**The Transformation of Mentoring Relationships in Academe: An Examination of Cross-Sex and Cross-Race Dyads**

**Abstract**

Because women and racial minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in the upper echelons of organizations compared to white men, they often have to depend on cross-sex and/or cross-race mentoring relationships to support their career goals. Existing literature has found that mentoring relationships may increase the chances for women and racial minorities to gain access to mentors. While an extensive literature on mentoring relationships exists, there is insufficient attention to the outcomes of mentoring relationships. Specifically, not much is known about the mechanisms that enable mentoring relationships to continue, nor about those that cause these relationships to end. Some mentoring relationships barely get off the ground, and even when mentoring relationships work, the average duration is only about 3 years. My research examines the progress of cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships within the context of academia. I consider how mentoring relationships develop, are transformed, and when and whether they end.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Diversity Mentoring Relationships, Dyads

**Introduction**

Mentoring has been a widely utilized tool recommended by practitioners and researchers to address the underrepresentation of women and racial minorities in positions of leadership and decision-making. Ideally, mentors can serve as trusted and experienced advisors who are able to provide their protégés with both instrumental and psycho-social support (Kram, 1983, 1985; Levinson et al., 1978). Instrumental support includes providing protégés assistance with the socialization process and how to navigate the political environment of an organization; whereas psychosocial support includes connecting with protégés on an interpersonal and emotional level (Kram, 1985).

Because women and racial minorities are disproportionately underrepresented in the upper echelons of organizations compared to white men, they are more likely to rely on cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships (DiTomaso and Palmer, 2017; Ragins, 1997; Zellers et al., 2008). Due to societal norms and gender role expectations, these relationships frequently present challenges. Cross-sex relationships can often be perceived to have sexual innuendos that lead to discomfort in the interaction. When that occurs, both men and women may be hesitant to further engage in supportive workplace relationships (Hewlett et al., 2011). Similarly, cross-race relationships can impede open and honest communication, in part because whites may fear they will appear to lack racial sensitivity (Thomas, 1989, 1990). This process results in protégés not receiving reliable feedback that can aid in their career advancement.

The duration of a mentoring relationship heavily depends on the quality of engagement and interaction between the protégé and mentor (Chandler et al., 2011; Ragins et al., 2000). Prior research has suggested that mentoring relationships advance through four distinct stages: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Kram 1983, 1985). There exists a high degree of variation, however, in these relationships and not all relationships advance through all four stages. Past research suggests that most mentoring relationships last only about three years on average, while many barely get off the ground (Hill, 1998; Ragins and Cotton, 1999). Thus, while there has been an extensive research literature on mentoring, including on the challenges inherent in cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships, less attention has been given to how mentoring relationships develop and transform over time. There is a lack of understanding as to how and why mentoring relationships end and to how they are transformed as the circumstances change for either the mentor or the protégé. For example, some relationships may fade away, some may end in conflict, while others may transition into lifelong supportive relationships. This research will examine the development, transformation, and when relevant, the ending of cross-sex and cross-race mentor-protégé relationships with special attention given to the redefinition (or exit) stage. This phenomenon will be explored in an academic context, by examining the current relationship status of junior faculty members and their former dissertation advisors. This research uses semi-structured interviews to investigate the following questions: a) how do contextual factors, such as institutional policies and practices, shape mentor and protégé interactions at different stages of the mentoring relationship, b) what happens to mentoring relationships when they end and what circumstances contribute to the ending of mentoring relationships, c) what challenges may be added for women and racial minority protégés in cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships as the relationships change over time, and d) what factors may contribute to success in mentoring relationships? Ideally, this research will allow me to identify the mechanisms that lead to favorable or unfavorable cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships over time, thus shedding light on the career trajectories of women and minorities in academic positions.

