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Journal of Management 2011 37: 127 originally published online 13 October 2010

DOI: 10.1177/0149206310384630

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The Organizational Socialization Process: Review and Development of a Social Capital Model

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The authors selectively review the literature on newcomer socialization in organizational settings and develop a social capital model of the organizational socialization process. The model highlights the roles of (1) socialization factors (i.e., organizational socialization tactics and newcomer proactivity) in facilitating newcomer accessibility to social capital, (2) effective mobilization of social capital for newcomer adjustment and subsequent career success, and (3) organizational insiders in facilitating newcomer adjustment. An agenda for future studies on socialization, social capital, and social networks is provided.

Keywords: *socialization; social networks; social capital; core-self evaluations; self-monitoring*

New employees acquire the attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge they need to participate as organizational members through a process known as *organizational socialization* (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Organizational scholars are particularly interested in understanding socialization processes, in part because effective socialization holds sizeable practical organizational implications. Ineffective socialization is a primary reason that organizational

Acknowledgements: This research was funded by the SHRM Foundation. The interpretations and conclusions in the manuscript are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Foundation. We wish to thank Jacqueline Thompson for editorial assistance and Connie Wanberg for helpful comments on drafts of the manuscript.

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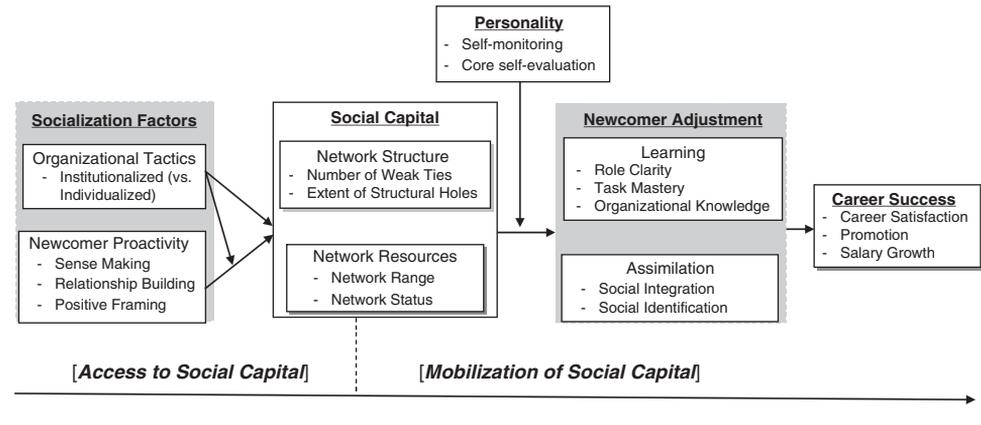
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newcomers quit or are discharged (Fisher, 1986), which disrupts work, loses productivity (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005), and costs organizations their investments in recruitment, selection, and training (Kammeyer-Muller & Wanberg, 2003). Besides avoiding financial losses, organizations need for newcomers to be socialized effectively because, as workforces are becoming more mobile and organizational loyalties are declining, effective socialization may be a key source of competitive advantage in the marketplace. From newcomers' perspectives, effective socialization may reduce not only their withdrawal cognitions and behaviors but also their anxieties about fitting in and performing well (Carr, Pearson, Vest, & Boyar, 2006).

Investigation of the socialization process has typically followed one of three approaches—organizational, individualistic, or interaction based—to understand socialization factors that influence newcomer adjustment. An *organizational* approach involves examining methods and processes (e.g., organizational socialization tactics) that organizations use to structure newcomers' socialization experiences. An *individualistic* approach focuses on newcomer attributes (e.g., personality) and proactivity (e.g., information seeking and acquisition; see Bauer, Bodner, Tucker, Erdogan, & Truxillo, 2007; Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Recent work has taken a traditional person-by-situation *interaction* approach to understand how newcomer self-socialization proactivity works in tandem with organizational socialization tactics to influence newcomer adjustment (e.g., Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2000; Gruman, Saks, & Zweig, 2006; Kim, Cable, & Kim, 2005). We suggest that underlying these three approaches is an implicit mechanism: *social resources* (e.g., information) that newcomers obtain through interactions and communications with organizational insiders. In other words, socialization factors—organizational and individual—help newcomers interact and communicate with insiders to obtain the social resources that are so critical for effective adjustment. Researchers have identified two particularly significant socialization factors—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity (Bauer et al., 2007).

We propose that advances in social capital theory have provided a fine-grained theoretical lens for examining this implicit mechanism underlying the effects of socialization factors on effective adjustment. Social capital theory conceptualizes social capital as embodying the social resources that are embedded in social relationship structures, and describes how individuals are able to achieve desired outcomes (e.g., finding a job) through two sequential processes—access to and mobilization of social capital (Lin, 1999). To achieve full, socialized membership, newcomers must access and mobilize social resources (e.g., information) embedded in the structures of their social relationships with organizational insiders. Thus, underlying the socialization process is a basic, critical question: How can newcomers achieve such accessibility and mobilization? We suggest that addressing this general question requires answering three related questions: (1) Where are the social resources critical for newcomer adjustment embedded? (2) How can newcomers access the resources? (3) How can the accessed resources be mobilized to achieve newcomer adjustment? As the first to view the newcomer socialization from the network structure perspective, Morrison (2002) examined the effects of network ties (friendship and advice) on newcomer adjustment. Her results suggested that how newcomers are connected with insiders (configurations of relationships) affects newcomer adjustment. Although this work was promising, several fundamental questions remained unanswered: Why do newcomers develop different structural social networks

Figure 1
A Social Capital Model of the Organizational Socialization Process



characteristics? Do the two important socialization factors (organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity) influence those structural characteristics? What structural social networks characteristics are most conducive to newcomer adjustment? We argue that answers to these questions indeed address the three related questions regarding newcomer accessibility and mobilization of social capital described previously.

To address these issues, we develop in the following sections an integrative social capital model of the socialization process (see Figure 1). We propose that two key socialization factors specified in Bauer et al.'s (2007) meta-analytic model—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity—relate to newcomer adjustment and subsequent career success through the underlying mechanism of social capital. The first part of the unfolding model depicts the social capital access process, and the latter part reflects the mobilization of social capital. We argue that the two aspects of social capital—structure and resources—are captured by *network structure* and *network resources*, respectively. Specifically, *network structure* refers to the configurations or structural characteristics of newcomers' network of relationships with organizational insiders; *network resources* refer to the social resources embedded in the network. In addition, we take a contingent view of the social capital mobilization process and argue that personality characteristics such as self-monitoring and core self-evaluation (CSE) are potential facilitators of social capital mobilization: High levels of self-monitoring and CSE strengthen the relationship between social capital and newcomer adjustment.

