WHAT TYPE OF IMPACT COULD SOCIAL MENTORING PROGRAMS HAVE?
AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXISTING ASSESSMENTS AND A PROPOSAL OF AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

¿QUÉ IMPACTO PUEDEN TENER LOS PROGRAMAS DE MENTORÍA SOCIAL EN LA SOCIEDAD? UNA EXPLORACIÓN DE LAS EVALUACIONES EXISTENTES Y PROPUESTA DE MARCO ANALÍTICO

QUE IMPACTO PODEM TER OS PROGRAMAS DE MENTORÍA SOCIAL NA SOCIEDADE?
UMA EXPLORAÇÃO DAS AVALIAÇÕES EXISTENTES E PROPOSTA DO QUADRO ANALÍTICO

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ABSTRACT: This study carries out a review of the existing scientific literature in the field of social mentoring and its effects on youth at risk of social exclusion as well as on other vulnerable groups. We start by presenting the range of programs evaluated and the different ways these evaluations have been approached. An analytical framework is also presented to delve into the study of the orientation and socio-political context of social mentoring, as well as a definition of the concept in accordance with emerging new social realities. To conclude, we emphasize the need for a wider range of research and evaluation that can better inform about the practice of social mentoring programs that are emerging in Spain, Europe and Latin America.

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PALABRAS CLAVE: mentoría social inclusión social innovación social cohesión	RESUMEN: Este trabajo realiza una revisión de la literatura científica existente sobre la mentoría social y sus efectos en jóvenes en riesgo de exclusión social y otros colectivos. Comenzamos presentando la variedad de programas que han sido evaluados y las diferentes perspectivas que abordan dicha evaluación. También se presenta un marco analítico para ahondar en el estudio de la orientación y el contexto socio-político de la mentoría social, así como una definición del concepto de acuerdo con las nuevas realidades sociales emergentes. Finalmente, destacamos la necesidad de contar con un abanico mayor de investigaciones y evaluaciones que puedan informar mejor acerca de la práctica de los programas de mentoría social que están emergiendo en España, Europa y Latinoamérica.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: mentoría social inclusão social inovação social coesão	RESUMO: Este trabalho realiza uma revisão da literatura científica existente sobre a mentoría social e os seus efeitos em jovens em risco de exclusão social e outros grupos. Começamos apresentando a variedade dos programas que foram avaliados e as diferentes perspectivas que abordam dita avaliação. Também é preciso ter um quadro analítico maior para o estudo da mentoría social, assim como uma definição do conceito de conforme com as novas realidades sociais emergentes. Finalmente, realçamos a necessidade de ter diferentes tipos de investigações e avaliações que possam dar uma melhor imformação dos programas de mentoria social que se estam realizando em Espanha, Europa e Latinoamérica.

1. Introduction

Increasingly, scientific research has focused on observing the effects of mentoring on the social inclusion of groups at risk of exclusion. Some authors have identified the benefits it has when it arises naturally and spontaneously (informal mentoring). For example, in the North American context, Erikson, McDonald and Elder Jr. (2009) observed how disadvantaged youth that had a mentor were more likely to reach college.

In this vein, Robert Putnam (2015) stresses the need to encourage greater presence of support networks and social capital since two-thirds of the most vulnerable adolescents do not have the company of an adult to accompany them in their transition to adult life (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). To respond to this need we find the increasing emergence, in different contexts, of mentoring programs promoted by civic organizations (formal mentoring) that are aimed at promoting the positive development of young people at risk of social exclusion. This is the case in Europe, for example, where the number of social mentoring programs has grown exponentially during the last decade 2007-2017, coinciding with the budgetary constraints that most European governments have promoted to manage the economic crisis. This situation has led third sector organizations to seek new strategies to meet the social challenge posed by the arrival of a significant number of unaccompanied immigrant youth and/or refugees who have left their countries of origin due to war or because of the economic, political and social instability experienced by many countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean arch. In the United States, the emergence of social mentoring was different. It spread during the 1990s as a substitute strategy for certain redistributive policies. These programs were driven by various philanthropic organizations and endorsed by the Bush and Clinton governments. The goal was to actively involve middle-class citizens who would guide young people at risk of social exclusion from the American dream, empowering young people to be individually accountable for their own development and destiny.

In this article, the authors first propose a broad definition of what we mean by social mentoring that goes beyond the North American context, employing a concept that is better suited to the different emerging social realities and the different forms that mentoring can have according to the socio-political context and the actors that drive it. While social mentoring can be used in a neoliberal policy framework as highlighted; it can also be carried out in other more redistributive contexts as a piece of the puzzle of social support for young people at risk of social exclusion. Second, a critical meta-analysis is presented on the results of the main research published in the last twenty years that aims to evaluate the impact of social mentoring programs. Last, based on this meta-analysis, we recommend an analytical framework on the different orientations these programs can have and the consequences for their final recipients.

