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Forms of Capital and the Construction of Leadership: Instructional Leadership in Urban Elementary Schools

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Using data from observations and interviews with 84 teachers at eight Chicago public elementary schools, this article examines how, through a process of social construction, forms of capital are a basis for instructional leadership. The authors argue that teachers construct influential others as leaders on the basis of valued forms of human, cultural, social, and economic capital. Moreover, the construction of leadership for instruction is often situated in various types of interactions (e.g., subject area) and varies by the leaders' position. Although the teachers in the study constructed school administrators as leaders largely on the basis of cultural capital, they constructed other teachers as leaders on the basis of human and social capital as well as cultural capital. Understanding the role of different species of capital in the construction of leadership will help researchers specify mechanisms that support professional learning and change in schools.

Premised on findings that school leadership is fundamental in efforts to change instructional practices (Newman and Wehlage 1995; Purkey and Smith 1983; Sheppard 1996), this article examines the construction of leadership in urban elementary schools. Changing organizational practices and routines is difficult, especially in schools (Cuban 1993; Meyer and Rowan 1977). Nonetheless, school reformers seek to transform classroom instruction to ensure that all students have access to high-quality opportunities to learn. The success of such initiatives depends largely on school leadership that creates conditions to support learning and instructional change. Following Cuban (1988) and Lindblom (1977), we argue that such leadership efforts are socially constituted; for leaders to lead, others must agree to follow. Therefore, understanding

why teachers construct administrators, curriculum specialists, and other teachers into leadership roles is paramount if we are to know the mechanisms that support and sustain change in the core technology of schools, that is, instructional practices.

In our study, our focus was on instructional leadership, which we defined as an influence relationship that motivates, enables, and supports teachers' efforts to learn about and change their instructional practices. Using data from observations and interviews with 84 teachers at eight Chicago public elementary schools, we examined how teachers construct influential others as leaders. In this article, we argue that the construction of leadership occurs through an interactive process in which followers construct others as leaders on the basis of valued forms of human capital (skills, knowledge, and expertise), cultural

capital (ways of being), social capital (networks and relations of trust), and economic capital (material resources). The construction of leadership is situated in certain interactions in which teachers value types of capital, depending on the aspect of instruction (e.g., subject area) and the leaders' positions. Although the teachers in our study constructed school administrators as leaders largely on the basis of cultural capital, they constructed other teachers as leaders on the basis not only of cultural capital, but of human and social capital.

FRAMING THE WORK

The Bases of Leadership

Research has recognized the importance of the leadership of principals in creating incentives and opportunities for teachers to learn (Goldring and Rallis 1993; Liberman, Falk, and Alexander 1994; Louis, Marks, and Kruse 1996; Rosenholtz 1989). Yet it has also shown that leadership extends beyond those at the top of organizations (Heenan and Bennis 1999; Katz and Kahn 1966; Lipman-Blumen 1996). Instructional leadership is not the exclusive purview of the principal, since teachers and other professionals play important roles (Heller and Firestone 1995; Smylie 1989; Smylie and Denny 1990). Teachers often assume leadership roles in a manner distinct from more formal leaders, creating professional communities and relations of trust that support learning and instructional change (Bidwell 2001; Siskin 1994). Networks of teachers that extend beyond the local school can also have a significant influence on teachers' work (Bidwell and Yasumoto 1999; Elmore, Peterson, and McCarthy 1996; Talbert and McLaughlin 1994). Taken together, this literature suggests that leadership is a distributed phenomenon, spread across multiple actors in schools (Gronn 2000; Ogawa and Bossert 1995; Pounder, Ogawa, and Adams 1995; Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond 1999, 2001).

Scholars have developed diverse typologies to describe the kinds of influence and power that are involved in leadership (Bass

1990; Butler and Harrison 1960; Earle 1997; French and Raven 1959; Goldhamer and Shils 1939; Read 1974; Weber 1968). Although formal positions of authority are important in instructional leadership, research indicates that teachers' perception of the principal's expertise or human capital is also critical (N. Johnson 1984; Treslan and Ryan 1986) and that a principal's interactive style can motivate teachers to change (G. S. Johnson and Venable 1986; Treslan and Ryan 1986). For example, Blase and Blase (1999) and Blase and Kirby (1993) reported that principals who engage in such practices as soliciting teacher advice and opinions while praising teachers better motivate teachers to improve instruction. Scholars have also identified social capital as a basis of teachers' leadership (Clift et al. 1995; S. M. Johnson 1990; Liberman, Darling-Hammond, and Zuckerman 1991; Little 1982; Lortie 1975; Louis et al. 1996). Specifically, social capital, in the form of valued social networks, mutual trust and respect, and a sense of obligation and responsibility, are defining characteristics of teachers' leadership for instruction (Smylie and Hart 1999).

Scholars have also debated the manner in which leaders and followers constitute leadership. Whereas leader-centric models that focus on the thoughts, actions, and traits of leaders are common (Likert 1967; Mouton and Blake 1984; Stodgill 1950; White and Lippitt 1960; Yukl 1981), some scholars have argued convincingly for a "follower-centric" approach that emphasizes how followers conceptualize leadership.