Our model particularly focuses on the communication network to describe the two aspects of social capital—network structure and network resources—although organizations include other types of networks such as friendship and advice. Organizational communications play a central role in embedding employees in the network of larger social processes; the communication network captures the flow of various types of information and other social resources (e.g., advice and friendship) among organizational members (Monge & Contractor, 2003).

When newcomers enter organizations, they experience high levels of uncertainty, but their uncertainty is reduced by various communication channels that give them the information they need; most notably, social interactions with organizational insiders help newcomers understand the new environment (Katz, 1980; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Thus, the communication network connecting newcomers with various insiders indicates the primary communication channels—interpersonal and feedback processes and interactions—that newcomers may use to reduce uncertainty. In other words, the inherent ambiguity of organizational settings (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980), coupled with newcomers' feelings of being inadequately informed (Jablin, 1984), highlights that the communication network is important in helping newcomers reduce uncertainty. If newcomers are to navigate the new environment successfully, especially critical is having access to and mobilization of information and other social resources embedded in the communication network.

Overall, we seek to unify and advance socialization literature through our social capital model of the socialization process. We consider that organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity affect adjustments, depending on the social capital embedded in newcomers' communication network. Reaching beyond the socialization literature's traditional uncertainty reduction theory, our model first integrates theory regarding "the major concepts and processes of socialization" (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a, p. 238). Therefore, we answer increasing calls for research regarding the *mechanisms* underlying relationships between socialization factors, especially organizational tactics, and newcomer adjustment (e.g., Allen, 2006; Gruman et al., 2006; Klein & Heuser, 2008; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). To help organizations socialize newcomers and to help newcomers self-socialize more effectively, we must better understand how organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity contribute to effective adjustment. Although the socialization literature has well recognized that organizational insiders (e.g., supervisors and peers) play important roles in helping newcomers adjust effectively, "exactly how those insiders facilitate socialization, and their effect on discrete outcomes, ha[s] not been investigated" (Bauer et al., 1998, p. 155). Our model explicates communication network characteristics that affect the importance of insiders when newcomers interact with them and seek their social resources (e.g., information) so critical for effective socialization. That is, we focus on insiders' *collective* role in the structural and resources aspects of social capital they give newcomers. Therefore, our model highlights the inherently "interpersonal" nature of organizational insiders as sources of social resources (e.g., information sources; Chia, Foo, & Fang, 2006; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993b) and extends the existing research that examines insiders' roles in terms of their socialization-related attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Slaughter & Zickar, 2006).

In the sections below, we first briefly review the organizational socialization literature regarding two important socialization factors—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity—as well as newcomer adjustment and subsequent career success outcomes. Second, we integrate and develop the social capital model of the organizational socialization process whereby newcomers access and mobilize social capital critical for adjusting or achieving socialization. Third, we discuss our model's implications for research on socialization, social capital, and social networks, and we propose directions for future research.

Organizational Socialization

Investigation of newcomer socialization has indicated that the two important socialization factors—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity—work independently or interactively to influence newcomer adjustment. Before elaborating our social capital model, we briefly review the literature on these two antecedents of newcomer adjustment, as well as newcomer adjustment and its subsequent outcome—career success.

Antecedents of Newcomer Adjustment

Organizational tactics. Most organizations use tactics to facilitate newcomer adjustment and adaptation and to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Collapsing Van Maanen and Schein's six-dimensional taxonomy, Jones (1986) conceptualized socialization tactics along a single continuum with *institutionalized* socialization (collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics) on one end and *individualized* socialization (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics) on the other. Briefly, under institutionalized socialization, newcomers have access to structured forms of modeling and social support; they undergo common learning experiences as part of a cohort, with clearly defined, sequenced, and timed training and orientation activities. Under individualized socialization, newcomers are exposed to learning experiences individually, informally, and sporadically; they define situations on their own without help and feedback from experienced insiders (see Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 1998; Jones, 1986; Saks et al., 2007, for reviews). Most researchers have conceptualized organizational tactics along a single continuum ranging from individualized tactics to institutionalized tactics because the tactics are highly and positively intercorrelated (e.g., Ashforth, Saks, & Lee, 1998; Bauer et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2005; Lueke & Svyantek, 2000). Following these studies, we adopt the single continuum of organizational tactics in our elaboration of the integrative social capital model. Furthermore, given that it may be premature to abandon Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) original six socialization tactics (Bauer et al., 1998), we also propose that among the six institutionalized tactics, certain tactics are most strongly related to newcomer accessibility to social capital.

Considerable empirical evidence has linked organizational tactics, particularly institutionalized tactics, to newcomer adjustment—learning (e.g., role clarity, task mastery, and organizational knowledge) and assimilation (e.g., social integration and social identification with organizations; Bauer et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks et al., 2007). However, much less is known about the mechanisms that underlie the influences of organizational tactics on newcomer adjustment. Socialization scholars (Klein & Heuser, 2008; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Saks et al., 2007) have called for research to examine such mechanisms. In their meta-analytic review, Saks and colleagues (2007: 440) argued, "We already know that socialization tactics predict newcomer adjustment, now we need research to find out why. . . . Future research is needed to develop and test additional models that explain the linkages between socialization tactics and newcomer adjustment." Although a few studies have examined newcomer communication behavior (Mignerey, Rubin, & Gorden, 1995)

and information acquisition (Saks & Ashforth, 1997b) as underlying processes, the focus on *what newcomers do* fails to capture the *interpersonal* nature of organizational insiders as social resources (e.g., information sources; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993b). We suggest that it is not just *what* newcomers do in communicating with insiders but also *how* they are connected with insiders in the organizational communication network (i.e., the configuration of relationships) that underlies the effects of organizational tactics (see Figure 1).

Newcomer proactivity. Many socialization scholars have focused on newcomers' proactive behaviors that facilitate adjustment or adaption (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Bauer & Green, 1994, 1998; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Muller, 2000). According to organizational research, proactive behavior is a form of motivated work behavior; it is initiative or anticipatory action that employees take to affect their personal comfort and/or their environments (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 2000; Grant & Ashford, 2008). Because organizations cannot possibly provide all the information and socialization that newcomers need, newcomers must act proactively if they are to reduce uncertainty (Saks & Ashforth, 1997a; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Muller, 2000). As the socialization literature has explained, *newcomer proactivity* comprises the self-initiated active steps newcomers take to reduce uncertainty about their work environments (Ashford & Black, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). To understand newcomer proactivity, we follow Ashford and Black's dimensions—*relationship building*, *sense making*, and *positive framing*. Relationship building includes general socializing, networking, and building relationships with bosses. Sense making describes the search for and acquisition of job- and organizational-related information or job performance feedback. Positive framing refers to the cognitive self-management mechanisms newcomers use to interpret the environment positively (Ashford & Black, 1996).

