Chapter 1

SOCIALIZATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS

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The survival of an organization depends partly on its ongoing ability to integrate new members into the fold while simultaneously allowing if not encouraging organizational change. Organizational socialization is the process by which individuals become part of an organization's pattern of activities (Anderson, Riddle & Martin, 1999). This broad definition accommodates the impact of both the organization on the individual and the individual on the organization (the latter is often referred to as individualization or personalization), and–given that socialization is continuous–recognizes that individuals may be organizational newcomers or veterans.

Why does socialization matter? First, because work contexts are complex, dynamic, designed for multiple purposes, and, for the newcomer, more or less novel, their meaning is inherently equivocal. As various perspectives (e.g., social learning theory, Bandura, 1977; social information processing theory, Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; social comparison theory; Festinger, 1954) maintain, individuals socially construct meaning, giving particular weight to the views of credible people–in this case, veteran insiders. For example, Salzinger (1991) studied two cooperatives that specialized in domestic worker placement. In one, management regarded domestic work as stopgap work and provided no training. In the other, management regarded domestic work as a profession, provided training, and held supportive meetings where workers discussed their

experiences. Members of the first co-op came to regard their work as unimportant, whereas members of the second came to regard it as a skilled occupation. The work was essentially the same: it was the social construction of the work that differed. Through socialization, newcomers gain a sense of what the organization is all about and why it's important, as well as their place within it.

Second, socialization facilitates work adjustment. Research has connected various forms of socialization to many adjustment variables, ranging from attitudes (particularly job satisfaction and organizational commitment) to behavior (e.g., performance, role innovation), and personal change (e.g., in values, beliefs) to stressors (particularly role ambiguity and role conflict) (e.g., Bauer, Morrison & Callister, 1998; Jablin, 2001; Nelson, 1987; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Wanous, 1992). As Fisher (1986, p. 101) noted, depending on the socialization process, 'the outcomes . . . can vary from outright rebellion to creative change of the organization by the new member to rigid conformity; from satisfaction and commitment to disillusionment and turnover' (see also Bauer et al., 1998). Effective socialization helps transform the newcomer into a contributing member, thereby replenishing if not rejuvenating the organization as a system.

Finally, early socialization experiences appear to strongly affect the course of long-term adjustment, triggering either a success cycle or a failure cycle (Hall, 1976). Positive experiences can foster learning, confidence, and credibility, thereby paving the way for further growth opportunities and additional learning, confidence, and credibility. For example, Berlew and Hall (1966) found that AT&T managers randomly given initially demanding assignments tended to perform better and have higher salaries four to five years later than managers randomly given less demanding assignments. Bravo, Pieró, Rodriguez and Whitely (2003) found, in a sample of office technology workers and machine operators, that having a role model and a set timetable for assumption of the new role predicted lower role conflict (directly) and lower role ambiguity (indirectly), both of which were associated with developing career strategies.

As Van Maanen and Schein (1979; Schein, 1971; Van Maanen, 1982) argue, socialization is most intense at boundary crossings, whether vertical (rank or level), horizontal (one's function), or inclusionary (one's centrality)–in short, 'up, around, and in' (Schein, 1971, p. 418). Organizations are concerned about the fit of the individual, and the individual is receptive to organizational cues about what needs to be learned. Indeed, the degree of novelty can provoke 'upending experiences'–i.e., 'deliberately planned or accidently created circumstances which dramatically and unequivocally upset or disconfirm some of the major assumptions which the new man holds about himself, his company, or his job' (Schein, 1968, p. 4). Upending experiences can 'unfreeze' (Lewin, 1951) the individual, motivating learning and possibly personal change.

Organizational entry involves all three boundaries and so is particularly in-tense (Louis, 1980), and, given the notion of success and failure cycles, par-ticularly consequential. Not surprisingly, then, most socialization research has focused on the aftermath of organizational entry for relative newcomers to the labor force–as we will in this chapter. (See Black, 1992, and Hill, 1992, for examples of managers; Nicholson & West, 1988, Kramer, 1996, and Kramer & Noland, 1999, for examples of job change, transfer, and promotion; Hall, 1980, for later career socialization issues; Feldman, 1989, regarding the reso-cialization of veterans; and Spenner & Otto, 1985, for an example of research on the longer-term effects of work and the organization on individual change and adjustment.) Later, under 'Questioning our Default Assumptions,' we briefly extend our focus to other groups.

The chapter is divided into three sections. First, we review certain histori-cal perspectives on organizational socialization, including some early roots of socialization research, socialization stage models, socialization tactics, social-ization content (newcomer learning), and newcomer proactivity. Second, we examine cross-currents in socialization research, that is, major themes that flow across the historical perspectives. These include organizational context, local-ized socialization, individual differences, and the role of time. Third, we briefly question the apparent default assumptions embedded in socialization research, such as the notion that socialization pertains to raw recruits and traditional work arrangements. Directions for future research will be offered throughout the chapter. However, given space constraints, we offer only a few methodolog-ical recommendations (for discussions of methodological issues see the reviews by Bauer et al., 1998, Fisher, 1986, Jablin, 2001, Saks & Ashforth, 1997a, and Wanous & Colella, 1989). As we will see, the research on socialization is as diverse as it is intriguing.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

As a process that mediates between the organization and the individual, socialization can be–and has been–broached from a number of perspec-tives. We outline five such perspectives, in rough chronological order: early roots of socialization research, socialization stage models, socialization tactics, socialization content (newcomer learning), and newcomer proactivity.

Early Roots of Socialization Research

Current models of organizational socialization have many roots. Three of the most important are life course socialization, occupational socialization, and socialization in total institutions.

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Life course socialization

Eclectic perspectives on socialization through the life course, particularly adult socialization, have informed thinking on organizational socialization (e.g., Becker, 1964; Brim, 1966; Clausen, 1968; Mortimer & Simmons, 1978; Rosow, 1965). Socialization occurs in diverse social domains–including family, school, youth organizations, and part-time jobs–as one matures and adopts new or altered roles in those domains.

Jablin (2001) reviews the impact of various social domains on workplace socialization. He concludes that families, particularly parents, have a huge influence on vocational choice, general attitudes to work, stereotypes of gender-appropriate work, and skills for role negotiation and information-seeking. Indeed, 'our homes may be one of the most important sources of on-the-job training' (p. 737). Educational institutions (from preschool to college) affect vocational choice, learning strategies, interpersonal competencies, and knowledge of organizational activities and attributes (e.g., status differentiation, hierarchy, division of labor). Organized sports teach members about teamwork, discipline, and concentration. Finally, the media–especially television programs–often transmit distorted and stereotypic information about organizational life and specific occupations. Jablin quotes Lichter, Lichter and Amundson (1997, p. 79), who analyzed prime-time shows over 30 years: 'no other occupation or institution was criticized as heavily as business, in terms of either the frequency or proportion of negative thematic portrayals.' Further, organizations are often depicted as places 'where workers tell off bosses and warm personal relationships are infinitely more important than economic productivity' (Lichter, Lichter & Rothman, 1994, p. 419). The upshot of these social domains is that individuals are predisposed to view work, organizations, and specific occupations in certain ways even before they actually begin working.

Bush and Simmons' (1981) review of the life course socialization literature suggests several provocative ideas that are reflected in various models of organizational socialization. First, role acquisition is a key element of socialization. Social domains consist of networks of interlocking roles, and the newcomer necessarily enters one or more roles when entering a domain. A role situates the individual, providing a platform for interaction, learning, stress coping (regarding role ambiguity, conflict, and overload), and possibly role redefinition. Second, both continuity and discontinuity characterize adult life. Role transitions tend to build on earlier transitions, but unique circumstances may precipitate change. Even the small shifts in values and behaviors that typify short-term adjustments may result in dramatic changes over the long-term. Third, foreshadowing our later discussion of stages of organizational socialization, various stage models of life course socialization have been proposed. However, the universality of such models remains controversial. Accordingly, we argue later that stage models should be seen as heuristics for thinking through

potential socialization challenges. Fourth, contrary to conventional wisdom, role transitions (other than those involving loss) are often experienced positively rather than negatively. (This is likely to be particularly true in organizational contexts because organizational entry, promotions, and transfers are normative and typically desirable.)

Lutfey and Mortimer's (2003) more recent review of the life course socialization literature suggests several additional ideas that have permeated the organizational literature. First, foreshadowing organizational research on newcomer proactivity, symbolic interactionist perspectives suggest that individuals are not passive recipients of socialization, but active players who seek out opportunities to engage others in their environment, who socially construct their environment, and who attempt to alter that environment. Second, whereas childhood socialization is focused on learning basic values (e.g., independence, honesty) and skills (e.g., language, social competence), adult socialization is focused on learning context-specific skills. (In the same vein, Schein, 1971, p. 413, argues that organizational socialization focuses less on personality than on more 'labile selves.')

In sum, diverse research on socialization over the life course reveals that newcomers are far from blank slates on which the organization can simply inscribe itself, and that organizational scholars can profit greatly from research on socialization in other social domains.

Occupational socialization

A second major root of socialization models is ethnographic research on particular occupations (and, to a lesser extent, organizations) and the educational institutions that bestow occupational credentials on students. The Chicago School of Sociology provided much of the impetus, with classic studies of occupations ranging from executives to teachers, and physicians to thieves (see Barley, 1989, for an overview). These and other ethnographic studies are largely descriptive, opting for richly nuanced discussions of the lived experiences of individuals in specific settings. The Chicago sociologists eschewed rigorous construct definitions and conceptual frameworks in favor of organic heuristics that could be extended to other occupations and life histories (Barley, 1989). These tendencies remain alive today, with many occupational (and organizational) ethnographies offering only loose ties with the conceptual literature. Indeed, ethnographies can be profitably viewed as secondary data, providing much grist for *ongoing* theory development (Hodson, 2001).

These ethnographies reveal the vibrant nature of occupational cultures: their patterned rounds of life, their ideologies and value systems, and their rituals, narratives, jargon, and markers of progress and status (Coffey & Atkinson, 1994; Trice, 1993; Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). The ideologies are

particularly noteworthy as they routinely privilege the occupation and explain away uncomfortable possibilities. For example, neophyte nuclear weapons scientists are socialized to think that their efforts are preserving world peace rather than escalating weapons research and thereby threatening peace (Gusterson, 1996). Given the symbolic interactionist tradition that inspired many ethnographies, a major emphasis is on how occupational members are embedded in rich interpersonal networks and socially construct their reality (e.g., Adler & Adler, 1991; Hallier & James, 1999; Ibarra, 1999; Van Maanen, 1975). Socialization thus appears to be as much about proactive role-making as reactive role-taking (Graen, 1976).

Two foci, in particular, of occupational (and organizational) ethnographies continue to offer much promise for socialization theory development. One is the *phenomenology* of socialization, the raw experience of exploring and becoming immersed in occupational and organizational life. Quantitative treatments of socialization tend to focus on relatively bloodless constructs like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance, assessed in periodic snapshots. In contrast, ethnographies are rife with 'real time' instances of joy, aggression, ambivalence, hope, doubt, cynicism, empathy, frustration, and sharing–in short, the stuff of living. Ethnographies can be plumbed for a better understanding of what drives the range of human experience and with what effects. For example, emotions provide potent signals about what matters and how one should respond (e.g., fight or flight). Scott and Myers (2005) describe how novice firefighters are trained to read and calibrate their anxiety in the face of danger; Schweingruber and Berns (2005) discuss how–through stories, role plays, positive framing, and positive self-talk–neophyte door-to-door book salespeople are inoculated against emotionally debilitating failure; and Cahill (1999) describes how death is normalized for mortuary science students–through autopsy films, routine exposure to cadavers and associated smells, and the use of jargon–so that they do not fear death or experience revulsion when working with cadavers (cf. Ashforth & Saks, 2002; Reio & Callahan, 2004).

A second promising focus is the 'lumpiness' of socialization, the events that may serve as 'turning points' (Cressey, 1932; Hughes, 1958) in one's progression from outsider to insider. Quantitative treatments of socialization tend to implicitly assume a more or less stable set of forces that steadily push and pull on newcomers (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). In contrast, Louis (1980) describes how surprises prompt sensemaking; Gundry and Rousseau (1994) and Teboul (1997) discuss how newcomers learned about their organization's culture and their place within it by decoding critical incidents; Stohl (1986, p. 232) suggests that messages from 'older and wiser' veterans regarding specific events can evolve into memorable maxims that frame the newcomers' understanding of the organization's normative system; and Bullis and Bach (1989) found that graduate students reported a variety of turning points during their first eight months, from representing the organization to handling

disappointments. Planned events such as orientation sessions, hazings, developmental assignments, status reviews, and parties, and unplanned events such as an invitation to lunch from coworkers, an overheard remark, negative feedback from a client, and being entrusted with privileged information, have manifest and latent, substantive and symbolic lessons (e.g., one is valued, one has much to learn) (e.g., Gundry & Rousseau, 1994; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 1991).

One much studied category of events is rites of passage (Hallier & James, 1999; van Gennep, 1960). These are more or less ritualized affairs with actors, scripts, settings, and props, a major purpose of which is to facilitate, test, and/or affirm the newcomer's assumption of the relevant identity, thereby recognizing 'a "change of soul"' (Caplow, 1964, p. 176; Ashforth, 2001). Anderson-Gough, Grey, and Robson (2001, p. 117) describe how audit trainees became fixated on their upcoming professional exams, viewing them less as a test of expertise and more of 'the general "character" or "calibre" of the examinee.' Kadushin (1969) found that music students came to think of themselves as professionals rather than as students when they won talent competitions, performed for pay, and joined the union. Thus, ethnographies can also be studied for how the nature, variety, timing, and sequencing of events affects the trajectory of socialization.

Additionally, peers, supervisors, and mentors–the primary '"agents" of socialization' (Bauer et al., 1998, p. 167)–impart a great deal of information to newcomers in narrative form, that is, as event-driven stories, myths, and folklore that vividly highlight both positive and negative cultural cues in action (Brown, 1985; Kitchell, Hannan, & Kempton, 2000; Pentland, 1999; Swap, Leonard, Shields & Abrams, 2001). Given the rich details, engaging storylines, and recognizable characters, narratives invite the listener to vicariously experience and collude in deriving the 'moral.' Thus, narratives provide memorable vehicles for identification and knowledge–including the tacit knowledge that is otherwise difficult to articulate. Many ethnographies are rife with such storytelling, providing scholars with insight into how newcomers construct a sense of the workplace from the bricolage of events.

Socialization in total institutions

A third major root of socialization models involves the 'total institution,' defined by Goffman (1961, p. xiii) as 'a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.' Ethnographic studies of military institutions (Dornbusch, 1955), correctional institutions (Wheeler, 1969), prisoner of war camps (Schein, 1961), and psychiatric hospitals (Goffman, 1961), among others, provided rich descriptions of how individuals were actively remade in the organization's image. Much like the occupations noted above, a major appeal of total institutions for

scholars appears to be their relatively unique mission, strong culture, and rigorous 'people processing' mechanisms (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). For much the same reason, ethnographic research has also been popular in organizations that approximate total institutions, such as the demanding and emotionally intense workloads of professional schools (Becker, Geer, Strauss & Hughes, 1961), the residence living of college (Van Der Ryn, 1971), and the physical isolation of company towns (Walkowitz, 1978). Research on socialization in total and near-total institutions has continued apace, with more recent examples including studies of a fire department (Scott & Myers, 2005), trawler (Bourassa & Ashforth, 1998), and medical schools (Hafferty, 1991; Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006).