Follower-centric approaches have merit because for leaders to lead, followers must take heed and follow (Lindblom 1977). Weber (1968:212) went so far as to state that "every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance." Meindl (1995:330–31) argued that followers are "more influenced by *their* constructions of the leader's personality than they are by the 'true' personality of the leader. It is the personalities of leaders as imagined or constructed by followers that become the object of study, not 'actual' or 'clinical' personalities per se." Although Meindl correctly drew attention to the role of followers in leadership, he has been criticized for downplaying the *substance*

upon which followers make their constructions of leadership, which emerges and changes over time as a product of concrete human actions (Schneider 1998:313; see also Ehrlich 1998). As Lord and Maher (1991:11) stated, "the locus of leadership is not solely in a leader or solely in followers. Instead, it involves behaviors, traits, characteristics, and outcomes produced by leaders as these elements are interpreted by followers."

Building on these literatures, we developed an integrated model to account for the relationship between leaders and followers and the multiple bases of leadership. On the one hand, we are interested in the various tasks in which leaders engage. On the other hand, we also recognize that it is difficult for leaders to lead against the resistance of followers. We therefore posited a dynamic relationship that is not characterized by domination by leaders or pure construction by followers. Rather, we believe that as they go about the tasks of leadership, people enact forms of capital. In valuing the forms of capital enacted by others, followers attribute leadership to them. In this process, leaders make use of the capitals they possess, and followers value the forms of capital enacted by leaders. There is substance to the relationship, such that what occurs is neither a limitless nor an abstract construction based on leaders' assumed characteristics, but more of an assembly of leadership based on the forms of capital that leaders enact and how this capital is valued by followers. In our study, we examined how the species of capital in teachers' construction of leadership are situated in particular contexts (namely, subject area) and vary, depending on the leaders' role (e.g., administrative, specialist, teacher).

FORMS OF CAPITAL

Broadly speaking, *capital* can be defined as resources that are acquired, accumulate, and are of value in certain situations or, to use the lingo of economists, are of worth in particular markets. In our study, we centered on four forms of capital as the basis of leadership: human, cultural, social, and economic. In what follows, for the sake of clarity, we dis-

cuss these forms of capital as analytically distinct. However, forms of capital are related in important ways (Coleman 1988), and teachers in our sample rarely mentioned a form of capital in isolation when constructing others as leaders.

Human capital involves a person's knowledge, skills, and expertise and is acquired through the development of skills and capabilities that enable people to perform in new ways (Becker 1964; Coleman 1988; Schultz 1961). An appreciation of human capital is found in the literature on instructional change that emphasizes the expertise of leaders (N. Johnson 1984; Treslan and Ryan 1986). When followers value the human capital of leaders, human capital becomes a basis for the construction of leadership.

Since Bourdieu (1979) introduced the term, cultural capital has been used in a variety of ways (Lamont and Lareau 1988), from the consumptive tastes of social classes (Bourdieu 1984) to taking art courses in school (DiMaggio 1982). Our use is related to what Bourdieu (1986) termed "embodied" cultural capital, referring to internalized dispositions acquired through the life course and manifested in behaviors or "practice" (Bourdieu 1979, 1990). Like Lareau (1987) and Lareau and Horvat (1999), we emphasize acquired ways of being and doing, enduring interactive styles that are of value in particular contexts. These styles act as a cultural tool kit (Swidler 1986), providing a range of behaviors that enable and constrain how people interact with others (Hallett 2002), *aside from* any substantive content they have. Whereas human capital manifests itself in the content of an interaction between a leader and a follower about instruction, cultural capital manifests itself in the *stylistic form* of the interaction. In this sense, the interactive style of a leader matters (Blase and Blase 1999; Blase and Kirby 1993), but only to the extent that others in the situation *value* this style. When valued, cultural capital becomes a basis for the construction of leadership.

Social capital takes the form of social networks but also concerns the relations among individuals in a group or organization. Such networks result from the prevalence of norms, such as trust, collaboration, and a

sense of obligation (Coleman 1988; Portes 1998). Finally, economic capital includes money and other material resources, such as books, curricular materials, and computers.

Forms of capital can be understood only within interactive contexts (Farkas 1996; Lareau 1989; Lareau and Horvat 1999). The model presented here is not a simplistic trait-based understanding of leadership. Rather, people and the forms of capital they possess matter, but only to the extent that others in the situation *value* those forms of capital as legitimate bases of leadership. When a potential leader possesses certain forms of capital *and* followers value them, followers attribute leadership on the basis of these forms of capital. Hence, to become a leader, one must undergo a *process of valuation*: On the basis of the possession of human, cultural, social, and economic capital, potential leaders must be constructed as "valid" by followers, who then attribute leadership to them. However, because actors enter situations in which particular forms of capital have already been defined as "valid," this construction or "valuation" is not entirely voluntary (Lee 1998).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is based on data from the Distributed Leadership Project, a four-year longitudinal study of elementary school leadership. The project began with a six-month pilot phase involving seven Chicago public elementary schools in the winter and spring of 1999. The first full year of data collection began in September 1999 and involved eight Chicago elementary schools, two of which were also used in the pilot phase (a total of 13 schools).

