# Essays on the Organizational Socialization of New Recruits in the Public Sector




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A thesis submitted for the degree of

*Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy*

Michaelmas 2023

**Abstract**

This article-based dissertation explores how public organizations and managers together socialize new recruits into the civil service. In three papers, I synthesize the state of our knowledge on practices by which organizations socialize recruits in both the academic literature and practice, develop a theory of task-based socialization of recruits by their managers, and empirically test this theory.

In Paper 1, I synthesize the state of our knowledge on practices by which organizations socialize recruits (such as orientation and training) by a novel combination of a systematic review of the literature and a review of practice in the public sector. I first review the extant literature on organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization in public administration and allied fields using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Along with findings from the systematic review, I also provide a narrative review of the literature, highlighting its main findings and outstanding gaps. Next, I supplement this systematic review of the literature with a review of practice in the public sector using secondary survey data and country case-studies by OCED's Directorate for Public Governance. I find that organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization are under-studied in public administration in contrast to a substantial body of evidence on how private firms socialize recruits in allied fields such as organizational behavior. In practice, recruit socialization is a minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. Finally, whereas the academic literature approaches recruit socialization from the perspective of socialization practices, i.e., its antecedents and explores recruits' intra-organizational learning and the role of organizational insiders in socialization process, civil services approach it from the perspective of competencies, i.e., outcomes and prioritize recruits' learning of technical skills and external stakeholders while largely neglecting the role of organizational insiders in socialization process. Hence, Paper 2 and 3 explore this last point - specifically, how direct supervisors socialize recruits into the civil service.

In Paper 2, I explore how direct supervisors socialize recruits in teams by taking an inductive, qualitative approach using grounded theory and interviews with public officials from Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. I conducted 80 in-person, individual interviews with new recruits, their supervisors, and HR personnel across nine organizations under Nigeria's and Ghana's core civil services following grounded theory recommendations. In contrast to the extant literature which focuses on the direct communication of organizational values, I find that supervisors rely more on task assignments, guidance, and feedback in socializing recruits than directly communicating values. This task-based socialization by supervisors reportedly influences recruits' learning, identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation. I therefore propose a theory of task-based socialization.

In Paper 3, I test the theory of task-based socialization proposed in Paper 2 using two original, large-N surveys with 371 new recruits into Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. The survey includes a battery of innovative measures for supervisory socialization practices and an embedded vignette experiment. First, I find variation in both how supervisors assign tasks and give guidance and feedback, i.e., what I refer to as task-based socialization and how supervisors directly communicate organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations, i.e., what I refer to as values-based socialization. In contrast to the literature's focus on direct values communication, I find that overall supervisors rely more heavily on task-based socialization than values-based socialization of recruits. Next, using observational data, I show that task-based socialization by supervisors in recruits' first years is positively correlated with the key measures of recruits' outcomes such as work attitudes and early career advancements, whereas values-based socialization is inconsistently correlated with these outcomes across different measures. Finally, improving upon these correlational findings and teasing out causality in them, I demonstrate that task-based socialization by supervisors is again positively associated with the key measures of recruits' outcomes using data from a vignette experiment. In contrast, values-based socialization alone does not matter to recruits unless task-based social-

ization is also provided in tandem.

Together, these three articles contribute to the public administration literature on the socialization of new recruits into public organizations. Paper 1 contributes to the literature by providing the first synthesis of the state of our knowledge on organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization in both the academic literature and practice. Paper 2 contributes to its theoretical advancement by proposing a theory of task-based socialization. Paper 3 contributes to its evidence base by demonstrating task-based socialization as a primary channel of socializing recruits into the civil service.

# Declaration

This thesis consists of approximately 49,306 words - this is calculated by using the word count function in Overleaf, an online latex editor. It includes 46 figures and 31 tables.

# Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to Martin Williams, my academic advisor at the Blavatnik School of Government. My DPhil journey began in unexpectedly challenging ways: the Covid-19 pandemic began six months into my DPhil followed by the coup back at home which severely disrupted my doctoral research and personal life. Martin's support during this difficult time was above and beyond what was expected of him. He was simply the most wonderful advisor that a DPhil student could hope for. I am also very grateful to Pepper Culpepper and Julien Labonne, who were the successive DPhil programme coordinators during my time, for their support in my success as a doctoral candidate.

The Blavatnik School of Government was a very supportive environment for my DPhil. I am grateful to the DPhil programme office - first Ruosi Zhang and later Helen Belcher and Cheryl Riley - for being ever responsive and supportive. Miriam Mendes was very helpful with her advice on my funding application.

I am grateful to the academic community at the Blavatnik Schoool, the University of Oxford and beyond for providing valuable contributions to my doctoral project. Akshay Mangla and Javier Fuenzalida provided thorough and insightful feedback during my transfer and confirmation of status. Javier was an ever willing listener to my research ideas while providing suggestions and nurturing my growth as a junior academic. Julien Labonne, Dan Honig, Lars Tummers, Marc Ventresca, Anothony Bertelli, Zahra Mansoor, Yue-Yi Hwa, and Jade Wong read my thesis and provided careful suggestions at its various stages. And I thank my fellow DPhils at the Blavatnik School for providing me with an intellectual and emotional home

throughout my time - without them my time there would have been far less richer and lonelier.

I am very fortunate to have supportive local partners during my fieldwork. For research in Ghana, I received generous financial support from the International Growth Centre (IGC). In particular, James Dzansi and Henry Telli at the IGC's in-country team provided wonderful support and engaging conversations on a wide-ranging topics during my fieldwork there. Without the support and collaboration by the Office of the Head of Civil Service in Ghana - in particular, Nana Kwasi Agyekum Dwamena, the Head of Civil Service; Chief Director Godwin Brocke, Director Elizabeth Obeng-Yeboah, Jane Adjabeng, and Allan Kasapa - my research there simply would have been impossible and less impactful. In Nigeria, I am very grateful for the support and collaboration by the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) and the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation. Specifically, I thank Dr. Folasade Omolara Yeim-Esan, the Head of the Civil Service; Director Uzo, and Assistant Director Christiana Enang at the OHCSF, and Chairman and Vice-Chairman Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede and Ofovwe Aig-Imoukhuede, Chioma Njoku, and Kachi Nwanchukwu at the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation. Finally, I thank all my research participants in Ghana and Nigeria for their candid and patient participation.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without the rock that is my family. My mom and late dad instill and nurture my love for knowledge despite this taking me far away from them over a long stretch of time. Myat placed me on the DPhil path despite my self-doubts and provided care, belief, and love. And M lit sunshine on the later stages of my DPhil as only a true lover of sunsets could.

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# 1 | Introduction

## 1.1 Background & motivation

The moment when new recruits enter a public organization is a crucial period for them and the organization as this is when their motivations, attitudes, and behaviors are the most malleable despite their pre-existing motivations and orientations. Organizations routinely attempt to shape recruits' early learning into their roles - a process widely known as organizational socialization in the literature. Organizational theorists have long highlighted the importance of organizational socialization for performance, and empirical research identifies the various formal and informal sources of influence involved in socialization process such as formal orientation and informal social interactions with supervisors and colleagues [Barnard, 1938, Selznick, 1948, Schein, 2010, Wilson, 2000, Kaufman, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Desmond, 2006, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Chatman, 1991, Buchanan, 1974, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Hatmaker et al., 2011a, Grindle, 1997, McDonnell, 2017]. Yet there is scant knowledge and evidence on what public organizations actually do to socialize new recruits.

The three articles of my article-based dissertation explore how public organizations and managers together socialize new recruits into the civil service. Of the myriad sources of socializing influence on recruits, organizations and managers are particularly important as they have authority, resources, and information to mobilize towards recruit socialization [Graen, 1976, Morrison, 1993]. In addition, whereas organization-level socialization practices such as orientation and training tend to be formal and focus on the "dos and don'ts" of the civil service, much socialization

happens informally when recruits are posted in teams in which supervisory socialization practices play a critical role.

Therefore, I explore how organizations and supervisors together socialize recruits in three articles by synthesizing the state of our knowledge on organizational practices with respect to socialization in both the academic literature and practice and conducting an exploratory, sequential mixed-method research on how supervisors socialize recruits by using interviews and surveys with civil servants in Nigeria and Ghana. In Paper 1, I synthesize the state of our knowledge on organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization by conducting a systematic review of the extant literature in public administration and allied fields and supplementing it with a review of practice in the public sector. In Paper 2 and 3, I focus on how direct supervisors socialize new recruits into their teams in the civil services of Nigeria and Ghana. Specifically, I engage in theory building in Paper 2 by exploring how supervisors actually socialize new recruits using a grounded theory approach and 80 qualitative interviews with recruits, their supervisors, and HR personnel across nine public organizations in Nigeria and Ghana. In Paper 3, I test the theory proposed in Paper 2 using two original, large-N surveys including a vignette experiment with 371 new recruits into Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services.

In terms of organization, this introduction chapter provides the background and motivation of the thesis, the definitional issues and empirical phenomenon of organizational socialization, the summary of methods and main results from three articles that make up my dissertation, the rationale for Nigeria and Ghana as cases, and my thesis' contributions to the literature. Chapter 2-4 then presents each article in details. Finally, chapter 5 concludes with a discussion on the implications

of my thesis for future research and policy.

## 1.2 Organizational socialization: definitional issues and empirical phenomenon

This section discusses the definitional issues and empirical phenomenon of organizational socialization. Beyond major conceptual works from the organizational socialization literature, it draws upon works from public administration, organization theory, sociology, and organizational economics. Typically, these myriad works are considered out of scope in the organizational socialization literature. Nonetheless, they are critical in situating organizational socialization within the broader context of organizational issues of interest in public administration. I begin by discussing definitional issues.

### 1.2.1 Definitional issues

For the purpose of my dissertation, I define organizational socialization as the process by which individuals learn skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors expected of a work role in an organization. This definition has three main components. First, organizational socialization is primarily about learning involving cognitive processes and outcomes. Second, what individuals learn in socialization concerns factual and normative knowledge and the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors expected by others in the organization. Finally, in its temporal dimension, organizational socialization occurs during the period when an individual assumes a work role. Contextually, it concerns learning in a workplace setting, and thus it is different from socialization in other contexts as family, religious orders, voluntary and professional associations, educational institutions, and total institutions.

My definition draws upon the existing conceptualizations of organizational socialization in the literature in adjacent fields, while highlighting key aspects that they do so only partially. In the literature, we may distinguish three groups of definitions (Figure 1.1 for selected definitions in the literature). The first group of definitions equates organizational socialization with organizational membership in a short-hand manner (e.g. [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Feldman, 1976]). This obscures learning as the main characteristics of socialization along with the specific content of learning involved in socialization. In addition, by highlighting organizational membership, it only emphasizes socialization when new recruits enter an organization. In my view, socialization happens whenever an individual enters a work role regardless of if it also involves entering into a new organization. The second group places learning at the front and center in defining socialization (e.g. [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]). It clarifies learning content as concerning with both factual and normative knowledge. Yet it does not indicate that socialization also involves the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the third group highlights learning process, both factual and normative learning content, and the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors (e.g. [Feldman, 1981, Schein, 1968, Saks et al., 2007]). Nonetheless, it fails to signal the expected nature of learning involved in socialization arising due to its social context: factual and normative knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that individuals learn in socialization arise from expectations of others in the organization. Furthermore, it tends to ignore the temporal and contextual boundaries of socialization, i.e., socialization happens during the entry into a work role within an organization. My definition of socialization highlights all its three key components - learning process; learning both factual and normative knowledge and the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors expected of recruits; and the entry into a work role. My

definition is closest to the one by Connie Wanberg [Wanberg, 2012].

Figure 1.1: My definition of organizational socialization alongside important conceptualizations in the literature

| Author-study | Definition | Focus |
|---|---|---|
| My definition | the process by which individuals learn skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors expected of a work role in an organization | Learning process<br>Expected factual and normative content<br>Acquisition of expected attitudes and behaviors<br>Work role |
| Feldman (1976) | "the process by which employees are transformed from organization outsiders to participating and effective members" | Organizational membership |
| Van Maanen and Schein (1979) | "the process by which one is taught and learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role"<br>"the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" | Learning process<br>Factual and normative content |
| Feldman (1981) | "socialization as the acquisition of a set of appropriate role behaviors...as the development of work skills and abilities...adjustment to the work group's norms and values" | Learning process<br>Factual and normative content<br>Acquisition of behaviors |
| Schein (1988) | "the process of 'learning the rope,' the process of being indoctrinated and trained, the process of being taught what is important in an organization or some subunit thereof"<br>"the process by which a new member learns the value system, the norms, and the required behavior patterns of the society, organization, or group which he is entering" | Learning process<br>Factual and normative content<br>Acquisition of behaviors<br>Group membership |
| Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison (2007) | "the process by which individuals become part of an organization's pattern of activities" | Organizational membership |
| Bauer et al. (2007) | "the process by which newcomers make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders" | Organizational membership |
| Saks, Uggerslev, and Fassina (2007) | "how newcomers adjust to their new surroundings and learn the behaviors, attitudes, and skills necessary to fulfill their new roles and function effectively as a member of an organization" | Learning process<br>Factual and normative content<br>Acquisition of attitudes and behaviors<br>Organizational membership |
| Connie R. Wanberg (2012) | "the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to adapt to a new work role" | Learning process<br>Factual and normative content<br>Acquisition of attitudes and behaviors<br>Work role |

The first component of my definition places learning at the front and center of socialization. Socialization is primarily about learning involving the cognitive processes of sense-making, perception, and interpretation. Organizational socialization is frequently explained from the perspectives of uncertainty reduction, social cognition, and sense-making [Ashforth et al., 2007]. Upon the role entry, individuals face the high levels of uncertainty and require information from multiple sources to make their new environment predictable and controllable. Similarly, from a sense-making perspective, they need to interpret, and give meanings to surprises encountered during the role entry. From a social cognition perspective, the various modes of learning and self-regulations are critical in the triadic interac-

tions of individual behaviors, cognition, and the environment during socialization. Accordingly, the existing conceptualizations of socialization highlight learning as integral to organizational socialization. Schein states organizational socialization as "learning the ropes" [Schein, 1968]. In a seminal paper, Van Maanen and Schein define it as the process by which an individual acquires social knowledge and skills [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. As the cognitive processes of sense-making, perception, and interpretation in socialization are intangible, the literature has instead focused on measuring their outcomes in terms of learning content domains and recruits' "adjustment". This is further discussed below.

The second component of my definition makes explicit that learning in socialization concerns both factual and normative knowledge as well as the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors expected by others in the organization. What individuals learn and acquire during socialization primarily concerns factual skills and knowledge as well as tacit and normative knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors do not exist in a vacuum but rather in a social context. Thus, what individuals learn during socialization are primarily the expectations of a work role arising from the organization's social context [Wilson, 2000, Diiulio, 1994]. Existing conceptualizations agree that learning in socialization involves both factual and normative content. Schein states that during socialization, individuals learn value system, norms, and behavior patterns, thus emphasizing the normative aspect of learning in socialization [Schein, 1968]. In summarizing three major views on socialization-related learning, Feldman lists: i) the acquisition of appropriate behaviors, ii) the development of work skills and abilities, and iii) the adjustment to work group norms and values [Feldman, 1981]. In their systematic review of literature, Saks, Uggerslev, and Fassina highlight that learning in socialization concerns both factual and normative knowledge as well as

the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors [Saks et al., 2007]. Yet existing conceptualizations fail to highlight that what individuals learn in socialization concerns the expectations of a work role from others in the organization.

As the cognitive processes in socialization-related learning are intangible as mentioned earlier, the literature has instead focused on measuring their outcomes in terms of either learning content domains or recruits' adjustment [Bauer and Erdogan, 2011]. First, a few scholars have emphasized directly measuring learning and proposed several learning content domains or areas that individuals must learn in socialization [Chao et al., 1994, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002, Haueter et al., 2003, Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992, Taormina, 1994]. Chao and co-authors suggest six domains: performance proficiency, politics, language, people, organizational goals and values, and history [Chao et al., 1994]. Recently, Klein and Hauser expand on Chao et al.'s original list and suggest 12 domains [Klein and Heuser, 2008]) In their Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire (NSQ), Haueter, Macan, and Winter insist that socialization concerns learning both factual information and expected behaviors regarding role, group, and organization [Haueter et al., 2003]. Similarly, Ostroff and Kozlowski propose four domains each concerning with learning about task, role, group, and organization [Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992].

The second approach to measuring learning treats it as a latent aspect of individual "adjustment outcomes" in socialization [Bauer and Erdogan, 2011]. Adjustment outcomes primarily measure individuals' perception of how they have adjusted to their new role and its social context. The most commonly used adjustment outcomes are understanding the responsibilities, priorities, and time allocation of

one's role (role clarity); the resolution of any conflicting expectations on one's role (role conflict); understanding required tasks and confidence in one's ability to discharge the role (self-efficacy); the perception of being liked and accepted by the work group (social integration); and the perception of fitting in with one's job and organization (the various dimensions of fit) [Bauer et al., 2007, **?**, Saks et al., 2007]. Some of these adjustment outcomes are increasingly investigated in the mainstream public administration literature, including that on public service motivation (e.g. [Wright and Pandey, 2008, Wright et al., 2012]). Whether learning is measured directly as domains or indirectly as adjustment outcomes, several scholars have proposed that learning should be treated as the main or "proximal" outcome of socialization which in turn mediates the effect of socialization on motivations, attitudes, and behaviors [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002, Saks et al., 2007]. Empirical studies support the proposed mediating role of learning. The acquisition of attitudes and behaviors is conceptually and empirically treated as the final outcome of socialization.

Finally, the third component of my definition delimits the boundary conditions of the concept more precisely than existing conceptualizations. Temporally, organizational socialization happens during the period when individuals assume a work role. Thus, socialization occurs when a new employee enters the organization as well as an existing employee assumes a new role within the same organization. In Van Maanen and Schein's conceptualization, organizational socialization happens at the boundary passages of an organization [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. Boundary passages are where an individual crosses hierarchical, functional, and/or inclusionary boundaries to enter an organizational role - whether as a new employee or an existing employee. Although most scholars would agree with this conceptu-

alization, some have only highlighted the organizational entry and the attainment of organizational membership. Schein states learning during organizational socialization as "the price of membership" into an organization or a group [Schein, 1968]. Feldman defines socialization as the transformation of organizational outsiders to insiders [Feldman, 1981]. Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison implicitly stress organizational membership when defining socialization as "individuals become(ing) part of an organization's pattern of activities" [Ashforth et al., 2007]. Instead, my definition captures the postulation by Van Maanen and Schein that socialization takes place during the role entry - regardless of whether the organizational entry is also involved [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979].

In addition, my definition makes a temporal distinction between socialization-related learning and organizational learning. Learning is a persistent feature of organizational life: individuals learn throughout their organizational careers. They may learn a new way of doing things or new information about their managers and colleagues. However, learning in socialization should be regarded as distinct from general learning throughout organizational careers as it primarily concerns with learning the expectations of a new role that individuals are about to assume. Hence, organizational socialization should be restricted to the process of learning at boundary passages into a work role. Van Maanen and Schein regard organizational socialization as potentially taking place throughout an individual's organizational career [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. I, however, agree with Ashford and Nurmohamed that although learning takes place throughout an individual's organizational career, socialization concerns learning during a role entry [Ashford and Nurmohamed, 2012]. Subsequent learning that takes place should instead be studied under organizational learning more generally. Indeed, most empirical studies have focused on studying socialization and its outcomes at the period of entry

into an organizational role [Bauer et al., 2007]. Although there is no consensus on when that period of socialization ends, most studies have attempted to measure the outcomes of socialization from the first three months to the first year on the job.

Overall, my definition of socialization is closest to Wanberg's definition in her introduction to the organizational socialization literature [Wanberg, 2012]. There, she defines it as "the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to adapt to a new work role". Just like my definition, it highlights learning process, learning of both factual and normative knowledge, and the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors, and the delimitation of socialization to the period of entry into a work role. However, it does not highlight the expected nature of what individuals learn in socialization that my definition does. After discussing the concept's definitional issues and boundary conditions at some length, I am now ready to discuss its empirical phenomenon in relation to the common organizational issues of interest in organization theory, public administration, sociology, and organizational economics.

### 1.2.2 Empirical phenomenon

Getting employees to contribute is a major challenge for organizations along with getting them to participate. It is a problem of organizational compliance or the integration of employee behaviors with organizational missions, objectives, and goals. There can be no functional organization without some resemblance of behavioral integration. Public and organizational consequences will be dire when forest rangers, prison wardens, police officers, and diplomats pursue private interests over the public interests of their respective organizations. Since Chester Barnard,

organization theory understands getting employees to contribute as a major challenge for organizations [March et al., 1958, Barnard, 1938]. Principal-agent theory also recognizes this. It describes the public sector as a chain of principal-agent relationships and its associated problems of behavioral integration - in particular, moral hazard [Bank, 2016a]. In democratic societies, these relationships may start with citizens as principals and their democratically elected representative as agents; then, elected representatives as principals and public agencies as agents; and agency heads and managers as principals and subordinates as agents and so on. Within organizations, a major challenge is again moral hazard or getting employees to contribute to the organization.

Organizational incentives and socialization are two major contributors to employees' willingness to contribute that are amenable to organizational and managerial influence. Material and non-material incentives are important "methods of incentives" for organizations to influence employees' willingness to contribute to the organization according to Barnard [Barnard, 1938]. On the other hand, inculcation or socialization is a crucial "method of persuasion". Organizations and managers need both methods to get employees to contribute [Selznick, 1948, Selznick, 1949, Selznick, 1957]. Writing seventy years after Barnard, Henry Mintzberg similarly argues that managers (and organizations) must use "control" systems including incentives and monitoring as well as "lead" employees by energizing, developing, and building [Mintzberg, 2009]. Although organizations need and use both incentives and socialization, these are likely to influence employee behaviors through different logic of actions and maybe more or less suitable for different organizational contexts.

Incentives influence employee behaviors primarily through the logic of consequences [March and Olsen, 2011]. Financial and non-financial incentives and monitoring guide employee behaviors by influencing individual valuations over the future consequences of their alternative courses of actions. They thus tie employee behaviors to organizational rewards and punishment systems. Doing so, they aim to foster behaviors that are congruent with organizational objectives and contribute to organizational performance. Given a preeminent role individual incentives play in principal-agent theory, it has been a major approach to study the effects of various incentive structures and contracts on employee behaviors. Some studies demonstrate that incentives and monitoring work in tackling the problems of adverse selection and moral hazard in public organizations (e.g., Duflo et al. and many studies cited in Finan et al. [Finan et al., 2015, Duflo et al., 2012]).

Yet there remain concerns over the suitability of relying solely on incentives to solicit employee compliance in the public sector. Since early on, Bernard has voiced concerns over the limitations of incentives in influencing employees' contribution to the organization and maintaining the organizational equilibrium [Barnard, 1938]. In public administration, Romzek makes a similar reservation for public organizations [Romzek, 1990]. These limitations are particularly severe in the public sector. The challenges of multiple principals, multi-tasking, the difficult to measure outcomes, and legal and procedural constraints on organizations and managers in the public sector continue to raise questions over when incentives work for public organizations [Akerlof and Kranton, 2010, Bevan and Hood, 2006, Dixit, 2002, Miller, 2000, Holmstrom and Milgrom, 1991]. For the public sectors in developing countries, financial and resource constraints may impose more severe limitations on their ability to use performance measures and incentives compared to their counterparts in developed countries [GCPSE, 2015]. The fallout from

COVID-19 pandemic is likely to tighten the post-2007 retrenched public sectors in many countries, thus limiting the room for experimenting with incentive schemes. In fact, Miller argues that principal-agent theory gets it wrong in attempting to align the incentives of agents (bureaucrats) with those of principals (politicians) when the mis-incentives of principals could be of a primary concern [Miller, 2000]. Thus, the myth of politics-bureaucracy separation along with the professionalization of bureaucrats is necessary. These debates, in fact, can be traced back to a classic Friedrich-Finer debate in public administration.

Socialization also influences employee behaviors, however, mainly through the logic of appropriateness and may be particularly suited for the public sector [March and Olsen, 2011]. By facilitating recruits' learning of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors appropriate for their role, it helps integrate their behaviors with organizational missions, objectives, and goals. It guides individual behaviors by giving them organizational identities and a set of associated behavioral rules. That socialization influences behaviors through the logic of appropriateness has been similarly conceptualized by other scholars including by James Perry and Wouter Vandenabeele [Perry, 2008, Vandenabeele, 2007]. Therefore, the U.S. Forest Service focused on recruiting professionally socialized graduates of forestry programs as well as emphasized the post-entry training along with close supervision and feedback, constant rotations to expose rangers to other rangers in different districts with similar challenges, collegial support, and organizational identification for promotion [Kaufman, 2006]. Similarly, training, peer expectations and pressure, and organizational symbols played an important role in the behaviors of prison wardens and staff at the Bureau of Prison [Dilulio, 1994]. Organizational requirements for socialization to work are potentially less stringent than those for incentives. It does not require tasks and performance to be precisely defined and

monitored. The legal, procedural, and budgetary constraints on how organizations and managers socialize recruits may be less severe than on pay-for-performance systems. Furthermore, unlike the bottom line of private firms, the missions of public organizations are (at least in theory) to serve some public interests [Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Wilson, 2000]. Therefore, socializing recruits into the missions of public organizations have the potential to encourage publicly motivated employees [Wright, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2011]. Hence, Simon highlighting the central role of socialization in behavioral integration ([Simon, 1961]):

> The deliberate control of the environment of decision permits not only the integration of choice, but its socialization as well. Social institutions may be viewed as regularizations of the behavior of individuals through subjection of their behavior to stimulus-patterns socially imposed on them. It is in these patterns that an understanding of the meaning and function of organization is to be found.

A few caveats are in order here. First, the above discussion does not suggest that incentives do not influence socialization. After all, both incentives and socialization attempt to influence employee behaviors. Nonetheless, there exist distinct practices by organizations such as orientation and training and by managers such as feedback-giving that are primarily aimed at socializing recruits. These practices exert influence by facilitating learning which is not the case for incentives. That incentives and socialization are both relevant but distinct contributors to employee behaviors is recognized widely not just in the organizational socialization literature but in the broader literature on organizational behaviors as discussed earlier. Second, my view of socialization is positivist rather than normative. Socialization can result in desirable or undesirable employee outcomes. Although the organizational socialization literature has primarily focused on desirable outcomes, there is

a recent shift towards undesirable consequences of socialization (e.g. [Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013]). This view is also in accordance with the related literature on informal organization and sub-group norms which show that sub-group norms can serve as well as subvert organizational objectives.

In sum, organizational socialization is an empirical phenomenon with its corresponding organizational practices that influence employee behaviors within organizations, and yet these practices remain largely unexplored in the public administration literature. Organizational socialization distinguishes itself from other sources of influence on employee behaviors by its focus on learning and its operational logic of appropriateness. Despite its importance, the role of incentives in the management of public organizations and principal-agent approaches continue to dominate the public administration literature. On the other hand, a recent review of the public administration literature on organizational socialization concludes that although there is a growing interest, existing studies do not explore specific socialization processes - especially informal processes - by which recruits are socialized into the public sector [Moyson et al., 2018]. Thus, the public administration research on organizational socialization has so far largely focused on "passive" socialization via working in the public sector or a specific job rather than also investigating how organizations "actively" socialize recruits [Perry, 2021].

When it comes to socialization practices, an important consideration is whether they are formal and intentional. Here, I define formal practices as those that can be ex-ante codified and ex-post enforced by organizations. Intentional practices deliberately aim at socializing recruits. Whether certain socialization practices are formal-informal and intentional-unintentional is to an extent contextual. Research has not paid enough attention to the formality and intentionality of socialization

practices under study.

In Figure 1.2, I provide a 2*2 matrix to suggest how we may begin to think about the formality and intentionality of organizational and managerial practices with regards to socialization. At the organization level, orientation and training should be considered as formal and intentional practices. Similarly, an on-boarding checklist that managers are required to complete for recruits should be considered as formal and intentional. An organization's reward and punishment system and an annual performance appraisal by managers might be qualified as formal but unintentional practices at the organization and manager levels respectively. On the other hand, an event organized for new recruits to meet their peers and co-workers might be an informal but intentional socialization practice by organizations. Similarly, emotional support, clarification and feedback-giving, and values communication by managers are likely to be informal but intentional at socializing recruits. Finally, recreational events and manager behaviors around supporting/ controlling recruits' autonomy might be informal organization- and manager-level practices with crucial, unintentional consequences on recruit socialization.

The three articles of my dissertation are concerned with socialization practices in all quadrants except for formal and unintentional practices such as incentive systems, monitoring mechanisms, and an annual performance appraisal. Specifically, Paper 1 focuses on formal and intentional, organization-level practices. Paper 2 and 3 focus on manager-level practices that can be either formal and intentional, informal but intentional, or informal and unintentional.

Figure 1.2: Formality and intentionality of socialization practices

| | **Formal** (ex-ante codifiable and ex-post enforceable) | **Informal** (not ex-ante codifiable and ex-post enforceable) |
|---|---|---|
| **Intentional** (Intended to socialize recruits) | Organization-level practices:<br>- Orientation<br>- Training<br>- Formal mentorship<br><br>Manager-level practices:<br>- An onboarding checklist required by the organization | Organization-level practices:<br>- An event organized for new recruits to meet their peers and senior co-workers<br><br>Manager-level practices:<br>- Emotional support<br>- Clarification and feedback-giving<br>- Values communication |
| **Unintentional** (Not intended to socialize recruits) | Organization-level practices:<br>- Financial & non-financial incentive systems<br>- Monitoring mechanisms<br><br>Manager-level practices:<br>- An annual performance appraisal | Organization-level practices:<br>- Recreational events<br><br>Manager-level practices:<br>- Supporting or controlling recruit autonomy |

## 1.3 Research design and main results

### 1.3.1 Paper 1

In Paper 1, I synthesize the state of our knowledge on how public organizations socialize recruits using organization-level practices in both the academic literature and practice. The moment when new recruits enter public organizations is critical for them and organizations as their identities, attitudes, and motivations are the most malleable despite their preexisting characteristics and orientations. Public organizations routinely attempt to influence their early learning into their role - a process known widely as organizational socialization in the academic literature

- through such formal practices as orientation and training and informal practices as social gatherings ([Wilson, 2000, Desmond, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Kaufman, 2006, Romzek, 1990, Chatman, 1991, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]. Yet there is the lack of knowledge on various practices by which organizations socialize recruits in both the public administration literature and practice. Paper 1 contributes towards addressing this gap in our knowledge.

I synthesize a systematic review of the academic literature and a review of practice in the public sector on how organizations socialize recruits using organization-level practices. I review the extant literature on organization-level socialization practices in public administration and allied fields such as organizational behavior and mainstream management, using the commonly used Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews & Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Along with findings from the systematic review, I also provide a narrative review of the literature, highlighting its main findings and outstanding puzzles. I then review actual practices by which civil services are socializing recruits, using secondary data from OCED Directorate for Public Governance's Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) surveys and country case-studies. Afterwards, I synthesize findings from the systematic review of the literature and the review of practice, highlighting their common concerns, divergent gaps, and potential directions for future research.

Based on my synthesis of the academic literature and practice, I find that whereas the practices by which public organizations socialize recruits are under-studied and under-discussed in both the public administration literature and practice, there exist substantial gaps between them. First, practices by which public organizations

socialize recruits is under-researched in contrast to a substantial body of evidence on how private firms socialize their recruits in allied fields such as organizational behavior and mainstream management. Second, whereas the academic literature that exists also emphasizes the ongoing and informal nature of much socialization, the review of practice reveals that beyond formal orientation and training, recruit socialization is a minor concern of civil services preoccupied with continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership development for change management, and technological adaptation. Third, whereas the academic literature approaches socialization from the perspective of socialization practices (antecedents) and explores recruits' intra-organizational learning and a critical role of organizational insiders in recruit socialization process, civil services approach it from the perspective of recruits' competencies (outcomes) and prioritize recruits' learning of technical skills and external stakeholders while largely neglecting the role of organizational insiders in recruit socialization. These findings have crucial implications for both research and practice going forward. One such direction for future research is on the role of direct supervisors in socializing recruits in teams which is the focus of paper 2 and 3.

### 1.3.2 Paper 2

Paper 2 complements Paper 1 by exploring how direct supervisors socialize recruits once recruits experience organization-level socialization and are now posted in teams. A consistent finding in the organizational socialization research is the crucial role that social interactions with supervisors and colleagues play in socialization process [Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000, Chatman, 1991, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Hatmaker et al., 2011a, Vandenabeele, 2011]. Supervisors' role in recruit socialization might

be particularly salient as they have authority, resources, and information that they can mobilize towards this purpose [Graen, 1976, Morrison, 1993]. Yet how supervisors actually socialize recruits remains unclear in the literature. Paper 2 contributes to addressing this gap.

I explore how direct supervisors socialize new recruits by using a grounded theory approach and interviews with civil servants in Nigeria and Ghana. I conducted 80 individual, in-person interviews in total with new recruits, their direct supervisors, and HR personnel across nine organizations under Nigeria's and Ghana's core civil services by using grounded theory approach in data collection and interpretation [Glaser and Strauss, 2017, Corbin and Strauss, 2008, Charmaz, 2014]. Whereas participating organizations include both "street-level bureaucracies" and core administrative organizations, participants cut across cadres, grades, and departments [Lipsky, 1980]. Following grounded theory recommendations, I conduct data collection and interpretation in parallel; theoretical sampling, i.e., jointly conducting data collection and interpretation to inform the next rounds of interviews and data interpretation; constant comparisons between categories, events, and among them to integrate and differentiate theoretical categories and their relationships; and memo-writing to keep my data collection and interpretation process transparent and reflective. I also follow best-practices in qualitative, inductive research by triangulating data from different sources, beginning interviews with broad, open-ended questions, and member-checking at the later stages of research to validate my interpretation.

Based on rich interview data, I propose a theory of task-based socialization of recruits by their direct supervisors. In contrast to the literature's focus on direct

values communication, I find that supervisors rely more on role and task assignments, guidance, and feedback - what I refer to as task-based socialization - in socializing and integrating recruits into their teams in Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. On the other hand, supervisors directly communicating organizational values to recruits is rare, and when done, it focuses on a set of restricted values such as respect for hierarchy. Task-based socialization by direct supervisors reportedly influences recruits' identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation via learning. The centralization of authority, access to formal orientation, and the support of co-workers may moderate the salience of task-based socialization by supervisors for recruits. In addition, I also offer preliminary evidence for meritocratic and non-meritocratic drivers by which supervisors sort recruits into different socialization experiences. Specifically, supervisors may allocate tasks, guidance, and feedback among recruits based on the meritocratic considerations of professionalism, commitment, and hard-work. On the other hand, they may allocate tasks, guidance, and feedback based on co-ethnic, co-religious, co-regional, and financial considerations and the non-meritocratic interpretation of respect for hierarchy.

### 1.3.3 Paper 3

In Paper 3, I test the proposed theory in Paper 2 by investigating the relative prevalence and associations of task-based and values-based socialization by supervisors with recruit outcomes. When highlighting the importance of organizational socialization, existing studies either explicitly or implicitly assume that it is done primarily via the direct communication of organizational values since public organizations have other-regarding missions and values [Wilson, 2000, Diiulio, 1994, Kaufman, 2006, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vanden-

abeele, 2011]. Yet there is scant direct evidence on if this values-based socialization is a primary channel by which recruits are socialized. In fact, in Paper 2, I show that task-based socialization is an alternative channel of socialization into the organization. Hence, I investigate this ambiguity in terms of organizational socialization channels in the literature and test my proposed theory of task-based socialization empirically in Paper 3.

I deploy two original, large-N surveys with new recruits into Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services using a battery of innovative measures for supervisory socialization practices and a vignette experiment. I adapt a methodology for measuring managerial practices from organizational economics into the organizational socialization context and construct the measures for task-based and values-based socialization practices by direct supervisors in recruits' first years [Bloom and Van Reenen, 2007, Bloom and Van Reenen, 2010, Bloom et al., 2014]. I also include the absolute, rather than relative, measures of task-based and values-based socialization by supervisors in recruits' first years, which as some scholars have highlighted, improve upon conventional Likert-item scales that face threats from social desirability bias and the non-comparability of responses across participants [Bloom and Van Reenen, 2007, Bloom and Van Reenen, 2010, Bloom et al., 2014]. Nonetheless, regressions using observational data from these measures can only show potential associations but not causal relations between supervisory socialization practices and recruits' outcomes because of potential unobserved variables that are correlated with both supervisory socialization practices and recruits' outcomes and reverse causality. To improve upon these observational data, I also embed a 2*2 cross-design, vignette experiment into my surveys. Survey participants include recruits into four federal organizations in Nigeria since 2018 and all recruits into Ghana's core civil service in 2020-22. The final sample includes 371 complete re-

sponses.

Drawing upon original survey data with innovative measures for supervisory socialization practices and a vignette experiment, I show that task-based socialization not only is relied upon more by direct supervisors but also matters more than values-based socialization in influencing recruit outcomes. Using data from different observational measures, I first demonstrate variation in how supervisors assign tasks, and give guidance and feedback as well as how they communicate organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations to recruits. Using the T-tests of mean-difference in scores, I then show that supervisors rely more on the task-based socialization of recruits rather than their values-based socialization, regardless of which observational measures I use. Second, using the regressions of observational data, I find that task-based socialization by supervisors in recruits' first years is significantly correlated with recruits' current job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the various measures of early career advancements, again regardless of which measures I use and controlling for recruits' characteristics and organization fixed-effects. On the other hand, I find that values-based socialization by supervisors is significantly but not consistently correlated to recruits' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the number of assignments to additional teams, depending upon which measures are used. Improving upon these observational findings and teasing out potential causal relations, regression results from the vignette experiment show that being assigned to a hypothetical supervisor who only provides task-based socialization is associated with the higher levels of reported job satisfaction, and promotion odds compared to being assigned to one who does not. In contrast, being assigned to a hypothetical supervisor who only provides values-based socialization does not matter to recruits' outcomes unless task-based socialization is also provided in tandem. These find-

ings are robust to regression models using different samples and indexing methods.

## 1.4 Rationale for Nigeria and Ghana as cases

I choose to study how socialization is done in the civil services of Nigeria and Ghana as they are suitable cases to explore the potential of socialization as a practical management tool and different socialization channels as well as to contribute to evidence base on socialization experiences in developing countries.

The civil services in Nigeria and Ghana together provides an appropriate site to study the potential of socialization as a practical management tool for the public sector in a resource constraint context. The public sectors of both economies have more limited financial resources compared to their counterparts in developed economies. Although Nigeria and Ghana are the largest and the fifth largest economies respectively in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2021 according to the World Bank data[1], both are lower middle income countries with the GDP per capita of only around US 2,000.[2] Specifically, the respective sizes of government in these economies are far smaller than those in developed economies. The government expenditures in Ghana and Nigeria were 25.7% and 13.3% of GDP respectively in 2021 according to IMF[3] compared to an OECD average of 40.8% of GDP in 2019.[4] Hence, the public sectors of both economies face more severe resource constraints than their counterparts in developed economies in experimenting with financial

[1] $https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=ZG\&most_recent_value_desc=true$

[2] $https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=ZG\&most_recent_value_desc=true$

[3] $https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/exp@FPP/USA/FRA/JPN/GBR/SWE/ESP/ITA/ZAF/IN$

[4] $https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/6c445a59-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/6c445a59-en$

and non-financial incentives to influence employee behaviors ([Finan et al., 2015]). Socialization therefore lends itself as a potentially more practical and affordable management tool for these public sectors.

In addition, Nigeria and Ghana together presents a potentially suitable case for exploring how organizational socialization may happen through different channels in the context of relatively prevalent dysfunctional organizational values in the public sector. The prior studies of public organizations in Ghana and Nigeria highlight challenges posed by patronage, nepotism, and corruption [Ayee, 2005, Tangri, 1999, Vandenabeele, 2007, Sandbrook, 1993, HydÃ©n and Bratton, 1992]. My interviews also collaborate their finding as can be seen in Paper 2. The public sectors of these economies hence face more challenges in utilizing values-based socialization compared to their counterparts in contexts where functional organizational values may provide a more conducive environment, and thus they may depend upon alternative socialization channels.

Finally, much of the evidence on organizational socialization is coming from developed countries, and there is not much evidence on the socialization experiences in the public sectors of developing countries. Studying how socialization is done in Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services contributes to this thin evidence base on developing countries.

These case-studies in turn inform my chosen research design: mixed-method design combining original interviews and survey data. Conducting public administration research in developing countries often requires assembling one's own data in the absence of existing databases, building theories and testing them due to limited

information, and integrating qualitative approaches to disentangle novelties and ambiguities [Bertelli et al., 2020]. Therefore, Nigeria and Ghana as cases inform my chosen mixed-method research design that first aims to build a theory of socialization using a qualitative, inductive approach with interviews and afterwards to test this theory using large-N, original surveys.

## 1.5 Contributions

Together, the three articles of my article-based dissertation contribute to the public administration literature on organizational socialization by offering the first synthesis, to my knowledge, of the state of our knowledge on organization-level socialization practices in both the extant literature and practice; a theory of task-based socialization of recruits by their direct supervisors; and the evidence on the relative prevalence and associations of task-based and values-based socialization by direct supervisors with recruit outcomes. It does so using a variety of methods including a systematic review and an exploratory, sequential mixed-method research design combining qualitative interviews with a survey experiment as well as using data at the levels of civil services, supervisors, and recruits.

Paper 1 contributes to the public administration literature on organizational socialization by providing the first synthesis of a systematic review of the literature across fields together with a review of actual practice in the public sector, to my knowledge. It builds upon the extant literature in public administration that highlights the importance of organizational socialization for performance and identifies a few organization-level practices as the sources of socializing influence on recruits [Barnard, 1938, Selznick, 1948, Schein, 2010, Wilson, 2000, Kaufman, 2006, Desmond, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Hatmaker et al.,

2011b, Hatmaker and Park, 2014, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]. It extends it by introducing the relevant literature across fields on various practices by which organizations socialize recruits to public administration. In addition, by supplementing a systematic review of the academic literature with a review of actual practice in the public sector, findings from this chapter contribute to the literature by highlighting their common concerns, divergent gaps, and directions for future research.

Paper 2 contributes to theoretical advancement in the literature by proposing a theory of task-based socialization of recruits by their direct supervisors. It builds upon existing studies that show supervisors to be an important source of socializing influence and extends them by highlighting specific supervisory socialization practices around tasks [Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Vandenabeele, 2011, Kaufman, 2006, Diiulio, 1994]. Rather than direct values communication, it shows that supervisors rely more on task assignments, guidance, and feedback in socialization recruits. And this task-based socialization matters for recruits' learning, identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation. The proposed theory of task-based socialization can be validated by future research in different contexts. Methodologically, this article also contributes to the literature that commonly utilizes ethnography, case-studies, and questionnaires by demonstrating the productive usage of a grounded theory approach for theoretical advancement in the study of organizational socialization.

Paper 3 makes substantial contribution to the evidence base on organizational socialization in the public sector by demonstrating that task-based socialization

is not only a primary mean by which supervisors socialize recruits but also matters more than values-based socialization for recruit outcomes. It complements existing research that either explicitly or implicitly assume that directly communicating organizational values facilitates socialization into organizational culture by highlighting that in fact, task-based socialization might be a more important channel of socialization in certain contexts [Wilson, 2000, Kaufman, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2011]). In addition, it contributes to our evidence base on organizational socialization in the public sector of developing countries, whereas most existing research has focused on developed countries. Methodologically, it demonstrates how an influential methodology for measuring managerial practices from organizational economics can be adapted for research on organizational socialization and how a survey experiment embedded in observational data can be productively used for causal inference [Bloom and Van Reenen, 2007, Bloom and Van Reenen, 2010, Bloom et al., 2014]. To my knowledge, this is the first organizational socialization study to use a survey experiment and the aforementioned influential methodology for measuring managerial practices.

The rest of this thesis is organized into 4 chapters. Chapters 2-4 present Paper 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion on the scope conditions of my research findings, findings' implications for future research directions, and policy implications.

# 2 | Organizational Socialization in the Public Sector: A Systematic Review of Evidence and Practice

**Abstract**

The moment when new recruits enter the civil service is crucial as their motivations, attitudes, and behaviors remain malleable, and public organizations routinely attempt to shape their early learning into their roles - a process widely known as organizational socialization in the literature. Yet there is a lack of knowledge in public administration on various practices by which organizations socialize recruits. This article bridges this gap by synthesizing the state of our knowledge on such practices in both the academic literature and actual practice in the public sector. I conduct a systematic review along with a narrative review of the academic literature on organizational practices with respect to socialization in public administration and allied fields using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. I supplement it with a review of practice using secondary data from OECD's Directorate for Public Governance. Overall, I find that how public organizations socialize recruits is under-studied and under-discussed in both the literature and practice. How public organizations socialize recruits is under-researched in public administration in contrast to a substantial body of evidence on how private firms do so in allied fields. In practice, recruit socialization is a minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. Finally, whereas the academic literature approaches recruit socialization from socialization practices (its antecedents) and explores their intra-organizational learning and the role of organizational insiders in socialization process, civil services approach it from recruits' competencies (outcomes) and prioritize their learning of technical skills and external stakeholders while largely neglecting how organizational insiders socialize recruits.