Because total and near-total institutions exercise strong control over their members and are often intent on rebuilding those members, they reveal certain socialization processes in their most extreme form. They also create the impression that socialization is about situationism, where a strong situation overwhelms the newcomer, rather than about interactionism, where individual differences interact with situational variables (Schneider, 1983), or about proactivity, where the newcomer actively investigates and affects the situation. A common theme in the early ethnographies of total institutions is the tactics–particularly divestiture–that would come to be known as institutionalized socialization (described later). Bourne (1967), for example, described the personal changes wrought by U.S. Army basic training. Recruits are isolated at a fort, their heads are shaved, civilian clothes are traded for a uniform, and minor infractions are relentlessly punished, such that the recruits 'are forced into a highly infantile role' (p. 195). This role induces disillusionment with oneself and the army. However, aided by lenient scoring, the recruits are then reinforced for their 'skilled' rifle shooting. In rapid succession, the recruit becomes proficient in hand-to-hand combat, tactical skills, and other capabilities. Although the dropout rate is approximately only 1%, the recruit is induced to feel pride at successfully surviving the training and becoming a member of the army. In nine short weeks, the recruit's tattered civilian identity has been remade into that of a skilled soldier.

Although we have cast life course socialization, occupational socialization, and socialization in total institutions as 'early roots' of socialization research, scholars continue to study these areas and generate intriguing findings. Moreover, much of the qualitative research that historically informed these areas remains riveting reading even today–and is still capable of generating novel insights into the dynamics of socialization. However, as Van Maanen (1984, p. 238) notes, 'Organizational researchers have overstudied relatively harsh and intensive socialization and . . . understudied socialization of the more benign and supportive sort.' Although accounts of 'harsh and intensive socialization' may be gripping, they wrongly imply that socialization is only about dramatic and revolutionary transformation. Mundane and evolutionary change also plays a major role in socialization.

Socialization Stage Models

Many researchers have attempted to distill the socialization process into a generalizable sequence of stages. However, stage models have not attracted much research attention during the last 20 years. This may be attributable to their mixed empirical support, the ascendance of other socialization perspectives (particularly socialization tactics and newcomer proactivity), and the pessimistic evaluation they received in Fisher's (1986) influential review. Indeed, Bauer et al. (1998, p. 153, their emphasis) state that 'these models were not true "process" models in that they focused on the sequence of *what* occurs during socialization, yet paid relatively little attention to *how* those changes occur.'

Stage models are prescriptive in that each stage is based on more or less successfully resolving the challenges of the previous stages. As such, we believe that stage models continue to provide a useful heuristic for thinking through the challenges that newcomers (and their employers) tend to face. As Wanous (1992, p. 210, his emphasis) puts it, 'Even if research has yet to establish the *precise sequences* of events, it is probably correct to consider the issues raised by the stage models to be relevant for most newcomers at some point early on in their careers with an organization.' Accordingly, we refrain from delving into the details that differentiate one model from another. Instead we provide a general comparison of how existing stage models are aligned and, to a lesser extent, misaligned to underscore assumptions and trends across the models. In making this comparison we have omitted models that were derived from specific professions in order to increase comparability and generalizability (Fisher, 1986, provides a solid review of some of these more specific models).

Table 1.1 compares the models across four relatively agreed upon stages: anticipation, encounter, adjustment, and stabilization. *Anticipation* occurs before organizational entry and includes activities through which individuals develop expectations regarding the organization in preparation for entry (e.g., job search, asking questions of family, friends, and contacts, reading media accounts and organizational self-portrayals). Similarly, during this stage the organization is often providing some combination of idealistic and realistic images of itself (through, for example, press releases, recruitment and selection activities, and internships). *Encounter* involves new members actually entering the organization and confronting its realities and contending with the discrepancies between expectations and experience. The result is often visceral; a sense of conflict (Wanous, 1992), shock (Hughes, 1959), and surprise (Louis, 1980) that prompts learning. *Adjustment* involves individuals resolving the demands of their new reality, such as becoming integrated into interpersonal networks and changing one's self-image, as well as insider and organizational activities designed to foster newcomer adaptation. These processes produce a mutual sense of commitment (Anderson & Thomas, 1996). Finally, *stabilization* focuses on the signals and actions that indicate that individuals are bona fide

Table 1.1 Socialization stage models

Author	Anticipation	Encounter	Adjustment	Stabilization	
Initial Models					
Buchanan (1974)		Basic training / initiation	Performance	Organizational dependability	
Porter, Lawler & Hackman (1975)	Prearrival	Encounter	Change and acquisition		
Feldman (1976)	Anticipatory socialization	Accommodation	Role management		
Schein (1978)		Entry	Socialization	Mutual acceptance ?	
Integrative Models					
Fisher (1986)	Anticipatory socialization	?	?	?	
Falcione & Wilson (1988)	Anticipatory socialization	Encounter	Metamorphosis		
Wanous (1992)		Confrontation Role clarity	Locate	Sign posts	
Bauer et al. (1998)	Anticipatory socialization	Accommodation / confrontation	Adaptation / metamorphosis		
Specialized Models					
Jablin (1987)—Communication		Entry	Assimilation		Exit
Nelson (1987)—Stress	Anticipatory socialization	Encounter	Change and adjustment		Outcomes
Nicholson (1987)—Role transitions	Anticipation	Encounter	Adjustment	Stabilization	
Kram (1988)—Mentorship		Initiation	Cultivation	Separation Redefinition	
Moreland & Levine (2001)—Group	Investigation	Socialization	Maintenance	Resocialization	Remembrance
Anderson & Thomas (1996)—Group	Anticipation	Encounter	Adjustment		
Anderson, Riddle & Martin (1999)—Group	Anticipation	Encounter	Assimilation		Exit

Antecedents

organizational insiders, including promotion, sharing of organizational secrets, lower stress, termination of mentoring, and integration into a group (Anderson et al., 1999; Kram, 1988; Nelson, 1987). There appears to be more consensus across the models on the occurrence of the first stages, perhaps because they have events that more clearly demarcate transitions (e.g., hiring can be viewed as an event marking the transition from anticipatory socialization to encounter), whereas the events demarcating later stages are often more subtle and gradual (Wanous, 1992).

We have organized the table to highlight three different categories of stage models: initial models, integrative models, and specialized models. Although there is considerable overlap between the second and third categories in terms of when they were published, these three categories provide a rough view of the evolution of stage models. With the exception of Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975), who distilled their model from a review of research, all of the initial models were derived from or informed by empirical research conducted by their originators. The initial models tend to depict socialization as a linear, lockstep sequence (Wanous, 1992). A comparison of these four models reveals that, even from the outset, socialization researchers had difficulty agreeing upon when socialization starts and ends: some researchers consider anticipatory socialization integral to socialization whereas others do not, and some consider stabilization as integral to socialization whereas others do not.

We have named the second set of stage models 'integrative models' because the authors were attempting to blend the initial models. The majority of the integrative models are derived from reviews of the extant literature and tend to be less detailed and descriptive than the initial models. Their authors tend to agree that stage models serve more as heuristics (Fisher, 1986) or conceptual frameworks (Bauer et al., 1998). These integrative models have also helped to solidify the importance of anticipatory socialization as a precursor to the dynamics of actual organizational entry.

The final set of stage models, 'specialized models,' deal with the impact of mentors (Kram, 1988) and groups (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Anderson et al., 1999; Moreland & Levine, 2001) as socialization agents, and highlight the effects of communication (Jablin, 1987), the importance of role transitions (Nicholson, 1987), and the relationship between socialization and stress (Nelson, 1987). Taken as a whole, these models enrich our understanding of socialization in three ways. First, whereas the initial models described socialization as a linear process, the specialized models highlight non-linearity–the stages are less discrete and more fluid as elements of the stages may overlap, specific elements may not occur (e.g., lack of reality shock), and events and emergent issues may cause a newcomer to recycle through the stages (e.g., Hess, 1993). Moreover, if viewed together, these models underscore the fact that individuals are often being socialized into multiple collectives simultaneously (e.g., occupation, team, department, organization, industry). For example, Anderson et al. (1999) note that individuals can be undergoing

socialization into multiple groups simultaneously but be in different stages across the groups. Similarly, an individual could be fully socialized into, say, a mentor relationship but still be beginning socialization into a new group or role.

Second, the specialized models display a greater sensitivity to the beginning and ending phases. The initial models tend to disagree about the occurrence of the anticipation and stabilization stages, whereas the integrative models are more apt to ignore the stabilization stage. In agreement with the integrative models, the specialized models demonstrate agreement on the importance of anticipation. In contrast, the specialized models show a greater inclination toward extending socialization into stabilization and even beyond. This inclination is probably related to the level of detail that can be provided by restricting the scope of the model. For instance, Nelson's (1987) stress model emphasizes outcomes of stress and in so doing, extends the impact of socialization beyond the organization, into the individual's family and into addictive behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and drug abuse. Moreland and Levine's (2001) model notes that even after stabilization, if mutual commitment erodes, groups may need to resocialize members and that this will either produce better person-group convergence or lead to the individual's exit. Anderson et al. (1999) note that exit affects both the individual and the group as each tries to make sense of what has occurred and justify the exit. The process of justification has the potential of surfacing relational issues within the group and potentially changing group norms (Bettenhausen & Murnighan, 1991).

Finally, these specialized models expose the importance of proximal, local elements in socialization. We discuss the importance of localized socialization later; however, in reference to stage models, models that focus on proximal sources of socialization provide a more precise picture of how interpersonal and group relationships may literally guide individuals through the stages of socialization and hence the rites that lead to 'insidership.' In other words, if socialization stage models are viewed as a fluid gestalt, like a set of ocean waves, models focused on proximal sources would act as the subsurface currents generating the force of the waves. For example, the assignment of a mentor to a newcomer, what Kram (1988) refers to as 'initiation,' is a clear signal of entry. Similarly, the final stage of mentorship, in which the newcomers detach from their mentors and redefine themselves as independent actors, provides a rich turning point that signifies insidership. These proximal, interpersonal transitions provide the momentum that helps drive the newcomer through the process of socialization.

Future socialization research should more actively integrate the heuristics of stage models with other socialization perspectives. Chen and Klimoski's (2003) study of the impact of team expectations on newcomer performance provides a good example. These authors use a three-stage model (anticipation, encounter, and adjustment) as a heuristic to generate and test their framework. The authors note that specific theories do not indicate when each socialization

phase begins and ends, but the three stages provide a conceptual rationale for the causal relations between their constructs as well as a methodological rationale that guided their three data collection periods. Such studies check our assumptions regarding what occurs in each stage and thereby help cultivate our understanding of the flow of events over the course of socialization.

Socialization Tactics

Prior to Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) landmark work, socialization research tended to focus on discrete activities such as newcomer orientation, training, apprenticeship, and mentoring. What was missing, however, was an overarching framework that suggested how and why such practices had the effects that they did. Van Maanen and Schein argue that organizations implement six bipolar tactics to integrate new employees. First, the *collective (vs. individual)* tactic involves grouping newcomers together and putting them through common learning experiences. Second, the *formal (vs. informal)* tactic includes separating the newcomers from organizational insiders via activities such as training and orientation classes. Third, the *sequential (vs. random)* tactic takes the newcomer through a lock-step series of adjustment experiences. Fourth, the *fixed (vs. variable)* tactic entails following a set timetable for moving from one adjustment experience to another. Fifth, the *serial (vs. disjunctive)* tactic involves learning the new job from a role model such as a mentor, supervisor, or more experienced peer. Finally, *investiture (vs. divestiture)* affirms the newcomer's incoming identity, capabilities, and attributes such as when one is hired because of one's previous training or experience. Jones (1986) argues that the collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics form a constellation termed *institutionalized socialization* wherein the organization encourages lock-step integration into the organizational milieu.[1] The opposite set of tactics (i.e., individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divesture) form *individualized socialization* wherein the newcomer is left on his or her own to walk the tightrope of adjustment.

A 1997 review by Saks and Ashforth (1997a) reported that institutionalized socialization is associated with lower role ambiguity, role conflict, and intentions to quit, and higher task mastery, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The positive attitudinal effects may be attributable not only to the instrumental payoff of institutionalized socialization (e.g., enhancing role clarity), but to the symbolic payoff noted earlier (i.e., demonstrating that the newcomer is valued) (Riordan, Weatherly, Vandenberg & Self, 2001). Research since 1997 has reinforced these findings (Anakwe & Greenhaus, 1999; Bravo et al., 2003; Cooper-Thomas, van Vianen & Anderson, 2004; Fogarty, 2000;

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[1] It should be noted that Van Maanen and Schein (1979, p. 253) argue that the fixed and investiture tactics *discourage* a 'custodial orientation.' However, subsequent research, cited later, has generally supported Jones' reformulation.

Hart & Miller, 2005; Hart, Miller & Johnson, 2003; Riordan et al., 2001; Seibert, 1999; cf. Jaskyte, 2005). Recent research has expanded the number of outcome variables; specifically, institutionalized tactics predict increased person-organization fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Gruman, Saks & Zeig, 2006; Kim, Cable & Kim, 2005), person-job fit (Gruman et al., 2006; Riordan et al., 2001), social integration (Anakwe & Greenhaus, 1999; Bravo et al., 2003; Gruman et al., 2006), on-the-job embeddedness (Allen, 2006), organization-based self-esteem (Riordan et al., 2001), increased expatriate adjustment (Feldman, Folks & Turnley, 1998; Harvey & Kiessling, 2004; Palthe, 2004), fewer perceived psychological contract violations (Robinson & Morrison, 2000), lower turnover (Allen, 2006), and, at the subunit level, knowledge transformation and exploitation (although not knowledge acquisition and assimilation) (Jansen, Van Den Bosch & Volberda, 2005).

Interestingly, Riordan et al. (2001) found that the collective tactic was *positively* associated with turnover at a large bank six months after entry. Riordan et al. speculate that perhaps newcomers in high-turnover positions were socialized collectively for reasons of efficiency. However, the finding is also consistent with Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) suggestion that collective socialization may occasionally backfire: incipient ill will may become contagious and gain momentum.

One particularly intriguing consequence of the socialization tactics is role innovation. Research generally indicates that institutionalized socialization is negatively associated with role innovation or, alternatively, that individualized socialization is positively associated with innovation (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Baker, 1995; Jones, 1986; King & Sethi, 1992; Mignerey, Rubin & Gorden, 1995). At first blush, this makes good sense because the 'sink or swim' approach implied by individualized socialization encourages–indeed, almost mandates–that newcomers find their own way, increasing the likelihood of innovation (even if unintended). However, it should be remembered that the tactics connote only a process, not particular content. While studies suggest that organizations tend to use the institutionalized tactics to encourage role conformity, these tactics can instead be used to encourage newcomers to innovate, albeit in a more deliberate and structured manner than in the default approach of the individualized tactics (Ashforth & Saks, 1996).