Site Selection

Schools were selected through the logic of selective (Schatzman and Strauss 1973) and theoretical (Glaser and Strauss 1967) sampling. We selected high-poverty urban schools that vary demographically, including seven predominantly African American schools, three predominantly Hispanic schools, and three that are mixed. We were

interested in schools that had shown signs of improving mathematics, science, or literacy instruction (in terms of either process or outcome measures) and those that had not. Accordingly, we used the longitudinal database of the Consortium on Chicago School Research to identify elementary schools that had shown indications of change and some that had remained unchanged on such measures as academic press, professional community, and instructional leadership (process measures) and academic productivity.¹

Data Collection

In this article, we focus on interviews with 84 teachers from eight schools in our sample (one school from the pilot phase, one school included in both the pilot and Year 1 phases, and six of the schools in the Year 1 phase).²

Although there are many definitions of leadership, most recognize it as a relationship in which leaders influence followers (Bass 1990; Cartwright 1965; Katz and Kahn 1966; Stogdill 1950). Following this tradition, we defined *instructional leadership* as influence over teachers' instructional practices. Therefore, we grounded our indicators of instructional leadership in questions to elicit teachers' reports of influences on specific instructional activities. Because we grounded our understanding of instructional influence in specific instructional change processes, we were confident that we captured teachers' experiences with leaders, rather than their abstract assessments of leaders' qualities. This method provides a check against the claim that leaders are perceived as having certain qualities by virtue of their position, rather than their actual behaviors.

In 45 percent of the interviews, we had the opportunity to observe teachers' classrooms beforehand. After our observations, the project researchers asked the teachers questions that focused on observed instructional practices, the influences on their instructional choices, and why they thought that the people they identified were influential (see the interview questions in the appendix). We structured our interview questions to allow the teachers to reflect on their general practices (e.g., "Why do you do this?") before we moved to specific influences on these prac-

tices (e.g., "Did anyone . . . contribute to this change?"). The general and specific questions allowed us to map instructional relationships, giving us a sense of the attribution of leadership in relation to observed practices.

In cases in which we did not have the opportunity to observe the teachers' instruction, we asked similar questions about influences on instructional changes. We were interested in determining if the teachers had made any changes in their instructional practices and, if so, who or what influenced these changes. Once the influences had been identified, we probed for *why* teachers thought that these things were influential using the following questions: "Did anyone help you make this change in your classroom? Who? How did they contribute to them? Why do [did] you turn to this person?"

Finally, for teachers who reported no change in their instructional practices, we asked them to think about what they would do if they were going to change something about their teaching. Although these hypothetical questions do not pertain to actual changes in instructional practices, they still bear on the subject of this article by illuminating how teachers construct others as leaders.

Data Analysis

The data collection and analysis were closely integrated, allowing us to uncover patterns and working hypotheses as they emerged from the data while refining data collection strategies as the study progressed (Miles and Huberman 1994). Coding categories were developed on the basis of the distributed leadership theoretical framework and initial analyses of our interview data.

For the purpose of this article, we focused on three attributes of our coding system. The first identified who or what influences classroom instruction. We created 12 categories to code these data, including principal, assistant principal, teacher leaders, other teachers, standards documents, testing, Local School Council, parents, and textbooks. The second attribute identified the dimension of instruction over which influence was exercised along two lines—subject matter and aspect of

instruction. The third centered on the attribution of legitimacy to leaders, identifying the informant's rationale for identifying a particular leader as influential. Six nodes were created to code these data: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, human capital, structural (i.e., proximity), and demographics (i.e., race and gender).

To ensure reliability in the data analysis, we all collaborated on the development of the coding categories, analyzed the interview data, and met regularly to reach a "taken-as-shared" understanding of each category. After we developed this common understanding, all the interviews were coded by the second author, who remained in constant communication with the first and third authors throughout that process.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEADERSHIP AND FORMS OF CAPITAL

Of the 84 teachers in our sample, 70 (83.3 percent) indicated that the principal shaped their instructional practices, and 24 (28.6 percent) mentioned the assistant principal.³ Yet 67 (79.8 percent) teachers identified other teachers as influential. However, to grasp instructional leadership fully, we had to move beyond the simple identification of an influential other to an understanding of the multiple bases on which others are constructed as leaders.

Human Capital

In discussing influences on their practices, the teachers often referred to the knowledge, skill, and expertise (human capital) of others. Human capital was invoked more often when the teachers constructed other teachers as leaders than when they constructed administrators as leaders (see Table 1). Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 38 (45.2 percent) cited human capital in constructing other teachers as leaders.