Empirical evidence shows that newcomer proactivity is conducive to effective adjustment (see Bauer et al., 2007; Klein & Heuser, 2008). For instance, sense making relates positively to role clarity and task mastery, and relationship building relates positively to social integration and role clarity (Morrison, 1993a; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Muller, 2000). To our best knowledge, however, empirical or theoretical work has yet to elaborate *why* newcomer proactivity enhances effective adjustment. Research is needed to better understand the processes involved in the relationship between newcomer proactivity and socialization outcomes (Klein & Heuser, 2008; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Newcomer proactivity describes newcomers' actions in social interactions and communications with organizational insiders, but newcomers become socialized not only by interacting with insiders (Bauer et al., 1998) but also by developing certain configurations of relationships with insiders (Morrison, 2002). We argue that an implicit assumption underlying the effects of newcomer proactivity on effective adjustment is that *what* newcomers do in the socialization process determines *how* they are ultimately connected in the network of communication relationships with various organizational insiders, which in turn facilitates their accessibility and mobilization of critical social resources.

Newcomer Adjustment

Newcomer adjustment following organizational entry involves newcomers' primary needs to reduce uncertainty about tasks, roles, and social transitions (Fisher, 1986). Although

socialization researchers have studied similar adjustment indicators, also called *proximal socialization outcomes*, in several ways (Bauer et al., 2007), newcomers generally must accomplish two tasks if they are to successfully integrate (Morrison, 2002). One task is *learning*: clarifying roles, mastering tasks, and acquiring organizational knowledge (Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b, 2002; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). The other task is *assimilation*: becoming socially integrated and identifying with workgroups and organizations (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Morrison, 1993a, 1993b, 2002; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Following prior studies, our model focuses on role clarity, task mastery, and organizational knowledge for the learning task, and on social integration and social identification for the assimilation task. Newcomers’ adjustment, in terms of learning and assimilation, has strong and potentially lasting impacts on their distal socialization outcomes or subsequent job performance and attitudes (see Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). This, in turn, suggests the importance of understanding *why* organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity enhance newcomer adjustment in the socialization process.

Outcome of Newcomer Adjustment—Career Success

Career success refers to accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes such as promotion, salary growth, and career satisfaction resulting from work experiences (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Although socialization researchers have focused mainly on job performance and attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to retain) when examining subsequent outcomes of newcomer adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007), we include career success as an outcome of newcomer adjustment for three main reasons. First, mentoring research has indicated that mentors are instrumental in career success (e.g., Ragins & Cotton, 1999) as are institutionalized socialization tactics such as training and developmental opportunities (Chow, 2002; Orpen, 1995). Second, research on proactive behavior in organizations (e.g., Crant, 2000; Gong, Cheung, Wang, & Huang, in press) has suggested that the socialization context is particularly relevant to career success because it is a cumulative outcome of behaviors over a relatively long period (Seibert et al., 1999). Third, because social capital contributes to career success (e.g., Burt, 1992; Seibert et al., 2001), our social capital lens of the socialization process motivates us to examine career success.

Social Capital Model of Organizational Socialization Process

Social Capital

In the past two decades, social capital in its various forms has emerged as one of the most salient concepts in social science. Social network researchers have led in formalizing and empirically testing theories related to the concept of social capital (e.g., Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 1982). Lin (1999: 35) defined social capital as “resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” and explained that embedded resources cannot possibly be captured without identifying network characteristics

and relations. The social capital construct is best thought of as “both the different network structures that facilitate or impede access to social resources and the nature of the social resources embedded in the network” (Seibert et al., 2001: 221). Lin’s (1999) definition simultaneously captured *structure* and *resources*, the two important aspects of social capital that are emphasized in three popular approaches to modeling social capital effects—weak-tie theory (valuable weak direct ties in reaching outside one’s social clique; Granovetter, 1973), structural holes approach (advantageous bridging positions that connect otherwise unconnected others; Burt, 1992), and social resources theory (social contacts who have status, wealth, power, or control of resources; Lin, 1982). Specifically, structural holes and weak-tie theories focus on the *structural* characteristics of social relations and implicitly or explicitly argue that network structures or locations are key elements for identifying social capital, whereas the social resource approach focuses on the *resources* embedded in social relations.

Therefore, our model takes Lin’s (1999) conceptualization of social capital: acknowledge the importance of structure and resources in the social capital construct and specify social capital in terms of network structure (number of weak ties and extent of structural holes) and network resources (network range and network status). Below, we briefly illustrate the structural and resource aspects of social capital that newcomers access and mobilize in the socialization process. From the day newcomers formally enter an organization, they interact with organizational insiders through various informal communication channels, reaching beyond the formal communications defined by the organizational hierarchy. Over time, these interactions result in different configurations of network structures as well as contact resources embedded in the network. For network structure, some newcomers may develop only a few strong connections with several insiders, whereas others may have various weak ties with different insiders (i.e., *number of weak ties*). In a relationship network, a structural hole exists between two unconnected actors (Burt, 1992). Accordingly, newcomers may also differ in the extent their contacts are unconnected (i.e., *extent of structural holes*). For network resources, newcomers have more or fewer contacts from different departments (Morrison, 2002), termed *network range* (Ibarra, 1995; Lin, 1982), or have contacts positioned at different levels of the organizational hierarchy, a conceptual variable called *network status* (Lin, 1982). Social capital allows people to achieve desired outcomes by facilitating the flow of information, exerting influence, building social credentials, and reinforcing social identity and recognition (Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1990; Erickson, 1996; Lin, 1982, 1999; Moliterno & Mahony, in press). Here, we expect newcomers to achieve effective adjustment via one or more of these four beneficial social capital effects—information, influence, credential, and reinforcement—reflected in network structure (number of weak ties and extent of structural holes) and network resources (network range and network status).

Access to Social Capital

Organizational tactics. As noted previously, organizational tactics for newcomer socialization experiences can be conceptualized along a single continuum ranging from institutionalized to individualized socialization. These tactics are contextual factors that influence interpersonal processes and newcomer–insider interactions (Miller & Jablin, 1991). We propose

that institutionalized tactics (collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture), relative to individualized tactics (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture), enable newcomers to access social capital mainly through two mechanisms. First, institutionalized tactics reduce newcomers' uncertainty by shaping how information is disseminated as well as what sources of information and social resources are given. When newcomers enter an organization, they do not yet possess comfortable routines for interacting with insiders and predicting responses (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Kim et al., 2005); they may lack confidence and feel incompetent in such interactions. But to reduce their uncertainty they must interact with insiders to obtain information and social resources critical for their effective adjustment. Institutionalized tactics help them overcome their temporary disadvantages by providing "a structure that enables newcomers to communicate more readily with coworkers and supervisors" (Mignerey et al., 1995: 77).