Although there has been progress on the research directions suggested by both Bauer et al. (1998) and Saks and Ashforth (1997a), the work is still somewhat under-developed. As shown above, research *has* started to explore links between socialization tactics and other important adjustment outcomes. Another recent advancement concerns investigations into the link between institutionalized socialization and newcomer learning. Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) found that institutionalized tactics predicted learning in the social, interpersonal, role, and organizational domains, and Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999) report that institutionalized socialization was associated

with task mastery. Hart and Miller (2005) found that the fixed and serial tactics lead to information about performance proficiency. Klein and Weaver (2000) also found that an orientation program (a formal tactic) was positively related to learning about goals/values, organizational history, and people (but not about politics, performance information, and language). We argue later that learning is central to the socialization process; clearly, more research on the link between socialization tactics and learning is needed–especially on the possibly mediating role of learning with respect to newcomer adjustment.

Scholars have also begun to consider how different conditions moderate the influence of socialization tactics on adjustment outcomes. For example, Kim et al. (2005) found that the relationship between institutionalized socialization and person-organization fit was enhanced by the newcomer proactive behaviors of positive framing and general socializing (but not by information- and feedback-seeking) and dampened by relationship-building with one's supervisor (but not by networking). Griffin, Colella and Goparaju (2000) conceived of socialization tactics as antecedents to and moderators of the newcomer proactivity process. Given the wide range of possible moderators, researchers should follow the above leads by including contextual variables that both drive and condition the use of socialization tactics (see our later discussions of 'Organizational Context' and 'Localized Socialization'). In short, while there has been progress, scholars have yet to fully map the moderating and mediating variables within the socialization process.

In addition to our previous suggestions, we see three promising directions for future research. First, studies routinely focus on individuals' perceptions of their organization's tactics: this approach needs to be revisited. To be sure, individual perceptions allow for variation across individuals within an organization and may therefore be appropriate for tactics that are more or less tailored to the individual (e.g., serial, investiture). However, most studies assume that the individual is acting as a reliable informant for organization-level practices. This assumption needs to be assessed with more objective measures of an organization's socialization tactics (e.g., archival measures, observation) and/or by testing for agreement and then aggregating individuals' responses. Further, in complex organizations with differentiated functions and occupations, it would be useful to assess whether *subunits* rather than the organization per se should be the referent for measures of socialization tactics.

Second, studies tend to assume that the six socialization tactics cluster at one pole or the other of the single institutionalized-individualized continuum. However, research summarized by Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1997) indicates that the tactics do not always covary. Perhaps most problematic is the investiture-divestiture tactic. If investiture is measured according to Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) original notion of affirming a newcomer's incoming identity (rather than as social support; see Jones, 1986), then investiture tends to be only weakly correlated with the other tactics (Ashforth et al., 1997). Bourassa and Ashforth (1998) suggest that although investiture tends to be positively

associated with the tactics of institutionalized socialization in most organizations, it is negatively associated in organizations that actively practice divestiture–that is, that seek to strip away newcomers' incoming identity–as part of a structured socialization program. Clear examples are total institutions such as the military (Bourne, 1967) and extended-sojourn fishing boats (Bourassa & Ashforth, 1998), as noted earlier. Further, given that socialization tactics may be used sequentially (e.g., collective socialization in a police academy, followed by individual socialization in a squad car), it may be useful to reassess the tactics during different phases of a socialization program or to devise measures that do not force a choice between one end of the continuum or the other.

Third, research should broaden the focus from socialization tactics to *sources* of socialization tactics. Research has started to discern various sources of tactics, namely, the organization, group (via occupational and localized norms), and leader-newcomer relationship (see 'Localized Socialization' below). For example, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found from a multi-organization study that the newcomer's organization, supervisor/mentor, and coworkers differentially affected adjustment outcomes. Similarly, Hart and Miller (2005) found that the organization and workgroup are each important sources of assimilation (see also Hallier & James, 1999, Holton & Russell, 1999, and Riddle, Anderson & Martin, 2000). As such, *simultaneous* investigation of the various sources of socialization tactics promises to provide more precise theoretical and practical predictions. For instance, do certain group tactics replace, enhance, or destabilize particular organizational tactics? Do the socialization tactic levels differentially influence newcomer proactivity, learning, and other adjustment outcomes?

In sum, Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) model has justifiably generated much research interest: it offers a comprehensive framework for combining a number of discrete socialization practices that had generated their own separate literatures. Moreover, their model continues to offer much promise for future research.

Socialization Content (Newcomer Learning)

For socialization to effectively bring the newcomer into the fold, the newcomer should come to know and understand (i.e., learn) the norms, values, tasks, and roles that typify group and organizational membership. As such, newcomer learning lies 'at the heart of any organizational socialization model' (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005, p. 117; Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein & Gardner, 1994; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Klein, Fan & Preacher, 2006; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Indeed, Saks and Ashforth (1997a) place newcomer learning as the conduit by which socialization factors (i.e., organizational-level tactics, group-level tactics, proactive behavior) influence other proximal outcomes (e.g., role clarity, person-organization fit,

identification) as well as more distal outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance). Put more succinctly, the learning of content is at least as important as the process itself. Thus, scholars and practitioners need a solid understanding of newcomer learning and its dimensions, which dimensions are best tapped by specific socialization practices and antecedents, and which dimensions lead to specific adjustment outcomes.

Most research on newcomer learning has focused on demarcating the domains of socialization content and documenting their effects, with less attention paid to what predicts these domains. Indeed, multiple socialization content or newcomer learning typologies have been proposed and tested (Chao et al., 1994; Fisher, 1986; Haueter, Macan & Winter, 2003; Morrison, 1993b, 1995; Myers & Oetzel, 2003; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Taormina, 1994, 1997; Thomas & Anderson, 1998). Although not completely aligned, these typologies tend to agree that learning spans the job and role, interpersonal and group relationships, and the nature of the organization as a whole (see Table 1.2). Generally, socialization content has been characterized (both theoretically and operationally) in three related ways: (1) as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities (Chao et al., 1994; Haueter et al., 2003; Morrison, 1993b; Myers & Oetzel, 2003; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Taormina, 1994; Thomas & Anderson, 1998); (2) as general adjustment (including role clarity) (Chao et al., 1994; Myers & Oetzel, 2003; Taormina, 1994, 1997); and (3) as effective support from various sources during the socialization process (e.g., organization, group, supervisor) (Myers & Oetzel, 2003; Taormina, 1994, 1997). Following Fisher (1986), we strongly believe that socialization content is best conceptualized as newcomer learning–the first option above–or 'what is actually learned during socialization' (Chao et al., 1994, p. 730). The remaining two components (general adjustment and support) overlap with the inputs to newcomer learning (i.e., organizational socialization tactics, newcomer proactivity) and the outcomes of learning.

Clearly, further research is needed to sort out learning domains that generalize across demographic groups, occupations, functions, organizations, and industries. This research may be complemented with group-, occupation-, function-, organization-, and industry-specific measures if researchers wish to drill down into particular settings and samples; however, such studies need to weigh the need for specificity against the needs for parsimony and generalizability.

Toward richer models of antecedents and consequences

It is somewhat difficult to offer authoritative comments on the antecedents and consequences of newcomer learning because of (1) the questionable factor structure of the most frequently used measure of learning–that of Chao et al. (1994; see Klein & Weaver, 2000, and Taormina, 2004), (2) the diversity of content measures used, and (3) the mixed support for the convergent and

Table 1.2 Measures of socialization content categorized by domain

Measures of Socialization Content	Newcomer Learning Domains				Sources	Other Components
	Task/Job	Role	Social/Group	Organization		Adjustment
Ostroff & Kozlowski (1992)	Task	Role	Group	Organization		
Chao et al. (1994)	Performance proficiency			Goals & values, Org. history, Language, Politics		People
Taormina (1994)	Understanding		Coworker support	Understanding	Training	Future prospects
Morrison (1993b, 1995)	Technical and appraisal info.	Referent and appraisal info.	Social info.	Normative info., Org. info., Political info.		
Thomas & Anderson (1998)		Role	Social, Interpersonal support	Organization		
Myers & Oetzel (2003)				Acculturation		Familiarity with others, Recognition, Involvement, Job competency, Adaptability/Role negotiation
Haueter, Macan & Winter (2003)	Task		Group	Organization		

discriminant validities of these measures.[2] Given that learning is the heart of socialization, it is not surprising that learning (or at least certain domains of learning) has been associated with a variety of newcomer adjustment variables – albeit not always consistently. These variables include higher job satisfaction (Chao et al., 1994; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002, 2005; Haueter et al., 2003; Klein et al., 2006; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Taormina, 2004), organizational commitment (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002; Haueter et al., 2003; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Klein et al., 2006; Klein & Weaver, 2000; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Taormina, 2004), social or group integration (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003), role clarity (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Klein et al., 2006), task mastery (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003), performance (Reio & Wiswell, 2000), personal income (Chao et al., 1994), career involvement (Chao et al., 1994), identity resolution (Chao et al., 1994), and adaptability (Chao et al., 1994), changes in psychological contract expectations (Thomas & Anderson, 1998), and lower role ambiguity (Hart & Miller, 2005), stress (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), intentions to quit (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002, 2005, Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), and work withdrawal (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003).

Further, if learning is in fact the heart of socialization, then it should at least partially mediate the impact of socialization processes (and individual differences) on more distal indicators of newcomer adjustment. The initial results are very promising. In a sample of British Army recruits, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) found that newcomer learning fully mediated the influence of organizational socialization tactics on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In a sample of newly hired employees in a large educational institution, learning fully mediated the impact of an orientation program on organizational commitment (Klein & Weaver, 2000) and partially mediated the impact of realistic preentry knowledge and socialization agent helpfulness on role clarity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Klein et al., 2006). Reio and Wiswell (2000) found that learning partially mediated the relationship between trait curiosity and performance among service industry employees (albeit of mixed tenure). In a diverse sample of recent hires, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found that 'proximal outcomes' (which included task mastery and political knowledge) partially mediated the effect of several (although not all) antecedents on organizational commitment and work withdrawal.

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[2] Regarding the third point, Haueter et al. (2003) found weak validities for their Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire vis-à-vis Chao et al.'s (1994) measure, and Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2006) found only moderate validities for Morrison's (1995) measure vis-à-vis Chao et al.'s measure. And although Taormina (2004) found strong convergent and discriminant validity for his Organizational Socialization Inventory measure vis-à-vis Chao et al.'s measure, four of Chao et al.'s six content domains loaded on only one of Taormina's four domains, and one of Taormina's four domains had no parallel in Chao et al.

However, Allen, McManus and Russell (1999) did not find that learning mediated the relationship between peer mentoring and stress among MBA students.

Beyond these mediation studies, most of the research on antecedents of socialization content has focused on training (e.g., Haueter et al., 2003), socialization tactics (reviewed earlier), newcomer proactivity (reviewed later), and, as noted, 'sources' (e.g., coworkers, experimentation, organizational documents; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). At first blush, one might expect that antecedents–and consequences–at the same target level as the learning domain (i.e., job/task, interpersonal/group, or organization) would display the strongest relationships. For instance, Haueter et al. (2003) found that job training and job satisfaction were more strongly related to task learning than to group or organization learning, and Klein and Weaver (2000) found that an organizational-level orientation program was associated with knowledge of the organization's history and goals/values (although not language). However, some antecedents may provide information about *multiple* target levels (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). For instance, Haueter et al. (2003) also report that having a mentor was associated with task, group, *and* organization learning, and Klein and Weaver (2000) also report that the orientation program was associated with Chao et al.'s (1994) measure of 'people' learning. Further, we argue later under 'Localized Socialization' that what one learns about one's supervisor and/or mentor may generalize to what one believes about the organization as a whole. This generalization process may reduce associations between learning and consequences at the same target level. The key point is that scholars need to determine (rather than assume) what is being communicated via a given antecedent of learning, and how learning about a given target may affect various foci of adjustment. Part of the difficulty is that there is no overarching theory of work adjustment that explains how these various foci are related; thus researchers tend to default to some variation of the 'big three' (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to quit).

As this brief review suggests, more research is needed on the antecedents of newcomer learning, particularly on contextual and individual difference factors that affect (1) the relevance of specific learning domains, (2) the organizational delivery of these domains, and (3) newcomers' willingness and ability to actually learn the domains. In short, the process of learning–who, what, where, why, when, and how–remains somewhat murky (cf. Weiss, 1990). Regarding the consequences of learning, research is needed on (1) conceptual models that explain how and why specific domains affect specific outcomes, and (2) mediation, that is, the role of learning in connecting socialization process (and the relevant antecedents) and content to newcomer adjustment. Mediation needs to be more thoroughly investigated in a variety of settings, using a variety of socialization and adjustment variables. Indeed, mediation models will

likely pave the way to more holistic and inclusive models of organizational socialization.

The role of discourse

As a glance at our reference section suggests, communication scholars have conducted a great deal of research on organizational socialization (see the reviews by Jablin, 1984, 1987, 2001). These scholars examine communicative practices and their effects on newcomers and other organizational members as they negotiate their relationships (McPhee & Zaug, 2000). One of the relatively unique contributions of communication scholars is research on *discourse*, the body of communication about a given topic (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). Whereas the literature on socialization content reviewed above focuses on the specific lessons imparted (what?), discourse analysis also focuses on *discursive practices*, the communication processes through which the lessons are imparted (how? who? when? where?). As Barge and Schlueter (2004, p. 237) note, 'Discourses are embedded with assumptions regarding who can speak, about what, when, through what medium, and with what intent.' Discursive practices not only shape the form of messages about a given topic, but convey symbolic cues beyond the literal content, helping produce and reproduce the organization's culture. For example, in a study of memorable messages received by newcomers in diverse organizations, Barge and Schlueter found that over 80% of the newcomers perceived the sender's intent to be benevolent. This affective tone likely enhanced the persuasiveness of the messages. And whereas the socialization content literature focuses on organizationally bounded communications, Gibson and Papa (2000) document how the assimilation of factory workers was facilitated by what they were told informally by relatives, friends, and neighbors who worked or had worked at the factory. Discourse analysis thus provides a powerful complementary tool to conventional research on content.

Newcomer Proactivity

Entering a new role often fosters much uncertainty for the newcomer regarding the meaning of the situation and what he or she is expected (and able) to do–e.g., What's required of me? Why does this matter? Can I master the necessary skills? Will my coworkers like me? Is this the right job and organization for me? Following uncertainty reduction theory, newcomers seek to reduce this uncertainty (Kramer, 1994; Lester, 1987; Teboul, 1994) and tend to believe that they receive less information from socialization agents than they actually need (Jablin, 1984). Moreover, much of the information that newcomers receive passively is generic, whereas a major concern of newcomers is the translation and application of generic information to their *specific* situation

and concerns (Ashforth, 2001; Morrison, 1995). Thus, research suggests that newcomers obtain more information–and more *useful* information–from relatively active means (Comer, 1991; Morrison, 1995; Teboul, 1994). As one of Comer's (1991, p. 78) participants put it, 'Asking is the quickest and most efficient solution for problems.'

