

Abstract

Integrating new employees so that they perform well, fit in well and are committed to the agency is a salient concern for public managers. Organizational socialization is the process by which new employees learn the knowledge, skills and values required to become organizational members. This article develops a model of organizational socialization grounded in newcomer social networks and set within a context of public service identity. Social network theory and methods offer a means for examining and interpreting patterns of interactions between newcomers and organizational members. This article concludes with propositions for future studies of organizational socialization and social networks.

Key words

Social networks, organizational socialization, public service identity, public service motivation

BRINGING NETWORKS IN

A model of organizational socialization in the public sector

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How to bring new employees onboard so that they perform well, fit in well and are committed to the agency is a salient concern for public managers. Especially when coupled with retaining current employees and maintaining performance, transitioning new employees into effective organizational members can present a considerable challenge. Organizational socialization is the process through which new employees learn the skills, expected behaviours and values needed to become organizational members (Van Maanen and Schein 1979); it is 'the process by which one is taught and "learns the ropes" of a particular organizational role' (Van Maanen and Schein 1979, 211). Over two decades of research on organizational socialization in private sector firms has revealed that it positively influences organizational commitment, job satisfaction, person-to-organization fit, role clarity, job embeddedness, task mastery, employee-organization value congruence and the adoption of the organizational culture and can reduce employee intentions to quit and turnover (Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison 2007; Bauer, Morrison, and Callister 1998; Chatman 1991; Jones 1986; Kim, Cable, and Kim 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 1997a). While this past research offers important insights that apply to public sector organizations, the process of organizational socialization within public agencies has not been widely investigated.

Why might filling this gap be of value? One reason is the proposed link between organizational socialization and public service motivation increasingly discussed by public sector scholars (e.g. Brewer 2008; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Paarlberg and Lavigna 2010; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Wright and Grant 2010). Public service motivation matters to managers because it may influence employee behaviours, such as organizational commitment, intentions to leave, and performance, that are important for retention and for developing high performing organizations (Brewer 2008; Paarlberg and Lavigna 2010; Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010; Perry and Wise 1990; Wright and Grant 2010; Wright and Pandey 2008). Insofar as organizations and institutions can influence public service motivation (Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Perry and Vandenamee 2008; Vandenamee 2007), organizational socialization tactics may be especially timely and effective mechanisms for instilling or increasing newcomers' public service motivation.

Socialization typically begins as soon as newcomers join the organization. It offers an opportunity for an organization to influence employee values and motives at a juncture where new employees are likely the most malleable. And since a primary focus of socialization is instilling the organizational culture (Van Maanen and Schein 1979), it may be a prime vehicle for shaping the adoption of public service values and constructing a public service identity.

The model in this article assumes that public service motivation is a dynamic construct that can be influenced by the organization, although scholars acknowledge that the extent to which it is a dynamic or a stable construct and the extent to which the organization is able to affect it requires further investigation (Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Perry and Vandenamee 2008; Wright and Grant 2010). Definitions of public service motivation

vary (see Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010 for examples) and one recent comprehensive definition is Vandenberg's (2007, 547): 'the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivate individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate.' This model draws from Vandenberg's (2007) work and Perry and Vandenberg's (2008) subsequent expansion to interpret public service motivation as internalized or embodied within a public service identity, which is acted upon through socialization tactics.

This article aims to offer insight on how newcomer relationship building during the socialization process can influence public service identity construction as well as an array of other outcomes important to public agencies. It also aims to contribute to the sparse literature on organizational socialization and social networks. Its primary focus is socialization within public sector organizations, although the article concludes with considerations for private sector organizations.¹ This article develops a model of organizational socialization that is grounded in employees' social networks. While scholars have acknowledged the importance of interactions between newcomers and experienced organizational members for socialization (Jones 1983; Reichers 1987), few have focused on the patterns or characteristics of these relationships (see Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011; Morrison 2002). Social network theory and methods offer a lens through which to do so. Although scholars have acknowledged that the network structural perspective can offer insight into the adaptation process, questions such as why newcomers develop different network structures, whether and how organizational socialization tactics and newcomer behaviours influence network structure, and which network configurations lend themselves best to effective socialization remain unanswered (Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011; Morrison 2002). The article begins by providing an overview of the organizational socialization model. Then it discusses propositions based on the process model, concluding with considerations for both practice and research.

