoring relationships purposely and unknowingly employ uses of social and cultural capital in their interactions. Integrating social and cultural capital intentionally into their mentoring models could far extend the benefits of the unintentional capital they have already included. Further investigation should be conducted into the effects of the transmission of social capital and cultural capital in mentoring models, and its potential positive impact on both attaining goals mentoring organizations set, in helping the at-risk youth that they serve.

Furthermore, a greater emphasis should be placed not only on the end goals of social and cultural capital transferal, but *how* these organizations and their mentors should transmit these forms of capital.

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