THE JOURNAL OF ARTS MANAGEMENT, LAW, AND SOCIETY, 42: 205–216, 2012

ISSN: 1063-2921 print / 1930-7799 online
DOI: 10.1080/10632921.2012.749817

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Mentoring and Change in Cultural Organizations: The Experience of Directors in British National Museums

Jonathan Paquette
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

In management and arts management literature, mentoring is generally associated with social reproduction and emulation, and illustrates a phenomenon that is rather conservative in nature. Rarely is mentoring associated with change. In this article, we explore how mentoring has been a force of renewal for the institutional culture of British museums. This qualitative research brings attention to mentoring as a lever for cultural change through the experience of a new cohort of museum directors—one that has translated a new vision and approach to museums and the public into reality, and has brought forward the Labour government's cultural policy ideals.

Keywords *change, cultural organizations, mentoring, museums*

INTRODUCTION

The British museum sector went through a period of significant institutional change in the past decade, and several new projects suggest that organizational and institutional transformations are still in progress. The nature of this institutional change is rooted in organizational transformation and in the creation of a new culture around museums, their operations, and their relationship with their public. Linkages between cultural organizations and economics have never been as obvious to governments as they have been in the last decade (Belfiore 2008). Governments have tried to harness the creative potential of cultural organizations as a lever for growth and, equally, as a tool for social justice. In the United Kingdom, the Labour government firmly believed that culture could be used to develop stronger and more welcoming communities across the country. While the idea and the vision existed in the policy realm, cultural organizations needed to find a certain leadership and energy to put together strategies that would help them seize important opportunities that were being provided by a warmer financial context (Gray 2007). For that to happen, the rise of a new generation of museum directors was essential to bringing museums to a different place. The new cohort of museum directors lived up to the challenge of bringing the institution to a new place, doing so in an environment with strong professional identities (Babbidge 2000), values, and principles (Kavanagh 1991).

The author would like to acknowledge the support of the British Academy and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for this research. The author would also like to acknowledge the reviewers for their helpful suggestions for the revision of this manuscript.

Address correspondence to Jonathan Paquette, Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Political Studies, University of Ottawa, 55 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, Canada. E-mail: jonathan.paquette@uottawa.ca

Today, British museums' operations are very different from what they were only a decade or so ago. Museums are no longer considered as just the bearers of national (and global) heritage; they are now wholly considered as agents of social inclusion and social change. Such work with the public is considered to have a deeper and more profound effect than learning, as museums are becoming increasingly associated with positive social and economical transformation. This new conception of the museum has led to increased attention being given to audience work, with evermore sophisticated strategies for social engagement in museum activities emerging in the process. This new conception of the museum suggests a change in organizational culture where museums must symbolically change their focus, from the object and from the curatorial tradition that dominated the organizational cultures, to an audience culture committed to the social agenda of museums and to social engagement in the museums.

Arguably, this change of organizational culture is now very much perceptible in the British national museums. From a broad institutional perspective, the roots of this change in organizational culture were designed and envisioned in the Labour government's cultural policy (1997–2010). This new cultural policy aimed at ascribing a new meaning and social role to the national museums—suggesting that museums had a part to play in sustaining public values and in the social transformation agenda promoted by that government. It must be acknowledged that until the beginning of the Labour era, national museums had been working in a state of greater autonomy from the policy demands of central government. It is only through the incremental implementation of a new cultural policy that national museums and cultural policy became more closely coupled. According to Lang, Reeve, and Woollard, "For the first time in a century or more the educational and social role of the museums was being clearly articulated by government and was influencing policy. Not everyone was converted, but for those not persuaded by the political, philosophical and ethical arguments another powerful force made museums look again at the ways in which they provide for the visitor's needs—namely hard cash (2006, 23). In other words, in museums there was a mixed reception to the new policy rationale that was being conveyed by the Labour government. This ambivalent reception may have been shared among some of the curatorial professionals and in the ranks of some of the senior administrators and board members who entertained a more conventional conception of the museum. Nonetheless, whether it was through Public Service Agreements, through Heritage and Lottery Fund requirements for funding, or through the new evaluation practices being imposed on museums' activities, some constraints aimed at facilitating a greater coupling between museums and policy.

