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

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Forms of Capital and the Construction of Leadership:

Instructional Leadership in Urban Elementary Schools

Using data from observations and interviews with 84 teachers at eight Chicago public elementary schools, this paper examines how, through a process of social construction, forms of capital are a basis for instructional leadership. We argue that teachers construct influential others as leaders based on 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. While teachers in our study construct school administrators as leaders based largely on cultural capital, teachers construct other teachers as leaders based on 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 paper 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 teacher learning and instructional change (Leithwood et al. 1982). Following Cuban (1988) and Lindblom (1977), we argue that such leadership efforts are socially constituted; for leaders to lead, others must agree to follow. As such, 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.

Our focus is instructional leadership, which we define 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 examine how teachers construct influential others as leaders. Specifically, we argue that the construction of leadership occurs through an interactive process in which followers construct others as leaders based on valued forms of human capital (skills, knowledge, 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' position. While teachers in our study construct school administrators as leaders based largely on cultural capital, teachers construct other teachers as leaders based not only on cultural capital, but also human and social capital.

FRAMING THE WORK

The Distribution and Bases of Leadership in Organizations

Scholarship recognizes the importance of principal leadership in creating incentives and opportunities for teachers to learn (Goldring and Rallis 1993; Liberman, Falk, and Alexander 1994; Louis et al. 1996; Rosenholtz 1989). Yet research has also shown that leadership extends beyond those at the top of organizations (Heenan and Bennis 1999; Katz and Kahn 1966; Lipmam-Blumen 1996). Likewise, instructional leadership is not the exclusive purview of the principal, as teachers and other professionals play important roles (Smylie 1989, Smylie and Denny 1990; Heller and Firestone 1995). Moreover, teacher leaders 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 (Rowan et al. 1991; Siskin 1994; Talbert, McLaughlin, and Rowan 1993, Bidwell 2001). Teacher networks that extend beyond the local school can also have a significant influence on teachers' work (Bidwell and Yasumoto 1999; Elmore, Peterson, and McCarthey 1996; Huberman 1995; Talbert and McLaughlin 1994). Taken together, this literature suggests that leadership is a

distributed phenomenon, spread across multiple actors in schools (Ogawa and Bossert 1995; Pounder, Ogawa, and Adams 1995; Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond 2001).

With respect to the bases of leadership, scholars have developed diverse typologies to describe the kinds of influence and power involved (Bass 1990; Butler and Harrison 1960; Earle 1997; French and Raven 1959; Goldhamer and Shils 1939; Read 1974; Weber 1968). Likewise, research on schools identifies multiple bases of leadership. While 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 (Johnson 1984; Treslan and Ryan 1986). Research also indicates that a principal's interactive style can motivate teacher change (Johnson and Venable 1986; Treslan and Ryan 1986). For example, Blasé and colleagues report that principals who engage in practices such as soliciting advice and opinions while praising teachers better motivate teachers to improve instruction (Blasé and Blasé 1998; Blasé and Kirby 1992). Scholars have also identified social capital as a basis of teacher leadership (Clift et al. 1995; Lortie 1975; Liberman, Darling-Hammond, and Zuckerman 1991; Little 1982; Rosehholtz 1989; Johnson 1990; 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 teacher leadership for instruction (Smylie and Hart 1999).

In identifying sources of leadership, scholars have also debated the manner in which leaders and followers constitute leadership. Indeed, French & Raven's model, which has been especially influential, has been criticized for a lack of conceptual clarity

in its five bases of power (Bass 1990). Specifically, whereas expert, reward, and coercive power were determined based on the leader's characteristics and resources, referent and legitimate power were defined in terms of followers' characteristics (Patchen 1974). While leader centric models that focus on the thoughts, actions, and traits of leaders are common (White and Lippit 1960; Mouton and Blake 1984; Likert 1967; Stodgill 1950, 1981; 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 (Simon 1991; Lindblom 1977). Weber goes so far as to state "every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance," (1968:212). In this vein, Meindl argues 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" (Meindl 1995:330-31). Though Meindl correctly draws attention to the role of followers in leadership, he has been criticized for downplaying the *substance* upon which followers make their constructions of leadership, substance that that emerges and changes over time as a product of concrete human actions (Schneider 1998:313; See also Ehrlich 1998). Wondering "is there a there there . . . " (Schneider 1998:311); these authors call for more integrated approaches. To quote Lord and Maher, "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" (1991:11).