## 2.1 Introduction

The moment when new recruits enter the public organization is a crucial period for them and the organization as this is when their motivations, attitudes, and behaviors are the most malleable despite their pre-existing characteristics and orientation. Public organizations routinely attempt to influence recruits' early learning into their jobs - a process widely known as organizational socialization in the literature - through such practices as orientation and training [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer and Erdogan, 2011]. Nonetheless, there is the lack of knowledge in public administration on various practices by which organizations socialize recruits. This article contributes to addressing this gap in our knowledge.

I synthesize the state of our knowledge on practices by which organizations socialize recruits by a systematic review along with a narrative review of the academic literature and a review of actual practice in the public sector. In the first half of the article, I conduct the systematic review of the literature on organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization in public administration and allied fields such as organizational behavior and mainstream management using the commonly used Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Afterwards drawing upon selected, influential studies, I provide a narrative review of this literature. Whereas the systematic review of the literature reveals its main puzzles, methods, populations, and outcomes of interest, the narrative review complements it by providing a more fine-grained picture of what we know about organizational socialization practices.

In the second part of the article, I review how civil services actually socialize re-

cruits using the secondary practitioner literature. Specifically, I rely on secondary data from Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) surveys and relevant country case-studies by OECD's Directorate for Public Governance. Supplementing the systematic review of the literature with the review of practice is crucial in synthesizing our state of knowledge and can pinpoint their common interests and divergent gaps. In fact, the recent reviews of the literature in adjacent fields (e.g., [Klein and Polin, 2012] and [Saks and Gruman, 2012]) synthesize the literature on organizational socialization with practice in the private sector in a novel way so as to highlight their crucial gaps and directions for future research and practice.

I find that public organizations' practices with respect to recruit socialization is under-studied and under-discussed in both the literature and practice with crucial gaps between them. In the extant literature, research on organizational socialization practices has been conducted mainly outside of public administration with evidence primarily from private firms in developed countries. Thus, how public organizations socialize recruits especially in developing countries is under-researched in public administration. This is despite the literature showing that when organizations provide a structured socialization process with various socialization practices, particularly targeting at recruits' expectations and offering mentoring opportunities, recruits are more likely to adjust and integrate successfully into their new environments. In practice, recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. Finally, whereas the literature approaches socialization from socialization practices (its antecedents) and explores recruits' intra-organizational learning and the role of organizational insiders in socialization process, civil services approach it from recruits' competencies (its outcomes) and prioritize their learning of technical skills and external

stakeholders while largely neglecting how organizational insiders socialize recruits.

This article contributes to the public administration literature by providing the first synthesis of the state of our knowledge on organizational socialization practices in both the extant literature and practice, to my knowledge. It builds upon exiting studies that demonstrate the importance of employee socialization for performance and highlight a few practices by which public organizations facilitate this process [Wilson, 2000, Kaufman, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Desmond, 2006, Chatman, 1991, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Hatmaker et al., 2011b]. It extends them by introducing the relevant literature on how organizations socialize recruits through various practices to public administration and providing a review of actual practice in the public sector. Thus, it answers to an appeal by Moyson and co-authors for future research to focus on socialization processes and practices in their recent review of the public administration literature on organizational socialization [Moyson et al., 2018].

The rest of the article is organized into 7 sections. Section 2 presents research questions and the conceptual framework used as a guide to organize the study. Section 3 presents the overview of methods used for the systematic review of the literature and the review of practice. Afterwards, section 4-6 respectively present key findings from the systematic review of the literature, its narrative review, and the review of practice. Section 7 concludes with a discussion on common concerns and main gaps between the literature and practice and directions for future research.

## 2.2 Research questions & conceptual framework

This section presents research questions and the conceptual framework used to organize the study.

### 2.2.1 Research questions

Despite recognizing the importance of employee socialization, public administration research has largely neglected how public organizations facilitate recruit socialization. Whereas organization theory has long recognized the importance of socialization into organizational culture for performance, the public administration literature shows that organizational culture determines what and how organizations do and distinguishes few high-performing organizations from many low-performing peers in both developed and developing countries [Barnard, 1938, Selznick, 1948, Schein, 2010, Wilson, 2000, Diiulio, 1994, Desmond, 2006, Grindle, 1997, McDonnell, 2017]. And recently, a few scholars have highlighted socialization as a primary mechanisms through which organizational culture influences individual behaviors [Perry and Vandenabeele, 2008, Vandenabeele, 2007]. Although several studies highlight a few practices - in particular orientation and training - through which organizations socialize recruits, a recent review of the public administration literature by Moyson and co-authors shows that it focuses on "passive" socialization rather than how organizations "actively" socialize recruits [Chatman, 1991, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Hatmaker et al., 2011b, Hatmaker and Park, 2014, Hatmaker, 2015, Perry, 2021, Moyson et al., 2018]. Their review demonstrates that public administration research focuses on the socializing influence of working in the public sector or a specific job rather than how organizations actively set out to socialize recruits, a topic of substantial research interest in allied fields. In other words, there is the lack of knowledge in public administration on

various practices by which organizations socialize recruits.

On the other hand, private firms' approaches to socializing their recruits is the subject of a large body of research in adjacent fields, which is yet to inform public administration. In fields such as organizational behavior and mainstream management, substantial scholarship is devoted to studying organizational socialization in private firms. This vast literature is organized around three sources of influence (i.e., antecedents) on socialization process and its outcomes: i) organization-level practices such as orientation and training, ii) social interactions with managers and co-workers, and iii) the proactive behaviors of recruits. This article is directly concerned with the first strand of the literature on organization-level socialization practices which is yet to be introduced to public administration. However, evidence from this literature comes primarily from private firms, and to what extent this speaks to the public sector is unclear.

Drawing upon these gaps in our knowledge, the following research questions guide this article:

1. What is the state of academic literature on practices by which organizations socialize new recruits?
2. What is the state of practice in the public sector with respect to recruit socialization?
3. Where do the academic literature and practice converge and diverge?

### 2.2.2 A conceptual framework of organizational socialization practices

Here, I propose a conceptual framework of organizational socialization practices. I constructed it iteratively during the early phase of the study. I drew upon influential conceptual works and the existing reviews of the literature to construct initial categories for organizational socialization practices and their outcomes. New categories emerged during the early phase of the systematic review of the literature which is largely empirical in nature, and this required me to make some adjustments to initial categories. The most common categories, i.e., the most commonly studied organizational socialization practices and their outcomes in the literature, are then used to propose the conceptual framework in the most parsimonious way possible. The proposed conceptual framework of organizational socialization practices is instrumental for this article in a number of ways. For the entire study, it serves as an analytical guide to organize and discuss findings from the systematic review of the literature and the review of practice. Furthermore, it contributes to a coding scheme in my systematic review of the literature (more on this under the Methodology section).

In this article, I define organizational socialization as the process by which recruits learn skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors expected of a work role within an organization, drawing upon a similar definition by Wanberg in her introduction to the organizational socialization literature [Wanberg, 2012]. Organizational socialization is primarily about learning involving the cognitive processes of sense-making, perception, and interpretation [Ashforth et al., 2007, Schein, 1968, Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. What recruits learn during socialization concerns factual skills and knowledge as well as the acquisition of normative knowl-

edge, attitudes, and behaviors expected of an organizational role by others in the organization [Feldman, 1981]. Finally, I delimit organizational socialization as concerning with learning during the period of entry into a work role [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. Therefore, socialization takes place when a recruit joins an organization as well as an existing employee assumes a new role within the same organization. Nonetheless, most of the research has focused on the socialization of new recruits, and accordingly, this article also focuses on their socialization and how organizations shape it through various practices.

In addition, I define organizational socialization practices as policies, programs, and practices by which organizations influence recruits' socialization process in this article. After organizations have gone through recruitment and selection, they routinely attempt to socialize recruits to ensure the latter's smooth transition and adjustment into their jobs. They may use both formal and informal practices such as formal orientation and training, and informal social gatherings. For the purpose of this article, I collectively call all formal and informal policies, programs, and practices that organizations use to facilitate recruits' socialization process as organizational socialization practices. In other words, they are the antecedents of socialization process that influence its outcomes. In my conceptualization, they exclude such other sources of influence on socialization process as everyday social interactions and the proactivity of recruits which are of major interests in the literature but arguably not under the ambit of organizational influence.

The first building block of the conceptual framework is a typology of organizational socialization practices. In a seminal paper, Van Maanen and Schein highlight six bi-polar "tactics" by which organizations influence the socialization process

of recruits. "Socialization tactics" describe the structural features that organizations give to recruits' socialization process [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. First, collective-individual tactics vary in terms of whether organizations socialize recruits collectively as a group or individually. Second, formal-informal tactics vary such that organizations isolate recruits from the workplace during socialization in formal tactics, whereas they expose recruits immediately to the workplace in informal tactics. Third, fixed-variable tactics differ in organizational usage or lack there of a time-table of progression for recruits with a designated end point at which recruits become full-fledged organizational members. Fourth, sequential-random tactics vary in terms of whether organizations make recruits go through a predetermined sequence of or random socialization experiences. Fifth, serial-disjunctive tactics differ with respect to whether organizations use organizational veterans to facilitate recruit socialization. Sixth, investiture-divestiture tactics contrast in that organizations embrace recruits' pre-existing characteristics in investiture tactics and re-mold recruits into the organizational image in divestiture.

I consider socialization tactics as the most abstract and outermost set of organizational socialization practices in my typology. Socialization tactics only describes the structural features of socialization process that recruits experience despite their major influence in organizational socialization research. Researchers using the socialization tactics framework typically ask recruits to rate their overall socialization experience. For instance, recruits are asked to rate their experience involving other new recruits in common, job related training activities to measure if they have been socialized collectively (i.e., organizations use collective tactics). Or they are asked to rate their experience regarding if training process expanded and built upon knowledge gained from the preceding stages of the process to measure if they have been socialized sequentially (i.e., organizations use sequential

tactics). Consequently, socialization tactics only portray structural features that organizations give to recruits' socialization process. It is only through specific organizational socialization practices such as training or mentorship that organizations give these structural features to recruits' socialization process. However, socialization tactics framework does not capture these practices involved. The concept of socialization tactics has thus been criticised for being abstract and not illuminating on specific practices and programs involved [Ashforth et al., 2007, Klein and Heuser, 2008, Klein and Polin, 2012, Saks and Gruman, 2012]. Nonetheless, I have included it in my typology for it is an influential way of considering structural characteristics that organizations give to recruits' socialization process in research.

We now need a way to distinguish among organizational socialization practices, and Klein and co-authors have proposed a useful framework in this regards [Klein and Heuser, 2008, Klein and Polin, 2012]. Klein and Polin define on-boarding activities as "all formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment" [Klein and Polin, 2012], 2. Therefore, their conceptualization of on-boarding activities is similar to what this article calls organizational socialization practices. Klein and Hauser propose three categories of on-boarding activities: i) informing, ii) welcoming, and iii) guiding [Klein and Heuser, 2008].

Inform on-boarding activities aim at providing recruits with information, resources, and experiences to facilitate learning. Inform activities are further dis-aggregated into communication, resources, and training. Communication activities facilitates the provision of one-way and two-way information exchanges. They include such activities as Q&A sessions, an initial meeting with a senior leader, and a meeting

with an HR representative. Unlike communication activities, resources are made accessible to recruits to facilitate learning, but recruits must proactively utilize them. Examples include a career plan outlining development opportunities, key contact information, and the readiness of the work station. Training involves such activities as an orientation session, job shadowing, and on-the-job training designed to facilitate systematic learning.

Welcome on-boarding activities aim at facilitating recruits' social interactions with others in the organization and celebrating their joining the organization. They include such activities as welcome kits, a personalized welcome from a senior leader or a manager, and a social gathering for recruits to meet organizational insiders. Finally, guide activities are some of the most personalized on-boarding activities in that they include assigning a personal guide to recruits such as a mentor or a buddy.

Unlike socialization tactics, Inform-Welcome-Guide (IWC) on-boarding activities describe specific, distinguishable, and time-bound practices that organizations use to socialize recruits. On-boarding activities are specific and distinguishable from one another. For instance, providing a welcome kit to recruits is a distinct practice from a personalized welcome from a senior leader of the organization. In addition, on-boarding activities are time-bound: for instance, orientation sessions and job shadowing have a designated time-frame. IWC on-boarding activities are related to the concept of socialization tactics in that they give rise to the structural features of socialization process which socialization tactics describe as argued earlier. Therefore, I consider IWC on-boarding activities as a subset of socialization tactics.

Finally, the certain dimensions of each on-boarding activity may be important for consideration. Klein and co-authors suggest a few key dimensions that merit attention such as its level, facilitators, learning content, and timing. First, levels at which on-boarding activities are conducted may facilitate the different types of learning. An on-boarding activity conducted at the civil service level may be particularly suited for learning public service values and civil service ethos, whereas an on-boarding activity at the work unit level may be better at facilitating learning about one's job, how it fits in within the work flow of the unit, and work unit culture. Second, the facilitators of on-boarding activities can have important consequences for recruit socialization. Line managers may be able to provide an authoritative account of what is expected of recruits, whereas senior co-workers may impart how work is actually done to recruits. Third, different on-boarding activities may be best suited to impart different learning content. Job shadowing and on-the-job training may enable recruits to learn about how to actually discharge one's job and responsibilities, whereas recruits may be able to learn about their work unit culture during a social gathering for recruits. Finally, the salience of learning specific content may depend on time. Klein and Hauser suggest a "just-in-time" approach that targets meeting the immediate and changing learning needs of recruits [Klein and Heuser, 2008]. The relevant temporal issues of on-boarding activities include their duration and sequencing. In addition to the above dimensions suggested by Klein and co-authors, technology may be another important cross-cutting dimension of on-boarding activities. Organizations may want to use technology to either replace or supplement an on-boarding activity that is traditionally delivered in-person.

I consider above key dimensions as the subset of on-boarding activities in my typology of organizational socialization practices. Although Klein and co-authors

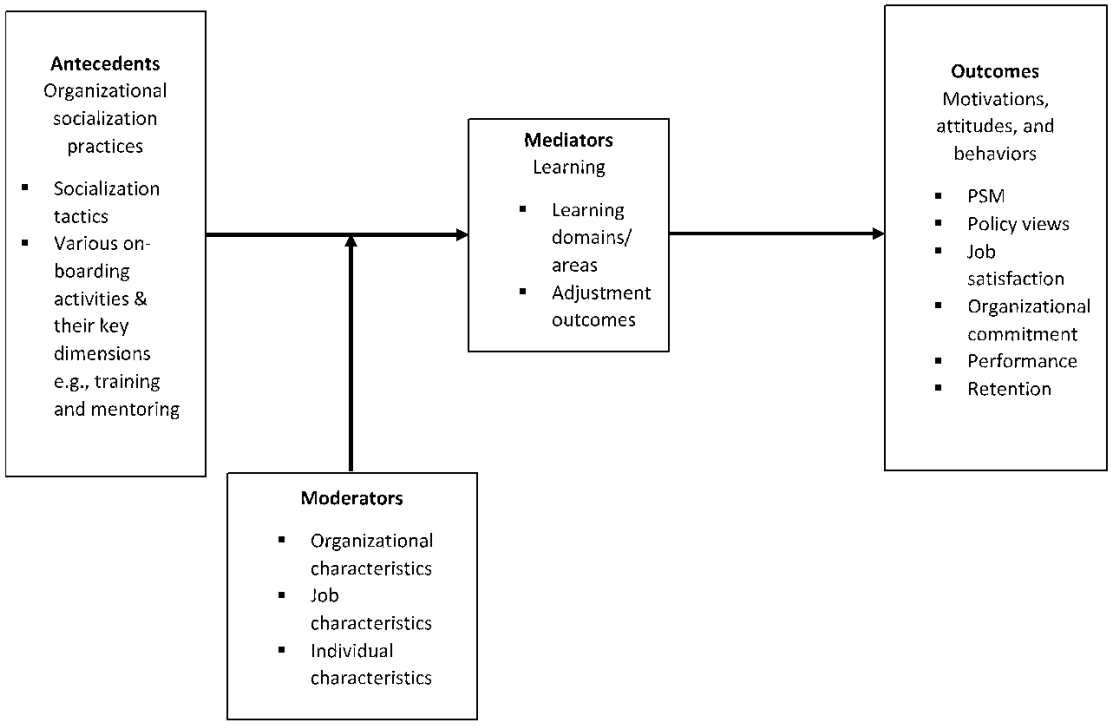
suggest a few crucial dimensions of on-boarding activities, they fall short of proposing how these dimensions fit in their framework. I propose that key dimensions are cross-cutting across on-boarding activities. Any on-boarding activity has the properties of the level at which it is conducted, its facilitators, learning content, timing, and technology.

To recap, organizational socialization practices are the antecedents of socialization process that influence its outcomes and may be considered at three levels. At the broadest and the most abstract level are socialization tactics which give rise to the structural features of recruits' socialization process. According to Van Maanen and Schein, key socialization tactics include socializing recruits collectively or individually, isolating recruits from the workplace during socialization or exposing them immediately to the workplace, using a time-table to track recruit progression, requiring recruits to go through a pre-determined sequence of or random events, using organizational veterans to facilitate recruit socialization, and embracing or discarding recruits' pre-entry characteristics [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. On the other hand, Inform-Welcome-Guide on-boarding activities are specific practices that organizations use to socialize recruits and that underpin their overall socialization tactics. Each on-boarding activity or practice has key dimensions that merit consideration, in particular, its level, facilitators, learning content, timing, and technology. Organizational socialization practices - with structural characteristics that they give rise to and their specific dimensions - influence the socialization process of recruits and its outcomes. Therefore, they are the antecedents of recruit socialization process in my conceptual framework in Figure 2.1.

The next building block in my conceptual framework is the outcomes of organizational socialization process for recruits. The literature shows that socialization influence recruits' learning, motivations, attitudes, and behaviors [Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007, Moyson et al., 2018]. In the public sector, organizational socialization has been shown to influence employees' public service motivation (PSM), organizational fit, policy preferences, and discretionary behaviors [Moyson et al., 2018]. In private firms, it has been shown to mainly influence recruits' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and retention [Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. In addition, learning is considered as the main and immediate outcome of socialization that facilitates such downstream outcomes as motivations, attitudes, and behaviors. Therefore, organizational socialization practices first influence recruit learning and through learning, their downstream motivations, attitudes, and behaviors in my conceptual framework. In Figure 2.1, I include PSM, policy preferences, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and retention under motivations, attitudes, and behaviors to indicate the most commonly measured recruit outcomes in the literature but by no means, to suggest this is an exhaustive list.

In the literature, there are two approaches to measuring learning as the main outcome of organizational socialization [Bauer and Erdogan, 2011]. The first measures learning directly and focuses on learning domains or areas that recruits must master. A few scholars have proposed several learning domains and scales to measure them [Chao et al., 1994, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson, 2002, Haueter et al., 2003, Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992, Taormina, 1994, Klein and Heuser, 2008]. Chao and co-authors suggest six learning domains: performance proficiency, politics, language, people, organizational goals and values, and history [Chao et al., 1994]. Recently, Klein and Hauser expand on Chao et al.'s original list and suggest 12

Figure 2.1: My conceptual framework of organizational socialization practices and their outcomes




learning domains [Klein and Heuser, 2008]. In their Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire (NSQ), Haueter, Macan, and Winter insist that socialization concerns learning both factual information and expected behaviors regarding role, group, and organization [Haueter et al., 2003]. Similarly, Ostroff and Kozlowski propose four learning domains each concerning with learning about task, role, group, and organization [Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992]. In their review of the literature, Ashforth, Sluss, and Harrison conclude that learning in socialization is primarily concerned with role, job, work group, and organization [Ashforth et al., 2007].

The second approach treats learning as a latent construct and measures it indirectly through recruits' "adjustment" into their job and its social context. Typical

adjustment outcomes include achieving clarity about one's tasks, priorities, and time allocation (role clarity); attaining competency for tasks and gaining confidence in one's role (self-efficacy); the feeling of being liked and supported by others (social integration); and fitting in with the job and the organization (Person-Job fit and Person-Organization fit) [Feldman, 1981, Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. In my conceptual framework in Figure 2.1, I have indicated learning domains and adjustment outcomes under learning as they are the primary ways of measuring the learning outcomes of socialization in the literature.

Finally, several factors can moderate the effects of socialization practices on recruit outcomes. Salient moderators include organizational, job, and individual characteristics. Organizational characteristics such as organizational culture and climate may influence how recruits experience organizational socialization practices. Although an organization may provide an otherwise effective training to recruits, the dysfunctional organizational culture may mitigate the training's effect on recruit outcomes. Similarly, job characteristics such as its novelty may moderate the effect of organizational socialization practices on recruit outcomes. A newly created job within the organizations may mean that organizational socialization practices are less effective in facilitating recruits learning about the job. Finally, individual characteristics such as gender, race, prior professional socialization (e.g., training as a doctor or an engineer), and recruits' belief about their own competency may moderate the effect of organizational socialization practices. A few studies show that a structured socialization process and training are particularly influential on recruits with the low level of belief in their competency [Jones, 1986, Saks, 1995]. Therefore, these moderating factors provide boundary conditions in my conceptual framework.

## 2.3 Method

This section describes the methods for the systematic review of the literature and the review of practice. For the systematic review, I first drafted a review protocol which was then piloted and edited prior to its full implementation.

### 2.3.1 Systematic review method

I use the commonly used Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines [Moher et al., 2009, Petticrew and Roberts, 2006]. The PRISMA guidelines list a minimum set of items that should be reported in systematic reviews and meta-analyses to increase their transparency and reduce bias. Originated in medicine, it has now been used in other fields including in a recent review of the organizational socialization literature in public administration [Moyson et al., 2018].

A crucial step in conducting systematic reviews is to determine eligibility criteria for studies. An important eligibility criteria for this review is study objective. The organizational socialization literature is a large body of research with multiple strands organized primarily around three sources of influence on socialization process: i) organization-level socialization practices such as training/ orientation, ii) social interactions and networks with organizational insiders such as managers and co-workers, and iii) the proactive behaviors of recruits respectively [Ashforth et al., 2007, Ashford and Nurmohamed, 2012, Bauer, 2010]. Since this review is concerned only with organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization, an inclusion criteria is the study objective that either theorizes, describes, or

evaluates the effects of such practices. Therefore, socialization studies on social interactions and the proactive behaviors of recruits are excluded from this review. It, however, does not restrict eligibility by study design or outcomes since my aim is to map a comprehensive picture of organization-level socialization practices under investigation in the literature but not to provide a meta-analysis of the effects of a specific organizational socialization practice.

Other important criteria are publication date and language. The publication of the seminal paper by Van Maneen and Schein in 1979 ushered in the systematic study of organizational socialization practices although there are earlier works on them [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. Thus, I only include studies that were published in 1979 or after. However, to ensure relevant earlier works are included, the review also browses through the bibliographies of previous reviews and includes relevant studies. Another eligibility criterion is the language of publication. The review only includes publications in English given my linguistic limitation. Finally, in terms of publication type, it includes journal articles, book chapters, conference papers and proceedings, theses, and policy literature such as those published by World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Asian Development Bank (ADB), etc.

Additional important steps in conducting systematic reviews concern databases and search strategies. The article primarily relies on academic databases. ABI/Inform Global, EBSCOhost Business Source Complete, and Social Science Premium Collection widely cover publications in mainstream management, organizational behavior, and public administration. Thus, the review first searches through these databases. They are supplemented by searches through Social Sciences Citation

Index (SSCI), Conference Proceedings Citation Index- Social Sciences and Humanities (CPCI-SSH), and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. For the policy literature on organizational socialization, the review searches through PolicyFile and System for Information on Gray Literature (SIGLE). However, since the former focuses on policy reports in the U.S. and the latter in Europe, it also searches for publications by World Bank, OECD, ADB, African Development Bank (AfDB), and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The review supplements search results with bibliographies from previous reviews. Given resource and time constraints, however, the review does not include ongoing studies nor conduct hand-searches in printed journals.

A scoping review of the literature that I conducted earlier provided search terms for this systematic review. The search strategy focuses on terms and their combinations as shown in Table 2.1. Some of the search terms such as proactivity are less associated with research on organizational socialization practices but more with the strand of literature on the proactive behaviors of new recruits in socialization. They are, nonetheless, included in the search terms to ensure that no relevant studies are excluded.

The review uses several specialist softwares for data management and analysis. Specifically, it uses EndNote X9 to manage search results, DistillerSR online platform to screen and extract study data, and Stata SE 14 version for analysis.

The conceptual framework discussed in section 2 served as a starting point for the coding scheme during the data extraction phase. I began with an initial set of categories for study antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators as suggested

Table 2.1: Search terms

| | |
|---|---|
| Organizational socialization | Induction |
| On-boarding | Socialization tactics |
| Proactivity | Work relationships |
| Role relationships | Social exchange |
| Leader-member exchange | Supervisor/ co-worker |
| Supervisory socialization tactics | |

by the conceptual framework. I then used these categories to code each study during the data extraction phase. After coding the first few studies, I needed to make adjustments to the initial set of categories. This happened whenever I came across a sizeable number of studies that were looking at an identical antecedent, outcome, or so on that my initial categories did not capture. Furthermore, if an initial category captures only a handful of studies in the final analysis, I dropped it and coded the corresponding studies under the residual "other" category. The final set of categories are then used in analyzing data in section 4 (Table 2.2).

The conceptual framework suggested some initial categories for study antecedents. They included socialization tactics and potentially a category for each type of Inform-Welcome-Guide on-boarding activities. Nonetheless, I discovered during the review process that there are primarily four types of studies in terms of study antecedents: i) studies on socialization tactics, ii) those exploring the availability and helpfulness of various on-boarding activities across organizations, iii) those on orientation/ training, and iv) those on mentoring. Therefore, the final set of categories for study antecedents include these four categories and a residual category for others.

The conceptual framework also provided a guidance on initial categories for study outcomes. Initial categories include PSM, policy views, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and retention. However, I found that while there are very few studies exploring the effects of organizational socialization practices on policy views, there are quite a few studies treating learning as the main outcome rather than exploring its mediating role. Among these, some measure learning in terms of learning domains/ areas, whereas others measure it by adjustment outcomes. Therefore, the final set of categories for study outcomes include: i) job satisfaction, ii) organizational commitment, iii) performance, iv) retention, v) learning as measured by learning domains, vi) learning as measured by adjustment outcomes, vii) PSM and viii) other.

The conceptual framework recommended learning as the main category for study mediators. Again, I found that studies measure learning by either learning domains/ areas or adjustment outcomes. Furthermore, a handful of studies explore how organizational socialization practices affect recruit outcomes by first encouraging their proactive behaviors. Hence, the final set of categories for study mediators include: i) learning measured in terms of learning domains/ areas, ii) learning measured in terms of adjustment outcomes, iii) individual proactive behaviors, and iv) other.

Finally, the conceptual framework suggested organizational, job, and individual characteristics as categories for study moderators. Thus, the final set of categories for study moderators include: i) organizational characteristics, ii) job characteristics, iii) individual characteristics, and iv) other.

Table 2.2: The final set of categories for study antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators

| Antecedents | Outcomes | Mediators | Moderators |
|---|---|---|---|
| Socialization tactics | Job satisfaction | Learning (content domains) | Organizational characteristics |
| Availability/ helpfulness of on-boarding activities | Organizational commitment | Learning (adjustment outcomes) | Job characteristics |
| Orientation/ training | Performance | Proactivity | Individual characteristics |
| Mentoring | Retention | Other | Other |
| Other | Learning domains | | |
| | Adjustment outcomes | | |
| | PSM | | |
| | Other | | |

Using these final categories, I coded eligible studies in terms of their focal antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators in a data extraction form that I designed on online DistillerSR Software. DistillerSR permits making multiple choices which suits many studies that explore not a single antecedent or outcome but multiple antecedents and outcomes. For instance, for a study that explores the influence of socialization tactics on recruits' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention, I choose socialization tactics under study antecedents as this study's main antecedent and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention under study outcomes as its main outcomes of interest.

### 2.3.2 The review of practice method

Supplementing a systematic review of literature with a review of practice could be a useful methodological invention in the study of certain public administration phenomena. Specifically, in research on phenomena with substantial research interest across fields such as in the case with organizational socialization, it is crucial to evaluate the extent to which academic research being carried out in other fields addresses the core concerns of public administration in practice. Reviews of practice provide such a litmus test. In addition, in studying phenomena with a large aspect of informality such as in the case with organizational socialization

again, it is crucial to consider how that informality is accounted for by public organizations and their administrators in practice. A review of practice again can shed light on this critical question. When it comes to a review of practice on organizational socialization practices, ideal sources include the censuses of organizational socialization practices across public organizations that ask both HR personnel and recruits about socialization practices that organizations administer and recruits experience and in-depth case-studies on these practices. Yet such censuses and case-studies on the public sector are rare, whereas censuses on private firms' socialization practices have been conducted [Louis et al., 1983, Klein and Polin, 2012, Klein et al., 2015].

For a review of practice, I primarily rely on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) surveys and country case-studies by OECD's Directorate for Public Governance. To my knowledge, OECD's Directorate for Public Governance has paid more attention to the issues of learning and development, i.e., the closest concept to organizational socialization in the practitioner literature, among international organizations. In 2016, it rolled out a Strategic Human Resource Management Survey which collected HRM information from 38 member-countries, non-members, and accession countries. Among the information collected include human resource management priorities, human resource strategy and planning, career development and promotion, and human resource management at senior levels. Some questions of the survey were updated in 2019. OECD reported some of the survey findings in its Government at a Glance 2017 report [OECD, 2017a]. In addition, OECD launched its 2014 Survey of National Schools of Government via its Global Network of Schools of Government to collect data on their operations, functions, and activities. Findings were subsequently reported in a 2017 report [OECD, 2017b]. Furthermore, OECD entirely devotes the discussion of

skills and public values in its 2017 report on "Skills for a High Performing Civil Service" [OECD, 2017c]. In addition, the country-specific information on learning and development are scattered throughout OCED's country case-studies which range from member-countries such as Belgium to non-members such as Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Kazakhstan. The review of practice also draws upon these country case-studies. The review of practice analyzes secondary data from above surveys, their corresponding publications, and country case-studies from the perspective of organizational socialization, attempting to answer questions on how civil services approach recruit socialization, practices they use in this regard, outcomes they are interested in, and their main concerns.

Despite its depth and breadth of coverage on learning and development, the OECD data has limitations that restrict my conclusions drawn based on it. First, it focuses primarily on formal socialization practices of organizations such as classroom-based training and formal mentoring programs. Therefore, it does not shed much light on informal socialization practices of organizations such as informal social gatherings that organizations facilitate to welcome recruits and foster their social network formations. Therefore, I restrict my inferences from the OECD data to formal organizational socialization practices. Second, my discussion of the relative presence or absence of specific socialization practices in the public sector is based upon the OECD surveys and country case-studies that explore learning and development among other topics such as public employment size. Yet the specialized surveys of socialization activities, programs, and policies by civil services are best suited to shed light on the actual practice in the public sector as suggested above. Therefore, my discussion of relative presence or absence of specific socialization practices in the public sector should be viewed in this light. Nonetheless, the presence or the lack of discussion in the OECD publications on specific socialization practices

should reflect priorities and concerns of civil services with respect to socialization to an extent, and I have treated it as such in my discussion. In addition, this review draws upon the OECD surveys that did ask civil services and the national schools of governments about their learning and development priorities and actual practices rather than purely on expert discussion of how civil services should conduct socialization. Third, the external validity of conclusions drawn from the OECD data should be treated carefully. The OECD data covers only a few non-member countries, and whether its findings reflect socialization practices in non-member countries especially developing countries needs verification by future studies.

## 2.4 Systematic review of the academic literature

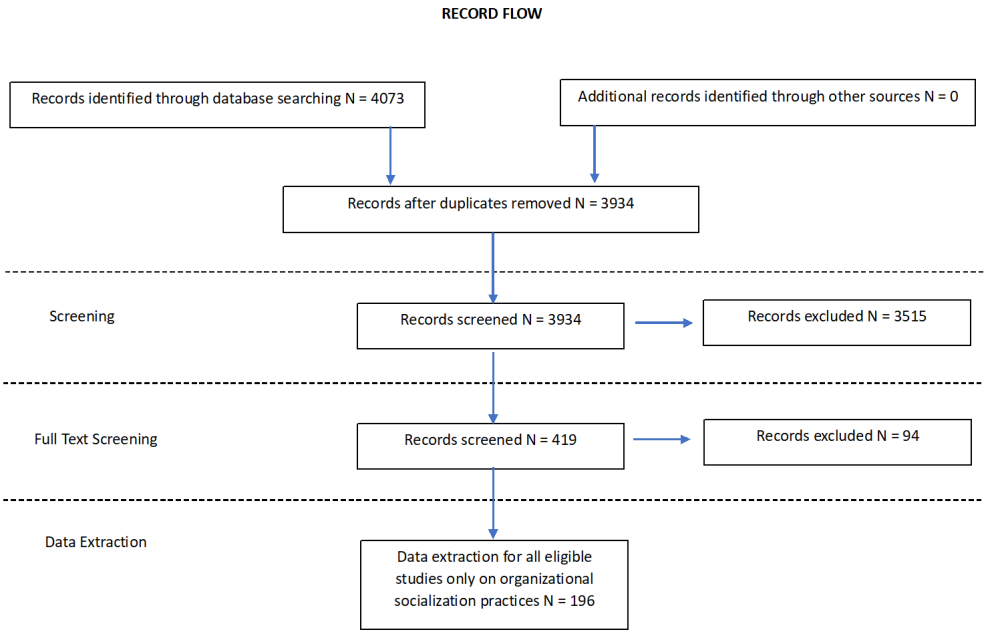
This section presents main findings from the systematic review of the academic literature. After briefly discussing the number of eligible studies in my sample, I present their general characteristics, highlighting study objectives, methodological traditions, contexts and populations as well as study antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators.

### 2.4.1 Study sample

My final sample includes 196 eligible studies. As shown in a PRISMA flowchart in Figure 2.2, I identified 4,073 studies through database searches using the different combinations of search terms. Since my search terms included terms that describe organizational phenomena which may overlap with organizational socialization such as role and work relationships, a lot of studies were identified. After duplicates were removed, 3,934 studies remained. At Rapid Screening Phase, I

screened through the titles and abstracts of all these studies of which 419 were retained and 3,515 were excluded. At Full Text Screening phase, I screened through the texts of 419 studies of which 325 studies were retained and 94 studies were excluded. Therefore, I was left with 325 studies on organizational socialization. However, this included studies that investigate the different aspects of organizational socialization rather than organizational socialization practices such as social interactions with supervisors and co-workers or the proactive behaviors of recruits. Therefore, at the Data Extraction Phase, I extracted data from 196 eligible studies on organizational socialization practices that make up my final sample. I present finding from these 196 studies below.

Figure 2.2: PRISMA flowchart




## 2.4.2 Publications

The role of organizational practices in recruit socialization is an under-studied topic in public administration despite it being a sustained research interest in

adjacent fields. Nearly 40% of all published studies in my sample haven been published in mainstream management journals, followed by 20% in organizational psychology and behavior and at a distant, 5.6% in communication (Figure 2.3). The review finds only a handful of public administration studies on the socialization practices of public organizations - most notably by Oberfield that explore the influence of training among other things on recruits [Oberfield, 2009, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]. This finding echoes a recent review of the public administration literature on organizational socialization which shows that it focuses on "passive" socialization by organizational and job experiences or the influence of extra-organizational socialization such as religious and political affiliations, etc [Moyson et al., 2018, Perry, 2021]. The rest of the studies have been published in other fields including education and health.

Together, various fields express a sustained interest in organizational socialization practices over years as shown in Figure 2.4. Research on organizational socialization practices began in late 1970s and by 2021, there are nearly 200 studies altogether (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.3: Publication fields

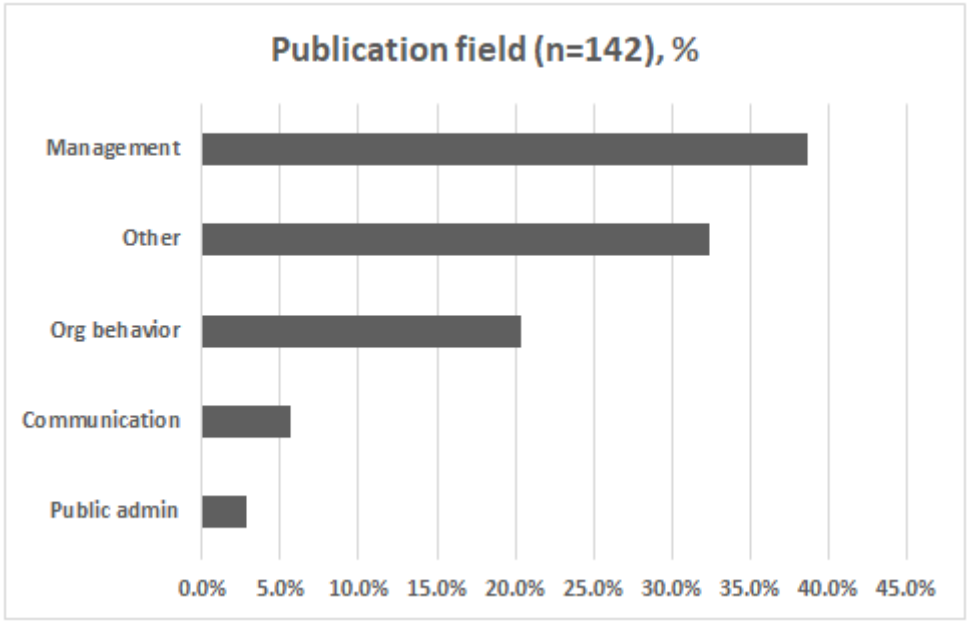
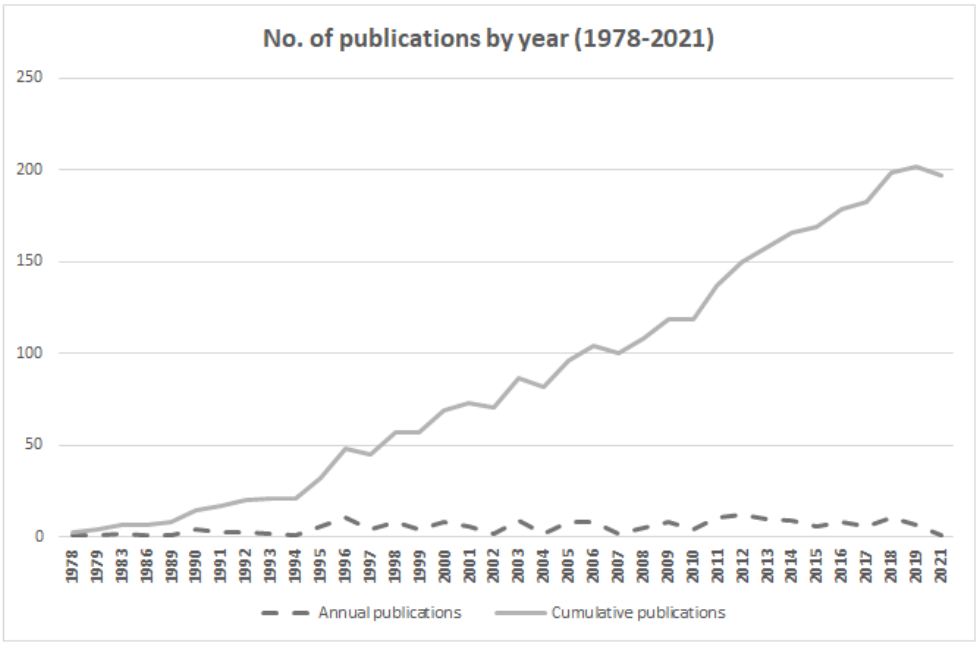


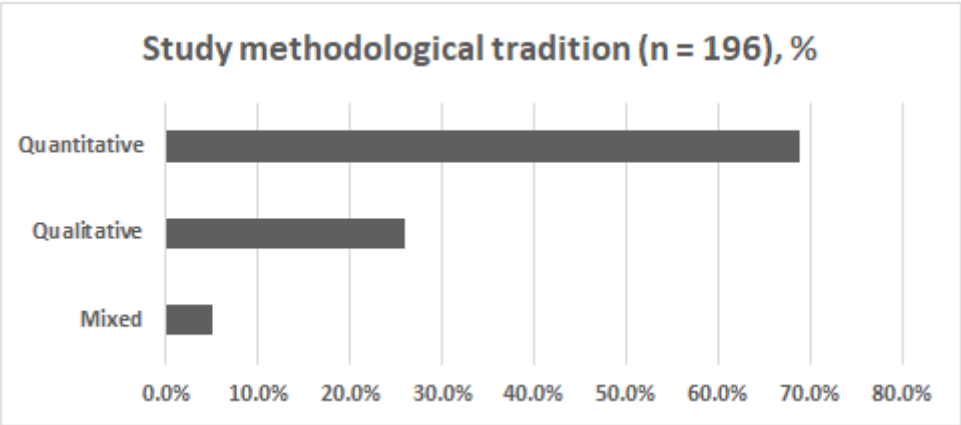

Figure 2.4: No. of publications by year (1978-2021)



### 2.4.3 Puzzles, methods, contexts, and populations

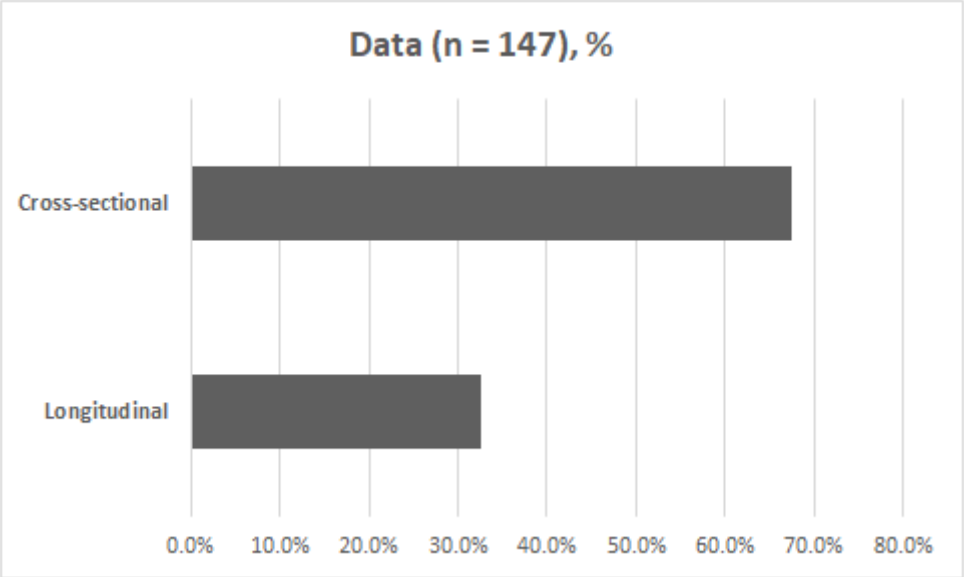
Most studies are interested in the effects of organizational socialization practices and conduct their research using quantitative methods and cross-sectional data. The primary objective of just over two-thirds of all studies in my sample is to evaluate the effects of organizational socialization practices, whereas the rest either conceptualizes or describes them. In terms of methodological traditions, the majority of studies (68.9%) use quantitative methods and mixed-method studies are rare (Figure 2.5). Among quantitative studies using surveys, a majority (67.3%) use cross-sectional data (Figure 2.6). The reliance of studies on cross-sectional data means that their findings can only be interpreted as highlighting correlations between organizational socialization practices and recruits' outcomes. Thus, there is a need for an increased use of diverse methodological traditions and research designs that can rigorously estimate the causal relationships of organizational socialization practices to recruits' outcomes.

Figure 2.5: Methodological traditions




The organizational socialization practices of public organizations especially in developing countries are under-studied. Half of all empirical studies were conducted

Figure 2.6: Data




in North America alone (Figure 2.7). There is no single study that explores organizational socialization in Africa continent. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of study samples (77.2%) come from private firms (Figure 2.8). 37 studies do not clarify where their study samples come from, indicating the need for enhanced transparency in reporting practices.

