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Linking Mentoring and Social Capital: Implications for Career and Organization Development

Sarah A. Hezlett
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The problem and the solution. Although they emphasize the importance of social relationships, the literatures on mentoring and social capital are largely independent. This article explores the connections between social capital and mentoring. After reviewing the limited literature in which social capital theory has been explicitly used in the study of mentoring, the authors discuss key concepts that appear in both literatures, including outcomes, bad relationships, trust, and information. They conclude with implications for the practice of human resource development (HRD), with particular attention paid to the role of mentoring in broader social networks, issues related to formal and informal mentoring, and creating cultures that foster the development of relationships. Their review reveals that the integration mentoring and social capital concepts offers great promise to enhance career and organization development initiatives.

Despite a common focus on the value of relationships, the literatures on mentoring and social capital largely have developed in parallel. Only recently have social capital and mentoring concepts been utilized together to understand workplace phenomena. The purpose of this article is to draw the connections between the concepts of *social capital* and *mentoring*. Given current trends in the workplace, mentoring and social capital are likely to remain important phenomena for human resource development (HRD) professionals to understand and utilize.

Interest in mentoring has expanded because of an increased need for continuous learning, reliance on informal learning, and on-the-job development, and

an emphasis on employee responsibility for career management. These have created a demand for employees to direct their own development and for organizations to provide tools and resources to support employees' efforts. Informal mentoring, which evolves as people get to know each other on their own, and formal mentoring, which is arranged through organizational intervention, are means by which experienced individuals can offer more junior colleagues career-related support and assistance. Evidence suggests that mentoring is associated with favorable career-related outcomes (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004) and is prevalent in many workplaces and occupations (Axel, 1999).

Different societal and workplace changes have been offered as explanations for why the concept of *social capital* has garnered so much attention. These include concerns over the excesses of individualism, a desire to reintroduce social relationships into capitalism following a period in which trust in relationships in personal and professional spheres has been eroded, and the resonance of the concept with professionals who struggle to maintain personal social ties in the face of work demands (Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000). Given the likely persistence of these issues, the prominence of social capital theory in related fields, and its apparent explanatory power, it is important for HRD professionals to familiarize themselves with relevant work on social capital. Similarly, efforts to continue the growth of our knowledge of mentoring as a form of social capital are likely to be fruitful for HRD professionals.

We begin examining the connections between mentoring and social capital with a review of the limited literature in which social capital theory explicitly has been used in the study of mentoring. Works in which scholars have drawn on theories of social capital to inform theory and research related to mentoring are reviewed. Then, we turn to considering less overt ways in which research on social capital and mentoring are related. Concepts that are considered include *outcomes, bad relationships, trust,* and *information*. Finally, the potential use of mentoring as an HRD tool for enhancing social capital in organizations is explored and implications for HRD practice identified. Particular attention is paid to career and organization development initiatives. Before examining the connections between mentoring and social capital, we clarify our use of the terms *mentoring, social capital,* and *social networks*.

Definitions

Mentoring

Traditionally, *mentoring* has been defined as an intense, dyadic relationship in which a more senior, experienced person, called a mentor, provides support and assistance to a more junior, less experienced colleague, referred to as a protégé or mentee. Although mutually beneficial, mentoring in the workplace typically is focused on enhancing the professional development of the protégé

(Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Russell & Adams, 1997). "It is generally agreed that mentoring is the most intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship, entailing the most influence, identification, and emotional involvement" (Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003, p. 41). Throughout this article, we follow convention and use the term *mentoring* to refer to this most powerful, one-on-one, hierarchical relationship. We use other terms (e.g., *peer mentoring, developmental relationship*) when referencing alternative sources of developmental support.

Researchers generally have used two basic approaches to examine mentoring. Some scholars have compared the experiences and/or characteristics of those who are in mentoring relationships with those who are not. Others have utilized the career and psychosocial mentoring functions Kram (1985) identified. Career mentoring functions, which include challenging assignments, coaching, exposure, protection, and sponsorship, directly assist protégés' career advancement. Psychosocial mentoring functions enhance protégés' sense of identity and self-worth. They include acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling. Some researchers (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993) have argued and provided evidence supporting the idea that role modeling should be viewed as a third, distinct mentoring function.

Social Network

The term *social network* has been used in diverse ways (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). Not only has this made the meaning of the term ambiguous, it has also created uncertainty about the nature of the relationship between social networks and social capital. To avoid confusion, it is important to clearly define how the terms *social network* and *social capital* are being used. Here we contrast two different ways the term *social network* has been used. We discuss how these distinct uses have alternate implications for how social networks relate to social capital, and we identify which definition of *social network* we use throughout this article.

At the broadest level, social network theory and research has been used to describe a large body of literature composed of diverse streams of research that build on the ties between entities, including individuals, groups, and organizations. These streams of research include studies of social capital, embeddedness, network organizations, board interlocks, joint ventures and interfirm alliances, knowledge management, social cognition, and group processes (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). Within this context, the term *social capital* is narrower than the term *social network*, focusing primarily on research that seeks to explain the benefits and costs individuals experience as a result of their social ties (Borgatti & Foster, 2003).

However, the term *social network* also has been used to designate a much narrower set of concepts. Within the social capital literature, the term *social*

network has been used to refer to the set of social connections between entities (e.g., individuals or groups). This set of relationships may be characterized in several ways, including the number of people who are part of it, the number of ties or connections between the people, and the pattern or configuration of the ties (Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). Within this context, the term *social capital* is broader than the term *social network*; social networks are constructs within social capital theory. Thus, in some instances the term *social network* has been used to refer to a body of literature that is broader than and encompasses research on social capital. In other cases, *social network* has been used to refer to the set of constructs within the social capital literature that characterize the social ties between entities.

In this article, we focus on the literature on social capital, rather than the body of literature on social networks. This focus is aligned with our objective of understanding the connection between mentoring and social capital. Comparing and contrasting theory, research, and practice on mentoring with other research streams in the social network literature (e.g., network organizations, board interlocks, and joint ventures) is beyond the scope of this work. Thus, in the rest of the article, when we use the term *social network*, we are referring to a set of social ties from which costs and benefits accrue.

Social Capital

The word *capital* in the term *social capital* captures the idea of the creation of value in response to an investment, reflecting similar uses of the word in the terms *economic capital* and *human capital*. As *economic capital* involves the investment of resources (e.g., labor, equipment, supplies) for the production of economic profit and *human capital* involves investment in education or training for the production of skills and knowledge, *social capital* involves individuals investing in social ties to gain access to the resources of others in the group or network (Lin, 2001).