The teachers constructed other teachers as leaders according to the types of expertise other teachers possess. For example, when we asked Mrs. McClain to whom she turned for guidance and why, she replied:

Table 1. Teachers' Construction of Leadership to Other Teachers, Administrators (Principal and Assistant Principal), and Specialists, by Form of Capital (84 teachers interviewed)

Form of Capital	Teachers		Administrators		Specialists	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Human capital	45.2	38	21.4	18	7.1	6
Cultural capital	59.5	50	70.2	59	8.3	7
Social capital	50.0	42	15.5	13	3.6	3
Economic capital	27.4	23	23.8	20	0.0	0

Note: Table 1 and Figure 1 must be interpreted with some caution. See the text for an explanation.

Uh, my team members. We're all very unique. Mrs. Bryant is really, um, very learned, and she loves math. And so she, her technique is, you know she has a way of really showing the kids. And she uses a lot of manipulatives with the kids in math. Mrs. Rodriguez is very knowledgeable in science. And she has a lot of ideas about science. Mrs. Diaz is a strong language arts person. Um, so you know whenever I have a question or I, you know, want to know about how to go about a strategy a particular way, I might ask her, "Well, how do you do this?" and "Does this work well with your students?"

Mrs. McClain valued the skills, knowledge, and expertise that her team members possess, constructing the members as leaders on the basis of this human capital in a dynamic social relationship. However, this relationship was situated in particular subject areas. Mrs. McClain valued Mrs. Bryant's expertise in math, especially her teaching technique and use of manipulatives. However, when it came to science, Mrs. Rodriguez had more human capital. As for language arts, when Mrs. McClain had questions about different strategies, she valued Mrs. Diaz's human capital. On the basis of their human capital, Mrs. McClain constructed each teacher as a leader. Yet the leadership was limited to particular areas of expertise and distributed across each of these leaders by subject area.

Mrs. Archibald exhibited a similar valuation of human capital when she explained why she used another teacher, Kelly Judson, as a reference for science:

Kelly is a much better life science teacher than I am. So in the next couple of weeks, I'll be

talking to her because I'm sure that I'm not going to like some of the textbooks, and I'll want alternate ideas. And since I don't have that background, and she does, I'll go to her.

Mrs. Archibald constructed Mrs. Judson as a leader on the basis of Judson's background in science, seeking her out for advice. As with the previous example, this construction was situated in a subject-area context: Archibald valued Judson's science-related human capital, but said nothing about Judson in relation to math or literacy. Such examples are frequent in our data. For example, one teacher explained of another: "She's awesome. She has a master's degree in reading and knows more about teaching than you and I do." Another teacher explained: "These are people who are endorsed in their content area."

In the previous examples, the construction of leadership around "expertise" (human capital) involved practical experience and/or the knowledge associated with formal certification or training in specific content areas. However, expertise is also associated with teaching tenure. As Ms. Adolphus said about influential colleagues:

Mr. Brisset had been teaching for about 28 years. Mrs. Gregory has been teaching about 15 years. A lot of them have been here for a long time. They have different theories, and I do believe in different theories. I try some of their ideas.

Ms. Adolphus constructed Mr. Brisset and Mrs. Gregory as leaders because of the wisdom associated with 10 years of teaching (human capital), a common finding in our data. Although the teachers invoked human

capital more frequently when they constructed other teachers as leaders, some teachers constructed administrators as leaders on the basis of human capital as well (see Table 1). Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 18 (21.4 percent) cited human capital when constructing the administrators (the principals and assistant principals) as leaders, while 6 (7.1 percent) cited human capital in attributing leadership to certain specialists (defined as curriculum coordinators, instructional coordinators, and so forth who spend less than 50 percent of their time in the classroom). To quote one teacher in regard to her principal:

Another reason I really like working for him is that he has a background in reading also. An awful lot of principals really don't know a whole lot about teaching reading, . . . [but] he understands it, knows it, has done it himself, has a master's degree in reading, and really supports me when I come up with initiatives that I want to pursue. . . So how could I not be supportive of him?

When the teachers constructed principals as leaders on the basis of human capital, they often did so in relation to knowledge about classroom teaching: "He understands it, knows it, has done it himself." In cases like these, the teachers valued the principals' expertise and knowledge as former teachers and constructed them as leaders on the basis of this human capital. Principals' legitimacy often comes from classroom experience and knowledge of instructional practices, not simply from their position, professional status, or the process through which they were allocated to their professional positions. As with previous examples, this relationship is situated in a subject-area context, in this case, reading.

Cultural Capital

In discussing cultural capital here, our emphasis is on the possession of certain interactive styles, habitual ways of being and doing that are acquired throughout the life course and used in social interaction. When others value these styles, this cultural capital becomes a basis of leadership, especially when the teachers in our study constructed the administrators as leaders. Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 59 (70.2 percent)

mentioned cultural capital when they constructed the principal or assistant principal as influential (see Table 1). Consider the following remarks from a teacher about her principal:

She would, you know, it's just the way you say it and do it I guess. When you're working with a group and the way they come across and talk to you and I, I guess I'm just a fool for people knowing how to talk to you and to give you that kind of respect, and you get these things done.

