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Youth-Adult Relationships as Assets for Youth:

Promoting Positive Development in Stressful Times

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Authors' contributions

S. F. Hamilton organized the symposium at which the studies reported in this chapter were presented and was the principal author of the chapter. M. A. Hamilton collaborated in shaping and editing the chapter. D. L. DuBois, M. L. Martínez, and P. Cumsille also contributed to improving the entire chapter. The other co-authors are listed alphabetically.

Youth-Adult Relationships as Assets for Youth:

Promoting Positive Development in Stressful Times

In this chapter we examine relationships between youth and adults outside their families as sources of strength that can help young people thrive even in the face of stressful economic and social change. Such relationships are counted among the assets that promote positive youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Our treatment of the topic will emphasize the needs of low-income and otherwise marginalized youth. While acknowledging the primacy of family relationships for nearly all youth, we focus primarily on relationships with adults who are not family members, addressing the value of these relationships, what forms they take, which adults are most likely to be involved, and finally how such relationships can be fostered so that more of the youth who need them have access to, and benefit from, them.

The metaphor, social capital, is useful for our purpose. In a seminal article, Coleman (1988) wrote about "social capital in the creation of human capital," calling attention to the link between people's capacity to earn a living and the nature of their social networks. Lin (2001, p. 29) defined social capital as, "resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions." In simpler language, social capital inheres in a person's ability to achieve her or his goals with the aid of people she or he knows. A person whose family, friends, neighbors, and other acquaintances can be called upon to help out has more social capital than one who is either more isolated – having a sparser social network – or whose acquaintances are less able to help.

A classic example is finding a job through "contacts," acquaintances who know about openings and perhaps can offer a recommendation. Three refinements of social capital theory are especially useful in the present context. The first is from Granovetter (1983), whose phrase, "the

strength of weak ties," captures his discovery that the best sources for job prospects are people the job-seeker knows only slightly, such as a friend of a friend. The reason is that people with whom a person is closely associated tend to have the same sources of information and access. As a result, they add little to the job-seeker's search. People on the periphery of the job-seeker's network are most likely to know about new prospects and to be acquainted with people the job-seeker does not know. Hence it is through "weak ties" that a job search is most likely to succeed. More generally, this example illustrates how expanding one's network beyond close acquaintances can provide access to new resources that can prove important in achieving a goal.

The strong vs. weak tie distinction is related to a second refinement, the distinction Putnam (2000) made between "bonding" and "bridging" social capital. Bonding social capital exists among people who share many characteristics. Families, for example, share a common culture, traditions, language, often religion and political preferences as well. Neighbors, members of religious congregations and voluntary associations are also high in bonding social capital, which gives them a sense of identity with the group, of belonging, of being part of something larger than themselves. Bridging social capital, as the metaphor suggests, reaches across these kinds of group boundaries, making connections between people who belong to different groups. These connections enable people to encounter others who are different and to make connections and be stimulated in ways that may not happen within their more closely bonded communities. A low-income youth of color who attends an elite university not only gains a good education but builds bridging social capital as well.

The third refinement to social capital theory, related to bridging social capital, is the designation of some social network members as "institutional agents" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2011), that is, as representatives of important social institutions who by virtue of their position

and knowledge are able to aid outsiders, young people among them, in gaining entrée to those institutions and access to their resources.[1] College admissions officers are exemplars of institutional agents, as are people with authority to make or influence hiring decisions.

This conceptual orientation strongly suggests that family connections (i.e., bonding) are necessary but not sufficient as sources of social capital for youth from families and communities with limited resources. The job recommendation from such a family member might help a youth find a position in a beauty parlor or a corner grocery store but not a business office or large factory. That person might accurately urge the youth to study hard to get into college but have no knowledge of financial aid or of the difference between enrolling in a nearby college that is a local institution and another whose alumnae/i move on to top graduate and professional schools.

The studies cited and reported in this chapter further elaborate evidence of the social class-based differentiation of young people's opportunities to form relationships with adults. Young people from low-income families whose parents have little education need assistance in building bridging social capital, in the form of relationships with people who have more resources, to aid their acquisition of greater human capital. A second topic is the contribution of youth organizations and schools to young people's opportunities to form development-enhancing relationships with adults. While these relationships arise in the course of youth program activities as a kind of second-order effect (Hirsch, Deutsch, & DuBois, 2011), growing appreciation of the importance of young people's relationships with adults outside their families has contributed to a movement to make mentors available to vulnerable youth (Rhodes, 2002), not only in the US, but in other countries as well. Data from a study of the Irish version of Big Brothers Big Sisters illuminates the different kinds of support mentors can provide. However, there are never enough

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[1] This construct is related to "linking social capital," which is used in public health. See, for example, Szreter & Wookcock, 2004.

volunteers and program staff to meet the needs of youth who could benefit from a mentor (Stukas, Clary, & Snyder, 2014). Moreover, most mentoring-type relationships occur naturally or informally, outside of mentoring programs. Hence, it is useful to examine how mentoring occurs naturally, both to deepen our understanding of who mentors are and what they do and to gain leverage to foster such relationships intentionally, among other ways by designing programs in which mentoring occurs without formal one-to-one matching of youth with mentors.

The four studies reported in this chapter, from Brazil, Chile, Ireland, and the United States of America, will be described serially. Themes tying the studies together will be identified as well and discussed in the conclusion section.