We elaborate this mechanism below by examining in more detail specific institutionalized tactics. On one hand, institutionalized tactics directly guide newcomers to reliable sources of information and assistance such as supervisors and experienced peers. Such tactics help newcomers interact and communicate with insiders from different departments to increase their network range and with insiders advanced in the hierarchy to enhance their network status. For example, *serial* tactics enable experienced insiders to act interpersonally as role models or mentors; *investiture* tactics allow experienced insiders to provide positive feedback and social support to help newcomers develop relationships and gain feelings of competence and confidence in interactions (Allen, 2006). As Cable and Parsons (2001) suggested, positive interactions with supportive organizational insiders under serial and investiture tactics help newcomers develop social networks and feel accepted. In addition, socialization activities (e.g., training classes and mentoring programs) under *formal*, *sequential*, or *fixed* tactics also help them interact with trainers and instructors, who generally are supervisors or experienced peers from different departments.

On the other hand, institutionalized tactics help newcomers pinpoint specific information sources (Miller & Jablin, 1991) and indirectly guide their communication behaviors. For example, newcomers under *collective* tactics receive common training and learning experiences, thus becoming cohorts who can reduce their shared uncertainties by sharing information. At the same time, effective organizational performance requires coordination and communication among employees from different departments (e.g., Cross & Cummings, 2004; Keller, 2001; Smidts, Pruyn, & van Riel, 2001). Institutionalized tactics often include socialization activities that help newcomers understand formal guidelines about where to find resources and who to approach to get action within the formal organizational structure (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Newcomers under institutionalized tactics are thus better at developing mind maps of key contacts or liaisons in different departments for coordination and communication. These maps of organizational communication allow them to target high-status insiders (enhancing network status) from different departments (increasing network range) for communication relationships.

Institutionalized tactics for socializing newcomers have another facilitating effect on social capital access; such tactics *embed* newcomers quickly and extensively into the web or network of organizational communication relationships. Institutionalized tactics enable organizations to structure or manage newcomers' initial interactions and communication with

various insiders immediately. Social network approaches to social capital assume that social actors have finite time and opportunity to invest in building social relationships, so having relatively many weak ties brings more social capital than having relatively few strong ties (Burt, 1992; Podolny & Baron, 1997). This assumption does not presume that weak ties are better than strong ties but that the *number* of weak ties relates to the number of valuable social contacts in a social network (Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert et al., 2001). A newcomer may develop weak ties rather easily and quickly, but developing stronger ties often requires more effort, familiarity, and extended time for relationships to evolve. Immediately following organizational entry, however, newcomers often do not have the time they need for strengthening relationships with various insiders or to establish trust and ease, and thus, they will have weaker ties with insiders. Although newcomers under collective tactics share common learning experiences as cohorts and thus may develop strong ties with each other, our theoretical model limits the conceptualization of social capital in terms of network relationships with various insiders, but not among newcomers themselves. Furthermore, as discussed previously, institutionalized tactics, relative to individualized ones, help newcomers build communication ties with various insiders from different departments and from different levels of organizational hierarchies. Newcomers under institutionalized tactics are thus more likely to have more ties with various insiders who may not communicate with each other; that is, their communication networks are likely to have more structural holes.

Therefore, newcomers are more likely to acquire or access social capital under institutionalized tactics than under individualized tactics. The *shaping* mechanism allows newcomers to receive systematic, accurate, and consistent information from appropriate sources. Newcomers are more likely to understand which social contacts are most important in terms of departmental affiliations (i.e., network range) and hierarchical levels (i.e., network status) and to be better able to navigate the new environment. Moreover, the *embedding* mechanism brings newcomers quickly and extensively into the organizational communication network, enhancing the number of weak ties and the extent of structural holes. Overall, newcomers are expected to benefit more from institutionalized tactics than from individualized tactics because of the structure (number of weak ties and extent of structural holes) and resources (network range and network status) that characterize the communication network.

Proposition 1a: For network structure, institutionalized tactics will be positively related to the number of weak ties and the extent of structural holes.

Proposition 1b: For network resources, institutionalized tactics will be positively related to network range (contacts with different departmental affiliations) and network status (contacts at high hierarchical levels).

Furthermore, we propose that among the six institutionalized tactics, serial and investiture tactics are more conducive to newcomers' accessibility to social capital, compared with the other four tactics. As described previously, with serial and investiture tactics, experienced organizational members act as role models for newcomers and give them positive feedback and social support. All elements are critical if newcomers are to develop relationships and gain a sense of competence and confidence in interactions (Allen, 2006; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cable & Parsons, 2001). Serial and investiture tactics directly reflect the *social* or

interpersonal aspects of socialization (Jones, 1986), the interpersonal characteristic inherent to the insider–newcomer interactions and critical for newcomers to obtain social resources. In contrast, the other four institutionalized tactics fail to directly convey the social or interpersonal aspects of socialization. Specifically, organizations design formal and collective tactics that reflect “the *contexts* in which organizations provide information to newcomers” (Jones, 1986: 264) to ensure that newcomers receive a common message about organizational values and how to interpret and respond to situations (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Sequential and fixed tactics, which deal with “the *content* of the information given to newcomers via socialization” (Jones, 1986: 264), give newcomers explicit information about the sequences of activities and precise knowledge about the timetables associated with each socialization stage.

Therefore, we expect that serial and investiture tactics (i.e., social tactics; Jones, 1986) function most effectively in helping newcomers receive systematic, accurate, and consistent information from appropriate sources (the shaping mechanism) and embedding newcomers quickly and extensively into the organizational communication network (the embedding mechanism). In addition, Saks et al.’s (2007) meta-analytical review has shown that serial and investiture tactics most strongly predict socialization outcomes—both proximal (e.g., role ambiguity and role conflict) and distal (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to quit). Their review indirectly supports our proposition that these two tactics most strongly relate to newcomers’ accessibility to social capital in terms of network structure and network resources.

Proposition 1c: Among institutionalized tactics (formal, collective, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture), serial and investiture tactics will be most strongly related to network structure and network resources.

Newcomer proactivity. A simple, straightforward premise about social capital is that investments in social relations generate expected returns (Lin, 1999). We propose that the three dimensions of newcomer proactivity—*relationship building*, *sense making*, and *positive framing*—well represent newcomers’ active investments in social capital, which enhances adjustment and assures subsequent career success. Although newcomers may be actively “seeking out interaction opportunities” (Reichers, 1987: 281), relationships such as communication do not just happen; they must start, develop, and be maintained (Miell & Duck, 1986). Although little is known about the processes for developing social networks (Morrison, 2002), several network scholars have proposed that individuals play active roles in constructing and developing their social networks. For example, Zeggelink (1994, 1995) argued that individuals are active and goal directed at pursuing relationships in the process of developing social networks. Alluding to individual proactivity in network construction, Balkundi and Kilduff (2006: 421) also noted that “individuals can invest in social relations with others, can structure their social networks by adding and subtracting relationships, and can reap rewards both in terms of their own personal performance and organizational unit performance.” We argue that proactive newcomers, relative to less proactive counterparts, will actively construct and develop their communication networks characterized by structure (more weak ties and structural holes) and critical resources (contacts from different departments and at high hierarchical levels).