Diverse and, at times, contradictory definitions of *social capital* have been proposed (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Akdere, 2005; Leana & Van Buren, 1999). In a review of the literature aimed at integrating across disciplines and encouraging discussion across diverse views, Adler and Kwon (2002) listed published definitions. One way in which the definitions vary is whether they focus on the ties an individual has with others (i.e., an external focus) or the structure of the ties among individuals within a group (i.e., an internal focus) or both (Adler & Kwon). The external versus internal focus is not mutually exclusive and largely a function of the level of analysis (Adler & Kwon). Although acknowledging that much of the mentoring literature is more consistent with an external focus, we also see value in considering an internal focus on social capital. Many HRD professionals are responsible for improving the learning and performance of groups and organizations, rather than just key individuals within them. Therefore,

we adopt a definition that encompasses the internal and external focus. "Social capital is the goodwill available to individual or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor" (Adler & Kwon, p. 23). This definition of *social capital* encompasses the structure of individuals' social networks, as well as the costs and benefits stemming from those networks. It is well aligned with the concept of *mentoring*, which traditionally has been defined in terms of the structure of a particular kind of relationship and in terms of the resources or functions of the relationship.

Following the lead of researchers who explicitly have drawn connections between the mentoring and social capital literatures, we take an integrative perspective and discuss a broad array of social capital constructs. A comprehensive review of social capital theories is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, we introduce and briefly describe key social capital concepts throughout the article.

Mentoring and Social Capital: Explicit Connections

In this section, we review the limited literature in which social capital theory has been explicitly used in the study of mentoring. First, we review attempts to differentiate mentoring from other kinds of developmental relationships using concepts from the social capital literature. Second, we summarize theory and research that has attempted to draw causal connections between constructs in the mentoring and social capital literatures. This includes work that has proposed social capital variables influence mentoring functions, as well as work that has suggested mentoring influences the development of social capital. This review is intended to provide HRD professionals with an understanding of what links between social capital concepts and mentoring have been proposed and the findings from studies examining those links.

Mentoring Versus Other Developmental Networks

Several scholars explicitly have used social capital concepts to distinguish mentoring from other workplace relationships. Higgins and Kram (2001) proposed a typology differentiating four categories of developmental networks, based on two concepts drawn from the social capital literature: the range of developmental relationship diversity (low to high) and the level of developmental relationship strength (weak to strong). *Developmental network diversity* refers to the number of social systems from which the relationships originate (e.g., school, work, professional associations, volunteer organizations, friends) with high-diversity networks including people from many social systems (Higgins & Kram). The concept is grounded in structural theories of social capital that emphasize the value of information stemming from different network configurations. Structural theories of social capital focus on the role played by

the configuration or pattern of social ties. For example, structural hole theory is based on the idea that individuals whose social ties span gaps in otherwise unconnected networks benefit from the diverse information they have access to and can utilize.

Developmental relationship strength characterizes the interpersonal bonds between individuals, with strong ties reflecting reciprocity, frequent communication, strong emotional affect, and interdependence (Higgins & Kram, 2001). The concept comes from Granovetter's (1973) weak-tie theory that is a social capital theory emphasizing the benefits stemming from maintaining relationships that are more distant and casual. Weak-tie theory is an example of relational approaches to social capital. These theories focus on the content of or resources transmitted through social ties.

The first category in Higgins and Kram's (2001) developmental network typology is titled "traditional" and reflects a network configuration that is generally composed of a few developers who have strong ties to the protégé. Higgins and Kram noted that this category is reflective of the classical mentoring relationship, with one strong-tie primary relationship and perhaps one or two additional developers from the same social context. In drawing this connection, Higgins and Kram explicitly linked the core concept of *strong ties* from the social capital literature to definitions of *mentoring*. Thus, they create a platform for thinking about the implications of previous findings from research on social capital for mentoring and generate a framework for guiding new research on developmental relationships.

The remaining categories in Higgins and Kram's (2001) typology describe development relationships that differ from traditional mentoring relationships. For example, the entrepreneurial developmental network, like the traditional (i.e., mentoring) category, is characterized by strong-tie relationships but differs in involving significant developmental network diversity. Persons with this type of developmental network gain the benefit of multiple strong-tie relationships but also, consistent with some theories of social capital (e.g., structural hole), have the benefit of gaining access to unconnected clusters of developers. This high range of developmental network diversity can, therefore, collectively provide access to a greater span of information for those protégés in an entrepreneurial developmental network. The remaining two categories of developmental networks— receptive and opportunistic—share the characteristics of weak-tie relationship strength (i.e., these individuals would not be considered as "mentors") but differ as to the range of developmental network diversity (Higgins & Kram).

Higgins and Kram (2001) embedded their typology of developmental networks in a framework that proposes that the nature of the developmental network is affected by situational factors (i.e., organization-level influences, industry, tasks), individual factors (e.g., help seeking, demographics, perceived need for development), and moderating factors (e.g., interaction style, the developer's power, and protégé's developmental orientation). The different networks also are predicted to yield different career-related consequences. Although Higgins

and Kram's propositions have not been thoroughly tested, their theoretical work stands out in applying social capital concepts to clarify the definition of *mentoring* and distinguish it from related concepts.

Drawing on Higgins and Kram's (2001) idea that traditional mentoring can be distinguished from other patterns of workplace relationships, Bozionelos (2003) investigated whether instrumental and expressive network resources contribute to career success over and above that which is gained from a mentoring relationship. Instrumental network resources included interpersonal ties (excluding the primary mentoring relationship) that are oriented toward promoting career functions. The primary function of expressive network resources is providing socioemotional support.

The results of Bozionelos' study of 264 white-collar workers indicated that network resources were additive to mentoring in contributing to career success (intrinsic and extrinsic), suggesting that network resources and mentoring have complementary effects on career outcomes. However, network resources were found to have stronger effects than a primary mentoring relationship on measures of extrinsic career success. Only instrumental network resources contributed to career attainment; expressive network resources were not linked to extrinsic career outcomes (Bozionelos, 2003). These results suggest that network resources and mentoring cannot serve as substitutes for each other (Bozionelos, 2003).

In a second study, Bozionelos (2006) extended his research by examining the influence of mentoring and network resources in a different culture. He investigated the relationships of mentoring and expressive network resources with career success and emotional exhaustion in a sample of Greek bank employees. Number of mentors accounted for a significant amount of variance in number of promotions after controlling for demographic and career experience variables. However, currently having a mentor did not account for significant incremental variance in intrinsic career success and was only marginally significant in accounting for additional variance in emotional exhaustion. In contrast, expressive network resources accounted for significant incremental variance in both intrinsic career success and emotional exhaustion. When their relationship to emotional exhaustion was considered simultaneously, expressive network resources made a significant contribution and currently having a mentor did not. Although this study was limited in how mentoring and network relationships were measured, it extended the finding that different kinds of social ties in the workplace are associated with distinct benefits to a different cultural context.