Research on *newcomer proactivity* explores the means by which newcomers actively seek information about their work environment and their role and performance within it as a means of reducing uncertainty (Ashford & Black, 1996; Crant, 2000). At least three distinct typologies of proactivity have been formulated with regard to newcomers. First, Miller and Jablin (1991) offered seven tactics: (1) *overt questions*, (2) *indirect questions*, typically used when newcomers are uncomfortable about seeking information about a particular topic and/or from a particular source, (3) *third parties*, i.e., using secondary sources (e.g., when the primary source is unavailable or the newcomer is uncomfortable), (4) *testing limits* (e.g., breaking rules), in order 'to gain insight into targets' attitudes toward particular behavior or issues' (pp. 106–107), (5) *disguising conversations* (e.g., joking), in order to subtly raise issues, (6) *observing*, and (7) *surveillance*, i.e., monitoring (e.g., eavesdropping on a conversation). Based on a factor analysis using an undergraduate sample (which was subsequently validated with employed graduates), Miller (1996) collapsed indirect questions and disguising conversations into 'indirect' information-seeking, and collapsed observing and surveillance into 'observing.' Jablin (2001) concluded from a literature review that newcomers use overt/direct and observing tactics most frequently, that coworkers and supervisors are the most common targets of information-seeking, and that as the perceived social cost of information-seeking increases, newcomers use the overt/direct tactic less and the 'covert' tactics more. It is evident that Miller and Jablin's (1991) tactics are inherently *social* in that they require the presence of others. Nonsocial practices, such as trial and error and reading documents (e.g., websites, manuals) (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), could also be profitably incorporated into Miller and Jablin's (1991) framework.

Second, Ashford and Black (1996) were interested in how individuals secure a sense of control in the workplace and thus included behavioral tactics (and one cognitive tactic) that facilitate understanding, connection to others, influence, and self-management. Their operationalization of proactivity comprises: (1) *information-seeking*, i.e., trying to learn about how the organization operates,[3] (2) *feedback-seeking*, i.e., soliciting information about one's performance, (3) *relationship-building*, i.e., striving to form a positive bond with others,[4] (4) *general socializing*, i.e., participating in social events, (5) *networking*, i.e.,

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[3] We view this focus as somewhat restricted. Given the desire of newcomers to situate themselves in the organizational context (Katz, 1980), information-seeking likely also focuses on the newcomer's specific role in the organization.

[4] Although Ashford and Black (1996) operationalized this construct in terms of one's boss, it could obviously be extended to other potential socialization agents, such as one's coworkers.

socializing with people outside of one's unit, (6) *job-change negotiating*, i.e., attempting to modify one's tasks and others' expectations of one, and (7) *positive framing* (the single cognitive tactic), i.e., trying to see things in an optimistic manner. Both the information- and feedback-seeking tactics essentially combine Miller and Jablin's (1991) seven tactics (e.g., using surveillance to learn about workgroup norms).

Third, self-regulation 'is defined by processes that enable an individual to guide his or her goal-directed activities over time and across changing circumstances, including the modulation of thought, affect, and behavior' (Porath & Bateman, 2006, p. 185). Self-regulation can be seen as a form of proactivity because it motivates the newcomer to actively engage with his or her work context. Using Manz' (1983) measure, Saks and Ashforth (1996) assessed the following six 'self-management' tactics among novice accountants: (1) *self-goal-setting*, in order to provide direction and set standards for oneself, (2) *self-observation*, i.e., monitoring one's behavior and its causes, (3) *cueing strategies*, i.e., using prompts to remind one to do or to avoid something,[5] (4) *self-reward*, in order to reinforce desired behavior, (5) *self-punishment*, in order to decrease undesired behavior, and (6) *rehearsal*, in order to practice desired behavior. As Ashford and Taylor (1990) note, effective self-regulation requires that newcomers know what they should be doing and how well they are doing it–potentially tall tasks for newcomers.

These three typologies suggest several directions for future research. First, given the varying foci–Miller and Jablin (1991) focus on social tactics, Ashford and Black (1996) focus on control, and Manz (1983) focuses on self-regulation–in what respects do the typologies converge and diverge, and do they necessarily address different research questions (and relate to different antecedents and consequences)? In short, what is the nomological network of proactivity? Second, each typology focuses either entirely or largely on behaviors. But as Ashford and Black (1996, p. 212) state, 'It may be useful for future socialization research to consider the ways in which individuals are cognitively and emotionally active during entry, not just behaviorally active.' Indeed, by definition, self-regulation includes the modulation of cognition and affect as well as behavior (Porath & Bateman, 2006). What might be useful cognitive and affective tactics to consider? As examples, the literature on proactive coping suggests that, through pre-emptive cognitive appraisals and preliminary coping, individuals can cognitively recast potentially stressful events into challenges that elicit personal growth (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004), and Ashforth and Saks (2002) discuss how newcomers 'feel their way' into new jobs through affect-related processes. Third, whereas most research focuses on the frequency with which the tactics are used, it remains unclear how efficacious the tactics are–and under what conditions (Jablin, 2001). For

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[5] This scale was subsequently deleted because of poor fit in a confirmatory factor analysis of the six scales.

example, Finkelstein, Kulas and Dages (2003) found that Miller and Jablin's (1991) covert tactics were *negatively* associated with role clarity among new faculty and new employees of a retail organization: the authors speculate that 'sneakier' (p. 497) information-seeking may yield unreliable information. Fourth, in what combinations are the tactics used, how might their effects interact, and how might the newcomer's choice of tactics change as he or she gains experience (Miller & Jablin, 1991)? Miller (1996), for instance, argues that because the social costs of information-seeking likely increase with experience, newcomers may rely more on covert/indirect tactics over time.

Toward a model of antecedents and consequences

Much of the research exploring the antecedents of newcomer proactivity has focused on individual differences (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; De Vos, Buyens & Schalk, 2005; Finkelstein et al., 2003; Teboul, 1995; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Although we review some of this work later under 'Individual Differences,' research has generally found that proactive personality, desire for control, extraversion, openness to experience, and self-efficacy, among other traits, predict newcomer proactivity.

Regarding contextual antecedents of proactivity, research has found that institutionalized socialization tactics (discussed later under 'Toward an Integrative Model'), task interdependence, and support from coworkers and managers are positive predictors of various proactive tactics, particularly information- and feedback-seeking (Feij, Whitely, Peiro & Taris, 1995; Gruman et al., 2006; Major & Kozlowski, 1997; Mignerey et al., 1995; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). However, we know little about other potential contextual antecedents. One particularly promising potential antecedent discussed by Crant (2000) is organizational culture. Qualitative research has found that fire departments–more specifically, senior firefighters, station captains, and social norms–communicate the intensity and type of proactive behaviors that are expected from 'booters' (i.e., probationary firefighters) (Myers, 2005; Scott & Myers, 2005; see Harris, Simons & Carden, 2004, for similar findings regarding probationary police officers). Clearly, more research is needed on how organizational culture and the norms it promulgates influence the enactment of different proactive tactics.

Turning to the consequences of newcomer proactivity, research has provided insight into how proactivity influences both proximal and distal outcomes. As reported in Saks and Ashforth (1997a), research has found that newcomer proactivity generally (but not always) predicts increased task mastery (Morrison, 1993a), acculturation (Morrison, 1993a), social integration (Morrison, 1993a), role clarity (Holder, 1996; Morrison, 1993a), job satisfaction (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), organizational commitment (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), internal motivation

(Saks & Ashforth, 1996), job performance (Ashford & Black, 1996; Morrison, 1993b), and adjustment (i.e., had adapted, were trusted, and felt independent; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), and decreased stress (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992), task-specific anxiety (Saks & Ashforth, 1996), and intentions to quit (Morrison, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992).

More recently, however, based on a literature review, Morrison (2002a) reports mixed findings with regard to the influence of information-seeking (as a specific proactive behavior) on newcomer adjustment (Bauer & Green, 1998; Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Finkelstein et al., 2003; Gruman et al., 2006; Holder, 1996). Morrison suggests that these mixed findings are due to the wide variance in conceptualizing and measuring information-seeking behaviors (e.g., omnibus versus specific measures). Regarding other adjustment variables not mentioned in Saks and Ashforth's (1997a) review, Chan and Schmitt (2000) found that information-seeking and relationship building predicted social integration. Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller (2000) found that relationship-building predicted higher social integration, while feedback-seeking predicted lower turnover. Gruman et al. (2006) report that feedback-seeking and general socializing were associated with social integration, person-job fit, and person-organization fit, that (boss) relationship building was associated with person-job and person-organization fit, and that job change negotiation was *negatively* associated with person-organization fit. In a laboratory simulation, Thomas, Hu, Gewin, Bingham, and Yanchus (2005) found that individuals were more willing to mentor newcomers who appeared to be proactive.

Finally, under the rubric of proactive self-regulation, Maier and Brunstein (2001) found that personal goal-setting predicted higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Further, low perceived goal attainability muzzled the positive influence of goal commitment on the outcomes whereas high goal attainability amplified the positive influence.

In sum, newcomer proactivity has been linked to both learning and adjustment. Clearly, however, more research is needed, especially considering the mixed findings reviewed above. First, research is needed to clarify the specific relationships between the dimensions of proactivity and the dimensions of newcomer learning. Second, research is needed on the contextual factors that may predict a newcomer's choice of proactive tactics (e.g., social cost, openness and credibility of source; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1995; Teboul, 1995) and that may moderate the impact of proactivity on learning and adjustment (e.g., learning culture, impression management norms; Hoff, Pohl & Bartfield, 2004; Watkins, 2003).

Role innovation

Although the newcomer proactivity literature emphasizes the active role that newcomers play in their socialization, it nonetheless tends to treat the status quo as a given that the newcomers seek to learn about and adapt

to.[6] However, research on role-making, role development, role negotiation, individualization, and personalization–in short, role innovation–indicates that newcomers often actively shape their jobs and perhaps the wider work context, such that socialization is typically a meld of personal change and role change (e.g., Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Ashforth, 2001; Brett, 1984; Graen, 1976; Jablin, 2001; Nicholson, 1984).[7] Increasing environmental turbulence and complexity have spawned organizational needs for flexibility and empowerment, such that role innovation is not only becoming commonplace for newcomers but more or less expected (Evans & Davis, 2005). When roles are explicitly framed for the newcomer as provisional works-in-progress, they are far less likely to be taken for granted as institutionalized facts to which the newcomer must adjust.

Role innovation can occur unilaterally, as when a person alters the order and manner in which certain tasks are performed, or be negotiated, as when a person discusses possible changes with his or her supervisor and peers. Either form presupposes (1) newcomer power, which may be based, for example, on prior training and experience, a unique skill set, the accumulation of idiosyncrasy credits, a mandate to instigate change, job and team autonomy, role ambiguity and intersender role conflict, and newness of the role, and (2) the willingness and ability to use that power, which, inter alia may be based on unmet expectations, poor person-role fit, interpersonal competence, self-efficacy, and approachable and open peers and supervisors (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Brett, 1984; Feldman, 1989; Jablin, 2001; Nicholson, 1984; Thornton & Nardi, 1975).

Three points about role innovation should be underscored. First, contrary to some perspectives (see Ashforth's, 2001, review), role innovation and personal change do not exist on a continuum, whereby work adjustment represents a compromise between the two. On the contrary, research indicates that the constructs are only weakly correlated (Ashforth, 2001): adjustment may reflect little personal and role change, much change in both, or different degrees of change in the two (Nicholson, 1984). Second, although role innovation has implicitly been viewed as intended, research on the socialization tactics and role innovation, summarized earlier, suggests that role innovation may instead be unintended and emergent. The more individualized the socialization

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[6] Ashford and Black's (1996) notion of 'job-change negotiating' behavior is an exception. Further, in his major literature review, Crant (2000: 436) defines proactive behavior in terms similar to role innovation: 'taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting to present conditions.' That said, Crant notes that other authors exclude the intent to actually change the situation from their conceptualization of proactive behavior and that it remains an 'unresolved issue' (p. 457) in the literature.

[7] Organizational communication scholars often distinguish between socialization as role-taking and individualization as role-making, reserving the term *assimilation* for both (Jablin, 1987; see the debate in the December 1999 issue of *Communication Monographs*, sparked by Kramer & Miller, 1999).
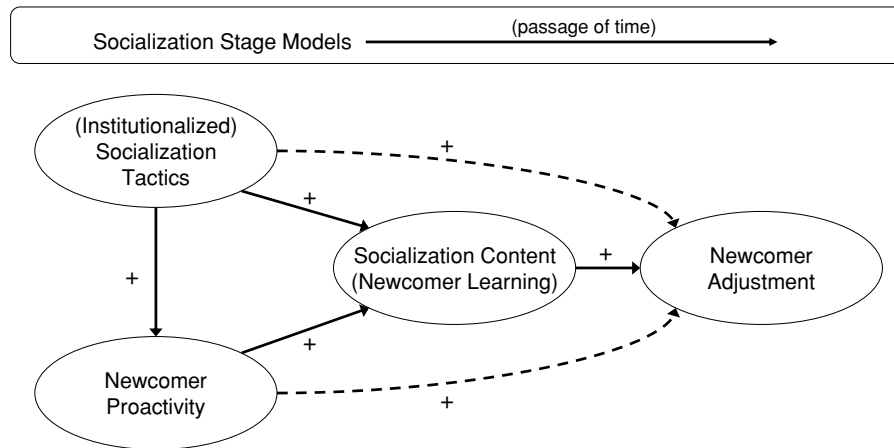
Figure 1.1   Integrating the major socialization perspectives–Adapted from Ashforth et al. (2006). Note: the dotted lines denote that socialization content does not fully mediate the links between tactics/proactivity and adjustment.

process, the more that the newcomer is left to sink or swim: in his or her naiveté, the newcomer may stumble onto different and perhaps better ways of enacting the role. Although individualized socialization tends to be associated with a variety of negative adjustment outcomes, the silver lining is that it does not reify assumptions that may no longer be functional. Third, that said, role innovation can be functional or dysfunctional for the organization (Staw & Boettger, 1990). Ashforth (2001) argues that role innovation is generally functional if the role is new, the means or ends are incompletely or incorrectly specified, creativity is expected, the context is dynamic, newcomers are accountable for outcomes and empowered to pursue them, and newcomers identify with the organization and have the requisite abilities to innovate.

Toward an Integrative Model

While integrative models of socialization and work adjustment have been proposed (e.g., Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Chao, 1988; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Holton & Russell, 1999; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a), we wish to close this section with a discussion of how the particular perspectives considered thus far–socialization stage models, socialization tactics, socialization content (newcomer learning), and newcomer proactivity–may interact. (We view the 'early roots of socialization' as helping to fuel these perspectives.) As shown in Figure 1.1, we view these perspectives as complementary. Stage models set the general context for socialization by outlining the newcomer's (and organization's) needs as well as organizational

facilitators of socialization as the newcomer settles in. Socialization tactics represent a largely organization-driven process for realizing those needs, whereas newcomer proactivity represents a largely individual-driven process. And socialization content represents a proximal outcome–namely, learning–of these processes (Kim et al., 2005; Kraimer, 1997).

