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Staff induction practices and organizational socialization
A review and extension of the debate

Elena P. Antonacopoulou
GNOSIS, University of Liverpool Management School, Liverpool, UK, and
Wolfgang H. Güttel
Institute of Human Resource and Change Management,
Johannes Kepler-University Linz, Linz, Austria

Abstract
Purpose – Socialization is one of the fundamental processes that define how collectivities emerge. Socialization underpins the social structures that shape not only how social actors interact in community but also the boundaries of action and the rules of engagement. In the context of organizations, socialization is a process that significantly shapes organization in the way core practices shape how things are done and why they are done in particular ways. This emphasis on consistency within and between practices is seen to be greatly facilitated by specific practices like staff induction. The purpose of this paper is to review the current conceptual and empirical research on staff induction as a process of organizational socialization and outlines some of the areas for future research particularly if a social practice perspective is adopted.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper presents a systematic review of the relevant literature on organizational socialization and staff induction and outlines themes to which the debate can usefully be extended.

Findings – This paper focuses on how staff induction practices provide valuable insights about how social agents (especially newcomers) get socialized in organizations.

Research limitations/implications – This paper provides a foundation for the various staff induction practices that other papers in this issue will be presenting. By outlining the current debate and insights from previous empirical research on staff induction, the objective is to extend the debate by outlining some new avenues for research that papers in the special issue both respond to and further explicate.

Originality/value – This paper explores staff induction and organizational socialization as a practice that can provide new insights into the dynamics of social interaction within organizations.

Keywords Induction, Socialization, Organizational culture

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction
Many old organizations, e.g. the University of Bologna (1088), the Catholic Church (approx. 100 AD), the British Army (1661) or companies such as Siemens (1847) or...
General Electric (1879) – have preserved their organizational memory by continuously integrating newcomers into the firm. In a sense, these organizations have remained the “same” in terms of their identities even if they have changed their strategies, structures, processes, or employees over time. Moreover, in their daily activities, employees act on behalf of the organization thus, reproduce the organization continuously through their behavior. Nevertheless, these organizations have survived as they have been able to adapt, change, and innovate in order to meet changing expectations of their continuously evolving environments. What these illustrative examples suggest is that organizations and organizing emerge amidst the continuity and discontinuity that underpins the core management and organizational practices performed by organizational agents (Antonacopoulou and Pesqueux, 2010). Our focus here is to unpack the interplay between continuity and discontinuity in relation to the process of organizational socialization and in particular, staff induction practices. Staff induction practices govern unconsciously or deliberately organizational socialization. They can be perceived as core mechanisms of the way in which firms introduce newcomers into the organization and thus, make the continuous recreation of the organization and of its memory system possible (Birnholtz et al., 2007).

Staff induction and socialization (Ardts et al., 2001) are central to the reproduction of an organization because they enable new individuals to become functional members of a collectivity (Anderson-Gough et al., 2000). They also supports organizational recreation by sustaining, as well as, renewing aspects of the organization’s character (Birnholtz et al., 2007). Consequently, staff induction and socialization are important mechanisms for both organizations and newcomers. On the one hand, organizations continuously need new employees for their sustainability and for organizational growth in particular. On the other hand, employees need to reduce complexity when they enter into a new organization in order to be able to contribute to organizational activities (Bauer et al., 1998). In essence, organizational socialization includes the entire process of actions taken by the organization and action taken by the newcomer to ensure effective adjustment (Tuttle, 2002).

In this paper, we critically review, analyze, and discuss the conceptual and empirical contributions to the staff induction and organizational socialization debate. Our objective in reviewing the existing literature is to both highlight the main insights about these important organizational processes and practices, and also identify the critical extensions that could usefully be made to advance the debate in the field. It is also our intention with this paper, to provide a backdrop to subsequent papers in the special issue discussing staff induction practices so that readers can engage directly with the key findings and contributions the empirical analysis of staff induction practices presents. We are mindful that Bauer et al. (1998) and Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) have provided literature reviews and Bauer et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of staff induction and organizational socialization from a psychological perspective. The analysis in this paper integrates the insights of these earlier reviews of the literature and extends beyond a psychological perspective to also make the critical connections with the wider human resource management (HRM) perspective. This appears to be missing in the current debate and our intention hence, is to explore the link between organizational socialization, staff induction, and HRM systems. We, therefore, contribute to the existing literature in three ways: first, we explicate the strengths and weaknesses of existing staff induction and socialization research
and we indicate fields for subsequent research from a social practice perspective. Second, we analyze the contribution of HRM as a practice governing staff induction. Third, we provide an outlook for future research on staff induction and socialization by integrating the insights of hitherto dispersed psychological, sociological, and management perspectives.

We organize the analysis in three sections. Following the introduction we review and discuss the dominant conceptualizations of organizational socialization and the role of staff induction practice therein. In the section that follows we explicate the way empirically informed research has advanced our understanding of the way these practices are performed in different contexts and the consequences these practices have for both the organization and the individual employee. The discussion and conclusion sections bring these various insights together and outline directions for future research.

**Staff induction and organizational socialization: conceptual background**

Over the last two decades, organizational socialization has advanced to a central topic in the field of HRM (Cable and Parsons, 2001; Ardfs et al., 2001; Tuttle, 2002). At the same time, this stream of research has also attracted increasing attention in mainstream management research particularly in relation to research on learning and knowledge sharing in organizations (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992; Danielson, 2004). A common feature of the literature is the focus on organizational socialization mostly, and typical for HRM research, seeking to develop a normative advice on how new employees can be better integrated into their new working environment. In the HRM literature, organizational socialization is widely recognized as a key process ensuring new employees can be efficiently and effectively integrated within the organization once they are recruited.

This practice of introducing a new employee, viewed through the lens of anthropology, organizational sociology, and social psychology is termed as organizational socialization. In this section, we start with an analysis of the conceptual literature on staff induction and organizational socialization. Subsequently, we describe HRM strategies that are designed to govern staff induction and the organizational socialization of employees.

**Staff induction and organizational socialization**

Organizational socialization has been defined as “the learning process by which newcomers develop attitudes and behavior that are necessary to function as a fully-fledged member of the organization” (Ardts et al., 2001, p. 159). Skeats (1991, p. 16) defines staff induction as:

> [...] any arrangement made to familiarize the new employee with the organization, safety rules, general conditions of employment, and the work of the section or department in which they are employed.

Organizational socialization extends the action of introducing a new employee to the organization with the process of imparting the norms on how to behave in a way that is acceptable to the social group one becomes part of.