1.1. Definition of social mentoring

Before entering into the analysis, we must define what we mean by social mentoring and why, in this article, we use a broader concept than mentoring for young people, literal translation of youth mentoring. The concept of mentoring for young people seems to us to limit mentoring to only one stage of life and excludes others. While it is true that the majority of existing social mentoring

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programs target adolescents or young people at risk of social exclusion, increasingly, mentoring programs are emerging that are aimed at the inclusion of the foreign or adult refugee population, at combating the loneliness of people over 65 years of age, at assisting those over 45 to gain employment, at helping disabled persons, etc. In this sense, we prefer to use the concept of social mentoring because it is more inclusive. It also differs from mentoring programs in their simplest form that have no social purpose since their participants are usually people who are in a comfortable position, whether in terms of education, employment or the social structure as a whole (for example, senior university professors who mentor junior university professors or executives who provide support to newly incorporated workers in a company). In short, by social mentoring programs we refer to those programs that encourage new peer or group relationships with the aim of influencing the social inclusion of people who are at risk of social exclusion.

1.2. Origins and expansion of social mentoring programs

In recent decades, mentoring programs that aim to support groups at risk of social exclusion have grown exponentially not only in Anglo-Saxon countries but also in other contexts (Blakeslee & Keller, 2012). One of the most successful programs in terms of both participants and trajectory, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America (BBBSA hereinafter), was born in 1904 and currently has about 100,000 mentoring pairs in the United States[1]. This program was driven by Ernest Coulter, an officer in the juvenile court in New York who was concerned with the growing number of unaccommpanied minors, many of whom were foreign-born, arriving in the courts. Coulter created a volunteer program in which adults accompany over a period of time young people at risk of social exclusion, arguing that many of the problems observed would be reduced or disappear with this type of mentoring. Most of the mentoring programs of this type (youth mentoring) in the United States have experienced the greatest growth in their history in the last twenty-five years. For example, at the beginning of the 1990s, an estimated 300,000 young people at risk of exclusion were enrolled in a formal mentoring program, compared with 4.5 million at present (MENTOR the National Mentoring Partnership, 2015). Another indicative fact to note is that only 18% of mentoring programs had more than fifteen years of experience in 2000 (Rhodes, 2002). This growth in participants and programs was due to the institutional and economic support of the United States federal government in the 1990s and 2000s, which supported the development of these programs managed locally or regionally as part of its social policy (DuBois, *et al.*, 2011).

In Europe, social mentoring programs are also growing significantly and there are an estimated one thousand, most of them newly created (Petrovic, 2015). In fact, some relevant research in Europe on the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as the immigrant population, highlights the need to promote social mentoring as a complementary or integral part of the education system (Crul & Schneider, 2014). In Catalonia, as well as in the rest of Spain, over the last twenty years we have been working in this direction from different sectors, promoting mentoring programs that provide welfare networks and community ties to foster the inclusion of young people of foreign origin who lack these. Some of these programs already have a consolidated track record and have shown good results in favoring the social inclusion of students of immigrant origin in the school environment, such as the *Rossinyol* project (Prieto-Flores, Feu & Casademont, 2016; Feu, 2015), or in the transition to adulthood of young foreigners who leave behind processes of guardianship such as the project *Referents* (*Coordinadora de Mentoría Social*, 2014). In addition, the government of the *Generalitat* of Catalonia launched a social mentoring program in January 2017 in which five hundred mentors work to promote the social inclusion of the refugee population residing in Catalonia (*Pla Català de Refugiats*, 2017).

There are criticisms about how the American model of mentoring has tried to extrapolate to other contexts either through the delegations of Big Brothers and Big Sisters International or through other programs that attempt to replicate the same model. For example, Philip (2003) points out how this model tries to equip youth with the tools to assume dominant values and practices with an uncritical view of social inequalities. In a similar vein, Colley (2003) notes that some programs may be preconceived from the needs of the socially dominant groups. Both authors coincide in pointing out that these programs start from a highly individualistic practice without taking into account, for example, how the friendships of young people play an important role in their life trajectories or how some elements of social structure such as gender, ethnicity or social class can condition their biographies. In the same context, recently, after years of experience, other authors including Smith *et al.*, (2016) argue that mentoring can be a good tool since it can be applied in many

possible formulas and generates an opportunity for a change of paradigm in social policies, moving from hierarchical relationships between the social worker and young people or other users to informal support relationships in which the mentoring relationship can encourage young people to enter into an emancipatory process of their own. These authors also stress that social mentoring alone is not sufficient and that it may have limitations in responding to existing structural inequalities that affect the most vulnerable young people. In this connection, it is not recommended that social policies only emphasize mentoring programs and transfer all responsibility for social policies to the community, using the austerity policy of neoliberal governments as an excuse.