The Importance of Social Class: Differences in Brazilian Youths' Perceived Autonomy

In times of economic distress, those who are already in distress inevitably suffer the most. A dramatic illustration of this fact of life is found in a study of "informal mentors" in US high schools by Erickson, McDonald, and Elder (2009). Drawing on the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, the investigators found that students from families with lower parent education and family income who nonetheless had someone at school they could talk to – a teacher mentor – were nearly twice as likely to enroll in college as comparable students without such an adult relationship (65% compared to 35%) and nearly as like to enroll as students whose parents had more education and more money but no teacher mentor (67%). Those students with more family resources, mainly income and parental education, were also more likely to enroll in college when they had a teacher mentor as well were also more like to enroll in college (75%) but the difference was not nearly so great. This study, employing a representative sample of the US student population and controls for other likely influences on the dependent variable such as

grades and test scores, indicates that youth whose families have the least resources benefit the most from relationships with adults outside the family.

Susana Núñez Rodriguez studied autonomy and relatedness in Brazilian youth. At the time of their study Brazil was experiencing strong economic growth combined with modest declines in income inequality and dramatically rising secondary school completion rates. Autonomy, competence and relatedness are the three basic psychological needs identified in Self-Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). According to this theory, human behavior is driven by the quest for their fulfillment. The need for autonomy refers to the individual's will and desire to organize experiences and carry out activities coherently within an integrated sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to Chirkov (2007), individuals may choose experiences that allow them to fulfill their need for autonomy within a collectivist environment as well as an individualistic one. The need for relatedness is met when a person has satisfying relations with friends and family, feels accepted by and is accepting of others for who they truly are, and is able to establish and maintain close and committed intimate relationships (Kasser, Cohn, Kanner, & Ryan, 2007).

Brazilian Study Design

Núñez's study included 970 participants, ages 18-30 years (M=22.8; SD=3.4) recruited from universities and schools in different regions of the country. In addition to a socio-demographic questionnaire, participants filled out, on-line or on paper, a Portuguese version of the Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS, Gagné, 2003) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (*SWLS*, Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed on the BPNS results. Multidimensional scaling was used to test for differences in autonomy related to participants' SES. Being predominately university and graduate students (90%), most participants were classified as coming from middle (54%) or high (32%) income families.

Brazilian Study Findings

Two findings are of particular interest for this chapter. One is that social class conditioned the association between relatedness and autonomy. For participants classified as lower SES a stronger association was evident between autonomy and relatedness than those classified as higher SES. There was a statistically significant difference in need for autonomy according to SES ($H(3, 970) = 10.274$, $p = .001$), with high SES showing an average level of 516.58 and lower SES showing an average of 416.25. The investigators linked this finding to other research in Brazil indicating differences in the appraisal of autonomy and its association with SES (Vieira et al., 2010; Seidl-de-Moura, 2008; Barbos & Wagner, 2013). These results suggest that, at least for lower-class Brazilian youth, autonomy is not necessarily a matter of gaining independence by leaving behind close ties but is a need that also can be fulfilled on the foundation of relationships.

The second finding is that the three-factor solution to the model of basic psychological needs that has been validated in the US and several other countries did not fit the Brazilian data, another indication of cultural differences in the meaning of autonomy to Brazilian youth. Rather than forming three distinct factors representing autonomy, relatedness, and competence, the responses of the Brazilian sample loaded on two factors that were best understood as representing competence and relatedness (see Table 1). While some items from the autonomy sub-scale could be joined with one of the other sub-scales, the most satisfactory solution dropped autonomy completely, in recognition that the BPNS did not adequately capture the meaning of autonomy for Brazilian youth. The resulting two-factor version demonstrated good internal consistency (alphas of .76 and .73 for relatedness and competence, respectively) and the subscales correlated well (.45, .54, ps<.01) with the Satisfaction with Life Scale, demonstrating evidence of construct validity.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Brazilian Study Implications

The findings of this study suggest that relatedness and autonomy, even if they are fundamental human needs, along with competence, have different meanings depending on young

people's social class and on their cultural background. Perceptions of relatedness and competence were differentiated among Brazilian youth, as captured in the factorial model. However, the items did not capture the perception of autonomy for Brazilian youth from different social class backgrounds, as they did in other countries, despite a very careful translation process. Is Brazil, especially among lower SES youth, the sense of self is associated with their relationships with others (e.g: family) and associations with their environment (e.g.: school). In addition to pursuing the measurement issues raised by these findings, it would be intriguing to explore the behavioral implications, especially to learn what relatedness and autonomy mean for lower-class Brazilian youth and how both can be enhanced. (See also comparable findings from Chile by Martínez, Pérez, & Cumsille, 2014.)

Contexts for Adult Relationships: Youth Organizations in Chile

Participation in youth organizations can cultivate values (e.g., tolerance, social responsibility; Flanagan & Faison, 2001) and promote skills (Kirshner, 2006) that advance youth civic development when they provide opportunities for interaction and learning that match youths' developmental needs, abilities, and interests (Zeldin, 2004). Young people are most likely to benefit when organizations foster their active participation and when the quality of relationships that adults establish with young participants is high. Adult partners in youth programs and organizations can promote positive outcomes by encouraging participation, by mentoring (Rhodes et al., 2005), by employing good teaching skills, and by linking youth with community resources and leaders (Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Zeldin, Petrokubi, & MacNeil, 2008). The benefits of participation in youth organizations can be expected to occur when youth hold meaningful roles, have opportunities for collaboration in decision-making (Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Zeldin et al, 2003), and share power with adults (Watts, Williams & Jaegers, 2003). One such benefit that is especially important because it has implications for a healthy civil

society is a growing sense of sociopolitical control, which includes leadership competence and political efficacy (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991).