Building on these literatures, we develop an integrated model to account for the relationship between leaders and followers and the multiple bases of leadership. On the one hand, we have an interest in the various tasks in which leaders engage. However, we also recognize that it is difficult for leaders to lead against the resistance of followers. As such, we posit a dynamic relationship, one 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 these capitals are valued by followers. As such, we examine 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. We center on four forms of capital as the basis of leadership: Human capital, cultural capital, social capital, and economic capital. In what follows, for the sake of clarity, we discuss these forms of capital as analytically distinct. However,

forms of capital are related in important ways (Coleman 1988), and teachers in our sample rarely mention a form of capital in isolation when constructing others as leaders.

Human capital involves a person's knowledge, skills, and expertise,[1] and is acquired through the development of skills and capabilities that enable people to perform in new ways (Schultz 1961; Becker 1964; Coleman 1988). An appreciation of human capital is found in existing literature on instructional change emphasizing the expertise of leaders (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 first 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 terms "embodied" cultural capital (1986), referring to internalized dispositions acquired through the life course and manifested in behaviors or "practice" (Bourdieu 1990, 1979). Like Lareau (1987) and Lareau and Horvat (1999), we emphasize acquired ways of being and doing, interactive styles that are of value in particular contexts. Such interactive styles are not whimsical moments, but tend to be habitual. They act as a cultural toolkit (Swidler 1986), providing a range of behaviors, enabling and constraining how people interact with others (Hallett 2002), *aside from* any kind of human capital they have about teaching. Where 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 (Blasé and Blasé 1998; Blasé and Kirby 1992), but only to the

extent that others in the situation *value* this acquired way of being. When this occurs, cultural capital becomes a basis for leadership construction.

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:S101-S102; Portes 1998). As discussed earlier, social capital appears frequently in studies of schools. Finally, economic capital includes money and other material resources including books, curricular materials, and computers, among other things.

Though forms of capital can become the basis of leadership, in themselves they mean little, and they can only be understood within interactive contexts (Lareau 1989; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Farkas 1996). 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 based on these forms of capital. Hence, to become a leader one must undergo a *process of valuation:* based on the possession of human, cultural, social, and economic capital, potential leaders must be constructed as "valid" by followers, who then attribute leadership to the leader.

Thus, leadership is constructed as leaders and followers enact and interpret forms of capital based on the meanings those forms of capital have for them (Blumer 1969). However, because actors enter situations where particular forms of capital have already been defined as "valid," this construction or "valuation" is not entirely voluntary (Lee

1998). Actors in this situation have the agency to construct leadership, but this agency is both the "medium and the outcome" of existing social structures (Giddens 1979, 1984).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on data from the Distributed Leadership Project, a four-year longitudinal study of elementary school leadership funded by the National Science Foundation and the Spencer Foundation. 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 sampling (Glaser 1978; Glaser and Strauss 1967) according to three dimensions. First, wanting to understand leadership in high poverty urban schools, all schools in our study have a minimum of 60% of students receiving free or reduced lunch (see Table 1). Second, we selected schools that vary demographically, including seven predominantly African American schools, three predominantly Hispanic schools, and three that are mixed (see Table 1). Third, we were chiefly interested in schools that had shown signs of improving mathematics, science, or literacy instruction (in terms of either process or outcome measures). Accordingly, we used the Consortium on Chicago School Research longitudinal database to identify elementary schools that had shown indications

of improvement on measures including “academic press,” “professional community,” and “instructional leadership” (process measures) and “academic productivity.”[2]

--- Table 1 About Here ---

Data Collection

For this paper we focused 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-one, and six of the year-one schools). This sub-sample was chosen because after analyzing the pilot data, we found that many of the people teachers cite as influential do not hold formal leadership positions. However, we could only understand the process through which teachers construct influential others as leaders when teachers explained *why* they identified particular people as influential. Because a focus on attribution was not a central concern in the original theoretical framing and did not feature prominently in the original interview protocol, data collection around this issue from the pilot phase was uneven, especially in interview-only sites. When teachers from the pilot identified certain people as leaders, sometimes they spoke at length about why and sometimes they did not, leaving a gap in our data. Based on our analysis of the pilot, our interest in the process of attribution increased and we built it into our overall theoretical apparatus and revised the interview protocols for our next round of data collection (year 1).[3]

Though 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 define instructional leadership as influence over teachers’ instructional practices. Therefore, we ground our indicators of

instructional leadership in questions to elicit teachers' reports of influences over specific instructional activities. Because we grounded our understanding of instructional influence in specific instruction 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 possessing certain qualities by virtue of their position rather than their actual behaviors.