2. Methodology

The aim of this paper is not to review all available studies on social mentoring but rather to carry out a selection of the most representative works in different areas in order to obtain an overview of the field. It is an exploration of the diversity of research and evaluative approaches that exist in addition to pointing out the many knowledge gaps that remain to be analyzed in this field. It is likely, then, that some readers will identify some models of mentoring or specific studies that have not been mentioned in this analysis.

The selection of these studies corresponds to the last twenty years (from 1997 to the present) in which the scientific literature has grown considerably. To find the most relevant articles and books, several searches were carried out in the Web of Science and in Google Scholar. The terms used in this process were "Mentoring" and "Youth mentoring" separately or combining them with other words like "Assessment", "Meta-analysis" and "Evaluation". The criteria for selection of articles and books we found were as follows: 1) those scientific articles and books that had obtained more citations taking into account the year of publication (ten or more citations per year in CrossRef), 2) the characteristics of the social mentoring programs evaluated (one-on-one mentoring, group or youth-initiated mentoring), 3) the target population (adolescents, young people, the elderly, immigrants and refugees, women...), and 4) the methods used in the evaluation: a) if only Randomized Control Trials were used, b) other quantitative techniques, c) only qualitative methods, or d) if mixed methods were used. In general, we not only wanted to observe the evaluative canon of social mentoring programs, but also the diversity of types of programs evaluated and the methodological plurality present in the scientific evaluations.

In total, fifty-two evaluations of mentoring programs were identified and analyzed. Some of these are meta-analyses that compile eighty-five other evaluations not previously included. Therefore, we can specify that the analytical *corpus* of which this work derives from is approximately one hundred and thirty-seven evaluations.

As parameters to carry out the analysis of these works and to develop the subsequent analytical framework the authors took into account, on the one hand, which indicators and dimensions were used in the selected studies and, on the other, the scientific discipline from which the authors come from who performed these evaluations. We believe that the disciplinary approach used in the analyzed works is important because this can condition how the object or subjects of study are evaluated as well as their political and social implications.

It is also worth mentioning that the elaboration of the proposed analytical framework is the result of conversations generated in the last ten years in different research networks that the authors of this article are part of, such as the International Nightingale Mentoring Network, the UNESCO Global Youth Mentoring Network or the European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring.

This work has a number of limitations since the selection of the evaluations is conditioned by the selection strategy described previously. In this regard, there may be very interesting and recent works that are still little known by the scientific community and have not been identified. Another limitation to be taken into account is the working language used since, mainly, studies published in English were explored. Most likely there are evaluations in other languages that have not been addressed in this analysis and that may also make interesting contributions to the study of social mentoring.

3. Results of the main evaluations

The growth of social mentoring programs has been accompanied by a considerable increase in the amount of research aimed at evaluating its effects (DuBois *et al.*, 2011). Most of these studies have been developed from clinical psychology and developmental psychology and 80% have evaluated one-on-one mentoring programs (Rhodes, 2002). The evaluation of social mentoring still requires a more interdisciplinary approach to address the study of its effects since it starts from premises that can condition its evaluation and the identification of what is effective and what is ineffective.

The majority of research analyzed (80%) in this review of the literature is based on the concept

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of resilience and how mentoring can accompany young people in providing them with a context where this flourishes and endures. One of the most cited theoretical frameworks in the field is Jean E. Rhodes' (2002) model of mentoring relationships. Rhodes argues that the effects of mentoring relationships can increase in function of the degree of trust and closeness between the participants. In this line, it is necessary to empirically explore how close relationships can be generated that are both lasting and positive for the development of participants. Most of the effects that mentoring relationships normally have on mentees (*protégés*) are an improvement in their emotional and cognitive skills, a better development of their identity and a greater enjoyment of well-being (Rhodes *et al.*, 2006). While Rhodes emphasizes the need to further explore the effects that mentoring has on the social field, he does not delve into this and it remains a knowledge gap in which more research and wider theoretical and interdisciplinary frameworks are needed to guide the actions of organizations that carry out social mentoring programs. In this sense, we do not yet have much information on the effects of mentoring in promoting greater social justice, in combating discrimination, in participation in community social activities, or in promoting acts of service to the community, among others.