For this teacher, the interactive style (what we have termed cultural capital) is paramount ("it's just the way you say it and do it I guess") The teacher valued this way of being and doing; constructed the principal as a leader on the basis of the principal's cultural capital; and, in turn, followed the principal's directives. As a form of cultural capital, these interactive styles are often a basis of the construction of leadership:

There's quite a bit. It's just so much. It's just everything. You can talk to them. They have time for you. They . . . haven't forgotten what it's like to be a teacher. . . . Yes, yes, yes. And they just support you in any way they can. If it's just a "How are you doing today?" it just makes a really, really big difference.

In discussing the influence of their administrators, the teachers paid particular attention to the ways of being and doing that the administrators brought to their interactions with others. In this example and others, the teachers validated those who engaged in a supportive style. A supportive style is an acquired form of cultural capital and, when valued, is a basis for the construction of leadership.

Cultural capital also figured in the teachers' construction of other teachers as leaders, although somewhat less prominently than they did with the administrators. Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 50 (59.5 percent) identified cultural capital in constructing other teachers as influential (see Table 1). As Mrs. Watson explained:

I go to Mrs. Jefferson a lot. I mean I don't interact with her—any of her students. I don't have any of her students, but our personalities

are very similar. . . . She's very, very honest and very, you know, she'll listen and give me what she thinks is her honest opinion even if it maybe isn't what I wanted to hear. You know? It doesn't always make me the happiest, but it is probably what would be the best.

Mrs. Watson was attracted to Mrs. Jefferson's honest style and constructed Jefferson as a leader, seeking her out for advice even though they did not have any students in common. Jefferson's candor became a basis for the construction of leadership.

Social Capital

A third type of capital evident in the construction of leadership is social capital. While social capital is relational in nature, for those who are involved in the relationship, it can become a kind of possession. In constructing leaders, the teachers in our study frequently referred to their social networks or connections. Mrs. Rhodes explained how the principal's network with her former school came to influence her classroom instruction:

McKinley was our partner school, and we had to go and observe teachers one day, and they had the partner reading and we saw how well it went over there, and I said that if they can do it, we can do it. So I came back, and we tried it.

In this case, the principal's connection to her former school enabled her to facilitate sharing by the teachers, successfully influencing Mrs. Rhodes's classroom practices. Mrs. Rhodes constructed her principal as a leader on the basis of this social capital, and, notably, the principal's network with the other school facilitated the transmission of human capital—skills and knowledge about partner reading—enabling the teachers to share and learn. In this way, social capital can foster the accumulation of human capital (Coleman 1988), and, once again, this process is situated in the subject-area context of reading.

Trust is another form of social capital that plays a role in the construction of leadership. To quote one teacher:

I feel like the faculty trusts me and the principal trusts me. . . . And I've come up with a lot of ideas for expressive arts that the principal

trusts, and he . . . just lets me go. He just lets me do it. He hands me an empty plate, and as long as I have a rationale for him, I can go. And that's leadership.

The trust between this teacher and the principal fostered a positive image of the principal in the eyes of the teacher. In this way, relations of trust are a basis for the construction of leadership.

It is important to note that this relationship of trust is facilitated by the principal's laid-back interactive style, or what we termed "cultural capital." As has been mentioned elsewhere, forms of capital often operate in combination, and whereas sociologists have suggested a link between social and human capital (Coleman 1988) and argued that social capital can help compensate for limitations in human and economic capital (Diamond 2000; Wong 1998), examples such as this suggest that the formation of social capital is bound with cultural capital. Holding similar ways of being in common may facilitate pleasant interactions, forming the groundwork for relations of trust and the creation of social networks.

Social capital in the form of networks and trust often converge, working together to facilitate teachers' sharing. Often (though not always), the construction of leadership around this social capital is situated in grade-level team meetings. As one teacher said:

We have grade-level meetings once a month. Sometimes a little more, depending on what is going on. We usually have an agenda of what we need to do for a grade-level meeting. So it really doesn't come up that often in grade-level meetings, it comes up more informally. And we have a really strong fifth-grade team. We work real well together. We like each other. We're constantly sharing ideas with each other, and I've had other teachers from other grade levels say "Wow. You guys have such a cool team." Just because they see that we really do work together when we're planning things and everything.

Grade-level team meetings can put teachers in contact with each other, facilitating the creation of social capital. What we emphasize here is that the social capital among teachers is a basis for the construction of leadership. The teachers in this group constructed each

other as leaders on the basis of this social capital, facilitating the dissemination of human capital. In this way, teachers' learning and sharing are intimately bound with teachers' leadership as it is socially constructed. Not only was the social capital shared by this group a basis of leadership within the group, but it fostered credibility in the eyes of teachers outside the group.