**Literature Review**

*Diverse Mentoring Relationships*

A growing body of literature has been devoted to the behavioral and perceptual processes in diversified mentoring relationships (Allen and Eby, 2004; Blake-Beard, 2011; Blake-Beard et al., 2006; Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1997; Ragin and Scandura, 1994; Scandura and Ragins, 1993; Thomas, 1993, 2001), meaning mentors and protégés who differ in social and demographical characteristics, such as race, sex, class, disability, or sexual orientation. Dynamics of power can emerge in diversified mentoring relationships that are not as likely to be prevalent in homogeneous relationships (Ragins, 1997). Because of these power differences, women and racial minorities are likely to engage in mentoring relationships with those of higher status to assist in controversial situations (McGuire, 2000), to help gain greater visibility, and to derive reflected power (Kanter, 1989; Ragins, 1997: 487). However, women and racial minorities who seek mentors in higher status positions often encounter additional challenges. Issues such as sexual innuendo, racial sensitivity, and public scrutiny often hinder the maturation and quality of cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships (Thomas, 2001; Young et al., 2006).

An essential component of high-quality mentoring relationships is being able to identify yourself with the other person (mentor or protégé). We know that mutual identification is more likely based on sex and race, but there may also be identification based on perceptions, attitudes, and values (Turban et al., 2002). These processes may be complicated, though. For example, Blake-Beard et al. (2011) found that matching by race and gender was felt to be important for STEM undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students, especially for women and racial minorities. Further, they found that students reported receiving more help when matched by the same-sex or same-race. Even so, the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the relationship did not impact academic outcomes. It might be that deep-level diversity attributes such as attitudes, beliefs, and personality become more salient over time and surface-level attributes become less so (Turban et al., 2002).

*Stages of Mentoring*

Kram (1983, 1985: 614-621) identified four distinct stages of mentoring relationships: initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. The initiation stage is a period when each partner imagines what the relationship might entail. The mentor embodies a favorable identification and is thereby viewed as someone who can assist the protégé in his or her career development. In the cultivation stage, the mentor and protégé begin to identify the real value of the relationship with one another. Each party begin to develop a more-in depth relationship, wherein career and psychosocial functions begin to emerge. The mentor and protégé often experience some obvious and subtle changes as a result of the complex career and psychosocial functions provided. Moreover, the cultivation phase is essential as it begins to define the boundaries of the relationship and to clarify expectations for both the mentor and the protégé. Kram (1985: 618) characterized the third phase, separation, as likely to have “some turmoil, anxiety, and feelings of loss.” Separation occurs both structurally and psychologically. Structurally, the hierarchical roles that existed between the protégé and mentor are relinquished. If the protégé receives a job placement, the mentor changes organizations, or the protégé begins to seek independence, there may be psychological effects such as feelings of resentment. Lastly, at the redefinition stage the relationship may be transformed into a friendship or peer-based relationship. Not all relationships turn into an ongoing relationship. Those that do, however, enjoy informal contact and mutual support as the relationship continues.

Kram’s study used mentoring relationships of both men and women, including those in cross-sex dyadic relationships. She did not indicate if any of the participates were in cross-race relationships. Kram found that women in dyads pointed out limitations to their relationships early in the initiation stages. Women proteges did not necessarily see a part of themselves in their mentors and did not want to emulate their mentors’ leadership styles (Kram, 1983). Given the additional complications of racial dynamics, it is likely that problems with identification may be even more problematic in cross-race mentoring relationships. Because of the challenges that may be encountered, cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships may not go through all four stages of the mentoring relationships. I will examine heterogenous mentoring relationships over the full life cycle and will consider the role dissertation advisors play in helping their former students navigate their careers, post-graduation.  
*Academic Setting*

Accredited business schools in the United States present an interesting setting for exploring diverse mentoring relationships. In 2015, African Americans, Latinx, and Native Americans represented 4.0%, 2.6%, and 0.3% of full-time business school faculty respectively (AACSB, 2015). Although there have been initiatives to address the underrepresentation of students, faculty, and administration in business schools, there still exist a serious pipeline issue (Baldwin et al., 2012; Minefee et al., 2018). Furthermore, recent research has brought attention to the discriminatory practices and biases that are more likely to occur in business schools than in other fields in academia (e.g. Milkman et al., 2015). For example, business faculty members were found to be significantly more likely to serve as mentors for white men than for racial minorities (Milkman et al., 2015). Business school faculty, along with faculty in the school of education, were also likely to exhibit more bias toward women or racial minority students than 8 other disciplines (Milkman et al., 2015).