In 45% of the interviews we had the opportunity to observe teachers' classrooms before hand. After our observations, interviewers asked teachers questions that focused on observed instructional practices, the influences on their instructional choices, and why they felt the people they identified were influential (Please see interview questions in Appendix A). We structured our interview questions to allow teachers to first reflect on their general practices (e.g., "why do you do this?") before moving into specific influences on these practices (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 teachers' instruction, we asked similar questions about influences over instructional changes. We were interested in determining if 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 felt 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. Though these hypothetical questions do not pertain to actual changes in instructional practices, they still bear on the subject for this paper by illuminating how teachers construct others as leaders.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis have been 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 based on the distributed leadership theoretical framework and initial analyses of our interview data. A commercial computer-based qualitative coding program—NUDIST—was used to code all project data. NUDIST allowed us to code the emerging ideas and concepts from the data into free nodes that can be compared and related to each other, forming larger "parent" nodes that can be stored into an index system that links the different components of the project.

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

Our third index tree 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 including economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, human capital, structural (i.e., proximity), and demographics (i.e., race and gender).

To insure reliability in the data analysis, all three authors collaborated on the development of the coding categories, analyzed interview data, and met regularly to reach a "taken as shared" understanding of each node. Having developed this common understanding, all of 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

This paper is concerned with people as instructional leaders. Of the 84 teachers in our sample, 83.3% (70) indicated that the principal shaped their instructional practices, while 28.6% (24) mentioned the assistant principal.[4] And yet 79.8% of the teachers' (67) identified other teachers as influential. However, to fully grasp instructional leadership we must move beyond the simple identification of an influential other to an understanding of the multiple bases upon which others are constructed as leaders.

Human Capital

In discussing influences on their practices, teachers in our study often refer to the knowledge, skill, and expertise (human capital) of others. Human capital is invoked more often when teachers in our study construct other teachers as leaders than it is when

teachers construct administrators as leaders (See Table 2). Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 45.2% (38) cite human capital in constructing other teachers as leaders.

--- Table 2 About Here ---

Teachers construct other teachers as leaders depending on the sorts of expertise other teachers possess. For example, when we asked Mrs. McClain to whom she turned for guidance and why, she replied:

> 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 values the skills, knowledge, and expertise that her team members possess, constructing them as leaders based on this human capital in a dynamic social relationship. However, this relationship is situated in particular subject areas. Mrs. McClain values Mrs. Bryant's expertise in math, especially her teaching technique and use of manipulatives. However, when it comes to science, Mrs. Rodriguez has more human capital. As for language arts, when Mrs. McClain has questions about different strategies she values Mrs. Diaz's human capital. Based on their human capital, Mrs. McClain

constructs each of these teachers as leaders. Yet the leadership is limited to particular areas of expertise, and distributed across each of these leaders by subject area.

Mrs. Archibald exhibits a similar valuation of human capital when she explains why she uses 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 going to not 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 constructs Mrs. Judson as a leader based on Judson's background in science, seeking her out for advice. As with the previous example, this construction is situated in a subject area context: Archibald values Judson's science related human capital, but says nothing of Judson around 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 explains: "these are people who are endorsed in their content area."

In the previous examples, the construction of leadership around "expertise" (human capital) involves 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 explains of 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 constructs Mr. Brisset and Mrs. Gregory as leaders because of the wisdom associated with ten years of teaching (human capital), a common finding in our data.