What this context has left us with is the organizational dimension of this change. How do these broad social and political changes penetrate the organizational realm to influence organizational culture? More importantly, how can a leader incarnate these new policy goals and mandates in institutions where the socialization and creation (or the incubation) of leadership has been on different grounds, values, and criteria for decades? Knowing that professional organizations and institutions tend to produce leaders with a rather orthodox relationship to culture, how could a new leadership emerge and be successful in addressing the cultural challenges of national museums? The reality is, a new generation of museum directors and leaders—who embody these new values and culture—has emerged from this turbulent and fascinating decade for national museums.

We found a partial explanation for the rise of new museum directors in the form of mentoring. Of course, a cynical eye could claim that much of the energy favorable to mentoring has to do with institutional conservatism (Baum 1992). In fact, most of the literature—even the most supportive of mentoring—conveys the idea that mentoring is equivalent to normalization and

social reproduction or learning as an uncritical engagement with a body of professional or organizational knowledge. But are mentors just reproducing and communicating the "tricks of the trade"?

Based on sixteen qualitative interviews conducted among the new cohort of directors in British National Museums, this article illustrates how mentoring has been pivotal in these directors' career trajectories. The mentoring relationship established by the directors interviewed suggests that their mentors supported them even as they represented a strong change of values for the organization and institution. This change was carried out in the face of strong normative contradictions between mentors and protégés who shared different views of the museum. This case study, on mentoring in the museum sector, contrasts with the dominant trend in the mentoring literature that focuses on mentoring and its normalizing effects on protégés. Also, this study suggests the importance of mentoring in establishing strategic relationships for organizational and institutional change.

MENTORING: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The mentoring literature can be divided into three broad categories, all favoring a different angle: sociological, managerial, and vocational (or career angle). The first category of literature, the sociological literature, delves into the social dynamics of mentoring, focusing on the power structures that develop in an organization. This literature suggests that mentoring is an act of social reproduction. The second stream of literature, the managerial literature, emphasizes mentoring as a social transaction between a mentor and a protégé. The focus for this second body of work is oriented on formal mentoring and the mutual benefits of relationships—whether it is mentors and protégés or organizations and protégés. Finally, the third approach to mentoring, the career literature, defines mentoring as a "natural" occupational process (Gibb 1999). For this perspective, mentoring is conceived of as an emergent practice in which a new professional seeks or receives advice and guidance for his or her career from a senior colleague through a durable relationship.

In the sociological literature, mentoring is an act of social reproduction. First and foremost, mentoring is defined as a social relationship between a mentor and a protégé. The established vocabulary already signals the nature of the conventional theorizations of this relationship: it emphasizes a postulated or actual disequilibrium—based on knowledge, experience, or symbolic capital—between the incumbents and the newcomers in an organization. From this perspective, the mentor is supposed to have a positive effect on his or her pupil by transmitting valuable information, strategies, social capital, and prestige that are necessary for one's career progression. This vocabulary is deeply rooted in a conception of mentoring as a device for social reproduction. There is, in fact, an important conceptual affiliation between mentoring and Bourdieu's work on fields and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1976, 1979). In some organizations and fields, the legitimacy of new entrants is secured by the symbolic relationship that exists between a mentor and a protégé. Mentoring, here, is conceived as a mechanism of social reproduction, where the protégé is constructed as a legitimate heir (Bourdieu 1981) to his or her mentor. This perspective on mentoring, from a critical standpoint, fits perfectly with a conservative interpretation of mentoring as a practice that is reminiscent of medieval apprenticeship. However, mentoring is not apprenticeship, but the literature does convey a certain ambivalence as to the proper nature and benefits of this relationship—especially when it comes to defining and prescribing practices in formal mentoring.

In the management literature, mentoring has been described as a practice that enhances organizational performance and secures the workplace successes of protégés (Bozeman and Feeney 2008; Burke 1984; Ragins 1997; Scandura 1992; Scandura & Viator 1994). Again, this relationship suggests that there are benefits for the protégé who is under a senior organization member's wings. A contrasting point of view consists of looking at the benefits of mentoring for mentors, focusing on the social recognition and rewarding aspects that come from the practice (Fagenson 1988, 1989). This body of work puts emphasis on formal mentoring: the development of formal mentoring programs in organizations is seen as a tool that fosters continuity in work transitions (Bozeman & Feeney 2007), as occasions for member socialization (Chao 1997), as well as an important tool for knowledge transmission (Fowler & O'Gorman 2005; Scandura & Schriesheim 1994; Young & Perrewe 2000). Formal mentoring—conceptualized here as the organizational and managerial mobilization of the mentor and protégé relationship for further organizational outcomes and performance—has benefited from a widespread popularity in recent years (Gibb 1999, 1056). For Baum (1992), this version of mentoring is an idealization of the mentor-protégé couple, and "[o]ne possible motivation for such idealization is to defend new workers against the dangers of organizational life and to transform the organization into a place where work and advancement are safe" (1992, 227). Baum suggests that the idealization of formal mentoring blurs the important hierarchical power relations implied in mentoring (and in organizations in general), as it conveys in its language a false sense of safety as the mentorship relationship suspends—momentarily—the objective power struggles that exist in the workplace, struggles that may/will be experienced differently once the protégé is left to his or her own devices. Beyond this, little is known about the potential threat of "forced relationships" or forced couplings in organizational mentoring.