In this study, I explore the characteristics of mentoring relationships to understand the boundary conditions of advising relationships between junior faculty members and their former dissertation advisors. For the purpose of this study, the role of a mentor will be used interchangeably with primary dissertation advisor. Although mentor relationships in graduate schools are likely to take on a different structure than mentoring relationships in a corporate setting, there are also areas of alignment such as shared goals and objectives. The faculty and doctoral student relationship in the academy can often be thought of as an apprenticeship, wherein the protégé learns the art of research, writing, and publication through hands-on experience with his/her dissertation advisor. The degree of mentorship that is carried out through the relationship, however, may vary based upon the advisor’s subjective evaluation of the student. Depending on the state of the relationship, advisors can remain essential actors in the junior faculty members’ careers or the relationship may end once the dissertation is successfully defended or soon after.

**Data and Methods**

I conducted a pilot study to explore the mentoring relationships as they unfolded over time. This pilot study was designed to identify potential themes in the data and to improve upon the study design. My primary focus for the initial study was heterogenous relationships. The final sample will include a comparative analysis between heterogenous and homogenous relationships. Participants, specifically protégés, were recruited from the Ph.D. Project, a non-profit organization created by the KPMG Foundation which aims to increase the representation of minorities in business schools. I reached out to an administrator of the Ph.D. Project and requested a list of current assistant professors who graduated between 2014-2016. This restricted time period provided a list of assistant professors who have been in their roles for the last 2-4 years, which allowed for some distance from graduate school and better reflect post-graduate changes in the protégé-mentor relationship. The list I received from the Ph.D. Project included a total of 191 assistant professors; 44 in marketing, 60 in management, 20 in information systems, 21 in finance, and 46 in accounting. All of the protégés successfully completed their doctorate from an accredited U.S. business school and serve as a tenure-track assistant professor in a business school. With the initial list, I endeavored to identify the current institution and to gain access from the internet to their curriculum vitae where possible. The curriculum vitae (CV) often included information about the protégés’ dissertation topic, along with names of their committee members. Thus, for some of the participants, I was able to quickly identify whether or not their former dissertation advisors were of a different sex or race.

After receiving IRB approval in February 2018, I sent out recruitment emails to eligible participants to perform a pilot study. I emailed fourteen assistant professors. Seven of the fourteen assistant professors responded to my request and agreed to participate in my pilot study. In the email, I informed the assistant professors that the study also required participation from their former dissertation advisor. After interviewing the protégés, I emailed and scheduled a time to interview the mentor. In one instance, the protégé contacted the mentor on my behalf, as she felt that her former dissertation advisor would be more responsive to her email request. Both parties were informed that the interviews would be confidential. I interviewed all seven of the protégés’ former dissertation advisors, creating a total of fourteen semi-structured, in-depth interviews (seven dyads). All interviews were completed via Skype or telephone between March and July 2018. Please refer to Table 1 for a brief description of the participants. Interviews averaged 52 minutes in length and ranged from 38 minutes to 92 minutes. With the participants’ consent, I audio-recorded and transcribed all of the interviews. I listened to these interviews’ multiple times and also took detailed memo notes. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and excerpts were only edited to remove verbal utterances such as “um” and “uh.” Appendix A provides a list of the topics and questions covered in the interview.

**{**insert Table 1 here}

For the pilot study, all of the dyads were cross-race mentoring relationships, and four out of the seven dyads were cross-sex mentoring relationships. I utilized the Carnegie Classification system, a widely utilized framework used in higher education studies to control for institutional differences (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2018). All of the protégés had extensive years of industry experience, including serving in an array of leadership roles, before entering their doctoral programs. During the time of the study, two of the seven relationships were ongoing, characterized as a discretionary level of engagement due to a mutual task. One of the relationships was research active, whereas the other relationship was active because of a graduate level diversity course that the protégé continued to teach upon completing her degree. The remaining relationships did not necessarily sever ties; however, there were very minimum communications that occurred throughout the academic year between the partners in the relationship.