### 2.4.4 Antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators

In terms of organizational socialization practices or study antecedents, socialization tactics have dominated the literature with only few studies exploring specific on-boarding activities. 39.3 percent of studies focus on abstract socialization tactics (Figure 2.9). 29.1 and 18.4 percents of studies respectively focus on training and the availability and helpfulness of various socialization practices. Only 11.2% of studies explore mentoring. The remainder of studies in other category are a

Figure 2.7: Study regions

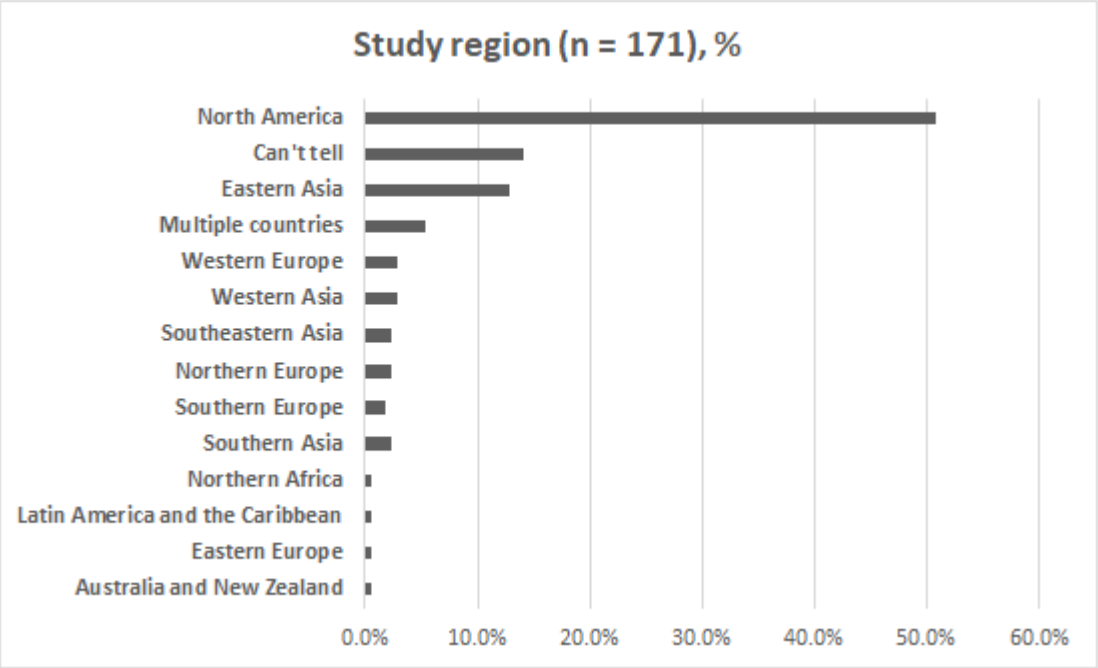
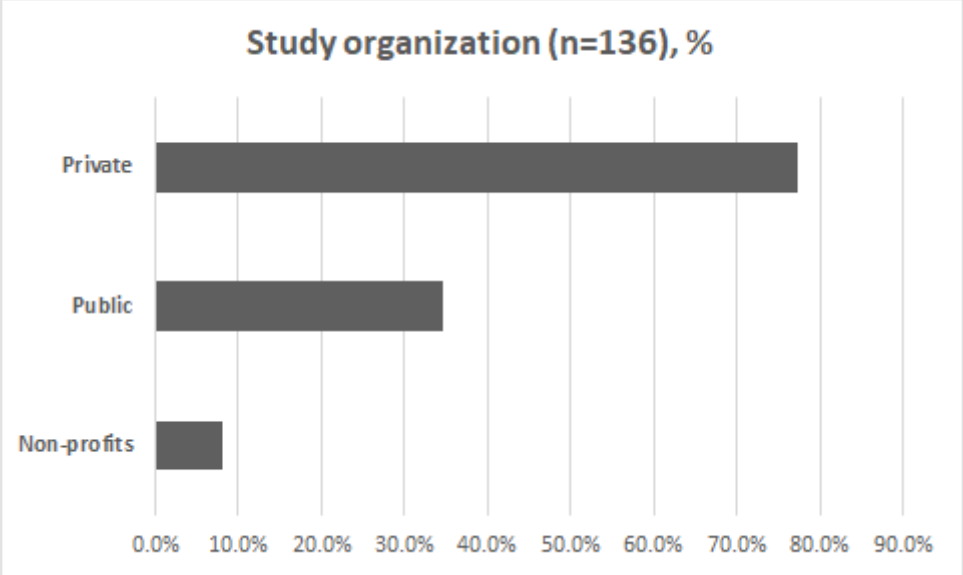
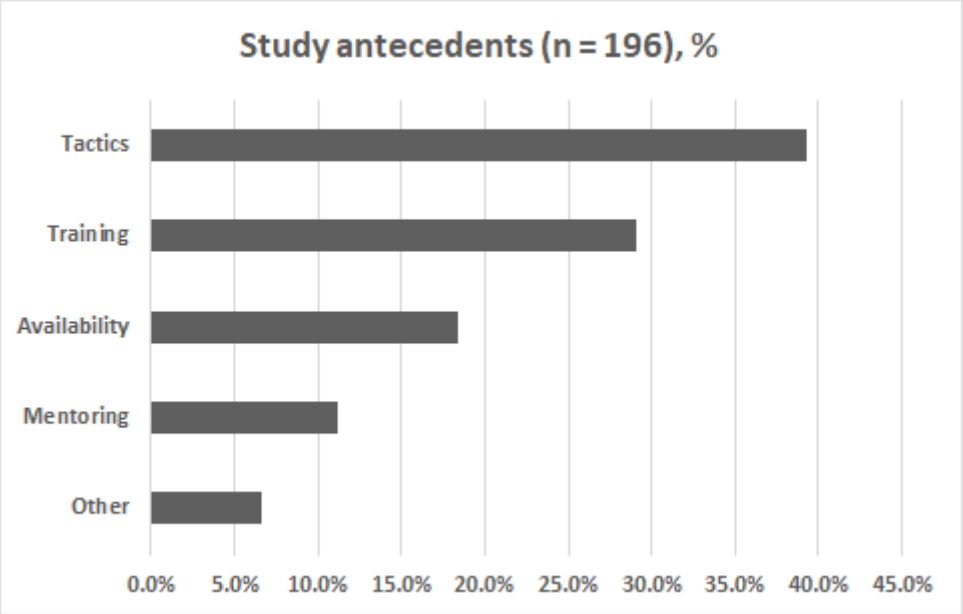



Figure 2.8: Organizational contexts



handful of studies on the effect of social media and intranet use on recruit socialization outcomes. These findings thus echo the call by other scholars for research to move away from abstract socialization tactics towards specific on-boarding activities [Ashforth et al., 2007, Klein and Polin, 2012, Saks and Gruman, 2012]. In addition, there exists a need for an increased attention to the role of technology in socialization practices.

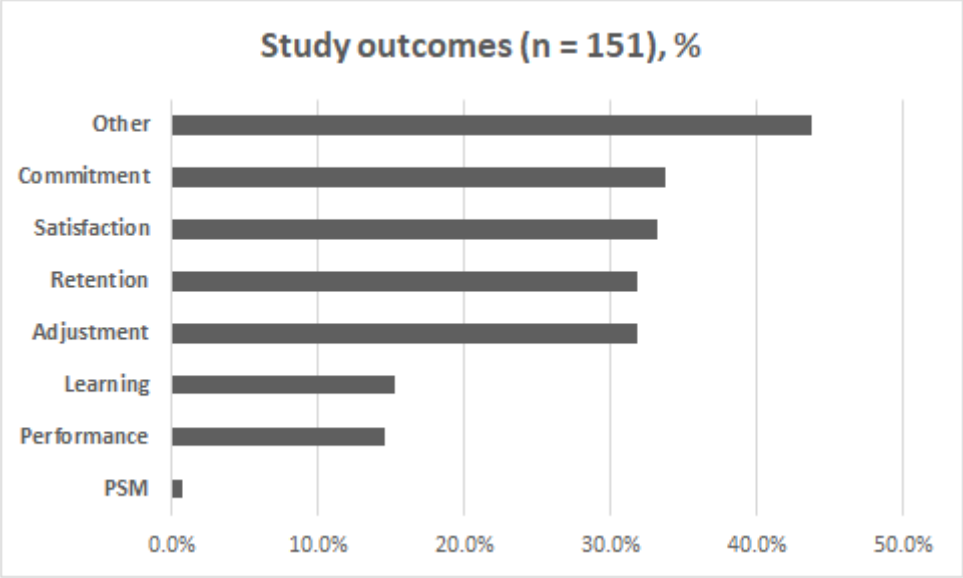
Figure 2.9: Study antecedents




Research is interested in measuring the effects of organizational socialization practices on learning outcomes as well as motivations, attitudes, and behaviors. Nearly a third of studies treat learning as the final outcome of organizational socialization practices and measure it in terms of adjustment outcomes. Another 15.2% also treat learning as a final outcome but measure it in terms of content domains. About a third of studies respectively explore organizational socialization practices' influence on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and retention. 14.6% of

studies are interested in the effects of socialization practices on performance. However, only one study explores the effect of socialization practices on public service motivation. The rest of the studies in other category (43.7%) explore myriad outcomes including the various dimensions of well-being such as stress, alienation, work withdrawal, burnout, and work engagement as well as organizational identification and career outcomes. The salience of organizational socialization practices for crucial public-sector outcomes such as PSM, policy preferences, and discretionary behaviors remains largely unexplored. An exception is a few studies by Oberfield that collectively investigate the influence of selection as well as formal and informal socialization on identities, attitudes, and motivations of newly recruited police cadets and social workers.

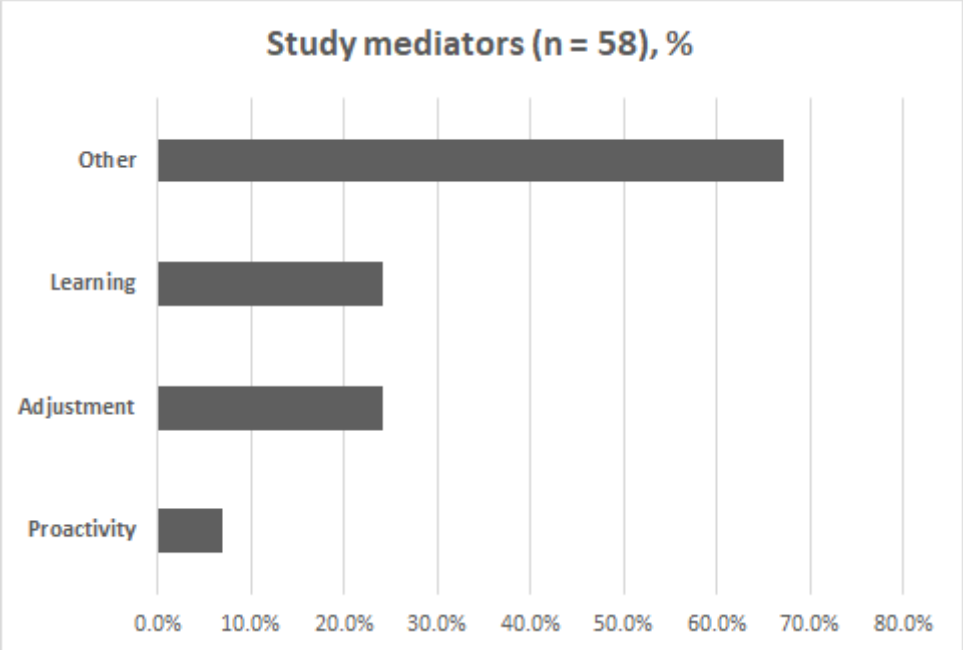
Figure 2.10: Study outcomes




It is crucial for studies to investigate mediating mechanisms or the proximal outcomes of socialization as final outcomes such as job satisfaction can be affected by factors other than organizational socialization practices. Yet fewer than a third of

studies investigate mediating mechanisms (Figure 2.11). Nearly half of all studies exploring mediation channels focus on the mediating role of learning measured in either adjustment or learning domains. A few studies (6.9%) explore how organizational socialization practices affect recruits' outcomes by facilitating their proactive behaviors. The remaining studies in the other category explore the mediating roles of such factors as social networks, the ease of technological usage, and stress.

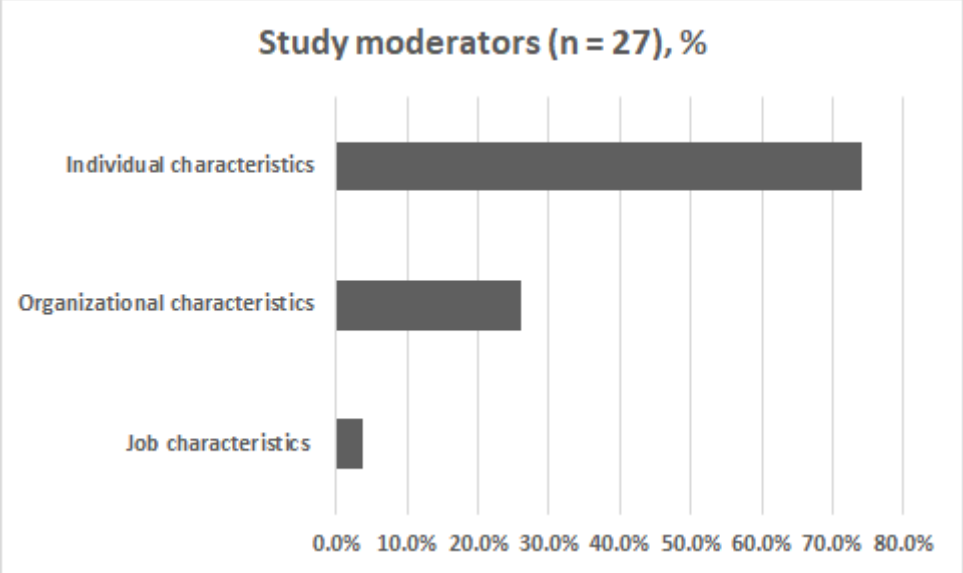
Figure 2.11: Study mediators




Even fewer studies explore how various factors may moderate the effects of organizational socialization practices (Figure 2.12). Of these, the moderating role of individual characteristics (74.1%) is the most frequently explored. Individual characteristics explored include gender, age, education, work experience, and psychological attributes among others. How organizational and job characteristics may moderate the effects of organizational socialization practices are under-explored:

only 25.9% and 3.7% of studies respectively investigate them. Organizational characteristics explored include organizational culture and climate, and job characteristics explored include the novelty of job.

Figure 2.12: Study moderators




### 2.4.5 Summary of the systematic review

I conclude this section by discussing its two main findings. First, the practices of public organizations in recruit socialization are an under-studied topic in the literature. Second, the role of on-boarding activities in recruit socialization is largely unexplored.

The practices of public organizations in recruit socialization are an under-studied topic in the literature. Although there is sustained research interest on organizational socialization practices across fields over six decades, most of that research has been conducted on private firms outside of public administration in adjacent

fields. The public administration research on organizational socialization practices and recruit socialization is only at an early stage. The evidence on how public organizations socialize recruits - particularly in developing countries and specifically in Africa continent - is thin. In addition, most studies explore how organizational socialization tactics influence recruit socialization, and a few studies that explore actual on-boarding activities have focused on only the availability of various on-boarding activities, orientation/ training, and mentoring. Thus, we still do not know much about various other organizational socialization practices. The summary of the systematic review is provided in the following Table 2.3

Table 2.3: Summary of the systematic review of the literature

| |
|---|
| The systematic review of the literature includes 196 eligible studies. |
| How public organizations socialize recruits is under-researched in the literature despite sustained research interest on organizational socialization practices across fields over six decades. |
| Most evidence on organizational socialization practices come from private firms in developed countries and is published outside of public administration in adjacent fields. There is little evidence on the organizational socialization practices of the public sectors in developing countries, specifically in Africa. |
| Most studies explore organizational socialization tactics. A few studies that explore actual on-boarding activities focus on the availability of various on-boarding activities, orientation/ training, and mentoring. Thus, there is much that we still do not know about other on-boarding activities. |

## 2.5 Narrative review of the academic literature

This section provides a narrative discussion of the literature, drawing upon selected, influential studies. It is organized around main antecedents explored in the literature, highlighting major conclusions and outstanding puzzles. I first discuss research on socialization tactics and its main conclusions. Next, I discuss research

on the availability of various on-boarding activities across organizations. Afterwards, I discuss research focusing on specific on-boarding activities, particularly orientation sessions/ training programs and mentoring.

### 2.5.1 Research on socialization tactics

To re-introduce, the concept of socialization tactics describes the structural features of the overall socialization process that organizations make recruits go through. Van Maanen and Schein highlight six bi-polar "socialization tactics" by which organizations influence the structural characteristics of recruits' socialization process [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. Organizations may socialize recruits collectively or individually, isolate recruits from the workplace during socialization or expose them immediately to the workplace, may use a time-table of progression for recruits, may make them go through a pre-determined sequence of or random events, may use organizational veterans to facilitate recruit socialization, and finally, may embrace or discard recruits' pre-entry personal characteristics. The concept of socialization tactics, therefore, describes the structural features of the overall socialization process for recruits. Despite its seminal contribution to the literature, it does not illuminate on specific on-boarding activities that make up and contribute to these structural features.

An earlier research interest is how socialization tactics influence the role orientation of recruits. Van Maanen and Schein hypothesize that they determine if recruits adopt a custodial or an innovative orientation [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]. In a custodial role orientation, recruits adopt the role as prescribed to them akin to the concept of rule-following in public administration. Instead, recruits change the prescribed content and role in an innovative orientation akin

to the concept of discretionary behaviors in public administration. Van Maanen and Schein hypothesize that when organizations socialize recruits collectively away from the workplace, use a time-table of progression and a predetermined sequence of events, and deploy organizational veterans to facilitate recruit socialization and discard recruits' preexisting characteristics, recruits are more likely to adopt their role as prescribed to them.

In the first and influential empirical test of Van Maanen and Schein's socialization tactics framework, Jones makes three propositions. First, he argues that socialization tactics may be arranged in a three-factor model [Jones, 1986]. Whether organizations socialize recruits collectively and isolate them from the workplace during socialization concern the context of recruit socialization. Whether organizations use a time-table of progression and a predetermined sequence of events concern the content of socialization. And finally, whether they use organizational insiders as facilitators and embrace recruits' pre-existing characteristics concern the social dimension of socialization. Second, in addition to this three-factor model, Jones proposes that the opposite poles of socialization tactics can be grouped together in a gestalt. Thus, when organizations socialize recruits collectively away from the workplace, use a time-table with a predetermined sequence of events, deploy organizational veterans as facilitators, and embrace recruits' pre-existing characteristics, Jones argue that organizations structure or institutionalize the socialization process of recruits. Otherwise, they individualize the socialization process of recruits. Third, Jones proposes that an institutionalized or structured process results in a custodial role orientation by recruits.

Jones's study has three important findings. First, an institutionalized socialization

process was positively related to a custodial role orientation by recruits supporting Jones' hypothesis [Jones, 1986]. Second, the social dimension of tactics, i.e., organizations using organizational veterans as facilitators and embracing recruits' pre-existing characteristics, was the most influential on recruit adjustment such as role orientation, role conflict, and role ambiguity as well as work attitudes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to quit. Whether organizations socialized recruits collectively and away from the workplace, i.e., the context dimension of socialization tactics, were the least influential on recruit adjustment and attitudes. Third, the pre-entry self-efficacy of recruits, i.e., recruits' beliefs in their competency to discharge their role, moderated the influence of socialization tactics. When the self-efficacy of recruits was low, an institutionalized socialization process was more strongly related to a custodial role orientation. The importance of Jones's study notwithstanding, Ashforth, Saks, and Tee make several cautions in using Jones' proposed scale in testing the effects of socialization tactics [Jones, 1986, Ashforth et al., 1997]. In their test, they find that the original 6-factor model predicted outcomes better than the 3-factor model and the 3-factor model predicted outcomes better than the 1-factor model. In addition, whereas Van Maanen and Schein originally conceive investiture tactics to be primarily about the organization embracing or discarding recruits' pre-existing characteristics, Jones measures them by social support [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979].

Subsequent studies have validated initial findings by Jones, while attempting to explore a potential trade-off between innovation and desirable attitudes [Jones, 1986]. Like Jones, Ashforth and Saks find that recruits who experienced an institutionalized socialization process were more satisfied, committed, and likely to identify with the organization [Jones, 1986, Ashford and Black, 1996]. In addition, they were less conflicted and ambiguous about their role, experienced fewer stress

symptoms, and expressed less intention to leave the organization. However, they were also less innovative. The authors, however, caution against concluding that an institutionalized socialization process involves a trade-off between positive work attitudes and innovation. Instead, learning content imparted through socialization tactics can either encourage or discourage innovation. Therefore, an institutionalized socialization process may impart learning content that encourages recruits to innovate. In fact, Allen and Meyer find that different socialization tactics influenced commitment and innovation [Allen and Meyer, 1990]. Whereas embracing recruits' pre-existing characteristics encouraged commitment by recruits in the first year of organizational tenure, using organizational veterans to facilitate recruit socialization discouraged their innovation. Therefore, the authors conclude that by using different tactics, organizations can achieve both commitment and innovation from recruits.

A few studies demonstrate recruits' fit with the organization as an important adjustment outcome of socialization tactics. Two studies use both the subjective and objective measures of organizational fit to explore socialization tactics' influence on it. Cable and Parsons find organizations using a time-table with a predetermined sequence of events (the content dimension) and using organizational veterans as facilitators and embracing recruits' pre-existing characteristics (the social dimension) to be related to both perceived and actual fit with the organization [Cable and Parsons, 2001]. Their findings thus collaborate Jones's study on the relative salience of the content and social dimensions of tactics compared to the context dimension [Jones, 1986]. Another study finds embracing recruits' preexisting characteristics to be associated with perceived fit, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment [Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004]. In addition, perceived fit mediated the relation of this tactic to job satisfaction and commitment.

Two meta-analyses published around the same time reach similar conclusions that affirm the beneficial effects of an institutionalized socialization process and the mediating role of adjustment outcomes. The meta-analyses by Bauer et al. and Saks et al. propose a model of socialization in which socialization tactics affect job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and intention to quit/stay [Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. In addition, Saks et al. include role orientation as an outcome of socialization [Saks et al., 2007]. The two studies slightly differ in their proposed mediators between tactics and the final outcomes of attitudes and behaviors. Bauer et al. propose recruits' clarity about their role, their competency beliefs, and the perception of being socially integrated as primary mediators or the "proximal outcomes" of socialization, whereas Saks et al. propose recruit ambiguity about their role, their perception of conflicting expectations on their role, and perceived fit as mediators [Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. Nonetheless, both studies find an institutionalized socialization process to be beneficial for job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and intention to stay and proximal adjustment outcomes to mediate these relationships. They also find potential study design effects: the relations between tactics and outcomes were stronger for cross-sectional and school-to-work samples. Finally, in echoing a call by Ashforth, Saks, and Tee, both studies call for the usage of a 6-factor model in measuring tactics rather than its 3- or 1-factor models [Ashforth et al., 1997].

Critiques of studies on socialization tactics generated further research that highlights the influence of socialization tactics on the proactive behaviors of recruits. Critics charge research on socialization tactics to be one-dimensional for its emphasis on the role of organizations in socialization and its silence on the role of

individual agency (e.g. [Ashford and Black, 1996, Morrison, 1993, Miller and Jablin, 1991]). Instead, recruits can be active participants in their socialization process by proactively engaging with it such as through information and feedback seeking, relationship building, and positive framing. [1] Two studies find recruits' proactive engagement or proactivity to be in part a function of socialization tactics themselves: an institutionalized socialization process was associated with encouraging recruit proactive behaviors [Saks and Ashforth, 1997, Gruman et al., 2006]. In addition, proactive behaviors mediated the relations of tactics to socialization outcomes. Proactive behaviors also have been found to moderate the effects of socialization tactics on socialization outcomes. It seems that depending on specific proactive behaviors and socialization outcomes, proactivity either complement or substitute the effects of tactics on socialization outcomes [Gruman et al., 2006, Kim et al., 2005]. On the other hand, Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks show both socialization tactics and proactive behaviors to affect performance, satisfaction, organizational identification, role orientation, and intention to quit partially through learning [Ashforth et al., 2007].

Although research shows the salience of socialization tactics for learning, attitudes and behaviors, research on their long-term career effects has been few. In proposing a social capital-based model of how socialization may affect career outcomes, Fang, Duffy, and Shaw hypothesize that socialization tactics by facilitating social networks and resources can influence career outcomes such as satisfaction with one's career, promotion, and salary increase [Fang et al., 2011]. A study by Jesus Bravo and co-authors demonstrates that indeed an institutionalized socialization process affects the career strategies of recruits by fostering social relations with

[1] A large strand of the literature on proactive behaviors and socialization exists. However, given this study's focus on the role of organizations in socialization, this literature is largely out of scope.

recruits' managers and peers [JesÃºs Bravo et al., 2003].

### 2.5.2 Research on the availability of on-boarding activities

Only a few studies have systematically investigated the availability of on-boarding activities across organizations although organizations routinely conduct such activities. A recent survey of private firms by Klein and Polin in collaboration with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) shows that 81 percent of HR managers in their sample reported having some on-boarding activities in their organizations [Klein and Polin, 2012]. Although comparable statistics for the public sector are unavailable, anecdotal evidence suggests that public organizations also use on-boarding activities. Yet so far only a few studies have systematically explored the availability of on-boarding activities. This section discusses the findings from these studies. The next section then discusses studies that focus on specific on-boarding activities particularly orientation/ training and mentoring.

Earliest studies using surveys of firms show that firms used various on-boarding activities although their availability differed, and when available, most respondents considered them to be helpful. The most available on-boarding activities at least in the samples of these studies tend to be informal - involving managers, senior co-workers, and peers [Louis et al., 1983, Nelson and Quick, 1991]. Among formal on-boarding activities, onsite orientation programs were the most available. Respondents reported available on-boarding activities to be helpful, and these activities were found to at least modestly benefit socialization outcomes. However, cross-sectional designs and self-reported responses limit these studies. For instance, they found mentoring to be associated with negative socialization

outcomes. The authors argue that this could be due to reverse causation where recruits already struggling with adjustment sought out more help from mentors. Yet cross-sectional designs do not enable these studies to disentangle these puzzling findings. In another study, Holton expands the list of on-boarding activities used in earlier studies [Holton Ill, 2001]. It finds that jobs that utilized the full extent of skills and abilities of recruits to be the most beneficial for socialization outcomes - a finding that resonates with general findings from job design research. Echoing the findings of earlier studies, it finds the most available on-boarding activities to be reportedly helpful and related to socialization outcomes. Nonetheless, these studies do not elaborate on the key dimensions of on-boarding activities such as their purpose, level, content, timing, and technology, given their broad scope.

Elaborating on earlier studies, a recent study finds that using a variety of on-boarding activities and making them formal and required were associated with the extent of socialization although the study also raises questions regarding timing. Using Inform-Welcome-Guide framework, Klein, Polin, and Sutton explore what on-boarding activities are commonly available, how they are made available, and when they are offered [Klein et al., 2015]. They find that organizations reported providing more on-boarding activities than what recruits reported receiving, the usage of a variety of on-boarding activities was associated with the extent of recruits being socialized, and formal and required on-boarding activities were reportedly more helpful and positively associated with the extent of socialization. Nonetheless, the significant relations of earlier on-boarding to reported helpfulness and the extent of socialization was found only for a few on-boarding activities. This questions the merit of offering on-boarding activities early as the study finds that most activities were offered during the first day on the job. The findings of this study seem to suggest that offering a variety of on-boarding activities, height-

ening the learning orientation of recruits by making them formal or required, and their careful timing can be beneficial in socializing recruits. They also collaborate earlier findings that on-boarding activities, when available, tend to be reportedly helpful.

Recent studies have highlighted the salience of conducting on-boarding activities at the different levels of organization and imparting different learning content. Bauer suggests that organizations may on-board recruits at four levels: compliance, clarification, culture, and connection [Bauer, 2010] . Here, the author is not talking about on-boarding activities conducted at the different levels of organizations rather on-boarding activities imparting the increasingly different depths of learning to recruits from targeting solely compliance to ensuring recruits' connections. Meyer and Bartels test this framework and find that indeed recruits who were on-boarded at the highest level of connection reported higher levels of satisfaction, commitment, and perceived support from the organization [Meyer and Bartels, 2017]. On the other hand, Cesario and Chambel hypothesize that recruits may be welcomed by organization, managers, and co-workers and show that welcome conducted at all three levels were positively associated with commitment and work engagement [CesÃ¡rio and Chambel, 2019]. In addition, welcome by organization and managers had stronger effects, and they were closely related suggesting their potential common determinants such as organizational culture or type.

### 2.5.3 Research on orientation/ training

This section presents a few existing studies on orientation sessions/ training programs and socialization. It discusses research on traditional, social-based orienta-

tion/ training as well as few studies on the emerging role of technology in orienting/ training recruits.

Research exploring the socializing effects of training reports mixed findings ranging from training having effects to no effect on recruit socialization outcomes. In three studies, Oberfield explores the influence of extra- and intra-organizational factors including the sources of formal and informal socialization on newly recruited police cadets and social workers in a U.S. city [Oberfield, 2009, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]. Collectively, they find evidence for the influence of both on recruits' identities, attitudes, and motivations. The pre-entry characteristics of recruits were the strongest predictors of recruits' outcomes, and they continued to cast influence over a 2-year period of the studies. Training as a formal socialization practice was also associated with recruits' outcomes. Quite remarkably, Alessandri and co-authors find that police cadets' personality changed during a three-year cadet training program [Alessandri et al., 2020]. Positive personality changes such as an increase in openness and consciousness were positively related to commitment and identification with the organization while negative personality changes such as an increase in neuroticism were negatively related to these outcomes. In one of the earliest studies to investigate training and socialization, Saks explores the influence of training on new accountants' socialization and finds that training amount was related to satisfaction, commitment, intention to quit, ability to cope, and the various dimensions of performance [Saks, 1996]. In addition, reported helpfulness was also related to satisfaction, commitment, and intention to quit independent of training amount. In another study, Saks explores the mediating and moderating role of recruits' competency beliefs between training and their ability to cope, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit, and performance using again a sample of new accountants [Saks, 1995]. He finds that

when recruits' beliefs about their competency was low, training was more positively related to socialization outcomes. Collaborating some of Saks's findings, Kammeyer-Mueller and co-authors find orientation and training to be positively related with commitment and negatively related with withdrawal from work [Saks, 1995, Saks, 1996, Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003]. However, orientation and training were found to be only modestly related to the newly hired's adjustment in a study with a sample of newly recruited IT professionals [Sharma and Stol, 2020]. In another study using a sample of new recruits at a Fortune 200 company, Anakwe and Greenhaus find no significant relations between training and recruit adjustment [Anakwe and Greenhaus, 1999]. Therefore, it seems that depending on the study sample and the exact nature of training under investigation, the effect of training on socialization outcomes varies. This demonstrates the importance of paying attention to the key dimensions of training under study to draw valid conclusions about when training results in effective socialization.

So far, studies show that training that purposefully targets at managing recruit expectations is beneficial for their stress, commitment, and performance. The adjacent literature on recruitment and selection has demonstrated the importance of realistically portraying job to candidates (so-called realistic job previews (RJP)) for their later adjustment after recruitment. Taking clues from these findings, a few studies explore if conveying a realistic picture of the job to recruits during orientation and training would affect their attitudes and behaviors. Barksdale and co-authors find that conveying a realistic picture of job and role positively influenced recruit commitment and performance in their analysis of secondary, longitudinal data [Barksdale Jr et al., 2003]. Fan and Wanous show that Realistic Orientation for New Employees Stress (ROPES) orientation program contributed to Asian students' academic and social adjustment by lowering expectations and

stress in an experimental study with a sample of new Asian students in a U.S. university [Fan and Wanous, 2008]. Another experimental study demonstrates that directly targeting expectations instead of through conveying a realistic picture of job worked as well as RJP in lowering expectations [Buckley et al., 1998]. These studies together thus demonstrate that managing recruit expectations should be one purpose of orientation and training.

Finally, I conclude this section by presenting few existing studies on the emerging role of technology in recruit orientation and training. Technology has pervaded throughout organizational processes including recruit socialization. On the one hand, the use of technology in recruit socialization can potentially save costs, encourage recruit initiative and ownership in their socialization process, and be catered to the unique needs of each recruit. On the other hand, the use of technology in place of traditional, social-based on-boarding activities may impede recruits' social learning and integration and exacerbate their status as outsiders.

Technology alone may not be an adequate alternative to social-based orientation. In a quasi-experiment setting, Wesson and Gogus compare the effect of a computer-based orientation to that of a traditional, social-based orientation on recruit learning and attitudes [Wesson and Celile Itir, 2005]. Respondents who were on-boarded using a computer-based orientation reported poorer learning outcomes in social knowledge but not in factual knowledge. In addition, poorer learning outcomes in these respondents resulted in lower satisfaction and commitment. In a similar study, Chen explores the causal mechanisms behind recruits' e-learning systems use and socialization in high vs. low human interaction contexts [Chen, 2012]. Overall, the study finds that e-learning systems use by recruits was posi-

tively related to learning and job adaptation. Thus, it is less pessimistic about the role of technology in orientation. Although some studies have shared a cautious news about technology substitution in place of traditional, social-based orientation, more research is necessary before we can draw valid conclusions.

### 2.5.4 Mentoring

Although there is a dedicated literature on mentoring, there are relatively few studies connecting mentoring with socialization. My focus is on formal mentoring that organizations utilize to facilitate recruit socialization rather than informal mentoring in which mentors and recruits select into a mentoring relationship. Informal mentoring, unlike other informal on-boarding activities, should be treated cautiously in studying recruit socialization because informal mentoring relationships may begin months and even a few years after organizational entry and be sustained over time. In addition, it may be more important for later-stage career outcomes rather than the early role adjustment of recruits. Hence, informal mentoring should arguably be studied under general organizational learning rather than organizational socialization. Nonetheless, to the extent that studies explore both formal and informal mentoring and informal mentoring helps illuminate formal mentoring facilitated by organizations, they are reviewed here. Otherwise, this section focuses on a few existing studies on formal mentoring and socialization.

In general, research shows mentoring to be beneficial for recruit learning. The dedicated literature on mentoring conceptualizes two ways in which mentors can benefit proteges [Chao, 2008]. They can serve career and psycho-social functions to recruits. Through career function, mentors facilitate proteges' learning on the

job and career advancement. The psycho-social function of mentors concerns with role modeling, psychological and social support, and facilitating protege's identification and integration with the organization. In a study comparing formal mentoring, informal mentoring, and the lack of mentoring, Chao and co-authors show that informally mentored respondents reported the higher levels of learning across different learning domains/ areas than the formally mentored and the formally mentored reported the higher levels of learning than the non-mentored [Chao et al., 1992]. This suggests not only that mentoring is beneficial to learning but also selection in informal mentoring may facilitate a better fit between the mentor and the protege, thus resulting in better learning outcomes. Indeed, Bowman, Mazerolle, and Kilbourne in their qualitative study of junior faculty mentoring conclude that formal mentoring was helpful only when a relationship developed between the mentor and the protege [Bowman et al., 2018]. Other studies have collaborated on the importance of mentoring for recruit learning [Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992, Swap et al., 2001].

Beside learning, research shows mentoring to positively influence recruit attitudes and behaviors. A study finds spending time with mentors to be associated with better organizational fit for recruits [Chatman, 1991]. In the study discussed above by Chao et al., informally mentored respondents reported higher job satisfaction and salaries than the non-mentored as well as reported higher salaries than the formally mentored [Chao et al., 1992]. Nonetheless, Lankau and Scandura find the psycho-social function of mentors to be positively related with intention to leave the organization despite the career function and role modeling by mentors positively affecting learning, satisfaction, and retention [Lankau and Scandura, 2002]. This mixed finding again highlights the importance of longitudinal designs in research to disentangle the potential challenges of reverse causation and joint

determinations.

Finally, since formal mentoring is an individualized mean of socializing recruits, individual characteristics such as gender and race may play crucial roles with important ramifications for organizational diversity issues. In a qualitative study of African American new faculty in predominantly white institutions of higher education, Burden, Harrison, and Hodge discuss a need for mentoring programs for African American new faculty and the training of mentors to sensitize them to unique challenges that minorities face in an organizational setting such as the pressure to conform, marginalization, discrimination, and coping strategies [Burden et al., 2005]. In a study with a sample of overseas interns, Feldman, Folks, and Turnley demonstrate the salience of similarity between mentors and proteges for socialization outcomes [Feldman et al., 1999]. Alarmingly, they find that proteges who differed from their mentors in nationality or gender received less mentoring. These proteges learned less, experienced poorer adjustment, and were less likely to be offered a job by their host organizations at the end of internship.

### 2.5.5 Summary of the narrative review

I conclude this section by discussing key findings from the narrative view of the literature. An overarching finding is that when organizations provide a structured socialization experience through various socialization practices, particularly targeting at recruits' expectations and providing mentors, recruits are likely to adjust and integrate successfully into their new working environments. The literature has focused disproportionately on abstract socialization tactics and their influence on recruit socialization outcomes. An institutionalized or structured socialization

process is shown to relate positively with recruit orienting towards their role as prescribed, their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and retention. Furthermore, learning is shown to mediate between socialization tactics and recruit socialization outcomes. Nonetheless, research on abstract socialization tactics only captures the structural features of recruits' socialization process rather than specific on-boarding activities that contribute to these features.

In comparison to research on socialization tactics, there are few studies exploring specific on-boarding activities. They show that at least private firms use various on-boarding activities. On-boarding activities are reportedly helpful when available. Especially, offering a variety of them, and making them formal and required tend to be beneficial for recruit socialization outcomes. Of myriad on-boarding activities, studies have primarily focused on orientation/ training and mentoring. Training that targets at managing recruits' expectations is shown to be beneficial for their stress, commitment, and performance. Few existing studies make a cautionary note over the emerging use of technology in orienting/ training recruits: technology-based orientation/ training seems to lessen recruit learning of social knowledge compared to traditional, social-based orientation/ training. Beyond this, however, the findings on training have been mixed across studies perhaps due to the lack of attention on the specific dimensions of training under study. Studies show mentoring to be generally beneficial for recruit learning. Above findings on orientation/ training and mentoring notwithstanding, we still do not know much about how other on-boarding activities influence recruit socialization.

A summary of this narrative discussion along with selected studies and their key findings are presented in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Summary of the narrative review of the literature

| **Organizational socialization practices** | **Research** | **Selected studies** |
|---|---|---|
| Socialization tactics | *Focus:*<br>• Van Maanen and Schein (1979)'s six bi-polar socialization tactics framework and their effects on recruits' motivations, attitudes, and behaviors<br>*Main questions:*<br>• How do organizations influence recruits' motivations, attitudes, and behaviors via socialization tactics?<br>*Main findings:*<br>• Many studies use the framework to study the effects of socialization tactics on recruits primarily in private firms.<br>• "Institutionalized" socialization tactics (i.e., a structured socialization process) are associated with recruits adopting their roles as prescribed, and their positive work motivations, attitudes, behaviors.<br>• Some socialization tactics are more influential than others.<br>• Using different socialization tactics, organizations may achieve both commitment and innovation from their workforces.<br>• Institutionalized socialization tactics influence recruits' work motivations, attitudes, behaviors, and career strategies via learning, their proactive behaviors, and social networks.<br>• Socialization tactics framework is too one-dimensional and does not consider the role of individual agency. It also does not illuminate on specific socialization practices organizations use. | Allen and Meyer (1990)<br>Ashforth and Saks (1996)<br>Ashforth, Saks, and Tee (1997)<br>Ashforth, Sluss, and Saks (2007)<br>Cable and Parsons (2001)<br>Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004)<br>Fang, Duffy, and Shaw (2011)<br>Gruman et al. (2006)<br>Jesus Bravo et al. (2003)<br>Jones (1986)<br>Kim et al. (2005)<br>Saks and Ashforth (1997)<br>Van Maanen and Schein (1979) |
| The availability of on-boarding activities | *Focus:*<br>▪ The availability and helpfulness of on-boarding activities across private firms<br>*Main questions:*<br>▪ What on-boarding activities are available across private firms? How helpful are they in socializing recruits?<br>*Main findings:*<br>▪ Only a few studies explore the availability and helpfulness of on-boarding activities.<br>▪ Firms use various on-boarding activities. However, their availability differs, and when available, they are reportedly helpful. | Bauer (2010)<br>Holton (2001)<br>Klein, Polin, and Sutton (2015)<br>Louis et al. (1983)<br>Meyer and Bartels (2017)<br>Nelson and Quick (1991)<br>Romzek (1990) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ▪ Using a variety of on-boarding activities and making them required and formal are associated with their reported helpfulness and the extent of socialization.<br>▪ Providing on-boarding activities early may not matter.<br>▪ On-boarding activities conducted at the different levels of organizations may impart different learning. | |
| Orientation/ training | *Focus:*<br>▪ The influence of orientation/ training on recruits' socialization<br>*Main questions*<br>▪ How do orientation/ training sessions influence recruits' motivations, attitudes, and behaviors?<br>*Main findings:*<br>▪ Only a few studies explore the influence of orientation/ training on recruits.<br>▪ Findings on the efficacy of orientation/ training on recruits' motivations, attitudes, and behaviors are mixed.<br>▪ Nonetheless, training targeting recruits' expectations benefit their stress, commitment, and performance.<br>▪ Technology may not be an adequate substitute to traditional, social-based orientation/ training. | Anakwe and Greenhaus (1999)<br>Barksdale et al. (2003)<br>Buckley et al. (1998)<br>Chen (2012)<br>Fan and Wanous (2008)<br>Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2003)<br>Oberfield (2009, 2012a, 2014)<br>Saks (1995, 1996)<br>Sharma and Stol (2020)<br>Wesson and Gogus (2005) |
| Mentoring | *Focus:*<br>▪ The influence of mentoring on recruits' socialization<br>*Main questions*<br>▪ How does mentoring influence recruits' socialization outcomes?<br>*Main findings:*<br>▪ Mentoring facilitates recruits' learning.<br>▪ Mentoring positively influences recruits' work attitudes such as job satisfaction. However, there is a mixed finding on mentoring's effect on recruits' intention to quit perhaps due to potential reverse causation.<br>▪ Match (or mismatch) between mentors and protegees has potential consequences for recruits' learning and career outcomes. | Bowman, Mazerolle, and Kilbourne (2018)<br>Burden, Harrison, and Hodge (2005)<br>Chao et al. (1992)<br>Chatman (1991)<br>Feldman, Folks, and Turnley (1999)<br>Lankau and Scandura (2002)<br>Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992)<br>Swap et al. (2001) |

## 2.6 Review of practice in the public sector

After presenting main findings from the systematic review of the academic literature and its narrative review, this section presents main findings from the review of practice. Again, the conceptual framework of organizational socialization practices is used to organize the review. An important caveat is the difference in terminology between the academic and practitioner literature. Organizational socialization remains a very much academic concept. In the practitioner literature, learning and development of civil servants comes closest to the concept of organizational socialization.

### 2.6.1 Socialization of recruits as a relatively minor concern of continuous learning and development

Civil services widely recognizes the importance of continuous learning and development. Continuous learning and development is critical because the environment in which civil services function continue to evolve due to the increasingly pluralistic public values and demands, technical complexity, and the blurring boundary of the public sector [OECD, 2016, OECD, 2017c]. Accordingly, civil services must continuously upgrade skills and knowledge of their employees, nurture leadership to manage change, and leverage on technological advancements. Continuous learning and development plays a key role in these endeavors. Furthermore, learning and development is important because it is a core HRM function together with recruitment, promotion, and performance management. It needs to work in sync with other HRM functions to ensure civil services have right skills, competencies, and capabilities. The importance of learning and development is widely recognized across the civil services of OECD countries. 61% and 70% of OECD countries have civil service- and organization-wide learning plans respectively [OECD, 2019].

In addition, half of them require civil servants to develop individual learning plans.

In learning and development, civil services emphasize upgrading skills and knowledge to meet future challenges, leadership development to manage change, and managing technological advancements. Civil servants across OECD countries have the right to a certain amount of training annually to upgrade their skills and knowledge. In 2016, civil servants in most countries received on average 3-5 days of training. However, this is a decline from the amount of training received in 2010: more countries reported the average annual training of 7-10 days in 2010 than in 2016 [OECD, 2017a]. This is in part due to training budget cuts across the OECD countries following the 2008 financial crisis [OECD, 2016]. Leadership training and development is a major focus across the OECD countries. According to OECD's SHRM survey in 2016, executive leadership training and coaching was the top training priority for most countries (23) [OECD, 2016]. In addition, 14 countries reported middle management training as a priority. Leveraging technological advancements both in terms of using technology for learning and development and digital skills training is a priority for many countries. 22 countries reported online course development as a priority while further 12 countries reported digital skills training as a priority.

The focus on continuous learning and development, however, means that recruit socialization is treated as a relatively minor concern by civil services which manifest in multiple ways. Although most OECD countries (28) have some sort of induction training for new recruits, it is a relatively minor concern compared to the focus on skills upgrading, leadership and middle management training, and leveraging on technology [OECD, 2018b]. Outside of OECD, there seems to be a wide variation in where induction training is conducted. Induction is conducted

at the civil service level in Dominican Republic, is decentralized to ministries in Paraguay, and is further decentralized to individual recruits in terms of self-study in Slovak Republic [OECD, 2015b, OECD, 2018b, OECD, 2015c]. Yet the desirability of induction at a particular level and the potential complementarity of induction at various levels are not widely discussed in the practitioner literature. Similarly, it is quite unclear who facilitate and contribute to induction training. Across OECD, there seems to be an increased recognition for the important roles by HR and line managers in this regard. Nonetheless, the discussion has so far limited to their managing and monitoring employee learning and development activities. On the other hand, the socialization literature suggests that organizational insiders themselves are an important source of learning to recruits. Outside of OECD, the role of external (and at times, foreign) technical assistants in recruit socialization at low-income countries is a salient issue for consideration [Bank, 2016b]. For instance, the implications of using external technical assistants or consultants for the learning of civil servants and the long-term institutional capacity of civil service training institutes are important considerations for civil services in Rwanda, Uganda, and Liberia. In terms of learning content, there seems to be a general agreement on the learning content for the entire civil service and leaders. It is unclear, however, if a similar agreement exists on what recruits must learn; it is certainly not being discussed much in the practitioner literature. Finally, in terms of timing, the focus is currently on the length of recruit induction. Across OECD, it ranges from less than 3 months to a year of training for recruits [OECD, 2013]. Whether there is a sequencing of induction activities is another area with less clarity in the practitioner literature.