The results of the meta-analyses so far are very similar. These emphasize that mentoring generally tends to improve the emotional, social, academic and behavioral development of mentees. By contrast, those young people who do not participate in mentoring programs tend to worsen in the same indicators (DuBois *et al.*, 2002, 2011; Rhodes, 2008; Eby *et al.*, 2008). According to these authors, the impact of mentoring programs is generally moderate (0.2 on average in net effects). These studies perform a mean of all effects of seventy-three studies that evaluate different types of programs. The results indicate that while there are programs that have a high impact there are others that have negative effects on young people. For example, Wood and Mayo-Wilson (2012) concluded that there is no evidence to show the impact that mentoring programs have on academic achievement, truancy or behavior and attitudes of young people in school. However, it should also be noted that these authors only analyzed twelve studies and therefore the results cannot be generalized to the totality of mentoring programs.

One of the most important concerns in this area of study is to answer the question why some programs that have a clear intention to promote the development of young people can have either negative or positive results. Rhodes, Liang and

Spencer (2009) observed that this situation is due to the fact that certain programs are not based on a clear code of ethics or ethical framework. Some of these requirements are, for example, that mentors actively promote the welfare and safety of the mentee, be responsible and trustworthy, act with integrity, promote justice and respect the rights and dignity of individuals. The good intentions of mentors alone are not enough. Participants are often people who have suffered situations of vulnerability and have experienced relationships characterized by a lack of confidence. If a mentor fails them serious consequences may result; therefore, it is necessary for mentoring programs to be designed with caution, and to be based on those practices that research has proven to be more sound, and to follow clear ethical principles.

In the case of group mentoring programs some results found are notable for their high impact. An example of this is the Becoming a Man program that aims to reduce crime and increase the graduation rate of young people living in high-crime neighborhoods of Chicago, United States. Heller *et al.*, (2017) observed that participant' arrests declined by 32% and their graduation rate increased by 19% due to the substantial improvement in the development of their emotional and social skills after passing through the program. Qualitative studies of similar programs have highlighted how these types of formal programs can generate bonds of friendship, trust and support among the young participants that help them greatly in their emotional and social development (Sánchez *et al.*, 2016).

In recent years a series of mentoring programs have emerged in Europe in which the target groups are neither adolescents nor young people. An example of this is the Nightingale Senior program in Malmö (Sweden), linking seniors over seventy years of age with university students. The idea is that older people have a larger social circle and reconnect with society not only through the relationship with their mentor. University students also benefit from new ways of understanding and thinking about the world beyond those that are strictly academic and formal. The evaluation of programs of this typology shows how mentoring relationships help older people to form new friendships and to participate in social activities, thus combating the feeling of loneliness that many report (Andrews *et al.*, 2003).

Another group is that of refugees and immigrants. In Denmark, the KVINFO organization's *Mentor-netværket* program connects about two thousand middle-aged immigrant or refugee women with native women in order to help them find work and join new networks of friendship in

Danish society. Bloksgaard (2010) emphasizes that the program addresses the integration of foreign and refugee women from different angles; not only does it improve the personal dimension by fostering improved communication and language skills but also more structural dimensions such as labor or social insertion, enhancing the visibility of the mentored woman as an active and empowered person by discrediting existing racist stereotypes in Danish society.

Unfortunately, there are still few scientific evaluations that can contribute to determining the effects on society of such social mentoring programs. In order to have more information about the impacts of the wide variety of social mentoring programs, more evaluations are required that can provide greater knowledge about these new experiences.

3.1. Effective elements

Some research has emphasized that there are a number of elements that are vitally important in the effectiveness of social mentoring programs regardless of the target population. These are the following: a) the objective and focus of the programs – how different orientations of the program generate one type of interaction or another in mentoring pairs (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010); b) the training of mentors – knowing how, based on the interests of the adolescent or young person, to help them speak openly about their dreams and organize activities that are connected with their motivations (Miller, 2007); c) the selection of mentors and pairing or matching, selecting, for example, mentors who have had previous experience with minors (Raposa, Rhodes & Herrera, 2016) or matching people who have similar hobbies by taking into account the voice of both actors – mentors and mentees (Karcher, Nakkula & Harris, 2005); d) connecting the activities with the objectives of the program by encouraging meaningful conversations that favor the development of virtues and service activities towards others as well as the improvement of intercultural competences (Prieto-Flores, Feu & Casademont, 2016), and e) the monitoring and evaluation of the pairs in the programs to obtain results consistent with the objectives initially proposed (Herrera, DuBois & Grossman, 2013).