Research summarized earlier bears directly on three links among these perspectives. First, given that organizations explicitly develop institutionalized socialization programs to impart certain information (versus the haphazard approach of individualized socialization), such programs are likely to be positively associated with learning. We cited research indicating that institutionalized socialization is associated with various forms of newcomer learning (although a consistent picture of how institutionalized socialization affects specific forms has yet to emerge). Second, given that newcomer proactivity is in part intended to ferret out information, proactivity should also be positively associated with learning (Kraimer, 1997). Although proactivity is manifested in various ways, the research summarized earlier supports this general contention. Third, given that socialization content facilitates sensemaking and reduces newcomer uncertainty, it seems likely that learning the content would be associated with more distal indicators of newcomer adjustment. The research cited earlier strongly supports this argument. Indeed, as noted, some research suggests that learning may partially or even fully mediate the impact of the work context on adjustment.

What about other possible links between the perspectives?

The role of stage models

The stage models suggest that proactivity is likely to be high in the anticipation stage, given the uncertainty of job search, and higher still in the encounter stage, given not only the uncertainty of the new situation but its inevitable surprises as well, coupled with the greater opportunities for proactively engaging the new work context. For example, Graen, Orris and Johnson (1973) studied primarily clerical and secretarial positions and found that newcomers' tendency to seek help from others tapered off steadily over 16 weeks, and Ashford, Blatt and VandeWalle (2003) concluded from a literature review that feedback-seeking tends to decline as newcomers gain experience. Further, given that the encounter stage involves adapting to the new reality and that one's immediate work context provides the greatest opportunities for proactivity, proactivity and learning are likely to be focused more on one's task, coworkers, and supervisor than on the organization as a whole (see our later discussion of 'Localized Socialization'). This may be one reason why organizational orientation programs were rated by recent business school graduates (Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983) and newcomers to a university, oil field service company, and electronics manufacturer (Nelson & Quick, 1991) as

only moderately helpful.[8] Finally, the notion of stages implies that the impact of a given socialization program may fade over time as the newcomers learn and mature and other needs arise (Katz, 1980). For example, Ashforth and Saks (1996) found that the impact of institutionalized tactics on the adjustment of recent university graduates was stronger at four months of employment than at 10 months. The authors speculate that as newcomers became comfortable, they were less responsive to the constrained nature of the tactics. Newcomers in the adjustment stage may even resent such programs as demeaning.

Socialization tactics → proactivity

The potential link between socialization tactics and proactivity is also intriguing. It could be argued that institutionalized socialization, as an organization-driven process, encourages a passive dependence on others and dampens newcomers' need and desire to ferret out information on their own. However, we speculate that by providing structured opportunities for newcomer-focused learning (particularly via the serial and collective tactics), institutionalized socialization makes learning salient and relatively intense, and provides ready opportunities to be proactive–to ask questions, to build relationships, and so on (Mignerey et al., 1995; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). In support, institutionalized socialization has been found to be positively associated with newcomers' use of observation, information- and feedback-seeking, general socializing, and boss relationship building (Gruman et al., 2006; Mignerey et al., 1995; Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). (Indeed, as implied by Figure 1.1, proactivity was also found by Gruman et al. to partially mediate the influence of institutionalized socialization on adjustment.) Further, although neither Kim et al. (2005) nor Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2006) assessed the tactics-proactivity argument, the former reported an average correlation of .12 ($p \leq .05$) between subordinates' rating of institutionalized socialization and their supervisors' rating of their proactive behaviors, and the latter reported a correlation of .29 ($p \leq .01$) between newcomers' rating of institutionalized socialization and of their own proactive behaviors. Teboul (1995) did not find a significant correlation between institutionalized socialization and proactive behaviors, but did find that that the perceived social costs of information-seeking mediated the relationship. That is, institutionalized socialization reduced the costs, which facilitated overt information-seeking and reduced covert information-seeking.

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[8] To be sure, orientation programs remain very important for helping newcomers contextualize their work, even if–in their concern over fitting into the *local* context–newcomers do not always appreciate it. Further, given the prevalence of orientation programs, newcomers may view their absence as a negative signal (the company doesn't care about me).

Additionally, although not depicted in Figure 1.1, proactivity has also been found to moderate the influence of socialization tactics on various adjustment variables such that institutionalized socialization is more strongly related to adjustment for *less* proactive newcomers (Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005). Consistent with the idea noted above that institutionalized socialization may dampen the need for information, Gruman et al. and Kim et al. argue that institutionalized socialization serves as a *substitute* for proactivity in that both processes foster information acquisition and uncertainty reduction. However, Kim et al. hypothesized and found an exception: positive framing enhanced the association between institutionalized socialization and newcomer adjustment (specifically, person-organization fit). The authors argue that positive framing leads newcomers to construe institutionalized socialization as helpful rather than as overbearing, such that newcomers become more receptive to the information provided. Further, Kim et al. unexpectedly found that general socializing also enhanced the association between institutionalized socialization and adjustment. The authors speculate that institutionalized socialization and general socializing interact to help newcomers build social networks that facilitate adjustment. Thus, while institutionalized socialization may substitute somewhat for newcomer proactivity, it appears that the two processes may at times operate more synergistically. We suspect that such synergies are actually quite common and that organizations have little to lose from encouraging proactivity in the context of institutionalized socialization.

A related issue is the *sequential use* of socialization tactics, alluded to earlier, and their impact on proactivity. In the studies of probationary firefighters (Myers, 2005; Scott & Myers, 2005) and police officers (Harris et al., 2004) cited above, the newcomers were first exposed to institutionalized socialization in the fire and police academies, and then assigned to fire stations and police departments. In these assignments, socialization was more individualized in that newcomers were no longer groomed collectively and formally, according to a sequential process (however, the police officers were paired with veterans, thus maintaining serial socialization, and the firefighters were rotated through three stations over nine months, thus suggesting fixed socialization). The newcomers were expected to use the 'theoretical' foundational knowledge gained in the academies to proactively engage the 'practical' work in their fire stations and police departments. As one neophyte police officer put it, 'You've got to go and get it yourself' (Harris et al., 2004: 211). In short, institutionalized socialization facilitated subsequent individualized socialization and proactivity. Indeed, the expectation of proactivity may be a major reason why the individualized socialization appears to have been effective for these newcomers. (However, Scott and Myers (2005) note that the shift from collective to individual tactics fostered some social isolation.) This issue of the sequential use of tactics and their effect on proactivity–as well as on learning and other outcomes–is very promising for future research.

Socialization tactics / newcomer proactivity → newcomer adjustment

Finally, Figure 1.1 shows dotted lines between socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment and between newcomer proactivity and newcomer adjustment. These links signify that (1) the process of socialization provides intended and unintended symbolic cues that may directly affect adjustment, independent of the content imparted (e.g., institutionalized socialization symbolizes an investment in the newcomer, fostering commitment; Ashforth et al., 2006), and (2) in addition to newcomer learning, there are other *proximal* (adjustment) outcomes of socialization processes (e.g., social integration, role clarity) that are not indicated in the figure but which likely directly affect distal adjustment.

In sum, despite their conceptual differences, we view socialization stage models, socialization tactics, socialization content (newcomer learning), and newcomer proactivity as quite complementary. Moreover, content appears to offer tremendous potential as the major linchpin between socialization processes and short- and long-term newcomer adjustment.

CROSS-CURRENTS IN SOCIALIZATION RESEARCH

The historical perspectives outlined above have been affected dramatically by various cross-currents–themes that flow across the perspectives. We discuss four cross-currents that have been (or, in the case of 'The Role of Time,' may well be) particularly important: organizational context, localized socialization, individual differences, and the role of time.

Organizational Context

Given that socialization is the process by which individuals become part of an organization's pattern of activities, and that meaning in–and of–the organization is equivocal, 'it is remarkable that so little research has focused on the contextual factors that facilitate and constrain socialization practices and outcomes' (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a: 269; Bauer et al., 1998). Indeed, the situated learning perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991) holds that 'learning cannot be separated from the social and physical context within which it occurs' (Sonnentag, Niessen & Ohly, 2004, p. 261). Part of the problem may be that, just as there is no widely-recognized theory of work adjustment (as noted earlier), there is also no widely-recognized theory of organizational context (Johns, 2006). Rather, there are extensive literatures on atomized contextual elements of relevance to socialization, whether oriented toward the organizational level (e.g., identity and strategy, culture and climate, structure, human resource management practices, communication systems), the role, occupational, and group level (e.g., job design, occupational culture, socio-technical systems, leadership, group and team structure and dynamics, interpersonal similarity

and attraction), or toward extra-organizational facets and forces (e.g., national culture, legal and regulatory systems, educational and training institutions, changing employer-employee expectations, communities of practice, emerging organizational forms and practices) (cf. Morrison & Brantner, 1992; Van Maanen, 1976).

Rather than attempt to review studies on these diverse contextual elements, a more fruitful question might be '*How* does the context of work affect the socialization process?' As a starting point, we propose three mechanisms: (1) proximal versus distal influence, (2) simplifying versus complicating socialization, and (3) facilitating versus inhibiting socialization (cf. Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Mowday & Sutton, 1993). The first mechanism, proximal versus distal influence, refers to the degree to which the context has a direct and immediate effect rather than an indirect and delayed effect (Lewin, 1951). For instance, various models have been proposed that link organizational strategy, structure, or human resource management strategies to socialization tactics and other practices (e.g., Baker & Feldman, 1991; Taylor & Giannantonio, 1993; Versloot, de Jong & Thijssen, 2001). Despite the direct causal arrows in these models, the actual impact of such macro constructs on socialization is likely somewhat indirect and delayed. We view the proximal-distal context mechanism as particularly important and discuss it in detail later under 'Localized Socialization.' The remaining two mechanisms are discussed below under 'Simplifying versus complicating socialization' and 'Facilitating versus inhibiting socialization.'

Simplifying versus complicating socialization

A complicated socialization process is one that is relatively protracted and intense, often involving multiple hurdles and socialization agents. For instance, the socialization of doctors involves a lengthy and demanding progression from medical school to internship to residency, before individuals are allowed to practice on their own. Neither 'simplifying' nor 'complicating' are intended to be pejorative. Although a simple socialization process is, all else equal, preferable for both the newcomer (who is typically eager to shake the newcomer label) and the organization (which strives for efficiency), there are very sound reasons for a complicated process.

Several examples will suffice. One example is job and role complexity. All else equal, the greater the need for hard-to-master knowledge, skills, and abilities, the more complicated the socialization process. Ashforth, Saks and Lee (1998) found that the greater the motivating potential of a newcomer's job (e.g., autonomy, skill variety), the greater the use of institutionalized socialization tactics. However, the motivating potential of complex work may enhance newcomers' desire to learn, partially shortening the otherwise long duration of socialization (Sonnentag et al., 2004; cf. Taris & Feij, 2004). Another example is task interdependencies, which require newcomers to coordinate their efforts with their peers. The greater the interdependencies and the more individuals

that are implicated, the more that socialization must occur not only at the individual level, but at the dyad, group, and even network levels. However, the interdependencies may enhance the motivation of task partners to socialize newcomers.

Recruitment and selection are examples of contextual mechanisms that potentially simplify socialization (Anderson & Ostroff, 1997; Fisher, 1986; Myers, 2005; Wanous, 1992). For example, Chatman (1991) found that an initial alignment between the values held by accounting firms and by new auditors upon entry predicted quicker work adjustment. Similarly, effective educational and training institutions can pre-socialize individuals, simplifying the hiring organization's socialization process. As these examples attest, simplifying conditions are analogous to Kerr and Jermier's (1978) 'substitutes for leadership' except that they partially substitute for socialization.

An interesting example is a strong organizational identity and culture; that is, a widely shared and deeply held sense of the central, distinctive, and relatively enduring attributes of the organization, including its values, beliefs, and norms. On one hand, a strong identity and culture acts as a beacon, attracting individuals who resonate with the organization, thereby simplifying the socialization of these self-selected newcomers. For example, Mael and Ashforth (1995) found that many U.S. Army recruits entered the army with relatively high organizational identification, despite having no direct experience of being a soldier. On the other hand, the richer and more distinctive the identity and culture, the more effort is nonetheless required to divest newcomers of their incoming identities and remake them in the distinctive image of the organization (e.g., Pratt, 2000).

Facilitating versus inhibiting socialization

The context also varies in the extent to which it facilitates or eases rather than inhibits or impairs the socialization process. To be sure, conditions that complicate socialization may also be said to inhibit it. However, the contextual mechanisms are somewhat orthogonal insofar as a given level of complication (e.g., 'breaking in' a novice software programmer) can nonetheless be facilitated (or further inhibited) by various conditions. Some prime examples of conditions include a climate for learning and learning transfer (e.g., openness to inquiry and change, constructive feedback, tolerance of mistakes, opportunities to use learning), reward system practices that encourage learning and adjustment (e.g., pay for performance, skill-based pay), and adequate resources (see research by, for instance, Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000, Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000, Sonnentag et al., 2004, and Tharenou, 2001). Conversely, prime examples of inhibiting conditions include role ambiguity, a politicized workplace (which inhibits trust and encourages defensive behavior), conflicting perspectives held by socialization agents, demographic dissimilarity, and

unpredictable change (e.g., Feldman, 1977; Jackson, Stone & Alvarez, 1993; Weick & Ashford, 2000).

Morrison and Brantner (1992) surveyed surface warfare officers on U.S. Navy ships. The authors included an extensive battery of possible contextual predictors of role learning, and found that learning was facilitated by (positively associated either directly or indirectly with) cooperative and competent leadership, role clarity, subordinate competence (presumably because this allowed the officers more time to learn their jobs), having reasonable time for one's job and personal development, and entering the job during a cycle when there was an opportunity to focus on central activities (i.e., when the ships were operating rather than undergoing repair and testing). Ashforth (2001) describes seven relatively micro factors that facilitate role transitions: low magnitude of change from the prior role, social desirability of the transition, the voluntary nature of the transition, the predictability of the transition (regarding exit from the prior role, the events surrounding exit and entry, and the onset and duration of socialization), the extent to which the transition is a collective one (i.e., with fellow newcomers), and the length of the transition period before the newcomer is expected to be 'up to speed' (although newcomers are often eager to shed their newcomer status [as noted earlier], a longer period eases adjustment).

Myth-making?