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION VIA SOCIAL NETWORKS

Figure 1 offers a framework for a relational perspective of organizational socialization based on newcomers' social networks. Social networks have received scant attention in the socialization literature, although both network research and socialization research offers reasons to believe that newcomers' network relationships are important for learning and integration (Morrison 2002, 1149; see Morrison 2002 for an empirical study and Chao 2007 and Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011 for a theoretical discussion). Newcomer relationship-building can be defined as 'proactive behaviours directed toward developing workplace networks' (Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011, 138). Prior research on newcomers' relationship-building has found that it can lead to increases in job satisfaction, job performance, and a newcomer's understanding of his or her job and responsibilities, as well as social integration (Ashford and Black 1996). Similar to Fang, Duffy, and Shaw's (2011) model of

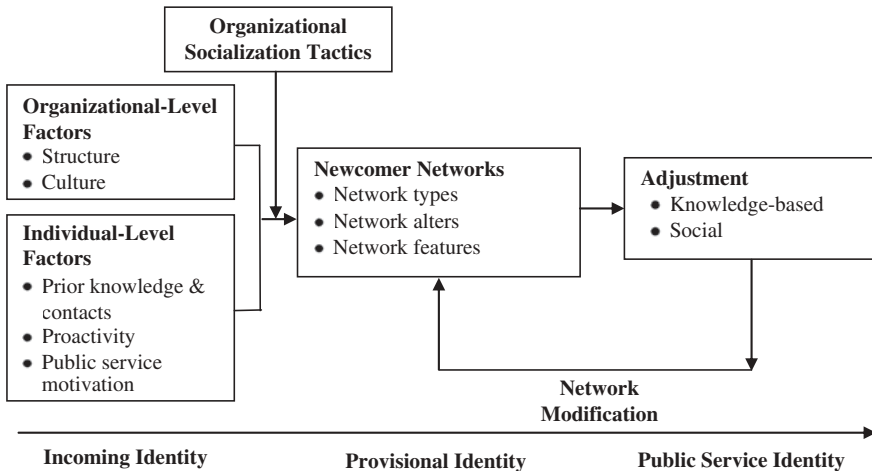


Figure 1: Network model of public sector organizational socialization

social capital and organizational socialization, the model developed here considers newcomers' network structure and characteristics. The model begins with organizational- and individual-level factors that can influence new employees' development of relationships with organizational insiders and other newcomers. This article discusses how relationships built by newcomers form social networks that offer access to support and resources that can influence newcomers' adjustment to the organization and their roles and ultimately can affect socialization outcomes. This process occurs within the context of a newcomer's identity construction predicated on the newcomer's foundational identity upon entry into the organization. As newcomers adjust to their roles and construct their public service identity, they modify their networks based on learning and early experiences. The next sections provide an overview of social networks, describe the process in more detail and conclude with propositions for future research.

Individual-level factors

Individual-level factors lay a foundation for newcomers' sense-making, learning, information acquisition, relationship-building and overall adaptation (Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison 2007; Jones 1983; Miller and Jablin 1991). These factors include prior knowledge, individual differences in proactivity, public service motivation and identity. New employees enter an organization with varying levels of familiarity with the organization and the job, past experience and professional training. Their information-seeking and relationship-building behaviours are likely to be shaped, at least in part, by what and who

they know at the time of joining the organization. Prior organizational contacts may provide introductions to organizational insiders and an information advantage, equipping some newcomers with insider knowledge that others do not have.

Newcomers' proactivity – that is, the extent to which newcomers take an active role in the socialization process versus being passive or reactive to the organization's tactics – may offer new employees access to key relationships and resources not available through the formal socialization channels (Ashford and Black 1996; Miller and Jablin 1991; Morrison 1993; Ostroff and Koslowski 1992; Reichers 1987). When newcomers are merely passive and/or reactive recipients of the organization's tactics, they may find themselves less integrated than they, and the organization, might have hoped. To avoid this fate, new employees may proactively seek out information and build relationships to augment the organization's activities and enhance their sense-making (Jones 1986; Louis 1980; Miller and Jablin 1991; Morrison 1993; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). For example, newcomers' agency can establish relationships that provide emotional support, tacit information and performance feedback they may not otherwise have (Miller and Jablin 1991; Morrison 1993; Ostroff and Koslowski 1992; Saks and Ashforth, 1997a, 1997b). Through information acquisition efforts, newcomers can further reduce uncertainty, enhance their understanding of organizational politics and learn how to fit in with the culture (Ashford and Black 1996; Kim, Cable, and Kim 2005; Morrison 1993). Proactive behaviours, such as reaching out to experienced organizational members for information, participating in or initiating social activities, stopping by people's offices to talk and initiating informal mentoring relationships (Ashford and Black 1996; Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011; Kim, Cable, and Kim 2005; Morrison 1993), can establish ties that form newcomers' networks.