Socialization of recruits (and generally, learning and development) in the public sector is complicated by a few sector specific factors such as public sector values,

the multitude of public organizations, and the external facilitators of socialization. Unlike private firms, a civil service is an entity with multiple organizations, however, with the shared set of public values and civil service ethos. On the one hand, it must thus encourage shared public sector values and civil service ethos across organizations. On the other hand, these organizations have their own policy portfolio, culture, and required skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Hence, the civil service must contend with meeting the varying learning needs of recruits entering into different organizations. Balancing between meeting the various learning needs of recruits and their organizations and maintaining a coherent civil service identity is an important challenge for the public sector.

Another sector specific factor that merits consideration is the role of external facilitators for recruit socialization. As mentioned earlier, human resource constraints within civil services in developing countries mean that organizations may not have insiders with appropriate technical skills to help socialize recruits into their jobs. In this scenario, external technical assistants are brought in to help recruits learn necessary skills and knowledge as in the cases of post-conflict Rwanda, Uganda, and Liberia [Bank, 2016b]. On the one hand, they present a short-term solution to ease human resource constraints within civil services. Beyond hard skills, they may also impart international professional and civil service ethos to host-country recruits, thereby encouraging cultural change within organizations. On the other hand, however, they may have very little context specific and tacit knowledge. Consequently, they may offer very little help to recruits in socializing into their roles. Hence, the potential and limitations of external technical assistants in recruit socialization is a salient consideration for the public sector.

### 2.6.2 Learning content as a focus rather than socialization practices

Competencies is a primary approach to learning and development of civil servants. Competencies is broadly conceived as involving the key desirable attributes of civil servants such as skills, knowledge, behaviors, and mindsets required to achieve public-sector outcomes [OECD, 2017a]. Therefore, what is competency in practice means socialization outcomes in the organizational socialization literature. Competency frameworks are increasingly used as a main approach to human resource management in the public sector including learning and development. They are used to guide various HRM processes such as identifying competency needs, recruitment, training and development, promotion, and performance management. In a 2014 survey of the national schools of government by OECD, 80% of respondents reported that their country governments have developed competencies for values and ethics [OECD, 2017b]. Just under 50% of respondents also reported that their governments have developed competencies for the whole of government or senior leadership.

There is not much discussion on the desirable competencies of recruits in the practitioner literature although there is a general agreement on civil service-wide and leadership competencies. For civil service-wide competencies, there is an increasing emphasis on soft skills and knowledge. OECD reports four commonly recognized meta-competencies for civil services among its member states: i) creative thinking, ii) strategic thinking, iii) flexibility, and iv) co-cooperation [OECD, 2011]. From the networked government perspective, it also suggests external-oriented competencies such as policy analysis and advice, citizen engagement, commission management, and partnership management [OECD, 2017c].

Given the focus on leadership in training and development, there also is a general agreement over competencies required for leadership. According to the 2014 OECD survey of the national schools of government, most respondents report the prioritized competencies for senior managers to be people management, change management, strategic thinking, values and ethics, action management, and communication [OECD, 2017b]. Nonetheless, there is very little discussion on how civil services are considering competencies for recruits. In Kazkhstan, the induction training for recruits focus on general skills (such as time management, teamwork, and communication), the functions of government, rules and procedures, and ethics [OECD, 2018a].

A competency-based approach to learning and development has several important implications for our understanding of recruit socialization. First, it places the focus on learning outcomes rather than socialization practices that influence them. As discussed above, competencies are concerned with specific skills, knowledge, and behaviors for civil servants. Therefore, while a competency-based approach highlights learning content/ outcomes crucial for civil servants, it obscures socialization practices that facilitate their learning. Second, competencies considered as crucial for civil servants in the practitioner literature differ from the learning content prioritized in the academic literature in an important way. Prioritized competencies for civil servants are concerned with not just how to do one's job but also other-regarding considerations such as public service values, civil service ethos, and a complex set of external stakeholders. Competencies regarding work group and organization are not discussed as priorities for civil services. On the other hand, the socialization literature focuses on recruits' intra-organizational learning about their job, work group, and organization while focusing less on learning about sectoral values and ethos, and external environment.

### 2.6.3 Training as a primary socialization practice

Civil services focus on training as a primary activity for learning and development. Among respondents to OCED's survey of the national schools of government, 93% reported a preference for traditional classroom-based training [OECD, 2017a]. Only a minority of respondents reported using other learning methods such as team-based activities and study tours. When the OECD countries were asked about training priorities for their civil services, fewer than ten countries reported non-classroom-based socialization practices such as coaching and mentoring, the community of practice, events and conferences, and networking as priorities [OECD, 2017a]. Specifically on mobility programs, the utilization of vertical and horizontal mobility as well as external mobility as a socialization practice remains low across OECD with only just over a third of countries using mobility programs including Canada, Denmark, and Israel [OECD, 2018a, OECD, 2019]. Even existing training programs are found to be non-strategic and unsystematic in a few countries [OECD, 2015a, OECD, 2015b, OECD, 2015c].

There is an increasing but uneven utilization of non-classroom-based learning and socialization practices. OECD reports a shift towards blended learning using various socialization practices among its member-countries [OECD, 2017b]. Yet this shift is uneven currently happening in mainly leadership development. In OECD countries such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, and Estonia, civil services are using non-classroom-based socialization practices such as peer learning, on-the-job training, and mentoring for leadership development [OECD, 2017b]. Belgium and the Netherlands are collaborating on cross-border coaching for senior leaders. UK civil service has implemented a leadership training program for

leaders managing major national projects which combines classroom learning with peer learning and problem solving [OECD, 2015c]. Elsewhere in Brazil, however, classroom training is still a preferred practice of socializing recruits despite an increased awareness for blended learning [OECD, 2010]. The general picture seems to be thus the utilization of non-classroom-based socialization practices is uneven and confined to leadership development despite an increased awareness of blended learning.

Rapid technological advancements along with training budget cuts are driving an increased use of technology in learning and development. Most OECD countries rank the development of online learning infrastructure as the top priority only after executive development [OECD, 2017a]. In addition, the overwhelming majority of these countries (90.5%) reported shifting towards a computer-assisted e-training to cope with training budget cuts and increase training efficiency. A few civil services such as Canada civil service are leading the way: the Canada School of Public Service boasts an online catalogue of nearly 100 courses. Outside OECD, countries such as Paraguay and Dominican Republic are also increasingly using an online delivery of learning [OECD, 2015b, OECD, 2018b]. However, it is unclear to what extent using technology has become prevalent for recruit socialization. Furthermore, the discussion seems to be focused on the potential efficiency and effectiveness gains from using technology in learning and development. To what extent technology facilitates learning and its potential downsides are yet to be fully evaluated. In fact, the evaluation of any learning and development activities continue to rely on the post-activity self-assessments of civil servants [OECD, 2017a]. The focus of evaluations seems to be primarily on the impact of learning activities on skills and knowledge rather than also on attitude and behavioral change.

### 2.6.4 Summary of the review of practice

I conclude the section on the review of practice in the public sector with its two main findings. First, recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. Second, civil services' approach to recruit socialization differs from the academic literature in that it approaches socialization from competencies and prioritizes recruits' learning of technical skills and external stakeholders while largely neglecting how organizational insiders socialize recruits.

Recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of continuous learning and development for civil services. The need to respond to a constantly evolving environment means civil services prioritizes the continuous upgrading of skills and knowledge, leadership development for change management, and leveraging technological advancements in their learning and development activities. Consequently, they have invested more on infrastructure and activities to facilitate the continuous learning of their workforce, leadership development, and e-learning. They are also increasingly using blended learning with non-classroom-based learning activities for leadership development such as coaching, peer learning, and problem-solving. Furthermore, they have more clarity over the desirable competencies for the entire civil service and its cadres of upper-level echelons. Nonetheless, recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of theirs despite the majority of them having induction activities for recruits. Overall, there is little discussion over learning activities for recruits and desirable competencies concerning them.

The approach of civil services to recruit socialization privileges its certain aspects over others while civil services also must contend with sector specific considerations. Overall, civil services approach recruit socialization (and in general, learning and development) from the perspective of competencies. They are concerned with competencies for the entire civil service as well as specific positions. There is less discussion on how competencies relate to organizational practices that facilitate their learning. Even within competencies, civil services seem to prioritize competencies regarding job, public service values and civil service ethos, and external stakeholders over those regarding work group and organization. Finally, civil services have not carefully considered the role of organizational insiders and outsiders in recruit socialization. The role of organizational outsiders in recruit consideration is a sector specific consideration. Particularly, civil services in low-income countries with human resource constraints must consider how to best utilize external technical assistants or consultants in recruit socialization.

The summary of the review of practice is presented in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Summary of the review of practice

| |
|---|
| Organizational socialization remains largely an academic concept. The closet concept to it in the practitioner literature is learning and development. |
| Recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. |
| In contrast to the academic literature, civil services approach recruit socialization from competencies (i.e., socialization outcomes) rather than socialization practices (i.e., socialization antecedents). When socialization practices are discussed, traditional classroom-based training remains a priority. |
| Again, in contrast to the academic literature, civil services prioritize recruits' learning of technical skills and external stakeholders such as citizen-clients and sub-contractors. |
| How organizational insiders such as supervisors and co-workers socialize and influence recruits is largely neglected by civil services. |

## 2.7 Discussion & Implications

Finally, I conclude the article with a discussion on main findings from the systematic review along with the narrative review of the academic literature and the review of practice and their implications for researchers and practitioners alike. Given the lack of knowledge in the public administration research and practice on the socialization practices of organizations, I set out to synthesize the relevant academic literature and practice on the subject.

I find that overall how public organizations socialize recruits is under-studied and under-discussed in both the public administration literature and practice. How public organizations socialize recruits is under-researched in public administration in contrast to a substantial body of evidence on private firms showing that when organizations provide a structured socialization experience with various socialization practices, particularly targeting at recruits' expectations and offering mentoring opportunities, recruits are more likely to adjust and integrate successfully into their new work environments. In practice, recruit socialization is a minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. Finally, whereas the academic literature approaches recruit socialization from the perspective of socialization practices and explores recruits' intra-organizational learning and the role of organizational insiders in socialization process, civil services approach it from the perspective of competencies and emphasizes recruits' learning of technical skills and external stakeholders while largely neglecting how organizational insiders socialize recruits.

The practices of public organizations with respect to recruit socialization are an

under-researched in public administration. Organizational socialization practices are of research interest to many fields including public administration, organizational psychology and behavior, and mainstream management. Nonetheless, most research has been conducted on private firms and published in adjacent fields outside of public administration. Thus, there is little evidence on how public organizations socialize recruits, especially in developing countries. This is despite the literature showing that organizational socialization practices matter: when organizations provide a structured socialization experience with various socialization practices, especially targeting at recruits' expectations and offering mentoring opportunities, recruits are more likely to successfully adjust and integrate into their new work environments.

In practice, recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of civil services. The need to respond to a constantly evolving environment means civil services focus on the continuous upgrading of skills and knowledge, leadership development for change management, and leveraging on technological advancements. Consequently, they have invested on infrastructure and learning activities to facilitate the continuous learning of their workforce, leadership development, and e-learning. They are increasingly using blended learning with non-classroom-based activities such as coaching, peer learning, and problem-solving for leadership development. They have clarity and consensus over desirable competencies for the entire civil service and specific positions. Nonetheless, recruit socialization is a relatively minor concern of continuous learning and development for civil services. There is little discussion over organizational socialization practices for recruit socialization despite most OCED countries having some induction training for recruits. Similarly, there is not much discussion over desirable competencies for recruits.

There is a substantial gap between the literature and practice in their respective approaches to recruit socialization. Overall, whereas the literature approaches recruit socialization from the perspective of organizational socialization practices (i.e., its antecedents), civil services approach it from the perspective of competencies (i.e., its learning outcomes). The literature is particularly interested in how structuring or institutionalizing the overall socialization process of recruits influences their learning, attitudes, and behaviors. Only few studies explore the effects of actual on-boarding activities on recruit socialization outcomes. Of these, the focus has been on traditional, classroom-based orientation/ training and mentoring. On the other hand, civil services approach recruit socialization from the perspective of competencies, i.e., skills, knowledge, attitudes, and mindsets, of their workforce. There is a substantial discussion on the importance of competency frameworks for human resource management, and desirable competencies for the entire civil service and leadership positions. There is, however, much less discussion on how competencies relate to organizational socialization practices that facilitate their learning. When there is attention on such practices, the focus is still on traditional, classroom-based training - a similarity that practice shares with the academic literature.

The gap between the literature and practice in their respective approaches to recruit socialization also manifests in prioritized learning content. Whereas the literature focuses on intra-organizational learning for recruits, extra-organizational learning is crucial for civil services. The literature has traditionally focused on intra-organizational learning - learning about job, work group, and organization. Civil services also prioritize learning job-related technical skills and knowledge. In addition, they are also concerned with getting recruits learn about public service

values, civil service ethos, and external stakeholders.

Like learning content, a similar gap between the literature and practice can be observed regarding the role of facilitators in recruit socialization. Whereas the literature highlights the important roles that organizational insiders play in recruit socialization, civil services have not really paid much attention to this. In the literature, one of the important tactics in Van Maanen and Schein [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979]'s framework is social tactics by which organizations use organizational insiders to facilitate recruit socialization. The literature shows that this is one of the most influential tactic on recruit learning, attitudes, and behaviors. In practice, there is generally not much discussion on how organizational insiders socialize and influence recruits. Nonetheless, the role of external technical assistants or consultants in recruit socialization is an important consideration for civil services in low-income countries with human resource constraint. They consider its implications for recruit learning and the long-term institutional capacity of civil service training institutes.

This study contributes to addressing the lack of knowledge on the socialization practices of organizations in the public administration research and practice. It does so by building on and complementing existing reviews of the literature. A recent, pioneering review of the organizational socialization literature in public administration by Moyson and co-authors shows public administration's interest in the socializing influence of working in the public sector, specific public organizations, and specific tasks [Moyson et al., 2018]. Nonetheless, it also demonstrates that public administration research has yet to systematically explore practices by which public organizations socialize recruits. Organizational socialization practices, especially of private firms, are a topic of substantial research activities in

adjacent fields such as organizational psychology and behavior, and mainstream management. In this study, we curate and introduce this relevant body of research to public administration using a systematic review of the literature. The systematic review in this study thus complements the review by Moyson and co-authors. Since my interest is on practices by which organizations socialize recruits, other strands of the broader organizational socialization literature such as those on social interactions and the proactive behaviors of recruits are, however, excluded from the systematic review. Therefore, future research should pay attention to these important and informal dimensions of socialization phenomenon. In this regards, Hatmaker and co-authors have already highlighted the salience of networks in socialization [Hatmaker et al., 2011b, Hatmaker and Park, 2014, Hatmaker, 2015].

The systematic review's narrow focus on organizational socialization practices means that this study is able to supplement the review of literature with the review of practice in the public sector. Organizational socialization remains a largely academic concept, and in the practitioner literature, the closest term is learning and development. Therefore, I rely on the secondary practitioner literature on learning and development for the review of practice, particularly survey data and case-studies by OCED's Directorate for Public Governance. The limitations of the OECD data should qualify conclusions drawn based on it. The OECD data focuses mainly on formal socialization practices of civil services, and thus, it does not shed much light on informal organizational socialization practices. Therefore, when I conclude that recruit socialization is an under-discussed topic in the public sector, it only applies to recruit socialization with respect to formal organizational socialization practices. Future studies should therefore survey not just the HR departments of civil services but also recruits themselves to have a more complete

picture of both formal and informal socialization practices in the public sector. In addition, my conclusion that recruit socialization is under-discussed in the public sector is reached based on the relative presence or absence of discussion on recruit socialization in the OCED publications. Yet under-discussion may not reflect under-representation in actual practice. Therefore, future studies using specialized surveys on actual socialization practices, programs, and policies by civil services are desirable to verify my conclusion. Nonetheless, the presence or absence of discussion on specific socialization practices in the practitioner literature should reflect the priorities and concerns of civil services to an extent. In addition, my conclusion draws upon the OCED surveys that did ask civil services and the national schools of governments about their learning and development priorities and practices. Other scholars have reached a similar conclusion that continuous skills upgrading, leadership development, and leveraging on technology are the main focus of civil services in learning and development [Perry, 2021]. Finally, whether findings based on the OECD data can be representative to non-member countries needs verification by future studies. All in all, an important direction for future research is to take stock of socialization practices in the public sector by surveying both HR departments and recruits. These limitations notwithstanding, this article contributes to the literature by providing the first synthesis of the academic literature and the practice in the public sector for public administration audience, to my knowledge.

The study's findings have implications for public administration scholars and practitioners alike going forward. As socialization is impactful for recruits and yet evidence on how public organizations socialize recruits is poor as highlighted here, more research is necessary. Future research should be done in close collaborations between researchers and practitioners as this review also highlights

their different approaches. A holistic perspective focusing on both organizational socialization practices and their outcomes is desirable. Furthermore, both traditional, classroom-based training as well as non-classroom-based socialization practices such as coaching, job shadowing, and job rotations need the attention of researchers and practitioners. In this regards, a good starting point is to take a census of available organizational socialization practices across civil services and public organizations. Such census have been conducted on private firms [Louis et al., 1983, Klein and Polin, 2012, Klein et al., 2015]. Such a study will also validate this article's findings using secondary data. When it comes to learning content, investigating the learning of both job, work group, and organization highlighted in the literature and public service values, civil service ethos and external stakeholders emphasized in practice is necessary. Similarly, the role of organizational insiders in recruit socialization highlighted in the literature as well as that of external technical assistants encountered in practice need consideration. Accounting for the changes in learning as well as in motivations, attitudes, and behaviors is important in evaluating the impact of organizational socialization practices.

## 2.8 Appendix

Table 2.6: Eligible studies included in the systematic review of the literature, n = 196

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# 3 | 'Carrying Along' and 'Putting Through' Recruits: Task-Based Socialization in Nigeria's and Ghana's Civil Services

**Abstract**

Socializing employees into the organization matters for both individual and organizational performance. Prior research has shown that direct supervisors play an important role in the socialization of new recruits, but there is scant evidence on what they actually do to socialize recruits. I explore this by taking a grounded theory approach and interviews with 80 new recruits, their supervisors, and HR personnel in Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. Rather than the literature's focus on the direct communication of organizational values, I find that supervisors rely more on seemingly mundane and informal task assignment, guidance, and feedback in socializing recruits. Interviewees reported that these informal task-based socialization practices have strong influence over recruits' learning, identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation. Drawing upon these findings from rich interview data, I then propose a theory of task-based socialization of recruits by their supervisors. In addition, I also offer preliminary evidence for meritocratic and non-meritocratic drivers by which supervisors sort recruit into positive and negative socialization experiences. Some supervisors allocate tasks, guidance, and feedback among recruits based on meritocratic considerations of professionalism, commitment, and hard-work. On the other hand, some allocate tasks, guidance, and feedback based on co-ethnic, co-religious, co-regional, and financial considerations and the non-meritocratic interpretation of respect for hierarchy.

## 3.1 Introduction

Direct supervisors are very crucial in socializing recruits into their roles in the organization [Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Vandenabeele, 2011, Van Maanen, 1975, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000]. An implicit presumption in the literature is that this happens by directly communicating organizational values [Diiulio, 1994, Kaufman, 2006, Wilson, 2000, McDonnell, 2017, Grindle, 1997]. Yet there is little direct evidence on how supervisors actually socialize recruits. Indeed, a review of practice presented in Paper 1 shows that civil services devote little practical attention to the role of supervisors in recruit socialization. We have thus little knowledge about different practices by which supervisors socialize recruits and their influence on the outcomes of socialization process.

I explore how new recruits into the civil service are socialized by their supervisors within their teams by taking a qualitative, inductive approach using grounded theory with interviews from Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. I conducted 80 individual, in-person interviews with new recruits, their direct supervisors, and HR personnel across nine public organizations in Nigeria and Ghana. Participating organizations include both "street-level bureaucracies" and core administrative organizations, and participants come across different cadres, grades, and departments [Lipsky, 1980]. I follow grounded theory recommendations by conducting data collection and interpretation in parallel, theoretical sampling to inform the next stages of data collection and interpretation, open coding and constant comparisons among categories and events to distinguish and integrate emerging theoretical concepts, and memo writing for transparency and reflection [Corbin and Strauss, 2008, Charmaz, 2014, Glaser and Strauss, 2017]. I also

follow best practices in qualitative research by triangulating data from different sources, starting interviews with broad questions, and member-checking on my interpretation in the later stages of interviews [Ospina et al., 2018, Dodge et al., 2005, Lincoln and Guba, 2007].

Rather than directly communicating organizational values, I find that supervisors primarily rely on informal task-based socialization of recruits. In Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services, supervisors socialize recruits into their teams through two practices - by carrying them along, i.e., assigning roles and tasks, and putting them through, i.e., providing guidance and feedback, but not through direct values communication. This informal task-based socialization by supervisors reportedly influences recruits' learning, identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation. Therefore, I propose a theory of task-based socialization of recruits by their supervisors. In addition, I find preliminary evidence for both meritocratic and non-meritocratic considerations by which supervisors sort recruits into different socialization experiences with potential implications for team-level performance.

By introducing the idea that a great deal of organizational socialization can occur through mundane and informal task-based socialization by supervisors, this study builds upon and extends existing literature on organizational culture and socialization in public administration. It builds upon previous studies that demonstrate the importance of organizational socialization for performance and highlight an important role that public managers play in this process [Desmond, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Grindle, 1997, Kaufman, 2006, McDonnell, 2017, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Wilson, 2000, Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000]. It

extends them by highlighting specific practices around tasks by which supervisors actually socialize recruits and contributes to theoretical advancement in the literature. Finally, by using a grounded theory approach, it also complements existing studies methodologically that utilize case studies, ethnography, and surveys.

The rest of this article is organized into nine sections. The following section discusses the literature on organizational socialization. Following the grounded theory tradition, this discussion is not to present a theory that informs the study but rather to situate this study within the relevant literature. Section 3 presents the details of empirical context, method, data, and analysis used. Section 4 discusses the respective context of organizational entry for new recruits into Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. Section 5 focuses on the main theme of this article: how recruits are informally socialized into organizations through supervisors' allocation and supervision of tasks. Section 6 follows by exploring the consequences of task-based socialization for recruits' learning, identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation. Section 7 provides preliminary explanations for why recruits reportedly encountered different task-based socialization experiences. Section 8 brings everything together and proposes a theory of informal task-based socialization of recruits by supervisors. Finally, section 9 concludes by discussing main findings and potential directions for future research and practice.

## 3.2 Organizational socialization and performance

This section provides a brief review of the public administration literature on organizational socialization and performance. The focus is on what this literature

informs us about specific mechanisms through which organizational socialization influences performance.

Scholars have long recognized the importance of organizational culture for performance. In a seminal work, Schein defines organizational culture as, "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration," [Schein, 2010]. In contrast to the scientific management of organizations, organizational theorists such as Chester Barnard and Philip Selznick argue persuasively for the importance of organizational culture for performance and consider infusing organizations with culture as a primary function of top executives [Barnard, 1938, Selznick, 1948]. March and Olsen argue that the different logic of action influence individual behaviours [March and Olsen, 2011]. Beyond instrumental calculations which they call as the logic of consequence, informal institutions can influence individual behaviours by the logic of appropriateness in which individual behaviours are guided by what they should do rather than what is in it for them. As Diiulio has argued, institutional perspectives are better at explaining functional behaviours in public organizations, whereas rational perspectives can explain dysfunctional behaviours well [Diiulio, 1994].

In the public administration literature, the salience of organizational culture - in particular, mission-driven culture or mission mystique - for organizational performance is a primary focus of investigation. Several classic texts demonstrate the salience of mission-driven culture for what and how public organizations do what they do in such diverse organizations as Social Security Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Forest Service, and police in the U.S. [Desmond, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Kaufman, 2006, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Wilson,

2000]. In addition, performance-based organizational culture is shown to be a decisive factor in distinguishing few high-performing organizations from many low-performing peers in developing countries with the challenging context of widespread patronage, nepotism, and corruption [Grindle, 1997, McDonnell, 2017]. Although these studies have crucially demonstrated the importance of mission-driven or performance-based culture for organizational performance, the processes by which organizational culture influences individual behaviours remain opaque in these studies, a major challenge for institutional theories [Peters, 2005].

Another strand of literature demonstrates socialization as a primary process through which organizational culture influences employee behaviours. For the purpose of this article, I define organizational socialization as a process by which new recruits learn skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours expected of their work role within an organization [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. Although an extensive literature on socialization exists in adjacent fields such as organizational behaviour and mainstream management as presented in Paper 1, I here focus on the much smaller public administration literature. Since Robert Merton, an extensive literature debates on how the formal structures of bureaucracy help create organizational culture which in turn inculcates and influences public employees (for original argument, see [Merton, 1940] & for recent argument, see [DeHart-Davis, 2007]). This brief review cannot do justice to this extensive literature and instead refer readers to it. Barbara Romzek insists managers to pay attention to organizational culture and socialization in building employee commitment [Romzek, 1990]. She argues the superiority of employee behaviours arising from commitment to those arising from employee investments via such incentives as promotion, bonuses, and leave. More recently, James Perry and Wouter Vandenabeele identify socialization as a primary process

alongside social identification, cultural preferences, and social identities through which institutions influence individual behaviours [Perry and Vandenabeele, 2008, Vandenabeele, 2007].

Empirical research shows that both formal and informal organizational sources and processes are involved in socializing new recruits and influencing their behaviours. New recruits' motivations and commitment tend to decline immediately following their organizational entry as they face up to "reality shocks" [Blau, 1960, Van Maanen, 1975]. In "street-level bureaucracies" such as police, schools, and social welfare agencies, identification - whether bureaucrats acquiring identities or "fixing" identities on citizens - is a primary process through which socialization influences frontline bureaucrats' behaviours towards citizens [Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003, Van Maanen, 1978, Zacka, 2017]. In a study of a public welfare agency, Blau demonstrates that learning and social support influenced new employees' orientation towards recruits [Blau, 1960]. In particular, learning and social support led to new employees focusing more on service provision and less on the rigid implementation of rules. A study of new public and private managers shows the positive influence of organizational tenure, social interactions with peers and superiors, job achievement, and hierarchical advancement on new managers' commitment [Buchanan, 1974]. Studies focusing on the social welfare policy shift in the U.S. from unemployment benefits to re-employment demonstrate that organizational culture along with resources, training, and managers' communication of policy goals affect whether employees re-oriented towards new policy objectives [Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000].

Using longitudinal designs, a few studies disentangle the influence of selection and socialization on new recruits. Chatman shows the salience of both selection and

socialization for person-organization fit (PO fit), i.e., value congruence between organizations and persons [Chatman, 1991]. Pre-entry personal characteristics such as achievement orientation/ confidence, endurance, and analytical orientations were related to either at-entry PO fit or its changes. Out of socialization factors, this study shows social interactions and mentorship to be positively related to post-entry PO fit and the changes in PO fit. It also shows that PO fit matters for job satisfaction and retention. Recently, Oberfield shows the enduring influence of pre-entry characteristics as well as formal and informal organizational factors such as training, peers, and veterans on the identities, attitudes, and motivations of new police officers and social workers [Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]. Finally, Hatmaker and co-authors show that newcomers relied on informal ego-centric networks for tacit knowledge instead of organization-sponsored communities of practice [Hatmaker et al., 2011a].

Finally, several scholars have begun to connect socialization with the literature on public service motivation (PSM). Although the scholarship on PSM has approached it from an institutional perspective since its conception, early research focuses on pre-organizational, socio-historical socialization such as religious, political, family, and educational influences [Perry, 1997, Perry and Wise, 1990]. However, scholars have recently begun to look inside public organizations to explain post-entry changes in PSM. Camilleri shows that organizational environment, in particular its motivational context, matters the most for the PSM of public employees [Camilleri, 2007]. In addition, organizational mission enhances employee's motivation even after controlling for performance-based extrinsic rewards [Wright, 2007]. Finally, in two studies linking PSM, sector and task choice, selection and socialization, Kjeldsen and Jacobsen demonstrate that PSM was important for task choice rather than sector-choice of Danish public workers

[Kjeldsen and Jacobsen, 2013, Kjeldsen, 2014]. In addition, although PSM declined among new recruits after organizational entry, this decline was smaller for recruits into the public sector.

Although prior studies have made crucial contributions to our understanding of organizational culture and socialization, their assumption around how employees are socialized into organizational culture may not be entirely accurate. So far, the literature has either explicitly or implicitly assumed that since socialization concerns organizational values, it is primarily done through directly communicating these values - what I refer to in this article as values-based socialization. There is, however, little evidence on how socialization is actually done or how recruits acquire values and norms. In particular, the role of direct supervisors in this process should be of particular interest as they have formal authority with discretion, information, and resources to influence recruits' socialization process, and the extant literature has consistently highlighted social interactions with them as crucial for recruits and employees [Graen, 1976, Morrison, 1993, Buchanan, 1974, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000]. Again, there is little evidence on how they actually socialize recruits in work units or teams. In fact, civil services have yet to carefully consider what their role is in recruit socialization as highlighted in my review of organizational socialization practices in the public sector in Paper 1. When recruits have social interactions with their supervisors, what is the nature of these socializing encounters? Are organizational values discussed and impressed upon recruits? What else is going on?

Therefore, drawing upon the extant literature and its outstanding gaps, the overarching research questions for this exploratory study are as follows:

1. How do direct supervisors socialize recruits within teams?

2. What are the consequences of this socialization process on recruits?

As highlighted by the extant literature, organizational socialization is a broad phenomenon with the multiple sources of influence on individuals. However, in order to make a meaningful contribution to the extant literature beyond highlighting a set of actors as an influential socializing source, I focus on direct supervisors and explore their specific socialization practices in this article - doing so in the empirical contexts of Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services to which I now turn my attention.

## 3.3 Context and method

This section presents the study's method, in particular the background of Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services as the empirical context, the rationale for and the application of grounded theory, the interview protocol, data collection, and data interpretation.

### 3.3.1 Background on Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services

According to its Client Service Charter, the Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS) in Ghana is responsible for the creation of posts within Ghana's core civil service based on its needs assessment and in collaboration with ministries and departments. [1] In its 2020 administrative instructions for the Ghana Civil Service, the OHCS overall distinguishes posts into General and Departmental posts. [2] General posts are common across ministries and departments and categorized into at least 20 classes such as Administrative and Management Class and Economic Officers Class. Officers in these classes can be re-posted

[1] https://www.ohcs.gov.gh/ohcs-client-service-charter
[2] https://www.ohcs.gov.gh/final-cs-administrative-instructions

into another department. On the other hand, departmental posts are specific to certain departments and further grouped into 4 classes such as Cooperative Officer Class. Officers in these posts cannot be re-posted to another department. Overall, there are over 100 posts in the core civil service, which are grouped into five categories from Category A to Category E. Whereas recruitment and selection into the most senior posts under Category A and B are conducted by Civil Service Council and Public Service Commission, recruitment into Category C posts are managed by the OHCS with approvals by Civil Service Council.

The OHCS recruits graduates and non-graduates slightly differently. In Ghana's context, tertiary education graduates are mandated to serve one year under National Service Scheme (NSS), and thus, graduate applicants are likely to hold a National Service Certificate. [3] They must go through a recruitment process including two rounds of exams and an interview, whereas non-graduates go through an interview process. The OHCS then seeks approvals for final selections from Civil Service Council prior to their postings. The postings are made by the OHCS across ministries and departments by its assessment of gaps.

The responsibility for training and development within the civil service is shared among the OHCS, ministries/departments, and individual civil servants. [4] Induction for new recruits is organized by the OHCS in collaboration with its Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC). Ministries and departments may also conduct their own induction in-house. At the civil-service level, induction focuses on the structure and mandate of the civil service, the code of conduct, ethics, civil and local governments, administrative writings, records management, and

[3] https://www.nss.gov.gh/our-projects

[4] https://www.ohcs.gov.gh/training-and-development-civil-service-and-guidelines-study-leave

staff performance appraisal.[5]

In Nigeria, posts in its federal civil service are overall organized into senior and junior posts. Junior posts encompass GL 01-06, whereas senior posts include GL 07-14. Senior posts together are also classified as General Executive Cadre.[6] According to the 2000 Schemes of Service which was later updated in 2001 and 2002, there are over 260 cadres with the further classifications of grades such as Assistant Electrical Superintendent and Electrical Superintendent grades under Electrical Superintendent Cadre.

According to its Charter and public service rules, Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) is responsible for appointments into the federal civil service with some appointments into certain grades decentralized into ministries.[7][8] Specifically, FCSC is responsible for appointments into GL 12-17. For entry into GL 07-10, it annually organizes entry examinations for new entrants and serving officers who wish to transfer from other scheduled services. Appointments into GL 01-06 are decentralized to ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) by its authority. Just like in Ghana, the graduates of tertiary educational institutions are mandated to serve one year under the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, and thus graduate applicants may share this common work experience.

The Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) in collaboration with Public Service Institute (PSI) and the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) is responsible for training and development within the federal civil service. In particular, the OHCSF in collaboration with PSI organizes induc-

[5]https://www.ohcs.gov.gh/induction-time-table-2021
[6]https://www.nipc.gov.ng/product/public-service-rules/
[7]$https://www.fedcivilservice.gov.ng/resources?category = service_charter$
[8]$https://www.nipc.gov.ng/product/public-service-rules/$

tion for new recruits at the civil service level, and MDAs may organize their own induction, although as we will see later this has rarely been done in recent years.

### 3.3.2 Grounded theory

I use grounded theory as a research tradition to conduct this study [Glaser and Strauss, 2017, Charmaz, 2014]. The primary aim of grounded theory is systematic data collection and data-driven theory generation. Hence, unlike deductive approaches to research, grounded theory does not begin with a theory and its testable hypotheses. Rather, the aim is to gather rich data especially around actions, practices, and processes; interpret data into important, emergent theoretical concepts; and propose either a substantive theory for a specific phenomenon or a formal theory across similar phenomena. Yet a grounded theory study may begin with some sensitizing concepts and questions based on a literature review to make researchers attuned to potentially salient issues in data collection [Charmaz, 2014]. A main tool for data collection in grounded theory is interviews.

Another hallmark of grounded theory is undertaking data collection and interpretation concurrently so as to inform the next steps of data collection and interpretation using theoretical sampling. Data interpretation steps include open coding in which researchers quickly go through and code sentences, paragraphs, and events in emergent, tentative codes, at times using "in vivo" codes, i.e., verbatim words and phrases from research participants that convey theoretical concepts. The next step may include choosing one or more codes as core categories critical in interpreting the primary phenomenon in the substantive arena of interest and using theoretical sampling to gather more information on them from previous interviews or future interview data. Constant comparisons

among categories, events, and between them are deployed to further develop these core categories, their properties, and relationships among them. As stated earlier, the endpoint of a grounded theory study is proposing a substantive or formal theory either weaved in descriptive paragraphs or formally in conceptual frameworks, charts, and proposed hypotheses. Therefore, grounded theory is particularly suited for this study's exploratory, inductive approach and its aim to build a substantive theory of practices by which supervisors socialize recruits in the public sector.

In recent years, there are important contentions and debates in grounded theory approaches. These are primarily over the balance between emergence in theory-generation as initially envisioned by Glaser and Strauss [Glaser and Strauss, 2017] and a more systematic approach to theory-generation with a well-defined coding paradigm as later proposed by Strauss and Corbin [Corbin and Strauss, 2008]. This article is primarily informed by a constructivist approach to grounded theory as laid out by Charmaz [Charmaz, 2014]. Striking a balance between a positivist epistemology and a postmodernist critique, a constructivist approach to grounded theory takes knowledge as socially constructed between researchers and participants. The socio-economic backgrounds of researchers shape how they interpret and construct knowledge. Similarly, there exist the multiple interpretations of reality by participants. Therefore, reality is knowable but only tentative as its interpretation changes across participants and social contexts. This constructivist epistemology has direct bearing on my research method in terms of data collection and interpretation - from enlisting the different types of interviewees to investigate multiple interpretations to member-checking on my interpretation as discussed later.

### 3.3.3 Interview protocol

The interview protocol followed the tradition of qualitative, inductive research and grounded theory by beginning interviews with broad, open-ended questions (see Appendix for the interview protocol). Interviews began with a broad question asking participants to describe what happened when a recruit joined the civil service. This was followed up by asking about challenges that the new recruit faced in her early days, and who assisted with these challenges. Together, they permitted me to investigate the context into which new recruits entered when they joined the service. Afterwards, I asked who influences the recruit the most in her team, and the nature of this influence, permitting participants to take the interview to whichever direction and keeping myself open to the various sources of influence on recruits. Then, I began asking questions on ways in which supervisors influence recruits, again keeping myself open to the various ways of influencing beyond socialization. During and across interviews, I asked follow-up questions to probe specific ways in which supervisors socialize recruits using theoretical sampling.

Although most interview questions are open-ended, the interview protocol includes some close-ended questions to understand how common certain experiences among recruits were. For instance, I ask all participants about the most influential person on recruits in their teams.

### 3.3.4 Data collection and interpretation

Nine public organizations across Nigeria's federal civil service and Ghana's core civil service participated in the study. In choosing public organizations, I focused

on those under the core civil services and included street-level bureaucracies as well as core administrative organizations. Therefore, in Nigeria, participating organizations are the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF), the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Health, and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment. In Ghana, participating organizations include "standard" directorates such as human resource directorate and more autonomous departments such as Labour Department under five core civil service organizations: the Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS); the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations; the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare; the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization, and Rural Development; and the Ministry of Finance.

In each participating organization, I interviewed recruits, their direct supervisors, and HR personnel. The reason to focus on these three types of participants is that whereas recruits experienced socialization processes themselves, direct supervisors and HR personnel can play important formal and informal roles in recruit socialization. In addition, interviewing these three types of interviewees permit me to investigate the potentially different interpretations of supervisory socialization practices and their (intended) consequences, while triangulating my findings - recommended best practices for rigor in qualitative research [Lincoln and Guba, 2007, Dodge et al., 2005, Ospina et al., 2018].

In each organization, I interviewed four recruits, four direct supervisors of recruits, and one HR representative. Participants were identified and recruited by asking for a list of newly recruited civil servants across departments, cadres, and grades from each organization. In Nigeria, I initially asked for new civil servants recruited in 2018 because the federal civil service placed a moratorium on new recruitment

after 2018. In practice, however, I found that recruitment were made as recently as early 2022. Thus, my sampling frame for each organization in Nigeria included recruits into federal civil service from 2018 onward. In Ghana, I asked for the list of new recruits into each organization from 2020 onward. Using the list for each organization, I chose eight recruits purposively to maximize variations across cadres, grades, and departments. Out of these eight identified recruits, I requested contacts at each organization to arrange for interviews with four recruits and the supervisors of remaining recruits. The reason to interview non-dyadic recruits and supervisors rather than dyadic ones is that the latter may induce biased responses when recruits and supervisor learned that both were being interviewed. Finally, I also requested organizational contacts to identify one HR personnel knowledgeable about the organization's HR processes for an interview.

In total, 80 individual, in-person interviews were conducted with recruits, their supervisors, and HR personnel across nine organizations during six months in Nigeria and Ghana. Interviews were first conducted in Nigeria and then in Ghana after piloting. I piloted the interview protocol with state-level civil servants in Nigeria and adapted it again after interviews there before interviews in Ghana. In Abuja, Nigeria, I conducted 36 individual, in-person interviews in total across four organizations between June and August of 2022. In Accra, Ghana, I conducted 44 individual, in-person interviews in total across five organizations between November 2022 and January 2023. At the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization, & Rural Development, one interview with a supervisor of a recruit was canceled as it turned out I already interviewed him as a supervisor for another recruit. I assigned unique IDs to each interview participant by country and participant type, i.e., recruits, supervisors, and HR personnel, to protect participants' anonymity. For instance, the first recruit interviewed in Ghana was

designated as GR1.

I conducted interviews following best practices in qualitative interview research [Lincoln and Guba, 2007, Dodge et al., 2005, Ospina et al., 2018]. Interviews began with me explaining research objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality and data management, and consent. I also shared a participant information sheet with participants and answered their questions prior to seeking their verbal consent and conducting the interview. I also sought permission to audio-record interviews, and in all cases, permission was granted. Interviews were conducted in-person individually in a secluded room at each organization where only the participant and I were present. In almost all cases, participants came to the interview without prior knowledge of what the study was about; in other words, there was no evidence of participants being "briefed" or "prepped" by their organizations prior to the interview. At the end of the interview, I thanked participants, asked for their contact information, and answered any questions they had. The study generated about 3,370 minutes of interview data in total and on average, each interview took about 40 minutes.

Following the grounded theory tradition, data collection was conducted concurrently with data interpretation. After the first few interviews in Nigeria, I began listening to recorded interviews, transcribing and coding them in NVivo software. Initial data interpretation then informed the next few interviews using theoretical sampling and so on. I first coded interview transcripts quickly using open coding, action codes, and when relevant, "in-vivo" codes, following Charmaz's recommendations [Charmaz, 2014]. At the same time, I wrote the various types of memos on organizational contexts, my perceptions and observations, and emerging categories [Charmaz, 2014]. I also re-listened to recorded interviews

number of times.

During this process, two core categories first emerged from my interpretation of interview data. Using theoretical sampling, I asked focused questions around these categories to subsequent interviewees, while also going back to previous interview transcripts for incidences on them. Using constant comparisons, I compared sentences, paragraphs, events with the same code as well as those with different codes to integrate and differentiate categories according to their properties until these categories became saturated and no new property emerged from interview data. This process led to the refinement of the respective properties of two core categories as well as their relationships to emerging other categories such as their consequences, potential drivers, and contexts. Upon further theorizing, I realize that these two categories are in fact both related to an overarching primary phenomenon that my participants were reportedly experiencing: the task-based socialization of recruits. Thus, they were collapsed as the sub-categories of task-based socialization around which other theoretical categories such as outcomes, potential drivers, and contexts can be integrated theoretically in a parsimonious way. Thus, the process of constant comparisons was leading me to the emergence of a theory with key relationships among core categories (see Appendix for more details on my coding process and the codebook table).

The discussion in subsequent sections draws upon data from 78 interviews. One interview with a supervisor in Nigeria was discarded because I found out that he was not the direct supervisor of a recruit but the formal departmental head. An interview with an HR personnel in Nigeria was also discarded because she was unwilling to engage in substantive discussion of her ministry's HR practices beyond its official narrative.

## 3.4 The context of new recruits' entry into Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services

This section provides a rich description of the contexts that new recruits into Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services entered when they joined the respective services. By highlighting salient contextual factors, it also begins to delineate boundary or scoping conditions in which the socialization of recruits happened. First, access to formal orientation was under-provided and unequal in Nigeria, whereas formal orientation was widely accessible in Ghana although new recruits in both countries needed to learn about the civil service, their organization, and their job. Second, although the cases of non-supportive colleagues are reported both in Nigeria and Ghana, these seem to be more prevalent in Nigeria's civil service. Third, given the high centralization of authority along with discretion in both Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services, recruits must rely primarily on supervisors for role and task assignments.

### 3.4.1 Access to formal orientation

Formal orientation for new recruits was under-provided in Nigeria's civil service. At least on paper, the responsibility for formal orientation was shared between central bodies such as the OHCSF and Public Service Institute (PSI) and ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) (Interview NH1, July 2022). MDAs had the choice of formally orienting their recruits either in-house or at one of the central bodies. In practice, however, senior officials in the civil service including HR personnel admitted that Nigeria's civil service had a backlog of around 4,000 civil servants yet to be given formal orientation. Most interviewed recruits

reported not having received any formal orientation either at a central body or their MDAs. Even when recruits received formal orientation, often it came many months after their deployment. At the supervisor level, supervisors uniformly reported that there was no organizationally required checklist or procedure that they must complete for recruit on-boarding.

Access to formal orientation was unequal overall in Nigeria. A few interviewees shared that while some recruits had gone to more than one formal orientation, there remained many others who had yet to receive any formal orientation. Indeed, some interviewees admitted to having gone to formal orientation more than once (Interview NR2, July 2022; Interview NR3, August 2022). Some alleged that the unequal access to formal orientation (and training opportunities in general as discuss later) was underpinned by financial incentives involved. One interviewee shared with me unequal access to formal orientation, financial incentives involved, and her sense of injustice:

> Since 2019, there are some people that we [sic] were employed together, and some of them have been inducted. Well, so many of us haven't. And it's sad to know that there are some people that are getting inducted two-three times. So, I am trying to see if there's a way for this system to be not corrupt. People who go two-three times [sic], it is because of money. Nothing else. You've been inducted once. Why do you want to go and do that again? (Interview NR13, July 2022).