**Preliminary Findings**

I aimed to identify emergent and salient themes that arise while interviewing the participants in cross-sex and cross-race mentoring relationships. I first developed descriptive codes relating to the four phases of mentoring relationships. I then created sub-categories for each phase of the mentoring relationship (please refer to Table 2). This approach allowed me to organize the findings in a systematic manner; however, as I continue to collect more data this framework (Kram, 1983) may need to be refined, based upon the outcomes revealed in cross-sex and cross-race relationships in comparison to same-sex and same race mentoring relationships.

*Initiation Stage*

The initiation stage sheds light on how the protégé and mentor relationships developed. Across both formal and informal processes, there was significant variation in how protégés’ relationships formed with their dissertation advisors. Some doctoral programs were more structured and included formal interviews prior to admitting students. Two of the seven mentoring relationship developed through an interview process before the students began taking classes. The interviews provided protégés with an opportunity to learn about their mentors’ research and allowed mentors to determine whether or not the protégé would be a good fit for the program. In one scenario, James, a white male mentor at an R1 university in the management department, spoke about seeking out a strong candidate from the application pool. Clearly, there were signals that the protégé provided on his application packet that resonated with James.

“Well, actually you might even say it started before [Institution ABC] because when he sent in his application materials, I called him up, contacted him and…and made arrangements for him to come to the campus for an interview. So you can say I helped in recruiting him and then I think I may have worked with him starting his first semester.”

In this scenario, John, an African American male, spoke about how he felt his advisor was invested in his overall career development throughout his entire doctoral journey. Another faculty member, Michael, a white male mentor in the management department of an R1 institution, discussed how the college was beginning to formalize their admittance process to help strengthen the relationship that develops between the protégé and mentor.

“It has changed over the time [Michelle] came in. So, I would say that when [Michelle] came in, it was a little less formalized, but when we take a student, we’re definitely having conversations about like…somebody has to be saying I will, I will work with that person. So we’re not just…if no one raised their hand and say I can imagine working with that person, then they’re definitely not getting in.”

Moreover, the majority of the mentoring relationships were initiated during the protégés’ second year after completing a seminar or independent study with their former dissertation advisor. Seminars and independent studies provided a medium for students to engage with the faculty members on a more intimate level, gaining a better understanding of how they approached research questions and their preferred work styles. In this case, protégés took the initiative to speak with a faculty member of interest and requested for them to serve as their dissertation advisor. However, in some instances, protégés felt that they were limited in choosing a dissertation advisor who would be an overall good fit for their career progression. For instance, beyond having aligned research interests, issues such as work styles, personalities, and status often complicated the mentoring relationship. As shown in the quote below, Catherine, an African American female in the management department of an R1 institution, had to think about which instructor would be most effective in assisting her in completing her degree.

“I don’t think she was ideal. I think she was just what was available. So ideally, I think I would have had someone who you know our research interest was more aligned, um, I enjoy working with them, I did not enjoy working with her. But she was the only person, the only senior person in my department that, you know, that in order to get out of the program you have to pick a senior person, and of the two she [is] the one that I can understand the most.”

Lastly, due to the lack of fit, two of the seven relationships were formed in the later stages of the doctoral journey. Obviously, these relationships were unable to blossom like others, since they originated for the sole purpose of degree completion. As demonstrated in the quote below, relationships formed in the protégé’s later years presented several challenges, especially for mentors, such as Gary, a white male in the management department of an R1 institution, who was accustomed to building a rapport with his students in their first-year, allowing them to establish expectations and areas in which to collaborate.

“And see [Gamal], he wasn’t my student so, he started being my student in his fourth year and so he had his work habits and stuff like that…so, it wasn’t that close relationship because he was used to working like, working independently. So I see him less than what I saw my other students.”

Two of the seven mentoring relationships were initiated through a formal interview process, such that the mentor sought out the protégé. The remainder of the relationships were sought out by the protégés. In this process, protégés dealt with the tensions of choosing the best faculty member to assist them with completing their degrees. Relationships formed in the latter years of the doctoral journey did not share the same level of intimacy than those that developed in earlier years were able to develop.

