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Source: *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Apr., 1997), pp. 482-521

Published by: [Academy of Management](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/259331>

Accessed: 26/07/2013 16:36

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DIVERSIFIED MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS IN ORGANIZATIONS: A POWER PERSPECTIVE

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A power perspective is used to examine the linkage between diversity and mentorship in work organizations. Sociological perspectives on power and minority group relations are used to develop and operationalize the construct of diversified mentoring relationships in organizations. The article examines behavioral and perceptual processes underlying diversified mentoring relationships and explores the relationship between diversified mentoring relationships and other work relationships. The consequences associated with diversified and homogeneous relationships are examined using a dyadic approach. The article closes by offering research propositions and discussing several implications.

Diversified mentoring relationships are a fact of life for minorities¹ in organizations. Diversified mentoring relationships are composed of mentors and protégés who differ in group membership associated with power differences in organizations (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation) (Ragins, 1995). Given the glass ceiling and the demographic composition of male-dominated organizations (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990), minorities are more likely to be in diversified relationships than majority members of organizations, who tend to be in homogeneous relationships with other majority members (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Murray, 1982; Ragins, 1989; Ragins & Cotton, 1991; Thomas, 1990). Research on cross-race and cross-gender relationships reveals distinct and important differences in mentoring processes and outcomes (Atkinson, Neville, &

I am grateful for the constructive comments from Special Consulting Editor Jim Breaugh, Editor Susan Jackson, and the five anonymous reviewers. I would also like to thank Sue Norton, Paul Sweeney, and the women who participated in the Smith College/Nag's Heart 1995 Feminist Conference on Ethnicity and Mentorship for their support and suggestions. An earlier version of this article was presented in the symposium "Diversified Mentoring: Developing Transformational Work Relationships for the Next Millennium" at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, August 6-9, 1995, Vancouver, Canada. Special thanks to Taylor Cox and Dave Thomas, who served as discussants in that symposium. This article was supported in part by a grant from the Marquette University College of Business Administration.

¹ Based on a sociological perspective that is presented later in this article, the term *minority* refers to group power rather than numerical status, and may include race, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities, age, class, religion, and sexual orientation.

Casas, 1991; Burke, McKeen, & McKenna, 1990, 1993; Murray, 1982; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Thomas, 1990, 1993). In developmental relationships the prevalence of diversified mentoring relationships for minority members and homogeneous relationships for majority members represents a significant schism in both composition and nature. It is therefore important to understand the nature of diversified mentoring relationships and the outcomes associated with these relationships.

A link between diversity and mentorship can also help expand and define the newly emerging field of mentorship in organizations. Initial theory on mentoring was based on white male samples (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978), which was limited to explaining homogeneous relationships among members of the dominant power group in most organizations. In recognition of the fact that mentorship models based on white males may not generalize to other groups, subsequent theory has attempted to differentiate the effects of gender on mentoring (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988a; Ragins, 1989). However, other dimensions of diversity associated with marginalization in organizations have been largely ignored (Nkomo, 1992). Microtheories for each marginalized group ignore the implications of multiple group membership, and take a limited, piecemeal perspective toward explaining diversity in mentoring relationships. A broader perspective recognizes that a common bond among marginalized groups is restricted power in organizations (Cox, 1993; Harris, 1994; Pettigrew & Martin, 1987; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). The power perspective has just recently been applied to understanding diversity in decision-making teams (Sessa & Jackson, 1995). In this article a power perspective is used to bridge the mentoring and diversity literatures and provide insight into the nature of diversified mentoring relationships and their outcomes.

Through this article, I seek to contribute to the development of mentorship theory not only by integrating a power and diversity perspective, but also by extending the unit of analysis to include both members of the relationship. Mentorship theory and subsequent research have been focused nearly exclusively on the mentor's role in the development of the relationship and the impact of the relationship on the protégé. However, a core assumption of this article is that the mentoring relationship is reciprocal; just as leader-member relationships are reciprocal in nature and function, mentoring is a dyadic relationship that is developed by both members and has outcomes for both parties (Mullen, 1994). Therefore, a dyadic perspective is utilized in defining and operationalizing diversified mentoring relationships and in exploring the outcomes associated with these relationships.

This article addresses the intersection of the organizational diversity and mentoring literatures. The goals of this article are (a) to expand the theoretical base for both of these newly developed areas, (b) to use a power perspective to bridge these areas, and (c) to provide propositions and directions for future research. Accordingly, in the first part of this

article I use a sociological perspective on power to bridge the areas of diversity and mentoring and define and operationalize the diversified mentoring construct. Following this, the distinction between diversified mentoring relationships and other work relationships is presented, and the underlying behavioral and perceptual processes inherent in diversified mentoring relationships are explored. In the final section of this article, I examine the consequences associated with diversified mentoring relationships and offer propositions and directions for future research.

CONSTRUCT DEFINITIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND BOUNDARIES

Definition of Mentoring

Traditionally, mentors are defined as individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support to their protégés' careers (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985). According to Kram (1985), mentors provide two primary types of functions or behavioral roles. First, they provide career development behaviors, which involve coaching, sponsoring advancement, providing challenging assignments, protecting protégés from adverse forces, and fostering positive visibility. Second, mentors provide psychosocial roles, which include such functions as personal support, friendship, acceptance, counseling, and role modeling. Some research has found support for the two mentorship factors of career development and psychosocial functions (Noe, 1988b; Schockett & Haring-Hidore, 1985), whereas other research found role modeling to represent a third factor that is distinct from psychosocial support (Scandura, 1992). Mentoring is not an all-or-nothing relationship. Mentors may provide some or all of these roles, and the provision of these roles may not only vary from relationship to relationship, but may also vary over time in a given relationship. Mentoring may or may not be publicly recognized or observable, and the members may not even recognize the mentoring component of their relationship until it is brought to their attention.

Mentors may or may not be employed in the same organization as the protégé, or be in the protégé's chain of command. Mentors employed in the same organization as their protégés (internal mentors), may provide more organizational resources than mentors employed outside the organization (external mentors). Internal mentors may be more physically accessible than external mentors, and may be in a better position to buffer their protégés from adverse forces, provide direct sponsorship to positions within the organization, and give their protégés challenging assignments designed to increase skills and self-confidence. External mentoring is aligned with the perspective that employees are increasingly concerned more with career mobility across organizations than hierarchical advancement within organizations due to corporate downsizing, nonwork influences, and workplace alienation (cf., DeMeuse & Tornow, 1990; Kanter, 1989). External mentors may have more interorganizational resources for

power than internal mentors, and may be in a better position to provide long-range career interventions and lateral career transitions for their protégés. External mentors are also removed from inside political fighting within organizations that may damage the protégé's career.

Perspectives on Power and Minority Groups

A variety of perspectives have been used to define power (cf. Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). The individual perspective defines power as the individual's ability, or perceived ability, to influence another (French & Raven, 1959; House, 1988) or to change others' behaviors (Dahl, 1957). According to the interpersonal perspective, power is a dyadic and reciprocal process in interpersonal relationships (Cartwright, 1959; Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). In contrast to these psychological perspectives, the more macro organizational perspective views power as a property of the structure of the organization and position, and involves control over persons, information, and resources (Hinnings, Hickson, Pennings, & Schneck, 1974; Pfeffer, 1981). Finally, under a sociological perspective, power is viewed as fluid relationships between groups in society (Blalock, 1989; Schermerhorn, 1956; Wilson, 1973). According to this perspective, power relationships among groups may be symmetrical, whereby both groups are equal, or asymmetrical, whereby one group dominates another group and has more power resources (i.e., money, prestige, property, natural resources, authority) (Bierstedt, 1950; Blalock, 1967, 1989). Power resources are fluid properties that change over time, and they determine the ability of a group to influence behavior and achieve group objectives (Blalock, 1967; Wilson, 1973). According to this sociological perspective, all groups are distinguished by changing power relations, and differential group power is the basis for social stratification in society (Lenski, 1966).

In the attempt to integrate the former perspectives, power is defined here as the influence of one person over others, stemming from an individual characteristic, an interpersonal relationship, a position in an organization, or from membership in a societal group (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). These perspectives on power reflect individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal levels of analysis. These four levels represent embedded systems that are interrelated; events at any one level influence and are influenced by other levels (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). However, the relationships among the levels are reciprocal but not necessarily symmetrical. In particular, the societal level of analysis has a prevailing influence on the lower levels of analysis (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Thus, the sociological perspective on power as a function of group relations permeates the other levels and may have a disproportionate impact on the individual's development of power.

The sociological perspective on power is also the most useful perspective for bridging the areas of diversity and mentoring in organizations. Whereas psychological approaches to power are beneficial for understanding interpersonal influence in dyadic relationships (i.e., how Individ-

ual A influences Individual B), sociological perspectives can provide important added insight into how intergroup power relations (i.e., how Group A influences Group B) influence dyadic relationships involving minorities.

Sociologists define *minority* as a concept grounded in power relations among groups (cf. Blalock, 1967; van Amersfoort, 1978). Race and ethnic relations are viewed and analyzed in terms of intergroup power relations and group power contests (Baker, 1983). The numerical relations between groups is seen as secondary to their power relationships (Schermerhorn, 1956; Stone, 1985; Wirth, 1945). As Stone (1985) observed, the situation of black Africans in South Africa illustrates that minority group membership is defined not by numbers, but by the power of the group, which may or may not be influenced by their numerical representation. Wirth's (1945: 347) classic definition of a minority as a "group of people distinguished by physical or cultural characteristics subject to different and unequal treatment by the society in which they live and who regard themselves as victims of collective discrimination" illustrates this concept. Schermerhorn (1956: 55) theorizes that "power relations furnish the chief agency through which minorities are differentiated . . . and set the basic frame within which acculturation, discrimination, prejudice, etc., do or do not take place." Finally, Blalock's (1967) theory of race and power relations holds that minority and majority groups are defined by power relationships and attempts to mobilize competitive power resources in society.