Chilean Study Design

M. Loreto Martínez and Patricio Cumsille examined Chilean youth organizations as contexts for youth-adult relationships, focusing specifically on how those relationships build a sense of sociopolitical control. In addition to calling attention to the importance of the quality of youth-adult relationships and the distinctive characteristics of youth organizations in their country, they explored the function of identity as a mediator.

Growing up in a country that is still recovering its democratic institutions, Chilean youth are skeptical about government and the efficacy of participation in politics. Only 34% of 18-29 year-olds [INJUV, 2012] endorsed compliance with government as essential for democracy and 40% reported that they did not think it was possible to influence political matters. On the other hand, half were favorable toward participation in civil society and 45% said they participated in social organizations; 61% said social networks are more effective channels for expressing demands than voting (INJUV, 2012).

Participants in Martínez and Cumsille's study were recruited through youth organizations, assuring a higher than average level of membership. The sample included 370 older adolescents and young adults (M=21.18, SD=2.37, range =17-26 years; 50.9% males), from Santiago and the Maule region. Most were students (89.7%). The majority came from middle-SES families (56%), indexed by parental education; low- and high-SES were equally represented among the remainder (i.e., about 22% each). Participants filled out a questionnaire on their perceptions of their *relationships with adults* in the organizations in which they were involved, including *caring/support* (6 items, α=.89), *opportunities for reflection/processing* (4 items,

11

α=.81), and for *active participation in decision-making* within the organization (8 items, α=.87). Identity measures included questions about *future orientation goals* (6 items, α=.82) and *sense of personal coherence* (3 items, α=.80). Finally, two indicators of sense of sociopolitical control were included as dependent variables, namely *leadership* (5 items, α=.76) and *political efficacy* (4 items, α=.76).

Chilean Study Results

These measures allowed for a test of a hypothesized model proposing that youth gain sociopolitical control when adults provide emotional support, opportunities for reflecting on experience, and opportunities to have a voice and role and when those characteristics of youth adult-relationships positively relate to youth identity. As Figure 1 shows, all measured indicators loaded high on their corresponding latent variables, thus providing evidence of the measurement properties of the model. Overall, the hypothesized model had an excellent fit to the data [χ^2 (11, n=370) = 11.11, *p*=.43, CFI=1, TLI=1, RMSEA =.005]. As hypothesized, the quality of youth-adult relationships within organizations had a positive association with identity (β=.36, *p* <.001), which in turn had a positive association with sense of sociopolitical control (β=.57, *p* <.001). More important, the hypothesized mediational role of identity was supported by the data (.20, *p* = <.001, 95% CI [.13:31]). Unlike the bivariate association between relational context and sociopolitical control, the regression coefficient linking relational context to sociopolitical control, in while controlling for the effect of identity, was significant. However, the association was, unexpectedly, negative (β=-0.18, p<.01), suggesting that identity acts as a suppressor in the relation between relational context and sociopolitical control.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Chilean Study Implications

This study offers support for the idea that the interpersonal context provided by supportive and caring adults in youth organizations allows adolescents and young adults to explore and consolidate their identity (Eccles, 2005; Kirshner, 2009; Larson, 2006; Larson & Angus, 2011). In turn, identity consolidation is reflected in youths' beliefs about their capacity to exert influence on sociopolitical issues. The findings also suggest that the quality of the relationships that youth establish with adults are relevant to identity across a range of organizational contexts. However, the unexpected negative direct association between relational context and sociopolitical control, after accounting for contributions of identity, suggests that whatever positive effects the relational context has on sociopolitical control goes through identity and, further, that the remaining variability in sociopolitical control that is not associated with identity is negatively associated to relational context. This latter possible process remains obscure, requiring further research. Perhaps when the relational context does not promote an autonomous self (identity) it is not conducive to an enhanced sense of sociopolitical efficacy, but may be useful in other ways, such as for mental health or personal well-being. Both replication and triangulation using observational methods would help illuminate this issue. However, the capacity of youth organizations to give youth access to close relationships with adults who matter to them is clearly supported.

Forms of Support Adults Give to Youth: Findings from an Irish Mentoring Program

The creation of mentoring programs is the most direct response to the perception that youth benefit from close, caring, and enduring relationships with adults who are not family members. Resilience (Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1982) is one of multiple strands of theory and research that has contributed to the rationale for and design of mentoring programs. Previous research has revealed much about how youth mentoring programs work, including the contexts

in which they are most likely to be successful, and their limitations. (see DuBois & Karcher, 2014, for a comprehensive treatment of mentoring programs.) Positive outcomes have been demonstrated in an array of areas, including emotional well-being, educational achievement, risky behavior, and relationships with parents and peers (Blinn-Pike 2007; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn,& Valentine, 2011; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995). Qualitative studies have explored some of the processes underpinning mentoring relationships. For example, studies by Spencer illustrated relational processes of authenticity, empathy, collaboration and companionship in mentoring relationships (Spencer 2006), reasons behind the termination of relationships (Spencer et al., 2014), and ways families are involved in mentoring programs (Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014).