Access to formal orientation was also unequal within MDAs in Nigeria. Within a single MDA, some departments may provide formal orientation to its newly recruited staff, whereas there was no formal orientation for new recruits into another department. For instance, the Department of Public Health under the Ministry of Health, where many recruits were medical professionals, provided a three-week orientation during which recruits were introduced to various divisions and must submit a report prior to being deployed to a specific division or unit

(Interviews NR10 & NR11, July 2022). This was one of the most comprehensive formal orientation arrangements that I had encountered during interviews. However, a new recruit into General Service Department under the same ministry was given one-day induction not by his department but by a central institute only six months after his deployment (Interview NR10, July 2022). In this particular instance, the unequal access to learning was accentuated because professionally trained medical personnel received additional, targeted orientation, whereas non-professionals such as a general service department staff were deprived of a similar opportunity.

In Ghana, new recruits almost uniformly received some formal orientation either at the civil service or the MDAs level, if not both. At the civil service level, the OHCS was responsible for recruitment into the core civil service for certain grades as mentioned under the background section as well as providing formal induction to new recruits in collaboration with its Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC). At the MDAs level, many ministries also organized additional formal induction for their new recruits. In fact, a few departments/directorates or units may even organize some induction for their new recruits. However, the role of direct supervisors in recruits orientation was not formally considered in Ghana as well. Formal communication from the HR department of a ministry typically ended at the head of department/ directorate as a notice that a new recruit had been assigned to them (Interview GH5, January 2023). In fact, HR departments tended to be unaware of whom a recruit's direct supervisor was.

### 3.4.2 Social context within teams: supportive and non-supportive colleagues

Beyond formal orientation, interview participants recounted the importance of the social context with their supervisors and co-workers for their socialization process, collaborating prior studies' findings [Graen, 1976, Morrison, 1993]. They informed me about supportive and non-supportive colleagues and its importance for their learning and adjustment to a new work environment. One important difference between the civil services in Nigeria and Ghana is that like their difference in access to formal orientation, more recruits interviewed in Nigeria reported their personal experiences of non-supportive colleagues than in Ghana. Only a handful of interviewees in Ghana reported personally experiencing non-supportive colleagues. Instead, more of them claimed to have a second-hand experience of such encounters. Thus, there seems to be differences in not only formal processes/structures such as formal orientation but also informal culture/norms such as the support of colleagues between Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. This collaborates the existing comparative studies of civil service reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa which suggest that Ghana's civil service is ahead of Nigeria's in terms of reforms [Ayee, 2005].

Interviewees shared the accounts of either experiencing their own or others' supervisors treating staff unequally. They alleged supervisors of favouring some staff over others when it came to assigning roles and tasks. An HR personnel in Nigeria demonstrated a supervisor's tactic of undermining a subordinate by assigning tasks to another staff who was a junior to the subordinate in terms of grade:

> Sometimes, there is discrimination and favouritism. Some tend to use who they prefer. Maybe you are level 14, and the next person is level 13. When you're not there, the level 13 person is supposed to work.

> But when the job comes, you may give it to the level 10 officer. It is common in service...No, they are not supposed to do [that]. So that causes a lot of grievances amongst staff (Interview NH2, July 2022).

Similarly, a recruit in Ghana recalled her experience with favouritism and how it could play out in relationships between supervisors and recruits although favouritism was mentioned much less frequently in Ghana interviews.

> In my first few months here, I was just there doing nothing. I wasn't given any coaching or work. I'd just come looking for work to do. Nobody would give you anything, but you see people who've been engaged. Yes, it is there. Some people are being coached to work, but some people were left unattended. They are just there. They don't have anything to do...I have experienced it, and I also heard people talk about it a lot. It's very common...Some people have their favourites. For some supervisors, they always give work to Mr. A. "I always want to coach him and guide him, but the rest, I don't really care about them"...Favourites come in different forms. The common form can be we are from the same region or town or ethnic group...In this office, you realize there are some people for whom for a half year or four months or 10 months, no supervisor will give them work to do. You see other people who are always working and busy. You realize there is favouritism there (Interview GR22, January 2023).

The unequal treatment of recruits by supervisors may have crucial consequences for recruits' learning and may set in place a feedback mechanism that sorts recruits into different career trajectories. An initial task assignment may enable recruits to learn important skills that signals their readiness for further assignments. Overtime, they may be assigned increasingly complex and challenging tasks. In contrast, other recruits who are not initially assigned a task may be at a comparable disadvantage in terms of their learning and ability to signal their increasing competency for future task assignments. An HR personnel interviewed in Nigeria portrays the importance of initial task assignments and their dynamics over time for recruits:

> Let's say five new recruits with the same qualifications. And the boss

> prefers working with just one of you all the time. It affects the others. The person who he is working with will be more exposed to the job. Five days later, they will say, "He knows the job. Use him." They will say, "The remaining persons don't know the job." But if they are not exposed to the job, how are they supposed to know it? They will continue using the same group of people. When posting comes and the boss is posted somewhere, he will say, "I need him to do so and so job." Somebody else can do the job if they have training. They insist on using one person because they favour that person. They have been exposed to that job for years. So, they are very competent in that job. If everybody is given equal opportunity, we'll all learn (Interview NH2, July 2022).

At least in Nigeria, the unequal treatment of recruits by supervisors also played out beyond task assignments in assigning for travel and study opportunities which could come with financial benefits (Interview NH2, July 2022). This was particularly important in Nigeria's civil service where new recruits could wait as many as two to three years to receive their salaries.

However, recruits that I interviewed also highlighted cases when supervisors were supportive to recruits and other staff. Some recruits discussed their supervisors who assigned and taught all recruits under them. This was a source of important motivation to recruits and their strong identification with such supervisors.

> Sometimes, he [the supervisor] just called me and tried to teach me and tried to move me. Yeah, he did it. And he wasn't doing it to only me. There were three that came in at the same time then. He was doing it to three of us. He was like a father (Interview NR8, July 2022).

Similarly, a recruit in Ghana shared how the supervisor ensured that everyone in the team had an assignment to work on and facilitated learning by careful task assignments among staff.

> It is a great experience and, as I said, we all come here as one big family. And you know, like almost all our work here is like arranged like this time you have...an International Women's Day. We have breast cancer

> [day]. We have gender equality [day]. So she [the supervisor] keeps you on your toes. Like we are having this program, you have to do this. So she makes sure everyone is assigned with something to do when there is a program in our unit...So she makes sure like this person is giving this to do, and that person is giving that to do. Maybe today you've been asked to work on this, the next day, you've been ask to work on a different thing. So you have to go to the person that has been working on to get maybe more information on how to go about it (Interview GR15, December 2022).

Interviewees also reported the cases of supportive and non-supportive co-workers. Like supervisors, some recruits recalled having supportive and helpful co-workers in their early days. Co-workers assisted them with their learning. In some cases, in Nigeria, co-workers also recommended recruits for travel or study opportunities. In contrast, other recruits recounted cases where co-workers were suspicious of recruits and shunned them of work opportunities. According to a recruit in Nigeria, co-workers tended to treat recruits suspiciously primarily because formal roles were unclear and at times, redundant in the civil service (Interview NR1, July 2022). Thus, co-workers guarded against any potential infringement of recruits into what they considered as their roles and their spheres of competency.

> As a new staff, you know, people in the system before you came had been deeply rooted in the department. No assigned roles for them. So, when you're coming in as a new staff, if you are taking over those roles, which [sic] means you are trying to, like, go overboard. Sometimes, you might be idle while others would be working. So, nobody wants to [sic]. Everybody wants to be in the mainstream. Everybody wants to be recognized. Everybody wants to be known. So, if you are like trying to do what others are doing, maybe you want to be involved in what others are doing, they might be seeing that maybe you are trying to intrude them. You are trying to overshadow them, stuff like that...that was a challenge (Interview NR1, July 2022).

A very similar dynamic played out in Ghana's civil service due to the scarcity of work according to one recruit although again non-supportive colleagues were mentioned less frequently in Ghana interviews compared to the ones in Nigeria.

> When I joined, even colleagues find it difficult to teach you because they feel you're coming to take their job. So, they find it very difficult to assist you. So, you have to fish for things yourselves. You have to go find old files and read before you can do what you've been asked to. It is quite frustrating...You know, people are not willing to teach you. It's difficult for people to be willing. They may feel that you're coming to take away their jobs from them. The job is not plenty and enough. If I teach you, the next time they may say you should do it. I will not do it. So because of that, I feel people are not really willing to give their all when new recruits come in including supervisors (Interview GR20, January 2023).

Compared to Ghana, non-supportive treatment by colleagues seems to be not only more prevalent but also taking on a different form in Nigeria. Many recruits there discussed the existence of "cabals" - power blocks or political factions - within the office. Turning public activities into club activities and organizing themselves as private clubs, the members of these political factions, which may include supervisors, tended to closely guard outsiders against involvement in their office activities. No interviewee in Ghana mentioned a comparable "clique" in their context. One recruit in Nigeria described the functioning of these political factions for me:

> It [Cabal] is anything that a group of people are doing that they don't want others to know that you are doing it. I classify these as open secret cults because when I get into the service, there are some activities they will be doing. Maybe you're not from the same region or the same tribe with your boss. Those who are working together they may decide to close it for you. You see these things happen (Interview NR6, July 2022).

### 3.4.3 Supervisors as the main influence on recruits

Supervisors had the most influence on recruits in both Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services according to my interviewees. Despite the importance of both supervisors and co-workers to recruits as discussed above, the majority of my research participants - recruits, their supervisors, and HR personnel - reported supervisors

as the most influential persons on recruits. In Nigeria, when asked who had the most influence on recruits, supervisors were identified as having the most influence on recruits in 23 out of 34 interviews compared to 10 interviews where co-workers were identified as having the most influence. When the same question was asked in Ghana, supervisors were identified as having the most influence on recruits in 31 out of 44 interviews compared to 17 interviews where co-workers were mentioned as having either the most influence or the same level of influence as supervisors on recruits. An HR personnel in Nigeria portrayed the potentially long-lasting and socializing influence of supervisors on recruits as follow:

> It depends on who exactly they [recruits] are reporting to. It is the mindset of whoever they are reporting to...the immediate boss, whoever they are reporting to, has tendency of being able to influence them or give them an opinion concerning the civil service as they are coming in fresh. Whatever opinion or whatever image such a person builds into in the minds of his subordinates, such thing will linger for a very long time. If the image he or she imbues in the subordinate's mind, if it is that of positive orientation, that will guide the person's future. You will see that that person or that subordinate would work along that line till he or she gets to the top. If it is negative, that idea would tend to follow the question not until he or she is re-oriented to chip off or wipe off those bad tendencies. Those things can definitely go along with the person, even when he becomes a manager too. And the tendency is that he or she will equally pass it down to any other person working under him or her because he has accepted it as the norm (Interview NH4, August 2022).

Supervisors being the primary source of influence may be due to the centralization of authority along with discretion, the inadequacy of formal orientation, or the non-supportiveness of other colleagues. The centralization of authority in Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services along with discretion, however, seems to be the primary reason. Respect for authority, hierarchy and seniority was highlighted as important for recruits in 25 and 18 interviews respectively in Nigeria and Ghana. Beyond this, supervisors were reported as having the most influence in

Nigeria and Ghana regardless of their differences in the levels of access to formal orientation and supportive/non-supportive co-workers as mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, the relative influence of supervisors vis-a-vis those of other sources of influence may still depend on access to formal orientation and supportive co-workers.

In sum, this section portrays the salient contextual features of new recruits joining the civil services in Nigeria and Ghana. Despite their learning needs, access to formal orientation whether at the civil service or organization level was largely absent and unequal in Nigeria, whereas it was fairly accessible in Ghana. In terms of informal sources of influence, whereas some supervisors and co-workers were supportive to recruits, others treated them suspiciously and unfairly due to ambiguous and redundant roles, patronage, nepotism, and corruption. Again, more recruits in Nigeria reported personal experiences of non-supportive colleagues than in Ghana. The highly centralized authority in both Nigeria and Ghana along with supervisory discretion means that supervisors were the most important influence on recruits. Therefore, access to formal orientation, the support of colleagues, and centralized authority together provide the salient features of the context in which the socialization of recruits happened in Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services. The socialization of recruits was conducted through a few informal but intentional practices by supervisors around tasks to which we now turn our attention.

## 3.5 Informal task-based socialization of recruits by supervisors

This section presents the main theme of this article, i.e., the task-based socialization of recruits by their direct supervisors. I present evidence on two practices

around tasks by which supervisors socialized recruits, in particular highlighting their variation.

### 3.5.1 Carrying recruits along

"Carrying recruits along" emerged as one of two major practices by which supervisors socialized and integrated recruits into their teams. In the context of these civil services, it primarily means supervisors assigning recruits a role and specific tasks to perform - in other words, the integration of recruits into their teams' work. Much of this task assignment was informal, given ambiguity and redundancy in formal roles. In Nigeria, being assigned tasks and integrated into the team's work alongside being recommended for lucrative study and travel opportunities was described as being "carried along" by recruits. No similar local expression was used in Ghana although task assignment was a crucial aspect of socialization for recruits there as well. Interviewees discuss it in 32 out of 34 interviews in Nigeria and 44 out of 45 interviews in Ghana.

Being carried along by supervisors may be particularly critical for recruits in settings such as Nigeria and Ghana where authority was highly centralized, and recruits could not undertake tasks without a clear sanction by supervisors. Respecting hierarchy and the commands of superiors were paramount concerns in these civil services. Undertaking a task without clear sanction and assignment by a supervisor may be perceived as a serious disregard for hierarchy and authority and may put recruits at the risks of a formal inquiry. In contrast, in organizations with decentralized authority and discretion, recruits may have more flexibility over negotiating their roles and tasks. One recruit in Nigeria highlights the importance of hierarchy and authority in his work decisions:

> Number one, you have to be careful, particularly if you are serving under any person. Whatever command you are told to do, you should go directly and do that. And if he commands you to do, go ahead and do it. And if he does not say to do that, you should not do it even in his absence unless and until if it is the law governing the work. Then, you can go ahead and do it because you have a reason and the fact that you can defend yourself. That is what I put in my mind (Interview NR10, July 2022).

In addition, discretion at the disposal of supervisors with regards to task assignments reinforces the salience of being carried along for recruits. In both Nigeria and Ghana, the scheme of service provided a broad job description for each post along with regulations over entry and promotion and required competencies. Only within teams were actual task assignments made, and supervisors had broad discretion over which tasks to assign among individuals with the same post. For one recruit in Ghana, being given a surprised opportunity to present in front of directors by the supervisor was an important learning and motivational experience, not least because the supervisor had a choice not to assign this particular task to the recruit:

> For example, in last year, so we're trying to move onto an electronic performance appraisal. OK, so what currently happens is we do paper-based. OK, so as part of training, officers in my directorate would be trained...So after that training, we were supported to go and train a larger group...When we went there, I thought I was going to just help out. So what we got there, I realized that I was the one supposed to conduct that training...Though you'd been trained on a system, to the best of your understanding, you were not the one supposed to do this training. I understood him [supervisor]. So, he was kind of giving me an opportunity for public speaking is one of critical things in the civil service. So he gave me the opportunity. So that's the motivation. So, I was in front. When I started, I was shaking. Well, if you are talking to a group of people, it is shaky. But I realized [in] the first two minutes, I was shaky. But 10 minutes on, I was okay. I was flowing...He [supervisor] took the first step for me to be able to conduct that training. If not, how can a new recruit go to train deputy directors

> and directors? Would you get that opportunity in other institutions at all? (Interview GR1, December 2022).

In interviews, I witnessed cases in which supervisors assigned a role and tasks to recruits from the onset of the latter's joining their work team and consistently afterwards. One interviewee in Nigeria recounted coming to her job on the first day when her supervisor asked her about her computer literacy (Interview NR4, July 2022). Once she confirmed that she could work on computers, she was assigned as a typist for memos.

> When I reported to the office, he [supervisor] just asked me what your name is. Can you operate computer? He was like jovial, "Can you operate computers?" I said, "Yes, I can." "Do you know more about Excel?" I said, "Yes." "Do you know more about Microsoft?" When I said, "Yes", he said, "You're good to go. I'll work with you. Just get a seat and sit down. Any seat. You can sit anywhere." So, I was like, "Hey, thanks god at least," (Interview NR4, July 2022).

From the supervisors' perspective, assigning tasks to recruits early on was also crucial to put them into a productive routine. A priority for supervisors as recruits joined their teams was to integrate them into the team's work activities and ensure their contribution to its workflow as early as possible. The failure to do so meant disruptions in the team's workflow and its members' responsibilities including those of supervisors. Thus, a priority for one supervisor in Nigeria as recruits joined his team was:

> I think the main priority for most new staff is to kind of settle into a routine - a productive routine - because if they're not able to settle into a productive routine, you find out that's become the behaviour they adopt as workers. And if it is the wrong one, then you've lost that person. So, it was more about trying to get activities across to him [new recruit] to deal with so that he's actually putting his brain and thinking capacity to work to be productive (Interview NS12, August 2022).

Not being carried along by supervisors was a commonly reported personal experi-

ence in Nigeria interviews, whereas interviewees in Ghana tended to have second-hand experiences. A recruit in Nigeria recalled his early days of joining the office when he was not assigned any formal role [job schedule] or tasks:

> There was no [job] schedule. Nothing. No official responsibility was given to me on the first time. Even for the first four months or five months, I think what happened was I would have to spend the whole weeks without even having anything to do. I would just sit, press my laptop, press my phone, and chat on WhatsApp, Twitter. I was not having any major role to play there. The woman [supervisor] there was not giving us much (Interview NR16, August 2022).

In Ghana, a recruit reflected on how some supervisors restricted their recruits' involvement in work out of the fear of competition by recruits for their positions.

> Recruits were not even given any training when they came in. They were restricted. You are not to do this and that by their supervisors...Within one year, some of my colleagues said they were not fully in their jobs. Like maybe I am in charge of these documents that come in, but because my supervisor restricts me, I don't know how to go about this. I think the reason when you come first, some people feel, especially when you are working with somebody, you know, higher than them, they feel you are coming to take over their role. So, they would restrict you. "They are new. So they shouldn't be exposed to certain things." (Interview GR5, December 2022).

Similarly, another recruit in Nigeria alleged the failure of his supervisor to carry him and others along as intentional and based on monetary incentive (Interview NR6, July 2022). He alleged his supervisor of not wanting to share work with his subordinates due to "honey and tea flowing" from his work.

### 3.5.2 Putting recruits through

"Putting recruits through", i.e., guiding and providing feedback to recruits, was the second major practice around tasks by which supervisors socialized recruits according to interviews. All 34 interviewees in Nigeria and 44 out of 45 intervie-

wees in Ghana discussed this practice by supervisors. Putting recruits through was an informal but intentional supervisory practice in Nigeria and Ghana. As discussed under formal orientation, the role of supervisors in recruit integration into the service was not formalized in either Nigeria or Ghana although they were expected to put recruits through. In cases when supervisors were putting through their recruits, interviewees reported that supervisors were doing so out of their volition with an intention of facilitating recruits' learning and integration into the civil service.

Guiding primarily means giving recruits instructions prior to their undertaking a specific task, and supervisors used various methods to guide recruits. Sometimes, supervisors gave instructions verbally while at times, they instructed recruits to observe others including themselves, accompany them to meetings, or learn from old files and documents. They needed to provide guidance to recruits regardless of the latter's grades and positions, including if it was a professional position that recruits were entering. Below are two excerpts from interviews with two supervisors who respectively guided a new recruit into a clerical position at the Federal Ministry of Education and a newly recruited medical doctor into the Federal Ministry of Health in Nigeria:

> But the first year he [recruit] came, I brought out the register, and the schedule of duty, and I explained it to him. I told him how to do the work. This is where you register incoming mails. This is where you register outgoing mails. This is where you register files. This letter is going to so and so division. This file is going to so and so division. If you get there and you don't see your mates to sign for you, you come and ask me, "Where do I take this letter?" So that was basically what I did for the first year (Interview NS5, July 2022).

> Because [sic] some [recruits] don't understand exactly what, especially when and if duties are administrative duties within the office, they

> don't quite understand at that point. There are some duties that are just pure administrative activities. There's a memo. There's a mail you need to gather information on...You need to write memos...So, I had to, you know, train on what's management, what's planning, what are the levels of planning OK, and distinguish between strategic planning and operational planning. You know, I had to do all of this (Interview NS11, August 2022).

Whereas guiding was ex ante, correcting was ex post entailing giving feedback to recruits on their performance of tasks. There also existed variation in giving corrections. At one extreme, some supervisors simply did not provide any meaningful corrections. Some may give corrections with a verbal display of frustration and impatience. At the other extreme, however, giving corrections to recruits involved a discussion in which the supervisor attempted to understand why the recruit took a particular course of action and negotiated with the recruit on how the final product should look like. In this regard, another important difference between Nigeria and Ghana is that supervisors in Ghana tended to use discussion-based feedback more frequently than their counterparts in Nigeria.

Supervisors also combined guiding and correcting in different ways. Some supervisors preferred giving detailed guidelines prior to letting recruits do their job, and then they provided corrections to recruits. Some, on the other hand, preferred to give recruits a try-out first without many detailed guidelines, and afterwards, they corrected recruits. To a few supervisors, whether one gives detailed guidance or a try-out first before correction depended upon the competence of the recruit as well as urgency and risks involved in the task. Recruits who were satisfied tended to have supervisors who put them through especially by first giving them a try-out instead of detailed instructions. In describing her preferred approach to guiding and correcting recruits, a supervisor in Nigeria described the failure to guide and correct recruits as the worst leadership style.

> I know my own [style] is this is the guidelines, go do, bring and let me correct. Do you understand? It is not autocratic. Yes, and I don't leave you to do anyhow. But I'll guide you to do the right thing. That's it. And I give advice and I also take [advice] from them. I don't say it because I am the boss, I know it all, no...You know, we have three types of leadership: autocratic, democratic and laissez faire. Autocratic is the one that this is this and it must be this. Democratic is you learn for me; I learn from you. I seek your own advice you give. I receive your own [advice]. I seek your opinion. Then, we put and come to a compromise. But laissez faire is do anything you like. If you like, if it is good for you, do it. If it is not, [don't]. That is the type of leadership which is the worst (Interview NS6, July 2022).

Her counterpart in Ghana concurs:

> I wouldn't say I am more authoritative or autocratic, and I wouldn't say I make it laissez faire for everybody to do what he wants. But the blend, you see, of the various leadership styles achieve targets. Sometimes, you don't have to be so strict on them. You let them know what they're supposed to do. You observe. They come to you. You do corrections. Where there is a need to be a bit stricter, as human beings sometimes you need to be a bit stricter on them [sic]. Where you need to, you know, advice [sic]. Even the civil service doesn't expect us to be so strict all the time. You give windows of opportunities for the person to operate within those windows until it gets to the extreme that you can't, you know, take certain decisions. So we operate within that framework of what we can do (Interview GS13, December 2022).

When guiding and correcting recruits, supervisors' focus on recruits' tasks at hand, and in all cases, this has nothing to do with communicating the importance of mission or public-sector ethos directly. Guidance and corrections involved helping them learn about rules and regulations, procedures, files and documents, and the "language" of civil service in both verbal and written communication as concerned to their tasks. The following excerpts from interviews with a supervisor and a recruit demonstrate putting recruits through with regards to files and procedures involved in their tasks. In the first excerpt, a supervisor in Nigeria shared how he put through a recruit who worked in processing retired civil servants. The

second excerpt is from the interview with a recruit in Ghana who was tasked with inspecting boilers and put through by his supervisor on how to conduct his assessment:

> When somebody who is about to retire come, I explained her [recruit]. You give them forms. We have forms. We have the letter of introduction. You fill all their information from date of birth, date of appointment, pay number, tenure form, put everything. Collect the forms from them. This one is the letter of introduction. When you get the information, you fill it on the letter of introduction. They will now take it for capturing. That's it (Interview NS7, July 2022).

> OK, so he [supervisor] had a project on boilers with the Environmental Protection Agency, who is our partner. So, he called me one day and he told me to do research on any and everything we knew about boilers because "you are a chemical engineer like myself." So, I researched on boilers. I learned the parts. I learned how it operates. Then the following day, I came and sat in this office and he said, "Now teach me what you learned." So, as I talked to him. I began to recall everything practically everything I saw, everything I read. Then occasionally, he would chip in from experience. What are boilers made of? How long are they expected to last? So, as I said, he puts in, as I shared, he put in. And then, when we're done discussing the fine details, he said, "Look, now you are going to create the table and everything we have discussed about the boiler parts and how their performance relates to the health of the workers, you are going to write it"...And I was supposed to fine-tune the report with practical experience he had on the field. So, I just took the report he had brought from the field and my theoretical knowledge that I had researched. And then, I began to compare. Then, I began to assess the boiler through his eyes (Interview GR12, December 2022).

Just as with carrying recruits along, a few recruits reported not being put through by their supervisors. In extreme cases, recruits simply were not assigned to any direct supervisors to learn from (Interview NR10, July 2022 & Interview GR27, January 2023). Fortunately for a recruit in Nigeria, her previous supervisor was "proactive" and put her through when she joined the civil service (Interview NR13,

August 2023). However, her previous supervisor was posted out, and a new supervisor came in. She lamented that the new supervisor was not putting anyone through including herself and newer recruits. She described her new supervisor as "a typical civil servant" who was happy with how things were. In another case in Nigeria, a recruit alleged his direct supervisor for unwilling to share the work and put subordinates through for monetary reasons (Interview NR8, July 2022). Luckily for him, he found another superior who was willing to help him learn. For a recruit in Ghana, his supervisor only infrequently assigned him tasks and barely put him through because the supervisor felt "threatened" by him receiving direct assignments from their unit's head (Interview GR18, December 2022).

### 3.5.3 Directly communicating mission and values to recruits

Whereas supervisors relied on the task-based socialization of recruits, values-based socialization, when carried out by them, was rare and focused on a narrow set of norms and values related primarily to hierarchy. Initial interviews in Nigeria suggested that conversations around tasks involving task assignments, guidance and feedback were primary interactions between recruits and their supervisors. Leveraging on this, I asked about primary conversations between recruits and supervisors to subsequent interviewees in Ghana focusing on those around immediate tasks, organizational mission and values, and formal performance appraisals. In 36 out of 42 interviews in which interviewees and I were able to discuss this, interviewees stated that conversations around tasks were primary conversations between recruits and their supervisors. When conversations turned towards a bigger picture, i.e., organizational vision, mission, and objectives, it was only in exceptional circumstances such as annual retreats or regular management meetings. Outside of these team-level conversations, supervisors and recruits had a chance to discuss it only when their tasks directly concerned with it such as

drafting a strategic plan for their organization or work unit.

However, supervisors in both Nigeria and Ghana attempted to instil respect for hierarchy in their recruits. Respect for hierarchy was highlighted as an important consideration for recruits in 18 interviews in Ghana and 25 interviews in Nigeria. In particular, supervisors routinely advised recruits to respect formal hierarchy and the commands of their superiors including theirs. This involves not skipping the chain of command in seeking assignments, inputs and approvals; working on assigned tasks without questioning; and following guidance and feedback. In Nigeria, respect for hierarchy takes on an additional dimension: being humble, polite, and careful in social interactions regardless of other party's formal grade and seniority. In Nigeria's civil service, more recruits were reportedly joining the service through powerful political connections - a phenomenon allegedly becoming more prevalent in Ghana as well (Interviews GH4 & GS22, January 2023). Supervisors with long tenures, in particular, lamented that these recruits tended not to respect hierarchy. In addition, since one could not be sure of who one was dealing with, supervisors advised recruits to be humble, polite, and careful in their social interactions at best to secure beneficial opportunities and at worst to avoid troubles. The following excerpt demonstrates a supervisor advising a recruit to be strategic in social interactions.

> My Chief told me, ignore, apologize, keep quiet, and move on...You cannot make everybody your enemy. You must make friends," (Interview NR7, July 2022).

Few supervisors also attempted to instil what can be described as performance-based culture in recruits. Specifically, these supervisors demanded recruits' thoroughness and diligence in performing their duties, punctuality, and presence. Few used stories about themselves to inspire performance-based values in recruits. Be-

yond instilling respect for authority; humility, politeness, and care in social interactions; and performance-based culture, instilling a sense of mission or public-sector values such as professionalism and accountability in recruits was rare.

## 3.6 Consequences of task-based socialization for recruits

Together with the preceding section which demonstrates supervisors' reliance on the task-based socialization of recruits, this section demonstrates that it is a primary socialization route into organizational culture. In particular, I provide evidence from interviews on task-based socialization's intended and reported influence on recruits' learning, identification, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation - crucial outcomes of interest for public administration. This is all despite the fact that it seemingly did not involve the explicit communication of mission and values.

The immediate and mechanical effect of task-based socialization might be recruits' learning about how to execute their tasks. Being initially assigned a role and tasks by a supervisor is a necessary condition for learning about a role. Once assigned a role, recruits acquire knowledge about their tasks by being guided and corrected by supervisors. In Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services, carrying recruits along and putting them through were specifically geared towards learning about tasks. Even inculcating respect for authority in recruits was in part to facilitate their cooperation with their bosses so that workflow was not interrupted and there would be outputs (Interview NR6, July 2022). A recruit reflects on her process of learning from old files shared by her supervisor:

> If not for him [supervisor], I won't know my work. I want to know the work of admin officer because I was given admin officer...In fact, I wouldn't even know what to do without the flimsy copies [of old files] and nobody to put you through that this is the work of an admin officer. This is what to do. You cannot. You are going nowhere...So, he [supervisor] guided me. Okay, he gave me those flimsy copies. He said, "Go and read them because I'll give you some files to treat them" (Interview NR4, July 2022).

Learning as the immediate outcome of socialization collaborates findings from research being conducted in organizational behaviour and mainstream management that demonstrates learning as a main mechanism through which socialization influences such "final" outcomes as identities, attitudes, and behaviors [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007].

Identification with supervisors came out as a major outcome of task-based socialization in interviews primarily in Nigeria. Many recruits whose supervisors carried them along and put them through reported strong identification with their supervisors, particularly as parents. One recruit who was carried along and put through by her supervisor reported her strong identification with her supervisor as an outcome of her task-based socialization (Interview NR5, July 2022). She reflected on her transformation process when a new and challenging supervisor was posted in her team. Initially, she found the new supervisor being harsh only to eventually appreciate that she learned more because of her new supervisor's insistence on learning. In this process, she also came to identify with her new supervisor.

> The first year, my boss was a deputy director. He was very kind. Then, he was transferred. I was like how I am going to cope. Then, they transferred in another deputy director. Another one that came here was very hard. She was difficult. Actually, nothing [sic] you did, she would not appreciate you. There was a time when I was not happy to come to work. Actually, she pushed me hard. I took the challenge as one of the things. I had to learn harder and harder. At first, I thought

> she was weakening or punishing me. But she made me learn. Later, I was so happy about that. She is a boss. She is like a mother...When someone is pushing you like this, the person wants you to learn. Now she has retired. I really miss her a lot (Interview NR5, July 2022).

I was unable to explore if such social identification with one's supervisor facilitates identification with one's organization such as in terms of organizational commitment.

A major area of influence by task-based socialization was on recruits' work attitudes. By being assigned tasks (sometimes, increasingly challenging tasks) and put through, recruits grew more confident about their ability to do their job. In fact, both recruits and supervisors recognized becoming increasingly confident on the job as an outcome of being carried along and put through. For one recruit in Ghana, being assigned tasks and put through by her supervisor demonstrated her supervisor's confidence in her ability which in turn encouraged her to be self-confident.

> It is beyond happy because it's like she [supervisor] makes me feel she is confident in me, and she trusts me with jobs when it comes to work. She really trusted that I could do. That thing alone, the way she feels about me, makes me feel like at least I fit the grade that was given to me. She makes me feel confident in myself. So whenever I'm doing anything, I'm not afraid of it and I'm not scared to do it because I know once you are human, there are definitely mistakes, and when there are mistakes, there are corrections. And you learn from that (Interview GR3, December 2022).

In addition, other positive work attitudes were reported as the outcomes of being carried along and put through. Being satisfied or happy with their job was a common reflection for recruits whose supervisors carried them along and put them through. Few recruits also reported feeling motivated, committed, and lively as the result of being socialized into their tasks. The three excerpts below illustrate

recruits' feelings about their job when they were either being put through or not. The first two excerpts come respectively from interviews with two recruits in Nigeria both of whom were being put through by their supervisors. The last excerpt, on the other hand, demonstrates a recruit's feeling when she found herself not being carried along and put through.

> She [supervisor] taught me how to receive incoming mails, how to record them and outgoing mails, and also how to write a memo, and also how to extract from anything written. This is the initial part of what she told me actually, and I'm really happy. I grabbed some more than 50 percent of what she told me. But still, we are in the process (Interview NR10, July 2022).

> If a meeting is ending now, I have a habit that in the next 12 hours, I must turn in my report. And once I turn in my report, he [supervisor] goes through it. He makes corrections. So, each time he does this, I think at least he reads my report...There was a meeting that we attended. I was sitting next to him. Immediately after the meeting ended, I sent him my report. He worked on the report. He sent it back to make changes. I made changes, and I sent it back to him. He makes me feel happy (Interview NR11, July 2022).

> Because I was not giving much role, I was feeling, "Is this really for me? Why am I here? Why should I be delaying my talent?"...And it was somehow emotional, and it really almost affected my mental health because, I don't know, coming to work, you sit down from morning to night without a letter coming to your office and telling, "Please treat this." It was painful. It was discouraging (Interview NR16, August 2022).

Performance was reported as another major recruit outcome from being carried along and put through by their supervisors. Learning and positive work attitudes encouraged by task assignments and supervision should in turn promote individual performance. In addition, some supervisors did recognize that the informal expectation on them to carry along and put through their recruits together with the bureaucratic system of "checks and balances" in which they were expected to

review, correct, and improve upon the work of their subordinates before forwarding it upwards along the hierarchical chain means that their own performance was tied to recruits' performance informally. One supervisor in Ghana highlighted informal linkages among guiding and correcting recruits, recruits' performance, and their own performance.

> For me, my priorities for her [the recruit] was to master how to write excellent reports, memos, letters. Those are the core parts of work. If you don't write good memos and reports, you can do all technical work, but they want to see good reports. At the end of the day, when the report is submitted, I'll be the one to get blamed because "you have not told them how to write well," and it's assumed that you as a supervisor, you're supposed to review everything she does before it is submitted to the highest person (Interview GS1, December 2022).

The formal performance appraisal system in Ghana and the aforementioned, informal cultural expectations on supervisors may be mutually reinforcing each other in a productive manner where these cultural expectations were functional. Thus, a supervisor in Ghana suggested the alignment of interests between her performance and her recruit's performance through the formal target setting system:

> We have our targets. It is more of an internal in-house competition. By the end of the year, the directorates are appraised and we have first, second, third positions. If you want your directorates, I mean, to be in the top two, we need to ensure your officers are working. I'll be appraised based on her [recruit] performance, too. So why would I sit with my arms and then, let her get a low mark and at the end of the day, I want my director to give me a high mark, it doesn't work that way. And that's my principle: if you are sinking, we all sink together (Interview GS1, December 2022).

The mastery of early assigned tasks may be an important platform for recruits' future assignments and career progression. It may signal to the recruit's supervisors and other superiors to continue assigning tasks, expand the scope of work, assign a more complex role, or even assign to a more important team. In other words, being

carried along and put through with the subsequent mastery of initial assignments may make the recruit increasingly "relevant" in her organization (Interview NS16, August 2022). Given the discretion at the disposal of supervisors in task assignments, recruits' career progression may be informal such as an expanded scope of work or being assigned to multiple roles within the team. Thus, one recruit in Nigeria who initially struggled with no assigned role from his previous supervisor saw an increase in his task mastery and subsequently assignments to additional roles and teams as his supervisor switched and the new supervisor carried him along and put him through.

> Within three months, I have been able to dedicate to memo writing. It has shown that wow, he has some potential. Along the line, a lot of postings were made. The director changed as well...One of them [staff] has seen my activities. When others asked him [sic] who took over the role of the budget officer, he said, "I gave it to him. He is smart and willing to learn." Then, other people said they have looked around and they found out from the staff they have that they don't have somebody that is smart and willing to learn. They found out that I'm willing to learn, and that's why they had to engage me [in a Ministerial secretariat]. I'm currently on my schedule: I am a desk officer for [X] organization. I am also a desk officer of the cases with [X] organization. And I'm also a desk officer for all [X] state offices in the whole [X] region (Interview NR16, August 2022).

In Ghana with its formal performance appraisal system, the mastery of tasks facilitated by task-based socialization may lead to career progression via a formal promotion. One recruit in Ghana, whose supervisor had consistently assigned him challenging tasks, reflected on how this experience positively affected his formal performance appraisal process:

> So I think I've been lucky to get something to do because if you are not able to get something to do and when it gets to the time for you to do your appraisal, you wouldn't know what to write in. But if you have something to do, you know what you are doing, you know your work. So, when it gets to appraisal, you always have a lot to write.

> And that's one thing I really appreciate my boss because sometimes [sic] my appraisal, I write stuff that I need more space to write a lot of things (Interview R27, January 2023).

Finally, through how direct supervisors assign tasks, and give guidance and feedback, recruits were acculturated into the informal norms of their organizations. As seen throughout in the above discussion, task-based socialization is not a-cultural or value-neutral. Some supervisors assigned tasks, and gave guidance and feedback fairly among recruits, whereas others pushed more tasks, guidance, and feedback to recruits who were the most committed, professional, and hardworking. In contrast, other supervisors allocated tasks, guidance, and feedback among recruits allegedly based on the considerations of co-ethnicity, co-religion, co-regional affiliations, or complicity in corruption. When recruits encountered these contrasting ways of task-based socialization, they also came to learn the implicit norms of their organization: i.e, whether their organization valued commitment, professionalism, and hard-work or rather extra-organizational social affiliations and the willingness to partake in corruption. Thus, as seen earlier, when recruits discussed their task-based socialization, more often than not they expressed their experiences with their perception of fairness, justice, favoritism, and corruption.

## 3.7 Differences in task-based socialization experiences across recruits

This section discusses preliminary evidence for both meritocratic and non-meritocratic drivers of differential task-based socialization experiences that recruits reported and their potential consequences for team-level performance. Although task-based socialization was a powerful tool, it was applied differentially across recruits with some benefiting from it, whereas others faced exclusion

and negative outcomes. Interviewees suggested different considerations - some more meritocratic while others less so - by which supervisors sorted recruits into positive and negative socialization experiences. These considerations over task assignments and supervision by supervisors may affect team-level performance. Since this issue is not a primary focus of this study, the following discussion is admittedly exploratory.

Interviews suggest that some supervisors meritocratically sorted recruits into positive and negative task-based socialization. In particular, a recruit's willingness to learn, work and be available was a crucial consideration for at least some supervisors in sorting whom to carry along and put through. To some interviewees, asking questions, taking feedback from one's supervisor well, learning fast, being humble and at times, apologetic in the learning process, and willing to try were some of the ways in which a recruit demonstrated her willingness to learn. Putting in work and being diligent demonstrated a recruit's willingness to work. Availability was cited as another reason for a supervisor to choose to carry a recruit along and put her through. Availability concerned both punctuality and attendance. In my interviews, both supervisors and recruits attributed these three things - willingness to learn, work and be available - as influential factors in a recruit being carried along and put through by her supervisor, as exemplified by the following excerpts from a recruit and a supervisor.

> In the space of eight months or nine months I've been with him [supervisor], he knows I am always available at the ministry. He will call me. This is what you should do. You see he knows that I'm willing to learn and I'm willing to work...If there is something to be done, he sees that I'm willing to learn and willing to work and I'm available. So, he will always assign tasks to me. Even if I make mistakes, he will correct me. So, I think these three things make me succeed...One of the mistakes that some of us did at early stage was that some

> did not come to work early. Even when they come, they don't get to see oga [i.e., boss]. So, he will assume that you're not around and available and you don't want to work (Interview NR11, July 2022).

> There are many people who don't know their job schedules. They have been in ministries for four-six years. They will tell, "When I joined, no assignment is given to me." Blah, blah, blah. But the question is do you put yourself to be available because there are people who are at your level in the office who are working. Because it's also about making yourself available. Most times, ogas will come into office and look for people. "What are you doing? Can you do it for me?" And if you do it well, tomorrow he will call you again. If he comes and doesn't see you for a week, he is not going to give you jobs. So, it's also about you: new recruits making yourselves available (Interview NS15, August 2022).

Yet non-meritocratic sorting based on favouritism was also cited as a factor behind why some recruits were positively task-socialized while others were not. As discussed under the section on the context, recruits and supervisors alike highlighted favouritism as one of the problems in these services, particularly in Nigeria. Favouritism ran allegedly along co-ethnic, co-religious, and co-regional affiliations. It ran allegedly across all forms of carrying recruits along - in assigning tasks and recommending for travels, studies, and other lucrative opportunities. Similarly, some supervisors reportedly favoured a particular group of recruits and staff over others in putting them through. Within Nigeria's bureaucracy exists "cabals", i.e., power blocks or political factions. Some supervisors may have cultivated such factions for the reason of co-ethnicity, co-religion, or financial benefits. I did not, however, find much evidence for co-ethic or co-religious prejudices at least among supervisors who had been carrying their recruits along and putting them through. In interviews, many recruits and supervisors with productive work relationships tended to be from different states and ethnicities of Nigeria and Ghana. I was, however, unable to adequately investigate to what extent financial incentives drove favouritism among supervisors.

Respect for hierarchy was also reportedly an important consideration by supervisors in sorting recruits into positive and negative task-based socialization, and it can be either a meritocratic or non-meritocratic consideration. Sometimes, supervisors equated recruits' willingness to learn, work and be available with expressing respect to them. In these cases, supervisors were arguably using recruits' respect for authority as a meritocratic yardstick in sorting them into positive and negative socialization. In discussing circumstances in which relationships between recruits and their supervisors could be strained, one HR personnel in Ghana highlighted recruits' willingness to learn as a decisive factor and linked it to their respect for their supervisors.

> But I will say that in the last two or three years, new recruits that are being recruited into the service, I don't know for what reason, but they are just not open to learn from their supervisors. The relationship is not fluid. The way their supervisor would want to work with them [sic]. They don't understand that the dynamic in school is different from the dynamic at work. So they feel, "I know why I've been recruited," in their mind. They feel they know. So, when they come and we tell them, "OK, this is your supervisor. This is what you'd be doing," they are not comfortable with it. So, they tend to work on their own. They work in silos even though they have a supervisor. And in the long run, that works against them because you have to report to your supervisor. And that supervisor would have taken note of you, "okay, you are not submissive to authority." (Interview GH2, December 2022).

However, supervisors sometimes considered recruits working within the bureaucratic hierarchy and the chain of command as showing respect. In particular, when supervisors perceived recruits to be skipping the chain of command and dealing directly with their own superiors in terms of assignments, guidance and feedback, they consider this behaviour as disrespectful. Whether this criterion by supervisors was meritocratic is contestable. On the one hand, when organizational norms were functional, supervisors were indeed expected to guide, review and correct

their recruits' work before it was submitted higher up the chain of command both to develop recruits and improve upon their submissions. In this case, supervisors were arguably attempting to fulfil expectations on them and demanding recruits' cooperation in this. On the other hand, this criterion reinforced the centralization of authority around supervisors. Another HR personnel in Ghana candidly shared with me the potential consequences for a recruit in dealing directly with the superior of one's supervisor:

> You know, the civil service organization is based on [sic] we do more with hierarchy. People are very interested in hierarchical issues. So, if I'm your supervisor and you go by me and go to my supervisor, I will not be pleased with you. And because of that, you know, they are human beings, usually they take it personally. And sometimes - I have to be very honest - sometimes they will sideline you or may not decide to mentor or coach you in your new roles (Interview GH5, January 2023).

Except for extra-organizational, demographic factors such as ethnicity or the region of origin, recruits' willingness to learn, work and be available as well as their respect for hierarchy and the willingness to partake in corruption can be endogenously influenced by the socialization process itself. Early encounters with their supervisors may either enhance or diminish recruits' willingness to learn, work and be available, their respect for hierarchy, and the willingness to partake in corruption which in turn influences their supervisors' subsequent practices towards them with regards to task assignments and supervision.

Finally, whether supervisors sort recruits into different task-based socialization experiences meritocratically or non-meritocratically may affect team-level performance. We can reasonably expect the calculus behind sorting to result in different team-level make-up and performance. Meritocratic sorting in a team may mean that recruits who are the most committed, professional, and productive are un-

dertaking more assignments while receiving consistent guidance and feedback, resulting in a highly productive team. In contrast, in a team with non-meritocratic sorting, those who receive more assignments, guidance, and feedback are not necessarily the most committed, professional or productive with team-level performance that is incompatible with organizational mission and values.