While human capital is invoked more frequently when teachers construct other teachers as leaders, some teachers construct administrators as leaders based on human capital (Table 2). Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 21.4% (18) cite human capital when constructing administrators as leaders (principal and assistant principal), while 7.1% (6) cite human capital in attributing leadership to certain specialists (defined as curriculum coordinators, instructional coordinators, etc., who spend less than 50% of their time in the classroom). To quote one teacher in regards to her principal:

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

When teachers construct principals as leaders based on human capital, it often involves knowledge about classroom teaching: "He understands it, knows it, has done it himself." In cases like these, teachers value the principals' expertise and knowledge as former teachers and construct them as leaders based on this human capital. Principals' legitimacy often comes from classroom experience and knowledge of instructional practices and not simply 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 acquired through the life course and used in social interaction. When others value and this way of being, this cultural capital becomes a basis of leadership, especially when teachers in our study construct administrators as leaders. Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 70.2% (59) mentioned cultural capital when constructing the principal or assistant principal as influential (Table 2). Consider the following remarks from a teacher in regards to 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 values this way of being and doing, constructs the principal as a leader based on her cultural capital, and in turn follows directives: "I guess I'm just a fool for people knowing how to talk to you and give you that kind of respect, and you get these things done." As a form of cultural capital, these interactive styles often become a basis of leadership construction:

> 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 don't, 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, teachers pay particular attention to the ways of being and doing that administrators bring to their interactions with others. In this example and others, teachers validate those who engage in a supportive style: “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.” A supportive style is actually an acquired form of cultural capital, and when valued, it is a basis for the construction of leadership.

Cultural capital also figures in teachers’ construction of other teachers as leaders, though somewhat less prominently compared with administrators. Of 84 teachers we interviewed, 59.5% (50) identified cultural capital in constructing other teachers as influential (Table 2). As Mrs. Watson explains:

> 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 is attracted to Mrs. Jefferson’s honest way of being and constructs Jefferson as a leader, seeking her out for advice despite the fact that they do not share any students in common. Jefferson’s candor becomes a basis for the construction of leadership.

Social Capital

A third species of capital evident in the construction of leadership is social capital. While social capital is relational in nature, for those involved in the relationship it can

become a kind of possession. In constructing leaders, teachers in our study frequently refer to their social networks or connections. Mrs. Rhodes explains how her principal's network with her former school came to influence 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 teacher sharing, successfully influencing the classroom practices of Mrs. Rhodes. Mrs. Rhodes constructs her principal as a leader based on 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 teacher sharing and learning. 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 lets me–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 fosters 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, “as long as I have a rationale for him, I can go. And that’s leadership.”

It is important to note that this relationship of trust is facilitated by the principal’s laid back interactive style, or what we have termed “cultural capital.” As mentioned elsewhere, capitals often operate in combination, and while 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 creating social networks.

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

> We have grade level meetings once a month. Sometimes a little more depending on what was going on. We usually, usually we have an agenda of what we need to do for a grade level meetings. Like—so it really doesn’t come up that often in grade level—it more comes 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.” I—just because they see that we really do work together when we’re planning things and everything. You know?

Grade level team meetings can put teachers in contact with each other, facilitating the creation of social capital: "We have a really strong fifth grade team. We work real well together." What we want to emphasize is that the social capital existing between teachers is a basis for the construction of leadership. The teachers in this group construct each other as leaders based on this social capital, facilitating the dissemination of human capital: "We're constantly sharing ideas with each other." In this way, teacher learning and sharing is intimately bound with teacher leadership as it is socially constructed. Not only is the social capital shared by this group a basis of leadership within the group, but it also fosters credibility in the eyes of other teachers outside of the group: "I've had other teachers from other grade levels say 'Wow. You guys have such a cool team.'"

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

Economic Capital

While economic capital does figure in teachers' constructions of leadership, it is less prominent than human, cultural, or social capital. This is particularly interesting in the case of principals whom we would suspect to be constructed as leaders based on economic capital (e.g., access to material resources). Teachers' refer to economic capital

in the form of money and material resources, at times constructing those who control these resources as leaders. One teacher cites her administration as influential in terms of:

> The books, instructional materials. You know some schools you don't even have that and we get an extra $350.00. Other schools get—receive only $50.00 from the office so we can use that extra $350.00 plus more that's allocated for each classroom to buy—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 provides teacher autonomy, but it also serves as a basis for the construction of leadership. Note that this teacher not only spoke of instructional materials, but she also made a conscious effort to recognize that the materials come from special budgeting, whereas other schools "receive only $50.00 from the office."

A teacher at a different school provides another example of how economic capital can be a basis for the construction of leadership. This teacher cites the principal as influential because "she's listening to what the teachers said about textbooks or lack of resources or need for help and she's making sure that the Chapter One 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 viewed positively by followers does it become a basis of leadership construction.