First, *relationship building* involves proactive behaviors directed toward developing workplace networks. The conduciveness or contribution of this proactivity dimension to network structure (number of weak ties and extent of structural holes) and network resources (network range and network status) is self-revealing. For example, proactive networking involves socializing with people in other departments and getting to know personally as many as possible in other organizational sections; general socializing includes attending organizational social gatherings and participating in office social events. Thus, newcomers who are proactive in these two aspects build extensive network range with peers across different departments. Newcomers who actively build relationships with bosses (e.g., joining supervisors for lunch) are more likely to communicate with their direct supervisors or supervisors from other departments in various social situations, thereby enhancing their network status. Furthermore, actively developing relationships with supervisors, creating peer networks across departments, and participating in formal and informal social activities (Kim et al., 2005) enable newcomers to develop large communication networks rich in structural holes. Similarly, mindful manners, coupled with limited time and opportunity available for strong relationship investment, suggest that newcomers proactive in relationship building will have more weak ties with various insiders.

Second, *sense making* describes newcomer proactivity in searching for and acquiring various kinds of information and performance feedback (Ashford & Black, 1996; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Muller, 2000). Newcomers proactive in sense making actively engage in various communication behaviors—information seeking and acquisition, feedback seeking, and critical involvement—in interpersonal exchanges with organizational insiders (Mignerey et al., 1995; Moreland & Levine, 2001). To reduce the high level of uncertainty, newcomers must seek information and feedback from various insiders, including direct supervisors, support personnel, experienced peers in different departments, and superiors other than immediate supervisors (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Therefore, newcomers proactive in sense making are more likely to develop large communication networks that include various insiders from different departments (network range), insiders at high hierarchical levels (network status), and insiders who may not communicate with each other (structural holes). Put simply, newcomers who are proactive in sense making embed themselves socially into the organizational communication network. Moreover, they must seek information in “mindful” ways (Langer, 1978: 36), thinking about what they do not know and how to obtain the information they need (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Recall that newcomers often are busy learning their new duties and that strong relationships take time to develop, so newcomers are especially challenged to find the time they need to develop strong insider ties. To increase opportunities for acquiring diverse information, they mindfully or strategically invest their limited time to developing many weak ties with various insiders rather than a few strong ties with a few insiders, thus contributing to the number of weak ties in their communication networks.

Third, *positive framing* builds newcomers’ sense of confidence and competence in responding to insiders’ information and feedback. Although building new relationships is critical, most newcomers find the task challenging because they have not yet established comfortable routines for interacting and predicting insiders’ responses (Kim et al., 2005). They are also concerned about negative relational consequences (e.g., social rejection) associated with insider

interactions (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Compared with passive and negative newcomers, newcomers who present positive and active images should be more personally attractive to insiders and more likely to receive positive effects (e.g., social acceptance and approval) and responses (e.g., approachability and recognition). Although the influence of positive framing on the characteristics of the communication network is not as self-revealing as that of sense making and relationship building, we argue that the positive relational outcomes resulting from proactive framing are fundamental ingredients that newcomers need if they are to develop communication relationships with insiders. Overall, newcomer proactivity depicts the specific social processes newcomers use to actively build and expand their communication networks. We propose the following:

Proposition 2a: For network structure, newcomer proactivity will be positively related to the number of weak ties and the extent of structural holes.

Proposition 2b: For network resources, newcomer proactivity will be positively related to network range (social contacts with different departmental affiliations) and network status (social contacts at high hierarchical levels).

The above description and arguments concerning newcomer proactivity also indicate that relationship building, compared with sense making and positive framing, is the strongest indicator of newcomers' abilities to build and expand their networks of communication relationships with various organizational insiders. Accordingly, we propose that relationship building is most conducive to newcomers' social capital accessibility.

Proposition 2c: Among the three dimensions of newcomer proactivity (relationship building, sense making, and positive framing), relationship building will be most strongly related to network structure and network resources.

Moderating role of organizational tactics. Some researchers have suggested that newcomer proactivity plays a more prominent role when organizations provide no specific methods for structuring newcomers' socialization (Bauer et al., 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a). Investigation of how newcomers' proactive attempts at self-socialization work in tandem with organizational tactics for socialization to influence adjustment will provide additional insight. Understanding has been increasing regarding the interactive effects of both organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity on important socialization outcomes (e.g., Griffin et al., 2000; Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005). However, much work remains to investigate how the interplay of these two critical socialization factors contributes to socialization (Klein & Heuser, 2008). We add attention to such interplay by examining how organizational tactics moderate the influence of newcomer proactivity on newcomer accessibility to social capital.

Institutionalized tactics structure newcomers' socialization experiences by providing defined socialization activities, specific steps to follow, timetables for completing the socialization process, experienced insiders as mentors or role models, and positive feedback and social support in the socialization process (Allen, 2006; Jones, 1986; Saks et al., 2007). These tactics greatly reduce newcomers' ambiguities about the job, activities around them, and routines for interactions with organizational insiders. Therefore, newcomers under institutionalized

tactics need not proactively acquire information and feedback from insiders, seek interaction opportunities for building relationships, or try to impress them with positive and active images. In contrast, individualized tactics yield ambiguous and unstructured socialization experiences when expectations and role requirements are unclear, and newcomers must be proactive to reduce inherent uncertainty. Individualized socialization almost “forces newcomers to be proactive in order to acquire the necessary information that can lower their uncertainty and allow them to make sense of their surroundings” (Gruman et al., 2006: 93). That is, newcomer proactivity is more essential in individualized socialization environments (Griffin et al., 2000).

As such, institutionalized tactics, relative to individualized ones, conform to what Mischel (1977) and others have called a *strong situation*, in which environmental assessments are similar across individuals, partly because appropriate norms and standards for behavior are clearly prescribed. In other words, institutionalized tactics provide strong situational cues that structure newcomers’ socialization experiences and diminish the influence of proactive behaviors in self-socialization. Therefore, we propose that institutionalized tactics will diminish the influence of newcomer proactivity on social capital accessibility.

Proposition 3a: Institutionalized tactics will moderate the positive relationship between newcomer proactivity and network structure (number of weak ties and extent of structural holes), as proposed in Proposition 2a, such that the positive relationship will be weaker under institutionalized tactics.

Proposition 3b: Institutionalized tactics will moderate the positive relationship between newcomer proactivity and network resources (network range and network status), as proposed in Proposition 2b, such that the positive relationship will be weaker under institutionalized tactics.