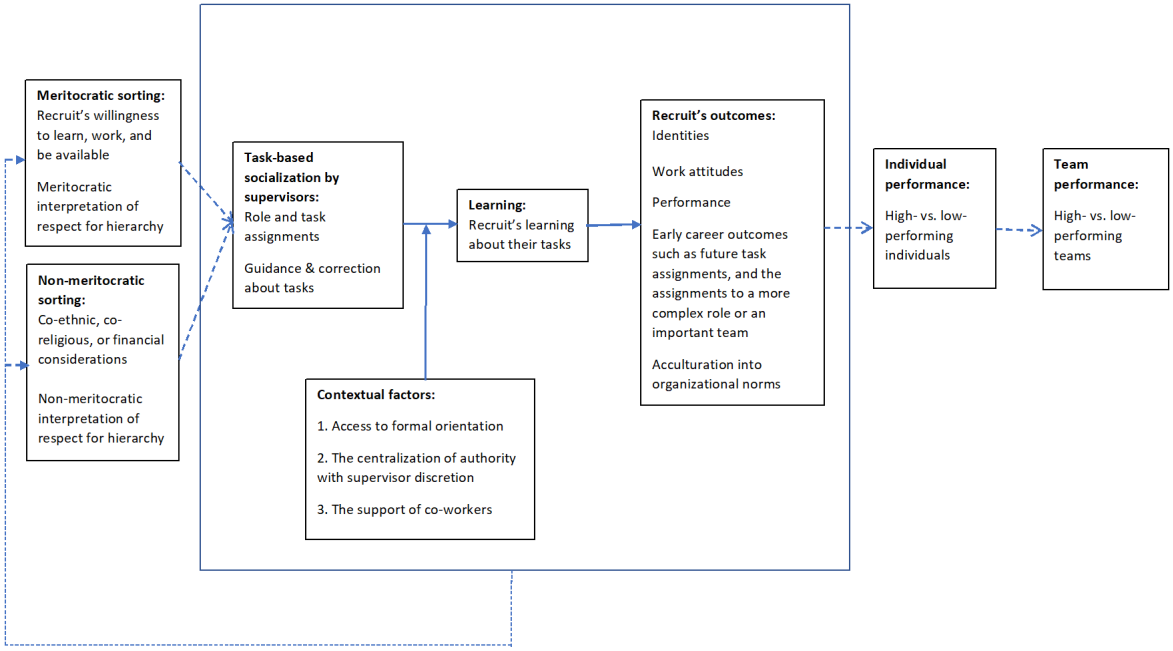
## 3.8 Discussion and theory-building

In this section, I use my empirical findings as grounding to develop and propose a theory of task-based socialization. Figure 3.1 illustrates this theory. The solid box in the figure demarcates the core components of the proposed theory while relationships outside this box are tentatively proposed.

Task-based socialization by supervisors - role and task assignments, guidance, and correction - is the main antecedent of the proposed theory. As discussed under Section 5, task-based socialization, not values-based socialization, is a primary mean by which supervisors socialize recruits. They socialize recruits by assigning them roles and tasks and providing guidance and feedback. These supervisory socialization practices are informal but intentional.

Learning is a primary mechanism of my proposed theory through which task-based socialization by supervisors affects recruits' outcomes. This is demonstrated in Figure 3.1 as an arrow first connects task-based socialization by supervisors to learning and through learning, to recruits' outcomes. As discussed in Section 6, task mastery is a mechanical and immediate outcome of task-based socialization. It can lead to recruits' identification with their supportive supervisors, positive work attitudes, and performance. Early task mastery also facilitates the further

Figure 3.1: Grounded theory of task-based socialization




Note: The solid box represents the core components of the proposed grounded theory of task-based socialization and recruits' outcomes while relationships outside this box are tentatively proposed.

assignment of tasks. In addition, it may signal recruits' immediate supervisors and other superiors to increasingly expand their scope of work, assign a more complex role, and perhaps even assign them to an important work team. This suggests that task-based socialization is crucial not only for the successful integration of recruits into the civil service but also as a platform for their long-term career trajectories. To what extent it contributes to recruits' formal career advancement such as promotion deepens upon the existence of a functional performance appraisal and promotion system. Finally, recruits learn the informal norms of their organization through whether their supervisors assign tasks, and give guidance and feedback based on commitment, professionalism, and hard-work or extra-organizational

factors and corruption.

Several contextual factors - in particular, the adequacy of formal orientation, the centralization of authority along with supervisor discretion, and the support of co-workers - can all moderate the influence of task-based socialization by supervisors on recruits. Thus, these contextual factors are indicated as potential moderators between task-based socialization and recruits' immediate outcome, i.e., learning in Figure 3.1. As discussed under section 4, recruits may have to depend more upon informal sources of learning such as supervisors and co-workers when formal sources such as orientation is inadequate as it was the case in Nigeria. Although the organizational socialization literature highlights both supervisors and co-workers as the crucial sources of influence on recruits, interviewees overwhelmingly identified supervisors as the single most important source of influence on recruits. One factor that may contribute to the relative influence of supervisors' vis-a-vis that of co-workers is the centralization of authority along with supervisor discretion. Where authority is highly centralized and supervisors have discretion around tasks, recruits [and subordinates] may depend more upon their superiors for task assignment, guidance, and corrections. In contrast, where authority is decentralized, recruits may rely less on their supervisors. In addition, when co-workers are non-supportive, recruits may rely more on supervisors for learning.

Finally, supervisors may use meritocratic or non-meritocratic considerations in sorting recruits into different socialization experiences within their teams with crucial consequences for team-level performance. However, this study only has preliminary evidence on these relationships. Thus, in Figure 3.1, they are portrayed outside of the core components of the theory using dashed arrows. As I

discuss under section 7, either meritocratic or non-meritocratic sorting may determine who get positively and negatively task-socialized among recruits in teams with important consequences for team-level performance. In teams with meritocratic sorting, supervisors may primarily consider recruits' willingness to learn, work, and be available in who to carry along and put through. In these teams then, those who have more assignments, guidance, and feedback are the ones with high commitment, professionalism, and hard-work, resulting in high team-level performance. In contrast, in teams with non-meritocratic sorting, supervisors favor those who share their ethnicity, religion, regionalism, or corruption or who are willing to work within the guardrails of hierarchy by allocating more assignments, guidance, and feedback to them, and these teams' performance may not be compatible with organizational mission and public-sector values. Furthermore, except for recruits' demographic characteristics, their willingness to learn, work and be available as well as their respect for hierarchy and the willingness for corruption may be endogenously generated by their socialization process itself. Therefore, a feedback mechanisms connect recruits' task-based socialization process back to their willingness to learn, work and be available, their respect for hierarchy, and their willingness for corruption in Figure 3.1 which in turn influences future supervisory socialization practices towards them.

## 3.9 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that task-based socialization is a main channel through which new recruits are socialized into organizational culture and proposes a theory of task-based socialization. In Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services, supervisors relied on task assignments, guidance, and feedback in socializing recruits rather than the direct communication of organizational values. Task-based socialization

by supervisors reportedly influenced recruits' learning and through learning, their identities, work attitudes, performance, early career advancements, and acculturation. These findings remain consistent across Nigeria and Ghana despite their differences in access to formal orientation and informal cultural norms.

By highlighting task-based socialization as an important channel for socializing recruits into organizational culture, this study builds upon and contributes to theoretical advancement in the literature. It builds upon prior studies that demonstrate the importance of employee socialization into organizational culture and an important role that supervisors play in this process [Wilson, 2000, Kaufman, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Desmond, 2006, Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Chatman, 1991, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]. It extends them by demonstrating how supervisors actually socialize recruits through tasks. Drawing upon rich interview data, it then proposes the theory of task-based socialization of recruits by supervisors, thereby contributing to theoretical advancement in the field. Methodologically, it also complements existing studies that use case-study methods, ethnography, and surveys by demonstrating a productive usage of grounded theory in studying organizational socialization.

Although I have attempted to adhere to the standards of trustworthiness to improve the study's rigor, the limitations of the study remain [Lincoln and Guba, 2007, Dodge et al., 2005, Ospina et al., 2018]. Potential improvements include supplementing interviews with the other modes of observations, using longitudinal data, and including more organizations or countries to enhance our understanding of salient contextual factors and thus transferability. Future research can complement this study by addressing these limitations.

The findings from this study point towards several directions for future research. First, it will be crucial to test the proposed theory of task-based socialization in a larger population using surveys and experiments. Contextual moderators should be included in investigation. Testing the proposed-theory in different contexts to Nigeria and Ghana is also important to investigate when the different channels of socialization are predominant in a particular setting. Second, task-based socialization's influence on team-level performance should be explored by investigating meritocratic and non-meritocratic sorting of recruits into different socialization experiences across teams.

This study's findings also have important practical considerations for Nigeria's and Ghana's civil services and beyond. In settings where careers are made or broken in part by pervasive informal organizational practices, task-based socialization by supervisors may be one such influence on recruits and their careers. In Nigeria and Ghana, although superiors are expected to put their junior officers through, this people investment may not be empowered, facilitated, and rewarded. No supervisor that I interviewed reported receiving an orientation checklist, training, or support from their HR departments specifically for recruit on-boarding. And there is no formal recognition for successfully on-boarding recruits.

Findings have implications for recruit on-boarding as well. In Nigeria specifically, more investment is necessary to increase the availability and fairness of formal orientation opportunities. In general, formal orientation should complement informal task-based socialization. Whereas informal task-based socialization focuses on task mastery, formal orientation should cover not only civil service-wide rules and regulations but also public-sector ethics and values. In addition, currently there

is no attention on training recruits on personal and relationship management in formal orientation. This study shows that when recruits signal their engagement with their job by their willingness to learn, work, and be available, supervisors reciprocate by assigning them tasks and giving them guidance and feedback. Thus, formal orientation should cover such personal and relationship management skills as building relationships, resolving conflicts, asking questions, seeking feedback, and negotiating for tasks.

## 3.10 Appendix

Table 3.1: Organizations and participants in Nigeria

| Organization | Recruits | Supervisors | HR representatives | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OHCSF | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Federal Ministry of Education | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Federal Ministry of Health | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |

| No | ID | Recruitment year | Respondent type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | H1 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 2 | H2 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 3 | H3 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 4 | H4 | NA/ | HR personnel |
| 5 | R1 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 6 | R10 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 7 | R11 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 8 | R12 | 2017 | Recruit |
| 9 | R13 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 10 | R14 | 2018 | Recruit |
| 11 | R15 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 12 | R16 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 13 | R2 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 14 | R3 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 15 | R4 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 16 | R5 | 2018 | Recruit |
| 17 | R6 | 2020 | Recruit |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | R7 | 2019 | Recruit |
| 19 | R8 | 2018 | Recruit |
| 20 | R9 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 21 | S1 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 22 | S10 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 23 | S11 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 24 | S12 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 25 | S13 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 26 | S14 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 27 | S15 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 28 | S16 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 29 | S2 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 30 | S3 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 31 | S4 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 32 | S5 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 33 | S6 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 34 | S7 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 35 | S8 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 36 | S9 | N/A | Supervisor |

Table 3.2: Organizations and participants in Ghana

| Organization | Recruits | Supervisors | HR representatives | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Office of the Head of Civil Service | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization, and Rural Development | 4 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| Ministry of Finance | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 |

Note: One interview with a supervisor at the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization, and Rural Development was cancelled since I already interviewed him as the supervisor of another recruit.

| No | ID | Recruitment year | Respondent type |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | H1 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 2 | H2 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 3 | H3 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 4 | H4 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 5 | H5 | N/A | HR personnel |
| 6 | R1 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 7 | R10 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 8 | R12 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 9 | R13 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 10 | R15 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 11 | R16 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 12 | R18 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 13 | R2 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 14 | R20 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 15 | R21 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 16 | R22 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 17 | R24 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 18 | R25 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 19 | R26 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 20 | R27 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 21 | R3 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 22 | R30 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 23 | R31 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 24 | R32 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 25 | R4 | 2020 | Recruit |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | R5 | 2020 | Recruit |
| 27 | R7 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 28 | R9 | 2021 | Recruit |
| 29 | S1 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 30 | S10 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 31 | S13 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 32 | S14 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 33 | S16 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 34 | S17 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 35 | S19 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 36 | S22 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 37 | S25 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 38 | S26 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 39 | S27 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 40 | S28 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 41 | S4 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 42 | S5 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 43 | S7 | N/A | Supervisor |
| 44 | S8 | N/A | Supervisor |

Table 3.3: Quotation examples

| **Quotation examples** |
| --- |
| "Our relationship [between the supervisor and the recruit] is not all that good because if you have a child, you need to go along with that child. You don't need to be hiding things from him because your child will take over. If you don't teach the child, it's going to be a great challenge. DSO [the supervisor] is one who is responsible for all security here. He does everything alone. Under him, there are three of us: me and two women. He can call any of us to help him. He doesn't do that. Since I came, he just gave me one memo to develop. I did it very well. He goes through it and say, `You know what you're doing.' That's my first attempt. Since then, he didn't call me to say, `Do this and that.' He comes to office. We greet him. We go to our office, sit down and google. So, that relationship is not cordial (Interview NR6) |
| "When the mail comes, she [the supervisor] taught me how to handle it because we're going to write a certificated called COR. We're going to give companies a certificate. So, she shows me what to do. So, she shows me how to minute back to the supervisor so that I will not make any mistakes. When a certificate needs to be issued, they will write, `Please so so so person, write this COR.' I'll open it. I will read what I'm supposed to. I'll now issue the certificate, the address, the company's name, date, the file number. I'll attach it with the mail that came. Then, I'll minute it to my supervisor who is the principal inspector of factories. I'll abbreviate it, `Please, COR is ready for your approval. Please check.'" (Interview NR14) |
| "But the first year he came, I brought out the register, and the schedule of duty and I explained it to him, I told him how to do the work. This is where you register the incoming mails. This is where you register the outgoing mails. This is where you register the files. This letter is going to so so division. This file is going to so so division. If you get there and you don't see your mate to sign for you, you come and ask me, `Where do I take this letter?' So that was basically what I did for the first year." (Interview NS5) |
| "I invited some cooperative societies to my office. When they came, I normally interview to find out what they are doing in the cooperative society. I wanted her [the recruit] to be part of this, because that's also part of the training process. If she's with me and I am talking to corporate societies, I'm lecturing them on the best practices. She's also learning even though they may not know that she's learning because she is staff. She will sit down and listen to me. So, there are some instances where I have to ask her to do it because when you want people to learn, you can use the practical approach of doing it yourself. I also expect her to make mistakes, and then I correct. And that's what we did. I gave her assignments. She couldn't do it well. I had to intervene. They asked her about the process of registration, and she didn't know how societies and the processes of registering a cooperative society. So, I intervened and corrected." (Interview NS15) |
| "OK, so if you take if you have a successful recruit, then it means that I feel the supervisor has done or has gone out to give his best to the recruit. So, it means that the recruit is settled in because of the kind of communication that he has had with the with his supervisor. So, if you have a successful recruit [sic] is because he's settled into his role based on the background information and the conversations he had with the supervisor during this time. Then there're not so successful recruits. There may be challenges with communication, probably between the supervisor and the recruits, and there may also be [that] these challenges could stem out of poor communication, could also stem out from a job description also not being communicated. It could also stem from a supervisor having very high expectations of the new recruit and gets disappointed. So, he is not willing to engage the recruit and help him or her to settle. Yeah, and that's where we may have that kind of poor or successful recruits, but the successful one, it means that a |

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| lot of dialogue gone on. That is how I see it." (Interview GH5) |
| "What we do is after the recruitment process and everything they've gone through, everything that is the biometric registration and all of that, we invite them to come over for orientation. But prior to the invitation, we draw up our program and everything. And then, we invite facilitators to take them [recruits] through ethics and rules in the civil service, the directorates we have in this service, and what they do." (Interview GH1) |
| "We have two types of orientation. We have this service wide one that's for all new recruits. The program has been drawn up by the recruitment department. And then ,we take them through the different directorates, what they do and what they encounter when posted to the various organizations… And then when it comes to within the organization, what we do is we gather them at the conference room. Yes, we brief them on what to expect in terms of work, the various departments, directorates and units within the organization and what they do, and the code of conduct of this service. That is the do's and don'ts so that in case they breach any of it, no one is to be blamed. They are to be blamed themselves because we've already oriented them what they do. So, when we are done with the orientation, we take them to directorates. It ends there." (Interview GH1) |
| "I'm really, really happy that I have good people around the office. They are like family. They are lovely and kind. They are ready to teach you the job. It's not like when you went to some offices or some ministry, they don't want to teach you the job. But in my own division, I am so happy. They are very good people. They are ready to teach what's going on. They are very wonderful people. I was so glad about this. I'm happy about that I meet family." (Interview NR5) |
| "Mostly it is their supervisors [who influence recruits the most] because you know, in this service, it's like if you are assigned to a directorate, all that, you know, in that institution will emanate from that supervisor. Your conduct only ends at your supervisor. It doesn't go beyond. Hmm. So whatever impact you have in this institution, good or bad, mostly depends on your supervisor." (Interview GH4) |
| "And one thing that helps me was that there's something they call under-learn: you under-learn somebody. Yeah, because if I come to meet you, no matter my qualification, my age. But I came to meet you in that job. So, the experience you have on that job, I don't have. Yes. If I want to be bossy over you, you will not be teaching me. Yes. So, I have to bring myself down to under-learn you and see how the service does things and then you can pick up quickly. Yes, that's what I did. And then that particular guy [the supervisor] was very helpful and he is still helpful to me." (Interview GR24) |
| "One thing I've realized about the head [the supervisor] is that he likes people who can get the work done. Yes. So, if you are reliable, whenever he calls, he will call upon you. Yeah, you are always available for tasks." (Interview GR18) |
| "Now in our ministry, the number is quite large. So, if you don't avail yourself, nobody would take you and involve you in anything. You have to avail yourself. You'll be assigned to an immediate boss. When it comes to morning, you have to show up. Like sometimes, you have to greet the person that you're in. So, do you have any work for me to do? The person then gives you work. With my case, for instance, anytime I come to work, I check up on my immediate boss and sometimes my director that I'm available." (Interview GR21) |
| "In this world, you can't say I am a master of my own. How can you be a subordinate and you disrespect your supervisor? It means you lack some kind of, uh, competency. You |

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| see, because respect is part of human society. OK, if you do not respect who is supervising you, then don't expect something from you. OK?" (Interview GH4) |
| "Maybe, sometimes, some subordinates are not proactive: they don't come to work early. You cannot find them. You're looking for someone, and you don't see them. I'll definitely move to the next person. And then subsequently, I think you're not reliable. I'll stick to one person. You're not there and reliable." (Interview GR22) |

## Codebook

During the coding process, two core categories first emerged from interviews: "carrying along" and "putting through". Using theoretical sampling, I began to ask more questions about them in subsequent interviews, while going back to previous interview transcripts for incidences of carrying along and putting through. Using constant comparisons, I compared sentences, paragraphs, and events with the same code as well as those with different codes to integrate and differentiate categories according to their properties until these categories became saturated and no new property emerged from interview data. This process led to the refinement of the respective properties of carrying along and putting through as well as other categories that are closely related to them such as their consequences and potential drivers (see Appendix for the examples of actual interview quotes and their coded categories). Thus, the process of constant comparisons was leading me to the emergence of a theory with key relationships among core categories. At the same time, a few categories were emerging that demonstrate the nature of context: access to formal orientation, social context within teams, and the influence of supervisors.

Upon further theorizing, I began to realize that both carrying along and putting through were in fact the sub-categories of a primary phenomenon that participants experienced: the task-based socialization of recruits by their supervisors. Thus, task-based socialization emerged as my core category around which sub-categories parsimoniously and coherently relate to each other. Leveraging on sequenced interviews first in Nigeria followed by in Ghana, I also conducted member-checking during the later stages of interviews in Ghana to validate my interpretation [Lincoln and Guba, 2007, Dodge et al., 2005, Ospina et al., 2018].

Table 3.4: Codebook

| Codes | | | Level of conceptualization |
|---|---|---|---|
| Task-based socialization | | | Core category |
| | Carrying along | | Sub-core category |
| | | Being assigned a specific role<br>Being assigned tasks<br>Being assigned to field visits<br>Being assigned to training<br>Being assigned to other lucrative opportunities | Properties of carrying along |
| | Putting through | | Sub-core category |
| | Putting through-content | | Sub-sub-core category |
| | | Learning to differentiate documents<br>Learning procedures<br>Learning rules and regulations<br>Learning the language of civil service<br>Learning respect for hierarchy and politeness in social interactions<br>Learning norms, values, and ethics | Properties of putting through-content |
| | Putting through-guiding | | Sub-sub-core category |
| | | Giving instructions<br>Giving a try-out<br>Instructing to observe<br>Instructing to learn from sample documents<br>Instructing to accompany to meetings | Properties of putting through-guiding |
| | Putting through-correcting | | Sub-sub-core category |
| | | Correcting with the display of frustration<br>Correcting by having a discussion | Properties of putting through-correcting |
| | Consequences of being carried along and put through | | Sub-core category |
| | | Learning<br>Identification<br>Work attitudes<br>Performance<br>Early career advancements<br>Acculturation | Properties of the consequences of being carried along and put through |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Attending formal orientation | | | Related category (contextual condition) |
| | | Attending formal orientation-content | | Related sub-category |
| | | | Learning rules and regulations<br>Learning technical competencies<br>Learning norms, values, and ethics<br>Learning respect for hierarchy and politeness in social interactions | Properties of attending formal orientation-content |
| | | Attending formal orientation-level | | Related sub-category |
| | | | Organized centrally<br>Organized by the ministry<br>Organized by the department/unit | Properties of attending formal orientation-level |
| | Having social interactions with others | | | Related category (contextual condition) |
| | | | Supported by supervisor<br>Not supported by supervisor<br>Supported by colleagues<br>Not supported by colleagues | Properties of having social interactions with others |
| | Influenced primarily by a colleague | | | Related category (contextual condition) |
| | | | Influenced primarily by the supervisor<br>Influenced primarily by a colleague other than the supervisor | Properties of influenced primarily by a colleague |
| | Willing to learn | | | Related category (Potential driver of task-based socialization) |
| | | | Asking questions<br>Learning fast<br>Taking corrections well<br>Being humble and apologetic<br>Willing to try | Properties of willing to learn |
| | Willing to work | | | Related category (Potential driver of task-based socialization) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Putting in work<br>Being diligent | Properties of willing to work |
| | Willing to be available | | Related category (Potential driver of task-based socialization) |
| | | Being punctual<br>Being present in the office | Properties of willing to be available |
| | Willing to respect hierarchy | | Related category (Potential driver of task-based socialization) |
| | | Respecting hierarchy<br>Being humble, polite, and apologetic | Properties of willing to respect hierarchy |
| | Consequences of willingness to learn, work, be available, and respect hierarchy | | Related category (Potential driver of task-based socialization) |
| | | Being carried along<br>Being put through | Properties of consequences of willingness to learn, work, be available, and respect hierarchy |

## Interview protocol

### Interviews with HR representatives

1. Tell me what happens when a new recruit joins the civil service. Now, tell me what happens when a new recruit joins your organization.

2. What challenges do new recruits into your organization face? Who help them tackle these challenges? How?

3. What does your HR department aim to achieve with recruit on-boarding process?

4. In your organization, who have the most influence on recruits and in what ways?

5. How would you describe the relationships between line managers and their recruits in your organizations? What part of these relationships work and does not work?

6. When new recruits and their line managers have interactions in recruits' first year, what are these interactions mainly about? What part of these interactions matter the most?

7. How do line managers influence recruits? Tell me an example when a line manager's influence is positive. Now, tell me an example when it is negative.

8. How does your HR department share the responsibility for recruit on-boarding with line management?

9. What support do line managers get in conducting on-boarding activities in their teams?

### Interviews with supervisors

1. Tell me what happened when the new recruit joined your work organization? Now, tell me what happened when the new recruit joined your

team?

2. What challenges did the new recruit into your team face in his/her first year? Who helped them tackle these challenges? How?

3. Who influenced the recruit the most in his/her first year and in what ways? Tell me an example when the influence was positive. Now, tell me an example when it was negative.

4. What were your priorities for the recruit in his/her first year?

5. When you and the recruit had interactions in his/her first year, what were those interactions mainly about? What parts of your interactions with the recruit were the most important? Why?

6. Did you have similar interactions with other recruits in your teams? Why or why not?

7. How did you try to influence the recruit's learning, motivations, attitudes, and behaviors in his/her first year? In this regard, tell me an example when you tried and worked. Now, tell me an example when you tried but it did not work.

8. Did your HR department require you to do any on-boarding activities for the recruit when he/she joined?

**Interviews with recruits**

1. Tell me why you decided to join the civil service. Since then, how have your expectations and feelings about working for the civil service changed?

2. Tell me what happened when you joined the civil service? Now, tell me what happened when you joined your organization? What were your feelings and thoughts at these times?

3. What challenges did you face as a new recruit in your team in your first year? Who helped you tackle these challenges? How?

4. Who had the most influence on you in your first year and in what ways? Tell me an example when the influence was positive. Now, tell me an example when it was negative.

5. How would you describe your relationships with your line manager in your first year?

6. When you and your line manager had interactions in your first year, what were those interactions mainly about? What parts of your interactions with your line managers were the most important? Why?

7. Did your line manager have similar interactions with other recruits in your team? Why or why not?

8. How did your line manager influence your learning, motivations, attitudes and behaviors in your first year? Tell me an example when the influence was positive. Now, tell me an example when it was negative.

# 4| Task-based Socialization of New Recruits in Ghana's and Nigeria's Civil Services

**Abstract**

This article tests the theory of task-based socialization developed in the previous article. Specifically, it investigates the prevalence and influence of task-based socialization - role and task assignment, guidance and feedback - and values-based socialization - direct values communication - by direct supervisors on recruits, using two original, large-N surveys with a vignette experiment and a battery of innovative measures from Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services. I show that task-based socialization is not only a primary mean by which supervisors socialize recruits but also is associated more than values-based socialization with recruits' work attitudes, and early career advancements. In fact, values-based socialization alone does not matter for recruits unless task-based socialization is also provided in tandem.

## 4.1 Introduction

This article tests the theory of task-based socialization developed in the previous article. In Paper 2, I developed a theory of task-based socialization drawing upon interviews with a limited number of new recruits, their supervisors, and HR personnel and proposed a set of hypotheses linking task-based socialization by supervisors to recruit outcomes. In this article, I test this proposed theory in a larger sample population of new recruits into Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services, investigating the relative prevalence and influence of task-based and values-based socialization by direct supervisors on recruits.

I use two large-N, original surveys including a vignette experiment and a battery of innovative measures and a sample of 371 new recruits into Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services. In Ghana, survey participants are recruits into its entire core civil service in 2020-22. In Nigeria, survey participants are recruits into four federal organizations since 2018. Thus, participating organizations include both street-level bureaucracies and core administrative organizations, and participants come from across different cadres, grades, and departments. The surveys include innovative measures for supervisory socialization practices that adapted an influential methodology for measuring management practices from organizational economics into the organizational socialization context [Bloom and Van Reenen, 2007, Bloom and Van Reenen, 2010, Bloom et al., 2014] to explore the correlations of task-based and values-based socialization to recruits' outcomes. To improve upon these correlational regressions from observational data which are open to threats from omitted variable bias and reverse causality, I also include an embedded vignette experiment in the surveys to tease out potential causal associations between supervisory socialization practices and recruit outcomes.

I find that task-based socialization is not only a primary mean by which supervisors socialize recruits but also is more important than values-based socialization for recruits' outcomes in Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services. Direct supervisors socialize recruits primarily by assigning tasks, and giving guidance and feedback, not by direct values communication. Task-based socialization by supervisors is positively associated with recruits' learning, job satisfaction, and early career advancements. On the other hand, values-based socialization by supervisors alone does not matter for recruits unless supervisors are also providing task-based socialization in tandem.

By introducing the idea that a great deal of organizational socialization can occur through mundane and informal task-based socialization by supervisors, this study builds upon and extends the existing literature on organizational culture and socialization in public administration. It builds upon previous studies that demonstrate the importance of values-based socialization into organizational culture for organizational performance [Desmond, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Grindle, 1997, Kaufman, 2006, McDonnell, 2017, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Wilson, 2000, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2011]. It complements them by showing that mundane and informal task-based socialization is an alternative, primary socialization channel in certain contexts. Findings thus validate my proposed theory of task-based socialization in Paper 2. This article also extends prior studies that demonstrate the importance of supervisors for recruit socialization by highlight their specific and informal socialization practices around tasks [Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Chatman, 1991, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014]). Finally, to my knowledge, this is the first socialization study to adapt an influential methodology for measuring management practices from organi-

zational economics into the socialization context and to use a vignette experiment.

The rest of the paper is organized into seven sections. The following section discusses my theoretical perspective and hypotheses. Section 3 presents the details of method, and section 4 descriptive statistics. Section 5 presents main results, first demonstrating supervisors' reliance on task-based socialization as a primary mean of socializing recruits, then the correlations between supervisory socialization practices and recruits' outcomes, afterwards their potential causal relations using a vignette experiment, and robustness checks. Section 6 summarizes main findings. Finally, section 7 concludes by discussing the study's limitations, its collaboration and extension on prior studies, the directions for future research, and policy implications.

## 4.2 Theoretical perspective and hypotheses development

### 4.2.1 A brief literature review

The literature review in Paper 2 indicates that public administration studies demonstrate the importance of values-based socialization into organizational culture and the influence of supervisors in this process. Inculcating recruits into mission-driven or performance-based cultural norms and values is critical for organizational performance both in developed and developing countries [Diiulio, 1994, Kaufman, 2006, McDonnell, 2017, Wilson, 2000, Vandenabeele, 2007, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Grindle, 1997]). And supervisors play a crucial role in this process ([Blau, 1960, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Riccucci et al., 2004, Buchanan, 1974, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2011]).

### 4.2.2 Task-based and values-based socialization

Although prior studies have made crucial contribution to our understanding of organizational culture and socialization, their assumption around how employees are socialized into organizational culture may not be entirely accurate. So far, the literature has either explicitly or implicitly assumed that socialization into organizational culture is primarily done via directly communicating the importance of organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations - what I call values-based socialization in this article. There is, however, little evidence on how socialization is actually done or how new recruits acquire values and norms.

On the other hand, there are both theoretical reasons and evidence to consider tasks as an alternative, important channel for socialization into organizational culture. In their seminal, theoretical work on organizational performance, Rainey and Steinbauer link various extra- and intra-organizational factors including culture to motivations [Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999]. They highlight three types of motivation: task, mission, and public service motivation. Thus, beyond values-based socialization into organizational mission or public service ethos, seemingly less glamorous and more mundane, task-based socialization can also influence civil servants. In addition, important ethnographic studies of frontline civil servants demonstrate that socialization is as much about how to do one's work as it is about directly communicating organizational values, norms, and mission [Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003, Van Maanen, 1978, Zacka, 2017]. However, to the researcher's knowledge, there is no direct evidence exploring tasks as a channel for socialization into organizational culture.

In addition, despite highlighting supervisors as an important source of recruit socialization, prior studies are unclear on actual practices by which supervisors socialize recruits. Beyond identifying supervisors as a critical socialization source, these studies do not illuminate much on actual socialization practices enacted by these actors except for a few studies (for instance, [Riccucci et al., 2004, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2011]). How do supervisors socialize new recruits? Do they socialize recruits by directly communicating the importance of organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations? What else do they do to socialize recruits? In particular, if we have reasons to suspect tasks as an important socialization channel, the role of supervisors in this warrants our attention as they have formal authority along with discretion, resources, and information to influence task assignments and supervision [Graen, 1976, Morrison, 1993].

In fact, Paper 2 demonstrates task-based socialization to be a primary, alternative channel of socializing employees into organizational culture. Drawing upon 80 qualitative interviews with new recruits, their direct supervisors, and HR personnel across nine organizations in Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services, it shows that supervisors socialize recruits primarily by assigning tasks, and providing guidance and feedback - what I call task-based socialization. According to interviewees, task-based socialization matters for recruits' attitudes - in particular their job satisfaction and perhaps organizational commitment-and early career advancements such as the assignment of future tasks, an additional role, or an additional team, collaborating prior research [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007].

Thus, drawing upon the extant literature and the proposed theory of task-based

socialization in Paper 2, my hypotheses are:

- H1: Direct supervisors rely more on task-based socialization (i.e., role and task assignments, guidance, and feedback) than values-based socialization (i.e., direct values communication) of new recruits into the civil service.
- H2: Task-based socialization is positively associated with new recruits' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and early career advancements.
- H3: Values-based socialization is positively associated with new recruits' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and early career advancements.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are my primary interests since they test if task-based socialization is a primary, alternative channel of socializing new recruits. H3 is an auxiliary hypothesis to explore that indeed both task-based and values-based socialization influence certain recruits' outcomes in the same direction. H2 and H3 are formulated as investigating correlational associations, rather than causal relations, of task-based and values-based socialization by supervisors to recruit outcomes as most of my data are observational. However, I also include a vignette experiment in my surveys to explore the causality of these associations. In addition, I will explore whether task-based or values-based socialization is more strongly associated with recruits' outcomes.

## 4.3 Method

In this section, I present this study's method, in particular its empirical context and survey populations, measures, the survey vignette experiment, and data collection.

### 4.3.1 Empirical context & survey populations

The rationale for choosing Nigeria and Ghana as the empirical context for my research and the relevant background on their civil services are discussed in

details in Introduction and Paper 2 respectively, and I refer the reader to these discussions. Hence, I here focus on presenting this study's population.

The population of interest for this study is newly recruited civil servants into the core civil services of Ghana and Nigeria. New recruits are the most commonly studied populations in the existing studies of socialization as they cross inclusionary, functional, and hierarchical boundaries in their transition from organizational outsiders into insiders [Van Maanen and Schein, 1979, Bauer et al., 2007, Ashforth et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. Thus, I also decided to focus on new recruits into the civil services of Ghana and Nigeria in this study.

The study population comes from new recruits into Ghana and Nigeria's core civil services across different organizations, cadres, and grades to increase the generalizablity of my findings. In Ghana, the study population is new recruits into the entire core civil service across cadres and grades in 2020-2022, i.e, three recruitment cohorts. In Nigeria, the study population is new recruits into four federal organizations across cadres and grades since 2018. These four organizations are the Federal Ministry of Labour & Employment, the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF), the Federal Ministry of Health, and the Federal Ministry of Education. The reason to focus on "older" new recruits in Nigeria is that I was initially informed of its government's moratorium on recruitment after 2018. Yet I found that in practice, recruitment was made as recently as 2022. Thus, the actual study population in Nigeria includes new recruits into its four federal civil service organizations as recently as 2022.

### 4.3.2 Measures

#### 4.3.2.1 Supervisory socialization practices (independent variables)

The independent variables of interest are task-based and values-based socialization practices by direct supervisors. Drawing upon rich, qualitative interview data from Paper 2, I define task-based socialization practice by supervisors as assigning role and tasks as well as providing guidance and feedback about these tasks. In other words, task-based socialization practice has two dimensions, i.e., task assignments and task supervision. On the other hand, I define values-based socialization practice as supervisors directly communicating the importance of organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations to new recruits drawing upon the extant literature's focus on mission mystique and performance-based culture. Here, I do not argue that task-based socialization does not entail values. In fact, my conceptual argument is that through task assignments, guidance, and feedback, values can be conveyed, and recruits socialized into organizational culture. Therefore, my main conceptual distinction between task-based and values-based socialization is the channel - tasks or the explicit and direct communication of values - through which recruits are socialized.

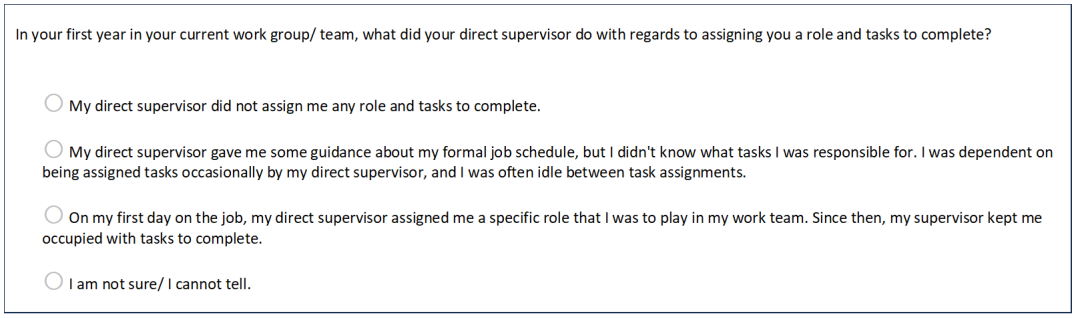
I constructed measures for task-based and values-based socialization practices by adapting a pioneering and highly influential methodology for measuring managerial practices proposed by Bloom and Van Reenen (BVR from now on) from organizational economics into the socialization context [Bloom and Van Reenen, 2007, Bloom and Van Reenen, 2010, Bloom et al., 2014]. Prior quantitative studies on organizational socialization have largely utilized perception-based, Likert-item questionnaires with subjective scales which open themselves up to potential threats from social disability bias and the non-comparability of responses

across participants among others. The BVR methodology improves upon these well-known biases in survey research by typically deploying in-person surveys in which a double-blind research design is utilized, and both unstructured and structured responses on prevailing management practices within an organization are solicited from participants. When structured responses are solicited from participants, absolute rather than subjective scales are used. Participant responses are then scored based on a scoring grid. Due to the aforementioned improvements offered by the BVR methodology over conventional, Likert-item scales, it has been adapted and used in recent research on public organizations (see [Rasul and Rogger, 2018, Rasul et al., 2021]).

Adapting the BVR methodology, I constructed open-ended questions asking new recruits about task-based and values-based socialization practices by their direct supervisors that they experienced in their first years in their current teams. I constructed two open-ended questions each asking about task assignments and task guidance/feedback by the supervisor to measure task-based socialization practice. I constructed one open-ended question asking recruits about direct values communication by their supervisors to measure values-based socialization practice. Usually, the BVR methodology solicits unstructured responses from participants by in-person survey administration. Since I planned to roll out the survey online, I instead constructed measures asking participants to choose one out of three descriptions of supervisory socialization practices that most closely reflects their own experiences in a multiple-choice answer format in response to questions. I drew upon my earlier interviews with recruits for Paper 2 to construct these descriptions. These descriptions are presented in a random order across participants on Qualtrics platform. The responses are then scored 1, 3, and 5 with 1 for the absence of a specific supervisory socialization practice and 5 for the consistent

provision of this practice. The open-ended question along with multiple choices on task assignments by the supervisor is shown in Table 4.1 (see Appendix for the complete set of the BVR-adapted measures for supervisory socialization practices).

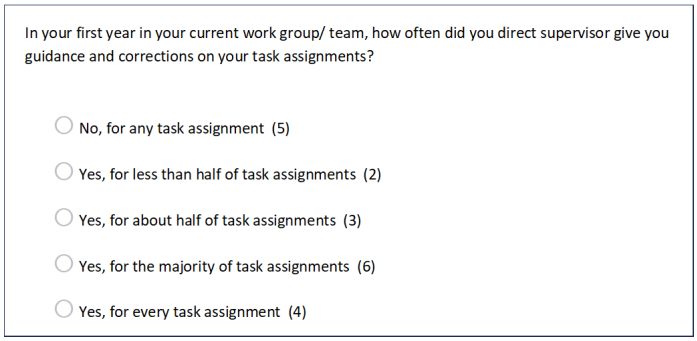
Table 4.1: The BVR-adapted question on task assignments by the supervisor




To complement above open-ended measures, I also constructed the closed-ended measures for the same supervisory socialization practices. However, instead of soliciting responses in subjective scales, these measures solicit responses in absolute scales [Bloom and Van Reenen, 2010]. Again, I constructed two closed-ended questions each asking recruits about the frequencies of task assignments and task guidance/feedback by their supervisors in their first years in their current teams to measure task-based socialization practice. I constructed one closed-ended question asking recruits about the frequency of direct values communication by their supervisors to measure values-based socialization practice. The closed-ended question asking recruits about the frequency of guidance/feedback by their supervisor is shown in Table 4.2 below.

For main regression analyses, I constructed the composite measures of task-based socialization practice using scores from its two dimensions. I took a simple average across the scores of the BVR-adapted measures of task assignments and task guidance/feedback to construct the BVR-adapted composite measure of

Table 4.2: The close-ended question with absolute scale on task guidance/feedback by the supervisor




task-based socialization practice. A similar procedure is adopted to construct the absolute composite measure of task-based socialization practice. I also experimented with the different construction of task-based socialization practice to provide robustness checks (see Robustness checks). I use the normalized scores of both task-based and values-based socialization in my main analyses.

The construct validity test in Figures 4.9 and 4.10 in Appendix demonstrates that task-based and values-based socialization are different constructs, and items constructed to measure them have convergent and discriminant validity. 100% of items have a correlation coefficient with the score of their own dimension greater than 0.4, demonstrating convergent validity. On the other hand, 100% of items have a correlation coefficient with the score of their own dimension greater than those computed with other scores, illustrating discriminant validity.

Table 4.3 below provides a summary of independent variables and their measures:

Table 4.3: Independent variables & measures

| Independent variables | Measures |
|---|---|
| Task-based socialization practice: 1) task assignments and 2) task guidance/feedback | BVR-adapted measure of task assignment<br>BVR-adapted measure of task guidance/feedback<br>Absolute measure of task assignment<br>Absolute measure of task guidance/feedback |
| Values-based socialization practice | BVR-adapted measure of direct values communication<br>Absolute measure of direct values communication |

#### 4.3.2.2 Recruits' outcomes (dependent variables)

The dependent variables of interest for this study are recruits' current job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and early career advancements, and I use both existing validated scales and measures constructed specifically for this study. For job satisfaction and organizational commitment, I use standard scales in the literature with reported reliability and validity. In particular, I use items from Meyer et al.'s scale that measures affective organizational commitment and the three-item global measure of job satisfaction from Michigan Organization Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ-JSS) since my interests are not in the specific dimensions of job satisfaction [Cammann et al., 1983, Meyer and Allen, 1991, Meyer et al., 1993]. For early career advancements of recruits, I constructed three questions each asking the intensity of current task assignments, the number of role assignments within the primary work team, and the number of additional team assignments beyond a recruit's primary work team. Together, they should approximate both formal and informal early career advancements that recruits had experienced. Again, I use the normalized scores of dependent variables in my main analyses. The question asking recruits for the number of current role assignments within their primary team is shown in Table 4.4, and Table 4.5 summarizes the dependent variables and their measures.

Table 4.4: The question on the recruit's current role assignments within the primary team

| |
|---|
| At present, how many roles are you assigned to in your primary work group/ team (e.g., beside being a budget officer of your work group/ team, you also are the desk officer for correspondence with the Head of Service)? |
| 0 |
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| More than 3 |

Table 4.5: Dependent variables & measures

| **Dependent variables** | **Measures** |
|---|---|
| Affective organizational commitment | Meyer et al. 1991; Meyer et al. 1993 |
| Job satisfaction | Michigan Organization Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann et al. 1983) |
| Intensity of task assignments | No. of days spent on task assignments in the previous month |
| Role assignments | No. of roles assigned in the primary team |
| Additional team assignments | No. of additional teams assigned beyond the primary team |

#### 4.3.2.3 Controls

The survey includes measures for potential individual-level confounders. Recruits' demographics characteristics may influence how supervisors behave towards them as well as their attitudes and career trajectories. In the extant literature, socialization studies routinely control for age and gender. Hence, the survey asks for recruits' age and gender. In addition, education, prior work experiences, formal orientation completion, and current tenure may influence how supervisors behave towards recruits and recruits' outcomes. Thus, the survey also asks for these demographic characteristics.

In addition, personality trait, motivation, and co-workers' support can influence

supervisors' practices towards recruits and recruits' outcomes. In particular, the proactive personality trait and the public service motivation (PSM) of recruits may influence how supervisors behave towards them and their own attitudes and career trajectories. Therefor, I measure proactive personality trait by using Bateman and Grant's scale [Bateman and Crant, 1993]. I measure the public service motivation of recruits by using the five-item global measure of PSM from 1996 Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) survey. Finally, I measure co-workers' support by using two-item measures developed by [Feij et al., 1995]. However, proactive personality trait, PSM, and co-workers' support may be endogeneous to socialization process although the extent literature tends to treat them as exogenous. Thus, my regression models include those with only demographic controls, i.e., tenure, age, gender, education, prior work experience, and formal orientation completion as well as all controls including above potentially endogenous variables. Table 4.6 provides a summary of control variables and their measures:

Table 4.6: Controls & measures

| **Demographic only controls** | **Measures** |
|---|---|
| Tenure | |
| Age | |
| Gender | |
| Education | |
| Prior work experience | |
| Formal orientation completion | |
| **Additional (potentially endogenous) controls** | **Measures** |
| Proactive personality trait | Batman et al. 1993 |
| Public service motivation | Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) survey 1996 |
| Co-workers' support | Feij et al. 1995 |

### 4.3.3 Vignette experiment

Cross-sectional data analyses using the above observational measures, however, come with causal inference limitations. Using this data, I can show the relative prevalence of task-based and values-based socialization practices by supervisors as well as their correlations with recruits' job satisfaction, organizational

commitment, and early career advancements. Yet statistical analyses based on cross-sectional data especially having a common source, i.e., new recruits in my case, face potential threats from common method variance, omitted variable bias and reverse causation, notwithstanding controlling for potential confounders.

To improve upon the limitations of cross-sectional data, I embedded a 2*2 cross-design, vignette experiment with experimental variations along the two dimensions of supervisory socialization practices of my interest in the surveys. Like in the BVR-adapted measures, vignettes portray task-based socialization practice by the supervisor as role and task assignments together with guidance and feedback and values-based socialization as supervisors directly communicating the importance of organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations to recruits. I only use two levels for each dimension, i.e., the presence or absence of task-based and values-based socialization practices by the supervisor.