In short, there are two sociological perspectives on power. According to the first, power is defined in terms of group relationships, and groups develop resources for power (Bierstedt, 1950; Lenski, 1966; Wilson, 1973). This perspective has been applied to organizations; Mintzberg (1983), for example, observed that power relationships among societal groups infiltrate and perpetuate group power relationships in organizations. The second perspective builds on the first and defines the construct *minority* in terms of power relationships among groups and the competition for power resources (Blalock, 1967; Schermerhorn, 1956). This perspective has received scant attention in its relation to organizations in general, and its relation to diversity in organizations in particular. Alderfer and Smith's (1982) intergroup theory touches on this issue; they observed that groups are embedded within other groups in organizations, and that group boundaries and relationships are influenced by intergroup power differences and the types of power resources available to groups. Sessa and Jackson (1995) took a more micro approach, and observed that status and power of group members mediate the relationship between team diversity and group outcomes. As suggested by Blalock (1967), there is a need to link the macro sociological perspectives on power and minority group relations with the micro psychological perspectives on power and influence in diverse dyads and groups. I make this bridge by applying the macro sociological perspective on power resources and minority group relations to the more micro level of diversified mentoring relationships. Sociological perspectives on power are particularly relevant to the area of mentoring,

because, as discussed in the following sections, mentoring relationships focus on the development of inter- and intraorganizational resources for power.

Based on the sociological theories reviewed here, a central premise of this article is that an individual's group membership influences his or her ability to develop inter- and intraorganizational resources for power. Based on an integration of sociological and organizational perspectives on power, power resources are defined here as control over persons, information, and organizational resources, which also involve the development of authority, credibility, and perceived expertise. Although within-group differences in power exist (cf. Ferdman, 1995), between-group differences set the foundation for the individual's ability to develop power within and between organizations.

A related premise of this article is that mentoring relationships do not occur in a vacuum; they are influenced by macro dynamics of intergroup power relationships in organizations. These intergroup power relationships vary from one organization to the next. The fluid and dynamic properties of intergroup power relations may result in subtle or dramatic shifts in power relations among groups in organizations. The micro dynamics involved with interpersonal influence in mentoring relationships are influenced by the individual's group membership and the organizational resources for power available by virtue of that membership. The complex relationship between power and mentoring relationships is examined at length in the next section.

Power and Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships involve two kinds of influence: one internal to the relationship that focuses on interpersonal influence, and the other external to the relationship that involves the development of power in organizations. These forms of power are interrelated in that external organizational influence can affect interpersonal influence in the relationship and vice versa.

Mentoring is intricately tied to the protégé's development of resources for power within and between organizations. Existing research indicates that the presence of a mentor is associated with power resources and that protégés report more positional power (Fagenson, 1988), receiving more promotions and compensation (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Scandura, 1992; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991) than nonprotégés. Mentors may help their protégés recognize the importance of developing power resources within and between organizations, and can provide training in political skills and influence strategies. By providing challenging assignments and placing protégés in visible positions, mentors can help protégés develop expert power and obtain visibility within and outside organizational boundaries (Kanter, 1989). According to Kanter (1977), mentors provide "reflected power" to their protégés; the mentor's organizational influence augments the protégé's influence, and the mentors' power allows

them to provide resources for their protégés and buffer their protégés from adverse organizational forces. Mentors may increase the "employability" of protégés, and allow for lateral career transitions across organizational boundaries (Kanter, 1989).

Yet the mentor may also gain power from the relationship. A protégé's performance is a direct reflection of the mentor's competency in selection and training (Levinson et al., 1978), and it affects the mentor's status and credibility among peers and supervisors (Kram, 1985). A protégé's performance may result in positive recognition among peers, and some organizations may formally recognize mentors' contributions to their protégés' performance. The mentor's power resources also may be increased by the protégé's provision of updated job-related information and a loyal base of support (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Scandura, 1994a). A protégé's performance may have a positive or negative impact on the mentor's reputation, which may be related to the mentor's career satisfaction and success (Kanter, 1989).

The relationship between mentoring and power is reciprocal and complex. As can be seen from the preceding discussion, mentoring influences the protégé's and mentor's power in organizations, but the partners' organizational resources for power also affect interpersonal influence within the relationship. However, because power is a perceptual phenomenon, the relationship between external power and internal processes may not always be congruent. For example, whereas it is generally expected that mentors who have more power in organizations should have greater ability to influence their protégés than those who do not, a mentor with limited organizational influence may still have strong interpersonal influence in the relationship based on expertise. Moreover, a mentor's power in the organization may be over- or underestimated by his or her protégés, or others in organizations. It is therefore important to separately estimate perceptions of power internal to the relationship from those external to the relationship.

The perceptual nature of power makes it particularly susceptible to group stereotypes and attributions. Members of minority groups are found at lower ranks and have less power in organizations than their majority counterparts (Cox, 1993; Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). However, even if individual minority mentors have equivalent power as majority mentors, they may not be perceived as such by their protégés. As discussed later in this article, power attributions are influenced by group membership, and may lead to underestimation of minority mentors' power by the protégé, others in the organization, or even by the mentor. Inaccurate perceptions may not only deplete a mentor's power in the relationship, but it may also dissipate the mentor's power in the organization. For example, a mentor may not reap the power benefits associated with training a protégé if peers discount the mentor's role by attributing the protégé's performance to factors other than the mentor's grooming. This case illustrates the incredible degree of complexity involved with

understanding the relationship between perceptions of power and expectations based on group membership. A female mentor, for example, may have strong interpersonal influence in her relationship, but if she underestimates this influence, she may restrict her ability to build on it by developing coalitions and external resources for power, which in turn may restrict her organizational influence and eventually erode her interpersonal power within the relationship.

Finally, it is important to understand the complex and sometimes incongruous relationship between organizational rank, power, and minority group membership. The relationship between rank and power differs for minority and majority members; minorities are less likely to have the power associated with their position than majority members of organizations (cf. reviews by Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Rank is therefore not as consistent or reliable an indicator of positional power for minority members of organizations. Moreover, minority and majority members may have to develop different resources for power to obtain the same positional power. As discussed previously, group membership is a foundation for the development of an individual's power. Therefore, even if a minority mentor obtains equivalent positional power as a majority mentor, the minority mentor started with less of a power base by virtue of his or her group membership. Moreover, due to biased perceptions and attributions, minority members' power bases may be more open to attack and therefore less tenable than their majority counterparts. The minority member therefore had to exert more effort and establish different and acceptable power bases by employing such strategies as developing specialized expertise and credentials, joining external and internal power coalitions, and demonstrating exceptional job performance.

The Diversified Mentoring Construct

Diversified mentoring relationships are composed of mentors and protégés who differ on one or more group memberships associated with power in organizations. In male-dominated organizations, for example, diversified mentoring relationships may involve the pairing of a majority mentor (a white male) with a minority protégé (a woman or member of another minority group). Although less common, diversified mentoring relationships may also involve a minority mentor and a majority protégé. Similarly, homogeneous mentoring relationships are composed of two minority members or two majority members. It should be noted that diversified mentoring relationships are not intrinsically better or worse than homogeneous relationships; each has costs and benefits, which are explored at length in subsequent sections of this article.

Whereas the construct of diversity in mentoring relationships may be viewed as dichotomous for classification and practical assessment purposes, on a conceptual level it is important to recognize that diversity is a continuous variable. Individuals can hold multiple group member-

ships that are associated with power differences in organizations, and the power differences between these various groups may vary. It is therefore important to consider the degree of diversity within mentoring relationships.

One factor influencing the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships is the number of power-related groups in which a mentor and protégé differ. For example, the pairing of a gay, white, male mentor with a heterosexual, black, female protégé would constitute a relationship with a greater degree of diversity than the pairing of a white male mentor with a black male protégé.

In addition to the number of power-related groups in which the mentor and protégé differ, the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships is also influenced by the differences in power between the groups and the significance of those differences. A mentor and protégé may belong to groups with distinct power differences, but may not perceive the differences as being valent or important in their relationship. However, as discussed earlier, it is important to recognize that even if the power differences between groups are not considered to be important by the members of the relationship, the differences may still be important to individuals external to the relationship who can influence the relationship dynamics and outcomes. Accordingly, the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships should incorporate both internal and external perceptions of power differences between groups, and the significance of those perceptions.

The degree of diversity in mentoring relationships may therefore be illustrated by the following equation:

$$d = \sum_{k=0}^n \{(P_{ik}V_{ik}) + (P_{ek}V_{ek})\}$$

where

d = the degree of diversity in the mentoring relationship

n = the number of power-related groups in which the mentor and protégé differ, ranging from 0 to n.

P = the power differences between groups

V = the valence associated with power differences between groups

i = internal to dyad

e = external to dyad

The degree of diversity in the relationship is therefore a function of the number of power-related groups in which the mentor and protégé differ (n), the differences in power between the groups (P), and the significance or valence attached to the differences (V) by the mentor and protégé (i: internal) and others in the mentor's and protégé's organization(s) who can influence the development and outcomes of the relationship (e: external). For example, if the mentor and protégé differ on gender, perceptions of gender differences in group power and the valence associated with the differences should be assessed from the mentor's and protégé's perspec-

tives, which are summed to constitute the internal term, and from pertinent members of the organization (i.e., other managers, supervisors, peers), which are summed to constitute the external term. This assessment would be conducted for each group in which the mentor and protégé differ, and then summed across groups to yield the degree of diversity in the mentoring relationship. It should be noted that the equation assumes equal weighting of the internal and external terms. The equation also measures similarities as well as differences: higher scores reflect greater degrees of diversity in the mentoring relationship, whereas scores that approach zero reflect greater similarity in pertinent group membership.