As these examples indicate, social capital is an important basis for the construction of leadership. It seems to be especially important in the construction of other teachers as leaders: Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 42 (50 percent) cited social capital in explaining why other teachers were influential, compared to 13 (15.5 percent) who did so for administrators and 3 (3.6 percent) who did so for specialists.

Economic Capital

Although economic capital figures in teachers' constructions of leadership, it is less prominent than is human, cultural, or social capital. This fact is particularly interesting in the case of principals, whom we would suspect would be constructed as leaders on the basis of their economic capital (e.g., access to material resources). The teachers we interviewed referred to economic capital in the form of money and material resources, at times constructing those who controlled these resources as leaders. One teacher cited her administrator as influential in terms of

the books, instructional materials. You know some schools you don't even have that, and we get an extra \$350. Other schools get only \$50 from the office, so we can use that extra \$350 plus more that's allocated for each classroom to purchase classroom materials

The administration at this school structures the budget in a way that puts increased money for instructional materials in the teachers' hands. The way the administration spreads its economic capital influences how teachers teach. This distribution of economic capital not only gives teachers autonomy, but serves as a basis for the construction of leadership. Note that this teacher not only spoke of instructional materials, but made a con-

scious effort to recognize that the materials come from special budgeting, whereas other schools "receive only \$50 from the office."

A teacher at a different school provided another example of how economic capital can be a basis for the construction of leadership. This teacher cited the principal as influential because "she's listening to what the teachers said about textbooks or the lack of resources or need for help, and she's making sure that the Chapter I funds or whatever textbook money is available is spent there." Note that, in itself, economic capital is not a basis of leadership. Only when the principal uses this economic capital in a manner that is viewed positively by followers does it become a basis of the construction of leadership.

School administrators are not the only people in schools who possess economic capital. In discussing her lesson with us, Mrs. Cook said: "Mrs. Greyson had a really good book that she'd used before to use pattern blocks with fractions. That was great, I hadn't seen that before. And that worked really well." Mrs. Greyson shared her material resources with Mrs. Cook, resources that Mrs. Cook valued. On the basis of these valuable resources, Mrs. Cook constructed Mrs. Greyson as a leader, seeking her out for advice and incorporating her materials into the lesson. Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 23 (27.4 percent) mentioned economic capital when constructing other teachers as leaders, whereas 20 (23.8 percent) cited economic capital when constructing administrators as leaders (see Table 1).

As many of the previous examples indicate, the construction of leadership does not presume intent by leaders. On the one hand, potential leaders may be acting intentionally, using impression management to enact forms of capital in highly visible ways (Hallett 2002). On the other hand, people use capital in their daily practices, even if they are not consciously making an effort to be leaders. Thus, someone who has no intention of becoming a leader may be constructed as a leader by others on the basis of his or her use of valued capital, and leadership (and organizations) is not an entirely rational process. People are often unwitting leaders, and it is not surprising that when followers label someone a

leader, the leader may respond by saying, "I am?"

FORMS OF CAPITAL AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

On the basis of our interviews with the teachers, it is possible to examine the relative importance of the various forms of capital as a basis for leadership for different actors in the schools we studied. Our analysis is tentative, however, because the teachers we interviewed rarely cited forms of capital in isolation. Rather, they discussed numerous forms of capital when constructing others as leaders, for example, both human capital and cultural capital or cultural capital and social capital. Hence, Table 1 must be interpreted with some caution. The table is based on interviews with 84 teachers from eight schools. Because the interviewees often cited multiple people and capital in one interview, the columns and rows cannot be added down and across, and they do not add up to 100 percent. The percentages represent the percentages of teachers who cited a particular form of capital in reference to a particular person or position. Comparisons across the forms of capital and people/positions involved should examine only the numbers (not the percentages) because the reference point is the number of teacher interviews, not

the total number of references to a particular form of capital or position/person.

One striking pattern is the importance of cultural capital (interactive style) for all leaders. A valued interactive style is a crucial basis of leadership construction for both teachers and administrators (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

Cultural capital appears to be especially important for administrators as leaders. The teachers in our study most frequently cited this "interactive style" when constructing their administrators as leaders, with human, social, and economic capital paling in comparison. This finding is interesting because both rational-legal and institutional perspectives would suggest that administrators would be constructed as leaders on the basis of expertise (human capital), material resources (economic capital), or the assumption that they possess such capital. However, our data support other research that suggested that the way in which principals interact with teachers also motivates change (Blase and Blase 1999; Blase and Kirby 1993).