The third stream of literature on mentoring focuses on the occupational and professional aspects, bringing career—rather than organization—to the forefront. Learning is at the core of this third body of literature. For Kram (1983), mentoring is an extension—a type—of peer relationship that enables two forms of occupational learning: psychosocial learning and vocational learning. On the one hand, mentoring is supposed to be beneficial to the protégé as it is a form of exchange where the protégé can mobilize his or her mentor as a confidant, expressing emotions and feelings about current occupational conditions at work. Such exchanges may contribute to confirming and validating the appropriateness of the situation lived by the protégé. The second dimension of mentoring focuses on career development. Kram and Isabella (1985) suggest that protégés seek sponsorship, coaching, visibility, exposure, protection, and professional challenges in their exchanges with their mentors. The need for and nature of the mentoring relationship also evolves as the individual progresses in his or her career. While the mentoring relationship may develop at the organizational level, it is not restricted by the organization's boundaries, as an individual may seek help and advice from a retiree or even maintain his or her relationship with a mentor after changing organizations for further career advancement.

In sum, while there is an important diversity of focus (society, organizations, and careers), the literature shares many common features. First, all three streams of literature convey the idea that mentoring is an experience that involves a single mentor. While it is acknowledged that a mentor may have multiple protégés (Gibb & Megginson 1993), the opposite does not seem to hold true. There are no conceptual or theoretical motivations to this characteristic of the literature other than the fact that many of these researches focused on either formalized forms of mentoring or on the evolving nature of the mentor/protégé relationship (Kram 1983)—something that has also been

evidenced in the more recent contributions building on an ecological understanding of mentoring (Chandler, Kram, and Yip 2011; Jones and Corner 2012). The second, and perhaps more striking, observation about this literature has to do with the fact that, in all instances, it emphasizes the processes of normalization. This characteristic is quite salient in the sociological works; it is the desired outcome of the managerial stream of the literature and is a core component of the vocational one—especially from the psycho-social point of view. The intergenerational dynamics portrayed in this body of work tend to underestimate the creativity and potential for innovation that lies in mentoring. As such, mentoring is rarely associated with a potential for organizational and institutional change.

METHODOLOGY

This research on organizational change is rooted in the professional life histories tradition of qualitative research (Bertaux 1980; Bertaux & Thompson 1997). Professional life histories focus on the narration of career trajectories and links the professional with his or her major career decisions and evolution in institutional fields and organizations. Derived from the interactionist approach (Becker & Strauss 1956; Duberley, Cohen, and Mallon 2006) to work and organization, professional life histories emphasize the major turning points (Hughes 1958) of an individual's career at different moments that shaped his or her career trajectory and professional self. In this research, we studied the place of mentoring in the career trajectory of a new cohort of museum directors who were all working in national museums at the time they were interviewed.

The sample of sixteen museum directors was constructed in collaboration with key informants at the School of Museum Studies in Leicester (UK) and with public servants operating for a cultural agency. Through conversations with key informants, we were able to establish a proper sample of museum directors who were credited and identified for having been important drivers of change in their institutions. All the participants selected worked for a public museum funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) to reflect the changing reality of national museum we described earlier (Lang, Reeve, and Woollard, 2006). We focused on individuals who accomplished a successful career progression to a senior administrative position within the last decade and who have been identified as agents of the cultural change in the sector. Genders are almost evenly represented in the sample, with nine men and seven women—a decision made in order to grasp the gender dynamics and the gendered attitude of mentoring identified in previous researches (Ragins 1997). In addition, the sample is not focused on one single institution, but builds on participants from a number of national museums. The directors we have interviewed all occupied senior positions in relation to the core activities of the museum—from General Director, to director of research, to manager or director of curatorial activities, to director of education, and other typical directorship positions found in national museums. These senior administrators are also part of the executive committees of their organizations. The number of directors at a museum differs from one museum to the next, but, generally speaking, their number is relatively small. To give an example, in 2009, the Executive Committee of the National Gallery in London was composed of eight members, including the General Director, the director of science, the director of conservation, the director of collections, the director of education, the director of public affairs and development, and the director of operations. Given that the DCMS directly funds only twenty-one museums—thirteen of which are national museums—the population studied