In cases of new constructs, it is often helpful to provide specific information on measurement issues and methods for employing the construct in future research. Accordingly, the diversified mentoring construct may be measured as follows. In order to obtain the values in the equation's internal term, the mentor and protégé should be presented with a list of groups that reflect significant power relations in their society (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability), and asked to indicate their group membership and that of their partners. This provides information on the number of power-related groups in which the mentor and protégé differ. For each group, the mentor and protégé rate the power differences between the groups using an interval scale. (As described earlier, power differences may be defined as differences in group influence based on control over persons, information, and resources in the organization.) Because all group differences are not equivalent in their importance to the members, for each identified group, the respondents should attach a numerical value (0 to 1.0) indicating the valence or significance of that specific intergroup power difference to their relationship. Because the model is multiplicative, individuals who perceive intergroup power differences in their relationships, but assign no importance to those differences, essentially obtain an internal score of zero for that group dimension.

The external term measures intergroup power differences in the organization, as perceived by individuals who can influence the outcomes of the particular mentoring relationship. There are various approaches to selecting these individuals. One is to ask the mentor and protégé to nominate individuals who are in the position to influence the outcomes of their relationship. This is particularly useful if the mentor and protégé are in different organizations. Alternately, the researcher may choose individuals based on organizational charts or other data. The selected group of individuals should be asked to rate the power differences between the groups that were identified by the mentor and protégé, and the importance or valence of those differences to their relationship with the mentor and/or protégé. Scores are summed across raters and groups to yield the external term in the equation.

Because membership in some power-related groups is not readily detectable or disclosed (i.e., sexual orientation, religion, class), there may be some divergence in reports of these particular group memberships

within the internal mentoring dyad or between the dyad and external sources. For example, a protégé may assume that his mentor is gay when this is not the case. Even though the protégé is mistaken, the perception of group membership may still affect the protégé's relationship with the mentor, and this variance should therefore be captured in the equation. Therefore, even if the mentor and protégé do not agree on their group memberships, their evaluations of those memberships should still be included in the computations. Because the scores of the mentor and protégé are summed to obtain the degree of diversity in the relationship, a relationship that has misperceptions as to group membership would still receive a lower score of diversity than a relationship that had accurate perceptions of group membership. Similarly, if external sources do not perceive group differences in a mentoring relationship, the computed degree of diversity would still be less than if all parties involved identified the same group differences.

As discussed previously, the construct of diversity in mentoring relationships should conceptually be viewed as a continuous variable that reflects multiple group memberships and variations in intergroup power perceptions. However, for practical purposes of assessment and classification, mentoring relationships may be artificially dichotomized into *diversified* and *homogeneous* relationships using median splits or other methods. While dichotomizing loses variance, it can provide greater clarity for model-building and assessment purposes. Please note, therefore, that the terms *diversified* and *homogeneous* when used in this article reflect an artificial dichotomization of the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships.

Boundaries

There are a number of boundary conditions for the diversified mentoring construct. The first is the potential for asymmetrical relationships among minority groups in organizations due to societal group relations. As was discussed, organizations are embedded within society, and societal power relationships among groups influence power relationships within organizations. Groups that are in the majority in the society but in the minority in organizations should not be equated with groups that are minorities in both settings. For example, male minorities in female-dominated organizations may be granted power by virtue of their societal group membership, and therefore they are not comparable to female minorities in male-dominated organizations, even though they are both members of "minority groups based on gender" in their respective organizations. This represents an asymmetrical power relationship among individuals who appear to share the same minority group, and illustrates the importance of measuring specific intergroup power differences in mentoring relationships within each organizational setting.

Second, it should be noted that power relationships between groups vary by culture, and the very construct of minority may change by cultural

setting. For example, power differences between Jewish, Muslim, and Christian groups in the United States are very different from those in Israel or Bosnia. It is therefore important to include all relevant power-related groups when assessing power differences in organizations in different cultural settings.

A final boundary condition is that this article deals primarily with informally developed, voluntary² mentoring relationships that occur within work organizations, rather than other organizations, such as schools. Informal mentoring relationships develop naturally and spontaneously, and can be traced back to ancient Greece (Hunt & Michael, 1983). Formal mentoring relationships are a recent organizational intervention aimed at replicating the informal relationship (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992). Formal relationships occur less frequently than informal relationships, and may involve a variety of organizational interventions, usually in the form of voluntary assignment over a specified period of time.

BEHAVIORAL AND PERCEPTUAL PROCESSES IN DIVERSIFIED MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

In this section diversified mentoring relationships are first differentiated from other work relationships in organizations, and the perceptual, behavioral, and psychological processes unique to diversified mentoring relationships are then explored. The outcomes associated with these processes are discussed in the next section of this article.

Mentoring relationships are unique in that the primary focus of the relationship is on the development of inter- and intraorganizational power for the protégé and, to a lesser extent, the mentor. Mentors use their organizational power to promote the development and advancement of their protégés within and among organizations. Mentors may groom their protégés for promotions, give them visible and challenging assignments, allow them access to inner power circles, and put them on the right track for career mobility (Kram, 1985; Levinson et al., 1978). Mentors also may gain organizational power from their mentoring relationships; protégés provide a loyal base of support and updated job-related information that may be used to build the mentor's power. Additionally, the protégé's performance is a direct reflection of the mentor's judgment and competency, which affects the mentor's status, reputation, and credibility in the organization (Kram, 1985; Levinson et al., 1978).

² With the recent surge of interest in mentoring, the voluntary nature of informal mentoring relationships may be changing. In some organizations managers and subordinates may be expected to enter mentoring relationships, which creates a less than voluntary approach to the development of informal mentoring relationships. However, the incidence of nonvoluntary informal mentoring relationships has not been empirically assessed. Involuntary informal mentoring relationships may be distinctly different from voluntary informal and formal relationships. For the purpose of clarity, this article focuses on voluntary informal mentoring relationships.

Mentoring relationships also have unique qualities involving influence processes within the relationship, most notably the role modeling and identification behaviors. For the mentor, the decision to enter a relationship occurs in mid-career life stages that involve reassessment of career and life accomplishments and the recognition of mortality (Erikson, 1963; Levinson et al., 1978). By viewing protégés as a younger version of themselves, mentors identify with their protégés and view them as representative of their past. The relationship provides the mentor with generativity, which is the sense of contribution to future generations (Erikson, 1963). From the protégé's perspective, the relationship occurs in early life stages that involve the formation of professional identity (Kram, 1985; Levinson et al., 1978). The protégé's selection of a mentor is often based on identification with the mentor and the perception of the mentor as a role model. In this sense, the mentor identifies the protégé as representative of his or her past, whereas the protégé identifies the mentor as representative of his or her future. This may be a contributing factor to the often-cited intensity of the relationship and the parallels drawn between mentoring and parent-child relationships. Although there are numerous other ways in which mentoring relationships differ from other work relationships, these are the core distinguishing factors pertinent to diversified mentoring relationships.

Diversified mentoring relationships are unique from other work relationships because of the distinct power functions of the mentoring component of the relationship, and also because of the differences in power brought to the relationship by virtue of group membership. As discussed previously, an individual's group membership influences his or her ability to obtain resources for power. Because power and influence are key processes in mentoring relationships and are also the distinguishing factors behind minority group distinctions, research and theory on behavioral and perceptual processes associated with minority group membership can shed insight into the behavioral, perceptual, and psychological processes associated with diversified mentoring relationships. Accordingly, fruitful areas that may be applied to diversified mentoring relationships include: stereotypes and attributions, perceived competence, visibility, performance pressures, shared identity and interpersonal comfort, and work group support. These areas are considered below.

Stereotypes and Attributions

Stereotyping is defined as "a cognitive structure that contains the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectancies about some human group" (Hamilton & Trolie, 1986: 133). Stereotypes are used to process information and categorize individuals into groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and result in the perception of homogeneity within groups and heterogeneity between groups (Hamilton & Trolie, 1986).

Current theoretical perspectives suggest a complex and reciprocal relationship between stereotyping and power in organizations. Fiske (1993)

proposed a mutually reinforcing interaction between power and stereotyping. According to this perspective, stereotypes limit behavioral options, and in so doing promote asymmetrical power relationships among individuals. Asymmetrical power relationships, in turn, promote stereotyping because people with power do not pay attention to individual differences that may dispel stereotypic impressions. Along similar lines, Ragins (1995) proposed that the image of power in organizations reflects those who have it, and therefore this image incorporates attributes of the dominant group in exclusion of other groups. For example, whereas power is often viewed as the "ability to influence," it may be associated with the "ability to control," a male-typed attribute, rather than the "ability to achieve consensus," a female-typed attribute. In support of this image, stereotypes associated with minority groups are distorted to incorporate characteristics that are antithetical to dominant perceptions of power (i.e., minority groups may be viewed as nurturing, weak, supportive, and lacking initiative). Like Fiske (1993), Ragins proposed a self-perpetuating process whereby stereotypes reinforce asymmetrical power relationships among groups in organizations. Minority group stereotypes are antithetical to power and result in the maintenance of group power relations and the use of dominant group characteristics to define power. Because the perception of individual power is based on group stereotypes, individual minority members are unlikely to be perceived as having power, and are therefore less likely to obtain the power necessary to change the dominant view of power in organizations.