*Cultivation Stage*

During the cultivation stage, protégés became very engrossed into the doctoral degree apprenticeship model. The structure of this model looked different at different institutions. At research intensive institutions, faculty were very intentional about placing students on their projects during their first and second year, so that they may begin to learn the process of writing, revising, and submitting to journals. Students were then responsible for taking more of an independent approach during their third and fourth year. Gary explains the process below:

“It’s a very, very close mentoring relationship. So like the model we have here, it’s very, very specific. It’s an apprentice model. You start with…in the first year, they usually start helping you with your research. Like how to look at data, how to write papers, and how to come up with ideas. So, again…we see our students, again, several times of the day. And then in the second year it’s kind of flipped. The second and third year it’s flipped where you start helping them with their research…the faculty. And then in their fourth and fifth year they’re supposed to be independent.”

This degree of faculty involvement was built into the departmental culture and was also visible to students. As stated by Michelle, some faculty members were not as forthcoming in providing their students with projects to work on. These students were held responsible for initiating projects, which can sometimes be troublesome without understanding the intricacies of the writing and publication process.

“He wouldn’t bring me in on anything he was already working on. Cause he would keep saying, well this is too far along, so this doesn’t make sense for you to come in. And in hindsight, some of the stuff was. Like if it was that close to being published, you know, it didn’t make sense for me as a first-year doctoral student to be coming in. There’s nothing for me to add. But everything that he was working on was not that far along.”

Also, in the cultivation phase, while often being the only racial minority person in their departments, protégés spoke about racial and gender challenges they encountered. Participants spoke about how they were the only student of color in the management department and the college of business. Whereas some protégés did not perceive their race or gender impacting their doctoral experience, other students spoke openly about it. Below Catherine spoke about how she believed her demographic characteristics impacted her ability to cultivate relationships with colleagues in the management department.

“It’s not one particular thing. It’s just they treat you like you’re not part of the club or group because you’re not their friend. Because they do research with their friends, and I just don’t fit what a friend looks like. So, it’s just a natural way of interacting with people that you know you’re a student…you know you are different from me, and I don’t think that you’re going to do well because you are black and a woman, and not what I’m used to. So, I don’t…have faith in that.”

Another protégé, Michelle, recalled an uncomfortable situation that another racial minority experienced during a scheduled seminar session when he commented on a speaker’s presentation:

“…but yea, just cursed at the student in the middle of the seminar. Very inappropriate and unprofessional. He ended up apologizing to the student later, cause it wasn’t cursing like cursing in conversation. He was like you know ‘effing answer the question’ you know one of them kind of things. Not very professional.”

As illustrated in the aforementioned quotes, protégés reported a range of overt and covert forms of racial discrimination during their doctoral degree experiences. Gender also became salient as it related to several students transitioning into motherhood. Two mentors specifically spoke about their students’ ability to manage motherhood along with their doctoral degree completion. The first mentor, Carol, was an Asian female in the management department who also had a family of her own:

“She never exhibited any evidence that you know that she couldn’t do this. That she…that it was too difficult for her or that she wasn’t motivated. That never happened, so…there was a period, I mean she was pregnant in the middle of the program, had a baby, things slowed down…she took an extra year in the program because of that, but that wasn’t a problem. I mean she just took an extra year.”

Given the unfavorable perceptions and stereotypes about working mothers, the protégé referenced in the aforementioned quote, Catherine, specifically talked during her interview about how she was a little unsettled about entering motherhood; however, she also explained how grateful she was to have a supportive advisor. This was not necessarily the case for Megan in the accounting department whose dissertation advisor, Mark, expressed being surprised to learn about his student’s decision to adopt a child during the dissertation phase of her program.

“You know that’s obviously is going to be a distraction. She handled it very well in terms of, still being able to get through and onto the market on time. But it wasn’t that sort of all in investment that one…you know I would like to see in a PhD student, at that critical phase, when they’re solely only focused on getting research done. So you know that’s…that’s, you just can’t do everything. There’s 24 hours in a day and 7 days in a week, and, you know people make choices how…what commitments they, they take on. So, I’m not saying that wasn’t the right choice for her, but it’s not what you…as a program, you wouldn’t want to see her, your doctoral students going up adopting kids. You know it’s just going to be, as a single parent, taking on a lot of distraction.”