One of the primary purposes of mentoring programs is to strengthen the social support that young people receive (Barrera & Bonds, 2005). We know that the presence of at least one caring adult in a young person's life can help reduce stress and improve mental well-being (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012). However, the mentoring literature provides little guidance on the nature of the support provided by adults in youth mentoring relationships. By drawing on an in-depth study of nine successful mentoring pairs in the Irish Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) program, Bernadine Brady and Patrick Dolan sought to identify distinctive types of support and highlight perceived improvements in the young person's welfare, particularly in terms of their emotional and behavioral well-being, that may have occurred as a result of this support.

Irish Study Design

The qualitative data reported here were collected as part of a larger mixed methods investigation that include a longitudinal quantitative study using a randomized controlled design (n=164) (see Dolan Brady, O'Regan, Russell, Canavan, & Forkan, 2011a & b). At the time of

recruitment to the qualitative strand, approximately 50 young people had been matched with mentors as part of the longitudinal quantitative strand of the study. BBBS project staff asked these participants (young people and parents) if they would also be willing to participate in a series of interviews with the research team. Twenty-one youth-parent pairs agreed and a purposive sample of 10 was selected to represent a balance across age, gender, location, family situation and reason for referral. Two interviews were conducted with the mentor and youth as well as with the parent and caseworker on two occasions – at the early stages of the relationship and approximately six months later. One youth declined to participate after the first interview, leaving a sample of nine. At both the first and second round five interviews could not be conducted (yielding 35 interviews in round one and 31 in round two).

After reading interview notes and transcripts several times to get a sense of the development of each match. To note whether and how outcomes were reported in each case, the researcher identified themes and coded the data according to them, using NVivo software. Initial themes were then grouped into higher order categories. After coding all interviews, the researcher re-read transcripts and interview notes in full and made some revisions to the codes. Having four perspectives (mentee, mentor, parent and caseworker) on each mentoring relationship enabled triangulation among different viewpoints regarding outcomes and processes.

Five male and four female mentees took part in the study. Their average age at the time of referral was 12 years. Only three of the youth lived with both parents at the time of the study intake. All the young people were Irish and all lived in rural areas or towns in the West of Ireland. The young people were dealing with a range of family and personal issues, including break-up of their parents' relationship, bereavement, incarceration of family members, behavioral problems, and low literacy. The average age of the mentor was 33 years on

recruitment to the program; most mentors were single and had some higher education. Mentors and youth were matched by gender.

Irish Study Findings

Previous studies of social support in interpersonal relationships (Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Wills, 1991) have identified five types of social support: concrete (also called tangible, instrumental, or practical), companionship, emotional, esteem, and advice. These categories served well to group the kinds of support described in the interviews.

Concrete support is defined as the provision of practical acts of assistance (Cutrona 2000; Dolan & Brady 2011), whereas *companionship support* is defined as giving people a sense of social belonging (Wills 1991). It enhances the pleasure of everyday life and contributes to emotional well-being (Spencer, 2006; Rook & Underwood, 2000). In mentoring relationships these two types of support are often intertwined. Many parents commented that their child "did not get out much," mostly because they as parents did not have time, money or resources to make that possible and, in some cases, because the young person was shy and unwilling to engage in social events with peers. One of the most obvious forms of support offered by mentors was the companionship support of taking the young person out of the house to do something different for a few hours every week. The weekly activities involved companionship, including one-to-one activities such as going to cafes, cinema, cooking, but also group events such as sports or youth clubs.[2] Parents and mentors who described this type of support also tied it to desirable outcomes, including increased confidence and new relationships with others in the community.

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[2] Unlike in the USA, the Irish BBBS programme is integrated into a 'parent' youth service, which gives mentors and mentees access to groups and facilities if desired.

This concrete and companionship support was evident at initial interviews. Based on the analysis of interview data, it can be argued that this form of support can be provided before a close bond has been formed, helping to create a context and structure from which a friendship and discovery of shared interests can emerge, and from which emotional, esteem and advice support can more readily be offered and accepted (see Keller, 2005, for a related discussion of the interplay of more relational and instrumental forms of activity, including the potential for instrumental activities to serve as important contexts for relationship development in a reciprocal manner).

Cobb (1976) defined *emotional support* as actions that lead a person to believe he or she is cared for. Emotional support took many forms in the mentoring relationships studied, including the mentor listening to and empathizing with the young person and acting as a "sounding board," listening to accounts of daily events and challenges. Theoretically, emotional support can and should be provided in different ways to match the needs and coping styles of the youth. Illustrations in line with this idea were found in the interviews, for example, of girls who appreciated having someone to talk to about the stresses they were feeling. In comparison, emotional support for boys the mentors' emotional support was often less direct. One boy, for example, did not confide to his mentor for several months that his parents had broken up, yet seemed to gain emotional strength from the consistency of his relationship with the mentor.

> Myself and his father broke up in the last year, so there has been an awful lot of changes for Brendan. But I just think that Alan gives him that stability whereas I didn't, and his father didn't, you know? He still has a continuum with Alan; Alan was still here on the dot every week, once a week, sometimes twice a week. So it's certainly helped … He's had consistency as far as Brendan goes. (parent)

Esteem support results from one person expressing love and concern for another (Cutrona, 2000). Youth inferred their mentors' concern for them from the time they spent with them, while mentors' encouragement and praise for their mentees added to this feeling. There were also examples in the research of a mentee showing a mentor how to play or improve their skills in particular activities (such as music, swimming or handball) and enjoying the positive feedback or esteem of the mentor for doing so.