In a third study, Bozionelos and Wang (2006) examined the relationship of mentoring and network resources in a sample of Chinese white-collar workers. In contrast to previous findings, the amount of network resources (*Guanxi*) was not correlated with either extrinsic or intrinsic career success and the amount of mentoring received was only related to intrinsic career success. In addition, although the Chinese participants were similar to their Western counterparts in perceiving a distinction between mentoring and other social network ties, these

participants did not distinguish between expressive and instrumental network resources, as has been found in the United States. The authors suggest that these findings are affected by the Chinese cultural context, in which the expressive relationship elements are a prerequisite for the provision of instrumental resources. Another distinct finding was that a significantly higher percentage of Chinese participants (72%) reported currently having a mentor than has been reported in US-based studies (Bozionelo & Wang). The authors propose that the high prevalence of mentoring relationships in Chinese organizations may explain the limited relationship between mentoring and career success. Having a mentor is a more commonplace experience in China and thus may not accrue any particular extrinsic career advantage (Bozionelos & Wang). Overall, the three studies conducted by Bozionelos and his colleague (Bozionelos, 2003, 2006; Bozionelos & Wang) highlight that it is critical to take culture into account when considering the nature of different social ties (e.g., mentoring and network resources, such as *Guanxi,* expressive network resources, and instrumental network resources) and the extrinsic and intrinsic career benefits they may generate.

Taken together, the work of Higgins and Kram (2001), Bozionelos (2003, 2006), and Bozionelos and Wang (2006) highlights the value of considering mentoring in the broader context of social relationships at work. Further research is needed to thoroughly evaluate the outcomes associated with different types of networks. In addition, Higgins and Kram's propositions regarding the antecedents of different types of developmental networks should be evaluated to develop a better understanding of factors contributing to the creation of developmental networks. With this knowledge, HRD professionals would be able to make informed decisions on how to foster specific kinds of network relationships to achieve desired outcomes. In the meantime, it is already clear that HRD professionals should not assume that all kinds of social ties in the workplace are equal.

Posited Causal Connections

A second way researchers have connected concepts from the mentoring and social capital literatures is by integrating them in models of career success. These models posit causal connections between social capital and mentoring concepts. We first review work by researchers that propose constructs from the social capital literature influence mentoring functions. Then, we summarize literature examining the idea that mentoring variables shape the development of social networks. Taken together, this theory and research provides HRD professionals with current thinking about how mentoring and social capital variables may influence each other and shape career development.

Social capital variables and mentoring functions. Several scholars have proposed and tested models in which social capital constructs exert a causal influence on mentoring variables, which in turn affect career success. Capitalizing on

their observation that the benefits of social capital (e.g., visibility, social credentialing) overlap with the construct of career mentoring, Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden (2001) proposed that career mentoring is one of the key variables mediating the relationship between the characteristics of social networks (i.e., weak ties, structural holes, contacts in other functions, and contacts at higher levels) and career outcomes. The benefits associated with structural networks—access to information and access to resources—were posited to be additional key mediating variables. Building on the premise that some contacts at higher organizational levels are mentors and provide career sponsorship, the authors employed the mentoring literature to support their proposition that the number of contacts a person had at higher organizational levels would be positively related to career mentoring. Similarly, the known positive effects of mentoring on career outcomes was used to support hypotheses positing relationships between the level of an employee's career mentoring and tangible career outcomes, such as current salary, number of promotions, and career satisfaction. Based on a survey of more than 700 alumni of a large midwestern university, Seibert et al. found support for their integrated model of social capital, mentoring, and career success.

The work of Seibert and his colleagues is groundbreaking. It integrates structural and resource perspectives on social capital, as well as a key concept (sponsorship, a facet of career mentoring) and findings from the mentoring literatures. However, this research was limited by its sole focus on career functions with no attention paid to the important psychosocial functions provided in a social network.

Although focusing on a narrower set of social capital and career outcome concepts, James (2000) proposed a model suggesting social capital constructs influenced career and psychosocial mentoring. Specifically, James hypothesized that social capital variables (racial similarity and tie strength) mediated the relationship between managers' race and career support (career related and psychosocial). In a study of Black and White managers in a *Fortune* 500 financial service firm, James found that, although there were no reported differences between Black and White managers on the measures of career support, social capital did mediate the relationship between race and perceived psychosocial support. Black managers perceived that they had fewer strong ties and, correspondingly, reported receiving less psychosocial support (James). This study highlights the importance of considering the role of race and possibly other demographic variables in research on mentoring and social capital. It also suggests access to mentoring is a dimension that should be addressed in future studies that incorporate mentoring and social capital.

The influence of mentoring on social capital. Seibert et al. (2001) and James (2000) argued that social capital variables have a causal influence on mentoring functions. Other scholars have proposed the opposite. In developing a model of formal mentoring, Wanberg and her colleagues (2003) attempted to

identify the mechanisms through which mentoring affected career outcomes. They proposed that receipt of mentoring influenced proximal outcomes that led to more distal career-related outcomes. These proximal outcomes were four protégé changes, including three kinds of learning, along with the expansion of social networks.

Kirchmeyer (2005) independently advanced similar ideas in her study testing two perspectives on how mentoring influences career advancement: the performance perspective and the political perspective. The performance perspective assumes that mentoring affects career success over time through the mediating variable of performance. The political perspective provides an alternative view, suggesting that "mentoring influences advancement of protégés by developing their social skills, serving as contacts with the social system, and sending signals of ability, reputation, and organizational fit (Ferris & Judge, 1991)" (Kirchmeyer, p. 641). Thus, the political perspective suggests that the development of social capital may be an outcome or consequence of mentoring.

Kirchmeyer's (2005) study of mentoring, performance, and career success of 143 academics yielded mixed results regarding the merits of the performance and political perspectives. Her findings indicated that developmental relationships affect performance (i.e., publications) and advancement. However, because developmental relationships did not mediate the publication–career outcomes relationships, Kirchmeyer concluded that the influence of developmental relationships on career progress is direct, supporting the political perspective. One limitation of this study was that the structure or resources of individuals' social networks was not measured; the link between mentoring and social capital variables was inferred not observed. In addition, the definition of a *mentor* focused heavily on career mentoring. It is interesting to note that consistent with the political perspective, having an "emotionally close" developer (a definition more consistent with traditional mentoring) was related to salary, even after controlling for publications (i.e., a performance measure) (Kirchmeyer).