Organizational socialization focuses on the interaction between a stable social system and the new members who enter it (Schein, 1988). Therefore, organizational socialization is the “process by which one is taught and learns the ‘ropes’ of a particular organizational role” (van Maanen and Schein, 1979, p. 211). Organizational socialization consists of formal
and informal processes that enable new individuals to become successfully functional members of a collectivity (Anderson-Gough et al., 2000). Successful socialization is the transformation from an outsider to participating as an effective insider (Feldman, 1976). As Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006, p. 492) put it: “Organizational socialization reflects a learning process through which a new organizational employee adapts from outsider to integrated and effective insider.” This process of learning involves the development of knowledge about the organizational structure, its formal rules and official goals, as well as, its social rules that are shaped by the firm’s history, traditions, and politics of the organization. Furthermore, the newcomer is introduced to his work unit and is taught how the working tasks and functions have to be fulfilled (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006). The central aim of organizational socialization is the transfer of job and task relevant information to the new organizational member. On the one hand, from an organizational perspective, staff induction strives to stimulate learning in order to familiarize a new employee with the systems, rules, conditions, and colleagues in the new workplace. On the other hand, organizational socialization includes from an individual perspective beyond familiarization with the social rules and regulations the assimilation of those values, norms, and behavior patterns that are necessary for any new member to learn (Schein, 1988).

An organization is able to convey knowledge about its formal and social rules to new employees and to reproduce its “character” over time understood as “coherent content of the ensemble of dispositions that generates the distinctive actions of the organizations” (Birnholtz et al., 2007, p. 317) on the basis of staff induction programs that have to be consistent with the overall human resource strategy. New employees learn the organizational routine’s underlying rules during the socialization process (March, 1991; Mills and Murgatroyd, 1991, pp. 35-7).

Indicators for successful integration into an organization include organizational attachment and commitment, job satisfaction, social integration, role clarity, task mastery, values congruence, and (perceived) fit (Bauer and Green, 1994; Brett et al., 1990; Cable and Parsons, 2001; Morrison, 1993a, b; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Staff induction programs seek to govern the newcomer’s socialization in a way that (s)he will become a fully functional member of the organization quickly. van Maanen and Schein (1979) posit that socialization is a necessary process for a newcomer to assume an organizational role without disrupting ongoing activities. In the course of the socialization process, the newcomer acquires knowledge necessary to manage everyday organizational life. Learning provides a common link between staff induction and organizational socialization.

van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) seminal paper “Towards a theory of organizational socialization” is considered as the most influential theoretical contribution on organizational socialization. It provides the conceptual foundation that guided subsequent empirical research on organizational socialization along various dimensions relating to the introduction of new employees. Some of these dimensions have been empirically explored in subsequent studies. In particular, socialization research investigates newcomer adjustment (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Ardts et al., 2001; Allen, 2006; Bauer et al., 2007), newcomer’s commitment, and role orientation (Allen and Meyer, 1990), the fit between the newcomer and the organization (Cable and Parsons, 2001) and the construction of social identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Arnold and Nichoson, 1991).
According to van Maanen and Schein (1979, p. 211), “new members must be taught
to see the organizational world as do their more experienced colleagues if the traditions
of the organizations are to survive.” The experienced members of the organization play
a critical role in ensuring that the newcomer does not cause “disruptions” to the
existing functioning of the organization or “embarrass or cast a disparaging light on
others,” or “question” too many of the established cultural solutions worked out for the
organization previously. Inductees acquire social knowledge and working skills
necessary to take the organizational role. On the basis of these considerations,
van Maanen and Schein (1979) present six tactics that organizations select consciously
or otherwise to structure the learning experience of a newcomer to a particular role
(Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2006; Ardts et al., 2001):

1. **Collective vs individual.** Whether newcomers are socialized in groups or
   individually.

2. **Formal vs informal.** Whether or not newcomers are segregated from insiders
during socialization.

3. **Sequential vs random.** Whether or not newcomers are told explicitly about the
   sequencing of planned socialization events.

4. **Fixed vs variable.** Whether or not there is an explicit, fixed timetable for
   completing the various socialization stages.

5. **Serial vs disjunctive.** Whether or not previous job incumbents are available as
   role models for newcomers.

6. **Investiture vs divestiture.** Whether or not newcomers receive positive social
   support from insiders.

These socialization tactics described by van Maanen and Schein (1979) can be seen as a
continuum with two poles: the first pole – the institutionalized socialization – is based
on a group process and is strongly orchestrated by the organization. In contrast, the
second pole reflects an individualized socialization process that is less governed by the
organization (Jones, 1986; Ardts et al., 2001). Institutionalized socialization tactics lead
to the adaptation of custodial orientation, whilst individualized socialization tactics
lead to more innovative newcomer role orientations. Major (2000, p. 364) explains that:
“Institutionalized tactics are likely to be ineffective in encouraging personal growth
and development and may even be dysfunctional when newcomer flexibility and
adaptability are important goals.” Accordingly, Ardts et al. (2001) establish a link
between the abstract socialization tactics of an organization and its concrete personnel
instruments like an induction program, training and education, career planning, and
counselling as well as performance appraisals. As the socialization tactics reflect
“general characteristics of concrete socialization-interventions” (Ardts et al., 2001,
p. 161), induction practices can be described in terms of socialization tactics that may
consist of a specific combination of the six poles presented by van Maanen and Schein
(1979).

**Staff induction and HRM practices**

Feldman (1988) was among the first to draw attention to the need to link organizational
socialization programs and policies more closely to other HRM practices. Baker and
Feldman (1991) presented a framework to link socialization tactics proposed by
van Maanen and Schein (1979) to HRM practices in order to achieve three broader corporate strategic goals, namely: innovation, quality enhancement, and cost reduction. They argue that organizations can achieve these corporate goals by following a three-step approach:

1. identifying the corporate strategy being pursued;
2. identifying what types of employee behaviors are requested; and
3. developing a socialization program that can produce the desired behavior types.

The fundamental argument that underpins this framework is that for a socialization program to be successful, it should not only adjust individuals to the organization, but rather should facilitate individual efforts towards organizational goals, as socialization tactics are not an end in themselves and have implications for how broader organizational goals are attained. Socialization tactics refer to HRM methods organizations use to facilitate a smooth integration of newcomers into the organization by reducing uncertainty and anxiety associated with the reality shock of joining a new organization, and to acquire social and technical knowledge for task performance (Bauer et al., 1998; Cable and Parson, 2001; Allen, 2006). The organization’s concrete induction practices that are derived from abstract socialization tactics have to be consistent with the overall HRM strategy (Baron and Kreps, 1999). In general, two consistent HRM strategies can be identified in the hitherto HRM literature:

1. a bureaucratic or control strategy; and
2. a commitment strategy (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009).