Advice support is the fourth type identified. Mentors offered information and guidance. The feedback from research participants is that the ability to offer advice was something that came more easily when the relationship was better established, and where advice could be given in the course of a normal conversation, rather than more didactically. For example, one mentor, Liam, described how his mentee, Dylan, asked his advice regarding school and education.

> With regard to school I suppose he has not been asking me advice but we have kind of ended up talking about school and what he was going to do ... so yes, I suppose he would have asked me advice on that or I'd have given my advice, I'm not sure which. (Liam, mentor)

Irish Study Implications

Inferences about the effects of these types of social support are all based on the testimony of those interviewed, not on formal measures. Yet that testimony tended to converge around some of the same changes in emotional well-being and behavior control. Mentees were described as happier and calmer, more involved with other people, and more confident. Among their conclusions, the researchers found that their data and interpretation support the findings of other studies that if they are to flourish, mentoring relationships need frequent, consistent, and enduring meetings – and space – openness and responsiveness to the needs of the youth.

Functional Roles of Natural Mentors in the US

Mentoring programs exist because, as Erickson et al. (2009) reported, those who most need mentors are least likely to have them. Most adult mentors of youth are not part of mentoring programs, and those programs face a chronic shortage of appropriate volunteers (MENTOR, 2005). Another concern is that mentoring programs can have iatrogenic effects (i.e., harm resulting from treatment). A young person whose assigned mentor does not work out for some reason can suffer from that failure, looking worse than a control group participant who never had a match (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). The magnitude of the estimated effect found by Erickson et al. of having a natural mentor is noteworthy. The near doubling of college enrollment among low-resource students with a school-related natural mentor is far greater than effect sizes reported from mentoring program evaluations (DuBois et al., 2011). Although they applied multiple controls, Erickson and his colleagues reported a correlational finding, meaning that other factors may be at play. Stll, their findings are certainly notable enough to warrant further research.

Natural mentors are nonparental adults who act as mentors without being assigned to do so through a program designed for that purpose (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Behrendt, 2005). Young people find natural mentors in schools (Greenberger, Chen & Beam, 1998), workplaces (2005; Mortimer, 2003), youth development organizations (Hirsch, DuBois, & Deutsch, 2011), other organizations, and in their communities. In addition to looking at natural mentors, this study asked youth about more than the provision of social support by mentors. While Brady and Dolan's focus on social support is prominent and appropriate in studies of mentoring, especially for younger youth, developmental theory and research tell us that older youth also need a goal orientation (Clausen, 1993; Schneider &

Stevenson, 1999). Karcher and Nakkula (2010; see also Nakkula & Harris, 2014) helpfully treat the goal orientation (or instrumental) and socio-emotional emphases of mentoring relationships as compatible.

US Study Design

These considerations motivated Mary Agnes Hamilton, Stephen Hamilton, David DuBois, and Deborah Sellers to investigate natural (or informal) mentors. The study employed the concept of functional roles (Darling, S. F. Hamilton, Toyokawa, & Matsuda, 2002; S. F. Hamilton & Darling, 1989/1996), which adds depth and detail to the broad distinction between socio-emotional and instrumental mentoring. The research drew both on the research just cited, which was done with middle school students and with college students and on retrospective interviews with two groups of young adults from low-income and minority communities on promising paths (M. A. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2012). Interview respondents talked about adults who taught them useful lessons and supported or encouraged them, who inspired and challenged them, who linked them with other people and resources, and who helped them acquire a sense of direction or purpose. We designated these functional roles: *Teacher, Supporter, Role Model, Challenger, Connector, and Compass*.

The study was conducted in two small Southern California high schools that are part of a charter school organization. Students are accepted by lottery, to represent the income and ethnicity/racial diversity of their district. The mean age of students in both schools was 15.7 years ($SD = 1.2$). Young women were slightly over-represented in each school. A majority (70%) of Site 1 students self-identified as Hispanic/Latino-a, whereas this was true of 38% of students at Site 2. These percentages are close to the overall percent Hispanic/Latino-a reported by each school. The response rate at Site 1 was 59% ($n = 355$ of 598); at Site 2 it was 54% ($n = 313$ of

583).

Following basic demographic questions, the survey asked students to identify their primary caregivers (i.e., parents or up to two other adults who were most responsible for raising them), then up to one additional important relative, and, finally, up to three important adults outside their family. For each of these adults, youth were asked to respond to the same set of 21 functional role items on a 5-point response scale: Not at all, A little, Some, Quite a bit, A lot. Students accessed the web-based survey on a computer, tablet, or smart phone. Exploratory factor analysis was used to investigate the factor structure of the items as rated for students' relationships with important nonfamilial adults. If a youth reported more than one such adult, ratings from the first (most important) adult were used. Additional analyses examined whether a similar factor structure was evident in ratings of students' experiences in their relationships with their parent/guardians and other important related adults (see M. A. Hamilton, Hamilton, DuBois, & Sellers, in press).