Palgi and Moore (2004) examined the extent to which mentoring was related to the development of social networks in their study of men and women holding elite positions in business and politics. They focused on one aspect of social networks: the range or number of different groups with whom individuals had contact. Their results indicate that female business leaders who had male mentors in higher positions within their organizations report a wider range of all interpersonal professional contacts, as well as a broader range of political contacts. In contrast, having female mentors in higher positions within their organizations was not significantly associated with range of contacts for the female business leaders. Having mentors, either male or female, was not associated with range of contacts for male business leaders or for male or female political leaders. Although Palgi and Moore's study was limited by its fairly narrow definition of *social networks*, it more directly investigates the role mentoring plays in development of social networks than Kirchmeyer's (2005) research. Like

Kirchmeyer's study, it provides mixed support for the idea that mentoring helps people make additional social contacts. This was true for some, but not all groups. Palgi and Moore's work highlights the potential importance of considering individual (i.e., gender) and situational (e.g., occupation) variables when thinking about mentoring and social capital.

Hooker, Nakamura, and Csikszentmihalyi (2003) discussed the importance of group dynamics in mentoring, providing a perspective on the interface between concepts of *social capital* and *creativity*. Their qualitative case study of five scientists from a space science lab at a major midwestern research university extends our thinking beyond the primary mentor to colleagues or peers who are part of the group through which an apprentice gains his or her socialization. These authors suggest several areas of importance as it relates to the connection between mentoring and social capital. First, for elite occupations that rely on contacts with eminent mentors, the mentor's position in the field in and of itself may be important to the protégé's career and, in addition, collaboration with the group with which the mentor is associated serves to promote the apprentice's visibility within the field. Second, enduring collaborative bonds established with a high-ranking mentor's group early in one's career may have long-lasting impact, as protégés are likely to work in the future with colleagues and peers to whom they were initially introduced by their mentor. Third, their findings suggest that, given the importance of the group in mentoring a new protégé, the relationship with the primary mentor may not need to be a close one. In fact, facilitating exposure to a broader social network of colleagues may be one of the primary roles of a mentor for those in creative occupations which rely on significant network contacts for future career success. Overall, these researchers suggest that, "understanding social capital enriches the definition of effective mentoring and helps to articulate more clearly . . . the role of the field (i.e., the mentor and an apprentice's peers and colleagues) in educating and socializing aspiring young people" (Hooker et al., p. 242).

Summary of Explicit Connections

In summary, the literature explicitly connecting mentoring and social capital is in its infancy. Diverse approaches have been used to link concepts from the two literatures, and the results show great promise. Theory and research suggest that mentoring and other kinds of social networks may yield distinct outcomes. Preliminary evidence suggests that culture may play a role in determining which kind of developmental relationships are associated with different career outcomes. Models positing that some social capital concepts influence mentoring functions and those positing that mentoring influences the development of social capital have been articulated and studied. This research has yielded support for both kinds of models, suggesting that there may be a reciprocal relationship between mentoring and other kinds of social capital.

However, research in this area has utilized cross-sectional designs, which do not enable rigorous evaluation of causality. Overall, the research explicitly linking mentoring and social capital confirms that mentoring can be viewed as a potent form of social capital, and that continued exploration of its potential benefits as part of the larger social network, especially for careers and organizations, would be a fruitful area for inquiry.

Mentoring and Social Capital: Common Constructs

In this section of the article, we look beyond the explicit attempts that have been made to link theories of mentoring and social capital. We focus on identifying key concepts that have appeared in works on mentoring and on social capital. These include favorable outcomes, negative experiences, trust, and information exchange.

Outcomes

A core premise of mentoring models and theories of social capital is that social relationships yield positive outcomes. The purpose of a noteworthy proportion of research on mentoring has been to test the idea that individuals, particularly protégés, gain substantial career-related rewards from participating in mentoring relationships. The notion that rewards accrue from social ties is inherent in the definition of *social capital*. Research on mentoring and on social capital has generally supported the idea that social relationships are associated with favorable outcomes.

Like the literature on social capital, the mentoring literature has recognized the structure and content of social ties. Research comparing protégés with non-protégés implicitly takes a structuralist perspective, suggesting that the existence of a mentoring tie drives outcomes. Recent qualitative reviews (Wanberg et al., 2003) and meta-analyses (Allen et al., 2004; Underhill, 2006) have concluded that being a protégé is associated with a variety of professional benefits. For example, protégés tend to have greater career satisfaction, higher salaries, and more promotions than their peers without mentors (Allen et. al., 2004). On average, the differences are small but highlight the value of having ties to a mentor.

Similarly, the much more limited research on the benefits of being a mentor also has supported the conclusion that the existence of a mentor–protégé tie leads to positive outcomes. By directly asking individuals about the benefits of being a mentor or by comparing individuals who have served as mentors with those who have not, researchers have assumed that the existence of a tie to a protégé generates outcomes. Preliminary evidence suggests the benefits associated with serving as a mentor may include enhanced career satisfaction, improved performance, accelerated promotion rates, higher salaries, receipt of information from protégés, the satisfaction of helping others, greater visibility

in one's organization, learning, and recognition for developing others (Allen, Lentz, & Day, 2006; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; Wanberg et al., 2003). In some instances, the short-term benefits reported by mentors (e.g., improved work performance) have been associated with some (e.g., more favorable work attitudes), but not all (e.g., career success) long-term gains (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2006). Additional research is needed to evaluate the causal role mentoring plays in career success (Allen et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003). Overall, research to date generally has linked being a mentor or protégé to favorable work and career outcomes.

The handful of studies on having multiple mentors also provides insight related to how the structure of social networks affects protégé outcomes. Most of this research has focused on characterizing the network in terms of the number of ties, rather than their configuration. The results of this small body of research are mixed (Wanberg et al., 2003). Having more mentors has been linked to higher work satisfaction (Higgins, 2000), reduced role ambiguity (Baugh & Scandura, 1999), enhanced career expectations (Baugh & Scandura, 1999), and greater career success (Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000). Qualitative analysis of interviews with 15 executives indicated that having a diverse mentoring network was considered to be beneficial for protégés' professional success (de Janasz, Sullivan, & Whiting, 2003). However, having more mentors also has been associated with increased role conflict (Baugh & Scandura, 1999) and higher job burnout (Fagan & Walter, 1982). Satisfaction tends to be higher when one person, rather than multiple individuals, provides high levels of psychosocial support (Higgins, 2000) or career support (Riley & Wrench, 1985). These findings highlight the importance of considering the structure of mentoring relationships and illustrate that more is not always better.