Proactivity is likely to vary across individuals (Kim, Cable, and Kim 2005; Morrison 2002; Reichers 1987). Individual differences can influence how readily newcomers will ask questions of and seek to develop relationships with seasoned organizational members, especially higher-level superiors. For example, some newcomers have indicated that they are less willing to ask for information from experienced employees out of concern they will be perceived as 'bugging them' or because they are 'already supposed to know' the answers (Miller and Jablin 1991, 97). The desire to avoid reputational and social costs that may be associated with admitting a lack of knowledge may inhibit some newcomers from seeking out information from experienced members (Borgatti and Cross 2003; Miller and Jablin 1991).

While scholars have noted that socialization efforts can influence public service motivation (e.g. Brewer 2008; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Paarlberg and Lavigna 2010; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Wright and Grant 2010), this model also assumes that newcomers enter with some level of public service motivation (Perry and Hondeghem 2008). Research has generally supported Perry and Wise's (1990, 370) proposition that the 'greater an individual's public service motivation, the more likely the individual will seek membership in a public organization' (Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010). In this model, public service motivation may also make it more likely that

newcomers will be proactive in their efforts to become an organizational member. That is, the effort expended towards successful adaptation – towards connecting with organizational insiders and acquiring needed information – may be greater when newcomers are motivated by public service values. When newcomers believe their membership in the organization will contribute positively towards ‘doing good for others and society’ (Perry, Hondeghem, and Wise 2010, 687), they may make a greater effort at successful integration than they otherwise would.

Newcomers also enter the organization with a certain sense of who they are – their identity. Identity is itself a complex concept and scholars have defined identity and the process of identity construction in multiple ways. Individuals may derive their identity from relationships and interactions, membership in groups and organizations, the social structure and their roles within that structure and their own interpretation and negotiation of those roles (Ashforth and Mael 1989; McCall and Simmons 1978; Mead 1934; Stryker and Serpe 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986). Professional identity is ‘the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role’ and it is constructed in part through interactions with network members (Dobrow and Higgins 2005; Ibarra 1999, 764–765; Ibarra, Kilduff, and Tsai 2005; Schein 1978). Public service motivation and professional identity are not entirely distinct topics; one facet of professional identity may be rooted in public service values.² Newcomers who choose to join a public sector organization may identify with the organization’s values and wish to enact their public service identity (Perry and Vandenberg 2008).

Organizational-level factors

Organizational-level factors such as structure and culture can also influence newcomers’ relationship-building. To whom newcomers have access may be partially determined by the organizational structure. For example, large agencies may be organized into regional divisions. Making connections across those geographic boundaries may be particularly challenging, even with organizational efforts geared towards spanning those boundaries. Proximity also likely matters, because it can determine access to experienced employees and the likelihood that newcomers will connect with individuals who have the information they need. Frequent interactions with co-workers and managers within their own office or on project teams give newcomers a sense of who’s who in terms of formal and informal roles and an opportunity for trust to develop. Both can influence whether newcomers establish ties to those individuals. The same may be true of organizations in which functional divisions act as silos – that is, with little overlap or interaction between them. Such a structure grants new employees little opportunity to interact with organizational members from different job functions unless socialization tactics bridge those boundaries.

An organization's culture is comprised of the values, basic shared beliefs and assumptions that guide organizational operations and the day-to-day behaviours of organizational members (Romzek 1990; Schein 2004). It can shape how readily experienced members reach out to or share information with newcomers, or how receptive they are to newcomers' relationship-building. For example, cultures in which experienced members are encouraged, and even rewarded, for collaborating and sharing knowledge with other employees can increase the likelihood that newcomers can build relationships with those individuals.