We will close our discussion of the context of socialization with Fogarty and Dirsmith's (2001) provocative argument. Drawing on institutional theory (particularly Meyer & Rowan, 1977, and DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), they propose that formal socialization programs may reflect institutional myths–and pressures–about sound management. That is, managers may enact certain normatively expected programs in a bid to enhance their organization's legitimacy, regardless of the instrumental value of these programs. This argument suggests a variety of intriguing speculations that are amenable to research. First, given normative expectations, socialization programs may look very similar across a given institutional context (e.g., orientation programs for commercial bankers), even if a variety of programs could satisfy instrumental needs. Second, if a particular socialization practice becomes normatively blessed, its diffusion may have a snowball or faddish quality as organizations scramble to appear current and responsive. Third, given the need for legitimacy, organizations may claim that they are conforming to normative expectations even when they are not, such that there is a wide gap between what an organization espouses to external constituents and what it does internally. Finally, given normative expectations, socialization programs may persist even if they have little substantive impact or are counterproductive. A possible example of some of these speculations is formal mentoring programs. Although some research casts doubt on the efficacy of such programs compared to informal mentoring (Chao, Walz & Gardner,
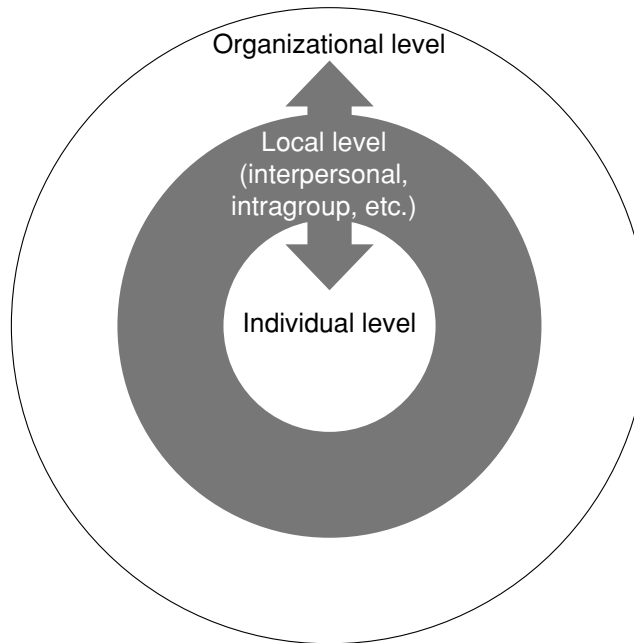
Figure 1.2 Localized socialization: The local level as mediator of the relationship between the organization and the individual

1992; Ragins & Cotton, 1999), they remain very popular in many organizations (cf. Scott & Meyer, 1991).[9]

In sum, socialization cannot be truly understood apart from the context in which–and for which–it occurs. Conceiving of the context in terms of simplifying vs. complicating factors, facilitating vs. inhibiting factors, and proximal vs. distal influence may help scholars better grasp how and why the context affects socialization dynamics. We now elaborate on the third dimension, proximal (i.e., localized) vs. distal influence.

Localized Socialization

Much of the theorizing and research on organizational socialization reviewed above focuses on the relationship between a newcomer and his or her organization (Anderson & Thomas, 1996). The meta-research question informing this work is 'How can a newcomer become an effective member of the organization?' However, we contend that a great deal of socialization is not so much 'organizational' as 'tribal' (see Figure 1.2). That is, newcomers are socialized largely

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[9] It should be noted that well-designed formal mentoring programs nonetheless 'have the *potential* to reap the same benefits as informal mentoring' (Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, 2003, p. 88, their emphasis).

through specific interpersonal and group-based interactions (Anderson et al., 1999; Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Falcione & Wilson, 1988; Jablin, 2001; Moreland & Levine, 2001; Reichers, 1987; Slaughter & Zickar, 2006; Stohl, 1986) that are grounded in localized contexts and focus largely on aspects of that context, and that result in newcomer change and actions that largely affect the localized context rather than the wider organization. The abstract and distal organization is made concrete and immediate–is made 'real'–through such visceral interactions. First, the organization largely affects the individual via the localized context. An organizational value of, say, openness may remain vague and flat until brought to life by the efforts of one's supervisor to speak frankly and encourage feedback, and organizational policies such as those regarding compensation and performance management are typically enacted by the subunit. A great deal of tacit knowledge about the organization is implicitly learned and fleshed out through immersion in rich, specific contexts (Chao, 1997). Indeed, in cases where the espoused theories of organizational messages and formal, off-the-job training are contradicted by the theories-in-use by peers, supervisors, mentors, and on-the-job training, the theories-in-use tend to hold sway (Argyris & Schön, 1978; DiSanza, 1995).

Second, the localized context is the genesis of much interaction in its own right. This is particularly true as organizations continue to decentralize decision-making and delegate work to teams. Localized contexts allow spontaneous observation and conversation around emergent issues. Third, much of the content that newcomers aspire to learn–and find more useful–is lodged at the local level, such as task requirements (Morrison, 1995) and interpersonal and group norms (Katz, 1980). For example, based on a sample of management and engineering graduates, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992, p. 869) found that 'acquiring information about [the values, norms, goals, and culture of the organization] is less important than a focus on task, role or group issues during early job experiences.' Further, most training in organizations is relatively informal and unstructured, occurring on-the-job in a more or less ad hoc manner (Chao, 1997). And research on transfer of training indicates that the effective transfer of material learned in formal training situations depends on the relevance and reinforcement of the material in the local context (Holton et al., 2000). Finally, the larger the organization, the more likely that a newcomer's actions will primarily affect his or her immediate situation rather than the overall organization.

Research on localized socialization has generally focused on one's immediate workgroup, often under the rubric of occupational socialization (e.g., Coffey & Atkinson, 1994). As Anderson and Thomas (1996, p. 423) put it, 'the work group often forms the primary medium through which the socialization process is enacted' (see also Louis, 1990, and Moreland & Levine, 2001). Because the peers, supervisors, and mentors that constitute socialization agents are more likely than other members of the organization to be seen as similar to the newcomer, physically proximal, task and outcome interdependent, and

knowledgeable about proximal work-related issues, they are also more likely to be seen as not only available but credible referents. Thus, research indicates that newcomers look to these agents as credible sources of important information (Comer, 1992; Feldman & Brett, 1983; Louis et al., 1983; Nelson & Quick, 1991). Louis et al. (1983) and Nelson and Quick (1991) found that newcomers rated their interactions with peers as the most helpful–and available–of 10 socialization practices, including relatively formal activities such as off-site residential training. Similarly, Broad and Newstrom (1992) propose that buddy systems, support groups, and mentors can expedite the transfer of training to one's immediate work context and needs. And Morrison (2002b), drawing on social network theory (e.g., Brass, 1995), found that new auditors with denser and stronger informational networks reported greater role clarity and task mastery (also, see Sherman, Smith & Mansfield, 1986).

Although the socialization tactics literature describes the formal process of socialization, it does not elaborate on the specific mechanisms through which socialization actually occurs (Jablin, 2001; cf. LaPreze, 2003; Slaughter & Zickar, 2006). However, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory articulates three localized mechanisms–observation, imitation, and instruction–that appear to underlie socialization processes in most if not all social domains (cf. Bush & Simmons, 1981).[10] The serial and collective socialization tactics, in particular, enable agents to act as instructors and role models, facilitating all the social learning mechanisms. For example, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found that observation of others was the most frequently used information source, followed by coworkers and supervisors ('interpersonal sources'), experimentation, and formal organizational documents (also, see Burke & Bolf, 1986). Recalling the earlier discussion of newcomer proactivity, the socialization literature also indicates the prevalence of more covert social learning mechanisms–for example, indirect and third party questioning, disguising conversations, and surveillance–that mitigate the social costs of overt information-seeking (e.g., Fedor, Rensvold & Adams, 1992; Ouellet, 1994; Scott & Myers, 2005; Teboul, 1995; see Miller & Jablin, 1991).

The potency of localized socialization is particularly apparent with regard to (1) newcomer identity and belonging, (2) social validation and support, and (3) mentors and supervisors as conduits to the organization.

Newcomer identity and belonging

Ashforth's (2001) model of role transitions holds that entry into a new role activates psychological motives for meaning, control, identity, and belonging. The research on socialization content and newcomer proactivity reviewed above implicitly focuses mainly on meaning in the form of sensemaking (what?) and

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[10] Our earlier discussion of newcomer proactivity suggests at least a fourth major localized mechanism: asking questions of veterans.

purpose-seeking (why?), and on control as a drive for task mastery and influence (how?). In contrast, the identity motive speaks to a desire for a *situated* self-definition (who and where am I?) and the belonging motive speaks to a desire for attachment to *situated* others (who?).

The operative word here is 'situated.' To feel comfortable and act with efficacy, newcomers must understand at least their local context and their particular place within it (Katz, 1980; Van Maanen, 1977). In short, they must be grounded. For example, Mansfield (1972) found that newcomers assigned to a series of short-term positions found it difficult to develop a coherent identity. Further, optimal distinctiveness theory maintains that individuals strive to balance a sense of assimilation (to be part of a collective) with a sense of differentiation (to be unique), and this tends to be best realized in relatively small, exclusive groups rather than large, inclusive ones (Brewer, 1991). What this means for organizational contexts is that newcomers are more likely to vest their identities in their local context rather than in the larger, more amorphous organizational context–and the larger the organization, the more likely this is. Thus, research indicates that organizational members tend to identify more strongly with–and feel more committed to–their occupations and subunits than the organization (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Moreland & Levine, 2001; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005).

Regarding the belonging motive, Baumeister and Leary (1995, p. 497) argue that individuals have a 'pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal interactions.' Although the belonging motive may be satisfied by other social domains (e.g., one's neighborhood), the sheer number of hours that many individuals spend at work tends to activate the motive in the work domain as well. The same factors noted above that make peers, supervisors, and mentors credible referents–interpersonal similarity, physical proximity, localized expertise, task and outcome interdependence, and, thus, frequent interaction–also tend to make these socialization agents attractive from an attachment standpoint. Thus, belongingness tends to be localized as well and the desire to form attachments with one's potential socialization agents is likely to increase one's receptivity to any lessons the agents impart.

Social validation and support

As noted above, entering a new role typically fosters uncertainty regarding one's competence and social acceptance. Because of the tribal nature of newcomers' organizational experiences, they tend to look to their peers, supervisors, and mentors not only for information and feedback, but for social validation. Indeed, like most individuals, newcomers tend to see themselves through the eyes of valued others (Felson, 1992). Validation occurs when these valued others reinforce the newcomer's (1) behaviors (e.g., role enactment, conformity to core organizational norms, organizational citizenship behaviors), (2) performance (e.g., output, low absenteeism, role innovation–or role conformity, depending

on what is socially desirable in the context), and (3) identity markers (e.g., attire, mannerisms, use of jargon) (Ashforth, 2001). This reinforcement signals and affirms that the credibility gap between the newcomer and the claimed identity is narrowing. Granfield (1991, p. 31) dubbed this process 'making it by faking it.' For example, Ibarra (1999) describes how neophyte investment bankers and management consultants adopted and refined the behaviors of their senior role models. As their colleagues and clients began to treat them as bona fide professionals, they began to view themselves as such. Thus, social validation helps the newcomer to feel authentic in his or her new organizational role, emboldening more confident and therefore more persuasive role performance.

Although it is frequently argued that the uncertainties associated with organizational entry are very stressful, implying a negative experience, it may be more accurate to say that the uncertainties generate *arousal*, which may be interpreted by the newcomer either negatively (e.g., an unwelcome threat) or positively (e.g., a welcome challenge) (Ashforth, 2001; Nicholson & West, 1989). The more negative the interpretation, the more likely that the newcomer will seek and appreciate social support from his or her socialization agents (Katz, 1985). Support can be instrumental (i.e., focused on solving problems) and/or expressive (i.e., focused on alleviating symptoms, as through displays of empathy). Research on the honeymoon effect (e.g., Fichman & Levinthal, 1991), newcomer expectations (e.g., Wanous, Poland, Premack & Davis, 1992), and newcomer adjustment (e.g., Vandenberg & Self, 1993) suggests that after an initial period of euphoria–often caused partly by newcomers' unrealistically high expectations–adjustment tends to decline fairly steadily as reality shock sets in, before stabilizing. Ironically, however, organizational members appear more likely to offer support before and at the time of entry rather than when it may be needed most–when the euphoria burns off.

Mentors and supervisors as conduits to the organization

Mentors are typically defined as senior colleagues who facilitate personalized newcomer adjustment through advice, training, protection, and social support (Kram, 1988). Because mentor-newcomer relationships usually do not carry as many impression management concerns as do manager-newcomer relationships (Morrison & Bies, 1991), newcomers tend to more freely seek information and advice from mentors. Research suggests that mentors help newcomers learn about and adjust to their new jobs and organizations (e.g., Allen et al., 1999; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993; Wanberg et al., 2003).[11]

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[11] However, as Wanberg et al. (2003) note, the preponderance of cross-sectional research designs and the absence of controls for protégés' attributes and work-related experiences raise questions about causality–particularly since mentors tend to prefer promising newcomers (Allen, Poteet & Russell, 2000).

Mentors as well as supervisors may play an additional, vital role for newcomers–that of a conduit to identifying with and feeling committed to the wider organization. Sluss and Ashforth (2005) argue that identification with a manager (or mentor) tends to generalize to the organization through four mechanisms. First, *social influence* occurs when the newcomer internalizes the valued manager's or mentor's advice, opinions, and goals (cf. Ben-Yoav & Hartman, 1988; Weiss, 1977), including their presumably positive views of the organization. For instance, Shamir, Zakay, Brainin and Popper (2000) found that when a military unit leader emphasized the unit's collective identity, the soldiers and staff responded in kind by identifying with the unit. Second, *anthropomorphization* occurs when the newcomer projects the manager's or mentor's perceived attributes on the abstract and equivocal organization. Pratt (2000) found that newcomers to Amway tended to view the company through the prism of their relationship with their supervisors–ascribing the relationship's qualities to the company. Third, given the desire to maintain cognitive consistency, *behavioral sensemaking* occurs when newcomers regard behavior that reflects their relationship with their manager/mentor as similarly reflecting their relationship with the organization (e.g., working hard to meet managerial goals suggests a desire to also meet organizational goals)–and vice versa. Finally, *affect transfer* occurs when the assumed overlap between the manager/mentor and the organization induces the feelings associated with one to nonconsciously spread to the other. For example, Vandenberghe, Bentein, and Stinglhamber (2004) found that nurses' affective commitment to their supervisors predicted organizational commitment, and Morrison (2002b) found that the strength, status, and range (i.e., the number of organizational units represented) of new auditors' friendship networks was associated with organizational commitment.

In sum, most of the newcomer's understanding of and attachment to the wider organization may be mediated through localized sources. Indeed, much of what has been described as organizational socialization may actually be more localized–if not tribal–socialization. As Figure 1.2 suggests, interpersonal and intragroup dynamics may mediate the impact of the organization on the individual and vice versa. Although we would not go as far as Moreland and Levine (2001, p. 87) to claim that 'much of the work on organizational socialization is misguided,' we do believe that research needs to incorporate localized structures and processes as mediators of the relationship between organization-level predictors and newcomers' learning and adjustment.

The notion of localized socialization raises other intriguing ideas. As one example, research on intergroup dynamics indicates that groups often seek positive distinctiveness, defining themselves as *foils* of one another and thereby exaggerating intergroup differences and intragroup similarities (Turner, 1985). Given that newcomers are often more motivated to please their immediate peers than more distal management, they are likely to conform to if not internalize these exaggerations. In this way, localized socialization is likely to perpetuate the resulting stereotypes, institutionalizing intergroup biases and conflict. For

instance, Collinson (1992) describes how shop-floor workers defined them-selves as the antithesis of management, socialized coworkers accordingly, and policed one another to ensure the worker-management gulf remained. As a second example, given the transient nature of such groups as project teams and task forces, and given the impact that a newcomer may have on his or her group, newcomer socialization may occur simultaneously with the socialization of the group itself (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Wanous, Reichers & Malik, 1984). For instance, Anderson et al. (1999) propose a group-level socialization stage model (listed as a specialized model in Table 1.1) that directly parallels their individual-level stage model. How and to what extent might models of socialization tactics, socialization content (newcomer learning), and newcomer proactivity be generalized to the collective level (e.g., Danielson, 2004)?