Existing research provides general support for these perspectives and indicates that stereotypes limit and distort perceptions of power and attributions regarding sources of influence among minority groups in organizations (cf. reviews by Pettigrew & Martin, 1987; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Empirical studies consistently reveal that both genders perceive men as having more and different forms of power than women, irrespective of actual power (cf. review by Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Race and ethnicity have also been found to influence attributions regarding organizational success (cf. review by Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). In short, even if minorities have equivalent resources for power as their majority counterparts, perceptions of their power may be distorted and underestimated because of stereotypes and attributions.

Stereotypes and attributions directly affect perceptual processes within and directed toward diversified mentoring relationships. As the ability to develop power in the mentoring relationship is based, in part, on perceptions of competency and performance (cf. House, 1988), negative attributions may have the net effect of attenuating the development of power for minority members. Stereotypes may distort and limit perceptions of a mentor's power and attributions about sources of influence (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Existing research suggests that minority and majority protégés may view minority mentors as having less power than majority mentors, and may view them as less able to

provide for their protégés' career needs. Brefach (1986) found that women rated male mentors as having more power at work than female mentors, and Erkut and Mokros (1984) found that male students avoided selecting female faculty members as mentors because they were viewed as having less power than their male counterparts. As discussed previously, even if minority mentors overcome group impediments and develop equivalent power as their majority counterparts, they may not be perceived accurately by their protégés or others in the organization. Moreover, if minority mentors internalize these attributions and stereotypes, they may also underestimate their own power. These inaccurate perceptions may further attenuate the mentor's power in the relationship and his or her ability to develop external resources for power in the organization.

Perceived Competence

Perceived competence is an important ingredient in the development of power (Blalock, 1989), and existing theory suggests that it is also linked to group membership. According to status characteristics theory, individuals base their perceptions and expectations of others' competence on physical, observable characteristics associated with status, such as race or gender (Berger, Fisek, Norman, & Zelditch, 1977). Status characteristics are culturally associated with general expectations for ability and competence, and existing research indicates that gender and race are status characteristics associated with erroneous perceptions of reduced competence (cf. Lockheed & Hall, 1976; Nemeth, 1988). Status is traditionally viewed as a consequence of power (Bierstedt, 1950), but to the extent that ability and competence are inferred from status, status may also influence individuals' power in organizations. Status characteristics theory suggests that minorities may be faced with a vicious cycle: inaccurate perceptions of competence may deplete their future ability to change status associations and develop power.

Existing research indicates that perceptions of minority members' competence are also negatively influenced by stereotypes and attributions (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). Laboratory studies portraying men and women with equivalent characteristics result in different appraisals of performance by both male and female raters (cf. reviews by Landy & Farr, 1980; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989), and other studies have found rater effects favoring whites over blacks (cf. Ilgen & Youtz, 1986; Landy & Farr, 1980; Sackett & DuBois, 1991). Even when holding performance ratings constant, attributions may distort perceptions of competence. Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1993), for example, found that the performance of highly successful black managers was attributed to help from others, rather than ability and effort. In short, not only are minority members' performance viewed as less effective than majority members' performance, but even when performance is viewed as effective, it is less likely to be attributed to internal ability and competence (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993; Pettigrew & Martin, 1987).

These findings have direct implications for perceptions and behaviors in diversified mentoring relationships. For example, effective performance by minority protégés may be attributed to the mentor providing remedial attention to compensate for the protégé's inadequacies. If the mentor is a member of the majority and the protégé performs well, the protégé's success may be attributed to the mentor's effectiveness. However, if the mentor is a minority, the protégé's success may be attributed to the protégé's ability, if the protégé is a majority member, or to extraneous factors if the protégé is a minority.

These perceptual processes suggest that minority mentors and protégés may need to employ specific behavioral strategies to offset stereotypic assumptions and attributions regarding their performance. One behavioral strategy holds that minority mentors and protégés become "superachievers" in order to overcome assumptions of incompetence. Minority mentors and protégés may also engage in specific impression management behaviors to counteract negative attributions and perceptions (Nemeth, 1988; Tedeschi & Riess, 1981). According to status characteristics and expectation states theory, negative expectations and inferences can be overcome if alternative and conflicting status cues, such as education or occupation, are presented (Berger, Conner, & Fisek, 1974; Berger et al., 1977). Nemeth (1988), however, cautioned that although minorities may choose behaviors that run counter to expectations, behavioral expectations are resilient and can determine what is observed and how it is interpreted and evaluated.

According to existing research, these behavioral strategies are used by minorities who are successful in organizations. For example, a recent study of 461 women executives by Catalyst (1996) revealed that they attributed their success to consistently exceeding performance expectations, presenting themselves in a way that made male coworkers comfortable, and having a mentor. This study, as well as others (cf. review by Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989), suggests that minority members in mentoring relationships may counteract negative performance attributions by planning and implementing deliberate actions and by developing unique skills or expertise that defies role stereotyping and expectations and makes them indispensable to the organization.

Visibility and Performance Pressures

Perceptions of competence and stereotypic expectations may be related to numerical representation in organizations. Kanter (1977) theorized that individuals who are in the numerical minority in organizations face increased visibility, performance pressures, and behavioral expectations based on group stereotypes. In support of this theory, Ely (1995) found that gender roles were more stereotypical in firms with few women in positions of power than in firms with more balanced representation. To the extent that individuals who are in the minority with respect to power relations may also be in the minority with respect to numerical representation, it is

important to consider the effects of visibility and token status on diversified mentoring relationships.

Visibility increases the risks associated with being in a diversified mentoring relationship. Because visibility magnifies both the successes and failures of the protégé and mentor, the potential costs of mentoring or being mentored by a minority member are greater in relationships involving minority members. Because the protégé's performance is a reflection of the mentor's competence in training and selection (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Scandura, 1994a), a protégé who is perceived as "incompetent" may attenuate the mentor's status and resources for power in the organization. This risk is amplified because the performance of minority protégés may be misperceived and underestimated due to stereotypes and attributions. Similarly, the competence of minority mentors may be questioned in a highly visible fashion. A mentor who is viewed as incompetent casts a negative light on the protégé's competency, and also restricts the protégé's ability to use the mentor to develop resources for power.

One behavioral outcome of visibility and performance pressures is that minority mentors may face greater barriers to assuming a mentoring role than their majority counterparts, particularly when their protégés are also visible minorities. Due to their precarious positions and limelight status, minority mentors can ill afford the loss of power and influence in organizations by being in a relationship with a protégé who is perceived as a "poor performer." Indeed, potential female mentors report lacking the time to be a mentor and wish to avoid the visibility associated with mentoring another woman (Bowers, 1985; Brown, 1986). One study of matched male and female middle managers revealed that women were more likely than men to report that they lacked the time to be a mentor, that they had enough trouble taking care of their own jobs without having to worry about others, and that they wanted to avoid being put in a bad light by their protégé's failures (Ragins & Cotton, 1993). However, gender differences in being a mentor were not found among a matched sample of high-ranking female and male executives, suggesting that rank and positional power may offset the risks associated with being a visible mentor (Ragins & Scandura, 1994a).

It is important to note that although minority mentors experience increased visibility and risks in mentoring other minorities, existing research indicates that they still engage in these relationships (cf. Catalyst, 1996; Ford & Wells, 1985; Korn/Ferry, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1994a). One explanation for this involvement is that the risks in mentoring a minority protégé may be offset by the potential intrinsic rewards of increased identification, interpersonal comfort, and the gratification involved with helping another minority member deal with barriers to advancement. Indeed, executive female mentors in one study reported identifying with junior women and purposefully selected female protégés in order to share hard-earned career strategies and insights (Catalyst, 1996).

Shared Identity and Interpersonal Comfort

Because diversified mentoring relationships involve individuals from different power-related groups, there may be distinct restrictions in the degree of identification in the relationship. Existing theory provides a link between group power and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Specifically, Deschamp (1982) theorized that individuals who are members of similar power groups share a common bond that shapes their self-identity and their identification with others in the group. According to this perspective, individuals who are members of similar power-related groups are more likely to identify with each other because of shared experiences and resulting social identities. As applied to mentoring relationships, the greater the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships, the less identification should be experienced by members. Because identification is a key process in the mentoring relationship (Erikson, 1963; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985), restricted social identity has important perceptual and behavioral implications. In particular, there may be more social distance in diversified mentoring relationships and less motivation to enter and remain in these relationships.

Because identification and interpersonal similarity increases the ease of communication in relationships (Lincoln & Miller, 1979), members of diversified mentoring relationships may experience less interpersonal comfort in the relationship. Whereas individuals in more homogeneous relationships may rely on readily available group membership as a basis for identification and perceived similarity, individuals in more diversified relationships may have to search for similarities that go beyond group membership (i.e., hobbies, pets, interests, background). It should be noted, however, that interpersonal comfort may vary as a function of time. This variance suggests that members of diversified relationships may feel less comfortable interacting in early stages of the relationship, but may find more similarities and comfort as the relationship progresses. Nevertheless, existing theory and research indicate distinct barriers to diversified mentoring relationships that are associated with comfort level. For example, Thomas (1989) theorized that racial taboos, particularly those involved with cross-gender and cross-race relationships, may result in constrained social interactions in cross-race mentoring relationships. Cross-gender relationships face barriers relating to the risk of sexual involvement or unfounded rumors of sexual relationships (Ragins, 1989). Ragins and Cotton (1991), for example, found that women were more likely than their matched male counterparts to report that potential mentors were unwilling to mentor them, and that they were reluctant to initiate a relationship with a potential mentor for fear that the action would be misconstrued as a sexual advance by the mentor or others in the organization. In another study of male and female protégés, Ragins and McFarlin (1990) found restricted role modeling and social interactions in cross-gender mentoring relationships. Members of cross-gender relationships may attempt to minimize damaging rumors by limiting social interactions. However, this strategy also

constrains the degree of interpersonal comfort developed in the relationship (Ragins, 1989).