is relatively small. Therefore, sociological information such as the age of participants, their ranks, their number of years of experience, and their discipline or specialty was not disclosed to ensure that participants—and their mentors—remain entirely anonymous.In most British national museums, there are no formal mentoring mechanisms or programmes. As such, much of this work is left to the professionals themselves, who may decide to construct (or not) a special relationship with one or many of their junior or senior peers. Nonetheless, all of the participants approached for this research acknowledged a mentor relationship at some point in their career trajectory. We believe that this signals the importance of mentoring as a professional practice in the museum sector. There is a long tradition of mentoring in the British museum sector, where institutions have sought to produce their inheritors. The relationship between Tate Gallery director Sir John Rothstein (director between 1938 and 1964) and his successor Sir Norman Reid (director between 1964 and 1979) is a good example of the mentoring culture that is deeply rooted in the sector. This culture is visible in the higher ranks and upper levels of professional and organizational life. Over the last decade, however, the type of intergenerational transmissions and exchanges in the organization and field—the museum sector—seems to illustrate a different dynamic of exchanges that center less on professional reproduction and perhaps more on organizational and institutional creativity.

MENTORING AND CULTURAL CHANGE: MENTORING FOR A CHANGE

From the protégé's point of view, mentoring is constructed as either a deliberate choice—something that stems from a curiosity—or as a result of the acceptance of the mentor as someone who the professional can trust. From our analysis of the career trajectories and occupational dynamics of the directors we have interviewed, mentoring had an enabling effect on their careers. While mentors may be held responsible for learning and the transfer of social capital, the most striking observation we made had to do with their contribution as protectors of creativity and organizational change by making room for their protégés. The experiences of the directors we interviewed all emphasized the role that their mentors had played in identifying the innovative potential of the directors when they were still junior managers or professionals. Moreover, these mentoring experiences were all established in the context of normative conflicts within the organizations. While there are genuine human relationships between the mentors and protégés, and while these relationships all engendered good sentiments, they were all built in a context of potential aversion between mentor and protégé, especially from a normative and professional perspective. The creation of the mentoring "couples" was not based on commonalities, but rather on friendships between professionals who profoundly disagreed on the museums' culture. Of course, this assertion may overshadow the fact that mentors do find qualities in their protégés, and that protégés are, themselves, finding ways to communicate their strengths to their mentors. Nevertheless, this singular aspect is in sharp contradiction with the most commonly shared perception of what mentoring ought to be.

Many of the museum directors we interviewed described their mentorship experience as being guided, at first glance, by someone who they would not have expected to be their mentor. Some mentoring experiences were additionally described as unexpected or as being a coupling united by a "strange force." While the interviewees all reported the traditional deference for the mentor as a respectable senior member of the organization, as someone to "look up to," their contributions to

their protégé's careers were noticed in interventions that were portrayed as "surprising" in most cases. One director reported how his mentoring relationship started:

> When I came to this museum, I realized that some galleries were extremely reverent to the Empire and the Empire was a good thing. Of course, the first exhibit I made when I came here was extremely critical of the Empire, and we received bad critiques in the Telegraph saying this was a wrong exhibit and so on. The Board of Trustees joined in and was extremely disappointed, and it almost started a war here. Since that moment he [mentor] was always on my side, giving sharp and precise advice.

While the director was a junior professional, his penchant for controversies was always supported by his mentor. Even if his mentor did not share his views or if, in fact, they were ideological antipodes when it came to their work, the protégé always felt that he had the necessary support to engage in new aspects of exhibit work and curatorial practices:

> I developed this strong relationship with that person who at the time was very high in the hierarchy and coming from the establishment side of things. He disliked the gallery; he had a very traditional view of that part of history. But he respected me for the rigor of this work from a sort of an academic point of view. [. . . .] He had the courage to support some of my work, and he knew it was going to be controversial, but he always backed it. Once before an exhibit opened, he asked me to give him a tour of the gallery and I did so and explained everything. I remember him standing and nodding, saying, right, ok! And whatever he felt privately, he kept privately, he hated the gallery, but publicly he defended it. And after he always did the same. He could have well said, that bloke is quite an idiot and decide to stand in the way, but he never did. I think he felt controversy was a good thing.