US Study Findings

Surprisingly, only 22% of the students who took the survey ($n = 148$) reported having an important non-related adult in their lives; of those who did, 44% ($n = 66$) identified just one such adult, 34% ($n = 50$) identified two, and 22% ($n = 32$) identified three. Students reported that they knew most of these adults (66%) in their school, either as teachers or in another role such as an advisor, administrator, or coach; 18% of the adults were reported to be known through involvement in other organizations (e.g., faith-based, sports, arts); the remaining 16% were described as having informal social roles in the youth's life such as an older friend, neighbor, or family friend.

Factor analyses of the functional role items for important non-related adults were conducted using an iterative process. The final solution was based on 14 of the 21 items and included 4 factors that accounted for 72.1% of the variance in the items. This factor solution is shown in Table 2.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Three of the factors consisted entirely of items intended for the *Supporter*, *Challenger*, and *Connector* roles, respectively, whereas the remaining factor included a mix of items intended for either the *Model* or *Compass* roles (the items intended for each functional role are indicated in Table 2). Scales based on the items that loaded most strongly on each of the factors demonstrated satisfactory internal reliability (coefficient alphas ranging from .77 to .87).

US Study Implications

This research sought to empirically differentiate the functions of mentors for youth with a higher level of detail and theoretical grounding than has been typical of prior work. Initial findings are consistent with the value of a functional roles framework for understanding natural mentoring among youth and, as such, could ultimately prove useful in the design and evaluation of initiatives to foster youth access to mentoring as one strategy to reduce inequalities (Putnam, 2015).

The survey measure that resulted from this research clearly should be regarded as preliminary and in need of further investigation, which should include examining support for the salience of the associated functional roles within larger and more demographically-diverse samples of youth. Also meriting study are the associations of functional roles of familial and non-familial important adults as assessed on the instrument with expected influences on youth access to mentoring (e.g., neighborhood resources, school environment) as well as anticipated

outcomes of mentoring (e.g., academic achievement, health, delinquent activity). Such research would serve the dual purposes of clarifying issues of construct validity and advancing theory (Smith, 2005).

These needs for further research notwithstanding, the four functional roles identified offer promising characterizations of the ways in which youth see their mentors. Combining the Compass and Model roles makes some sense insofar as youth may tend to look to mentors they want to emulate as sources for values. Distinguishing among mentors' functional roles opens the door to more refined studies in which the independent variable is not simply the presence of a mentor but the profile of mentoring functions a youth is receiving. It also makes possible examination of different functions that might be performed by multiple mentors for one youth, simultaneously or sequentially, thus informing a social network perspective on mentoring that to date is largely lacking in the literature (Keller & Blakeslee, 2014).

A concern raised by this study is that only a minority of survey respondents reported an important unrelated adult: 21% of those at Site 1, 23% at Site 2. This aspect of our findings was discordant with previous research (e.g., Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). In an effort to better understand what might have happened, we conducted brief focus groups and interviews with students in both schools. Seven focus groups were conducted with a total of 77 students and individual interviews were conducted with 27 additional students, 5 of whom had not taken the survey. These were convenience samples; they included approximately equal numbers of male and female students from all racial and ethnic groups. In stark contrast to the survey, nearly every student we asked face-to-face told us about at least one important non-family adult in his or her life. Only two of the students interviewed said they could not identify such an adult.

Although average completion time for the survey was only 12 minutes, our conversations with students revealed that several of them found the survey too long and too repetitive. They simply stopped responding before getting to the questions about non-family adults. We believe improving the survey design and recruitment would increase participation. We had both higher response rates and far more reports of important adults outside the family on a simpler paper-and-pencil survey in a pre-test. In the focus groups students told us they would have been more likely to complete the survey if they had been asked to do it in class-time. Some suggested using Instagram or Facebook, technology more appealing than web surveys. Students also told us that talking face-to-face and hearing our explanation of why we were asking the questions and what we planned to do with the data made them more interested in participating. They also said incentives for participation were appealing. Finally, several students strongly endorsed the idea of engaging students in designing and conducting a survey.

Implications and Conclusions from the Four Studies

The four studies presented in this chapter from three continents all sound variations on the them of young people's relationships with adults outside their families as resources in times of stressful economic and social change. The importance of those relationships is well-grounded in the research literature; these studies illuminate some of the intricacies inherent in them.

By showing that relatedness and autonomy are positively associated among low-SES Brazilian youth and that the factor structure of the widely used Basic Psychological Needs Scale works best without autonomy for their Brazilian sample (with only relatedness and competence), Nuñéz's work reminds us that neither relationships nor their impact should be expected to be uniform across social classes and cultures. This poses a warning to researchers planning to measure these constructs that instruments developed in one culture may not be valid in another

and to policy makers and practitioners that mentoring and other interventions designed to meet young people's basic psychological needs are not necessarily transferable. What works for some youth in some contexts may well not work for others.

Martínez and Cumsille's study of Chilean youth is encouraging. Despite considerable skepticism among youth about conventional political engagement, Chilean youth organizations offer a space for participation, leadership, and the development and enactment of caring and supportive relationships with adults, decision making, leadership, political efficacy, and opportunities for reflection, all desirable and productive. Unexpectedly, the predicted association of the quality of youths' relationships with adults in these settings with sociopolitical control proved to be negative, raising questions to be answered in the future. But two conclusions seem warranted. One is that youth organizations can provide many constructive experiences for young people, including the chance to build relationships with adults outside the family. The other is that simply being there is not enough. Quality counts. The programs and the relationships have to be good. The adults need to be skilled. Most of all they need to be willing and able to share power with young people, to give them real responsibility, making them part of the decision-making process. Adults must create partnerships with youth (Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005) and make multiple careful judgments in the moment about what young people can manage, when to push and when to stand back (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005).