In short, unlike homogeneous mentoring relationships, diversified relationships cannot rely on readily available cues of perceived similarity to establish interpersonal comfort and shared social identification. Moreover, the visibility in cross-gender and cross-race relationships makes them susceptible to scrutiny and false rumors regarding the nature of the relationship. As a result, these relationships may be more difficult to establish and maintain than homogeneous relationships involving majority members.

Work-Group Support

As discussed earlier, the mentor's and protégé's ability to develop power is influenced by their work groups. However, diversified mentoring relationships may elicit unique work-group reactions. Like other mentoring relationships, diversified relationships are open to charges of favoritism, perceptions of inequity, and coworker jealousy (Myers & Humphreys, 1985). However, these work-group reactions may be intensified in diversified mentoring relationships because of heightened visibility and negative stereotyping and assumptions regarding competency. As discussed previously, group stereotypes regarding competence may lead work-group members to perceive minority protégés as receiving special "remedial" attention from their majority mentors, and they may foster the perception that the protégé would not be able to perform his or her job without this special attention. Majority mentors may face a "backlash" from their peers and subordinates if they are perceived as helping minority members at the expense of majority members. Minority mentors with minority protégés represent the most visible of all mentoring combinations. This relationship may be particularly threatening to work-group members, who may perceive the relationship as a political coalition that is divisive and exclusionary in nature (Ragins, 1989). It should be pointed out that some of these issues may be less applicable when the mentor and protégé are in different organizations. In this case, the relationship is less visible and perhaps less susceptible to these negative perceptions and attributions.

Existing research indicates that work groups react differently to mentoring relationships involving minorities. Ragins and Cotton (1991) found that women were more likely than men to report that supervisors and coworkers would disapprove of their development of a relationship with a mentor. Bowen (1985) found that female protégés in cross-gender relationships reported being the target of discrediting sexual innuendoes and rumors circulated by jealous coworkers. Chao and O'Leary (1990) found that successful female protégés in same-gender relationships were viewed less favorably than protégés in other gender combinations. Jones (1986) observed that white managers may be uncomfortable sponsoring black protégés for promotion or high-visibility assignments for fear of

ostracism from other white coworkers in the organization. In short, relationships involving minority members face resistance from work-group members, and this resistance may range from lack of support to active sabotage. The lack of power among minority mentors exacerbates the situation and provides less of a buffer for backlash effects. One behavioral consequence is that minorities in mentoring relationships need extra effort to offset these damaging reactions by managing work-group members' impressions of their relationship (Nemeth, 1988; Tedeschi & Riess, 1981).

The composition of the work group is also an important mediator of the group's reaction to diversified relationships. Work group diversity increases opportunities for direct assessment of minorities' behaviors, and should therefore be less susceptible to group stereotyping and erroneous performance attributions (Jackson, Stone, & Alvarez, 1992; Kossek & Zonia, 1993). Group diversity should also decrease the visibility, and the associated performance pressures, of minorities in mentoring relationships. However, coworker jealousy and resentment may still be amplified in cases where a minority protégé receives mentoring, but where his or her coworkers are excluded from this relationship. This resentment may be exacerbated with minority coworkers, because minorities face greater barriers to obtaining mentors in organizations (Ragins & Cotton, 1991; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

In sum, the perceptual, psychological, and behavioral processes in diversified mentoring relationships and homogeneous relationships involving minorities are unique because minority members in organizations are perceived and treated differently from their majority counterparts. Due to differential perceptions and attributions, members in mentoring relationships involving minorities need to spend extra time and effort managing others' impressions of their performance and power. Stereotypes, attributions, perceived competence, visibility, and work-group reactions may all serve to attenuate and restrict both the resources for power available for minority members in mentoring relationships and the attainment of power-related goals that are unique to mentoring relationships. These behavioral and perceptual processes lead to differential outcomes for diversified and homogeneous relationships, which are explored in the next section.

OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH DIVERSIFIED MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Mentoring relationships have been found to be related to a variety of organizational, career, and developmental outcomes. Protégés receive more promotions (Bachman & Gregory, 1993; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992), have higher incomes (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991), and report more career satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989) and mobility (Scandura, 1992) than nonprotégés. Mentoring has also been found to be related to job stress (Ford & Wells, 1985),

work alienation (Koberg, Boss, Chappell, & Ringer, 1994), organizational socialization (Chao et al., 1992; Ostroff & Kozolowski, 1993), career commitment (Bachman & Gregory, 1993), positional power (Fagenson, 1988), turnover intentions (Scandura & Viator, 1994), job satisfaction (Chao et al., 1992; Fagenson, 1989; Koberg et al., 1994), and role stress and burnout (Ford & Wells, 1985). Although there has been a lack of research on the benefits for mentors, one study found that individuals with mentorship experience reported more benefits and fewer costs to being a mentor than individuals lacking experience (Ragins & Scandura, 1993). Potential benefits include internal satisfaction and fulfillment, organizational recognition, protégé loyalty, career rejuvenation, and improved job performance. Costs involve negative visibility from poorly performing protégés, displacement by high-performing protégés, charges of favoritism, and the time and energy spent maintaining the relationship.

Researchers are just beginning to assess whether race or gender influences protégé and mentor outcomes (cf. reviews by Noe, 1988a; Ragins, 1989; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). However, nearly all of the existing research is used to investigate the independent main effects of the mentor's or the protégé's race or gender, without considering the composition of the relationship. This is a serious omission because, as illustrated in the previous section, the composition of mentoring relationships leads to unique behavioral and perceptual processes. The differential outcomes associated with these processes are examined in this section. A dyadic perspective is used to explore the influence of the composition of the mentoring relationship on protégé and mentor outcomes.

Protégé Outcomes

Diversified and homogeneous mentoring relationships may influence two related sets of outcomes. The first outcome is the mentor's behaviors or functions. Mentor behaviors, in turn, lead to protégé outcomes related to career and professional development.

Mentor behaviors. As discussed previously in this article, mentors may provide three types of behaviors or functions: (a) career development functions that are aimed at helping the protégé advance in the organization; (b) psychosocial functions that provide counseling, acceptance, and personal support to the protégé; and (c) role modeling functions that are involved with identification (Kram, 1983, 1985; Scandura, 1992). As noted previously, mentoring relationships may provide some or all of these functions to various degrees.

A key point of this article is that mentor behaviors vary as a function of the composition of the relationship. The mentor's behavior is influenced by the protégé's needs, the mentor's perception of the protégé's needs, and the ability and motivation of the mentor to meet the needs of the protégé. Thus, it is important to recognize that minorities have different developmental and career needs from their majority counterparts (Kanter, 1977): they face discriminatory barriers to advancement (Ragins & Sund-

strom, 1989), exclusion from informal networks and role modeling (Ibarra, 1993), and alienation as minority members in organizations (Kanter, 1977). Career strategies and behaviors that are acceptable and effective for majority members may not be acceptable or effective for minority members in organizations (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Catalyst, 1996). Minority protégés' mentors may therefore need to meet their special needs and compensate for structural barriers by buffering them from discrimination, tailoring their career paths, extending extra support, building their self-confidence and career goals, and providing them with the inside information usually obtained in the "old boys" networks (Ragins, 1989). Given the lack of minority role models in many organizations, role modeling is a particularly important function for minority protégés. Although mentors are particularly important for minorities in organizations, there is no evidence that minority members become overly dependent on their mentors (Ragins & Scandura, 1994b).

However, there is some empirical evidence that diversified relationships provide less psychosocial and role modeling functions than homogeneous relationships. Ragins and McFarlin (1990) found that protégés in same-gender mentoring relationships were more likely than protégés in cross-gender relationships to engage in social activities with their mentors. In addition, compared to other gender combinations, female protégés with female mentors were significantly more likely to report that their mentor provided role modeling functions. Similarly, Thomas (1990) found that same-race relationships provided more psychosocial support than cross-race relationships and that same-gender relationships provided more trust and mutuality than cross-gender relationships.

Related theory also supports the proposition that psychosocial and role modeling functions should be positively related to the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships. As discussed in the previous section, identification should be greater in relationships characterized by more homogeneity because of overlapping social identities stemming from membership in similar power-related groups (Deschamp, 1982). Identification is nearly synonymous with role modeling, and both are positively related to intimacy and psychosocial support in developmental relationships (Levinson et al., 1978). Empirical support for the relationship between role modeling and psychosocial functions has also been found in mentorship research (cf. Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). Extant research and theory suggest that the degree of diversity in the mentoring relationship should be inversely correlated with the provision of psychosocial and role modeling functions. In other words, in relationships characterized by large differences in the number and degree of power-related groups, identification should be restricted, and so should the degree of role modeling and psychosocial mentor functions.

Proposition 1: Role modeling and psychosocial functions will be stronger in homogeneous than in diversified mentoring relationships.