This cohort of new museum directors has benefited from a degree of freedom that was enabled by important and powerful mentors. Very senior members of the museum community—with traditional views on the institution—have acted as mentors and have, in fact, given thrust to museum leaders who believe in postcolonialism and postcolonial museology—discourses that are anything but conservative. Mentors seemingly have the social strength to support their protégés' controversies. Similarly, in another director's account of his mentoring experience,

> I became director shortly after a controversial exhibit. Coming from History, I challenged curators to put together a visitor-friendly exhibit that would help my educational programmes. It communicated how science and colonialism worked hand-in-hand. You can imagine I didn't make friends in this museum! The exhibit got an impressive media coverage. But you know, I knew exactly what I was doing and the consequences too [. . . .] One morning, I was preparing evaluations for that exhibit and the director [his mentor] asked me to meet him in his office. I wasn't all that cocky anymore; I was a bit scared of what I would be hearing. Surprisingly, he told me that some of my colleagues [curators] tried to derail the project months before, but he insisted on letting me do this exhibit. In a sense I was protected by him.

This narrative is common to the museum directors we interviewed. The support of a mentor—in adversity—was necessary for the protégé's establishment as a professional and as a creative element of the organization. In many ways, mentors are depicted as being austere characters, commanding respect, rather than being the warm and caring influence portrayed in the literature (Baum 1992; Day & Allen 2004; Kram & Isabella 1985). These mentors were role models, sources of inspiration, but above all they protected the creative potential of their protégés even if they did not share their views. This first form of creativity, emerging from the mentor/protégé relationship, illustrates what we qualify as an institutional creativity, where the relationship is

used to foster cultural change. The protégé, with an adversarial point of view, is nonetheless recognized by a mentor who supports the protégé for the sake of the values and innovations he or she brings to the institution. To give another example:

> She was a strong believer that institutions go through different phases and in different times they need different types of leaders. That was hugely important. She had long chats with me to see if I was the right person and should she support me or not. They were never high level conversation, they were short conversations. She was great and I always stayed in touch with her, she was a pioneer in the field. I am very fond of her and she regularly comes in and we chat about our visions of the museum. We have quite different perspectives, but that's what she liked, and she always acted as a mentor.

For this director, the mentor was someone who could support a very different vision of the museum than their own, who supported the cultural change that was much needed and desired, and as someone who encouraged the views of the new generation of museum professionals and directors. As mentors are closer to the end (or the renewal) of their careers, they seem to be perceived of and act as habilitating forces for institutional change. Sociologically and professionally, mentors occupy privileged positions in their field and/or their organizations, and this power seems to have been put forward for the benefit of change.

The social and occupational fabric of museums is quite diverse. This diversity has increased over the last few decades, with an influx of many new occupations emanating from the business sector and, more recently, from the educational sector. While in the past, the curator has traditionally been the dominant figure of the institution (Kavanagh 1991; Sandell & Janes 2007), things are now considerably different, and curators are no longer the sole dominant professional force of the museum. Of course, such conditions are usually conducive to important organizational clashes between professional cultures (Whetten & Godfrey 1998) and identity (Watts 2010). Surprisingly, in contexts of tension, mentoring relationships can develop and become the base of fruitful organizational projects. In some instances, a new professional, learning the ropes, may want to challenge his or her initial professional socialization and will demonstrate a primal aversion to a different (competing) professional group in the organization. In this research, we have witnessed some situations where a new professional in an organization will seek guidance from a member of a different occupational group. In our interviews, we observed the importance of such strategies, mobilized by protégés seeking the presence of a mentor to establish themselves in their organizations.

We concentrate here on the case of one museum director for who this form of mentor-protégé relationship was crucial to implementing strategies that were not all that welcomed in museums at the time. For this museum director, who has a background in museum education, it was essential to establish a link with someone from a totally different background:

> From a personal point of view, it was an opportunity for me to develop my experience and my career in ways that would have been very difficult to do in any other way. One of the sorts of agreement I have made with the curator was to engage in debates. He was willing to listen to my ideas about audiences, if I was willing to engage in all of the curatorial debates [. . . .] So I was asked to curate a special display and lead one of the groups. I think it was very important, for me, this relationship meant the possibility of being involved in all sorts of projects that otherwise, for an education person at that point, was pretty difficult to get the opportunity to do [laughs]. There was a mutual respect; he understood where I was coming from and I understood where he was coming from. I understood all their [curators] anxieties and issues. That relationship was crucial to get me where I am now.