In addition, a transversal criterion to be taken into account in establishing mentoring relationships is time. Some research suggests that the minimum time required for a trusting relationship to be established that leaves a mark is six months (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). It has also been shown that the longer and more trustful the mentoring relationship, the greater the impact it will have on its participants (Rhodes et al., 2014).

4. Methods used in the evaluations

We live in an era in which there is still a certain methodological hierarchy of the quantitative over the qualitative, especially in relation to studies of causal inference. Studies that have an experimental methodological design are usually the most common in assessing the effects of social mentoring on participants. Traditionally, they are studies carried out from clinical and developmental psychology, disciplines that often recurrently use the counterfactual model of causality that consists of interviewing both a treatment group and a control group in two or more moments in time to observe the effects of social mentoring programs on their participants. This situation implies that Randomized Control Trials (RCTs hereinafter) may appear to be the only valid method for assessing social mentoring. This methodological priority is also found in the discourses of some researchers who openly emphasize that academic rigor derives from having more studies that are governed only by this perspective. For example, Rhodes and DuBois affirm the need to evaluate new forms of social mentoring emerging in different contexts only through "using RCTs" as a methodological tool (2006, p. 651). Indeed, there have been attempts to replicate this type of evaluations in Europe, as in the case of the evaluation conducted by Brady and O'Regan (2009) of the program *Foróige*, the Irish version of BBBSA, or the program *Baluund du* developed in Germany (Drexler, Borrmann & Müller-Kohlenberg, 2012).

In fact, 70% of the 130 studies found in this review, also taking into account meta-analyses, use this impact assessment model. There are few studies that still employ mixed or only qualitative methods for this purpose. It is also worth noting that one of the limitations of RCTs is that it only observes the differences that may exist between two groups (one participant and another control) over a short period of time (six and fifteen months depending on the time difference with which pre-tests and post-tests take place). The research with the longest time between the pre-and the post-test is the exploration carried out by Carla Herrera et al., (2007) of the project BBBSA –fifteen months. It was observed that there are significant but modest improvements in reducing school absenteeism, infractions and the attitudes of its participants. This study is also useful to observe how longer mentoring relationships were also those that had a greater effect on mentees.

The hegemonic use of inferential causal models may not visualize new knowledge that can be gathered through other methods and that can be helpful to organizations that carry out social mentoring programs. For example, social sciences increasingly emphasize the need to complement the analysis of social processes with other perspectives of causality such as Comparative Qualitative Analysis or the identification of social mechanisms (Small, 2013). The first uses not-so-large samples and focuses more on causes (for example, it would not be a matter of observing the effects of mentoring but rather what might be the causes that encourage high-quality mentoring relationships to emerge and be maintained over time). The second, on the other hand, would focus more on responding to what mechanisms connect cause and effect (Elster, 1999), i.e., whether certain types of mentoring relationships could induce certain changes or not.

It would also be necessary to have a more extensive body of mixed method research using quantitative and qualitative techniques or ethnographic research on the effects of social mentoring. A recent study that clearly reflects the contributions of ethnography in the field is the study of Amanda Barrett Cox (2017) which highlights the way in which certain organizational structures can enable African American students at risk of social exclusion to benefit from social capital networks that facilitate their access to the university.

Through qualitative methods it is easier to see what substantive changes social mentoring has produced in the lives of its participants, what epiphanies were experienced by participants, and what the meaning of the relationship is that was created within the framework of the program over time. Some interesting qualitative research allows us to capture a richness that, otherwise, is not collected; for example, taking into account the contribution of mentoring to the biographical construction of individuals or the development of programs. In this line, some qualitative studies have observed how certain practices affect participants, for example, the identification of different closures of mentoring relationships at the end of the program and their consequences (Spencer *et al.*, 2014), how mentoring affects other actors such as family members (Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico & Lewis, 2011), or how mentoring programs may be connected to community development, though appearing to be one-on-one mentoring programs (Brady & Dolan, 2009).