The content or connectionist perspective on social capital is reflected in research examining the relationship between mentoring functions and outcomes. Recent qualitative reviews (Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003) and meta-analyses (Allen et al., 2004) have concluded that receiving more mentoring functions (e.g., psychosocial functions, career functions) is associated with experiencing more favorable career-related outcomes, including greater career satisfaction, higher salaries, and more promotions. An important caveat to this conclusion, however, is that most research on protégé outcomes has been correlational and cross-sectional, providing little information about causality (Allen et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003). It is possible that individuals who are more successful in their careers are more likely to receive more support from their mentors. In general, this research has supported the notion that the content of the tie is important.

Within the social capital literature, the structural approach, which emphasizes that the source of social capital is the configuration of the ties rather than their content, is supported to the extent that ties are appropriable (Adler & Kwon, 2002). For example, if friendship ties can be utilized to achieve a work-related

outcome, such as locating a job, it suggests the outcomes derive from the structure of the ties, not their content. However, Adler and Kwon (2002) pointed out that research has demonstrated that appropriability is limited, finding, for example, that managers' promotion rates are differentially influenced by different kinds of networks. This suggests that the content of ties, not just their structure, is important.

Turning to relational or content perspective in the social capital literature, researchers have examined the relationships among a variety of social network characteristics and outcomes. At the individual level, social capital has been linked to finding jobs, career success, and executive compensation (Adler & Kwon, 2002). However, "results have been mixed concerning the benefits of weak and strong ties" (Labianca & Brass, 2006, p. 602). Thus, unlike the mentoring literature in which the value of certain tie content has been demonstrated (i.e., mentoring functions), the social capital literature provides more ambiguous information regarding what tie content is beneficial to individuals' careers.

Up to this point, we have focused on discussing the individual, work- and career-related outcomes associated with workplace relationships. This approach is consistent with the literature on mentoring, which has been dominated by studies of the individual benefits that accrue to protégés. This body of research generally suggests favorable organizational outcomes will stem from the favorable outcomes experienced by protégés and their mentors but has rarely examined the organization-level benefits of mentoring directly.

For example, it could be argued that because protégés (particularly those who receive more mentoring functions) tend to have more favorable job attitudes (Allen et al., 2004), and job attitudes are linked to turnover, it seems probable that organizations where mentoring was prevalent would have higher retention rates. However, the few studies that have explicitly studied the connection between mentoring and turnover have used individual-level designs. The results of these studies have been promising but are not definitive. Meta-analyses suggest that protégés, particularly those who receive more psychosocial mentoring, have stronger intentions to stay with their organizations. However, these effects are small and do not appear to generalize to all situations (Allen et al., 2004; Underhill, 2006). Two studies have found a negative connection between mentoring and turnover, suggesting that mentoring encourages retention (Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Payne & Huffman, 2005). Additional research utilizing different designs is needed to determine if mentoring offers organizations a competitive advantage in terms of retaining competent employees.

Similarly, because protégés, particularly those who receive more career-related mentoring functions, tend to be better compensated and receive more promotions, it could be assumed that organizations are reaping the benefits of having more capable and qualified employees through mentoring. However, research that examines the relationship between mentoring and job performance while controlling for the ability and motivation of protégés has not been

conducted (Wanberg et al., 2003). Moreover, as Kirchmeyer's (2005) work suggests, an alternate explanation is that organizations are paying more for their employees without gaining any improvements in performance. Thus, much remains unknown about the impact of mentoring on organizational outcomes.

One of the most explicit examinations of the organizational benefits of mentoring focused on the attractiveness of formal mentoring to job seekers. Allen and O'Brien (2006) found that undergraduate students seeking jobs were more attracted to organizations that were portrayed as having formal mentoring programs than to those that were not portrayed as having these programs. Moreover, individuals with a greater learning goal orientation were more strongly attracted to organizations that were depicted as offering formal mentoring. Thus, initial research suggests mentoring may yield organization-level benefits; however, more research in this area is needed.

Within the social capital research, organizational outcomes have received somewhat more research attention. In addition to reducing turnover, social capital has been linked to several aspects of improved organizational functioning, including product innovation, resource exchange, cross-functional team effectiveness, and the development of intellectual capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002). This suggests that mentoring may lead to a number of organizational benefits that have not yet been examined.

In summary, research within the mentoring and social capital literature indicates that social ties in the workplace are associated with favorable career-related outcomes for individuals. In both literatures, the structure and content of ties has been investigated and been shown to be important. A broader range of structural characteristics have been investigated within the social capital literature, which is not surprising given the definitional constraints of the social ties within the mentoring literature. Studies of peer mentoring (Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Thomas, Hu, Gewin, Bingham, & Yanchus, 2005) and comparisons of supervisory versus nonsupervisory mentoring (Payne & Huffman, 2005; Scandura & Williams, 2004) are examples of how structural characteristics have been explored in the mentoring literature. Further insights into mentoring may be gained by incorporating additional structural concepts into future research, such as the concept of *network diversity* included in Higgins and Kram's (2001) typology of developmental networks. In addition, it would be interesting to examine whether other structural concepts, such as a *mentors' centrality in networks* or *their filling of structural holes*, influence the career-related benefits enjoyed by their protégés. A strength of the mentoring literature is the insights it provides regarding the kinds of assistance that may be provided through social ties. As the literature integrating mentoring and social capital has demonstrated, mentoring functions are a useful way of conceptualizing the resources provided through social ties. Mentoring and social capital research may benefit by incorporating additional aspects of the content or quality of social ties. Further research examining the organizational outcomes of mentoring would be valuable to HRD professionals. Research from the social capital

literature suggests that team effectiveness and innovation may be fruitful outcomes to include in such research.

Bad Relationships

Within the mentoring and social capital literatures, scholars have begun exploring the idea that not all aspects of relationships in the workplace are beneficial. Conjectures about how mentoring relationships could be damaging has been augmented by the systematic study of bad mentoring experiences and their consequences. For example, Eby and her colleagues initially used content analysis to identify 15 types of negative mentoring experiences (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000) and, in a subsequent study, confirmed the grouping of these experiences into five metathemes (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004). These metathemes were tied empirically to unfavorable outcomes for protégés (Eby et al., 2004), including intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, and job withdrawal.