Brady and Dolan help to open up the nature of high-quality youth-adult relationships, differentiating the core concept of social support into five types: concrete, companionship, emotional, esteem, and advice. This typology helps to explicate what a high-quality relationship looks like between an adult mentor and a young person, especially one whose family has limited capacity. The observation that a mentor can provide concrete and companionship support

without a close and strong relationship but that such support can become a platform for the more personal types of support (emotional and esteem) offers a suggestion about the possible developmental trajectory of a close and enduring mentoring relationship that should be useful to mentors and those who work with them.

M. A. Hamilton, Hamilton, DuBois and Sellers offer a related but somewhat different typology in which support(er) is an important function of mentoring but is joined by three more functions: challenger, connector, and model/compass, all having a more instrumental or goal-directed orientation, possibly because they studied older youth. When mentoring programs, youth organizations, schools, and communities are all considered potential sources of adult relationships for youth, the opportunities appear broader. These findings also point to different facets of mentoring relationships, both natural and program-supported, that merit further examination both in terms of processes involved and developmental outcomes to examine. We need to learn more about the nature of support exchanges and roles in mentoring, the quality of youth-adult relationships in youth programs and their association with different developmental outcomes. The Brazilian study reminds us that the influences of culture and social class should be examined in relation to all of these issues.

Social Inventions to Increase Access to Natural Mentors

If we accept the premise of this chapter that such relationships are beneficial and that they are especially important for youth facing stressful times with few resources, then the question becomes how to create more opportunities for those youth. Mentoring programs have demonstrated their value in giving youth greater access to adults. While advocating their greater use we also propose the modification of existing organizations and institutions creating social inventions (M. A. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2015) to enhance natural mentoring without necessarily

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matching mentors and mentees one-to-one. Some illustrations follow, drawn from or suggested by the reports above.

Advisory groups. The small high schools studied by M. A. Hamilton et al. are examples of what Freedman (1993) called "mentor-rich environments," places where mentoring is likely to happen without formal intervention. One social invention (Whyte, 1982) in those schools, but not unique to them, is the advisory group, in which a stable cross-age set of students meets regularly with a teacher or staff member to do things together and talk about issues of mutual interest. This group is an example of the kind of invention that is needed to take full advantage of making any school experientially smaller for students even if the school's total size remains large.

Civic engagement projects. Martínez and Cumsille's study of Chilean youth organizations demonstrates that political attitudes and the skills needed for community involvement are formed not only in explicitly political contexts but also in civil society more broadly where participation in decision making as well as experiences in leadership and planning can build a sense of competence and commitment that carries over from youth organizations (and school) to political and non-political organizations in the larger community and nation. As they and others pointed out, adults need to make it possible for youth to take real responsibilities, wield genuine power, and have a chance to think and talk or reflect on their experiences. Service-learning is an especially powerful form of civic engagement for youth in which action to improve the community is central, but opportunities for youth learning are equally important. The convergence between mentoring and service-learning is illustrated by the Irish Big Brothers Big Sisters program's sponsorship of citizenship projects by participants (http://www.foroige.ie/citizenship/inspiration-your-citizenship-project).

Jobs and internships. Work and work-like experiences can be used for career exploration, job training, or more general education. They give young people paid or unpaid work-based learning experiences in which they can engage with adults in goal-directed activity. As with civic engagement projects done in partnership with adults, these experiences are conducive to the formation of close relationships (S. F. Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). Despite the fact that many youth jobs offer only limited contact with adults, a surprising number of young workers report that their adult supervisors are important people in their lives (Mortimer, 2003). We can hypothesize that the process of joint engagement in instrumentally meaningful activities can foster close ties, or, in functional role terms, that instrumental roles may evolve into more personal, emotional roles. This would appear to be a complementary trajectory to concrete and companionship support serving as a foundation for deeper and more personal mentoring relationships observed in the Irish study.

Community activation. When citizens and leaders, including youth, come together and agree that it is important for youth to be incorporated into the life of their community, they can find many ways to change organizations, in addition to creating new programs, for this purpose.[3] Consider, for example, taking greater advantage of the cross-age membership of faith-based organizations. Although families may participate in some services, other activities are age-graded when young people might be intentionally integrated with adults as a way of sharing the responsibilities of nurturing children beyond the immediate family and enabling the youth to get to know a wider range of caring adults. This kind of change, like adding youth members to local government committees, takes a consensus within the community or organization that youth belong in such places, that they should have a voice, and that adults who are not their parents and

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[3] The Search Institute has methods and capacity to help communities coalesce around youth development goals.

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teachers bear some responsibility for promoting their development. In view of the sad reality that some adults are capable of doing harm to young people, that consensus should extend to the creation of new norms, expectations, and procedures around youth-adult relationships. Youth can learn how to invite adults to become their mentors and then how to make the most of the opportunity. Adults can be encouraged to welcome such invitations, to initiate them, and coached in how to be an effective mentor. Parents should be involved appropriately in those relationships in recognition that they retain primary responsibility for their child's welfare and that one of the benefits of having a mentor is that it can improve relations with parents (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000).