The final vignette population thus includes 4 vignettes with three treatment arms and one control in a 2*2 cross design (Table 4.7). Vignette 1 assigns survey participants a hypothetical supervisor who provides both task-based and values-based socialization to the recruit. Vignette 2 assigns a hypothetical supervisor who only provides task-based socialization practice to the recruit, and vignette 3 assigns a hypothetical supervisor who only provides values-based socialization practice to the recruit. Finally, vignette 4 assigns a hypothetical supervisor who provides neither task-based nor values-based socialization to the recruit, thus serving as the control. A single vignette was randomly assigned across participants using the randomizer on Qualtrics online survey platform.

Prior to presenting the vignette that contains the experimental stimulus to

Table 4.7: The 2*2 cross design vignette experiment

| | **Task-based socialization practice by the supervisor** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Vales-based socialization practice by the supervisor** | Yes | No |
| Yes | T1: Vignette 1 (n = 110) | T3: Vignette 3 (n = 95) |
| No | T2: Vignette 2 (n = 91) | C: Vignette 4 (n = 84) |

participants, each vignette begins by presenting the same hypothetical scenario. The scenario portrays a new recruit joining a department of a ministry within the civil service and being assigned a direct supervisor. It does not specify department or ministry to avoid organization-level confounders and enhance generalizability. Similarly, it does not specify the gender, age, position, or ethnicity of the direct supervisor or the recruit for similar reasons. In addition, I attempt to experimentally control additional confounders in vignettes, especially co-workers' support and proactive behaviours of the recruit by keeping them constant across vignettes. In sum, organizational and individual characteristics including co-workers' support and proactive behaviours are experimentally controlled, and vignettes vary only along the dimensions of supervisory socialization practices. Participants are then asked to imagine themselves to be the recruit in the scenario (see Appendix for all 4 vignettes with the introductory paragraph describing the hypothetical scenario).

After presenting the vignette, participants are asked to rate their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the likelihood of promotion in the presented scenario. I also include manipulation checks. In particular, the literature shows learning as a primary mechanism through which organizational socialization influences recruits' outcomes [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. Hence, for task-based socialization by the supervisor, the vignette experiment asks participants to rate learning about tasks. Similarly, for values-based

socialization by the supervisor, it asks participants to rate learning about organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. In other words, if experimental variations along task-based and values-based socialization practices work, participants should be able to report their (not) learning. The manipulation checks also allow me to conduct mediation analyses.

### 4.3.4 Data collection

I piloted the survey iteratively in both Nigeria and Ghana prior to its roll-out in each country. In Nigeria, I piloted the survey with new recruits into its state-level civil service in November-December 2022. In Ghana, I piloted the survey with those recruited prior to 2020 in January-February 2023.

Prior to the survey roll-out in each country, I constructed a sampling frame by asking for the list of eligible recruits from each participating organization. In Nigeria, I requested the list of recruits from four participating federal organizations who were recruited from 2018 onward. My sampling frame in Nigeria includes 5,629 eligible recruits. Unlike in Nigeria however, the Ghana's OHCS has centralized data on new recruits into its civil service. I requested the list of recruits into Ghana's civil service in 2020-22 from the OHCS. The list includes 855 total new recruits in that period. The final sampling frame pooled across Nigeria and Ghana includes 6,484 eligible recruits.

The survey was first rolled out in Nigeria from the last week of January 2023 to mid-February 2023 for three weeks on the University of Oxford's Qualtrics online survey platform. An anonymous link to the online survey was sent to all eligible recruits via their cellphone numbers using a local SMS messaging company. The same link was sent to participants via the WhatsApp platform.

The response rate was very low. After the first week of the survey roll-out, the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation, my local collaborator, began calling some recruits to find out why responses were low. At least according to some recruits, they did not fill out the survey because they did not have any incentive for the survey or incentive to contribute towards the potential improvement of the civil service through this study. Beyond the lack of incentives, another reason for a low response rate might be that many recruits did not give out their actual contact numbers to their organizations according to one senior official. After the first week of the survey roll-out, I sent out a reminder to recruits at the end of the second week and again at the end of the third/final week to fill out the survey if they had not already. The total responses are 428. Unsurprisingly, many participants simply opened the survey link or did not finish it. The total finished responses are only 156 (2.8% response rate). The implication of this low response rate for causal inference is discussed under the Robustness checks section.

After the survey roll-out in Nigeria, the same survey was rolled out in Ghana for three weeks in March 2023. Unlike in Nigeria, the OHCS had its own SMS messaging platform to civil servants. I used this platform to send out an anonymous survey link on Qualtrics Platform to all eligible recruits. Reminders were sent out at the end of each week until the survey was closed at the end of the third week. 325 new recruits responded to the survey of which 215 finished the survey (25.1 percent response rate), a comparable response rate to previous online surveys with civil servants conducted by others ([Schuster et al., 2023, Anessi-Pessina and Sicilia, 2020, Dimitrijevska —Markoski and French, 2019]).

## 4.4 Descriptive statistics of the sample population

### 4.4.1 Finished & unfinished responses

371 out of 753, who started the survey, finished it (49.3% completion rate), and only grade is a statistically significant difference in observable characteristics between those who finished the survey and those who did not. In Ghana, 325 started the survey of which 215 (66.2%) finished it (Table 4.12 in Appendix). In Nigeria, 156 out of 428 (36.4%) who started the survey finished it. The balance test on observable individual characteristics in Table 4.13 in Appendix shows that there is statistically significant difference between finished and non-finished responses in terms of grades at 5% significance level. In my main regression analyses, I use only the finished sub-sample. However, I also provide regression results using the entire sample in Appendix.

### 4.4.2 Pre-entry demographic characteristics

The majority of survey participants are under 35 males with prior work experiences and formal higher education degrees. Specifically, 65.7% of participants are younger than 35 years of age. Just over half of them (58.6%) are males (see Appendix). An overwhelming majority of them (84.7%) has some prior work experience before joining the civil service. 77.4% of participants from Ghana hold at least one degree, whereas 84.4% of participants in Nigeria have attended a graduate school. In addition, the majority of survey participants in Ghana come from coastal regions in the South or their neighboring regions: 65.2% come from Eastern, Greater Accra, Ashanti, Volta, and Central regions. On the other hand, survey participants from Nigeria are more evenly distributed among its 36 states and 1 Federal Capital Territory.

### 4.4.3 Organizations & grades

Whereas survey participants come from all ministries, semi-autonomous departments, and extra-ministerial organizations in Ghana and mainly from one federal ministry in Nigeria, participants tend to concentrate around certain grades in both Ghana and Nigeria. In Ghana, the survey was rolled out to eligible recruits at all ministries, semi-autonomous departments, and extra-ministerial organizations. Survey participants come from across all ministries, and the majority of them are from Births and Deaths Department among semi-autonomous departments (see Appendix). Between the Office of the President and the OHCS, i.e., two extra-ministerial organizations, an overwhelming majority of the survey participants are from the OHCS. On the other hand, just over half of the survey participants in Nigeria are from its Federal Ministry of Labour & Productivity. In terms of grades, the majority of survey participants in Ghana and Nigeria are at Assistant Director IIB grade and GL 6-12 respectively.

### 4.4.4 Access to formal orientation

The access to formal orientation for new recruits is markedly different between Ghana and Nigeria. In the pooled sample, 63.9% of survey participants have had some form of formal orientation either at the civil service, ministry or department level (see Appendix). Yet whereas 77% of recruits in Ghana reported having received some formal orientation, one out of two new recruits in Nigeria reported not having received any formal orientation (see Appendix). Table 4.14 in Appendix provides the summary table of key variables.

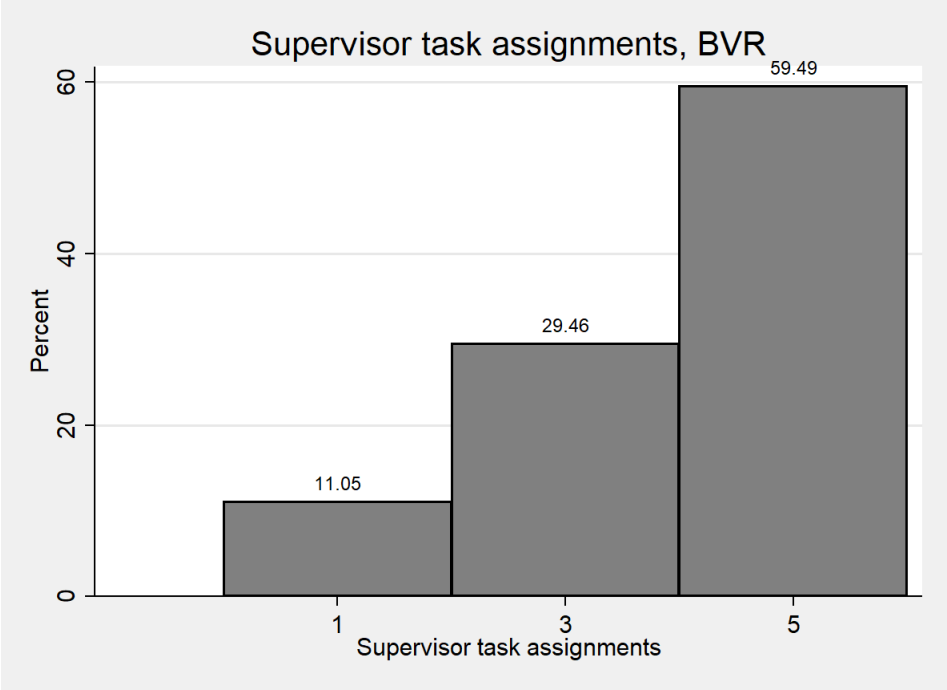
## 4.5 Results

### 4.5.1 Relative prevalence of task-based and values-based socialization practices by direct supervisors

In this section, I explore the relative prevalence of task-based and values-based socialization practices by direct supervisors towards recruits to test Hypothesis I. First, I show that there is variation in task-based and values-based socialization practices by direct supervisors that recruits reportedly experienced in their first years. Second, I demonstrate that direct supervisors rely more on task-based socialization than values-based socialization of recruits in the latter's first years validating Hypothesis I as well as collaborating findings from qualitative interviews in Paper 2.

Recruits reportedly experienced the different levels of task-based socialization practice by their supervisors in their first years in their teams. The existence of formal job descriptions notwithstanding, survey participants reported wide variation in actual task assignments, guidance and feedback by their supervisors. When asked how their direct supervisor assigned them roles and tasks in their first year in the BVR-adapted measure, 59.5% of participants responded that their direct supervisor assigned them a role to play in their team on their first day and since then, consistently assigned them tasks (see score 5 Figure 4.1). In contrast, one out of ten participants responded that their supervisor never assigned them a role and tasks in their first year (see score 1 in Figure 4.1). When asked how their supervisor gave them guidance and feedback in their first year in the BVR-adapted measure, over three out of four participants responded that their supervisor consistently gave them guidance prior to tasks

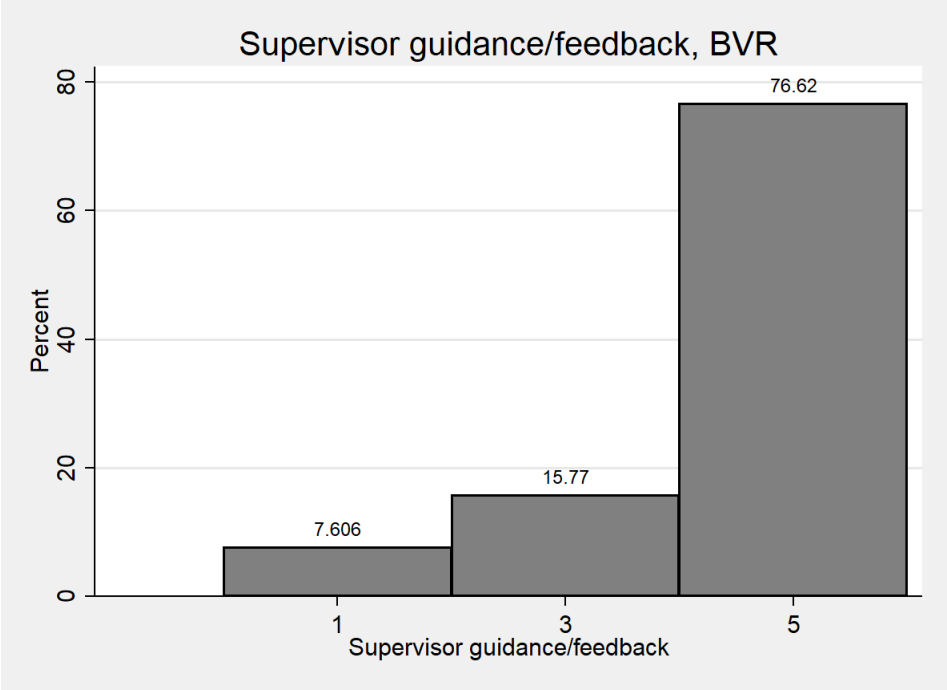
Figure 4.1: Whereas just over one in two recruits reportedly received consistent task assignments from their supervisors in their first years, one in ten recruits never received any assignments (BVR-adapted measure)




and provided feedback again after submission when necessary (see score 5 in Figure 4.2). In contrast, less than one out of ten participants responded that their supervisor never gave them guidance and feedback (see score 1 in Figure 4.2).

I observe similar variation in task-based socialization practice by direct supervisors in the absolute measures, collaborating the above findings. When asked how often recruits had assignments to work on from their supervisor in a typical month in their first year, just over one out of two participants responded that they had assignments every week of the month (see Figure 4.3). In contrast, one out of five participants responded that they had assignments less than 2 weeks of the month. Similarly, only a quarter of participants reportedly received guidance and feedback for all tasks from their supervisors in their first years, and one out of

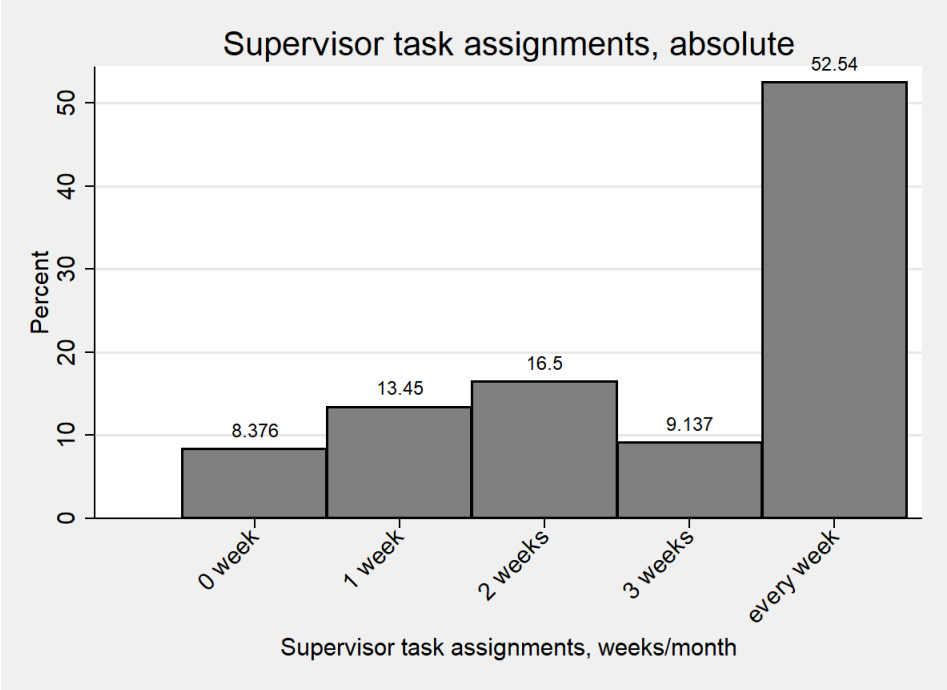
Figure 4.2: 7.6% of recruits reportedly never received any guidance and feedback from their supervisors in their first years, although the majority of recruits received consistent guidance/feedback (BVR-adapted measure)




ten participants reportedly never received any guidance or feedback from their supervisors (see Figure 4.4).

Similarly, recruits reportedly experienced the different levels of values-based socialization practice by their supervisors in their first years. When asked how their supervisor directly communicated organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations in their first year in the BVR-adapted measure, 38.9% of participants responded that their supervisor informed them of these things on their first day and since then, had regularly reminded them of these organizational values (see score 5 Figure 4.5). In contrast, 17.4% of participants responded that their supervisor never explained organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations to them. When asked a similar

Figure 4.3: Whereas one in two recruits reportedly had assignments from their supervisors in every week of a typical month in their first years, 20% of recruits had assignments for less than half of the month (absolute measure)




question in the absolute measure, just over a third of participants responded that their supervisor reminded them of organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations every month (see Figure 4.6). In contrast, just over a quarter of participants responded that their supervisor never explained these organizational values to them. Together, the variation in task-based and values-based socialization practices by supervisors that I observe here collaborate and complement qualitative findings in Paper 2 by showing the extent of their variation in a larger sample population.

Supervisors relied more on task-based socialization than values-based socialization of recruits validating Hypothesis I. First, as shown in the first two rows in Table 4.8 showing T-tests using BVR-adapted scores, the mean scores for task assignments

Figure 4.4: A quarter of recruits reportedly received guidance and feedback for every task from their supervisors, but 10% of recruits never received any guidance and feedback (absolute measure)

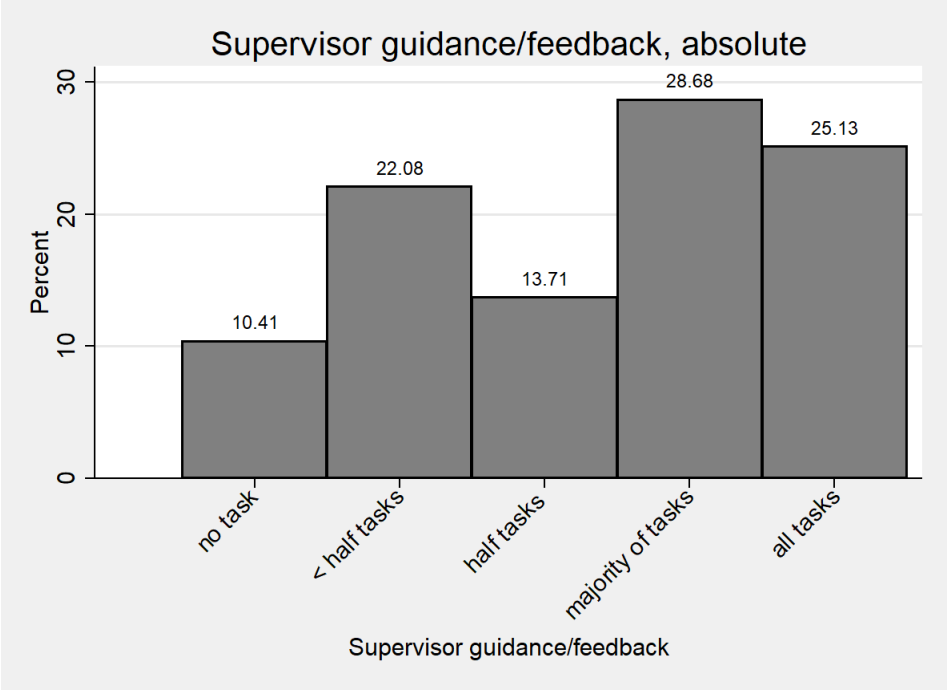


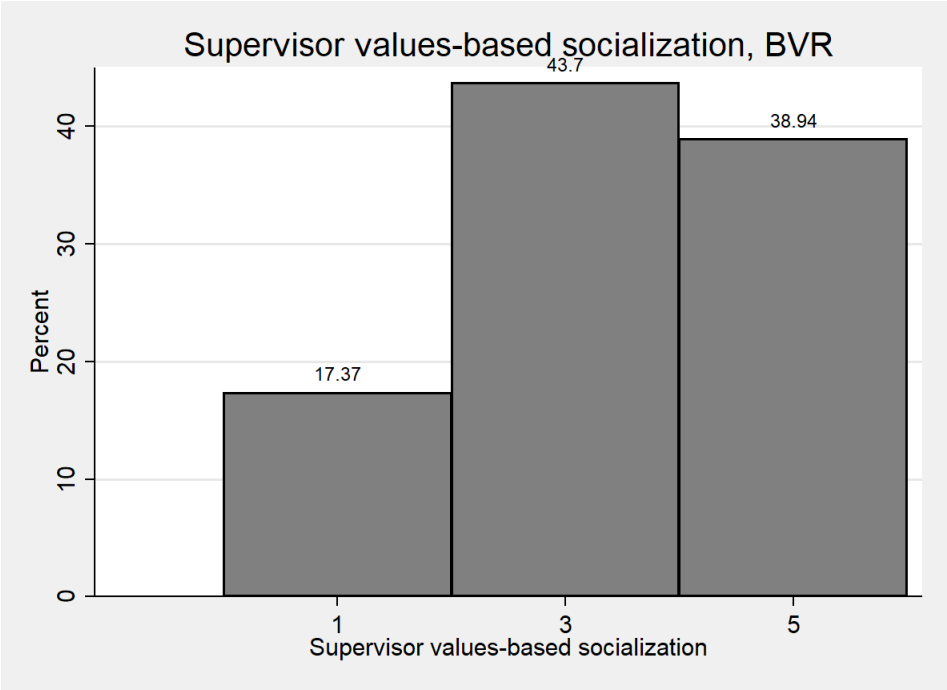

Table 4.8: The mean scores for task assignments, task guidance/feedback, and the composite measure of task-based socialization are significantly higher than that for values based socialization (BVR-adapted measures)

| | obs | Mean1 | Mean2 | dif | St Err |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| assign – valuesSocial | 332 | 4.04 | 3.43 | .61 | .09 |
| guide – valuesSocial | 339 | 4.37 | 3.44 | .93 | .08 |
| taskSocial - valuesSocial | 354 | 4.17 | 3.44 | .73 | .08 |

Note: assign = task assignments, guide = guidance/ feedback, taskSocial = the composite measure of task-based socialization, valuesSocial = values-based socialization

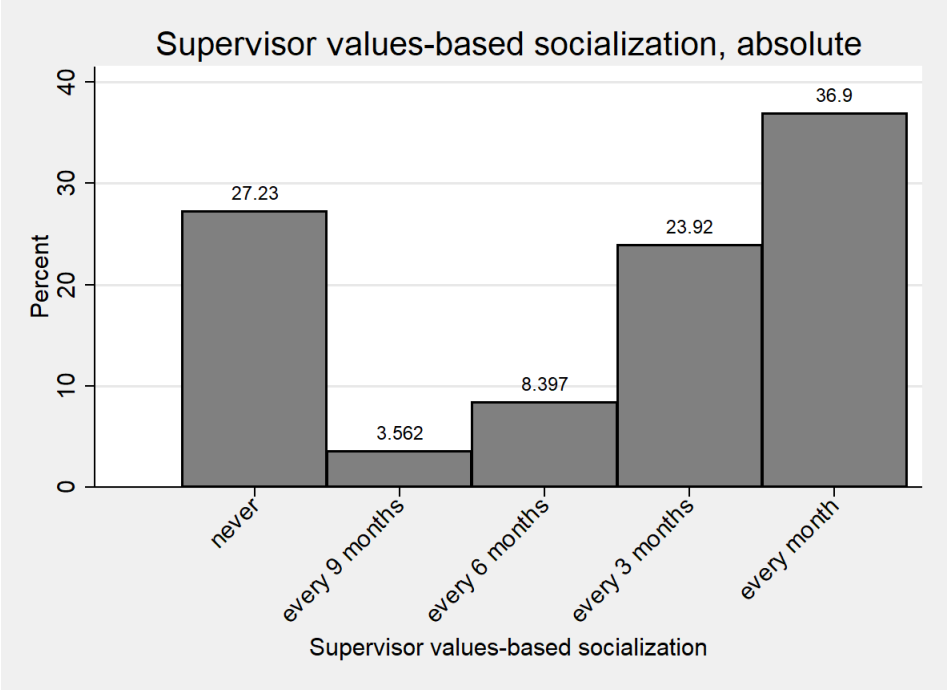
and task guidance/feedback by supervisors are significantly higher than that for direct values communication by supervisors. Next, I constructed the composite measure of task-based socialization practice by taking a simple average across scores for task assignments and task guidance/feedback. Again, the mean score

Figure 4.5: Just over a third of supervisors reportedly communicated organizational values to recruits in a consistent manner in recruits' first years, whereas 17% of supervisors never communicated these values to recruits (BVR-adapted measure)




for task-based socialization practice is significantly higher than that for values-based socialization as shown in the third row in the Figure. Hence, together these T-test results demonstrate that supervisors relied more on task-based socialization of recruits than their values-based socialization, collaborating interview findings in Paper 2. T-test results using the absolute measures collaborate these findings except there is no significant mean-difference between task guidance/feedback and values-based socialization (see Table 4.17 in Appendix).

Figure 4.6: Just over a third of supervisors reportedly communicated organizational values to recruits every month in recruits' first years, but over a quarter of supervisors never communicated these values to recruits (absolute measure)




### 4.5.2 Correlations of task-based and values-based socialization by supervisors with recruits' outcomes

In this section, I explore the correlations of task-based and values-based socialization practices by supervisors in recruits' first years with the latter's current job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career advancements to test Hypotheses II and III.

I run the multi-variate, partial correlation regressions of recruits' current job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and early career advancements on supervisory socialization practices that they reportedly encountered in their first years to test hypothesis II and III. Using an organization fixed-effect model, I control

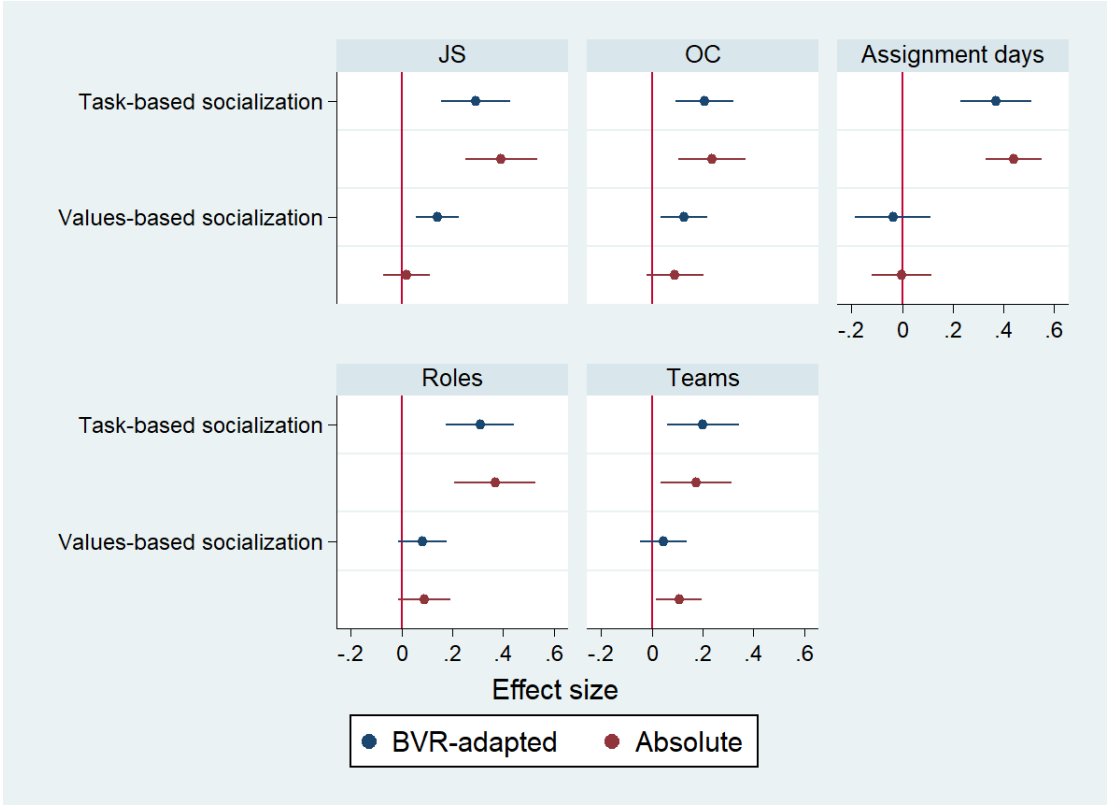
for organization-level confounders. In addition, I first control for individual demographic characteristics: age, gender, education, prior work experience, tenure, and formal orientation completion. Afterwards, I introduce additional controls that might be endogenous to socialization process itself: recruits' proactive personality trait, their public service motivation, and co-workers' support (see Method section). Hence, my identification specification is as follow:

$$Y_{ij} = \alpha + \beta_1 TaskSocialization_{ij} + \beta_2 ValuesSocialization_{ij} + \chi^i + \eta^j + e_{ij}, \quad (4.1)$$

where $Y_{ij}$ is the outcome of interest for i recruit in j organization. $\beta_1$ and $\beta_2$ are my primary coefficients of interest, measuring the correlations of task-based and values-based socialization by the supervisor to the outcome of interest for recruit i in organization j respectively. $\chi$ is a a vector of demographic controls for recruit i. $\eta$ is the fixed-effect for organization j. $e_{ij}$ is the error term. Below, I first present regression results using scores from the BVR-adapted measures of supervisory socialization practices and afterwards results using scores from their absolute measures. Both regressions only use finished responses (see Appendix for robustness checks using all responses).

Task-based socialization by supervisors in recruits' first years is positively, significantly, and meaningfully correlated to all recruits' current outcomes supporting Hypothesis II. Whether using scores from BVR-adapted or absolute measures, task-based socialization by supervisors is positively and significantly correlated to recruits' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, the number of days spent on task assignments in the previous month, the number of roles assigned in their current teams, and the number of additional teams to which they have been assigned (Figure 4.7). In addition, effect sizes are large and similar whether controlling

Figure 4.7: Whereas task-based socialization is positively correlated with all recruits' outcomes across regressions using either BVR-adapted or absolute measures, values-based socialization is not consistently correlated with recruits' outcomes across regressions using different measures




Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = the number of days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = the number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = the number of additional teams assigned to beyond the primary team

for only demographic characteristics or all individual characteristics including potentially endogenous factors and across regressions using BVR-adapted and absolute measures (Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10). On the other hand, values-based socialization by supervisors is positively and significantly correlated with recruits' job satisfaction and organizational commitment in regressions using BVR-adapted measures, but it is positively and significantly correlated with recruits' additional

Table 4.9: Whereas task-based socialization is positively correlated with all recruits' outcomes, values-based socialization is only significantly correlated with recruits' job satisfaction and organizational commitment (BVR-adapted measures)

Regression Results, BVR measures

| | (1) JS | (2) JS | (3) OC | (4) OC | (5) Assignment Days | (6) Assignment days | (7) Roles | (8) Roles | (9) Teams | (10) Teams |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Task-based socialization | 0.303*** (0.0736) | 0.293*** (0.0677) | 0.205** (0.0668) | 0.208*** (0.0572) | 0.369*** (0.0713) | 0.369*** (0.0693) | 0.314*** (0.0637) | 0.309*** (0.0669) | 0.213** (0.0663) | 0.201** (0.0703) |
| Values-based socialization | 0.180*** .0394) | 0.141** (0.0417) | 0.182*** (0.0504) | 0.126** (0.0455) | -0.0297 (0.0698) | -0.0370 (0.0745) | 0.0897 (0.0478) | 0.0838 (0.0477) | 0.0489 (0.0501) | 0.0456 (0.0463) |
| Demo Controls | v | | v | | v | | v | | v | |
| All Controls | | v | | v | | v | | v | | v |
| _cons | -0.590 (0.503) | -2.604*** (0.718) | -0.430 (0.563) | -2.632** (0.846) | -0.248 (0.521) | -0.683 (0.578) | -0.882 (0.509) | -1.141 (0.657) | -1.167* (0.478) | -1.343 (0.883) |
| N | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 | 333 |

Note: Normalized clustered standard errors are shown below point estimates in parentheses. These regression results use the BVR-adapted measures of task- and values-based socialization and use only finished responses. Demographic controls include tenure, age, gender, education, prior work experience, and formal orientation. All controls include potentially endogenous proactive personality trait, co-workers' support, and public service motivation plus demographic controls. JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = the number of days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = the number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = the number of additional teams assigned to beyond the primary team
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 4.10: Whereas task-based socialization is positively correlated with all recruits' outcomes, values-based socialization is only significantly related with recruits' additional team assignments (absolute measures)

Regression Results, absolute measures

| | (1) JS | (2) JS | (3) OC | (4) OC | (5) Assignment days | (6) Assignment days | (7) Roles | (8) Roles | (9) Teams | (10) Teams |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Task-based socialization | 0.402*** (0.0692) | 0.393*** (0.0701) | 0.243*** (0.0533) | 0.237*** (0.0659) | 0.442*** (0.0531) | 0.440*** (0.0545) | 0.370*** (0.0756) | 0.369*** (0.0796) | 0.181** (0.0634) | 0.173* (0.0697) |
| Values-based socialization | 0.0364 (0.0499) | 0.0189 (0.0456) | 0.114 (0.0617) | 0.0910 (0.0555) | -0.000474 (0.0571) | -0.00367 (0.0584) | 0.0933 (0.0491) | 0.0892 (0.0506) | 0.111* (0.0444) | 0.107* (0.0447) |
| Demo-Controls | v | | v | | v | | v | | v | |
| All-Controls | | v | | v | | v | | v | | v |
| _cons | -0.962 (0.480) | -2.771*** (0.605) | -0.922 (0.515) | -3.353*** (0.672) | -0.772 (0.478) | -1.325* (0.522) | -1.098* (0.468) | -1.422* (0.547) | -1.472** (0.445) | -1.561 (0.805) |
| N | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 | 367 |

Note: Normalized clustered standard errors are shown below point estimates in parentheses. These regression results use the absolute measures of task- and values-based socialization and use only finished responses. Demographic controls include tenure, age, gender, education, prior work experience, and formal orientation. All controls include potentially endogenous proactive personality trait, co-workers' support, and public service motivation plus demographic controls. JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = the number of days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = the number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = the number of additional teams assigned to beyond the primary team
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

team assignments in regressions using absolute measures. Thus, whereas I find support for Hypothesis II, there is only partial support for Hypothesis III. These findings are consistent with my theory of task-based socialization and findings based on qualitative interviews in Paper 2 that task-based socialization, not values-based socialization, is a primary channel of socializing recruits into the organization in some contexts.

### 4.5.3 Causal effects of task-based and values-based socialization on recruits' outcomes

In this section, I improve upon above correlational findings and tease out their potential causal relations using a vignette experiment to test Hypotheses II and III. Findings from correlational regressions in the previous section are open to threats from omitted variables that are associated with both supervisory socialization practices and recruit outcomes as well as reverse causality. Hence, they only portray correlational associations rather than causation. To improve upon them and tease out their causal associations, I use experimental data from a vignette experiment in this section.

The random vignette assignments across participants are balanced on observable participants' characteristics. Out of 371 participants who finished the survey, 101 received vignette 1, 91 vignette 2, 95 vignette 3, and 84 vignette 4. As seen in Table 4.18 in Appendix, observable participants' characteristics across vignette assignments are balanced.

Again using only finished responses pooled across Ghana and Nigeria, I use the following OLS specification:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Vig1_i + \beta_2 Vig2_i + \beta_3 Vig3_i + e_i, \tag{4.2}$$

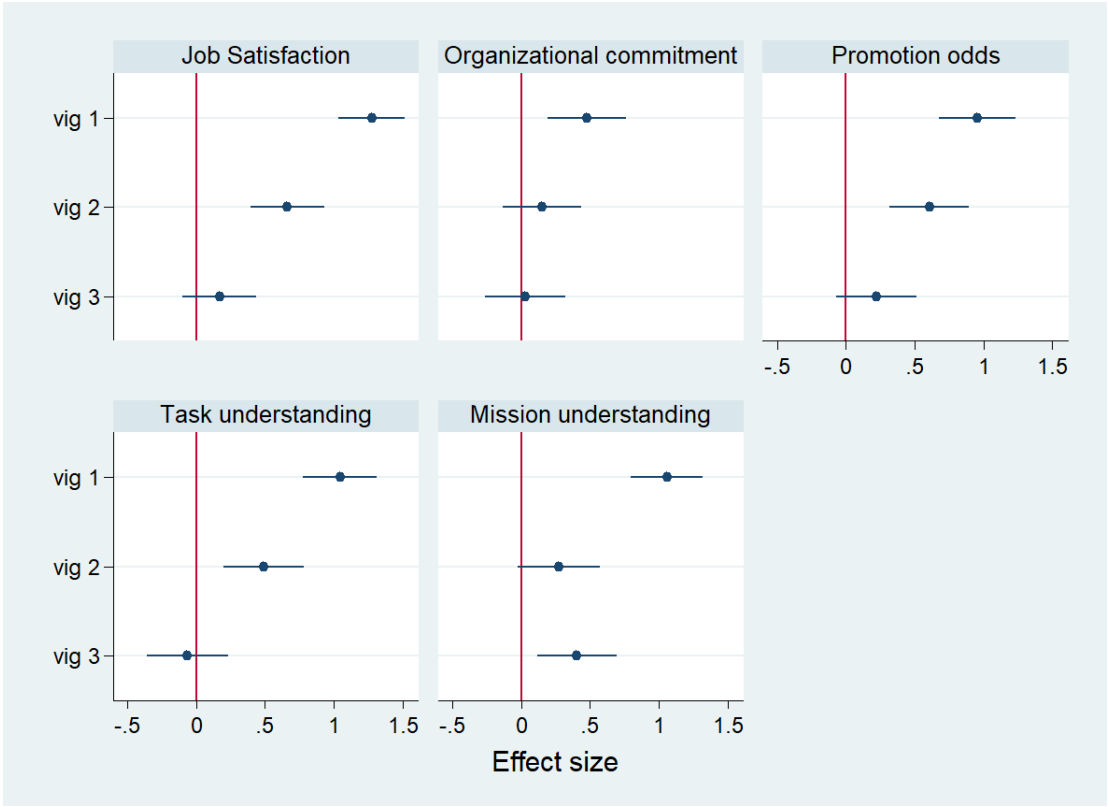
where $Y_i$ is the outcome of interest for recruit i who is randomly assigned a vignette condition. $\beta_1$ to $\beta_3$ are my primary estimates of interest which measures the potential causal effects of being assigned a treatment vignette condition on the outcome of interest for recruit i in comparison to being assigned a control vignette condition, i.e., $\beta_4 Vig4_i$ which is omitted from the equation as a baseline

condition. Specifically, $\beta_1$ estimates the recruit's outcomes of being assigned a vignette condition when the hypothetical supervisor provides both task-based and values-based socialization. $\beta_2$ estimates the recruit's outcomes of being assigned a vignette condition when the supervisor provides only task-based socialization. $\beta_3$ estimates the recruit's outcomes of being assigned a vignette condition when the supervisor provides only values-based socialization. Finally, $\beta_4$ estimates the recruit's outcomes of being assigned the control vignette condition when the supervisor does not provide either task-based or values-based socialization.

First, the experimental stimuli in terms of task-based and values-based socialization work as expected according to manipulation checks included in vignettes. Based on the organizational socialization literature in mainstream management and organizational behavior, I expect task-based socialization to be positively related with learning about tasks and values-based socialization to be positively related with learning about values if experimental manipulations work [Ashforth et al., 2007, Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. As seen in Figure 4.8, being assigned to vignette 2 when the hypothetical supervisor provides only task-based socialization is positively related to task understanding but not values understanding. Similarly, being assigned to vignette 3 when the supervisor provides only values-based socialization is positively related to values understanding but not task understanding.

In large support of Hypothesis II, being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who provides only task-based socialization is positively associated with the higher levels of reported recruits' outcomes than being assigned one who does not. Participants who were randomly assigned vignette 2 reported the higher levels of job satisfaction and promotion odds compared to those who were assigned the

Figure 4.8: Whereas being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who only provides task-based socialization (vignette 2) is associated with the higher levels of reported job satisfaction and promotion odds compared to the one who does not, being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who only provides values-based socialization (vignette 3) is not associated with the higher levels of work attitudes and promotion odds than the one who does not




Note: Effect sizes are in comparison to being assigned the control condition: i.e., vignette 4.

control vignette (Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.11).

In contrast, being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who provides only values-based socialization is not associated with the higher levels of recruits' outcomes than being assigned one who does not. Reported job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and promotion odds for participants randomly assigned vignette

3 are not significantly different to those assigned the control vignette, failing to provide evidence in support of Hypothesis III. Overall, regression results using the vignette experiment largely collaborate correlational findings from the previous section.

Table 4.11: Whereas being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who only provides task-based socialization (vignette 2) is associated with the higher levels of reported job satisfaction and promotion odds compared to the one who does not, being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who only provides values-based socialization (vignette 3) is not associated with the higher levels of work attitudes and promotion odds than the one who does not (vignette experiment)

Regression Results, vignette experiment

| | (1) JS | (2) OC | (3) Promotion odds | (4) Task-Understand | (5) Mission-Understand |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| vig1 | 1.274*** | 0.477** | 0.955*** | 1.046*** | 1.060*** |
| | (0.122) | (0.145) | (0.141) | (0.136) | (0.133) |
| vig2 | 0.661*** | 0.153 | 0.606*** | 0.491*** | 0.275 |
| | (0.136) | (0.145) | (0.147) | (0.147) | (0.153) |
| vig3 | 0.168 | 0.0311 | 0.219 | -0.0633 | 0.405** |
| | (0.138) | (0.148) | (0.148) | (0.149) | (0.146) |
| _cons | -0.542*** | -0.146 | -0.436*** | -0.378*** | -0.430*** |
| | (0.0973) | (0.105) | (0.111) | (0.114) | (0.111) |
| N | 371 | 371 | 371 | 371 | 371 |
| vig1=vig2 | 0.000000589 | 0.0232 | 0.00729 | 0.00000496 | 1.87e-09 |
| vig1=vig3 | 8.04e-18 | 0.00229 | 3.58e-08 | 4.90e-18 | 7.60e-08 |
| vig2=vig3 | 0.000342 | 0.400 | 0.00524 | 0.0000443 | 0.360 |

Note: vignette 4 is omitted from the table. Normalized standard errors are shown below point estimates in parentheses. JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment.
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Finally, being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who provides both task-based and values-based socialization is positively associated with higher recruits' outcomes than being assigned a supervisor that only provides task-based socialization. The effect sizes for being assigned vignette 1 are significantly bigger than those for being assigned vignette 2 (Figure 4.11). Together with regression results for being assigned vignette 3, this suggests that whereas values-based socialization can potentially provide additional influence on recruits, it must be provided in

tandem with task-based socialization.

### 4.5.4 Robustness checks

In this section, I present robustness checks, and their results collaborate findings from main specifications discussed above. I present regression results using only the Ghana sub-sample and afterwards, present regression results using the different construction of task-based and values-based socialization measures.

Regressions using the vignette experiment only from the Ghana sub-sample return similar results to those using the pooled sample as presented in the above section. As discussed under the Method section, the survey response rate in Nigeria is very low. Hence, sample selection bias may affect regression results using the pooled sample that includes Nigeria sub-sample. On the other hand, the response rate in Ghana is comparable to those in previous online surveys with civil servants conducted by other scholars [Schuster et al., 2023, Anessi-Pessina and Sicilia, 2020, Dimitrijevska —Markoski and French, 2019], and hence regressions using only the Ghana sub-sample provide a good robustness check. As seen in Figure 4.25 in Appendix, effect sizes using the vignette experiment only from the Ghana sub-sample are similar to those using the pooled sample although their variations are larger due to a smaller sample size (see Appendix for additional robustness checks using the BVR-adapted and absolute measures and only the Ghana sub-sample).

In addition, a robustness check using the different construction of task-based and values-based socialization measures also returns results similar to those from the initial construction. Initially, I use only the scores from either the BVR-adapted

or absolute items to construct task-based and values-based socialization measures. For instance, I took a simple average across the BVR-adapted scores of task assignments and task guidance/feedback to construct the BVR-adapted composite measure of task-based socialization. As a robustness check, I constructed the alternative measure of task-based socialization by taking an average across the BVR-adapted and absolute scores, and a similar procedure is adopted for values-based socialization. Regression results using this alternative construction are similar to those using the initial construction as seen in Figure 4.28 in Appendix.

## 4.6 Discussion

Overall, my analyses demonstrate that task-based socialization practice is not only primarily relied upon by supervisors for recruit socialization but also has more important consequences on recruits' outcomes than values-based socialization practice in Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services. First, recruits encounter different task-based and values-based socialization practices by their direct supervisors. Some recruits have positive task-based socialization experiences, i.e., being assigned tasks, and provided guidelines and feedback consistently by their supervisors, whereas others experience negative exclusion. Similarly, some recruits have a supervisor who consistently communicates the importance of organizational mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations to them. In contrast, others have supervisors who never communicate these organizational values to them. Descriptive statistics for task-based and values-based socialization using both their BVR-adapted and absolute measure show these variation.

In support of Hypothesis I, I find that direct supervisors rely more on task-based socialization than values-based socialization of recruits. The mean scores for

task-based socialization practice are significantly higher than those for values-based socialization, regardless of whether I use scores from the BVR-adapted or absolute measures. Hence, at least in the civil services of Ghana and Nigeria at the grade levels of Assistant Direction IIB in Ghana and GL6-12 in Nigeria, supervisors socialize recruits primarily by assigning tasks, and providing guidance and feedback rather than directly communicating organizational values.