Under the wings of a senior curator at the time, the above-mentioned professional was able to think of museums and museum education in a very different way. He was able to engage in self-learning activities, connect with a different professional culture, and sustain exchanges with his mentor:

> I read a lot of arts history books, I took out various readings. Then we would sit down and discuss the books or the article. I read a lot about objects and so that was to make sure that I had the background to exchange with him. Of course, we couldn't exchange on the same level, he had a lifetime worth of knowledge. You're never going to catch up! But I appreciated his willingness to engage with me at that level. There was an interest and enthusiasm and that was important for building the relationship.

In this next organization, a relationship across professional cultures was essential to establishing the acceptance and legitimacy of the nascent audience evaluation (at the time) with its multiple assessment tools and strategy. While he was a junior professional, his mentoring relationship helped protect his mandate and introduce new practices that would not have been accepted otherwise. The mentoring relationship in this next case was important for going beyond the occupational divide in museums between curators and the up-and-coming museum professionals who were trying to establish their place in the institution:

> [. . . .] It was necessary to depersonalize the audience evaluation tools and practices I was implementing in the organization. It's not me saying something, it's coming from the audience, it's not personal you see? Not some irrational point of view coming from an educator. That relationship was helpful as curators would accept to come and sit in the back of the room and listen to one of my focus groups with the public; that really helped. They heard things first hand, some crude and simplistic comments from the public. They understood it wasn't me saying this and that I wasn't pushing an agenda. The public may dislike an art object even if it's a pivotal piece for the art history of that period.

These audience evaluation practices are now common to all British museums. However, at the time, these practices represented a source of tension between professional groups. For the director, as a young professional, it was important to gain respect and establish a strong relationship with a mentor coming from a totally different professional horizon. In return, as they became institutionalized, these audience evaluation practices have become important tools for museums—especially when it comes to negotiating with the DCMS, demonstrating that, in fact, museums have an impact on social change (DCMS 1999) and that museums are socially relevant and worth being funded. In this professional narrative, again, mentoring served the purpose of enabling change rather than professional reproduction. The mentor's protection was crucial for the director's career development, and it was equally important for the organization and the successful implementation and acceptance of the audience programme evaluation.

Finally, mentors who were in directors' positions themselves assumed a strategic role for their protégés in the face of the board of trustees of museums. On the one hand, they acted as shields for their protégés at times where the protégés' audacity was heavily mediatized and seen as controversial. Protégés firmly believed that their mentors protected them even if that meant protecting views of the museum that did not conform to the mentor's own. Most protégés, for that matter, were always surprised to be chosen by their mentors: "I don't know why he wanted me to be part of the team, but he wanted me there." Of course, these narratives illustrate how protégés were supported and defended the cultural change they represented. On the other hand, mentors are described as having initiated or introduced the directors to the intricacies of board politics.

In order to represent change and have a voice in the institution, the directors needed to learn the intricacies and difficulties of board dynamics. As one director reported, "He encouraged all his senior team, and me in particular, to attend all the board meetings. This was invaluable. I sat in on all the board meetings and would respond to anything that came into my direction or anything that concerned my area or my new projects. [. . . .] He [mentor] told me that I didn't come across as strong as one would expect on the board level, I needed to defend my ideas differently, especially when they were contentious."

In sum, the accounts of the new cohort of museum directors communicates an experience of mentoring that was crucial, as it gave way to important institutional changes in the sector. The cultural changes that we have witnessed in museum operations over the last decade were prompted by leaders who had different values and ideas about the museum and its place in society. The museum directors we have interviewed were still furthering their cultural transformations of museums as part of their career projects and their singular and prescient perception of the place it holds in relation to the public, education, and social change.