Another gap still to be covered in the evaluation of social mentoring and the most interesting debates is whether the effects of the programs persist over time, whether they have structural consequences or fade away. This is an issue that remains unclear and there are very few longitudinal studies that can provide evidence in this regard. Rhodes and DuBois (2008) examined in depth the only six longitudinal studies that exist and emphasize that the effects continue beyond mentoring, but we do not know how or in what way. There are very few longitudinal studies that track participants through the transition from youth to adulthood. In fact, this is a necessity that researchers in the field have highlighted and that could help shed light on what the effects of mentoring are in the medium or long term. One of the main difficulties in carrying out such studies is that they are expensive and require time to see their results. Even so, these are quite necessary because the results have very relevant political and practical implications. Two examples that obtain different results are the longitudinal studies of two school-based mentoring programs, the Quantum Opportunity program (Rodríguez-Planas, 2012) and the SMILE program (Karcher, 2008, 2016). In the first case, no significant results were found between those who participated in the program and those who did not. The benefits it could offer in the short term (two years) would fade five years later. In the second case, the opposite occurred. Initially, Karcher (2008) found no significant results in the grades and social skills of mentees. Ten years later he re-interviewed the same participants and observed how mentees had committed fewer offenses and had more post-compulsory studies than non-mentees (Karcher, 2016). These results made Karcher recognize that he had to retract certain statements he had made ten years earlier in not recommending such programs aimed at minority youth; lesson that probably has to do with the fact that the results of social mentoring programs require time and patience in order to see how the seed that was deposited germinates and grows. It will also be necessary to observe what the common characteristics are of the social mentoring programs in which this seed grows in a more secure and stable way.

The following table lists some types of social mentoring programs according to the focus, structure, target group, or the results of research that has analyzed their impact:

Table 1. Some evaluations of social mentoring programs analyzed				
Type of program	**Program and main results obtained**	**References**	**Method used in the evaluation**	**Target population (territory)**
One-on-one mentoring	_Various_. The average in net effects of the evaluation of 73 mentoring programs is 0.2. These studies highlight their positive effects but also their variability in outcomes depending on the program.	DuBois _et al._, 2002, 2011	Meta-analysis	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
One-on-one mentoring (CBM)[1]	_Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America_. Young people improve their emotional and cognitive skills and better shape their identities. They are also less likely to fall into alcohol and drugs, show reduced absenteeism and improve their behavior in school. These studies also highlight the need to create quality relationships, know how to properly end the relationship and encourage family participation in the process.	Grossman & Tierney 1998; Rhodes 2006; Rhodes _et al._, 2014; Raposa, Rhodes & Herrera 2016; Herrera _et al._, 2007; Spencer _et al._, 2011, 2014	RCT[3]; In-depth interviews	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
One-on-one mentoring (SBM)[2]	_SMILE_. Decrease in crime rate and increased participation in post-compulsory education.	Karcher 2008, 2016	RCT	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
One-on-one mentoring (SBM)	_Quantum Opportunity Program_. There are no significant changes between participants and non-participants.	Rodríguez-Planas 2012	RCT	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
One-on-one mentoring (CBM)	_Nightingale - Rossinyol_. Improves communication skills, self-esteem, behavior in school, and educational expectations. It also improves the intercultural competencies of mentors.	Prieto-Flores, Feu & Casademont 2016; Feu 2015	RCT; Mixed methods	Adolescents of foreign origin or Roma (Spain)
One-on-one mentoring (CBM)	_Baluund du_. Improves the quality of physical and emotional well-being of the children involved. It also improves their school motivation by positively affecting their performance.	Drexler, Borrmann & Müller-Kohlenberg 2012	RCT	Children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Germany)
One-on-one mentoring (CBM)	_KVINFOs Mentor-netværk_. Improvement in communicative and linguistic skills, greater access to the labor market and social image of empowerment.	Bloksgaard, 2010	Discussion groups	Foreign or refugee women (Denmark)
Group mentoring (SBM)	_Becoming a Man_. Decrease in arrests and an increase of 19% in the graduation rate of participants. Generation of bonds of friendship and mutual aid among participants.	Heller _et al._, 2017; Sánchez _et al._, 2016	RCT; In-depth interviews	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
Group mentoring (SBM)	_Posse_. The program generates vertical and horizontal social support networks that help facilitate access to the university for young people from ethnic minorities.	Barrett Cox 2017	Ethnography	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
One-on-one mentoring (CBM)	_Foróige_. Similar programs to BBBSA in other contexts that, when connected with civic and community activities promote community development and the active citizenship of their participants.	Brady & O'Regan 2009, Brady & Dolan 2009	Mixed methods	Young people at risk of social exclusion (Ireland)