Within the social capital literature, the negative aspects of social ties have been conceptualized in two distinct ways (Brass, 2001). The first approach is based on the idea of opportunity costs. Investing in developing and maintaining social relationships uses resources (e.g., time, effort) that are then unavailable for other uses (Leana & Van Buren, 1999). For example, developing long-lasting relationships that involve strong ties may reduce opportunities to establish weak ties (Brass, 2001; Labianca & Brass, 2006). The second approach recognizes that not all social relationships are advantageous. To take a full accounting of the "social ledger," assets (social capital) and liabilities must be considered (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Social liabilities are proposed to arise from negative relationships (Brass, 2001) in which at least one person dislikes the other (Labianca & Brass, 2006). Labianca and Brass (2006) have proposed a framework outlining the antecedents and career-related outcomes of negative relationships, as well as factors that moderate the impact of negative relationships on those outcomes.

In the literatures on mentoring and social capital, there are some similarities and some differences in the study of bad relationships. In both domains, theory and research on negative experiences is quite young. Scholars studying mentoring and social capital agree that poor social relationships may generate poor career-related outcomes, including withdrawal from work. However, definitions of *bad relationships* differ across the mentoring and social capital literatures. Mentoring researchers have focused on identifying specific experiences within a mentoring relationship that are negative. In contrast to social capital scholars, negative mentoring relationships are not necessarily characterized in terms of the mentor or protégé (or both) disliking each other. In addition, mentoring researchers have not examined the opportunity costs of maintaining mentoring relationships.

Trust

Trust is embedded in most descriptions of mentoring and utilized frequently in discussions of social capital. However, trust has rarely been studied by mentoring researchers or included in mentoring models. One set of studies in the mentoring literature that has provided insight into the role of trust has been focused on understanding mentors' characteristics. For example, Burke (1984) reported that most protégés perceived that mentors had a reputation for being trusted, respected, liked, and admired. Mentors have identified being honest and/or trustworthy as one of the ideal characteristics mentors should possess and mentioned trust as one of the things mentors and protégés could do "to make the most of mentoring relationships" (Allen & Poteet, 1999).

Also relevant are the handful of studies that have investigated the "micro" processes characterizing mentor–protégé interactions (Wanberg et al., 2003). It is interesting to note that this work has examined several related concepts, such as *interpersonal comfort* (Allen, Day, & Lentz, 2002), *reciprocity* (Ensher et al., 2001), and *emotional distance* (Burke & McKeen, 1997) but has rarely included *trust*. One study that did incorporate trust found that for mentors and protégés, met expectations partially mediated the relationship between mentoring functions and perceptions of relationship effectiveness and trust (Young & Perrewé, 2000).

Integrating the small body of research on mentor–protégé interactions with models of interpersonal relationships, Wanberg and her colleagues (2003) included relationship characteristics in their model of formal mentoring, proposing that these characteristics partially mediate the relationship between mentoring antecedents (i.e., protégé, mentor, and dyad characteristics) and mentoring received (e.g., mentoring functions). It is interesting to note that this model did not specify trust as one of the relationship characteristics. However, trust was recognized as being related to one of the four relationship characteristics: intimacy. Intimacy, which is signaled by the degree to which mentors and protégés disclose to each other cognitively or emotionally, refers to the closeness of the mentor and the protégé. Thus, although trust is widely recognized as an important part of mentoring, it has rarely been studied by mentoring researchers or included in mentoring models.

Within the social capital literature, trust also is a core concept (Schuller et al., 2000). However, scholars have articulated diverse views of the role trust plays in social capital. "Some authors equate trust with social capital (Fukuyama, 1995, 1997), some see trust as a source of social capital (Putnam, 1993), some see it as a form of social capital (Coleman, 1988), and some see it as a collective asset resulting from social capital construed as a relational asset (Lin, 1999)" (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 26). We briefly discuss five salient aspects of trust reflected in the social capital literature here.

First, there is substantial evidence that individuals are more willing to exchange resources and cooperate with each other if their relationships are high in trust (Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). That is, trust appears to be an important driver of cooperative behavior.

Second, the relationship between cooperation and trust is reciprocal. Successful cooperation generates trust (Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). This suggests that HRD initiatives designed to enhance cooperation will foster trust, and interventions to improve trust will generate increased cooperation.

Third, trust may be a multidimensional concept (Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). Scholars have distinguished between fragile trust and resilient trust. Trust is considered fragile when individuals make the decision to take a risk or be vulnerable on a transaction-by-transaction basis. If the predicted benefit or reward is not received in the transaction, fragile trust is broken. In contrast, resilient trust is more robust. It is based on broader experience with the other party and can persist if the cost of the transaction occasionally outweighs the expected rewards (Leana & Van Buren, 1999). Another distinction scholars have made is between interpersonal, or dyadic, trust and indirect trust. In some cases, "trust . . . does not rest with knowledge of particular individuals but rather with norms and behaviors that are generalized to others in the social unit as a whole" (Leana & Van Buren, 1999, p. 543). Individuals may trust each other without much direct contact simply because they belong to the same group or social network. This is known as generalized trust.

Fourth, at first glance, it appears that strong ties are the type of network resource that builds trust (Brass, 2001), particularly resilient trust. Strong-tie relationships have been described as friendships. Individuals who are friends are likely to be willing to be vulnerable and share the expectation that risks will be rewarded, if not immediately, then at some future time (Leana & Van Buren, 1999). This suggests that benefits flowing from trust should be associated with strong-tie relationships. Consistent with this notion, leadership research examining relationships high on leader–member exchange, which have been characterized by high levels of trust and exemplify many aspects of strong ties, have been linked to follower performance, satisfaction, and retention (Brass, 2001).

Fifth, scholars have argued that strong ties may not be necessary to generate trust. Generalized trust may exist in communities or organizations when individuals are thoroughly connected with weak ties (Leana & Van Buren, 1999).

Comparing the treatment of trust in the mentoring and social capital literatures is informative. Although trust is central to mentoring and social capital, it has rarely been explicitly discussed or studied in the mentoring literature. In contrast, the social capital literature contains rich, if sometimes contradictory, ideas about trust. Theory and research on mentoring may benefit from drawing on these ideas. For example, it would be interesting to compare formal and informal mentoring relationships on the nature of their dyadic trust (i.e., fragile vs. resilient) and explore factors (e.g., program characteristics, mentor and protégé characteristics) that foster the development of more resilient trust. In addition, it would be valuable to build a better understanding of how mentoring influences the development of generalized trust in an organization, and how generalized trust affects mentoring.