Individual Differences

Individual differences span a wide range of variables: demographic attributes, including past experience; personality traits; values, beliefs, and attitudes; be-havioral styles; knowledge, skills, and abilities; and goals, aspirations, and needs. Reviews of socialization research have documented a variety of indi-vidual differences that have been considered as independent, moderating, me-diating, and outcome variables (Ashforth, 2001; Bauer et al., 1998; Colquitt et al., 2000; Fisher, 1986; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Sonnentag et al., 2004). That said, given that socialization involves a continuous interaction between individuals and organizations, there have been repeated calls for more inter-actionist approaches to socialization, that is, for approaches that consider how individual differences play out in socialization dynamics over time (Griffin et al., 2000; Jones, 1983; Reichers, 1987; Taylor & Giannantonio, 1993).

Given space limitations, we will focus on individual differences that are di-rectly related to what was said earlier to be the heart of socialization: making sense of the new situation and learning the expected capabilities. 'Making sense' entails processing information both *provided to* (i.e., organizational tactics) and *obtained by* (i.e., newcomer proactivity) the newcomer. Individual differences affect the motivation and capability for this sensemaking process.

Motivation for sensemaking and learning

Previous work experience provides schemata for interpreting the new situation, thus facilitating adjustment (Brett, 1984). For example, Beyer and Hannah (2002) interviewed engineers and other professionals in the semiconductor in-dustry who were assigned to a consortium. These authors found that individu-als with longer and more diverse work experience had more diverse identities, which provided flexibility for making sense of and adjusting to their new roles. However, research has found that experience facilitates (Black, 1988), inhibits (Adkins, 1995; Morrison & Brantner, 1992), and has no effect (Anakwe &

Greenhaus, 2000; Finkelstein et al., 2003; Pinder & Schroeder, 1987) on adjustment. Why the mixed support? Ashforth (2001) speculates that previous experience is most likely to be *mis*applied when the newcomer is confronting moderate change. Under little change, past learning can be readily and appropriately applied to the new setting. Under great change, the newcomer is apt to recognize the limited relevance of past learning, prompting information-seeking and receptiveness. Thus, Aiman-Smith and Green (2002) found that the more novel a new technology was to factory workers, the *less* time they took to become proficient at operating the technology. Under moderate change, however, the apparent similarity of the present to the past may induce 'false confidence' (Adkins, 1995, p. 856), whereby the newcomer inappropriately applies previously learned schema to the new setting and is less receptive to new information. Alternatively, even if the newcomer is receptive to learning, the need to first unlearn well-entrenched schemata may delay learning (Morrison & Brantner, 1992).

A literature review by Sonnentag et al. (2004) indicates that one's *dispositional learning goal orientation* (i.e., a desire to increase one's competence via new skills) is associated with task-specific self-efficacy, self-set goal difficulty, effort, feedback-seeking, and task performance. However, much of this research is based on undergraduate students (e.g., Bogler & Somech, 2002). In an organizational example, Godshalk and Sosik (2003) found that protégés who matched their mentors in terms of having a high learning goal orientation reported receiving more psychosocial support from their mentors than did protégés who did not match their mentors or who matched on a low orientation. It seems likely that a learning goal orientation would be particularly effective in complex roles and situations. Similarly, research indicates that *trait curiosity* is associated with workplace learning (Reio & Callahan, 2004), and a *proactive personality* predicts task mastery, group integration, political knowledge, and job performance (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Thompson, 2005). Ashford and Black (1996) found that *state desire for control* is related to information-seeking, general socializing, networking, job change negotiation, and positive framing, but not to feedback-seeking and relationship-building with the boss. Presumably, *trait* desire for control would also predict proactivity. Black and Ashford (1995) report that *trait desire for feedback* is associated with newcomer personal change, although some research suggests otherwise (see Ashforth's 2001 review for further details).

In the context of organizational training, a meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2000) indicates that one's *motivation to learn* (i.e., a desire to assimilate the training material) is positively associated with declarative knowledge, skill acquisition, and post-training self-efficacy. Interestingly, motivation to learn is not predicted by conscientiousness (but is predicted by an internal locus of control). Motivation to learn, however, is only partly dispositional as Colquitt et al. found that it is strongly influenced by the perceived valence of training outcomes (cf. Tharenou, 2001).

In addition to the task, role, and organization, the newcomer also learns about the overall obligations and inducements found in the psychological contract. In this connection, De Vos et al. (2005) found that individual *work values* and an internal *locus of control* influenced specific information-seeking efforts–for example, valuing promotion predicted information-seeking about financial rewards and an internal locus of control predicted information-seeking about job content (i.e., 'challenging, varied, and interesting work,' p. 42).

Taken together, these findings indicate that particular needs and preferences for information appear to motivate newcomers to seek corresponding types of information (cf. Morrison, 2002a).

Capabilities for sensemaking and learning

A variety of individual differences–*cognitive ability*, *learning style*, *extraversion*, *openness to experience*, and *self-monitoring*–have been shown to facilitate newcomer adjustment (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Sonnentag et al., 2004; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). With regard to proactive behavior, extraversion and openness to experience were found to predict proactive feedback-seeking, while extraversion also predicted relationship-building (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). This research underscores the importance of what Hall (1986) refers to as *meta-competencies*–skills for learning to learn, including how, what, where, and when to learn, and whom to learn from (Fisher, 1986). Meta-competencies suggest a willingness and ability to explore and experiment, to proactively engage one's situation, to draw on a variety of experiences to make sense of one's situation, and to adapt one's role identity and career narratives to the demands of the situation (Ashforth, 2001). Hall (1986) argues that, in the face of increasing environmental and career turbulence, meta-competencies are becoming more important.

One possible meta-competency is *employability*–a disposition to proactively improve and change oneself to meet situational demands (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). As such, employability may be an important predictor of proactive behavior and newcomer learning, as well as role innovation. A second possible meta-competency is *core self-evaluation* or 'more simply, positive self-concept' (Judge & Bono, 2001, p. 80). Core self-evaluation is a latent construct measured by an amalgam of generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and emotional stability (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). Traditionally, self-efficacy has been found to predict, moderate, and mediate various processes within socialization (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). For example, recent research indicates that newcomer self-efficacy predicts perceived control and problem-focused coping (Ashforth & Saks, 2000), task mastery, role clarity, and social integration (Gruman et al., 2006), and higher performance expectations (Chen & Klimoski, 2003). Self-efficacy was also found to moderate the relationship of entry stressors on adjustment outcomes; specifically, role conflict predicted decreased organizational commitment and identification for

those newcomers with low self-efficacy (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). Building on the findings from self-efficacy as well as locus of control, core self-evaluation may have a strong and holistic influence on newcomer adjustment.

Toward dynamic interactionism

Interactionism is often operationalized in socialization research as an algebraic interaction (A × B), for example, where self-efficacy is argued to moderate the impact of institutionalized socialization on newcomer behavior. However, moderation effects are notoriously difficult to detect in field settings, partly because of restricted range in the individual and situational variables (McClelland & Judd, 1993). More importantly, the interaction between individuals and organizations can assume many forms (Frese, 1982; Schneider, 1983). In particular, individuals typically select and actively perceive the situations they are in; they usually have some discretion over their behavior and this behavior–whether by design or accident–may alter the situation; the situation tends to affect different individuals in different ways; and the individuals decide to remain or exit the situation and are more likely to be retained by the organization if they display desired attributes. The upshot is what Hattrup and Jackson (1996) term *dynamic interactionism*, whereby persons and situations reciprocally affect each other such that there are continuous changes in both over time. In short, 'people and settings are difficult to separate' (Schneider, 1983, p. 11).

Accordingly, it may be quixotic to predict sensemaking and learning–or other newcomer endeavors (Ashford & Taylor, 1990)–from a static set of individual differences, no matter how comprehensive the set may be. What is needed is research that tracks socialization as an evolving synthesis of newcomer, role, and context, where current states in all three are regarded as provisional and interactive.

The Role of Time

Although socialization is an inherently dynamic process, time has thus far been relegated to a relatively minor supporting role in the literature. The following topics merely hint at the vast potential to be realized when time is explicitly incorporated in socialization models.

Rate of socialization

Figure 1.3 captures a tacit assumption in the socialization literature regarding the amount of cumulative learning over time (cf. Taormina, 1997). Anticipatory socialization leads to some learning prior to the boundary crossing, but most learning occurs shortly after the crossing, when the newcomer is immersed in the setting; diminishing returns then set in, with the amount of
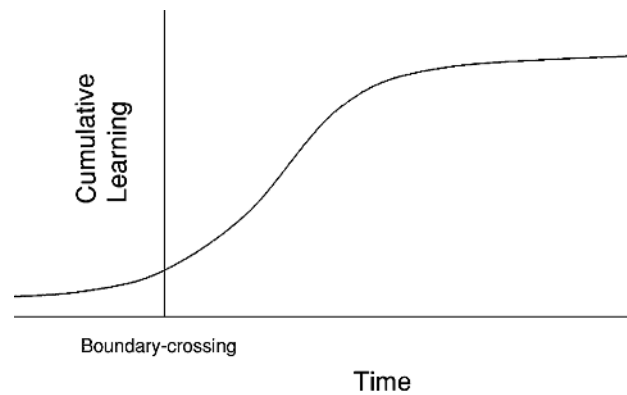
Figure 1.3 Newcomer learning over time

learning ultimately approaching the asymptote. Our earlier observation about socialization lumpiness is not inconsistent with this model: what appears lumpy with a 'high-resolution lens' that tracks day-to-day progress may appear smoother with a low-resolution lens that follows the learning trajectory over a sweep of months (or even years for very complex jobs). An intriguing research question is how newcomers in fact aggregate or bracket the experience of time (George & Jones, 2000) and the effect this has on the perceived smoothness and satisfactoriness of their socialization: what may seem like haphazard episodes to one may seem like a pleasantly meandering road to another. Interestingly, Brown (1985) found that nursing home employees with five months or less work experience tended to recite specific stories to an interviewer when discussing their work, whereas employees with five to 12 months experience tended to recite specific stories with morals, and employees with over 12 months experience tended to tell prototypic or mythic stories in the service of a larger point about the values and operations of the organization. Brown concluded that the evolution in stories signaled an increasing awareness of the bigger organizational picture: the disparate threads of everyday life were gradually woven into a compelling pattern.

A critical issue is the slope of the learning curve, that is, the rate of socialization (Reichers, 1987). As noted earlier, a relatively rapid rate is desirable for both the newcomer and organization (Reichers, 1987), provided that it does not overtax either. Despite the importance of the rate, Reicher's observation of 20 years ago–that the rate has been 'largely overlooked' (p. 279) in socialization research–is still true today (however, see Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005, for a recent exception, and Chan & Schmitt, 2000, and Lance, Vandenberg, & Self, 2001, for recent examinations of the rate of change in other proximal and distal outcomes of socialization). Holding the magnitude of the transition constant, and consistent with the notion of localized socialization, Reichers (1987) argues that *interaction frequency* predicts the socialization rate.

Interaction frequency is in turn likely influenced by institutionalized social-ization (particularly the serial and collective tactics), newcomer (and veteran) proactivity, the factors noted earlier regarding the appeal of socialization agents (i.e., similarity to the newcomer, physical proximity, task and outcome inter-dependence, and knowledgeablity about the workplace), as well as a host of well-known management practices covered in any textbook on organizational behavior or industrial/organizational psychology (e.g., supportive leadership, clear effort-reward contingencies). For example, Pinder and Schroeder (1987) found that individuals transferred to more difficult jobs reported becoming proficient more quickly if they received 'support' (an amalgam of cooperation and supervisor/coworker support). We would add that the impact of interaction frequency on the socialization rate is likely moderated by *interaction quality*–the extent to which the interaction provides useful information. Quality is associ-ated with information that is accurate and timely, tailored to the newcomer's developmental needs, and delivered via a medium that is appropriate to the in-formation's richness and via a constructive manner that enhances receptiveness (cf. Kraiger, 2003).

Time lags and duration of effects

As alluded to earlier, learning has been posited to facilitate such proximal outcomes as role clarity, skill acquisition, and personal change, which in turn facilitate more distal outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commit-ment, performance, and role innovation/conformity (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). (It should be noted that the impact of learning and the proximal outcomes on the distal outcomes is not necessarily positive: as the literatures on psycholog-ical contract violations and unmet expectations suggest, one could experience unpleasant surprises that turn one against the job, subunit, and/or organi-zation.) The distinction between proximal and distal outcomes suggests the importance of conceptualizing *time lags* in the socialization process and vari-ables that may shorten or lengthen them, as well as possible feedback loops (e.g., organizational commitment may motivate further learning) (cf. Chan & Schmitt, 2000; George & Jones, 2000; Mitchell & James, 2001). Although research cited earlier does suggest that learning–or at least the pursuit of learn-ing through proactivity–precedes various newcomer adjustment variables, the conceptualization of the lag process has been scanty. For instance, it is unclear which effects are instantaneous (e.g., learning that one's peers are friendly may foster rapid social integration) and which are delayed (e.g., learning how to perform a complex task may only affect performance over the next task cycle).

An additional temporal consideration is the *duration of the effects* (cf. George & Jones, 2000; Mitchell & James, 2001). Mitchell and James discuss the pos-sibility of an 'entropic period' in causal models, whereby the impact of X on Y (in this case, learning on proximal outcomes, and both of these on distal out-comes) may become attenuated. For example, it was noted earlier that stage

models of socialization imply that the impact of a given socialization program may fade over time as newcomers mature and their needs evolve.

Relative stability and instability

On one hand, literature reviews have suggested that newcomers tend to adjust relatively rapidly to their new jobs and organizations (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a) and that adjustment is relatively stable (Bauer et al., 1998; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). For example, Chen and Klimoski (2003) found that newcomers in information technology project teams took only two to three months to perform up to expectations, despite the complexity of their role, and Bauer and Green (1994) found that the adjustment of doctoral students assessed three weeks after entry into their programs was the best predictor of adjustment assessed after nine months. On the other hand, research on the honeymoon effect, unmet expectations, and psychological contract violations, cited earlier, suggests that the mean level of newcomer attitudes tends to decline, even if the earlier levels continue to predict later levels. Moreover, a great deal of variance in the later levels remains unaccounted for by the earlier levels. Further, research on gamma change (Golembiewski, Billingsley, & Yeager, 1976) indicates that the very *meaning* of a construct may change during socialization. For instance, Vandenberg and Self (1993) found that newcomers reconstituted constructs so severely during their first six months on the job that the differences between their initial and later measures of affective commitment and continuance commitment were uninterpretable. Thus, it appears that the stability/instability conundrum can be seen as a classic case of 'the glass is half-full' vs. 'the glass is half-empty'; that is, both views have some merit.