Lastly, in the cultivation stage mentors’ expectations became more transparent to the protégés and also influenced the continuation of the mentoring relationship. As previously mentioned, the protégés attended some institutions that were more research-intensive while others were considered more balanced institutions. As articulated by Carol, the majority of faculty members at research-intensive institutions expected their students to follow the apprenticeship model and work towards being placed at a peer research institution.

“We want her to be at a school that you know will allow her to engage in research, as much research as possible, and have research support. So, she understood that. That kind of stressed her in the beginning because you know that’s harder to do. But she did it and she’s able to…I mean she understood, through our conversations, why that was important.”

Although some institutions took a different approach, students were expected to be actively involved with research projects but were not pressured to seek a job placement at a peer research institution. John recalls a moment when the faculty members had a conversation with his entire cohort about their expectations for the students on the job market.

“So they were very encouraging and let us know that they’re going to support us no matter what. They ultimately wanted us to be happy with our job because they didn’t want us to go to a place where we would burn out, not get tenured because that was like ‘these [Institution ABC] grads can’t produce,’ so they kind of understand…they kind of understood if you’re happy with your environment, you would produce at a high level.”

Only two of the seven protégés were placed at R1 institutions. One of those students completed her degree at an R2 school, amazingly, placing her at a higher-level institution than would have been expected. In the other mentoring relationships some incongruencies arose. For example,

Gamal, an African American protégé in the management department at an R1 institution, spoke about assessing the job market from a more comprehensive perspective, considering how his placement would also impact his wife and children. As a result of differences in demographics and family dynamics, Gamal decided to create his own blueprint for his academic career.

“It was harder for me to find people who were, who reminded me of me and all…who were family guys with kids, who had a working spouse that was not in academia, you know so that you are talking about your significant other’s career just like you’re thinking about your career and all that stuff, and so I just said man if I do what this person has done, why would I not end up in their situation. So I happened to say, I need to do something different if I want something different.”

The substance of the relationship occurred during the cultivating stage. Protégés were able to gain a better perspective about their mentors’ expectations through involvement with research projects and their dissertations. Other factors such as racial and gender adversities, along with family dynamics impacted how protégés identified with their mentors and navigated their collegiate careers, independent of their dissertation advisors.

*Separation*

The separation phase can be characterized as the period when protégés transitioned into a new chapter of their academic careers, i.e., a tenure-track assistant professorship. While gaining a new status, assistant professors were also crafting their identity as rising scholars in their fields. A key component that impacted the mentoring relationship included the protégés’ research projects and job placements. Protégés who decided to pursue a career at a balanced, research and teaching institution, had less contact with their former dissertation advisors after graduation than did those who had been placed at research-intensive institutions. Because they were now pursuing different goals as it pertained to research, contact was both less necessary and less likely. Protégés who chose a more balanced career were not faced with the pressure brought to bear on those at R1 institutions to publish four or five manuscripts in top-tier journals in order to get tenure.

The dynamics also varied for those who were placed at a research-intensive school. For example, Carol, spoke about her relationship with her mentor as remaining pretty much the same with the exception of distance. Since they were no longer in close proximity, they relied on technology to continue to collaborate on a project that they collected data for while the protégé was a student.

“I mean we talk continuously, I talk to her almost every week, unless she’s out of town or I’m out of town, but we talk every week. And we continue to make progress on our research…on the, you know, what is turning out to be a difficult paper, and quite a lot of work, but she’s doing it and I’m doing it, and we’re doing the best we can. But, we continue to have the same basic relationship, except for it’s through Skype or phone.”

Furthermore, networks became a central theme, as protégés attempted to gain traction with research projects and create co-authorship opportunities. As with any mentoring relationship, one of the benefits, specifically for women and racial minorities is being able to leverage their mentors’ social capital. Interestingly, three out of the four mentors spoke about not sharing their network with their former protégés, “I just don’t do that usually with my students. Like, I really don’t introduce them to people,” stated Gary. He felt the most critical value in gaining tenure and promotion is through publications.

“And I don’t think that it makes much more of a difference…like to the students. If the student has a good record, it speaks for itself, right. The fact that you introduce them is very, very minor. Nobody chooses, like to invite people because you introduced them at the Academy.”