The influence of the composition of the mentoring relationship on career development functions is less straightforward. A structuralist perspective (Kanter, 1977) predicts that mentors with minority protégés need to provide more career development functions in order to compensate for the structural barriers to advancement faced by their protégés. However, a critical moderator in this relationship is the mentor's *ability* to provide career development functions. As discussed in the previous section, since minority mentors have fewer resources for power than their majority counterparts, they may be less able to provide career development functions that include sponsoring the protégé to high-ranking positions, buffering the protégé from adverse forces, and opening avenues for the protégé's advancement. Even when holding rank constant, minorities are less likely than majority members to have power associated with their position (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Ohlott, Ruderman, & McCauley, 1994; Rodriguez, 1987). A recent study by Dreher and Cox (1996) found that although there were no gender or race differences in the presence of a mentor, women and minorities were less likely than their majority counterparts to form relationships with white male mentors, and the presence of white male mentors was associated with greater compensation for protégés than the presence of minority or female mentors. This finding suggests that restricted organizational power curtails minority mentors' ability to provide career development functions for their protégés.

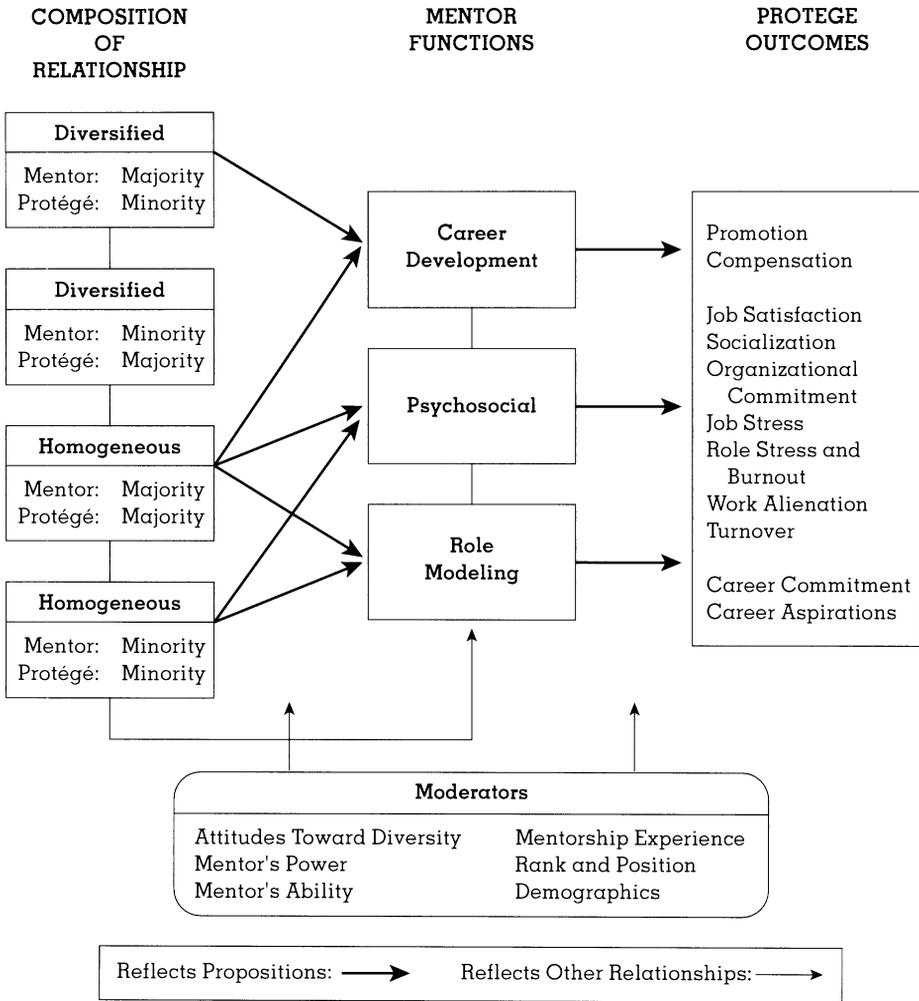
Proposition 2: Relationships involving minority mentors will provide fewer career development functions than relationships involving majority mentors.

The hypothesized relationships between the composition of the mentoring relationship and mentoring functions are summarized in Figure 1. It is important to recognize that most mentoring relationships have the capacity to provide all three types of mentorship functions to some degree, as displayed in the figure. The bold arrows in Figure 1 reflect the hypothesized functions and outcomes provided by each of the four classified mentoring relationships, as outlined in the preceding discussion and propositions.

Further, as summarized in Figure 1, diversified relationships involving majority mentors and minority protégés provide career development functions, but are limited in the provision of psychosocial and role modeling functions. Diversified relationships involving minority mentors and majority protégés are limited in all three functions (which may explain the rarity of this relationship), whereas homogeneous relationships involving majority mentors and majority protégés provide all three functions. Homogeneous relationships with minority mentors and protégés are limited in the provision of career development functions, but provide psychosocial and role modeling functions.

Career and developmental outcomes. Mentorship functions have been found to be directly related to protégé outcomes; the more functions the

FIGURE 1
Composition of Relationship, Mentor Functions, and Protégé Outcomes



mentor provides, the greater the career and organizational benefits received by the protégé³ (cf. Bachman & Gregory, 1993; Chao et al., 1992; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992).

Although protégé outcomes are determined by a combination of mentorship functions, it is reasonable to expect that certain mentor functions have a stronger effect on some outcomes than others. According to Kram (1985), career development functions enhance the protégé's advancement in the organization, and should therefore have a primary impact on promo-

³ The protégé outcomes that are displayed in Figure 1 have all been empirically associated with the presence of a mentor.

tion and compensation, and a secondary influence on other outcomes, such as career aspirations and socialization. Psychosocial roles involve facilitating the protégé's organizational socialization, sense of competence, and effectiveness in professional roles. These functions should therefore have a primary impact on such variables as socialization, work alienation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress, role stress, burnout, and turnover. Psychosocial functions should have a secondary influence on other variables, such as promotion and compensation. Role modeling or identification functions should have a primary influence on protégés' career aspirations and commitment, and a secondary impact on other factors, such as compensation, promotion, and job stress.

As discussed earlier, the homogeneous mentoring relationship with majority members provides more mentor functions than any other combination. Given the relationship between mentor functions and protégé outcomes discussed above, it is therefore reasonable to expect that these relationships should also provide more protégé outcomes than any other mentoring combination.

Proposition 3: Homogeneous mentoring relationships involving majority members will provide greater protégé outcomes than any other combination of the mentoring relationship.

Moderators. A number of variables may moderate the relationship between the composition of the mentoring relationship and mentor behaviors, as well as the relationship between mentor behaviors and outcome variables. These moderator variables need to be investigated and controlled for in future research on diversified and homogeneous mentoring relationships.

One key moderator of the relationship between diversified relationships and mentor behaviors is the nature of the mentor's and protégé's attitudes toward diversity. Specifically, Thomas (1993) found that mentors in cross-race relationships provide both career development and psychosocial functions when both members shared similar attitudes and strategies for dealing with racial differences in the relationship (i.e., both members either denied racial differences or discussed them openly), but the relationships lacked psychosocial support when the members held different attitudes.

Other potential moderators are prior experience in mentoring relationships, and the mentor's position and rank in the organization. These variables have been found to influence mentor functions (Fagenson & Amendola, 1993; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990), and they also may influence career and developmental outcomes. For example, experienced mentors at higher ranks may have more ability to achieve outcomes for their protégés than novice mentors at lower ranks. However, there are group differences in these variables: blacks are more likely to have nonsupervisory mentors than whites (Thomas, 1990), middle-management women are less

likely to be mentors than their male counterparts (Ragins & Cotton, 1993), and minority groups tend to hold lower ranking positions than majority groups (Brown & Ford, 1977; DeFreitas, 1991; Korn/Ferry, 1993). Group differences in these variables may therefore confound a direct assessment of the relationship between composition of relationship, mentor behaviors, and outcomes. It is therefore important to both study and control for these variables when conducting comparative investigations of diversified and homogeneous mentoring relationships.

Finally, a number of demographic variables, such as age, career stage, socioeconomic class, and education, may influence mentor functions and protégé outcomes, and they may also vary by group membership (Fagenson & Amendola, 1993; Knouse, 1992; Paludi, Meyers, Kindermann, Speicher, & Haring-Hidore, 1990). For example, Whitely, Dougherty, and Dreher (1991) found that protégés from higher socioeconomic backgrounds received more career development functions from their mentors than protégés from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Paludi observed that gender, age, and career stage interact in mentoring relationships (Paludi et al., 1990). Because of interrupted careers, female protégés may be older than their male counterparts, which may result in role modeling becoming constrained in same-gender relationships, psychosocial support functions becoming reversed in cross-gender relationships, and career development functions becoming limited by age-based causal attributions. Along those lines, Knouse (1992) observed that Hispanic protégés choose Hispanic mentors in early career stages, in order to help with language issues, but may shift to more powerful majority mentors in later career stages to gain the resources necessary for advancement.

Although demographic variables may moderate the relationship between the composition of the mentoring relationship and mentoring outcomes, it is important to remember that individuals who hold similar demographic characteristics may differ extensively in values, beliefs, and life experiences (Ferdman, 1995), and that these psychological variables may have an independent effect on outcomes associated with both diverse and homogeneous mentoring relationships. Future research and theory should explore the relationship between psychological variables and outcomes associated with mentoring relationships.