Organizational socialization tactics

Organizational socialization tactics are the means used by organizations to structure experiences for newcomers (Van Maanen and Schein 1979). Organizational socialization tactics enable newcomers to learn about their organization, their fellow organizational members, their craft and the organization. Through socialization efforts, newcomers learn the knowledge, skills and expectations associated with their formal organizational role (Van Maanen and Schein 1979; Louis 1980). A primary aim of socialization is to instil the organizational culture and values (Bauer, Morrison, and Callister 1998; Chatman 1991; Jones 1986; Louis 1980; Romzek 1990; Van Maanen and Schein 1979). Institutionalized tactics are those in which the organization controls the mechanisms used to transition employees (Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison 2007; Jones 1986; Saks and Ashforth, 1997b). The organization can employ tactics such as mentoring, orientation sessions, training and apprenticeship to guide newcomer sense-making (Jones 1983, 1986; Louis 1980; Miller and Jablin 1991; Van Maanen and Schein 1979).

The type of socialization tactics employed by the organization can influence the relationships developed by newcomers (Miller and Jablin 1991). Newcomers meet and establish ties with other new employees through training, orientation sessions or other collective socialization tactics. Newcomers who are mentored may establish close relationships with experienced organizational members, managers and supervisors. Collectivities of newcomers can offer a trusted and safe space for sharing concerns and asking questions. Tactics such as orientation sessions, group-based training and formal mentoring expose newcomers to other new employees and experienced organization members and offer opportunities for newcomers to develop ties. As new employees experience institutionalized socialization efforts, they build relationships with peers (fellow newcomers), supervisors, upper-level managers and experienced co-workers (Miller and Jablin 1991; Morrison 1993, 2002).

Newcomer network types

This section offers an overview of social networks relevant to organizational socialization and discusses specific network features, in terms of network structure and attributes, that can be measured to examine how networks might influence socialization. Newcomers' social networks are comprised of the set of ties that an individual (ego) establishes with others (alters), termed egocentric networks or ego-networks (Marsden 1990; Wellman 1983).³ Socialization scholars have noted specific types of information and support that are integral to newcomers' socialization (e.g. Chao 2007; Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011; Morrison 2002, 1993; Ostroff and Koslowski 1992), and the networks that offer this support can be broadly grouped into two categories. *Instrumental* networks provide task information and advice that explains how to perform one's job and assists with learning one's role, expectations associated with organizational roles, and information about organizational goals, norms, structure and politics (Morrison 2002, 1993; Ostroff and Koslowski 1992). *Expressive* networks offer friendship and social support (Bauer, Morrison, and Callister 1998; Ibarra 1992; Morrison 1993, 2002; Podolny and Baron 1997; Reichers 1987).

Within these two broad categories, scholars discuss specific network types. *Advice* networks offer job-related information and advice on how to perform specific tasks and work-related decision-making and problem-solving (Gibbons 2004; Ibarra 1992; Morrison 2002). *Organizational information* networks provide knowledge about organizational goals, norms, history, structure, policies and politics (Morrison 2002). *Friendship* networks are comprised of trusted individuals who 'provide support and a sense of belonging and identity' (Gibbons 2004; Ibarra 1992; Morrison 2002, 1151; Podolny and Baron 1997). *Social support* networks include organizational members with whom newcomers would feel comfortable discussing sensitive matters and/or on whom newcomers could rely on in a crisis (Ibarra 1992; Podolny and Baron 1997). Drawing from the mentoring literature, *developmental* networks are comprised of individuals, or developers, that are important for career development, who take an active interest in or act on behalf of the employee to advance his or her career (Chao 2007; Higgins and Kram 2001). Developers offer both career-related and psychosocial mentoring to newcomers that can help them to become proficient in their jobs, enhance their visibility within the organization, teach them about organizational politics, role-model desired behaviours and values, help them feel a sense of belonging, and assist them in forging their identity as organizational members (Chao 2007).