School administrators are not the only people in schools who possess economic capital. In discussing her lesson with us, Mrs. Cook explains: "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 shares her material resources with Mrs. Cook, resources Cook values. Based on these valuable resources, Cook constructs Mrs. Greyson as a leader, seeking her out for advice, and incorporating her materials into the lesson. Of the 84 teachers we interviewed, 27.4% (23) mention economic capital when constructing other teachers as leaders, while 23.8% (20) cite economic capital when constructing administrators as leaders (see Table 2).

As many of the previous examples indicate, the construction of leadership does not presume intent on the part of leaders. On the one hand, potential leaders may be acting intentionally, using impression management to enact their capitals in highly visible ways (Hallett 2002). On the other hand, capitals are things that people use in their daily practices, even if they aren't consciously making an effort to be a leader. Thus, someone who has no intention of becoming a leader may be constructed as a leader by others based on their 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 with shock, "I am?!"

THE SITUATED CONSTRUCTION OF LEADERSHIP: FORMS OF CAPITAL AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

Based on our interviews with 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. As previously mentioned, however, caution is in order as the

teachers we interviewed rarely cite forms of capital in isolation. Rather, they discuss 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 2 must be interpreted with some caution. The table is based on 84 teacher interviews from eight schools. Because the interviewees often cite 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%. The percentages represent the percent of teachers interviewed who cite a particular form of capital in reference to a particular person/position. Comparisons across the forms of capital and people/positions involved should only examine the numbers (and not percentages) because the reference point is the number of teacher interviews and 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 2 and Figure 1).

--- Figure 1 About Here---

Cultural capital appears to be especially important for administrators as leaders. Teachers in our study most frequently cite 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 based on expertise (human capital), material resources (economic capital), or the presumption that they possess such

capital. However, our data support other work suggesting that the *way* principals interact with teachers also motivates change (Blasé and Blasé 1998; Blasé and Kirby 1992).

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 based on their human capital when compared to administrators (see Table 2 and Figure 1). This is especially so when we look at the dismal score for “specialists”, i.e., curriculum coordinators, instructional coordinators, specialized teachers who spend less then 50% of their time in the classroom. These numbers seem to indicate that teachers believe important knowledge, skills, and expertise around instruction rest with other “ordinary” teachers.

The patterns identified above 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 administrator (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 examine how teachers construct influential others as leaders based on valued forms of human, cultural, social, and economic capital. While our model centers on how followers construct leaders, it does not portray leadership as an abstract construction devoid of what leaders do in practice. Rather, in our model, followers construct leaders based on valued forms of capital as enacted by leaders. Further, our account illustrates how the construction of leadership is situated in different interactions, with teachers constructing different leaders depending on the subject area, and constructing school administrators as leaders based largely on cultural capital, while constructing teachers as leaders based on 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 sample discuss the leadership of an influential other in terms of rational-legal positioning. In explaining why she discussed a particular lesson with her principal, one teacher explained: "I went to Dr. Ordonez because she's the principal. I wanted to be sure that I was doing the right thing." This teacher explains her principal's influence only in terms of position. Yet for the vast majority of the teachers in our sample, position alone is not a sufficient basis of leadership: Only 7 of our 84 teachers (8.3%) cited position alone when discussing the influence of administrators. Further, in some schools teachers *do not* value their boss, *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, and that many of those who are identified as leaders are not positional leaders.

Given that leadership is socially constructed, institutional theory might suggest that the legitimacy of leaders (and therefore the forms of capital attributed to them) result from a rationalization of formal structures and teachers' expectations of those holding 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 possess those qualities. Given prior work, we might suspect that positional leaders would be seen as possessing substantial human capital (e.g., knowledge and expertise) based on 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) are reported far less often than cultural capital when teachers describe the influence of school administrators. The attributions that

teachers in our study make to positional leaders do 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 is 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 based on forms of capital. To be sure, accountability measures influence instruction in the classrooms that we studied. For example, 41.7% (35) of the teachers in our sample cite Chicago Public School standards and frameworks as influencing their instructional practices. Additionally, 46.4% (39) indicate that standardized tests shape their instructional practices. However, as mentioned earlier, the vast majority of our teachers cite *other people* as influential, a relationship that gains clarity through a consideration of human, cultural, social, and economic capital.