Type of program	Program and main results obtained	References	Method used in the evaluation	Target population (territory)
One-on-one mentoring (CBM)	_Age UK_. Reduces the feeling of loneliness of the elderly, new friendships are forged and the relationship with their environment increases.	Andrews _et al._, 2003	Mixed methods	People over age 65 (United Kingdom)
Youth-initiated mentoring	_National Guard Youth Challenge Program_. Educational, occupational and behavioral improvements are found in those cases where relationships that are more lasting have been constructed. The most enduring relationships occur when young people choose their mentors and when they are of the same ethnic origin.	Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer & Grossman 2016	Mixed methods	Young people at risk of social exclusion (USA)
Youth-initiated mentoring	_Several organizations that implement this modality in Netherlands with young people under care guardianship._ Eight out of ten young people who participated in the program identified an informal mentor among their social networks within five weeks.	Dam _et al._, 2017	Case-file analysis	Young people under guardianship care (Netherlands)

Source: Authors' elaboration.
Notes: (1) CBM = Community-Based Mentoring.
 (2) SBM = School-Based Mentoring.
 (3) RCT= Randomized Control Trial.

5. Analytical framework for identifying the orientation and the context of social mentoring programs

Next, we present a modest analytical framework that can help us understand the direction social mentoring programs may take and the potential consequences for their participants. This framework has been built on the basis of the literature review we carried out and the identification of some gaps to be covered, based on the particularities of the new programs that are being developed in various contexts, not just the North American one. In this regard, the analysis of social mentoring programs must take into account how the programs can be positioned in three axes of action according to the context in which they are developed. For example, it could not be generalized that all mentoring programs have an individualistic and preventive orientation as there are more and more programs that have a clear focus on generating community ties and empowering mentees (axis _individualization_ versus _community_); neither can they be identified exclusively as paternalistic since there are an increasing number of programs that highlight the mutual benefits of mentoring, and fewer that resort to paternalism to "save the unfortunate and teach them the way of the American dream" (axis _unidirectionality_

versus _bidirectionality_). Finally, on the one hand, mentoring programs can be developed in a neoliberal context with a strong reduction of welfare state redistributive policies as happened in the United States during the 1990s and 2000s. On the other hand, they can also be developed as complementary (non-substitutive) actions of traditional redistribution policies since they have the capacity to generate new social relations of solidarity that the Administration does not usually attain, as in the Danish case (axis _neoliberal model_ versus _social model_). See Figure 1 below for _graphic representation_.

a) _Individualization versus community._ Some mentoring programs are based on a more individualistic approach with special emphasis on the resilience of the individual overcoming the obstacles they will encounter on the path to being successful in today's society. All this is usually disconnected from the context of young people. The idea is to get them out of their neighborhoods so that they can experience another reality. In this type of programs emphasis is placed on the development of those skills that the young person or adult must have to adapt to the norms that the labor market or society imposes. On the other hand, other mentoring programs start from a more civic conception

of social mentoring, taking into account the development of civic virtues or how the mentor can consciously accompany mentees in their empowerment by participating in cultural or community events, activities of service to the community and neighborhood improvement, etc. To delve deeper into this line, it is necessary, as Stanton-Salazar (2011) points out, to have more programs that can serve as a model, additional research and broader theoretical frameworks on the processes through which people at risk of social exclusion can be empowered in their relationship with significant others. To do this, it is necessary to go beyond the theoretical frameworks of developmental psychology and complement them with critical social theories on social networks and socialization to understand how mentoring processes can be connected with social structure and how they can create mechanisms of resistance to combat social inequalities. It is also necessary for mentors to be aware of the social forces that hinder the human development of young people, adults and older people at risk of social exclusion, to provide active support and to act as institutional agents[2]. In recent years, we find some programs and approaches that seek to promote this path of empowerment. For example, Schwartz and Rhodes (2016) emphasize the need to promote what they call youth-initiated mentoring (YIM), a new form of mentoring in which young people learn to build informal mentoring relationships in their natural support networks by identifying adults in their environment who can become mentors (Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer & Grossman, 2013). This type of mentoring is not only found in the North American context but also in Europe (Dam *et al.*, 2016).

b) *Unidirectionality versus bidirectionality.* One option that social mentoring programs and their evaluations have is to make visible only the benefit of their programs to the end user, whether in the prevention of drug use, school failure or delinquency. On the other hand, there are also programs and evaluations that highlight the mutual benefits generated by mentoring for its direct participants (mentees and mentors) as well as other related agents (family, community, etc.). This situation is much more common in Europe than in the United States (Prieto-Flores, Preston & Rhodes, in press). While this situation may be due to the fact that European programs have younger mentors who

usually carry out mentoring as part of service learning programs; also the relationships that arise tend to be more egalitarian because in European programs there is less distance between the ages of mentees and mentors. In order to observe the bidirectional or multilateral nature of the benefits of mentoring, it is necessary to create indicators and new evaluation systems that broadly show the effects that are generated by different kinds of relationships. This information is crucial to enhance the effectiveness of programs that promote social inclusion and social cohesion. For example, some studies have shown that social mentoring also improves intercultural competences of mentors (Sánchez *et al.*, 2014; Prieto-Flores, Feu & Casademont, 2016), or can promote community development (Brady & Dolan, 2009) as well as having positive effects on the social inclusion of the final recipients.