CONCLUSION

The type of study we have conducted has shown that mentoring may be a crucial component of cultural change. While mentoring is generally seen in light of social reproduction and normalization, the directors' experiences of mentoring reveal how this relationship was pivotal for them becoming leaders of a cultural transformation in the field. The phenomena observed suggest that some pressures on an institutional field may be conducive to supporting a different form of leadership (Wales 2001). The directors we interviewed felt that they were protégés of senior professionals and senior administrators with whom they could not necessarily rely on for shared or similar views, but rather as people who wanted to test them—to see how far they could go with their ideas and to see how solidly they could sustain those ideas in the organization. Indeed, the directors we interviewed were protected by their mentors from a part of the organizational politics at play; however, they were not supported by a caring energy (Baum 1992) that led them to think that their careers would evolve simplistically outside the power relations of their organizations. Rather, they were all exposed to the fact that their actions and views of the institution were contentious and to the realities of board politics. Simply put, cultural changes in organizations are important, albeit stressful (Alvesson 2002; Mcguire, Stonner, and Mylona 2008; Smollan and Sayers 2009), and there remains work to be done in British museums when it comes to the professional divides that invariably contribute to the stress and overall difficulty in evoking change. Nonetheless, the directors we interviewed have contributed much to the change so far—and, arguably, in no small part because they were able to navigate professional divides thanks to the support and experience they acquired through mentorship.

More research about the place of mentoring in change management is needed in order to better assess the potential of mentoring as a lever and social force for change in institutional fields and organizations. This is an especially salient research consideration since, across all sectors, organizations have become increasingly aware of the importance of addressing the challenges of an aging workforce, and since mentoring has come to be an extremely popular solution for this particular social issue. Moreover, many organizations fear that the expected labor turnover in the coming years could represent an important threat to their performance and sustainability.

The situation has preoccupied many organizations and, in some cases, has been the catalyst for new organizational policies that seek to address it. In the educational sector, for example, formal mentoring has become the most common treatment for a sector in turmoil—where wages, work, and life expectations seem to clash from one generation of professional to the next. But rather than focusing on mentoring—and formal mentoring—as a condition of continuity, future research may speak to the place that mentoring occupies in change management. Also, much of the scholarship on mentoring, and this research carries the same limitation, tends to overemphasize the experience and perception of the protégé; much less attention is given to the experience of mentoring from the mentor's point of view. In times when mentoring (formal mentoring, that is) is seen as a panacea for succession management in organizations, what can we learn about mentors in order to consolidate an understanding of the ethics of mentoring?

For arts management research, mentoring as a research theme has a promising future. This research outlined the experience of mentoring as a way to foster change in organizational culture and as a means of protecting creativity in times where normative or value changes are pressed upon national museums. This research is rooted in the context of national museums and cultural policy in Britain; but some of the broad policy transformations urging museums to change are also being evidenced in many different countries, with similar injunctions. Additionally, arts organizations face tremendous challenges, and while some of these challenges may be different from the ones explored in this research, mentoring and organizational culture change is a theme that is becoming very salient when trying to understand succession management practices and the tensions between innovation and conservatism. This raises the question of the importance and the limitations of mentoring in contexts where a strong founding (or influential) figure departs an arts organization, such as an Opera Company, a Theater, or a Performing Arts Centre; it raises the challenges of negotiating organizational culture, organizational identity, change, and creativity through mentoring.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M. 2002. *Understanding Organizational Culture*. London: Sage Publications.

Babbidge, A. 2000. "UK Museums: Safe and Sound?" *Cultural Trends 37*(1): 1–35.

Baum, H. S. 1992. "Mentoring: Narcissistic Fantasies and Oedipal Realities." *Human Relations 45*(3): 223–45.

Becker, H. S., and A. Strauss. 1956. "Careers, Personality and Adult Socialization." *The American Journal of Sociology 62*(3): 253–63.

Belfiore, E. 2008. *The Social Impacts of the Arts: An Intellectual History*. London: Palgrave-MacMillan.

Bertaux, D. 1980. "L'approche biographique, sa validité méthodologique, ses potentialities." *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie 69*(2): 198–225.

Bertaux, D., and P. Thompson. 1997. *Pathways to Social Classes. A Qualitative Approach to Social Mobility*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1976. "Le champ scientifique." *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 2*(1): 88–108.

———. 1979. "Les trois états du capital culturel." *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 30*(1): 3–6.

———. 1981. *Questions de sociologie*. Paris: Les éditions de minuit.

Bozeman, B., and M. K. Feeney. 2007. "Toward a Useful Theory of Mentoring." *Administration and Society 39*(6): 719–39.

———. 2008. "Public Management Mentoring: What Affects Outcomes?" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 19*(1): 427–52.

Burke, R. J. 1984. "Mentors in Organizations." *Group and Organization Studies 9*(3): 353–72.