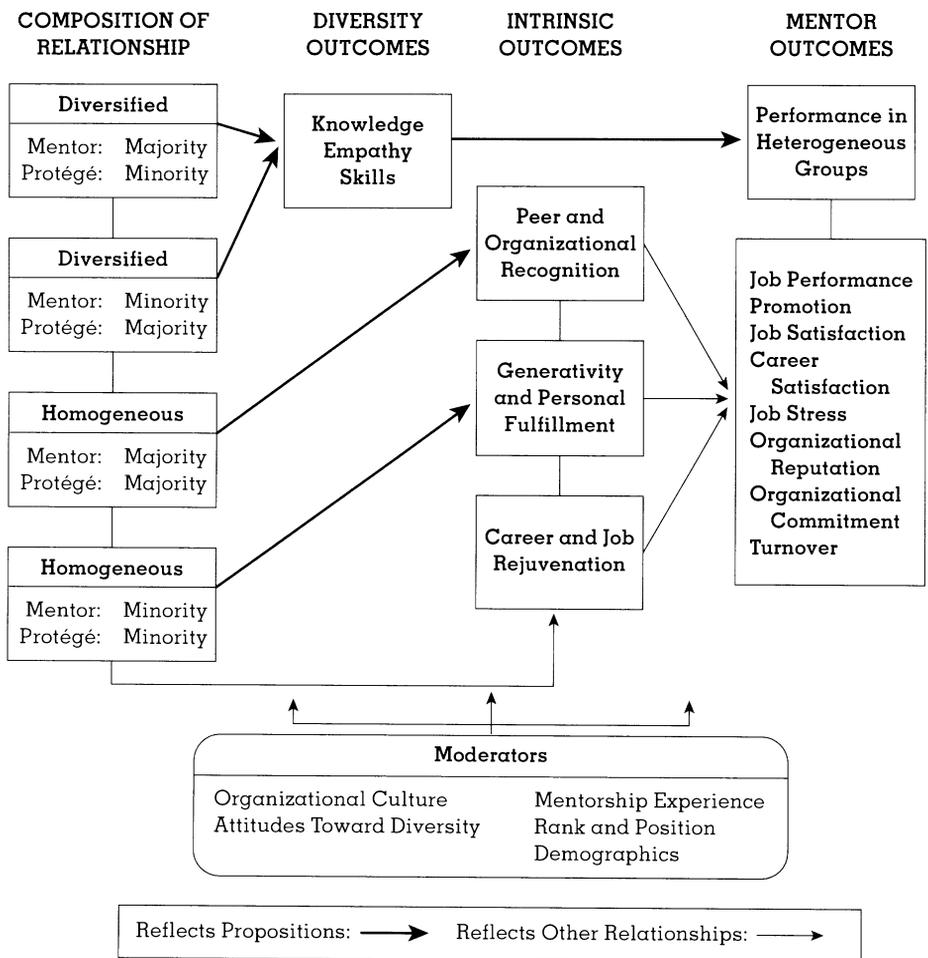
Mentor Outcomes

There has been a lack of attention to the outcomes associated with being a mentor. Although it is generally assumed that protégés receive more benefits from the relationship than mentors, mentors may in fact receive a variety of benefits (Barnett, 1984; Erikson, 1963; Levinson et al., 1978; Ragins & Scandura, 1994a), which may be influenced by the composition of the relationship. The composition of the relationship may influence three mentor outcomes: diversity outcomes, intrinsic outcomes, and organizational outcomes. Most mentoring relationships have the capacity to obtain intrinsic and organizational outcomes to some degree. As discussed

next, diversity outcomes are exclusively related to diversified mentoring relationships. The bold arrows in Figure 2 reflect the hypothesized outcomes associated with the four classified relationships.⁴

Diversity outcomes. Mentors in more diversified relationships should obtain more knowledge, empathy, and skills relating to interacting with individuals from different power-related groups than mentors in more homogeneous relationships. Whereas individuals in diversified relationships can test group stereotypes and attributions regarding differences, individuals in homogeneous relationships lack this opportunity. Majority

FIGURE 2
Composition of Relationship and Mentor Outcomes



⁴ The organizational outcomes in Figure 2 have been proposed in the literature but have not as yet been empirically assessed.

and minority mentors in diversified relationships can gain an understanding and appreciation of group differences and similarities, which can build empathy and help dispel stereotypes about other groups (Redmond, 1990). These mentors also have the opportunity to develop communication skills that span cultural, ethnic, and gender lines. Finally, majority mentors can gain awareness and exposure to the barriers faced by their minority protégés, which not only raises their general awareness of issues faced by minorities in organizations, but also allows them to develop more effective advancement strategies for their minority protégés.

This line of reasoning suggests that the greater the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships, as reflected in the number of power-related groups representing the dyad and the differences in power between the groups, the greater the potential for the mentor to obtain these diversity outcomes.

Proposition 4: The degree of diversity in the mentoring relationship will have a positive relationship with the mentor's accrual of knowledge, empathy, and skills relating to diverse groups.

Intrinsic outcomes. Mentors may receive three types of intrinsic rewards from the relationship, which in turn may be associated with a host of organizational outcomes (cf. Ragins & Scandura, 1994a). A primary intrinsic reward is the sense of satisfaction and fulfillment received from fostering the development of a younger adult. Erikson (1963) discussed this relationship in terms of generativity, which is the sense of immortality received by contributing to future generations. Levinson (1978) observed that mentors, who are often plateaued and in middle-life transition, obtain internal satisfaction from making productive use of their accumulated wisdom and skills.

Mentors may also gain job and career rejuvenation from the youthful and creative energy of their protégés (Kram, 1985). Protégés can keep their mentors up to date on recent trends and technological advancements. This educational process may enrich and rejuvenate the mentor's job and career, and may have a positive impact on the mentor's job performance, job and career satisfaction, and advancement. Plateaued mentors may experience a sense of renewal, and their investment in their protégés may contribute to a reinvestment in their position and organization.

Finally, the relationship may be a source of recognition by peers and the organization as a whole (Kram, 1985). The protégé's performance is a direct reflection of the mentor's competency and ability. Protégés who are perceived as performing effectively may enhance the mentor's reputation in the organization, which may indirectly facilitate the mentor's own advancement.

While there is little reason to expect that the composition of the mentoring relationship should directly influence career and job rejuvenation outcomes, there is reason to expect that it will have a direct impact on

generativity and personal fulfillment. Although majority mentors may experience generativity and personal fulfillment, minority mentors in homogeneous relationships should experience more generativity and personal fulfillment than any other combination of mentoring relationship. As discussed previously, minority mentors face more barriers to advancement than majority mentors, and need to develop special strategies for overcoming organizational and interpersonal barriers to advancement (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). As discussed in the last section, minority mentors may not only strongly identify with their minority protégés, but they may also obtain a particularly strong sense of fulfillment and gratification from passing their hard-earned strategies on to future generations of minority protégés (Catalyst, 1996). This may be particularly true if the mentor was a path-breaker for other minorities in the organization. Because of intergroup power differences, advancement strategies for minorities differ from those of majority members (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Minority mentors may not only recognize the importance of their strategies for their protégé's advancement, but they may also understand the irreplaceable nature of their contribution; minority protégés are unlikely to get these specialized strategies from majority mentors, nor are they likely to obtain important role modeling functions from majority mentors. These factors may lead to a heightened sense of identification and contribution among minority mentors in homogeneous relationships. Additionally, relationships with minority protégés may decrease the social isolation experienced by minority mentors and contribute to their personal sense of fulfillment in the workplace (Ragins, 1989; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

Altogether, this line of reasoning suggests that minority mentors with minority protégés should experience a greater sense of contribution and fulfillment in their mentoring relationships than any other combination of mentoring relationship.

Proposition 5: Minority mentors in homogeneous relationships will report more generativity and fulfillment than any other combination of mentoring relationship.

The composition of the mentoring relationship also may affect outcomes relating to peer and organizational recognition. Minority mentors should be less likely than their majority counterparts to receive positive recognition for their mentoring efforts from others in the organization. As discussed earlier, minority members' performance is often viewed as less effective than majority members' because of distorted perceptions based on stereotypes (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Additionally, compared to their majority counterparts, the effective performance of minority members is less likely to be attributed to their internal abilities (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). One consequence is that minority mentors may be less likely than majority mentors to get the credit they deserve for their protégé's effective performance. If the protégé is a majority member, the effectiveness of the protégé's performance is likely to be attributed more to the protégé's ability

than the minority mentor's training. If the protégé is a minority member, his or her performance may be viewed as less effective than majority counterparts to begin with, which has the net result of less positive recognition for the minority mentor's efforts. Additionally, this particular relationship may be viewed as a political coalition that may threaten others in the organization, and create a negative backlash (Ragins, 1989).

Majority mentors are in the best position to obtain peer and organizational recognition if they have majority protégés. Majority mentors with minority protégés may face two barriers. First, as discussed above, their protégés' performance may be viewed as less effective, which casts a negative shadow on the mentor's reputation. Second, as discussed earlier in this article, in spite of organizational diversity efforts, majority mentors may face backlash if they are perceived as helping minority protégés at the expense of majority protégés. In short, majority mentors in homogeneous relationships should receive more peer and organizational recognition than mentors in any other combination of relationship.

Proposition 6: Majority mentors in homogeneous relationships will receive more positive peer recognition than any other combination of the mentoring relationship.