A control-based HRM strategy reflects specific employment practices corresponding with a specific set of formal (administrative) rules and procedures (Osterman, 1984) that are based on hierarchical control. Its formal rule system is centrally planned and bureaucratically structured. The strategic practices are, therefore, input-oriented and planned. In terms of its general logic, a control strategy can be connected to an institutionalized socialization process and a bureaucratic induction approach where formal, standardized, and restricting induction practices enable the integration of newcomers and, thus, organizational recreation. Hired cohorts have a “common initiatory and learning experience” (Allen and Meyer, 1990, p. 847). Their induction phase is guided by formal rules and standardized (sequential and fixed) induction practices with corresponding and “explicit guidelines about the sequence and timing of progression in an organization” (Allen and Meyer, 1990, p. 847). The use of serial tactics including appropriate role models may promote a custodial role orientation as newcomers are exposed to someone who has done, or is doing, their new job. They have clearer guidelines for the job and less need to learn on their own than newcomers who have no such exposure (Allen and Meyer, 1990, p. 848). Furthermore, the “social support from organization members confirms the newcomer’s identity, constituting investiture” (Allen and Meyer, 1990, pp. 847-8). Finally, the sequential and fixed tactics, where newcomers receive information about the organization, make newcomers less likely to “rock the boat” (Jones, 1986, p. 265). Consequently, inductees learn a conformist role behavior that restricts them in applying new knowledge and interpreting existing rules and norms. Overall, the focus in this approach lies on knowledge deepening.
In contrast to the control HRM strategy, the commitment strategy represents a bundle of HRM practices that “aim at getting more from workers by giving more to them” (Baron and Kreps, 1999, p. 189). They facilitate the employee’s commitment by using long-term employment guarantees, team-based production systems, job rotation or quality cycles (Baron and Kreps, 1999; Osterman and Burton, 2005), and are characterized by a high degree of self-organization and a looser, less strictly formalized, and decentrally regulated rule system. Their strategic processes are output-oriented, governed, and controlled regarding the central goals of the organization; actors have an individual sphere of influence. Furthermore, the self-organization and social learning processes of a commitment strategy encourage the flexibility and creativity of actors and, therefore, enhance the innovation potentials of new employees. Owing to the basic logic of the commitment strategy, the general socialization process is more individualized and less governed by the organization than in the institutionalized process of the control strategy.

The corresponding induction practice can be described as a “clan approach” that is guided by social rules and is flexible not standardized. There is a unique initiatory and learning experience (it is individual) and on-the-job training (it is informal). Providing little information about the sequence or timing of career progression, the organization uses random and variable socialization tactics. Requiring newcomers to develop their own roles, it employs a disjunctive tactic. Finally, treatment by organization members that disconfirms newcomers’ identities constitutes divestiture which according to Allen and Meyer (1990, p. 848) “encourages innovative role orientations because, unlike investiture, it causes newcomers to question assumptions about their behavior and challenges them to justify or modify it.” On the one hand, these induction practices provide newcomers with the required background knowledge (i.e. understanding of the firm’s strategy and their ability to perform exploratory learning) to correctly interpret the core of organizational routines (i.e. their ostensive aspects; Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Pentland and Feldman, 2005) and corresponding social norms and sanction mechanisms. On the other hand, induction practices enable them to develop new interpretations of the ostensive aspect and enfold their innovation potential. The central aim is the broadening of the existing knowledge base.

The various theoretical contributions discussed in this section reveal the orientation of staff induction and socialization towards the tension between individual and organizational goals which has been found to be typical of other HRM practices (e.g. training and development, see Antonacopoulou, 2001). Such tension is endemic to the political nature of organizational practices, but do not explicate how the interaction between individual and organizational goals affects the nature of organizational practices and the resulting degrees of socialization, institutionalization, and regeneration, all of which are seen as critical outcomes of HRM practices. Empirically informed studies could shed more light in this regard. We explore this further in the next section.

**Staff induction and organizational socialization: empirical data**

Following the seminal theoretical work of van Maanen and Schein (1979), empirical research has been conducted since the early 1980s. In particular, the staff induction and socialization are well analyzed, but mainly in psychology-based literature. According to a psychological perspective, Bauer et al. (1998) and Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) provide a broad literature review and Bauer et al. (2007) present results from
a meta-analysis on staff induction and socialization. Bauer et al. (2007) distinguish between antecedents, newcomer adjustment behavior in the course of their socialization and outcomes. This is diagrammatically shown in Figure 1.

The meta-analysis of Bauer et al. (2007) shows, that the newcomer’s information seeking behavior and the organization’s socialization tactics govern, on the one hand, the newcomer adjustment in terms of role clarity, self-efficacy, and social acceptance as shown in Figure 1. On the other hand, the outcome of the socialization process in terms of performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to remain, and turnover is dependent on the way newcomers adapt to the organizational and group-level expectations.

In this section, we advance the framework provided by Bauer et al. (2007) to present our review of empirical research in the field of induction, socialization, and related HRM practices. We start with the individual and organizational antecedents, i.e. the newcomer’s predispositions and the firm’s HRM practices which govern staff induction. Subsequently, we present empirical data concerning the inductee’s adjustment and learning behavior over the course of their socialization. Finally, we describe the outcomes of staff induction and socialization by focusing on the person-organization fit. We clearly acknowledge that most of the empirical papers address more than one of these fields. Nevertheless, we strive to classify the papers in those fields where we perceive a central contribution to advance our understanding of staff induction and socialization. Our approach in selecting the relevant empirical studies for our analysis was organized in three steps. In the first step, we identified papers in the EBSCO and SSCI database by using key words such as induction (inductee, induct *) and socialization. In a next step, we distinguished empirical and theoretical papers in order to provide an empirical-based review on staff induction and socialization. In the final step, we excluded papers lacking any relationship to a management perspective and papers where staff induction or socialization was only addressed as a minor aspect within larger investigations (e.g. papers where the impact of HRM methods are measured in order to facilitate innovation). Based on this approach, we included 20 papers on staff induction, socialization, and HRM practices in our empirical literature review, which are shown in Table I. We distill from these empirically informed contributions three main themes; namely, the antecedents of induction and socialization, the socialization process and outcomes of induction, and socialization in terms of person-organization fit. We discuss each of these in turn next.