The importance of cultural capital as a basis of administrative leadership raises an interesting question: If administrators are constructed as leaders mostly on the basis of their "style," who are the true guardians and transmitters of knowledge about instruction in schools? Our data indicate that teachers are the ones who possess this human capital, and teachers are more likely to be constructed as leaders on the basis of their human cap-

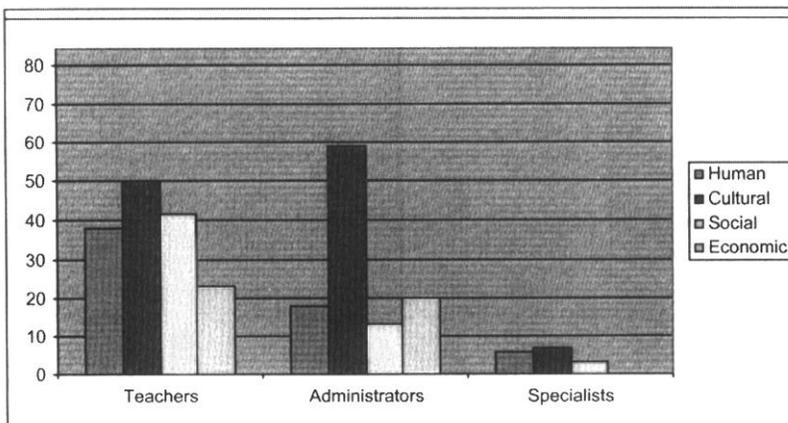


Figure 1 The Importance of Particular Forms of Capital for Leadership by Role (Number of Teachers Citing)

ital than are administrators (see Table 1 and Figure 1). This is especially so when we look at the dismal score for "specialists." These numbers seem to indicate that teachers believe that important knowledge, skills, and expertise in relation to instruction rest with other "ordinary" teachers.

The patterns we identified point to the situated nature of leadership. Namely, *the construction of leadership is situated in particular types of interactions*. For administrators (as leaders), the construction of leadership is situated in interactions with teachers and is based primarily on the cultural capital of the administrators (teacher-administrator interactions). For teachers (as leaders) the construction of leadership is situated in interactions with other teachers (teacher-teacher interactions) and is based primarily on cultural capital, but also on human and social capital.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By focusing on instructional leadership as an influence relationship that motivates, enables, and supports teachers' efforts to learn about and change their teaching practices, we examined how teachers construct influential others as leaders on the basis of valued forms of human, cultural, social, and economic capital. Although our model centers on how followers construct leaders, it does not portray leadership as an abstract construction that is devoid of what leaders do in practice. Rather, in our model, followers construct leaders on the basis of valued forms of capital as enacted by leaders. Furthermore, our account illustrates how the construction of leadership is situated in different interactions, with teachers constructing different leaders according to the subject area; constructing school administrators as leaders largely on the basis of cultural capital; and constructing teachers as leaders on the basis of cultural, social, and human capital.

Of course, forms of capital are not the only bases of instructional leadership in schools. At times, teachers in our study discussed the leadership of an influential other in terms of rational-legal positioning. In stating why she discussed a particular lesson with her princi-

pal, one teacher said: "I went to Dr. Ordoñez because she's the principal. I wanted to be sure that I was doing the right thing." This teacher explained her principal's influence only in terms of position. Yet for the vast majority of the teachers in our sample, position alone was not a sufficient basis of leadership: Only 7 of the 84 teachers (8.3 percent) cited position alone when discussing the influence of administrators. Furthermore, in some schools, teachers *do not* value their bosses, *do not* construct them as instructional leaders, and *do not* turn to them for advice about instructional matters. Moreover, even when followers talk about positional leaders, they do not always emphasize positions in the hierarchy. Instead, the construction of leadership involves an evaluation by followers, indicating that the actions of a potential leader are appropriate and desirable within a socially constructed system (Suchman 1987). These constructions move beyond mere "position" to include other valued bases of leadership (forms of capital). Therefore, it is not surprising that leadership in schools is distributed (Spillane et al. 2001) and that many of those who are identified as leaders are not positional leaders.

Given that leadership is socially constructed, institutional theory may suggest that the legitimacy of leaders (and hence the forms of capital attributed to them) result from a rationalization of formal structures and teachers' expectations of those who hold specific positions within organizations (Meyer and Rowan 1977). In other words, the qualities attributed to leaders could be assumed from the positions they hold whether or not they actually have these qualities. Given prior work, one may suspect that positional leaders would be seen as possessing substantial human capital (e.g., knowledge and expertise) on the basis of the process through which they were allocated to their positions (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and economic capital (e.g., access to resources) because of their position within the organizational hierarchy. In contrast to these expectations, our findings (grounded in specific instructional influences reported by teachers) suggest that teachers most often construct administrators as leaders because of their cultural capital or interactive style, rather

than their human or economic capital. Expertise (human capital) and access to resources (economic capital) were mentioned far less often than cultural capital when the teachers we interviewed described the influence of school administrators. The attributions that teachers in our study made to positional leaders did not match what we would expect if they emerged solely from institutionalized myths about those in leadership positions.