To overcome this challenge, two of the seven protégés, who formed their mentoring relationships with their dissertation advisors during their later years, spoke about how they leveraged the Ph.D. Project to establish a publication pipeline and navigate their transition from a doctoral candidate to becoming an assistant professor. However, this phase of separation also resulted in several protégés feeling uncertain about how to form meaningful relationships with co-authors and to build a fruitful publication pipeline. Catherine shared her concern below:

“So yeah, I just talk to people to see if they would be willing to work with me or help me, so it’s very challenging, it’s very difficult, because I don’t think I know as many people as many others…or those who had advisors who are willing to work with them on multiple projects and introducing them to other people in networks. So, that was one of my biggest concerns when I got out of the program. So you know at this point I just kind of reached out to my peers or senior faculty within the department, and try to talk to them about research ideas and research projects.”

As demonstrated in the aforementioned quotes, the separation stage represented a crossroads for the mentoring relationship. Based on various levels of interactions and experiences, both parties were able to gain a sense of whether or not the relationship would continue as the protégé transitioned into the role of a tenure-track assistant professor.

*Redefinition Stage*

The redefinition stage represented the current state of the mentoring relationship, now that the protégé is a tenure-track assistant professor. In this phase, the distinction between the role of a mentor and an advisor was an emerging theme. While mentors often encompassed the role of an advisor, the reverse was not always true. The limited involvement of advisors as mentors was evident in comments by Michelle who preferred to use the term advisor as opposed to mentor during the interview, “So, as a mentor, I would say minimal, bare minimal; as an advisor, I think he did a great job getting me finished.” Advisors served in a more official capacity, overseeing the students’ dissertations and serving as consultants for other issues as it pertained to earning a doctoral degree, but mentors provided something more personal and more helpful that went beyond the formal requirements of seeing a doctoral student through to completion of the degree.

Although some faculty members defined their roles as advisors, others explicitly informed their doctoral students that they were there to support and coach them throughout the tenure and promotion process. For example, Gary stated, “I told him like ‘I don’t divorce my students until they get tenure.’” This level of support is beyond meaningful for women and racial minority students who are already underrepresented in their fields of study. It demonstrates that the advisor is genuinely invested in their development and wants to see them succeed in the field. However, to earn this level of support, protégés must perform due diligence by initiating and driving research projects.

Moreover, in the redefinition phase, there was also a shift in the way the mentor and protégé classified their relationship. As a student there was a clear hierarchical differentiation in status; however, gaining status as a tenure-track assistant professor allowed protégés, such as Megan, to relate to her former mentor as a colleague rather than as a subordinate.

“Yea, I would definitely say, you know, I seen it transition from being kind of being a senior subordinate relationship to more of a colleague-peer type of relationship.”

James, described his relationship as extending beyond academics and transforming into a friendship:

“Well I think…it didn’t…it didn’t take long even when he was here before he got his PhD for us to consider each other as a friend. We just…we got along well together and enjoyed working with each other.”

The same feelings were reciprocated by his protégé, John, who referred to his mentor as his “academic father.”

“Again, I go back to of him taking ownership of my development as a scholar. He’s like my academic father, I’m like his academic son. And like any parent, no matter what, when you leave the house, when you leave the nest, a parent will still want to be a parent to you, and make sure you, you know, make sure they’re there for you.”

Although James and John are not actively publishing together, they do make an effort to check-in via email and connect during annual conference meetings.

At the time of the interviews, only one of the seven dyads were still actively publishing together, and this was due to interview data collected when the protégé was a doctoral student. Several protégés spoke about reconnecting with their mentors now that that they have settled into their positions and have other projects that are moving along in the pipeline. Two of the seven protégés spoke about utilizing their former dissertation advisor as a reference for new job opportunities, and others spoke about connecting during annual conferences.