![Figure 1. Antecedents and outcomes of newcomer adjustment during organizational socialization](image-url)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jones (1986)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Biography and past experience of newcomers and the role of interpersonal processes</td>
<td>The information organizations provide during the socialization process influences newcomer’s adjustment and level of self-efficacy moderates the effects of socialization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahrly and Tosi (1989)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Staff induction of blue collar workers</td>
<td>Formal and collective induction are significant in achieving organizationally desired outcomes such as job orientation and job satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen and Meyer (1990)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The relationship between socialization, role orientation and organizational commitment</td>
<td>Newcomer’s organizational socialization experiences are negatively related to role innovation but positively related to organizational commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatman (1991)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The fit between a newcomer and the organization is established and maintained</td>
<td>The experience during the socialization process contributes significant to change in person-organization fit over the course of the first year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold and Nicholson (1991)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The role of socialization in bringing about personal changes</td>
<td>Organizational socialization plays a significant role affecting the attitudes and behavior of newcomers, but has limited influence on their self-concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Newcomers’ information acquisition about organizational contextual domains from different sources</td>
<td>The learning process of newcomers reveals that whereas information acquisition during the socialization process focuses primarily on task- and role-related aspects, observation and experimentation are considered the most useful sources of obtaining knowledge about the group and the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison (1993a, b)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The effects of information seeking on newcomers’ organizational socialization</td>
<td>Newcomers are perceived as pro-active. They sought technical information by asking others and other types of information through observation. Technical information, information about role demands and performance feedback is sought mostly from supervisors, but normative and social information from peers.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
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<th>Key findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adkins (1995)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The relationship between organizational socialization and prior work experiences of newcomers and effects on role adjustment</td>
<td>A significant relationship exists between previous work experience of the newcomer and their role adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mignerey et al. (1995)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The relationship between the communication behavior of newcomers and innovative role orientation</td>
<td>Introduces alongside the process of socialization the process of individualization, where newcomers attempt to change the environment to meet their personal needs and not only adhere to organizational demands through socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashforth and Sakes (1996)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Does institutionalized socialization tactics induce newcomers to conform to organizational goals and maintain status quo?</td>
<td>Although the impact of socialization tactics wanes over time they are still they bind newcomers to the organizational identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pratt (2000)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Sense-making and sense-breaking practices in employees’ identification with the organization</td>
<td>A combination of sense-making and sense-breaking is necessary to manage identification and commitment of employees in the process of becoming a fully integrated member of an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable and Parsons (2001)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The influence of socialization tactics on changing newcomers’ values</td>
<td>Newcomers’ values shift towards the organization’s values when they experience socialization tactics that are sequential and fixed. Serial and investiture-oriented socialization tactics are more helpful in shifting newcomers’ personal values towards perceptions of their organization’s values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Integration of newcomers facilitates positive attitudinal outcomes by providing the context for newcomer learning</td>
<td>Institutionalized patterns of organizational socialization have a positive influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison (2002)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The social relationships of socialization</td>
<td>A network of relationships with insiders is integral to socialization</td>
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<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
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<th>Focus</th>
<th>Key findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Newcomers’ pre-entry knowledge and personality traits as predictors of role adjustment</td>
<td>The leaders’ influence is the only significant predictor reducing newcomers’ turnover, but does not impact organizational commitment. Co-workers found to influence newcomer’s integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Changes in newcomer’s fit perceptions</td>
<td>Newcomers’ do not change their perceptions in the first months of socialization as there is stability in actual fit over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The link between organizational socialization tactics and person-organization fit</td>
<td>A common message and positive social models contribute to greater congruence between individual and organizational values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paré and Le Maistre (2006)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Distributed mentoring through team member knowledge sharing</td>
<td>The importance of active learning and the role of the team mentorship in having the necessary knowledge available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen (2006)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>The impact of socialization tactics on turnover behavior</td>
<td>Serial and investing socialization tactics reduce the chances of subsequent turnover among newcomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokisaari and Nurmi (2009)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Whether supervisor’s support influences newcomers’ learning, role clarity and work mastery</td>
<td>The supervisor’s support is particularly important in the first months in order for newcomers to develop work mastery</td>
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Antecedents: characteristics of newcomers and socialization tactics

Based on the conceptual work of van Maanen and Schein (1979), Jones (1986) conducted one of the first empirical studies of staff induction. By taking an interactionist perspective and exploring through a psychological lens, he argues that individual differences and attribution processes play a significant role in moderating the newcomer's adjustment to the organization and personal and role outcomes. Jones (1986) seeks to put the emphasis on the biography and past experience of the newcomer as forces influencing the outcome of the socialization process. The ability of the organization to influence the newcomer's behavior is also affected by a variety of interpersonal processes. The attribution process plays a significant role in moderating the way in which role related and cultural knowledge is transmitted. Jones (1986) empirically tested his model in a survey-based longitudinal study of 127 MBA students and examined how the information organizations provide during the socialization process influence newcomers' adjustment to the organization and how the newcomers' level of self-efficacy moderate the effects of socialization practices in newcomers' subsequent job orientations. Based on his findings, he concluded that, as predicted by van Maanen and Schein (1979), different patterns of socialization lead to different forms of newcomer adjustment to the organization. His findings highlight the significance of the social dimension in socialization – investiture and serial processes – in influencing role orientations and subsequent adjustment to the organization. At the same time, both collective and formal socialization tactics are found to be relatively less influential in assuaging uncertainty surrounding the entry process. The most significant insight that emerged from his research is that the concept of self-efficacy moderates the learning process in relation to socialization activities. Socialization tactics produce a stronger custodial role orientation when the newcomer possesses low levels of self-efficacy (Jones, 1986, p. 262). He concludes that an institutionalized approach to socialization leads to custodial role orientation, whereas a more individualized approach contributes to innovative role orientation.

Allen and Meyer (1990) replicated Jones's (1986) research and examined the relationship between socialization dimensions and two of the outcomes: role orientation and organizational commitment. Their quantitative study, similar to Jones (1986), focused on 132 university MBA students and undergraduates from two successive programs. They found out that the newcomer's organizational socialization experiences are negatively related to role innovation but positively related to organizational commitment. Therefore, Allen and Mayer (1990, p. 885) recommend:

Organizations that want employees who are both committed and willing to innovate might be best advised to use investiture to foster commitment but at the same time to minimize the influence of current or previous job incumbents and encourage newcomers to develop their own strategies for dealing with their new roles, a disjunctive tactic.