Newcomer network features and alters

Network structure and attributes and the types of network members, or alters, have implications for how well a newcomer might learn about their role, job and the

organization (Morrison 2002). The properties of the relationships themselves – the relational characteristics – may influence information flows even more than the structure itself because just examining the structure does not reveal why individuals may seek information from specific network alters and not others (Borgatti and Cross 2003). For example, the level and type of support that newcomers derive from their ties can be dependent on the diversity of the members and strength of these relationships. Greater diversity of network alters, referred to as network *range*, in terms of organizational roles or geographic or functional location, offers access to a greater breadth of resources useful for socialization (Fang, Duffy, and Shaw 2011; Morrison 2002). Individuals at higher levels of the organization may offer greater access to some information, and network *status* measures the extent to which one's network alters hold high positions in the organizational hierarchy (Morrison 2002). The number of network members, or network *size*, may be an indicator of how well a newcomer establishes relationships, how well integrated he or she is, efficacy of proactive efforts, or simply popularity (Marsden 1990). *Tie strength* can be an indicator of how strong a relationship is; tie strength can be measured by the amount of time, frequency of communication, emotional closeness and level of reciprocity between two individuals (Granovetter 1973, 1361; Marsden 1990). Another measure used to gauge egocentric networks is network *density*, an indicator of the connectedness of the network members, and network *closure* occurs when all alters are connected to each other (Marsden 1990). Network *centrality* refers to one's relative position within the network; degree centrality measures the number of direct ties (Marsden 1990, 454, 2002, 409). The next sections discuss the modification of networks during socialization, and how specific network types and structures lend themselves to different areas of newcomer adjustment in the organization.

Newcomer adjustment

While any organizational member with whom newcomers interact may affect adaptation and adjustment, network members, in particular, have the potential to wield a great deal of influence. Interpersonal interactions are a key vehicle through which socialization occurs (Reichers 1987; Morrison 2002), and the relationships newcomers develop contribute to their adjustment to their role, their job and the organization in several ways. Networks offer newcomers a greater sense of control by reducing uncertainty, anxiety and ambiguity, offering social support and enabling them to gain a better understanding of a situation (Ashford and Black 1996; Morrison 2002). For example, developmental network members can coach newcomers on meeting job expectations, enhance their visibility within the organization, and even protect the newcomer from undue criticism or manipulative organizational insiders (Chao 2007). Drawing from Fang, Duffy, and Shaw (2011), the model in Figure 1 notes two different

types of adjustment affected by newcomer networks: (1) knowledge-based adjustment, in which newcomers gain the information and skills needed to become productive organizational members; and (2) social adjustment, in which newcomers accrue social capital and attain a sense of belonging and person–organization fit. This section discusses the different network types, network structure and attributes that may lead to the two types of adjustment.

Knowledge-based adjustment

Newcomers' advice, developmental and organizational information networks provide access to resources that affect knowledge-based adjustment such as role clarity, task mastery and information acquisition. Interacting with seasoned organizational members, such as supervisors and co-workers, can offer access to several types of information: (1) *technical information* needed to perform one's job, (2) *normative information* about expected behaviours and attitudes, (3) *referent information* about role expectations, (4) *appraisal information* about how well they are performing, and (5) *relational information* about the nature of their work relationships (Miller and Jablin 1991; Morrison 1993, 2002).⁴ Newcomers can also gain important feedback about their performance through these relationships, enabling them to make corrections as they learn their job and master their roles (Ashford and Black 1996; Morrison 1993). Consistent and clear communication of role expectations from organizational insiders can influence newcomers' role clarity, or how well they understand what is expected of them (Morrison 2002; Podolny and Baron 1997, 674–675).

Developmental networks include mentors, with access to resources such as knowledge and power, who take an active interest in newcomers' development (Chao 2007). Interactions with managers and experienced co-workers can provide tacit information about the organization and how to do one's job, which is grounded in their experience and likely not available in manuals or documents (Miller and Jablin 1991). In knowledge-based work, where much task-based information may be tacit and held by senior organizational members, such ties may be especially critical to both newcomer learning and organizational continuity. The more frequently newcomers interact with senior organizational members, the more opportunities they will have for acquiring information.