Mobilization of Social Capital

Newcomer adjustment. Access to social capital creates the necessary condition for social capital mobilization (Lin, 1999). The general assumption underlying the mobilization notion is that “the better the accessible embedded resources, the better embedded resources can and will be mobilized in purposive actions by an individual” (Lin, 1999: 42). Organizational scholars have implicitly and explicitly tested this assumption in individual career success (e.g., Burt, 1992; Ibarra, 1995; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert et al., 2001). For example, Seibert et al. (2001) found positive relationships between social capital (i.e., accessed information and resources) and career success (e.g., current salary and number of promotions). Yet testing this assumption in newcomer adjustment contexts is still rare. Although not explicitly based on the notion of social capital mobilization, Morrison’s (2002) study was the first to examine how patterns of network ties with insiders (friendship and advice) influence newcomer socialization outcomes. This study found that network patterns (e.g., size, range, status, and density) positively related to newcomer adjustment (learning and assimilation). Although the cross-sectional design raises causality concerns, this study supports our proposition that accessed social capital is conducive to newcomer adjustment.

Implicit in the mobilization notion are the four beneficial social capital effects—information, influence, credential, and reinforcement—that can help us understand why social capital (network structure and network resources) enhances newcomer adjustment. First, newcomers

suffer much initial uncertainty; their discomfort highlights that *information*, relative to other social resources, is particularly important for navigating in new environments (e.g., Bauer & Green, 1998; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Morrison, 1993b; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). Because different functional units or departments have unique information and differing perspectives, information sharing and processing across unit boundaries are critical, especially for individuals who rely on coordination and communication across functional units to achieve desirable performance (e.g., Galbraith, 1977; March & Simon, 1958). For newcomers, having many weak ties in the communication network facilitates the flow of unique and diverse information from contacts in different functional units or departments; with many structural holes in the network, they may also acquire nonredundant information from contacts who may not directly communicate with each other (Burt, 1992; Seibert et al., 2001). This information flow is critical to newcomers for mastering tasks and understanding organizations.

Second, social contacts at high hierarchical levels may influence decisions involving newcomers (e.g., task assignment) and help them acquire organizational resources (e.g., materials or equipment). Such influences and credentials establish newcomers as valuable organizational members and contribute to their social integration and identification. Similarly, contacts from various departments bring diverse information about norms, policies, politics, informal social networks, and formal reporting relationships among organizational members, information that newcomers need if they are to achieve organizational knowledge as well as social integration and identification. Therefore, we propose that social capital (network structure and network resources) is conducive to newcomer adjustment.

Proposition 4a: Social capital will be positively related to newcomer adjustment in both learning (role clarity, task mastery, and organizational knowledge) and assimilation (social integration and social identification).

Career success. As noted earlier, effective adjustment or socialization contributes to subsequent career success (i.e., promotion, salary growth, and career satisfaction). Furthermore, research on social capital has found a positive relationship between accessed social capital and individual career success (Burt, 1992; Ibarra, 1995; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert et al., 2001). Therefore, we propose that, within the socialization context, newcomer adjustment will be positively related to career success; it will also act as a potential mechanism that underlies the positive relationship between social capital and career success.

Proposition 4b: Newcomer adjustment will be positively related to career success (promotion, salary growth, and career satisfaction).

Proposition 4c: Newcomer adjustment will mediate the positive relationship between social capital and career success.

Moderating Role of Personality

A logical extension for understanding social capital mobilization is to explore why, given the same level of accessed social capital, some individuals mobilize social capital better than others do (Lin, 1999). We propose that one contingency may be individual differences in

sensitivity to available advantages and actions taken. We focus on two particular personality traits—self-monitoring and CSE—because their constitutive definitions and previous theoretical and empirical work suggest that individuals high in these traits are more situationally aware, are more likely to act proactively to challenge the status quo, and also have proclivities for capitalizing on situational advantages (e.g., Fang & Shaw, 2009; Judge & Hurst, 2007).

Self-monitoring. Self-monitoring is characterized by an acuteness of perception, discernment, and understanding of social situations; as compared with individuals who are low in self-monitoring, high self-monitors are more sensitive to social and interpersonal cues, have higher levels of expressive control, and manage their behaviors more effectively in terms of situational appropriateness (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). In the socialization context, the structural characteristics of the communication relationships with insiders (i.e., network structure) and contact diversity in hierarchical levels and departmental affiliations (i.e., network resources) are critical situational and interpersonal cues available to guide newcomers in interacting and communicating with various insiders. It is reasonable, then, to question whether newcomers will be more or less responsive to these cues as a function of their level of self-monitoring.

To better understand why high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, often perform better on the job, emerge as group leaders, and have more successful careers (see Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, for a review), Mehra, Kilduff, and Brass (2001) examined how high self-monitors benefited from social networks to achieve better work performance. They suggested that high self-monitors may be more able and motivated to seek out and use the resources available and accessible from their advantageous bridging positions in social networks. They argued that

the success of high self-monitors in organizations may occur not because the high self-monitors tend to occupy structurally advantageous positions in social networks, but because, irrespective of who happens to occupy the bridging position in social networks, only the high self-monitors are willing and able to take advantage of the opportunities represented by such positions. (Mehra et al., 2001: 127)

In other words, although low self-monitors may accurately sense or recognize accessible social resources around them, they still lack expressive control to capitalize on those resources. Supporting this reasoning, Fang and Shaw (2009) found that high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, more effectively judged cues about coworkers' informal social status to adjust and manage their information exchanges with coworkers. The application of these general arguments and findings to the mobilization of social capital suggests that, given the same level of social capital, newcomers with different levels of self-monitoring will differ in their mobilization of the social capital. We propose that newcomers high in self-monitoring will be more likely to mobilize social capital.

Proposition 5a: Self-monitoring will moderate the positive relationship between social capital and newcomer adjustment, as proposed in Proposition 4a, such that the positive relationship will be stronger among newcomers high in self-monitoring.

Core self-evaluation. *Core self-evaluation*, positive self-concept, is defined as the “fundamental premises that individuals hold about themselves and their functioning in the world” (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998: 168). CSE represents fundamental assessments that people make about their competence, worthiness, and capabilities—self-appraisals from positive to negative (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005). In social psychology, an intriguing question involving individual success is “why some people with certain opportunities and circumstances linked to success flourish whereas others with the same advantages do less well and, at times, even founder” (Judge & Hurst, 2007: 1212). Studies on capitalization have suggested that people can derive benefit not only from the tangible outcomes of advantageous circumstances but also by responding in certain ways to those circumstances (e.g., Gable, Impett, Reis, & Asher, 2004; Langston, 1994). Building on these ideas, Judge and Hurst (2007) examined whether people with higher CSE realized higher long-term material success. They found that CSE moderated the influences of family socioeconomic status and academic achievement on income at midcareer, such that high CSE enhanced beneficial effects.