Organizational outcomes. Mentorship theorists have proposed that the intrinsic outcomes discussed earlier combine to influence a number of organizational outcomes (Kram, 1985; Levinson et al., 1978; Ragins & Scandura, 1993). For example, it has been suggested that by receiving such outcomes as generativity and fulfillment, career and job rejuvenation, and peer and organizational recognition, the mentor may essentially receive a boost to his or her own career that may lead to improved job performance, and heightened job and career satisfaction. Mentors may gain new job-related insights by training their protégés in job functions. By providing a loyal base of support for the mentor and updating the mentor on new technological advancements, the protégé may help improve the mentor's own job performance and mobility. Mentors may become reinvested in their organization and experience a sense of job and career renewal. This renewal may contribute to an increase in organizational commitment and a reduction in turnover intentions and job stress. Finally, peer and organizational recognition for mentoring activities may enhance the mentor's reputation and mobility within and outside the organization.

The diversity outcome should have a positive relationship with performance in heterogeneous groups, which is particularly significant given changing workforce demographics and the increasing emergence of heterogeneous work groups (Jackson et al., 1992; Sessa & Jackson, 1995). As discussed earlier, mentors in more diversified relationships should obtain more knowledge, empathy, and skills relating to diverse individuals than mentors in more homogeneous relationships. This in turn should have a

positive impact on the mentor's performance in heterogeneous work groups (Jackson et al., 1992; Sessa & Jackson, 1995). Leaders who are sensitive to individual differences and behave accordingly are more effective in obtaining group goals and facilitating group interaction than leaders who are insensitive to group member's differences (cf. review by Cartwright & Zander, 1968). The degree of diversity in the mentoring relationship should therefore have a positive relationship with the mentor's performance in heterogeneous work groups. The greater the number of power-related groups representing the dyad and the greater the differences in power between the groups, the more opportunity the mentor should have to develop skills relating to individuals from different power-related groups.

Proposition 7: Mentors in diversified relationships will exhibit more effective performance in heterogeneous work groups than mentors in homogeneous relationships.

Of course, any type of interaction with people who are different has the capacity to affect heterogeneous work group performance by increasing the sensitivity, knowledge, and empathy of the members. Diverse work relationships allow for a mutual testing of stereotypes and attributions regarding differences, and allow for the development of communication skills that span cultural, ethnic, and gender lines. However, the intimacy and friendship components of mentoring relationships (Kram, 1985) make these relationships particularly suited for these diversity outcomes.

Moderators. Many of the variables that moderate the relationship between the composition of the mentoring relationship and protégé outcomes may also serve as moderators for mentor outcomes. Specifically, attitudes regarding diversity should moderate the relationships between composition of relationship, and diversity and organizational outcomes (cf. Thomas, 1993). Mentors with more positive attitudes toward diversity should obtain more diversity outcomes from the relationship and achieve more effective performance in heterogeneous work groups than mentors with less positive attitudes. Similarly, the mentor's stereotypes and attributions regarding group members should also moderate this relationship. Another moderator that is particularly important for mentorship outcomes is the organization's culture regarding diversity (Cox, 1993; Tsui, Egan, & Xin, 1995). Organizational cultures that value diversity should provide more recognition for diversified mentoring relationships than cultures that do not value diversity.

Prior experience in mentoring relationships, the mentor's position and rank, and demographic variables could all moderate the relationship between composition of the relationship and intrinsic and organizational outcomes. Older, experienced mentors at higher ranks may seek and receive different intrinsic and organizational outcomes from their mentoring relationships than younger, novice mentors at lower organizational ranks. For example, it has been suggested that peer recognition becomes more

important with age and organizational seniority (Levinson et al., 1978). As discussed earlier, existing group differences on these variables need to be examined and controlled for when investigating the relationship between composition and mentor outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

A key proposition of this article is that mentoring relationships involving minority members differ from their majority counterparts in the development, processes, and outcomes associated with the relationship. As discussed earlier, the power associated with minority group membership may affect the behavioral and perceptual processes involved in the development and maintenance of mentoring relationships. Specifically, negative stereotypes, attributions, and perceptions of competence, combined with increased visibility and negative work group reactions, restrict minority members' access to mentoring relationships and the outcomes associated with the relationship. Additionally, group-based restrictions in organizational power may restrict minority mentors' ability to provide career development functions and may distort peer and organizational recognition of the minority mentors' contribution to their protégés' performance.

If these propositions are true, two practical issues emerge that may be addressed by organizations as independent actions, or as part of a larger diversity program. The first issue involves the restricted access to mentoring relationships faced by minority members in organizations. One way to address this problem is through mentoring programs that facilitate access to mentors in organizations. Although many mentoring programs use formally assigned mentors, existing research suggests that formally assigned relationships may be less effective than informally developed relationships (Chao et al., 1992). Organizations may avoid this problem by employing informal mentoring programs. These programs first identify pools of potential mentors and protégés, then provide training in the development of effective mentoring with a particular emphasis on diversity issues, and then provide informal opportunities for the development of informal mentoring relationships.

Even without a mentoring program, organizations may increase the opportunities for the development of minority mentoring relationships by structuring diverse work teams that span departmental and hierarchical lines, and by increasing informal opportunities for networking and interactions among diverse groups of potential protégés and mentors. Increased interaction also may facilitate the development of the relationship by dispelling stereotypes and attributions, allowing for more comfortable interactions, and increasing the opportunities for the recognition of competence and commonalities. Organizations also can reinforce the development of mentoring relationships by recognizing these relationships in performance appraisals and salary decisions. This is particularly important for minority mentors, who may face greater service demands on

their time than their majority counterparts (Ragins & Cotton, 1993), but may be less likely to obtain the recognition associated with being a mentor.

The second practical issue involves the different outcomes associated with mentoring relationships involving minority members. In particular, if minority mentors have less power than their majority counterparts, they may be less able to provide for their protégés' advancement and career development needs. Because minority mentors are more likely to mentor minority protégés than majority protégés, this scenario has important ramifications for minority protégés. The long-term solution to this problem is to equalize power relationships among groups in organizations by structurally integrating minorities into positions across ranks and departments (Cox, 1993) and to ensure that minority mentors obtain the power associated with their positions (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). In the short term, minority protégés may be encouraged to obtain more than one mentor in order to obtain role modeling in homogeneous relationships and career development functions in diversified relationships. Because experience as a protégé is a significant predictor of both future decisions to become a mentor (Ragins & Cotton, 1993) and the development of power (Fagenson, 1988), organizations can equalize power relationships and expand their future pool of minority mentors by increasing their current minority employees' access to minority and majority mentors.

FUTURE RESEARCH: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The study of diversified mentoring relationships requires at least four methodological considerations. The first consideration is the unit of analysis. As described in the beginning of this article, both a dyadic and network approach should be used to measure the degree of diversity in mentoring relationships. If individuals have more than one mentor at a given point in time, separate assessments should be conducted for each relationship pair. If it is not feasible to survey both members of the relationship, the composition of the relationship should at least be obtained, and the limitations involved with using one source acknowledged. Assessing the independent main effect of group membership without considering the composition of the dyad may lead to inconsistent findings. For example, research on the relationship between race and protégé outcomes has yielded inconsistent findings (e.g., Alleman, Newman, Huggins, & Carr, 1987; Cox & Nkomo, 1981; Ford & Wells, 1985; Murray, 1982), which may be due to between-study variations in the composition of mentoring relationships and variations in controls for multiple group membership. Another key advantage of the dyadic approach is that it balances the focus of research to include the mentor's perspective, and permits the assessment of perceptions from both the mentor's and protégé's perspective.

The second methodological consideration is the use of multiple levels of analysis to study diversified mentoring relationships. A basic premise of this article is that mentoring relationships do not exist in a vacuum;

they exist within organizational and societal contexts that influence their processes and outcomes. Although individual, interpersonal, and organizational factors may influence mentoring relationships, most mentorship research has focused on the individual level of analysis. There has been a lack of research, or even discussion, of the macro levels that may affect mentoring relationships. As illustrated in this article, intergroup power relations affect mentoring relationships, and these power relations not only vary by organization but also across time within organizations. In the future, researchers could explore organizational characteristics associated with power differences between groups, the nature of those differences, and their impact on diversified mentoring relationships. An incorporation of multiple levels of analysis would also allow an assessment of the types of situations that are most and least productive for diversified mentoring relationships. Incorporating an interorganizational perspective would allow us to examine patterns of mentoring relationships within and among organizations, and to assess whether these patterns vary by the composition of the dyad (cf. Thomas & Higgins, 1996). This is particularly relevant given the increasing emphasis on interorganizational career paths (DeMeuse & Tornow, 1990; Kanter, 1989).

The third methodological consideration is the use of control variables. As discussed earlier, rank, position, work, and mentoring history have been found to influence mentoring relationships and these factors may vary by membership in power-related groups. Group differences in these variables may therefore confound a direct assessment of the relationship between composition of mentoring relationships and their outcomes. It is therefore important to include these variables and examine their effects in future research on diversified mentoring relationships.

The final methodological issue taps a more general problem with existing research on mentoring. Perhaps because mentoring is a relatively new area of research, there has been a reliance on cross-sectional research based on self-report data. There is clearly a need for longitudinal studies that trace the parallel development of mentoring and career variables. This research could provide information on the types of mentoring relationships, diversified or homogeneous, that are most valuable in different career stages for the protégé and the mentor. For example, minority protégés may need minority mentors for role modeling when entering an organization, but may need the power associated with majority mentors to advance within the organization. Whereas self-report data are clearly appropriate for perceptual and attitudinal measures, such as perceived mentor functions and satisfaction with the relationship, it may be advisable to obtain cross-validation of other measures by using reports from the other member in the relationship and others in the organization.

In conclusion, by applying a sociological perspective of power and intergroup relations to diversified mentoring relationships, we not only can better understand these unique and complex relationships, but we

can also obtain important insights into the macro processes affecting all types of diversified relationships in organizations.

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