Social adjustment

Friendship, social support and developmental networks can offer newcomers a sense of belonging within the organization and a confirmation of their membership (Chao 2007; Morrison 2002). As they interact with managers and other experienced organizational members in their developmental, friendship and social support networks, newcomers can gain a sense of acceptance and confirmation of their skills development. Morrison

(2002) found that strong friendship ties are related to assimilation into the organization. Ties to supervisors and mentors, in particular, may offer both information and a sense of belonging (Podolny and Baron 1997). Socialization tactics and time spent with mentors have also been shown to positively influence person–organization fit (Cable and Parsons 2001; Chatman 1991). Person–organization fit can be broadly defined as ‘compatibility between persons and the organizations in which they work’ (Cable and Parsons 2001, 1), but more specifically it refers to a congruence between individual and organizational values (Cable and Parsons 2001; Chatman 1991; Moynihan and Pandey 2007).

Peers, particularly other newcomers, may play a unique role in the adaptation process that has not been considered much by the socialization literature. Such relationships offer both friendship and social support, which can contribute to a sense of fitting in, as well as the sharing of new knowledge as it is gained (Hatmaker, Park, and Rethemeyer 2011). Fellow newcomers are likely experiencing similar circumstances and may be able to empathize and provide social support that experienced co-workers cannot offer and share job-related information as they learn it – including how to do certain tasks (Hatmaker, Park, and Rethemeyer 2011; Miller and Jablin 1991).

Developmental networks may be particularly integral in the accrual of social capital – the resources derived from one’s network of relationships (Borgatti and Foster 2003). Fang, Duffy, and Shaw (2011) propose that access to and mobilization of social capital is conducive to newcomer adjustment and career outcomes and this model proposes that social capital is an indicator of adjustment that has career implications. Social capital scholars have noted advantages to networks containing structural holes as well as closed networks where individuals are strongly connected to each other (Provan and Lemaire 2012). Networks with structural holes, or sparse networks in which alters are not connected to each other, offer less redundancy – that is, network members offer information that is more varied than in networks that are highly connected and in which members are more likely to have the same information (Burt 1992). Network closure may contribute to task mastery and role clarity more than sparse networks composed of nonredundant alters because in learning to do one’s immediate job obtaining consistent and reliable information quickly may be more important than having access to a breadth of information (Morrison 2002, 1150; Ostroff and Koslowski 1992).

Network modification

The networks that newcomers generate are not necessarily static. As newcomers learn and adjust to their roles, becoming more proficient in their jobs and gaining experience in their roles and with network members, they will likely modify their network ties. Early career experiences, both positive and negative, may shape who they add or

remove from their network. For example, if a newcomer meets a higher-level manager who offers key advice or information, he or she may wish to maintain a tie with that individual. Identity construction can also spur network modification. As newcomers adapt to their new roles, they may try out different provisional identities, or 'possible selves', that are shaped by role models in their networks and as they learn from these 'identity trials', they may establish or break network ties (Ibarra 1999; Ibarra, Kilduff, and Tsai 2005, 363).

Newcomers may also 'prune' network alters, removing individuals from their networks over time (Hatmaker, Park, and Rethemeyer 2011). One reason is rooted in newcomers' self-interest to adapt and become functional members of the organization. As they become more familiar with network alters, they gain a better sense of who can offer what resources. Ties with individuals who cannot offer valued information and advice may be dropped. Maintaining such ties takes time and effort that newcomers may not be able to spare on connections that are not fruitful. Individuals with whom newcomers work closely on a project may only be included as network alters for the duration of that project; such ties may be simply dormant, or 'latent', and may be reactivated at a later date, pending project or other work needs (Hatmaker, Park, and Rethemeyer 2011).

Public service identity

The socialization process through newcomer networks occurs within the context of a newcomer's identity, or more specifically, a public service identity. As discussed earlier, newcomers enter with a foundational identity, and this self-definition likely encompasses some level of public service values and motivation. Drawing from Vandenabeele (2007) and Perry and Vandenabeele (2008), this model focuses on a public service identity in which newcomers adopt public service values such that they are motivated to act in a way that benefits a larger entity. In other words, socialization processes contribute to the construction of a public service identity in which the newcomer internalizes public service values and is thus motivated to act in a way that is in accordance with public service behaviours (Perry and Vandenabeele 2008; Vandenabeele 2007). Identity is conferred as mentors and superiors in newcomer networks convey normative expectations to newcomers that frame their actions (Podolny and Baron 1997). Interactions with organizational leaders, managers and supervisors in newcomer networks are a primary force in public service identity construction, especially as they act as role models and demonstrate the organization's public service values.