Information Exchange

Although it rarely has appeared in the mentoring literature, the concept of *information* is central to several theories of social capital. Within the mentoring literature, the concept of *information exchange* between mentors and protégés has been explored by Mullen. Mullen (1994) proposed that mentors and protégés mutually seek social and performance feedback from each other, as well as technical, referent, and normative information. She proposed a framework outlining factors affecting the extent of information seeking. Partial support for this framework was obtained (Mullen & Noe, 1999). Using data provided by protégés, hierarchical regression analyses suggested mentors' information seeking was only a function of protégé perceptions of the appropriateness of information seeking. In contrast, based on responses collected from mentors, mentors' information seeking was significantly associated with the extent to which the mentor was influenced by his or her protégé, mentors' perceptions of whether the protégé thought information seeking was appropriate, perceived protégé competence, and by career mentoring. These findings demonstrate that information seeking is a complex part of the dynamics of mentoring relationships. It seems likely that there is a great deal more to learn about the role and value of information exchange in mentoring. Information may prove to be a valuable concept in furthering our understanding of mentoring.

As stated in Adler and Kwon's (2002) definition of *social capital*, information is one of the key mechanisms through which the content and structure of social ties influence outcomes. Examples of social capital theories where information plays a pivotal explanatory role include weak-tie and structural hole theories. According to weak-tie theory, weak ties are sources of novel information that individuals may find valuable in achieving career-related goals, such as finding a job (Brass, 2001). Within structural hole theory, the power of bridging a structural hole (i.e., linking two people who are otherwise not connected) stems from the access to nonredundant information and control over information flow (Brass, 2001).

Examination of these social capital theories suggests additional directions for research on mentoring. For example, studying the flow of information from outside to inside mentoring dyads is likely to clarify how mentors and protégés mutually benefit from their relationships. Mentors and protégés may each fill the role of structural holes for the other. Mentors may give protégés access to information shared in networks for more senior, experienced individuals, whereas protégés may serve as a bridge for mentors to information transmitted among more junior individuals.

Mentoring and Social Capital: Implications for Practice

In this section of the article, we discuss the implications of the connections between social capital and mentoring for the practice of HRD, focusing on how

relationship management by HRD might be used to efficiently and effectively enhance career and organization development. Specifically, we consider the role of mentoring in broader social networks, issues related to formal and informal mentoring, and creating cultures that foster relationship building.

The Role of Mentoring in Social Networks

As noted earlier in this review, a significant amount of attention has been paid in the mentoring and social capital literatures to the individual outcomes of social relationships, specifically the achievement of career-related outcomes. Our review of the research explicitly connecting social capital concepts and mentoring supports a more discriminating look at what types of relationships are most likely to assist an individual in achieving desired career outcomes. Emerging evidence suggests traditional mentoring and social networks do not contribute equally to the same outcomes. The finding that only instrumental network resources (and not expressive network resources) contribute to career attainment (Bozionelos, 2003) supports that an additional dimension to consider is what relationship types (i.e., content of ties) will yield the desired benefits with the least investment of time and effort. Furthermore, diverging findings in similar studies conducted in different countries (Bozionelos, 2003, 2006; Bozionelos & Wang, 2006) suggest that the national cultural context is a critical variable to consider when examining the relationships between mentoring and network resources with respect to intrinsic and extrinsic career outcomes.

These findings have several important implications for HRD professionals. First, they highlight that regardless of the type of relationships HRD professionals are seeking to support (e.g., traditional mentoring, alternative developmental networks), they should consider interventions (e.g., training, values statements) that equip those providing support with the knowledge and skills they need to provide the desired kind of support. Second, current research findings suggest that a long-term objective for HRD professionals would be to adjust their efforts to foster the development of traditional mentoring relationships, alternative developmental networks, or other network resources depending on the type of career-related outcomes that best meet the strategic objectives of their organizations. Unfortunately, to date, there are relatively few research findings on which HRD professionals can base such decisions. In the absence of additional information, an alternative would be for HRD professionals to encourage the development of a diversity of kinds of social ties in the workplace. Although research permitting the rigorous evaluation of causality is needed, the handful of studies proposing and evaluating alternative relationships between mentoring and social capital constructs suggest that enhancing social capital increases mentoring and mentoring facilitates the building of social capital. That is, mentoring and other kinds of social networks appear to be mutually supportive, rather than competitive. However, it seems probable that there are limits on how many social ties individuals should be encouraged to develop and maintain. Social capital scholars have pointed out that opportunity costs are one way of conceptualizing the

"dark side" of social ties and research on mentoring has hinted that having too many mentors may lead to burnout.

Informal and Formal Relationships

Much of the literature on mentoring and most, if not all, of the literature on social capital has focused on social ties that evolve naturally between individuals. However, the association of informal mentoring with favorable career outcomes has encouraged the creation of formal programs in which mentor–protégé relationships are created or fostered by organizations. Although initial research findings suggest that formal mentoring relationships have significant potential to achieve career outcomes analogous to those attained through informal mentoring (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000), several studies suggest these benefits are not routinely realized (Hezlett & Gibson, 2005; Wanberg at al., 2003). Many scholars have expressed doubt about whether mentors and protégés in formal relationships typically can become as close as those in informal relationships. Within the social capital literature, the firm message is that although social networks can be encouraged, they cannot be engineered or mandated as their efficacy is based on the establishment of trust, social links, and personal commitment (Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2003).

As noted in our review of constructs examined in the mentoring and social capital literatures, trust may be a key factor in establishing social ties. This concept perhaps can help bridge the divide between informal and formal mentoring. For example, Prusak and Cohen (2001) also concluded that managers can encourage building relationships among employees through three categories of practices: making connections, enabling trust, and fostering cooperation. They argued that making connections can be encouraged by making a commitment to retention, promoting from within, giving people time and space to bond in person, facilitating personal conversations, and fostering durable networks. Trust can be facilitated by promoting transparency and consistency in actions, displaying trust in others, and rewarding those who act trustworthy. Last, cooperation can be fostered by communicating a common sense of purpose, establishing work norms requiring cooperation, and hiring those who are team oriented. The HRD practitioner's engagement in these types of activities designed to foster connection, trust, and cooperation would facilitate the formation of informal mentoring relationships that, in turn, are likely to enhance, overall, the relationship building capacity of an organization.

Moreover, if formal mentoring programs are established, the social capital literature would support HRD practitioners employing many of these same strategies. For example, researchers on mentoring have suggested that formal mentoring can be facilitated by providing structured opportunities for mentors and protégés to meet (i.e., lunch brown bags) (Egan & Rosser, 2004) and that the initiation of mentoring relationships for faculty can be best facilitated by sponsoring forums or other gatherings where potential protégés and mentors can

meet each other to determine whether a connection has the potential to develop (Gibson, 2006). The social capital and mentoring literatures would, thus, support that facilitating trust and connection would likely contribute to the successful matching of two individuals in a mentoring relationship, whether that relationship is formal or informal. Similarly, both literatures highlight that social ties can become negative. Therefore, whether HRD professionals are interested in supporting informal social ties or establishing formal programs, they should provide processes to address and training to prevent negative workplace relationships.