Cultural norms and youth voice. We should also acknowledge that our recommendations presume an appreciation of youth empowerment that is not universal. Some societies and certainly some segments of all societies emphasize subordination to elders and view the idea of youth-adult partnership as improper. This may mean that the relationships look different in different locations and cultures, as suggested by Núñez's study, perhaps more hierarchical than we have envisioned. Research on this topic would be welcome.

That young people facing economic and social change need education and jobs is indisputable. Far too many need food, shelter, and protection from violence and diseases as well. Their parents and other family members should remain their primary sources of support whenever possible. But as we seek to promote the positive development of all youth we need to attend to their opportunities to watch, talk with, learn from, pattern themselves after, and interact on a progressively more equal way with adults who are not family members. Access to these opportunities comes with the privilege of attending a well-resourced institution of higher education, indenture in a high-quality apprenticeship, or membership in a high-functioning

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community. For the vast majority of young people who do not enjoy theses privileges we must be more intentional and invest more resources to make these opportunities available. The studies reported and cited in this chapter provide some guidance toward that aim.

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Table 1

Fit Indexes of the 3 and 2 Factor Models obtained in the Factorial Analysis

Factor Analysis	X^2	df	VRMR/ SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
CFA (3 factors) ($N = 294$)	1558.797*	186	2.057	.112	.799	.773
EFA (2 factors) ($N = 294$)	905.771*	169	.060	.086	.892	.866
CFA (2 factors) ($N = 301$)	126.375*	43	.081	.087	.938	.921

(* $p < .001$; **Common shared variance = 64.96%)

Table 2

Factor Loadings and Interrcorrelations for Mentoring Functional Role Items

Item[a]	Challenger	Connector	Supporter	Model/Compass
Rotated Factor Pattern Loadings[b]				
This person stands up for me.			.79	
This person is there when I need him/her.			.73	
This person cares about me.			.72	
This person helps me understand things about life.				.84
This person helps me reflect on my purpose in life.[c]				.66
I want to be like this person in some ways.[d]				.90
I want to do things as well as this person.[d]				.65
This person pushes me to do my best.	-.91			
This person gets me to work harder.				-.79
This person holds me to high standards.		-.76		
This person points out where I need to improve.				-.75
This person connected me to someone		.86		

to learn what I want to know.

This person connected me to someone .82
to help me meet my goals.

This person takes me to new places. .42

Factor Intercorrelations

	Supporter Connector	Model/Compass	Challenger
Supporter	--	.45	
Model/Compass		--	
Challenger	-.33	-.46	--
Connector	.25 --	.37	.38

Note. The following seven items were not included in the final factor solutions (intended functional roles are indicated in parentheses): "This person supports me in what I do" (Supporter), "This person teaches me how to do things" (Model), "I respect what this person has achieved" (Model), "I get values from this person" (Compass), "Ideas I have about right/wrong come from this person" (Compass), "This person helps me see the impact of my behavior on others" (Compass), and "I do things with this person I haven't done before" (Connector).

[a]For each item, the youth rated how much the statement described their relationship with this adult: Not at all, A little, Some, Quite a bit, A lot.

[b]Factor loadings <.35 are not included in the table.

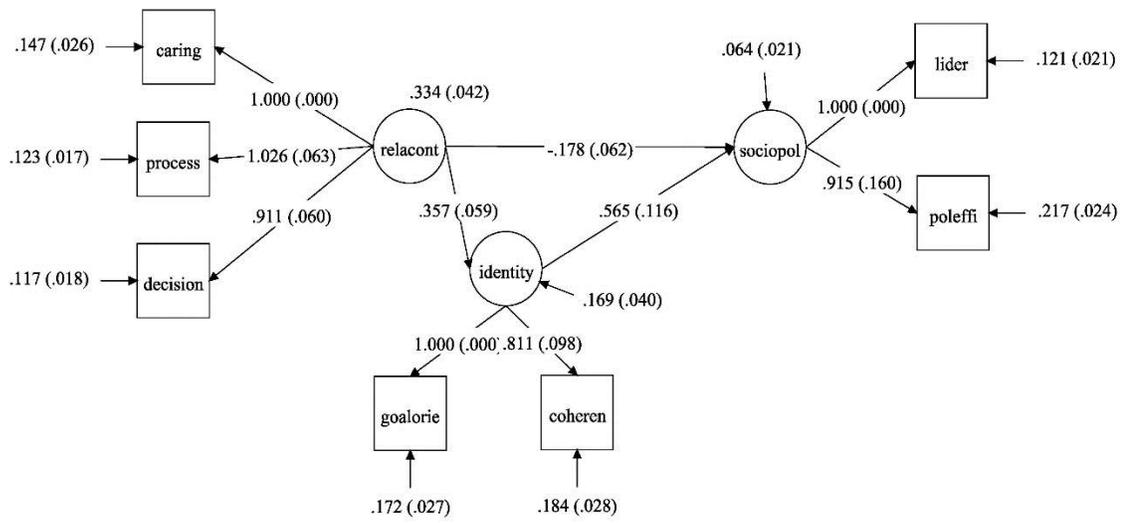[e]Item intended to assess the Compass functional role.

[d]Item intended to assess the Model functional role.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model