Since they tend to be comprised of organizational leaders and mentors, developmental networks may be especially influential in public service identity construction and the embodiment of public service values that motivate newcomers' actions.

Public sector scholars have noted that leaders, in particular, may directly influence levels of public service motivation (Brewer 2008; Moynihan and Pandey 2007; Paarlberg and Lavigna 2010; Wright and Grant 2010). For example, leaders who communicate the organizational mission and values and relate them to those of the employee can influence the development of public service motivation (Paarlberg and Lavigna 2010). Orientation sessions, training, mission statements and agency manuals may espouse the organizational culture and values (Schein 2004), including the public service values that are particularly relevant. But it is when network members demonstrate the organizational values through their actions and enact them through their behaviours that newcomers also learn how to do so and come to recognize those values as truly central to what it means to be an organizational member.

The adoption of organizational public service values goes hand in hand with newcomer identity construction. As Ibarra, Kilduff, and Tsai (2005), 363 note, ‘identity emerges through network processes: The people around us are active players in the cocreation of who we are at work. Work identities are created, deployed, and altered in social interactions with others.’ Supervisors and managers in newcomer networks may be especially instrumental as newcomers answer the question ‘Who am I (now)?’ (Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison 2007; Chao 2007; Miller and Jablin 1991; Podolny and Baron 1997; Sluss et al. 2012, 2). Managers in a newcomer’s network may act as role models, demonstrating desired behaviours and values and offering newcomers possibilities of how they may define and conduct themselves at work (Chao 2007; Ibarra 1999; Sluss et al. 2012). By role modelling desired behaviours and values, managers may spur the construction of a professional identity that aligns with the organizational values (Chao 2007). Such congruence can indicate both a good person–organization fit as well as confirm the newcomer’s identity as an organizational insider (Chao 2007, 192; Chatman 1991; Sluss et al. 2012).

PROPOSITIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This section presents propositions derived from the model developed in this article, focusing specifically on areas that have not been widely examined, particularly in the public sector literature. The model developed here attempts to integrate several conceptual bases to offer scholars and practitioners a view of how social networks can influence organizational socialization. A social network approach enables researchers to bring together quantitative, qualitative and graphical analyses to examine socialization processes and changes over time (Ibarra, Kilduff, and Tsai 2005, 368).

Of particular interest to public sector scholars may be the implications for the construction of a public service-oriented professional identity and cultivation of public service motivation. In this model, individuals enter an agency with an identity which may already be oriented towards public service and as they proactively seek ways to learn about their jobs and the organization, they strengthen their identity as public

servants through their interactions with others. They also begin to identify with the organizational values and culture, enhancing their public service motivation. Although this paper proposes that a relationship between public service motivation, socialization and newcomer networks exists, how public service motivation actually influences or interacts with newcomer proactivity to shape new employees' relationship-building and integration has not yet been examined and the first proposition below addresses this gap.

Proposition 1: Newcomers with an incoming public service identity marked by greater levels of public service motivation will engage in more relationship-building as part of the socialization process, as evidenced by measures such as network size, range, and tie strength.

Little research has examined the effects of peer relationships on the socialization process. Yet peers, or other newcomers, may be able to uniquely relate to what other newcomers may be experiencing. Peers have been found to offer social support as well as share new task-based information as it is acquired (Hatmaker, Park, and Rethemeyer 2011). Newcomers may also be more comfortable admitting their lack of knowledge to other new employees rather than revealing what they do not know to superiors. In public sector organizations that include probationary periods during which performance is carefully evaluated and at the end of which employees are offered a permanent appointment or terminated, managing supervisors' impressions in this way may be especially important. Newcomers who include other newcomers in their friendship, social support and task advice networks may receive social and job-related support that contributes to their adjustment specifically because these alters understand what the newcomer is experiencing. As such, peers may uniquely contribute to newcomers' sense of belonging, their ability to do their job and their knowledge about their job.

Proposition 2: Interactions with peers in friendship, social support and task advice networks will contribute to a newcomer's sense of belonging, task-based information acquisition and task mastery. Close peers are likely to have more influence than other friends, and the composition of these network alters is likely to change over time.