Given that socialization reviews have emphasized the glass being half-full, why might the glass also be half-empty? First, as the socialization stage models suggest, a newcomer's needs, aspirations, attention, expectations, and behaviors may evolve as he or she gains experience (e.g., Chan & Schmitt, 2000). Further, as these changes occur, socialization agents are likely to view and treat the newcomer differently (cf. situational leadership theory, Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). For example, laboratory research by Greenberg (1996) indicates that raters give higher-than-normal evaluations for good performance but lower-than-normal evaluations for poor performance if they believe the individual to be new to the organization. Such differential treatment is signaled partly through symbolic markers of status (e.g., derogatory names) and rites of passage (e.g., newcomer probation period) (see Bourassa & Ashforth, 1998, for examples of each on a trawler).

Second, some adjustments occur more quickly than others (Fisher, 1986), as suggested by the distinction between proximal and distal outcomes (Ashford & Taylor, 1990; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Newcomers may quickly mimic desired behaviors, but it may take much longer to learn tacit norms, accept

organizational values, and deeply internalize occupational and organizational identities (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). Ashforth's (2001) ABC (affect/behavior/cognition) model of role transitions holds that newcomers can think/feel their way into a role, as with anticipatory socialization, or behave their way, as with sudden immersion wherein newcomers are required to enact the role before they have internalized and feel comfortable with it. Further, the literature on socialization content, discussed earlier, indicates that knowledge in the job and possibly social domain is acquired more quickly than knowledge in the organizational domain (Morrison, 1995; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Taormina, 1997; cf. Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005). Indeed, Feldman (1977) found that hospital employees felt accepted by their coworkers after about three months, but did not feel competent until about six months into their new jobs.

The relativity of organizational tenure and time

Rollag (2004) notes that researchers use organizational tenure to differentiate newcomers from veterans and assume that tenure is a proxy for acculturation. Further, Rollag cites research suggesting that the mere label of 'newcomer' strongly affects how socialization agents regard and act toward the individual. Using data from four entrepreneurial start-up organizations, he demonstrates how one's self-perception of newcomer status, of work and advice network centrality, and of whether one seeks or provides information depend more on one's tenure *relative* to other organizational members than on one's *absolute* tenure. Thus, 'the rate of transition from thinking and acting like a newcomer to thinking and acting like an oldtimer is strongly driven by organizational growth and turnover' (Rollag, 2004, p. 864). In a rapidly growing organization with high turnover, a person with tenure of mere months may be socially constructed as a veteran–regardless of his or her actual learning and adjustment–with its attendant implications for how that person interacts with others. As Rollag notes, the person may even conclude that he or she has 'outgrown' the organization's socialization efforts long before achieving mastery. Conversely, in a stable organization with low turnover, a person with tenure of many years may still be seen as 'the new kid on the block.' Rollag's research provocatively underscores that 'newcomer' and 'veteran' are socially constructed labels and that there are no inherently fixed timeframes for becoming socialized.

One's *temporal orientation*, or characteristic approach to time, also suggests some intriguing possibilities (Ancona, Okhuysen & Perlow, 2001; Lutfey & Mortimer, 2003). For instance, a newcomer who is characteristically oriented to the future is more inclined to set long-term goals than a newcomer oriented to the present. Given the motivating potential of goal-setting, this future orientation may prove self-fulfilling: the newcomer may focus on amassing the skill set necessary for his or her longer range career goals, and may tolerate and even seek out developmental assignments that others would regard as undesirable.

However, the structured aspirations may render him or her more vulnerable to frustration if the career does not progress as intended. Conversely, the present-oriented newcomer may experience a more reactive career, opportunistically seizing chances as they appear and eschewing the delay of gratification required for personal development. However, opportunism may nonetheless allow one to amass a diverse set of marketable skills. Wiener (1996) interviewed individuals who entered Hollywood stunt work after unwittingly compiling the necessary skills through such experiences as rodeo riding and crop dusting. Given the turbulence of modern economies, opportunism may become more common for a large segment of the work force. Some *organizations* may even prefer newcomers who are oriented to the present, as it reduces the demand for costly and possibly untenable career planning and development initiatives.

As demonstrated, the notion of time raises a host of provocative issues for future research.

QUESTIONING OUR DEFAULT ASSUMPTIONS

A casual perusal of the organizational socialization literature may lead one to conclude that socialization theory and research generally focus on raw recruits in traditional work arrangements, entering their first full-time, white-collar jobs in relatively large organizations, resulting in some impact on traditional organizational behavior outcomes. Although these 'default assumptions' are frequently questioned in the literature, most studies nonetheless implicitly invoke them. We state these assumptions below rather baldy to surface how constricting they are and to suggest a few of the many possibilities to be realized from relaxing them.

Assumption #1: Socialization Pertains to Raw Recruits and First Full-Time Jobs

Socialization research has traditionally been dominated by studies of first-time workers and raw recruits. This focus is too narrow and disregards other important boundary crossings that necessitate socialization. Indeed, it is likely that the resocialization of veterans occurs as frequently as the socialization of newcomers because organizations are increasingly replacing promotion with lateral moves that require forgetting aspects of old roles, learning new roles and schemata, speaking new languages, and developing new relationships (Ashforth, 2001; Rousseau & Arthur, 1999). In short, careers are becoming more transitory (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004), necessitating that individuals negotiate movement within and between organizations. Hence, organizations are rife with instances of desocialization and resocialization that have little to do with first-timers (Feldman, 1989; Hall, 1980). Examining lateral moves offers many promising areas for advancing theory (e.g., Feldman &

Brett, 1983; Nicholson & West, 1988). For example, organizations often use lateral moves to disseminate knowledge across the organization (Lazarova & Tarique, 2005); however, such moves may also necessitate 'selective forgetting' (Ashforth, 2001, p. 190) and put the newly moved individual into a group that is suspicious or unwilling to learn new information. Individuals that successfully negotiate such situations may provide rich examples of an attitude of wisdom (Sutton & Hargadon, 1996; Weick, 1993) in which individuals in transition must balance experience with the novelty of the current situation. Moreover, such examples highlight the bidirectional nature of socialization; that is, how the group socializes the new member and how the new member socializes the group by deploying new knowledge.

Assumption #2: Socialization Pertains to Traditional Work Arrangements

Organizations are increasingly relying on alternative work arrangements, such as telecommuting, virtual teams, and contingent work, to maintain flexibility (Avery & Zabel, 2001; Garsten, 1999). The use of such arrangements is massive. For example, nearly one-third of U.S. employees rely on some form of telecommuting ('Emergent workers,' 2006) and organizations often use telecommuting as an incentive in lieu of pay raises (Moore, 2005). Some studies have reported that such changes have a deleterious effect on socialization. For instance, in a quasi-experimental field study, Wesson and Gogus (2005) found that newcomers learning through computer-based training reported lower levels of understanding socially rich content compared to cohorts attending socially-based orientations. One reason may be that computer-facilitated socialization is not as facile as observation at disseminating tacit, normative knowledge (Ahuja & Galvin, 2003). However, Flanagin and Waldeck (2004) suggest that organizations can use technology to facilitate anticipatory socialization and later stages of socialization when individuals already have a good grasp of social norms and can use them to contextualize potentially ambiguous information. Future research should continue exploring the use of technology in socialization. For example, does technology reduce stress (Nelson, 1987) and surprise (Louis, 1980) because it provides access to a greater number and variety of information sources or does it increase stress by adding possibly discordant voices to the choir?

As many as 50% of U.S. organizations rely on temporary workers (Foote & Folta, 2002). Socialization–more specifically, inadequate socialization–seems to have a reciprocal relationship with temporary work. Inadequate socialization during a first job often leads the individual to being offered temporary rather than permanent positions (Ruiz-Quintanilla & Claes, 1996; Winfree, Kielich, & Clark, 1984). In turn, temporary workers often receive poorer socialization than their permanent counterparts (Foote, 2004; Sias, Kramer &

Jenkins, 1997). Thus, individuals may find themselves in a negative spiral, becoming organizational wanderers that seek full membership but achieve only quasi-insider status. In contrast, other workers deliberately choose this 'liminal' lifestyle (Garsten, 1999) and seem to relish the process of continually entering new settings and negotiating ambiguity. Contrary to the negative spiral of under-socialization leading to temporary work, this perspective on temporary work suggests a positive spiral of learning and discovery. Future studies should examine and compare these spirals to better understand the dynamics that produce one instead of the other. For instance, are there individual differences that lead some people to seek out and thrive in temporary work environments, whereas others flounder and find themselves trapped in temporary situations they see as suboptimal?

Assumption #3: Socialization Pertains to Well-Educated, White-Collar Occupations

Fisher (1986: 105) observed that socialization research has 'tended to concentrate in the same few occupations.' This critique still holds–the vast majority of socialization studies use well-educated, white-collar samples, ignoring a broader range of workers and occupations. Research exploring these often ignored samples promises to increase the generalizability of our current theories as well as extend and modify them. For example, Gibson and Papa (2000) studied the communication patterns of manufacturing workers and found that the anticipatory socialization stage often began in adolescence, preparing future employees for organizational entry years before it occurred. This long anticipatory stage created a foundation for 'organizational osmosis' (p. 79), an effortless assimilation of norms that made the transition from outsider to insider appear seamless. Gibson and Papa determined that this long albeit informal socialization process generated an occupational identity centered on hard physical labor that in turn provided a context of normative control–individuals that do not take vacations are 'real men' that work 'like dogs,' whereas those that don't fit either 'break' or 'quit.' This research suggests that the anticipatory socialization stage can be seen as an incubation period in which identities are shaped that differentially enable or inhibit success in a given occupation (Cohen-Scali, 2003). As suggested earlier with regard to occupational ethnographies, future research should take advantage of such rich and thick situations (Folger & Turillo, 1999) in occupations other than white-collar ones, in order to broaden our understanding of socialization.

These understudied populations also offer promising venues for theory testing because they often provide contexts that serve as more stringent tests of socialization theories. For example, Sluss (2006) studied how newcomers in the tele-services industry identify with their relationship with their managers and how this dyadic connection generalizes to or augurs the newcomers'

identification with the organization as a whole. The high rate of turnover in the industry and the generally low educational level served as a caustic backdrop that had the potential to obviate these processes. The fact that the hypotheses held suggests the universal importance of these mechanisms across a wide range of organizations and occupations. Autry and Wheeler (2005) used a similar logic to study the impact of orientation duration on person-organization fit in the warehousing industry.

Assumption #4: Socialization Pertains to 'Traditional' OB Outcomes

Over 20 years ago, Fisher (1986) argued that there was an urgent need for research that focuses on outcomes that are specific to socialization, such as role innovation and internalization of organizational norms, in addition to traditional OB outcomes such as performance and commitment (also, see Ashford & Taylor, 1990, and Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). While this statement remains true today, there is a welcome trend toward focusing on proximal and socialization-specific indicators of adjustment. For example, in addition to examining how learning mediates the impact of socialization on distal outcomes, noted earlier, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) also examined the mediating role of group integration and role clarity. Socialization research should continue this trend, particularly because it underscores the unique contribution that socialization offers to understanding organizational dynamics.

Assumption #5: Socialization Pertains to Large Organizations

Many socialization studies examine cohorts of graduates entering large, mature firms (Bauer et al., 1998). However, we know little about how organizational size actually affects socialization. Given that smaller organizations lack the economies of scale and often the resources of larger organizations to utilize formal socialization practices, it seems likely that smaller firms would rely more heavily on informal practices (Ashforth et al., 1998). For instance, service workers in smaller chains of English pubs learned to interpret customers' emotional cues through trial and error, observation, and after-work social interaction, rather than through formal training (which they often derided in other chains) (Seymour & Sandiford, 2005). Similarly, women socialized in smaller newspaper organizations felt greater freedom to express gendered values whereas women in larger newspaper organizations felt that, to be accepted, their distinctive attributes needed to 'disappear' (Rodgers & Thorson, 2003, p. 672). Although these findings suggest that large organizations exert greater pressure toward conformity, this need not be the case. While smaller organizations tend to use more informal processes, they may rely heavily on restrictive, normative control systems in which members police one another (Barker, 1993). Future

research should contrast the use of normative controls during socialization in organizations of varying size.

We can also turn the causal direction of the question above on its head and ask, how does socialization affect size? Geeraerts (1984) argues that the socialization of managers plays a crucial role in an organization's ability to grow. Education and previous experience tend to socialize professional managers (in contrast to founders/owners) to institute strategic policies–such as functional specialization and acquisitions–that facilitate organizational growth. Given the impact that such strategies can have on organizational performance, the dynamic relationship between socialization and organizational structure and size deserves further study.

Assumption #6: Socialization is the Same Across National Cultures

'Globalization and the challenge of managing across borders are now the norm instead of the exception' (Steers et al., 2004, p. 383), yet we know relatively little about socialization in international contexts (Bauer et al., 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). One of the largest unanswered questions is the impact that national cultures have on learning styles (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998; Taormina & Bauer, 2000): because learning is central to the socialization process, organizations working across borders need to understand how different groups of employees may learn. For example, newcomers in Hong Kong ask fewer questions regarding their performance than newcomers in the U.S. (Morrison, Chen & Salgado, 2004), and U.S. interns at Japanese firms described receiving very little performance feedback from their Japanese supervisors even though the supervisors felt that they were providing an adequate amount (Masumoto, 2004).

Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) suggest that successful adaptation to different cultures requires a broad set of learning competencies. However, cross-cultural differences may be deeply embedded, presenting a greater challenge than simply developing competencies. For instance, Choi and Nisbett (2000) argue that the prevalence of paradoxical thinking that pervades eastern cultures prevents individuals from sensing surprise because their sensemaking schemata allow for contradictions. In other words, when contradictions are not experienced as such, the individual is less likely to ask 'why did this occur?' (Wong & Weiner, 1981). The lack of surprise undermines inquiry and sensemaking. This line of thinking suggests that individuals of different cultural backgrounds experiencing the same socialization process may have drastically different experiences (Chao, 1997) and emerge with disparate interpretations of how to negotiate the organization. Research needs to investigate how cultural differences in sensemaking and schema formation may differentially affect information-seeking, learning, and other socialization dynamics (Bauer & Taylor, 2002).

CONCLUSION

As this sojourn through decades of research suggests, organizational socialization has a diverse family tree. It ranges from interviews with teachers to laboratory research on feedback-seeking, and from survey research on novice accountants to ethnographic research in military boot camps. This is as it should be: the construct of socialization–like the process of socialization itself–is a generative one. Individuals cannot become functioning members of organizations and organizations cannot sustain themselves without socialization. Socialization is core to understanding the courtship and marriage of individuals and organizations.

The topics of socialization stages, socialization tactics, socialization content (newcomer learning), and newcomer proactivity have provided a solid foundation for understanding the dynamics of the socialization process. Perhaps the biggest research challenge in the years ahead will be understanding how organizations might socialize for instability as well as for stability. As the conditions confronting organizations–and individuals' careers–become increasingly turbulent, particular research attention will need to be paid to task/project- and group-specific socialization, to newcomer proactivity, and to role innovation. Perhaps more than ever, socialization research is critical to understanding and helping organizations as they move into an uncertain future.

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