CSE should *intensify* these effects because it influences situational appraisal, self-verification motivation, and final performance such that “high CSE individuals will view situations more positively, will see themselves as more worthy of the advantages conferred by those situations, and will work harder to extract the benefits” (Judge & Hurst, 2007: 1215). Applying these general mechanisms to the socialization context, we expect that newcomers high in CSE, relative to those low in CSE, will interpret socialization process challenges more positively, sense the social resources that insiders can provide (e.g., various types of job- and organizational-related information as well as formal and informal influences), be more confident in their eligibility to obtain the resources, and work harder to extract insider resources. Therefore, we propose that CSE is an important contingency variable in understanding why some newcomers mobilize social capital more effectively.

Proposition 5b: Core self-evaluation will moderate the positive relationship between social capital and newcomer adjustment, as proposed in Proposition 4a, such that the positive relationship will be stronger among newcomers high in core self-evaluation.

Discussion

In this article, we briefly review the organizational socialization literature and propose that the social capital perspective provides a fine-grained theoretical lens to view how the two important socialization factors—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity—contribute to newcomer adjustment and subsequent career success. Our theoretical model (see Figure 1) indicates that these two factors work independently and interactively to influence newcomers’ accessibility to social capital embedded in their communication networks; furthermore, the accessed social capital is mobilized to achieve desirable outcomes of newcomer adjustment and career success. In addition, this model reveals that personality characteristics of self-monitoring and CSE are potential contingencies that influence social capital mobilization. Also, integrating career success into the socialization context suggests that newcomer adjustment is a potential mechanism underlying the influence of social capital on

newcomer career success. Below, we discuss the implications of our model for research on socialization, social capital, and social networks. We also propose avenues for future research and potential limitations.

Implications

This article has several implications for socialization literature. First, although the two socialization factors—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity—have been extensively linked to newcomer adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007), much may yet be learned regarding potential mechanisms that underlie the influences of these two socialization factors (e.g., Saks et al., 2007). Moreover, researchers have rarely investigated how organizational insiders play important roles in such influences. The “interpersonal” nature of insiders as sources of information and other resources suggests that we need additional insight into the configuration of newcomers’ networks of communication relationships with insiders. Drawing on social capital theory (Lin, 1999), we propose that organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity enable newcomers to access social capital embedded in the communication network that connects them with various organizational insiders. Newcomers further mobilize the accessed social capital to adjust to the environment and achieve subsequent career success. In particular, the social capital perspective highlights that insiders are important for their four beneficial social capital effects—information, influence, credential, and reinforcement. Second, our integrative framework examining the interplay of organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity in influencing social capital accessibility adds to the socialization literature’s increasing attention to the interactive approach (e.g., Griffin et al., 2000; Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005; Klein & Heuser, 2008). Thereby we address past failures to integrate organizational and individualistic approaches to understand the socialization process (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 1997b). Third, exploring career success within the socialization context addresses previously inadequate research attention to ongoing organizational issues regarding career success for newcomers; it also suggests newcomer adjustment as a potential mechanism underlying the influence of social capital on career success. Overall, our social capital model extends socialization research beyond traditional uncertainty reduction theory and contributes to the advancement of socialization literature by providing a coherent theoretical framework that integrates the major concepts and processes of socialization.

This framework also has implications for research on social capital development. Although organizational scholars have acknowledged that social capital affects instrumental individual outcomes such as job mobility (e.g., Granovetter, 1973; Marsden & Hurlbert, 1988) and individual career success (e.g., Burt, 1992; Ibarra, 1995; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert et al., 2001), they have paid relatively less attention to the determinants of social capital and have relatively ignored how individuals build organizational social capital. Both organizational factors (e.g., certain employment practices; Leana & Van Buren, 1999) and individual behavior (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors; Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002) have been suggested to facilitate the building and maintenance of organizational-level social capital. Taking these ideas to individual-level social capital, we propose that organizational employment practices (organization tactics) and individual behavior (newcomer proactivity)

relate to individual ability to build social capital. Organizational practices that create opportunities or situations for individuals to develop communication relationships with other organizational members facilitate their social capital development. Individuals also play independent, proactive roles in building their own social capital by developing relationships with supervisors, creating peer networks across departments, and participating in informal social activities. These proactive actions not only underscore that individuals do not operate in social vacuums but also support the social capital view that individual potency within a social structure is predicated on developing a network of relationships (Thompson, 2005). Also, this article has implication for the emergence and development of social networks. Social network researchers increasingly recognize that it is important to understand the processes individuals use to develop social networks (e.g., Kilduff & Tsai, 2007; Mehra et al., 2001; Morrison, 2002) and to reap network benefits (e.g., Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006). Our model provides additional insight into such processes: We demonstrate that individuals play proactive roles in configuring their networks and reaping network benefits within socialization contexts. Specifically, newcomers who are proactive in relationship building, sense making, and positive framing construct and configure their communication network so as to socialize more effectively.

Directions for Future Research

In addition to encouraging researchers to test our unfolding model, our model suggests several different directions for future research on socialization, social capital, and social networks. First, future research can explore other individual socialization factors beyond newcomer proactivity as antecedents of social capital. For example, individual differences in needs, motives, affective dispositions, and personality characteristics may influence newcomers' accessibility to social capital or construction of social networks. Individual differences such as personality may affect how newcomers interact with insiders and how insiders respond to newcomers (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Saks & Ashforth, 1997a), both instrumental in constructing network connections between newcomers and insiders. For example, newcomers with high need for power may seek to develop their influence and political competence by interacting with organizational insiders at high hierarchical levels. Newcomers with high positive affectivity may be more likely to develop friendships with peers across departments.

Social network researchers have also suggested that personality affects the particular structures of an individual's immediate network environment. People take advantage of their personalities to "forge different types of network structures" (Mehra et al., 2001: 141). The underlying process for network change is assumed to be located in the "characteristics of network members" (Stokman & Doreian, 1997: 237). However, relatively less is known about individual differences as potential causes of the different patterns of social networks (see Kalish & Robins, 2006; Klein, Lim, Saltz, & Mayer, 2004; Mehra et al., 2001, for exceptions). More studies are needed to address "how in a given social context, social relationships might emerge between individuals, each exhibiting certain characteristics" (Kalish & Robins, 2006: 58). We suggest that socialization provides the appropriate "given social

context” in which newcomers’ pre-entry personality may influence the emergence and patterns of subsequent social networks.

Second, future research can explore some potential relationships between the constructs that are unaddressed but are included in our theoretical model. Although our model captures the main and interactive effects of organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity, future research may investigate the possibility that newcomer proactivity is a mechanism underlying the influence of organizational tactics on the accessibility of social capital. Some previous studies examined newcomer proactivity in sense making, information seeking and acquisition (Saks & Ashforth, 1997b), and relationship building (Gruman et al., 2006) as underlying mechanisms for the effects of socialization tactics on socialization outcomes. Similarly, future research can explore whether newcomer proactivity mediates the relationship between organizational tactics and social capital. Future research can also examine the potential causal relationship between the two related aspects of social capital—network structure (number of weak ties and extent of structural holes) and network resources (network range and network status). By focusing on the two sequential processes—access to and mobilization of social capital—we avoid proposing potential causal network effects on network resources in the theoretical model. However, embedded social resources cannot possibly be captured without identifying network characteristics (Lin, 1999). For example, Seibert et al. (2001) found the influence of network structure on social resources among long-tenured school alumni. Future research can extend such testing among newcomers within the socialization context.