Similar to Allen and Meyer (1990), Ashforth and Saks (1996) also replicated the work of Jones (1986) and focused on 295 graduates leaving university to study how the socialization process facilitated the newcomer's adjustment to their new work environment. Ashforth and Saks' (1996) study also provided support to Jones' (1986) claim that institutionalized socialization tactics induce newcomers to conform to established organizational goals and methods and hence maintain the status quo. Although such tactics are viewed negatively in relation to role innovation, nevertheless such tactics are found to be more helpful in reducing uncertainties that impair
newcomer adjustment as argued by van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Jones (1986). Two key insights emerged from Ashforth and Saks’ (1996, p. 170) research related to the issues of binding newcomers to organizational identity and the declining effect of socialization tactics and suggest that “the institutionalized socialization induces newcomers to define themselves in terms of their organizational membership, binding their self-conceptions with the perceived identity of the organization.” According to Ashforth and Saks (1996), the impact of the socialization tactics wanes over time as the newcomers develop a more stable sense of their roles and new work environment and become less responsive to institutionalized socialization, instead of becoming more responsive to other stimuli in the workplace.

This finding is consistent with Zahrly and Tosi’s (1989, p. 72) results, which suggest that although:

 [...] induction mode is one of the strongest variables influencing outcomes during early tenure [...] the effects of induction mode would lessen over time and that other personal and organizational variables would become stronger.

Zahrly and Tosi’s (1989) longitudinal study of the differential effect of the collective and individualized induction process on the role of adjustment of 64 production floor employees in a new manufacturing facility was focused on blue collar workers. The findings from their study demonstrate the significance of formal and collective induction on achieving organizationally desired outcomes such as job orientation and job satisfaction. However, contrary to van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) argument, neither formal and collective induction process nor the informal and individual induction process significantly influence either high worker involvement or strong team cohesion.

Morrison (1993a, b) investigated the information seeking behavior of 135 (Morrison, 1993a) and 205 (Morrison, 1993b) new accountants in a survey study. In both studies, she identified pro-active newcomers who use different sources for receiving information necessary for them to integrate themselves into the organization. Newcomers capture technical information by asking others and other types of information through observation. Technical information, information about role demands and performance feedback is sought mostly from supervisors, but normative and social information from peers. Her data also show that the frequency of information seeking is related to satisfaction, performance, and intentions to leave at six months (Morrison, 1993b, p. 584).

Adkins’ (1995) study on the socialization process of 171 mental health specialists explored the relation between the organizational socialization process and prior work experience of newcomers adjustment. Drawing on Morrison’s (1993a, b) conceptualization, based on the longitudinal research findings, she considers developing a sense of task competence, developing work role clarity, developing realistic expectations about the job, and developing interpersonal relationships as key tasks involved in the socialization process. Performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover are taken as key outcomes of the socialization process. Adkins (1995, p. 885) does not find in her survey-based study any significant relationship between previous work experience and role adjustment. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that:

 [...] although the present study found very few relationships between previous work experience and socialization variables, it may be premature to conclude that previous experience has no impact on socialization whatsoever.
Socialization process: adjustment and learning behavior

One of the key arguments, van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed relates to the significance of organizational socialization in influencing newcomers’ behavior, attitudes, and self-image so that the newcomers become more congruent with their work environment. Arnold and Nicholson (1991) exclusively focused on understanding the role of organizational socialization in bringing about personal changes. The extent to which a person’s self-concept differs from what they believed in the past was conceptualized as an indication of personal change. In a longitudinal case study research, Arnold and Nicholson (1991) examined the self-concept of 94 newcomers drawn from different departments in British Petroleum plc. They arrived at the conclusion that although the process of organizational socialization plays a significant role in affecting the attitudes and behavior of newcomers, it has limited influence of the self-concept of inductees. Organizational commitment is thus enhanced when newcomers become more familiar with their supervisors and get involved as well with successful company members.

In their survey-based longitudinal study, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) developed a structural equation model based on data of 589 inductees. They identified the newcomer’s pre-entry knowledge and his or her proactive personality as significant predictor of adjustment. According to their data, organizational influence is slightly positively related to role clarity and organizational commitment. Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) identified the leader’s influence as the only significant predictor reducing newcomers’ turnover, but surprisingly does not impact organizational commitment. Finally, they emphasize the significance of the co-workers’ influence on the newcomer’s integration into the work group.

Allen (2006) investigated the impact of socialization tactics on turnover behavior. In his survey-based study, which investigated the socialization process of 259 employees of a large financial service organization, he found out that serial and investing socialization tactics, proposed by van Maanen and Schein (1979), lower the extant of subsequent turnover among newcomers. The results emphasize the importance of the social nature of learning and adjustment as also suggested by Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004). These tactics actively embed new employees into the organization. Moreover, on-the-job embeddedness, according to Mitchell et al. (2001) affects the extent to which individuals have links to other people, the extent to which individuals perceive a fit with their organization, and sacrifices of material or psychological benefits that would be lost by quitting, is significantly negatively correlated with turnover, whereas off-the-job embeddedness is not. Embeddedness helps newcomers to develop relationships and competencies concerning their task fulfillment and consistent with the demands of the organization. Serial tactics that provide experienced organizational members as role models do not increase the degree of embeddedness but reduce the risk of turnover (Allen, 2006).

The newcomers’ adaptation over the course of their socialization process can also be perceived as a learning process (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992; Mignerey et al., 1995; Cable et al., 2000). The view that the socialization of newcomers to their new organizational contexts requires that the inductees learn to understand and make sense of their new settings underpins the learning perspective associated with organizational socialization (Louis, 1980). Feldman (1981), in particular, perceives the organizational socialization process with the acquisition of a set of appropriate role behaviors and the development of work skills, as well as adjustment to the work group’s norms and values.
Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) note that job-related tasks, work roles, group processes, and organizational attributes are four content dimensions that encompass the important contextual features relevant to the socialization learning process. Accordingly, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) focus on investigating newcomers’ information acquisition about organizational contextual domains from different sources. They also examine the relationship between information acquisition and knowledge of domains and seek to understand the relationship between information acquisition from sources, knowledge of domains, and socialization outcomes. Based on the responses collected from 151 university leaving graduates who provide the information five months after joining the new organizations, Ostroff and Kozlowski’s (1992) research provided significant insights into the learning process of newcomers. They particularly note that whereas information acquisition during the socialization process focuses primarily on task- and role-related aspects, observation and experimentation are considered as the most useful sources of obtaining knowledge about the group and the organization. The findings also demonstrate that supervisors are seen as a source of information and knowledge about the task and role domains are most useful for positive socialization outcomes. The most significant finding to emerge from Ostroff and Kozlowski’s (1992, p. 869) study relates to the perceived importance attached to the acquisition of information and mastery of task and role or group issues as compared to issues relating to learning of values, norms, goals, and culture of the organization:

[... ] when socialization is viewed from a long term perspective, the contextual features of the organizational environment may become critical and play a greater role after newcomers have achieved task and role mastery.