A next step in developing a model of capital and the construction of leadership involves moving from the broadly illustrative interview data presented here and into 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. These concerns are a central focus in the second author's dissertation. We are also exploring three other areas of related interest: 1) the relationship between the of tenure of the school leaders and the forms of

capital used in the attribution of leadership; 2) exploring the connections between different forms of capital including human and social capital and cultural and social capital; and 3) relations 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, 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" presumed 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 into the cultural capital needed for leadership, or does cultural capital require a different, longer socialization processes? These questions form an agenda for future research, yet as important as these questions are, they are moot without an understanding of capital and the construction of leadership.

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ENDNOTES

[1] *In including "human capital," we acknowledge Bourdieu's reservations about human capital that he sees as indistinguishable from cultural capital (1986). However, in the context of elementary schools, it is useful to think of human capital as knowledge, skill, and expertise related specifically to the educational field, apart from cultural capital broadly defined. We also acknowledge that Weber associated expertise or human capital with rational-legal power.*

[2] *The academic press measure gauged the extent to which students felt that their teachers pushed them to reach high levels of academic performance. For 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 principal and teacher leadership (e.g., questions about setting standards, communicating a clear school vision). Finally, the academic productivity measure uses ITBS scores to determine the academic gain for students spending the entire year at individual schools. This measure is used to determine the productivity of schools over time. While we will use the Consortium's data on "academic productivity," a weakness with this measure is that the ITBS is inadequate to assess students' mastery of the more challenging reading and mathematics content. Further, all of these measures are proxies for a schools' engagement in instructional improvement, and improvement should not be attributed to school leadership. In addition to these measures, we interviewed school personnel and observers of the system to obtain their nominations of potential sites.*

[3] *Reliability checks on year 1 data uncovered problems with the data relating to followers' construction of leaders for one of the schools. Specifically, interviewers collecting data in that school had not consistently followed up with interviewees as to why they identified certain people as influential. Hence, we dropped this school from our study for the purpose of this paper. However, we did include one of the schools from the pilot, where probes had been used to pursue informants' reasons for attributing power and influence to others.*

[4] *These numbers cannot be added to create a "total" for administrators. Doing so would cause double counting, as teachers often cite both in the course of one interview.*

APPENDIX A: 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 non-observed 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 mathematics instruction identified by the informant]? [If no, skip to question D5]

D2. How long have been unhappy about [list aspect of MATHEMATICS/SCIENCE/LITERACY instruction identified by the informant]?

D3. Was there something or someone that helped you see your teaching of MATHEMATICS/SCIENCE/LITERACY or [list aspect of mathematics 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 non-observed 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 above], what would you do? [Try to focus the respondent on content, materials, teaching strategies, grouping arrangements as specific aspects of instruction] e.g., 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 etc.]

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?

Table 1. School Demographics

School	Student Enrollment	Low Income	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Limited English
School A	861	93%	100%	0	0	0	0	0
School B	1,048	69%	7	47%	22	24	1	38%
School C	1,498	73%	8	40	19	34	0	48%
School D	287	90%	100	0	0	0	0	0
School E	928	97%	3	0	97	0	0	46%
School F	363	97%	100	0	0	0	0	0
School G	1,054	97%	100	0	0	0	0	0
School H	1,331	96%	4	3	88	5	0	29%
School I	748	61%	100%	0	0	0	0	0
School J	662	88%	100%	0	0	0	0	0
School K	1,363	84%	3%	23%	23%	52%	0	23%
School L	503	64%	3%	53%	43%	1%	1%	25%
School M	889	96%	24%	1%	75%	0	0	36%

Note: Schools G- M formed part of the pilot study, with school G and H continuing as case study sites for the research project. In the pilot study, schools A, C, D and E were “interview only” sites, with no classroom observations done. The research currently involves 8 schools, A-H.

Table 2. 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
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 2 and Figure 1 must be interpreted with some caution. This table is based on 84 teacher interviews from our 8-school sub-sample, counting interviews in which the teachers indicated why a particular person was influential. Because the interviewees often cited multiple people and multiple forms of capital in one interview, the columns and rows cannot be added down and across, and do not add up to 100%. The percentages represent the percent of teachers interviewed who cite a specific form of capital in reference to a particular person/position. The percentages can only be used to compare the people/positions identified in association with a particular form of capital. Broader comparisons across the forms of capital and people/positions (Figure 1) can only examine the numbers, because the base number is the number of teacher interview, and not the total number of references to a particular form of capital or position/person (unfortunately, our qualitative data will not allow us to represent the data easily in this way).

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