Third, this article highlights methodological issues that researchers should consider in future empirical tests. One, the model unfolds the socialization process into two sequential processes—access to and mobilization of social capital. Therefore, a longitudinal research design is necessary to depict this dynamic process adequately. Two, we conceptualize organizational tactics as an organizational-level variable, which has a main effect and interacts with newcomer proactivity (individual-level variables) in influencing newcomers’ accessibility to social capital. Therefore, our model suggests a multilevel analytical approach, although the socialization literature commonly uses perceptions of socialization tactics. The ideal sample would include newcomers from many organizations with considerable variance of organizational socialization tactics. Three, social capital scholars have suggested that social capital is best measured with egocentric networks, or individuals’ unique social contacts, rather than with entire networks (e.g., Campbell, Marsden, & Hurlbert, 1986; Lin, 1999; Podolny & Baron, 1997). Capturing egocentric networks involves having individuals identify others they communicate with and the extent of communication among their social contacts (Marsden, 1990). Studies of egocentric networks do not describe overall organizational social structures, but instead show how a person’s unique web of contacts relates to variables at the individual level of analysis (Marsden, 1990; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). A focus on egocentric networks may be appropriate for studying the development of newcomers’ social capital (e.g., Morrison, 2002), but we encourage future researchers to investigate fully the advantages and disadvantages of network operationalizations. A potential disadvantage of the egocentric approach versus an entire network approach is possible monosource bias given that respondents also provide information concerning all connections among their contacts (see Shaw, Duffy, Johnson, & Lockhart, 2005, for an example). Therefore, future research should try to reduce potential bias by instructing respondents clearly about how to report

their egocentric networks, perhaps by asking them to name a limited number of insiders or contacts or to focus on certain characteristics.

Limitations

This article has several limitations. First is the conceptualization of organizational socialization tactics. For the simplicity of our theoretical social capital model, we adopt Jones's (1986) conceptualization of Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) six bipolar tactics along a single continuum (institutionalized vs. individualized) rather than the six bipolar tactics separately. Although both approaches continue to prevail in recent socialization research (see Klein & Heuser, 2008, for a review), socialization scholars also note that collapsing the six bipolar tactics into a single continuum may lose conceptual richness (e.g., Allen, 2006; Bauer et al., 1998). To balance this debate, we further propose that certain socialization tactics (serial and investiture tactics) most strongly relate to newcomer accessibility to social capital. We recognize this potential limitation in our theoretical model and encourage future research to empirically test which conceptualization of organizational tactics more powerfully predicts such accessibility.

Second, regarding the interplay between organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity in our model, we proposed that the positive relationship between newcomer proactivity and accessibility to social capital will be weaker under institutionalized tactics. As suggested by Kim et al. (2005), this pattern of interaction indicates that institutionalized tactics have a *replacement* effect for newcomer proactivity in predicting socialization outcomes (see also Gruman et al., 2006). However, one reviewer noted that institutionalized tactics may actually make it easier and more likely for newcomers to be proactive in accessing social capital; thus, the positive relationship between newcomer proactivity and accessibility to social capital might be stronger under institutionalized tactics. That is, institutionalized tactics have a *harmonizing* effect for newcomer proactivity (Kim et al., 2005). Empirical evidence from several studies that examined the interplay of institutionalized tactics and newcomer proactivity (e.g., Griffin et al., 2000; Gruman et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2005) revealed that institutionalized tactics can strengthen (harmonize) or weaken (replace) the positive relationships between newcomer proactivity and socialization outcomes. Gruman et al. found a replacement effect when newcomer proactivity and institutionalized tactics interact to predict social integration, job satisfaction, and person–organization (P-O) fit perceptions. Kim et al. found both effects: Institutionalized tactics have a replacement effect for building relationships with bosses but a harmonizing effect for positive framing in predicting P-O fit. Although we propose that institutionalized tactics weaken the influence of newcomer proactivity on newcomer accessibility to social capital, we encourage future research to empirically test how organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity interplay in predicting newcomer accessibility to social capital.

Third, among various types of networks in organizations (e.g., friendship and advice), we focus on the organizational communication network to highlight the particular importance of information flow from various organizational insiders to newcomers. At the same time, the communication network conveys other social resources such as friendship, advice, and

social support (Monge & Contractor, 2003). Although Morrison (2002) predicted that for newcomers the structures of friendship and advice networks would differentially relate to the two tasks of newcomer adjustment—learning and assimilation—the findings indeed reveal an overall similar pattern of relationships for learning and assimilation across the two networks. Our focus on the communication network, however, limits us to exploring the possibility that the two key socialization factors—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity—may differentially influence how newcomers develop different types of social networks in organizations. We encourage such distinctions in future research.

The fourth limitation involves the role of newcomers' personality in the socialization process and the related specification of newcomer proactivity as *proactive behavior* rather than *proactive personality*. On one hand, we took a contingent approach and explored how the two personality characteristics (self-monitoring and CSE) moderate newcomers' social capital mobilization. On the other hand, we followed the majority of the socialization literature and conceptualized newcomer proactivity as proactive behavior rather than as proactive personality. As discussed previously, newcomer personality predicts potential accessibility of social capital and construction of social networks. For example, a few studies have found that proactive personality relates positively to newcomer adjustment (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Kammeyer-Muller & Wanberg, 2003) and that extraversion and openness to experience significantly predict proactive behaviors such as feedback seeking and positive framing (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Muller, 2000). Therefore, we encourage future research to extend our theoretical model and investigate the role of newcomer personality as antecedents or predictors of proactive behaviors on social capital accessibility.

Conclusion

In this article, we briefly reviewed the literature on organizational socialization in organizational settings and developed a social capital model of the organizational socialization process to address the socialization literature's fragmentation (Bauer et al., 2007) and to answer the need for more understanding of mechanisms that underlie the effects of the two key socialization factors on newcomer adjustment—organizational tactics and newcomer proactivity. Our theoretical model reveals that these two socialization factors facilitate or enable newcomers to access social capital embedded in their communication relationships with organizational insiders and, furthermore, to mobilize the accessed social capital for adjustment and subsequent career success. Our model highlights that organizational insiders are important to newcomers' efforts to access beneficial social capital. This article not only contributes to the current understanding of the organizational socialization process but also adds to knowledge about the development of social capital and social networks.

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