Mignerey et al. (1995) explored in a survey-based study the issue of information seeking behavior of newcomers albeit with the objective of understanding the relationship between the communication behavior of newcomers and innovative role orientation. According to Mignerey et al. (1995), during organizational entry, newcomers are involved in both the socialization process as well as the individualization process. Whereas socialization refers to the process by which a newcomer is taught the value systems, norms, and required behavior to become an organizational member (van Maanen and Schein, 1979), individualization is the process whereby the employee attempts to change the environment to meet personal needs. They found out that institutionalized induction tactics provide orientation for newcomers. Thus, inductees are better able to obtain information about the organization that reduces uncertainty. On the contrary, individualized induction tactics enable newcomers to experience the organization without many restrictions or norms. Consequently, firms that seek to enhance innovative role orientations create an environment where newcomers are not socialized wholly in formal ways. Instead, inductees acquire information and knowledge necessary for task performance independently from veterans and other newcomers.

Morrison (2002) used a sample of 154 inductees for her quantitative study of the impact of social relationships on socialization. According to their findings, newcomers become socialized not only by interacting with insiders, but also by developing a certain network of relationships with insiders. She concludes that “is not what insiders do – provide information, initiate interaction, and so forth – but also how they are connected to a newcomer that affects socialization” (Morrison, 2002, p. 1137).
She perceives socialization as a process where inductees learn in informational networks their job requirements and roles; a process in which newcomers are proactive, as proposed by her earlier studies (Morrison, 1993a, b).

The integration of newcomers into the British Army was investigated by Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) with a longitudinal study of 201 recruits. Their key finding is “that organizational socialization tactics facilitate positive attitudinal outcomes by providing the context for newcomer learning” (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002, p. 432). Owing to the intensity of Army training during the first weeks, they also identify significant adjustment after two months. Such institutionalized socialization tactics enables structuring learning and thus, significantly predict information acquisition behavior of inductees. Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002) also identified the positive influence of institutionalized patterns of organizational socialization on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Jokisaari and Nurmi (2009) investigated newcomer learning, i.e. how newcomers achieve role clarity and work mastery in relation to the supervisor’s support. Their study is based on a longitudinal survey of 409 graduates from polytechnic schools in Finland. Jokisaari and Nurmi (2009, p. 538) show “that the greater the decrease in perceived supervisor support the greater the decrease in newcomers’ role clarity and job satisfaction during six-21 months after organizational entry.” Therefore, their results are consistent with those of previous studies that emphasize the importance of supervisors in organizational socialization (Bauer and Green, 1994; Major et al., 1995, Morrison, 2002). Jokisaari and Nurmi’s (2009) results show that the supervisor’s support is particularly important during the first months in order to develop work mastery. Thereafter, co-workers and their feedback to the newcomer’s performance play a role in the development of work mastery over time.

Based on the activity theory (Engeström et al., 1999), Paré and Le Maistre (2006) provide qualitative and longitudinal data of the school-to-work transition. They show the importance of active learning and the role of the team and team member (“distributed mentoring”) in order to make the necessary information and knowledge for the inductee available. Paré and Le Maistre distinguish between a passive and active learning behavior. The former is characterized by learning from others and by following predefined instructions. Active learning, by contrast, enables newcomers to “stimulate and change the communities they seek to join, forcing them to look again at habitual practice and, in the process, causing them to learn more about themselves and about their work” (Paré and Le Maistre, 2006, p. 378). The authors also stress the fact that newcomers learn from others through the inclusion into a team, where distributed mentoring happens. They perceive this kind of learning more important than learning from supervisors as task complexity would overcharge them in guiding individual learning effectively.

In an ethnographic study, Pratt (2000) investigated the process of sense-making (i.e. the provision of meaning) and sense-breaking (i.e. the break-down of meaning) practices in a network marketing organization in order to investigate the employees’ identification with their firm. He found out that only a combination of tactics of sense-making and sense-breaking is necessary to manage identification and commitment of employees with their firm, which is necessary for becoming a fully integrated member of an organization. Sense-breaking happens through dream-building activities (e.g. setting personal goals) where the current sense is devalued. New sense is given through positive programming...
where supportive members (e.g. mentors) of the organization provide a new meaning that lead in combination with the replacement of old sense (through sense-breaking) to a positive identification with the firm. Finally, Pratt’s (2000, p. 485) study also suggests, “that identification is not a one-time, all-or-nothing process whereby an individual comes to match his or her values with an organization. Rather, individuals can change identification states.”

Outcome: person-organization fit

The relationship between organizational socialization and the issue of matching people and organizations has been a key objective towards which staff induction practices have been directed towards meeting. Person-organization fit is defined as the congruence between patterns of organizational values and patterns of individual values (Chatman, 1991). Considering that organizational socialization is fundamental to ensure the continuity of organizational values and norms (van Maanen and Schein, 1979), the tactics employed during the socialization process must help to establish compatibility between people and the organization (Cable and Parsons, 2001).

Chatman (1991) investigated how the fit of a newcomer with his or her organization is established as a whole and how that relationship is maintained by focusing her study on 171 entry level auditors in eight of the largest US accounting firms. According to Chatman (1991), the selection and socialization processes are essentially viewed as complementary processes in accounting firms. Her findings support the view that although selection contributes significantly to value congruence at entry, the experience during the socialization process significantly contributes to changes in person-organization fit over the newcomer’s first year. Moreover, formal socialization tactics result in recruits in accounting firms learning more about the technical aspect of auditing and less about the norms and values of the firms. Insights from Chatman’s (1991) study provide also support to Arnold and Nicholson’s (1991) results highlighting the significance of newcomer’s relationships with supervisors and other senior staff in enhancing the organizational commitment of the newcomers.

Cable and Parson (2001) focused their attention on university leaving graduates. Findings from their research demonstrate the socialization tactics employed by organizations influence changes in newcomers’ values. Although sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture-oriented socialization tactics result in positive person-organization fit perception, newcomers’ values shift towards their perception of their organizations’ values when they experience socialization tactics that are sequential and fixed. Serial and investiture socialization tactics are more helpful in shifting newcomers’ personal values towards perceptions of their organizations’ values. Cable and Parson (2001) provide also support for the observations of Chatman (1991), which highlighted that newcomers are more likely to internalize the values of their organization if they spend social time with organizational insiders.