Forms of capital and the construction of leadership are an important point of reflection for school reformers. At the core of many recent policy initiatives is an attempt by state governments and local school districts to exert much stronger leadership for instruction through a variety of accountability mechanisms and standards. Our research indicates that accountability measures and other external policy levers coexist or work in tandem with leadership processes that are based on forms of capital. To be sure, accountability measures influenced instruction in the classrooms that we studied. For example, 41.7 percent (35) of the teachers in our sample mentioned Chicago Public Schools' standards and frameworks as influencing their instructional practices. In addition, 46.4 percent (39) indicated that standardized tests shaped their instructional practices. However, as we mentioned earlier, the vast majority of our teachers cited *other people* as influential, a relationship that gains clarity through a consideration of human, cultural, social, and economic capital.

The next step in developing a model of capital and the construction of leadership involves moving from the broadly illustrative interview data presented here to the everyday interactions between teachers and administrators and teachers and teachers. It is through these seemingly mundane interactions that potential leaders enact forms of capital and followers value these capitals and attribute leadership accordingly. Likewise, leaders influence followers through social interaction. We are also exploring three other areas of related interest: (1) the relationship between the tenure of school leaders and the forms of capital used in the attribution of leadership; (2) the connections between different forms of capital, including human and

social capital and cultural and social capital; and (3) the relationship between subject matter and forms of capital used in the attribution of leadership.

Understanding capital and the construction of leadership raises important questions for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners. What is missed when we ignore these processes? Can policies mandate the construction of leadership? Probably not, because it would be difficult to govern the interactions through which leadership is constructed. Then how do we train potential leaders? Considerable resources are spent trying to equip people with the "human capital" that is presumed to be necessary for leadership, but what of the other forms of capital? Our data indicate that cultural capital is an especially important basis for the construction of leadership, but how do leaders acquire cultural capital? Can we educate potential leaders for the cultural capital needed for leadership, or does cultural capital require a different, longer socialization process?

NOTES

1. The academic-press measure gauged the extent to which students felt that their teachers pushed them to reach high levels of academic performance. For the professional community, we used measures of collegiality (the degree of collective work ethic among staff), teacher-teacher and teacher-principal trust, and shared norms among staff. The instructional leadership measure assesses teachers' perceptions of principals' and teachers' leadership (e.g., questions about setting standards and communicating a clear vision of the school). Finally, the academic productivity measure uses scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to determine the academic gain for students spending the entire year at individual schools. We also interviewed school personnel and observers of the system to obtain their nominations of potential sites.

2. Reliability checks on Year 1 data uncovered problems with the data related to followers' construction of leaders for one of the schools. Specifically, interviewers who collected data in that school had not consistently

followed up with the interviewees as to why they identified certain people as influential. Hence, we dropped this school from our study for the purpose of this article. However, we did include one of the schools from the pilot phase, in which probes had been used to pursue informants' reasons for attributing power and influence to others.

3. These numbers cannot be added to create a "total" for administrators. Doing so would cause double counting, since the teachers often cited both in the course of one interview.

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APPENDIX

Relevant Interview Questions

Questions for Observed Teachers

1. I noticed that [*plug in relevant details from lesson; for example, you immediately informed this student whether her answer was right or wrong*].

a. Is this something that happens regularly in your [mathematics, science, or reading] teaching?

b. Why do you do this? Could you do this in another way if you wanted to? If not, why not? (*Listen for things and/or people that constrain/limit teachers' choices and control.*)

c. Have you always [*plug in relevant detail from lesson*] in your [mathematics, science, or reading] teaching? If not, how long have you done it this way? What did you do in the past? How did you change? Why? Did anyone or anything contribute to this change? Who? How and *what* did they contribute? Why this person? or Why this thing?

Questions for Nonobserved Teachers

D1. Are there particular things about the way you teach mathematics/science/literacy now that you are unhappy with? If yes, what are these things? What makes you unhappy about [list aspect of instruction identified by the informant]? [If no, skip to question D5.]

D2. How long have been unhappy about [list aspects of mathematics/science/literacy instruction identified by the informant]?

D3. Was there something or someone who helped you see your teaching of mathematics/science/literacy or [list aspect of instruction identified by the informant] as problematic? Who? What? How?

D4. Have you changed anything about the way you teach mathematics/science/literacy recently? [Try to focus the respondent on content, materials, teaching strategies, grouping arrangements as specific aspects of instruction.] [If yes, continue with D5; if no, go to D8.]

D5. If you can remember back to when you made this change, was there someone or something that helped you to think about adopting this new way of doing things? Who? How?

D6. Did anyone help you make this change in your classroom? Who? How did they contribute to them? Why do/did you turn to this person?

D7. Did you draw on any resources to help you make this change? What resources did you draw on?

Questions for Nonobserved Teachers Who Reported No Instructional Changes

D8. If you were going make a change in how you [Discuss each of the things mentioned by the teacher in D2], what would you do? [Try to focus the respondent on content, materials, teaching strategies, grouping arrangements as specific aspects of instruction.] For example, suppose that you wanted to make a change in the textbook you use in your room, how could you make this change? [Ask also for content/teaching strategies/assessment practices and so forth.]

D9. Are there resources that you would use to assist you? If so, what are those resources?

D10. Are there people to whom you think you would turn for assistance? Who are those people? Why would you turn to them and not others?