For those organizations with a culture that embraces public service values and motives, as managers and leaders role-model behaviours and communicate role expectations and norms that align with public service values, frequent or consistent interactions with leaders and managers may instil or enhance public service motivation. Newcomers' interpretation of these interactions influences their identity, their understanding of the organization and their job within the public sector. If the organization signals to the newcomer through its socialization tactics, mission statement and goals that it values public service and if managers within newcomers developmental networks model behaviours that enact public service values, then it may be more likely that the

newcomer will construct a public service identity (Perry and Vandenberg 2008) – that part of their professional identity that aligns with public service values and is motivated by them.

Proposition 3: Supervisors and managers in newcomers' developmental networks who act as role models and reflect the organization's values will be positively related to newcomers' public service identity construction. Supervisors and managers with whom the newcomer has stronger ties are likely to have more influence than peers or other network members. The number of supervisors and managers (size), the network range and tie strength will change over time as newcomers adjust to their roles.

Finally, the effectiveness of the socialization tactics themselves can influence the development of newcomer's networks. How well a public organization's institutionalized socialization tactics enable newcomers to build relationships with, interact with and acquire information from a variety of organizational members can influence network formation and, in turn, how well newcomers are integrated into the agency. The socialization tactics' effectiveness also may influence levels of newcomers' proactivity. The organization's socialization efforts may not be sufficient to relieve newcomer stress, provide adequate information and fully incorporate new employees (Miller and Jablin 1991), so a newcomer's proactive efforts would occur in tandem to the organization's tactics – as supplements to the formal processes. My final proposition addresses the organization's socialization tactics themselves and their link to the newcomers' networks.

Proposition 4: How well a public organization's socialization tactics enable newcomers to develop relationships with experienced organizational members will influence newcomers' proactive efforts to develop network ties. When socialization tactics do not give newcomers opportunities to connect with organizational members who can provide them with access to key information, resources and mentoring, newcomers will engage in more active efforts to develop these ties on their own.

The model and propositions offer several considerations for future research. New studies should consider the application of advanced social network analytic methods and the analysis of qualitative data to examine patterns of relationships as well as the nature of the interactions within these relationships. More research is needed on how newcomer networks change over time under varying socialization tactics and organizational contexts (Morrison 2002). Such longitudinal work can contribute to the generalizability of theory built from case-based findings. Advanced stochastic network modelling techniques of complete networks enable the examination of the coevolution of networks and behaviour over time (Snijders, van de Bunt, and Steglich 2010), offering greater insight into how network alters and structure influence socialization.

Morrison (2002) also calls for collecting data from multiple sources – both newcomers and organizational insiders. This article expands this call to suggest collecting

both social network and qualitative interview data from these sources. By collecting this in-depth data from both sides of the dyad, scholars can gain a better perception of ‘what is going on’ in these networks to more clearly understand how they influence newcomer adjustment. This research can also assist in better understanding how newcomers rely on individuals at different levels of the organization, the resources newcomers garner through these relationships, and how the networks influence identity construction during socialization.

Finally, while this model is geared primarily towards public sector organizations, newcomers in the private sector also undergo similar socialization processes; in fact, most organizational socialization research has focused on the private sector. Insofar as public service identity, values or motivation are applicable to individuals working in private sector organizations (for example, see Steen 2008, and Liu et al. 2013); this model also largely applies and should be tested in such contexts.

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NOTES

- 1 Public administration scholars have defined public organizations with varying degrees of ‘publicness’, by placing them along a public–private continuum, and by categorizing them along divisions such as ownership and funding (Antonsen and Jorgensen 1997; Perry and Rainey 1988; Steen 2008; Vandenaebale 2008). For the purpose of this article, I draw from Antonsen and Jorgensen (1997, 337), who defined public organizations as those who display (varying) degrees of publicness, defined by them as ‘organizational attachment to public sector values such as accountability, due process and welfare provision.’ Thank you to the anonymous reviewer who suggested that I include this definition.
- 2 The author wishes to thank Bradley E. Wright for the comment regarding public service motivation and identity.
- 3 In contrast, ‘complete’ network data includes ties for linking all actors within a closed population, such as an organization, division or department (Marsden 1990).
- 4 Note that Miller and Jablin (1991, 99) label information needed to do one’s job as referent information.

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