The quantitative study of Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) examines changes in newcomer’s fit perceptions with a sample of 198 newcomers in a global professional service firm. They draw on the work of Chatman and Jehn (1994) who propose that changes result from:

(1) a change in the newcomer’s values as a result of socialization;

(2) if the newcomer’s initial perception of organizational values may change as a result of their experience in the organization; or
(3) from a change of the organization’s values over time in response to external or internal events.

Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004, p. 69) conclude that “actual fit as measured at organizational entry is a significant predictor of perceived fit and individual outcomes after the first stage of socialization.” Moreover, newcomers do not change their own values in the first months of socialization, as there is stability in actual fit over time. Over the course of time, newcomers validate their initial perception of organizational values. The degree to which initial fit perceptions depends on newcomers’ experience with socialization tactics.

Kim et al. (2005) conducted a survey-based study of 279 employee-supervisor pairs in seven organizations in order to investigate the linkage between organizational socialization tactics and person-organization fit. They found out that employees perceive a greater congruence between their individual values with the firm’s value system when they receive a common message and positive social models. However, firms cannot entirely control the effects of their socialization tactics on new entrant’s person-organization fit as employees themselves play an important role. Inductees frame their entry process positively or negatively and thus influence the effect of the socialization tactics on the person-organization fit.

Taken together, the empirical studies of staff induction and socialization reflect a whole variety of issues that act as conditions affecting degrees of identification with the organization’s values and expectations, degrees of adjustment, and person-organization fit. Despite the variety of issues the various studies raise they do share several key issues in common, including the dominance of a psychological perspective in analyzing staff induction and socialization practices. We explicate the implications of this dominant psychological view in Discussion section before outlining additional avenues for further research.

Discussion

In analyzing the conceptual and empirical studies on staff induction and organizational socialization in the previous sections, we sought to highlight both the issues that attracted attention so far. The Discussion section distills the main insights that existing research provides and outlines the missing links that existing research does not fully address. This provides a useful basis for outlining the possible extensions that a practice perspective can bring to the analysis of staff induction and organizational socialization.

Key insights from individual focused research of organizational socialization

Although van Maanen and Schein (1979) positioned their ground-breaking paper on socialization from an organizational perspective, outlining different tactics for integrating newcomers into an organization, the bulk of the research undertaken since, is notably conducted with a dominant focus on the individual inductee. By focusing much of the analysis on the individual newcomer as the main unit of analysis the orientation is also more geared towards psychological aspects of staff induction and socialization that include perception and behavioral attitudes. In line with this kind of psychological research, only two out of 20 studies applied qualitative methods.

Perhaps, as a consequence of this orientation, we also note that HRM issues are primarily discussed by referring to van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) or Jones’s (1986)
distinction between different socialization tactics (institutionalized vs individualized). It is interesting to observe that empirical literature on induction does not discuss wider HRM issues. For example, issues such as the relationship to the HRM strategy, the relationship to and consistency between different HRM practices are not taken into account. Only staff selection is mentioned in induction papers as prior experience and the fit between individual and organizational values is dependent on the newcomer's past, which could be a criterion in the selection practice.

The existing research is therefore, predominantly concerned with the influence of institutionalized or individualized staff induction tactics on the newcomer’s perception or behavior. One of the key insights from the existing research is that institutionalized staff induction programs influence the perception of the person-organization fit as they enable the firm to send consistent massages to inductees. Formally institutionalized programs also provide a context for structured learning that reduces insecurity and ambiguity and results in clear role-expectations and facilitates newcomers’ sense-making. However, the main objective of institutionalized staff induction programs is the newcomer’s adjustment to organizational needs. Consequently, institutionalized induction programs raise adjustment pressure and reduce the options for newcomers to innovate and to change existing expectations.

Moreover, what we discern from the empirical findings is that more impact on the newcomer’s adjustment behavior results from co-workers than from institutionalized induction programs. Co-workers and the work group are perceived as important for learning the values and norms of the organization. Distributed mentoring of team members facilitates cultural integration and provides knowledge for task fulfillment. Supervisors are also ranked high on the level of importance they have in facilitating role clarity that leads to job satisfaction. Over the course of the socialization process, the team members’ feedback is more important as inductees are transformed into an accepted team member. Nevertheless, the influence of co-workers and of supervisors is positively related to the inductee’s commitment to the firm. Existing role models provide a sense-making function, which is not important for team integration but reduces the turnover rate.

Social integration and task knowledge are the key learning issues during socialization. Newcomers learn role behavior, group norms, and, more generally, orientation, as well as, work skills. Existing research shows that there is a limited influence of prior experience, which can be perceived as a result of adjustment pressure and the limited scope of a newcomer to influence the organization. Staff induction programs therefore, have limited influence on the core of the personality. Inductees learn the ropes of their roles without changing core values of their personality. Hence, it appears that institutionalization dominates over individualization. This imbalance in the way staff induction and socialization are understood and pursued in practice exposes not only a gap in existing research. It also reveals the range of possibilities to examine such processes from a practice perspective.

Extensions to the current debate: the case for a practice perspective
A practice perspective would seem particularly relevant in further unpacking the intricacies in staff induction and organizational socialization. As Antonacopoulou and Pesqueux (2010) argue, a practice orientation can provide clearer indications about the ways in which institutionalization and socialization connect as well as differ.
Moreover, a practice perspective can also reveal the ways in which tensions are engaged with in the way a practice is performed. Hence, a practice perspective provides scope to understand the social actor not only as a psychological subject, but also as an independent player who not only subordinates their goals in order to fit the organizational agenda. Instead, we can afford to explore the ways in which practitioners/inductees/social actors shape their practice by virtue of the practical judgments they make that leave always room for them to also shape the practice and the character of its performance. A practice perspective may retain the individual centre stage, however, it is more concerned with unpacking the process of individualization, as much as it seeks to understand this in the context of institutionalization. This means that a practice perspective of examining staff induction and socialization would be more concerned with the complex interplay between organizational values and norms, work groups, supervisors and inductees in order to understand the modes of learning and knowing that individuals entering organizations engage in as they come to think (perceive) and act, i.e. perform organizational practices – in accordance to pre-existing organizational standards or try to shift such standards accordingly. This is a core process through which organizations with their idiosyncratic identity survive. All these dimensions of current research on induction and socialization are diagrammatically shown in Figure 2.