Distinguishing Mentoring and Network Resources: Organizational Outcomes

Perhaps the most critical implication from a review of the connections between the mentoring and social capital literatures is the impact that a focus on relationship building can have on organizations and, correspondingly, the effect that organizational actions can have on the fostering of relationships. Traditionally, most of the mentoring literature, and much of the social capital literature, has emphasized individual outcomes, rather than organizational outcomes such as retention and productivity. As noted earlier, there is preliminary research indicating that traditional mentoring or network resources may be valued differently in terms of investment to achieve career goals. Discriminating between these constructs as it relates to organizational implications is absent in the small set of studies spanning the mentoring and social capital literatures. However, some insights can be gleaned by looking at the literatures separately.

As noted previously, several recent studies of mentoring have begun to address the gap in the literature on mentoring and organizational outcomes. Allen and O'Brien's (2006) recent research on mentoring and organizational attraction illustrates one potential distinct organizational benefit of traditional mentoring. It suggests that HRD practitioners may want to consider establishing formal mentoring programs as an attraction vehicle for "best fit" candidates in an organization that values learning, as the actual existence of a formal mentoring is likely to be more persuasive than descriptions of network resources. Similarly, research linking mentoring to reduced turnover indicates that traditional mentoring may be important in the achievement of organizational retention objectives. This research provides some initial guidance to the HRD professional in determining when the facilitation of traditional mentoring relationships as part of the broader social network would be most effective in achieving organizational goals (e.g., in facilitating attraction and retention goals); however, it is clear that more research is needed.

Some scholars of social capital have viewed social networks from the perspective of the community or organization. From this vantage point, the goal of studying networks is to understand the diffusion of attitudes or homophily. This approach enables HRD professionals to consider relationship management as

not just a tool for individual career development but also a means of influencing organizational culture. The development of social networks may foster similarity of understanding, which can be used as a conduit for communicating ideas or a common sense of values in an organization.

The negative consequences of an emphasis on social capital should also be considered in that social capital may be exclusionary, leading those who are not members of the integrated group or network to feel alienated from the work environments (Akdere, 2005). This would imply that HRD practitioners contemplating any initiative designed to foster either mentoring or other social network resources should consider issues of program accessibility and diversity of participation, lest these programs have this unintended consequence.

Moreover, a review of the literatures on social capital and mentoring indicates that cultures supportive of social capital would likely also support the organizational investment required (in terms of rewards and other resources such as training) to promote mentoring (Hegstad, 1999; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005). Therefore, it appears that the nature of the relationship between developmental relationships (including mentoring) and organizational culture may be reciprocal, with each supporting the other. The provision of mentoring and its perceived accessibility has been strongly supported as a means to promote a culture that has development as one of its primary precepts (Young & Perrewé, 2004). It has been proposed that mentoring may be more representative of a learning philosophy in organizations, whereas other network resources (as reflected by other developmental relationships) may support cultures that have more of a performance orientation (Gibson, 2005). HRD practitioners would be well advised to begin with an assessment of organizational cultural attributes before determining how to target their relationship-building efforts.

Regardless of whether the HRD professional's goal is to foster career development or organization development, social network tools (Hatala, 2006) could be employed by HRD practitioners to assess the potential utility of fostering traditional mentoring relationships versus other network resources. Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (2003) recommend a customized view of this role, noting that "HR can tap into this web of relationships, observe what's going on, encourage and nurture some, discourage others, and manage them all for the organization's benefit" (p. 55). Applying this systems approach to the broad array of social network relationships, including mentoring, would be consistent with a strategic approach to using relationships to develop human capital and support value creation in organizations (Ruona & Gibson, 2004).

Conclusion

Although to a large extent the literatures on social capital and mentoring have developed independently, scholars recently have begun to integrate concepts from the two bodies of research. Our review identified several distinct ways in which constructs from the social capital and mentoring literatures have been

combined. First, social capital constructs have been utilized to attempt to differentiate mentoring from other kinds of supportive, developmental relationships. Second, social capital and mentoring concepts have been utilized together to develop more comprehensive models of career development. Both models in which social capital constructs influence mentoring concepts and models in which mentoring concepts influence social capital constructs have been proposed. This integrative work has yielded interesting theories and generated valuable research findings. In addition to further tests of the proposed theories, we have recommended several areas for additional research. These include continued investigation of the outcomes of different kinds of developmental relationships (i.e., mentoring, expressive networks, and instrumental networks) in various national cultural contexts, further study of the role of race and other antecedent variables (e.g., gender, occupation) on mentoring and social capital, additional examination of access to mentoring, and more rigorous testing of directional hypotheses about the relationships among social capital and mentoring constructs.

In addition to summarizing previous integrative work in the areas of social capital and mentoring, this article analyzed four key constructs that have been considered in both literatures: outcomes, bad relationships, trust, and information exchange. A number of similarities and differences across the two bodies of research were identified. We noted that understanding of the outcomes of mentoring could be enhanced by increasing research on organizational-level outcomes, such as those examined in the social capital literature and by conducting studies that apply additional structural concepts from the social capital literature (e.g., network centrality, structural holes) to mentoring. Based on our examination of how bad relationships have been defined and studied in the mentoring and social capital literatures, we suggested that an important issue to investigate is the opportunity cost of maintaining mentoring relationships. Our review of the research on trust and information exchange identified several ways the more extensive development of these ideas in the social capital literature could be useful in informing research on mentoring.

Finally, the implications of the joint consideration of mentoring and social capital for practice were discussed. Recognizing the intensity of traditional mentoring relationships, a key consideration in exploring practice implications focused on the social capital concept of *investment*. The opportunity costs of developing a mentoring relationship are important to consider when evaluating when and where mentoring would be most effectively utilized. At times, other social network resources may be a better investment. Preliminary findings indicate that the fostering of mentoring relationships, as part of a broader social network, may be most indicated to facilitate intrinsic career outcomes or learning. In addition, when facilitating formal mentoring programs, HRD practitioners can take advantage of the strategies of building trust and connection that are integral to the development of social network and informal mentoring relationships.

Finally, emerging research suggests that HRD professionals may want to consider mentoring as a key strategy in their toolkit when working toward the achievement of organizational attraction and retention goals, especially in an organization that has learning as one of its foundational attributes.

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