Chandler, D. E., K. E. Kram, and J. Yip. 2011. "An Ecological Systems Perspective on Mentoring at Work: A Review and Future Prospects." *The Academy of Management Annals 15*(1): 519–70.

Chao, G. T. 1997. "Mentoring Phases and Outcomes." *Journal of Vocational Behavior 51*(1): 15–28.

Day, R., and Allen, T. D. 2004. "The Relationship Between Career Motivation and Self-Efficacy with Protégé Career Success." *Journal of Vocational Behavior 64*(1): 72–81.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 1999. *Policy Action Team 10: Arts and Sport: Report to the Social Exclusion Unit*. London: HMSO.

Duberley, J., L. Cohen, and M. Mallon. 2006. "Constructing Scientific Careers: Change, Continuity and Context." *Organization Studies 27*(8): 1131–51.

Fagenson, E. A. 1988. "The Power of a Mentor: Protégés and Non-Protégés' Perceptions of Their Own Power in Organizations." *Group and Organization Studies 13*(1): 182–92.

———. 1989. "The Mentor Advantage: Perceived Career/Job Experiences of Protégés Versus Non-Protégés." *Journal of Organizational Behavior 10*(4): 309–20.

Fowler, Jane L., and John G. O'Gorman. 2005. "Mentoring Functions: A Contemporary View of the Perceptions of Mentees and Mentors." *British Journal of Management 16*(1): 51–57.

Gibb, S. 1999. "The Usefulness of Theory: A Case Study in Evaluating Formal Mentoring Schemes." *Human Relations 52*(8): 1055–75.

Gibb, S., and D. Megginson. 1993. "Inside Corporate Mentoring Schemes: A New Agenda of Concerns." *Personnel Review 22*(1): 40–54.

Gray, C. 2007. "Commodification and Instrumentality in Cultural Policy." *International Journal of Cultural Policy 13*(2): 203–15.

Hughes, E. C. 1958. *Men and Their Work*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Jones, R., and J. Corner. 2012. "Seeing the Forest and the Trees: A Complex Adaptive Systems Lens for Mentoring." *Human Relations 65*(3): 391–411.

Kavanagh, G. 1991. *The Museum Profession: Internal and External Relations*. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Kram K. E. 1983. "Phases of Mentor Relationship." *Academy of Management Journal 26*(4): 608–25.

Kram, K. E., and L. A. Isabella. 1985. "Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development." *Academy of Management Journal 28*(1): 110–32.

Lang, C., J. Reeve, and V. Woolard. 2006. *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-first Century*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publications.

Mcguire, D., L. Stonner, and S. Mylona. 2008. "The Role of Line Managers as Human Resources Agents in Fostering Organizational Change in Public Services." *Journal of Change Management 8*(1): 73–84.

Ragins, B. R. 1997. "Diversified Mentoring Relationships in Organizations: A Power Perspective." *Academy of Management Review 22*(2): 482–521.

Sandell, R., and R. Janes. 2007. *Museum Management and Marketing*. London: Routledge.

Scandura, T. A. 1992. "Mentorship and Career Mobility: An Empirical Investigation." *Journal of Organizational Behavior 13*(2): 169–74.

Scandura, T. A., and C. A. Schriesheim. 1994. "Leader-Member Exchange and Supervisor Career Mentoring as a Complementary Construct in Leadership Research." *Academy of Management Journal 37*(6): 1588–1602.

Scandura, T. A, and R. E. Viator. 1994. "Mentoring in Public Accounting Firms: An Analysis of Mentor-Protégé Relationships, Mentorship Functions, and Protégé Turnover Intentions." *Accounting, Organizations and Society 19*(8): 717–34.

Smollan, R. K., and J. G. Sayers. 2009. "Organizational Culture, Change and Emotions: A Qualitative Study." *Journal of Change Management 9*(4): 435–57.

Wales, S. 2001. "Mentoring and Profiling in a New Job Share." *Journal of Change Management 1*(4): 378–82.

Watts, S. 2010. "Identification and the Cultural Organization: How the Concept of Identification Can Impact the Constituencies Who Work Within Cultural Organizations." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society 40*(3): 200–16.

Whetten, D. A., and P. C. Godfrey. 1998. *Identity in Organizations: Building Theory Through Conversations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Young, A. M., and P. L. Perrewe. 2000. "What Did You Expect? An Examination of Career-Related Support and Social Support Among Mentors and Protégés." *Journal of Management 26*(4): 611–32.