This dominant individual-centric approach to staff induction and organizational socialization could be further extended beyond the psychological perspective. It could usefully be complemented by empirical studies that capture the learning process and the complex interplay with the collective dimension where theories on practice would be appropriate.

Fundamentally, a practice perspective could usefully enrich our understanding of the way seemingly “static” and institutionalized practices such as staff induction and

Figure 2.
Thematic map of empirical staff induction and organizational socialization research
socialization are also constantly reconfiguring and dynamic. Surprisingly, in our review of the literature, we failed to identify any paper that investigates induction and socialization in a variety of dynamic environments. Other research shows that it makes clearly a difference in the expectations of employees (and of newcomers) in which environment a firm performs. For example, in high-velocity markets, the need for knowledge creation and innovation is higher than in moderately dynamic markets where the use of established routines serves as key for success. Consequently, staff induction will be performed differently; either allowing innovation or facilitating adaptation to the existing standards. We also failed to find any study that links staff induction and socialization to topics that address organizational survival over a longer period of time. Research on organizational memory and organizational recreation could serve as a promising perspective to anchor staff induction in a broader organizational and strategic context.

Along similar lines we would encourage further empirical research on staff induction as part of a wider set of HRM practices. This would promote a greater analysis of the inter-practice dynamics which contribute significantly towards the relative balance between continuity and discontinuity that the shape organizations and their development, as much as it would affect the experiences of newcomers. A greater understanding of how multiple practices cluster under a broader strategic priorities (such as HRM) would provide scope for capturing the conditions that affect how the balance between institutionalization and individualization may also be reached.

Conclusions
This paper presented a state of art review of the current debate in relation to staff induction and organizational socialization. Contrary to previous reviews of the literature by Bauer et al. (2007) and Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2002), this overview of the debate extends beyond the psychological perspectives that dominates the research in this field, and offers an alternative perspective. A practice perspective is proposed for future research which provides a foundation for tapping into a range of other aspects affecting staff induction and socialization including a range of additional themes in relation to HRM, organizational memory, organizational routines to name but a few. Perhaps, more fundamentally a practice perspective opens up the possibility to understand how the sense of stability and change are negotiated amidst the ongoing emergence that governs organization. This means that practices like staff induction and socialization may be predominantly geared towards fostering a sense of stability and continuity by encouraging the reproduction of organizational values and enforcing organizational priorities. However, amidst this process of institutionalization lies also a sense of progress that can be made possible due to individual’s active participation in shaping the direction of organizational practices. Individual’s actions have the potential to introduce different degrees of change by virtue of how practices are performed.

This view is shared by Danielson (2004) who points out that induction and socialization processes can be structured as reviewing processes within the organization supporting innovation and growth by fostering greater renewal capacity through organizational agility. She particularly draws attention to the importance of continuous learning and adaptation to achieve sustained competitive success through organizational renewal and change. This view challenges the dominant orientation
towards the individual as the transitioning party in the process of induction and socialization. Instead, it invites a greater focus on how a team, a department, or the organization experiences the socialization during the process of socializing new staff. If indeed learning is critical to socialization then clearly the newcomer cannot be the only learning party. There is a scope in future research on induction and socialization to also explore how and what do existing members learn from newcomers. Some of the papers in this special issue explore these possibilities empirically, which hitherto has only been considered conceptually.

In short, this paper extends the current staff induction and organizational socialization debate by drawing attention to three key issues: first, it draws attention to the importance of exploring the connections between staff induction, socialization, and organizational recreation by focusing in particular on learning and knowledge. Second, it highlights the inter- and intra-practice dynamics of staff induction and socialization as part of a wider field of HRM practices. The connections between HRM practices can provide a basis for a more consistent and coherent pursuit of organizational development. Third, a practice as opposed to a psychological perspectives as a basis for rethinking staff induction and socialization promotes reciprocity in the interaction that governs the way newcomers interact with the organization, their team, supervisors and their underlying values, rules, procedures, and ways of doing things. A practice perspective embraces tensions as a natural part of the way organizations emerge hence, acknowledges the positive role of conflict between newcomers and incumbents, where inductees have the potential to shake existing norms and value sets, as much as they are being taught how to reproduce these.

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**About the authors**

Elena P. Antonacopoulou is a Professor of Organizational Behavior at the University of Liverpool Management School where she leads GNOSIS – a research initiative advancing practice relevant management scholarship. Her principal research interests include change and learning practices in organizations and the development of new methodologies for studying social complexity. She is currently undertaking a series of research projects in organizational learning, social practice and dynamic capabilities working collaboratively with leading researchers internationally and with practitioners and policy-makers in co-creating knowledge for action. She writes on all the above areas and her work is published in international journals such as *Organization Studies, Journal of Management Studies, and Academy of Management Review*. She is currently Subject Editor for *Organizational Learning and Knowledge for the Emergence: Complexity and Organizational Journal* and has recently completed a five-year term as joint Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal Management Learning*. She serves on the Editorial Board of *Organization Science, Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal, Society, Business and Organization Journal, and Irish Journal of Management*. She has recently completed a four-year prestigious senior research fellowship as part of the Advanced Institute of Management Research. She has served on the EGOS Board for two terms (six years) and has been elected in several positions at board and executive levels at the Academy of Management (USA) where she has now been appointed to lead the Practice Theme Committee. Elena P. Antonacopoulou is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: E.Antonacopoulou@liverpool.ac.uk

Wolfgang H. Güttel is a Professor for Human Resource and Change Management at the Johannes Kepler University Linz (Austria). Previously, he served as full Professor at the University of Kassel (Germany) and as temporary Professor at the universities of Hamburg (Germany) and Kassel (Germany), research fellow at the universities of Padua (Italy) and Liverpool (the UK), and Assistant Professor at the WU Vienna (Austria). His main research field
concerns strategic learning, i.e. linking learning, knowledge creation, transfer, and replication on individual, group, and organizational level with strategic objectives. In particular, organizational ambidexterity, i.e. the integration of competing learning modes of exploration and exploitation, dynamic capabilities, i.e. the firm’s mode to govern change, and replication, i.e. the transfer of successful business models in new markets, are investigated in relation to human resource and change management. Research results are presented at international conferences and published in several books and scholarly journals. Prior to his academic career he acted as management consultant at Daimler-Benz AG in Stuttgart (Germany), at Diebold Management Consulting in Vienna (Austria) and as independent consultant within a consulting network (1997-2002).
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