**{**insert Table 2 here}

**Discussion**

Based on past literature regarding diverse mentoring relationships, I anticipate that the transformation of cross-sex and cross-race dyadic relationships will take several forms, some of which will be perceived as less favorable than others. I expect context will play a significant role in those relationships that are able to flourish. In this paper, context will be examined from the lens of the department and institution in which the relationships are formed. Departments not only create explicit rules and cultural norms, but also implicitly inform faculty members what behaviors are (and are not) acceptable. In doing so, there may be written rules that address diversity and inclusion; however, in practice it may be of low priority compared to other aspects of completing doctoral programs. Hence, there may be faculty members for whom gender, and racial stereotypes have subtle effects.

Furthermore, though engaged in a cross-sex or cross-race mentoring relationship, protégés or mentors may experience perceived similarity. Perceived similarity often takes on the form of deep-level diversity, where the protégé or mentor feels a connection as a result of shared values, personality, beliefs or attitudes (Turban et al., 2002). Recent research has shown that protégés are likely to report favorable career outcomes when they perceive themselves being similar to their mentors compared to those who did not experience those perceptions (Eby et al., 2013; Ghosh, 2014; Turban et al., 2002).

Finally, I believe that racial minority protégés will rely heavily on support from peers and senior-faculty members with whom they share the same-sex or same-race. Individuals from the same-sex and same-race are likely to provide protégés with psycho-social support because they have had similar experiences and faced similar challenges while pursuing their doctoral degrees and navigating their careers in the academy. Presumably, those of the same-sex or same-race will be able to provide protégés with tangible strategies on how to mitigate barriers they may face, while simultaneously strengthening their self-confidence as participants in the field.

**Limitations and Future Research**

One of the main objectives of this research is to understand how and why mentoring relationships end or are transformed as the circumstances change for either the mentor or protégé. I am only able to understand the intricate dynamics of a relationship if protégés and mentors are willing to share their stories, which may not always be likely. Given that the academy is a fairly small, niche field, which becomes even more intimate once you examine it from a department perspective, faculty members are cautious about the information that they reveal. Thus, this research may be limited in examining the full range of nuances that continue to occur after the degree completion of proteges and oversample positive relationships.

Moreover, my focus on the transformation of mentoring relationships drawing on retrospective accounts, rather than in real-time, adds a significant contribution to the mentoring literature. Even so, retrospective accounts may not provide a full picture of what occurred between the mentor and protégé. Future research should consider a longitudinal study in which the mentor-protégé relationships are followed over time from inception. A longitudinal approach would make it possible to uncover the unique relational dynamics that occur at various stages (i.e., initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition) of cross-sex and cross-race, mentor-protégé relationships.

**Table 1:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Protégé** | **Mentor** | **Institution** | **Dept** | **Protégé Job Placement** | **Pre-Doc Publications** | **Post-Doc Publications** | **Status** |
| Black Female | White Male | R2 | ACCT | R1 | 0 | 0 | Ended |
| Bi-Racial Female | White Male | R1 | ACCT | M1 | 0 | 0 | Ended |
| Black Female | White Male | R1 | MGMT | Baccalaureate College | 1 | 0 | Ongoing |
| Black Female | Asian  Female | R1 | MGMT | R1 | 0 | 0 | Ongoing |
| Black Male | White Male | R1 | MGMT | R2 | 1 | 1 | Ended |
| Black Male | White Male | R1 | MGMT | M2 | 0 | 0 | Ended |
| Hispanic Male | White Female | R3 | MKTG | R3 | 2 | 0 | Ended |

**Table 2:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Description** | **Advisor-Advisee Relationship Salient Themes** | **Year** |
| Initiation | Time in which the relationship has started. | * Communications prior to becoming admitted * Seminar or independent study * Default to what’s available | 1-2 |
| Cultivation | Time in which the range of instrumental and psychosocial functions provided expands to maximum. | * Apprenticeship model * Program structure * Racial and gender dynamics | 3-4 |
| Separation | Time in which the established nature of the relationship is altered by structural changes in the organizational context and/or by psychological changes within one or both individuals. | * Status change to assistant professor * Aligned or misaligned research priorities * Cultivating a network for co-authorships | 4-6 |
| Redefinition | Time in which the relationship evolves a new form that is significantly different from the past, or the relationship ends entirely. | * Advisor’s mentoring philosophy * Protégés’ driving research projects * Relational shift | 5+ |

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