c) *Neoliberal model versus social model.* Social mentoring can be promoted as social policy within the welfare state from different perspectives. On the one hand, it can be promoted from a neoliberal framework in which civic organizations rely on philanthropic contributions as their main source of funding to carry out their programs. While the State can also contribute to their funding (as in the case of the United States), organizations seek to implement mentoring programs without regard to the relationships adolescents or young people at risk of social exclusion may have with others socializing agents such as the school, social workers or other professionals working with youth or the immigrant population. From this point of view, the responsibility for social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups rests with themselves and with the capacity of organized civil society to "show them the road to success".

On the other hand, a social framework can be fostered in which responsibility is shared and the State, together with organized civil society, works in concert to carry out mentoring programs that are complementary to existing public policies. The objective is to work in coordination with other actors to reach where the Administration does not, with social mentoring being one ingredient of a comprehensive public policy model. The application of this model could run the risk of ending up with excessive bureaucratization of the processes of mentoring due to a strong colonization of the relationships of everyday life by the system; that is to say,

that the Administration appropriates and can stifle fresh and flexible practices. However, we have examples where such a balance is possible, as in the case of *KVINFO* in Denmark, where mentoring programs for the inclusion of foreign women have been complemented in the last fifteen years (2002-2017) by redistributive public policies related to gender and social inequality promoted by the Danish authorities.
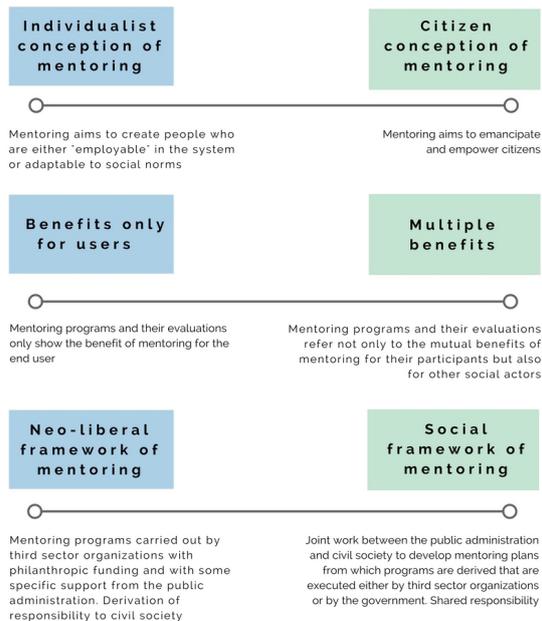

Figure 1. Analytical framework for social mentoring programs and evaluations

Source: Authors' elaboration.

6. Conclusions

There are many scientific studies that highlight the role of non-family adults (neighbors, monitors, teachers or others) in social inclusion and well-being in the most vulnerable groups (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005; Sánchez, Esparza & Colón, 2008, Portes, Aparicio & Haller, 2016). In order to foster this type of relationship, social mentoring programs seeking to promote these relationships in the community have emerged strongly in recent years. This growth is accompanied by the need for third sector organizations and the public administration to better articulate existing volunteerism in our societies. The growing presence of these programs has also been accompanied by a significant increase in the amount of research that attempts to explain social mentoring relationships and how these programs can become more effective. However, the existing research is not very extensive and has been carried out generally from only one discipline of knowledge and focuses only on the case of young people. Interdisciplinary work is needed to address the many knowledge gaps that still exist in the field, as well as new analytical frameworks that help us to better understand the processes of social mentoring and the context in which they are implemented. This paper attempts to contribute to filling this gap by providing an analytical framework that can help to critically identify the orientation and socio-political context in which they develop. This analytical framework allows us to identify how social mentoring programs are not only possible in the neo-liberal contexts in which they were born, but can also be developed in social-democratic political contexts from a differentiated perspective, emphasizing the empowerment of the most vulnerable groups, not only young people, thus being a formula culturally closer to several European and Latin American countries.

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Notes

[1] Big Brothers & Big Sisters of America. http://www.bbbs.org (Web accessed on February 8, 2017).

[2] Mentors can help mentees learn to navigate safely through the systems of oppression to defend their interests. They give them direct support and can provide them with access to spaces and scenarios that were previously denied them.

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