In support of hypothesis II, task-based socialization by supervisors is positively associated with recruits' work attitudes, and early career advancements. Partial correlation regressions based on both the BVR-adapted and absolute measures of supervisory socialization practices show that task-based socialization by supervisors in recruits' first years is positively correlated with their current levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the various measures of their formal and informal career advancements. Regression results from the vignette experiment further demonstrate that being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who only provides task-based socialization is associated with the higher levels of reported job satisfaction and promotion odds compared to the one who does not. Hence, findings largely support Hypothesis II and validate my theory of task-based socialization proposed in Paper 2 except for the relationship between task-based socialization and organizational commitment in the vignette experiment.

However, I find that values-based socialization is not associated with many recruits' outcomes especially if not provided in tandem with task-based socialization, providing only limited support for Hypothesis III. Partial correlation regression results based on both the BVR-adapted and absolute measures of supervisory socialization practices show the inconsistent correlations of values-based socialization by supervisors to recruits' outcomes. Furthermore, in regressions

using the vignette experiment, being assigned a hypothetical supervisor who provides only values-based socialization is not associated with the higher levels of work attitudes and promotion odds than when being assigned one that does not. However, being assigned a supervisor who provides both values-based and task-based socialization is associated with the significantly higher levels of reported recruits' outcomes than being assigned a supervisor who provides only task-based socialization. Therefore, whereas values-based socialization by supervisors can influence recruits' outcomes, my analyses show that it must be provided in tandem with their task-based socialization. These findings are consistent with the propositions from my theory of task-based socialization - task-based socialization is a primary channel of socializing recruits in certain contexts.

## 4.7 Conclusion

In summary, this study shows task-based socialization to be an important, alternative channel of socialization into organizational culture. First, supervisors rely more on task-based socialization than values-based socialization of recruits in Ghana's and Nigeria's civil services. Second, task-based socialization is more important for recruits' work attitudes, and early career advancements than values-based socialization. In fact, values-based socialization by supervisors alone might not matter to recruits unless task-based socialization is also provided in tandem.

Whether the findings of this study are valid to contexts outside of Nigeria and Ghana depend on learning mechanisms, contextual factors around tasks and

supervisors together, and the nature of organizational values. The extant literature shows learning to be a primary mechanisms through which organizational socialization influences recruits' outcomes [Bauer et al., 2007, Saks et al., 2007]. Unfortunately, I do not have enough power to test learning as a mechanism in this study. Nonetheless, from a theoretical perspective, we may predict that as long as recruits have the need to learn about their tasks and the fulfillment of that need depends upon supervisors, task-based socialization is likely to produce similar effects as observed here.

Yet learning and its facilitation by supervisors are contextual to the nature of tasks and discretion at the disposal of supervisors. On the one hand, new recruits into professional tasks such as treating a patient or educating a child are likely to enter the organization with professional training and expertise necessary to execute these tasks. Thus, they are less dependent on the context for learning how to discharge their professional duties. In other words, task-based socialization by supervisors may not be as salient to recruits into professional tasks. Even then, these same recruits must learn non-professional tasks to be a civil servant including rules, regulations, and procedures around tasks and how to communicate in "the language of civil service". For this type of learning, they may have to depend upon their colleagues including supervisors. In particular, they are likely to lean more heavily on supervisors in contexts where authority is centralized around supervisors with discretion over task assignments. Where supervisors have discretion over "who get what and how" in terms of task assignments, task-based socialization by supervisors is likely to be crucial for learning. In contrast, where authority is decentralized or tasks are clearly demarcated by formal job descriptions, recruits may depend less on supervisors' task-based socialization. On the other hand, values-based socialization by supervisors may be more prevalent

and salient for recruits in contexts where organizational values are relatively more functional, challenging, and meaningful.

By highlighting task-based socialization as an important channel for socializing recruits into organizational culture, this study builds upon and extends the existing literature on organizational socialization in public administration. It complements prior studies that focus on values-based socialization by highlighting that task-based socialization is an important channel for organizational socialization [Desmond, 2006, Diiulio, 1994, Grindle, 1997, Kaufman, 2006, McDonnell, 2017, Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999, Wilson, 2000, Vandenabeele, 2007, Vandenabeele, 2011]. Its findings also collaborate prior studies by demonstrating the importance of supervisors in socialization process [Blau, 1960, Buchanan, 1974, Chatman, 1991, Oberfield, 2010, Oberfield, 2012, Oberfield, 2014, Riccucci et al., 2004, Sandfort, 2000]. They extend them by highlighting specific, informal supervisory socialization practices around tasks. Furthermore, findings here validate the theory of task-based socialization and its propositions in Paper 2. Methodologically, to my knowledge, this is the first socialization study to use innovative measures for supervisory socialization practices that improve upon conventional Likert-item scales and a vignette experiment to explore causal associations between supervisory socialization practices and recruit outcomes.

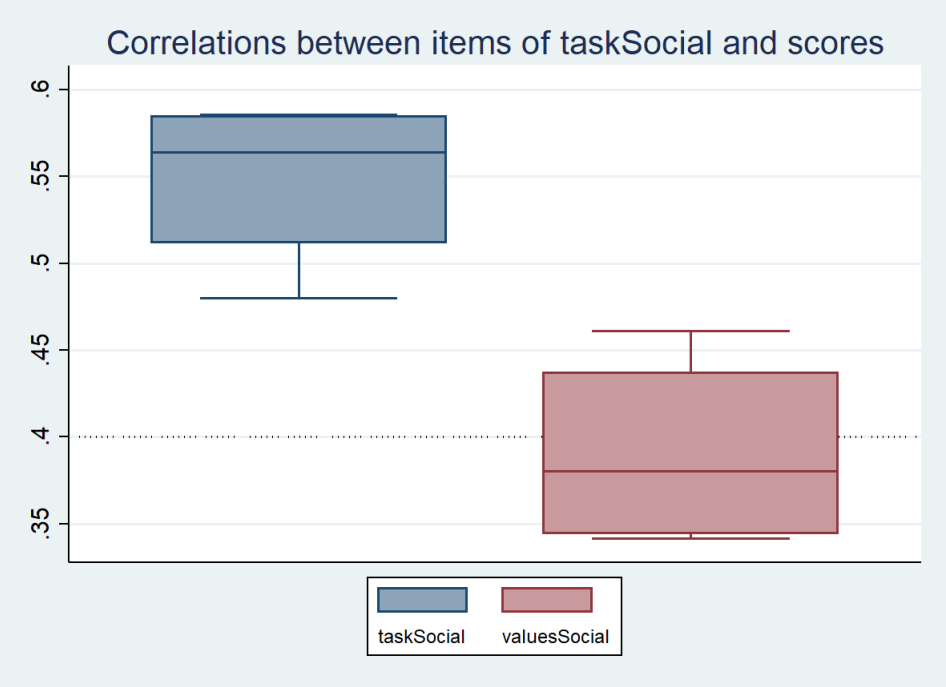
There are several directions for future research. Future research should investigate the potential influence of task-based and values-based socialization on additional outcomes, in particular such behavior outcomes as absenteeism, organizational citizenship behaviors, and voluntary retention while paying attention to differences in their effects. In addition, potential curvilinear relationships of task-based and values-based socialization on outcomes such as mental health and burnt-out

should be explored. Future research should also validate this study's findings using field experiments such as managerial training or panel data and using data from different contexts. In addition, future studies can investigate who get positively and negatively task-socialized among recruits. There may be both meritocratic and non-meritocratic drivers by which supervisors allocate positive and negative task-based socialization across recruits. Their implications for team-level performance should be investigated.

In terms of policies, findings have implications for both recruit orientation and the training and management of their supervisors. Supervisors should be equipped, facilitated, and rewarded to execute their task assignments, guidance, and feedback in an effective and meritocratic manner. Civil service training centers can offer management training on best practices in task assignments, guidance and feedback such as consistent and progressively challenging assignments, guidance balanced with a room for experimentation and learning, and discussion-based feedback. The role of supervisors in recruit on-boarding processes needs greater attention. Direct supervisors should be provided with guidelines and appropriate information by HR departments concerning recruits joining their teams. Finally, how supervisors are integrating recruits into their teams - in particular, meritocracy and effectiveness in their task assignments, guidance and feedback - should be monitored and integrated into their formal performance appraisal beyond meeting their operational targets. Similarly, recruit orientation should focus not just on "dos and don'ts" of the civil service but also on soft-skills in personal and relationship management such as effective learning techniques, relationship building with their supervisors, asking for feedback, and negotiating for tasks.

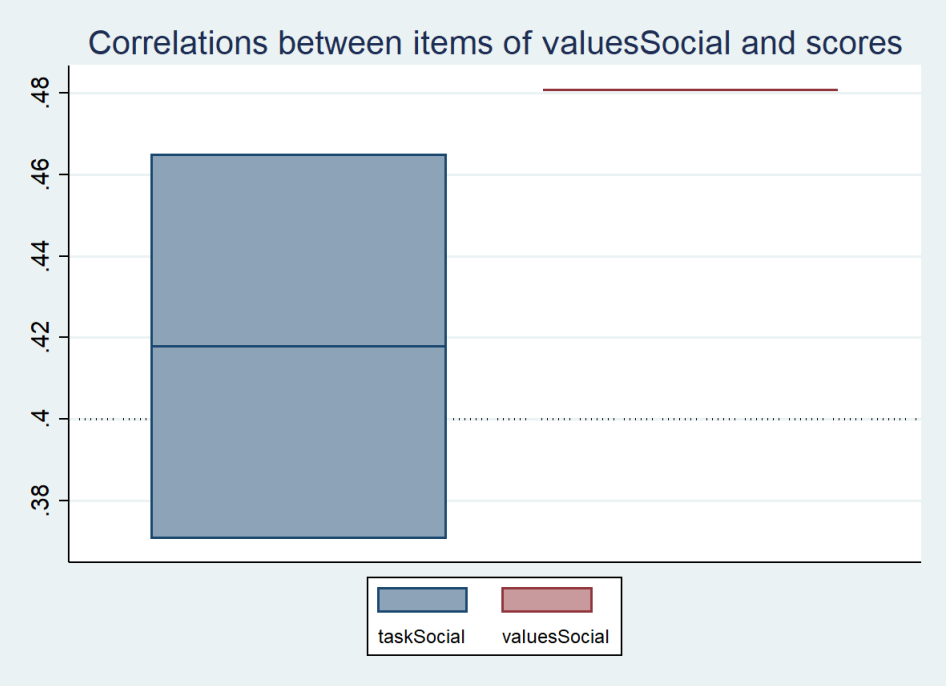
## 4.8 Appendix

Figure 4.9: Items measuring task-based and values-based socialization practices display convergent and discriminant validity




Note: taskSocial = task-based socialization, valuesSocial = values-based socialization.

Figure 4.10: Items measuring task-based and values-based socialization practices display convergent and discriminant validity




Note: taskSocial = task-based socialization, valuesSocial = values-based socialization.

Table 4.12: 66.2% of total participants finished the survey in Ghana, whereas 36.5% of total participants finished it in Nigeria

| | (1) nigeria 0 Freq | (2) nigeria 1 Freq |
|---|---|---|
| finished | (Percent) | (Percent) |
| 0 | 110*** | 272*** |
| | (33.85) | (63.55) |
| 1 | 215*** | 156*** |
| | (66.15) | (36.45) |
| Total | 325 | 428 |

Table 4.13: Finished and unfinished responses are balanced on observable characteristics except for grades

| | 0<br>Mean<br>(SE) | 1<br>Mean<br>(SE) | Pairwise<br>t-test<br>Mean<br>difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| tenure | 2.438 | 2.385 | -0.052 |
| | (0.751) | (0.771) | (0.074) |
| age | 2.353 | 2.385 | 0.032 |
| | (0.608) | (0.628) | (0.066) |
| gender | 1.603 | 1.617 | 0.014 |
| | (0.617) | (0.519) | (0.058) |
| edu | 3.802 | 4.102 | 0.301 |
| | (2.048) | (2.044) | (0.218) |
| region | 29.940 | 32.806 | 2.866* |
| | (14.402) | (13.535) | (1.462) |
| prior | 1.802 | 1.863 | 0.061 |
| | (0.400) | (0.345) | (0.038) |
| orient | 1.612 | 1.644 | 0.032 |
| | (0.489) | (0.479) | (0.051) |
| grade | 7.043 | 8.208 | 1.164** |
| | (4.387) | (4.850) | (0.505) |
| allOrg | 15.157 | 17.927 | 2.770 |
| | (15.550) | (16.407) | (1.732) |
| Observations | 382 | 371 | 753 |

Significance: ***=.01, **=.05, *=.1

Note: edu = education, prior = prior work experience, orient = formal orientation received, allOrg = organizations

Table 4.14: Summary statistics of key variables

| VARIABLES | (1) N | (2) mean | (3) sd | (4) min | (5) max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Days spent on assignments in previous month | 371 | 13.67 | 8.248 | 0 | 31 |
| Task assignments (absolute) | 371 | 3.852 | 1.396 | 1 | 5 |
| Role assignments within the primary team | 371 | 3.245 | 1.308 | 1 | 5 |
| Additional team assignments | 371 | 2.464 | 1.303 | 1 | 5 |
| vig1 | 371 | 0.272 | 0.446 | 0 | 1 |
| vig2 | 371 | 0.245 | 0.431 | 0 | 1 |
| vig3 | 371 | 0.256 | 0.437 | 0 | 1 |
| vig4 | 371 | 0.226 | 0.419 | 0 | 1 |
| Task assignments (BVR) | 332 | 3.970 | 1.368 | 1 | 5 |
| Guidance/ feedback (BVR) | 334 | 4.383 | 1.207 | 1 | 5 |
| Guidance/ feedback (Absolute) | 371 | 3.388 | 1.338 | 1 | 5 |
| Values-based socialization (BVR) | 339 | 3.413 | 1.433 | 1 | 5 |
| Values-based socialization (Absolute) | 370 | 3.451 | 1.618 | 1 | 5 |
| Job satisfaction (Vignette) | 371 | 4.261 | 2.447 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized job satisfaction (Vignette) | 371 | 0.0100 | 1.005 | -1.329 | 1.134 |
| Organizational commitment (Vignette) | 371 | 4.159 | 2.205 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized organizational commitment (Vignette) | 371 | 0.0292 | 1.003 | -1.408 | 1.322 |
| Promotion odds (Vignette) | 371 | 4.480 | 2.223 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized promotion odds (Vignette) | 371 | 0.0292 | 1.006 | -1.545 | 1.169 |
| Task understanding (Vignette) | 371 | 4.631 | 2.348 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized task understanding (Vignette) | 371 | 0.0111 | 1.010 | -1.550 | 1.030 |
| Mission understanding (Vignette) | 371 | 4.801 | 2.302 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized mission understanding (Vignette) | 371 | 0.0299 | 0.996 | -1.614 | 0.982 |
| Normalized task assignments (BVR) | 332 | 0.000758 | 0.996 | -2.161 | 0.750 |
| Normalized task assignments (Absolute) | 371 | 0.00832 | 0.997 | -2.028 | 0.828 |
| Normalized guidance/ feedback (BVR) | 334 | 0.00244 | 0.996 | -2.790 | 0.511 |
| Normalized guidance/ feedback (Absolute) | 371 | 0.0207 | 0.996 | -1.758 | 1.221 |
| Normalized values-based socialization (BVR) | 339 | -0.0128 | 0.996 | -1.689 | 1.090 |
| Normalized values-based socialization (Absolute) | 370 | 0.0332 | 0.987 | -1.462 | 0.978 |
| Task-based socialization (BVR) | 354 | 4.130 | 1.185 | 1 | 5 |
| Task-based socialization (Absolute) | 371 | 3.620 | 1.144 | 1 | 5 |
| Task-based socialization (BVR & absolute) | 354 | -0.0335 | 0.900 | -2.790 | 0.750 |
| Normalized task-based socialization (Absolute) | 371 | 0.0145 | 0.834 | -1.893 | 1.025 |
| Organizational commitment | 371 | 4.884 | 1.598 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized organizational commitment | 371 | 0.0124 | 0.988 | -2.389 | 1.321 |
| Job satisfaction | 371 | 5.190 | 1.591 | 1 | 7 |
| Normalized job satisfaction | 371 | 0.0170 | 0.991 | -2.591 | 1.144 |
| Normalized days spent on tasks in the previous month | 371 | 0.0124 | 0.998 | -1.641 | 2.109 |
| Normalized role assignments within the primary team | 371 | -0.00159 | 0.999 | -1.718 | 1.340 |
| Normalized additional team assignments | 371 | 0.00441 | 1.006 | -1.125 | 1.962 |

Figure 4.11: The majority of participants are younger than 35 years of age

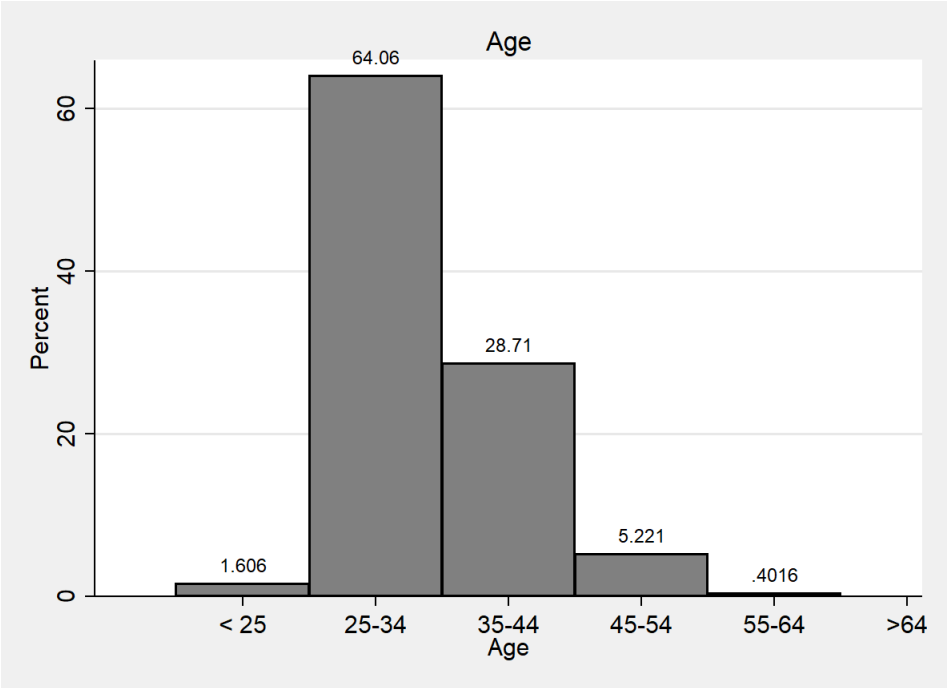



Figure 4.12: Just over half of participants are male

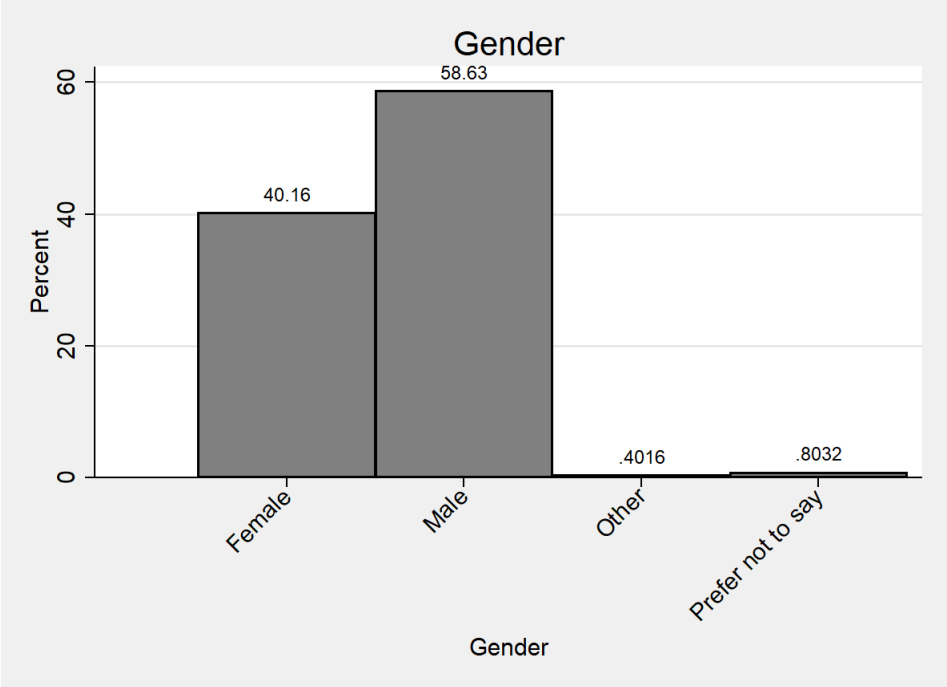


Figure 4.13: Over three quarters of participants in Ghana hold a degree (Ghana)

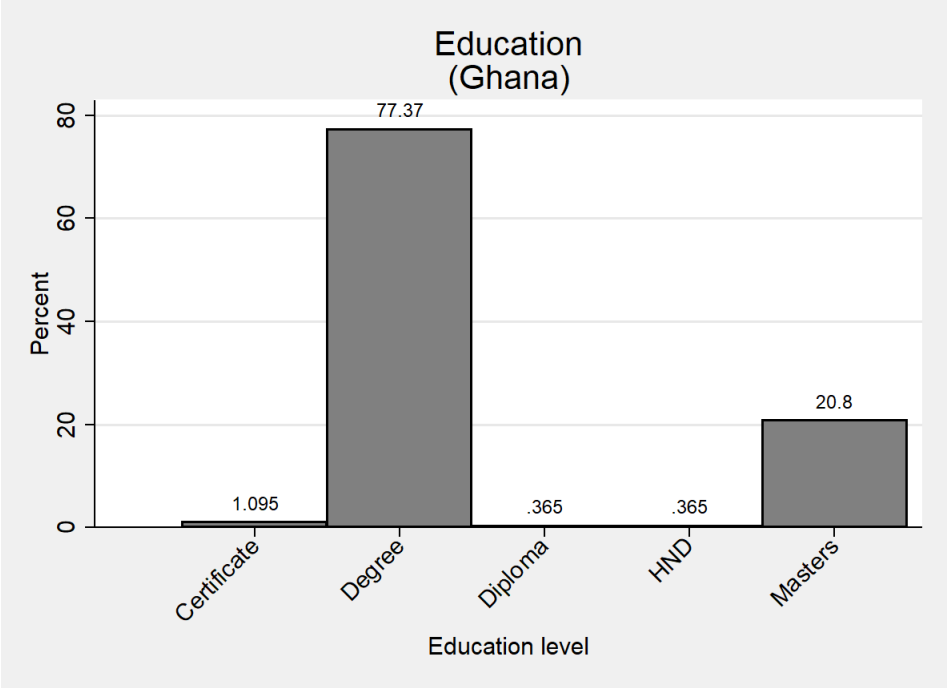



Figure 4.14: The majority of participants in Nigeria have attended a graduate school (Nigeria)

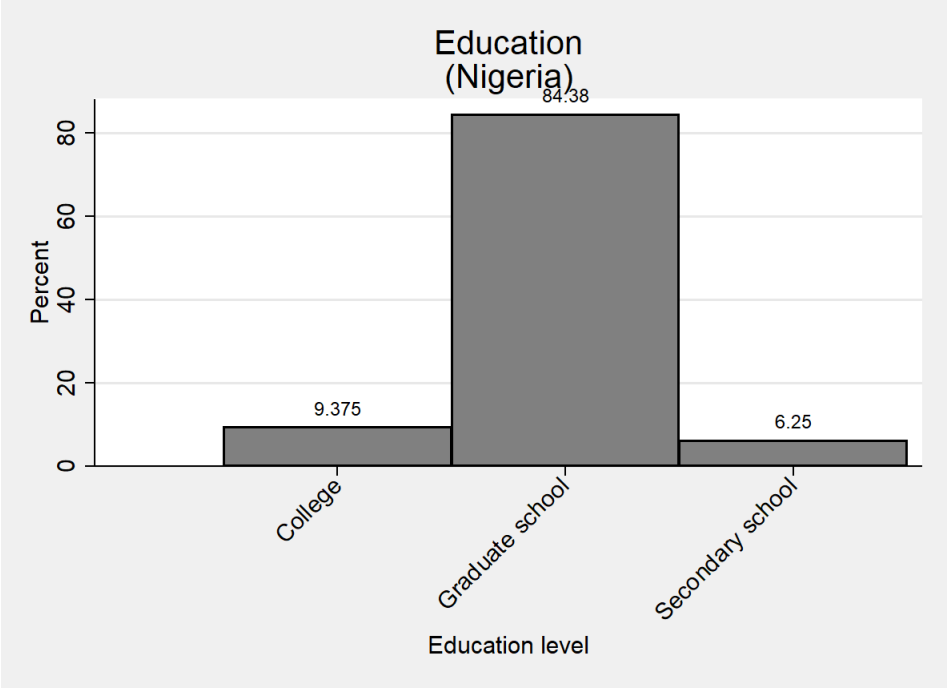


Figure 4.15: The majority of participants have prior work experience before joining the civil service



Table 4.15: The majority of participants in Ghana are originally from coastal and their neighboring regions (Ghana)

| | (1) |
|---|---|
| region_ghana | Freq<br>(Percent) |
| Ahafo | 4 |
| | (1.460) |
| Ashanti | 45 |
| | (16.42) |
| Brong Ahafo | 6 |
| | (2.190) |
| Central | 28 |
| | (10.22) |
| Eastern | 53 |
| | (19.34) |
| Greater Accra | 53 |
| | (19.34) |
| North East | 4 |
| | (1.460) |
| Northern | 12 |
| | (4.380) |
| Oti | 4 |
| | (1.460) |
| Savannah Region | 4 |
| | (1.460) |
| Upper East | 6 |
| | (2.190) |
| Upper West | 8 |
| | (2.920) |
| Volta | 37 |
| | (13.50) |
| Western | 10 |
| | (3.650) |
| Total | 274 |

Table 4.16: Participants are originally from all across Nigeria (Nigeria)

| region_nigeria | (1)<br>Freq<br>(Percent) |
|---|---|
| Abia | 4<br>(1.786) |
| Adamawa | 5<br>(2.232) |
| Akwa Ibom | 8<br>(3.571) |
| Anambra | 8<br>(3.571) |
| Bauchi | 3<br>(1.339) |
| Bayelsa | 2<br>(0.893) |
| Benue | 9<br>(4.018) |
| Borno | 3<br>(1.339) |
| Cross River | 6<br>(2.679) |
| Delta | 6<br>(2.679) |
| Ebonyi | 1<br>(0.446) |
| Edo | 9<br>(4.018) |
| Ekiti | 8<br>(3.571) |
| Enugu | 3<br>(1.339) |
| Gombe | 8<br>(3.571) |
| Imo | 11<br>(4.911) |
| Jigawa | 3<br>(1.339) |
| Kaduna | 8<br>(3.571) |
| Kano | 5<br>(2.232) |
| Katsina | 9<br>(4.018) |
| Kebbi | 9<br>(4.018) |
| Kogi | 13<br>(5.804) |
| Kwara | 9<br>(4.018) |
| Lagos | 2<br>(0.893) |
| Nasarawa | 5<br>(2.232) |
| Niger | 8<br>(3.571) |
| Ogun | 7<br>(3.125) |
| Ondo | 6<br>(2.679) |
| Osun | 10<br>(4.464) |
| Oyo | 5<br>(2.232) |
| Plateau | 10<br>(4.464) |
| Rivers | 4<br>(1.786) |
| Sokoto | 3<br>(1.339) |
| Taraba | 5<br>(2.232) |
| Yobe | 3<br>(1.339) |
| Zamfara | 6<br>(2.679) |
| Total | 224 |

Figure 4.16: Most participants in Ghana are at Assistant Director IIB grade (Ghana)

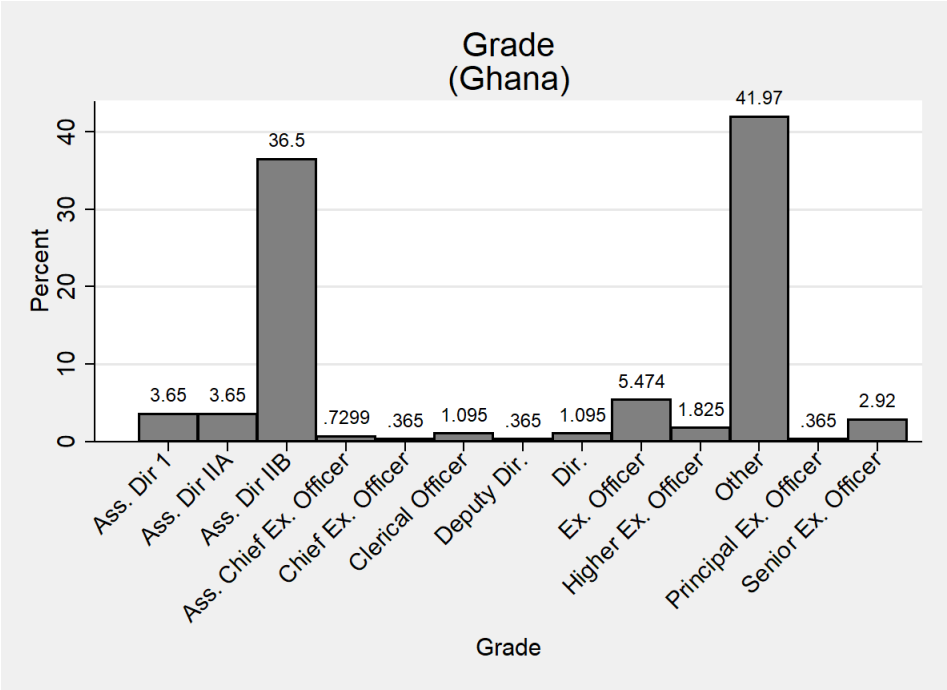



Figure 4.17: The majority of participants in Nigeria are at GL6-12 (Nigeria)

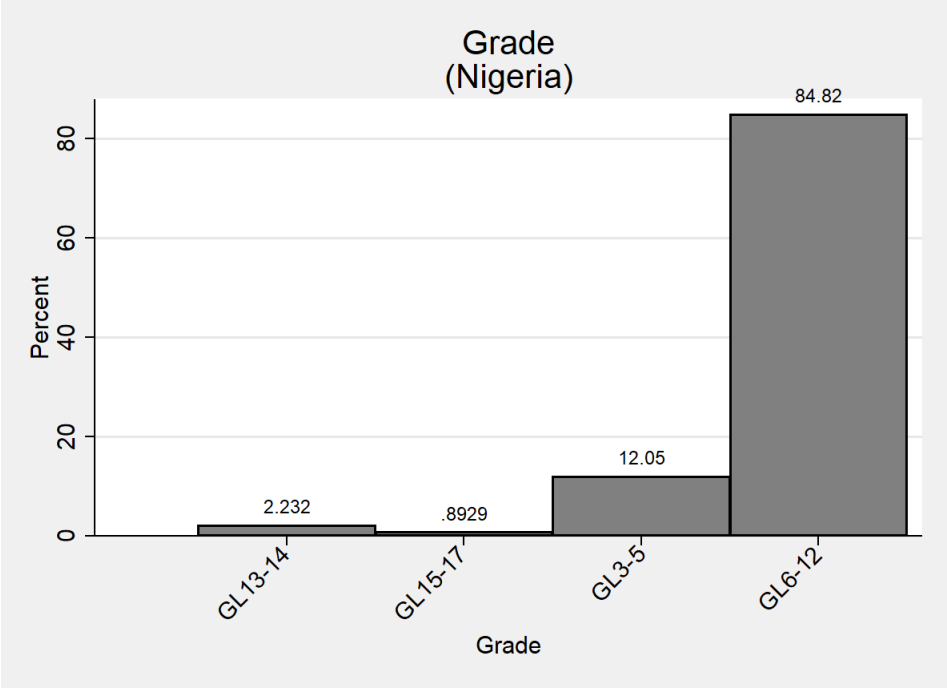


Figure 4.18: Participants come from all ministries in Ghana (Ghana)

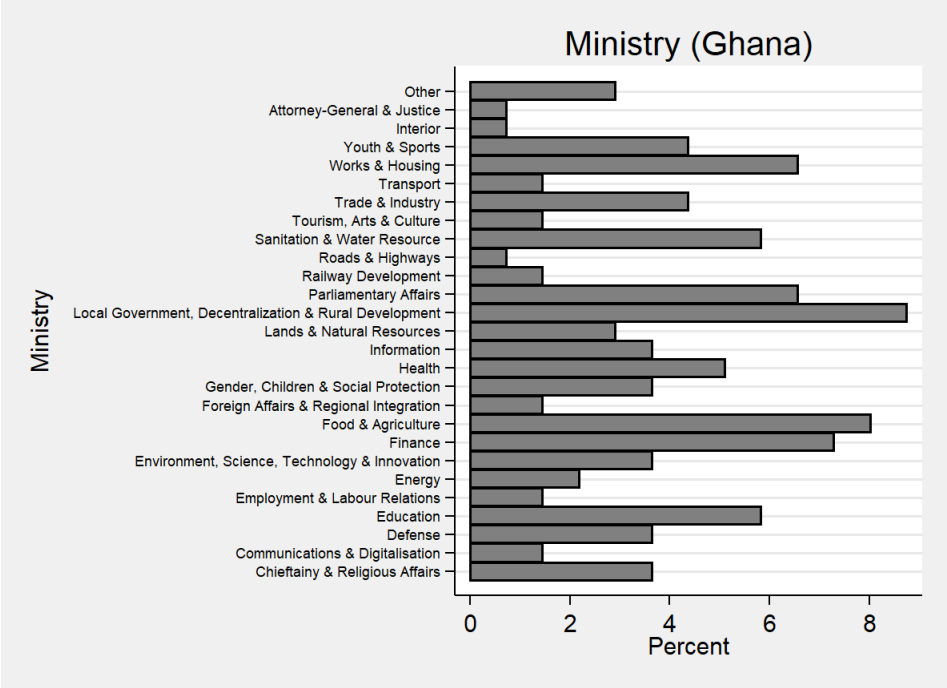



Figure 4.19: Participants come from all semi-autonomous departments in Ghana, although most are from Births and Deaths Department (Ghana)

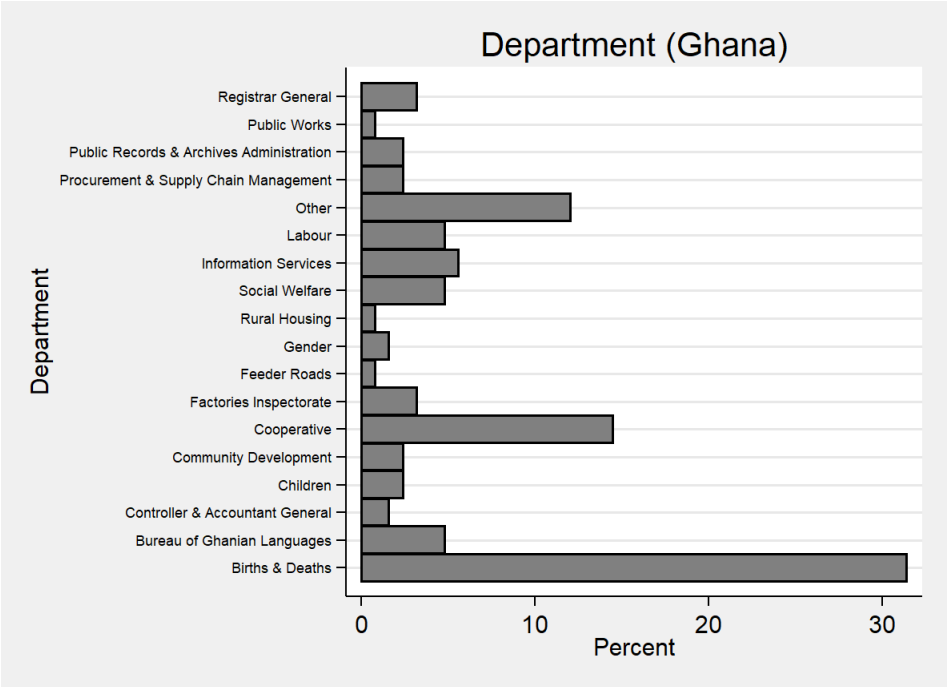


Figure 4.20: The majority of participants in Ghana are from the OHCS among its two extra-ministerial organizations (Ghana)

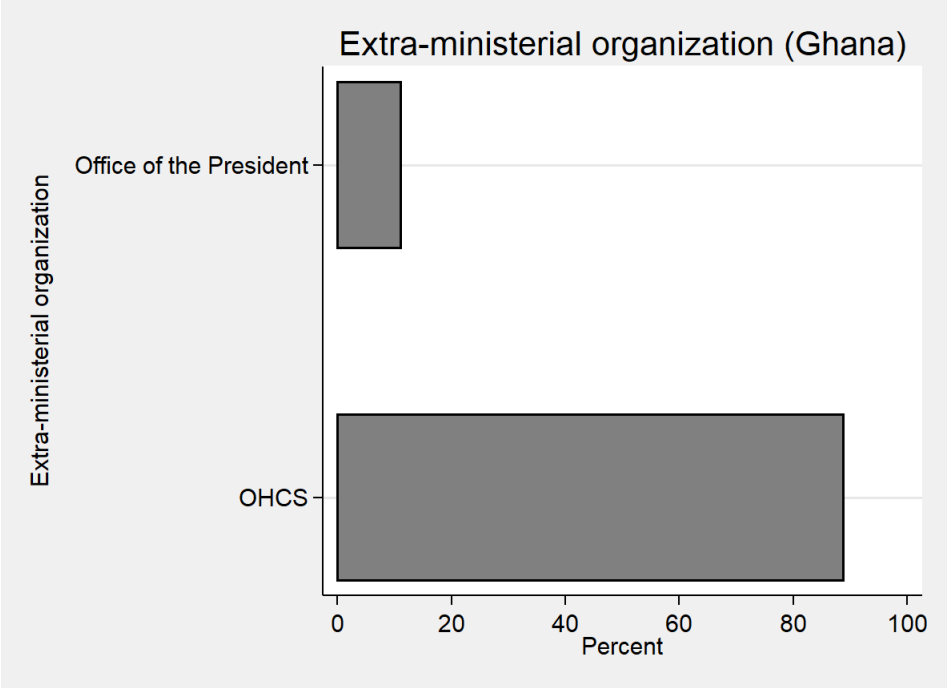



Table 4.17: The mean scores for task assignments and the composite measure of task-based socialization are significantly higher than that for values-based socialization (absolute measures)

| | obs | Mean1 | Mean2 | dif | St Err |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| assign – valuesSocial | 393 | 3.84 | 3.40 | .44 | .09 |
| guide – valuesSocial | 393 | 3.36 | 3.40 | -.04 | .09 |
| taskSocial - valuesSocial | 393 | 3.6 | 3.40 | .2 | .08 |

Figure 4.21: Over half of participants in Nigeria are from its Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity (Nigeria)

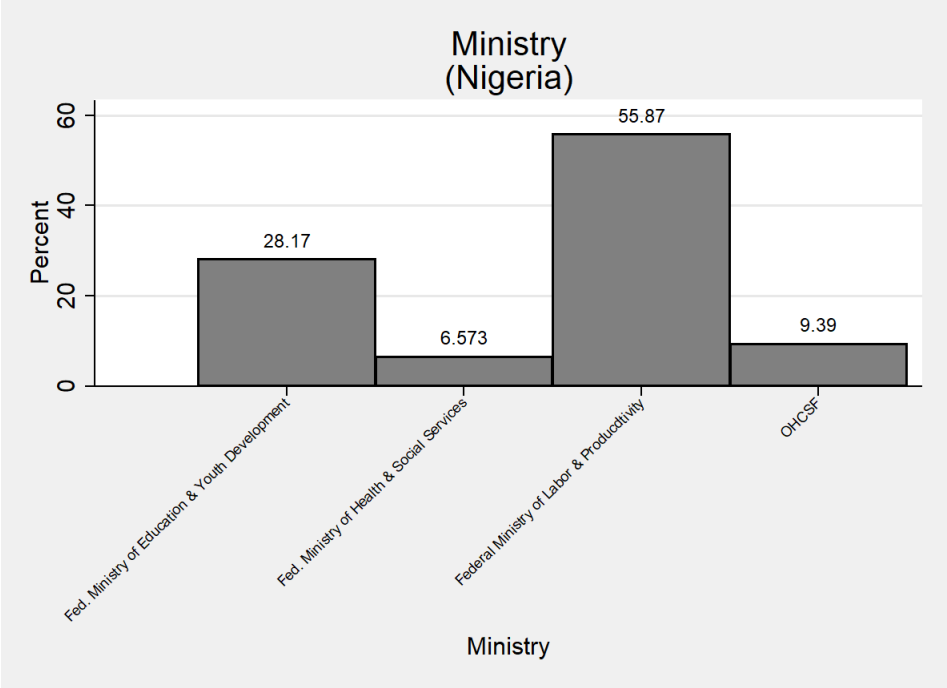


Figure 4.22: Nearly two-thirds of participants have received some formal orientation

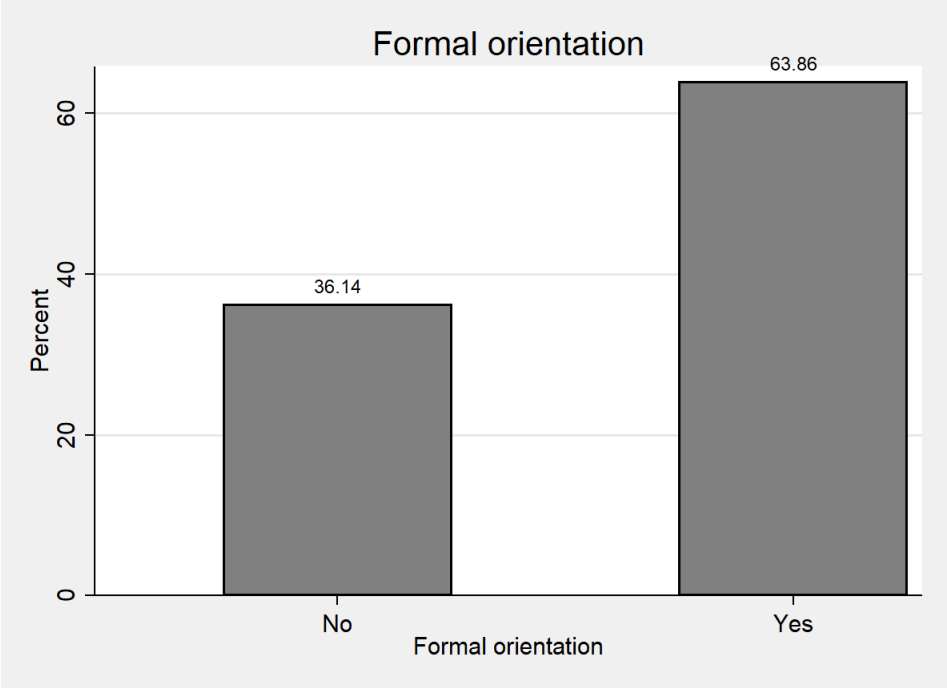


Figure 4.23: Over 4 out of 5 recruits in Ghana have received some formal orientation (Ghana)

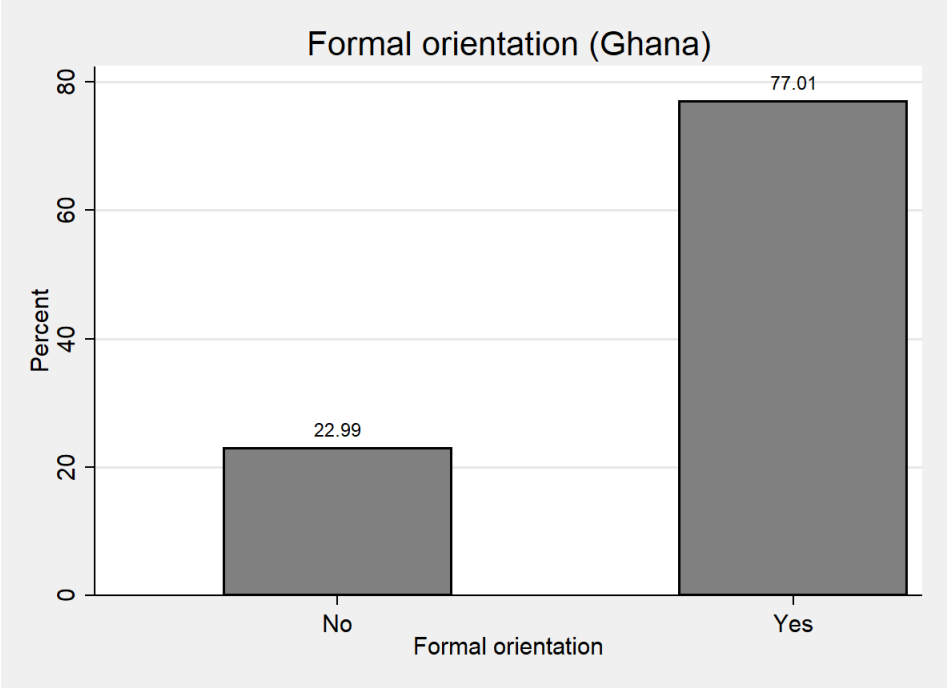


Figure 4.24: Over half of recruits in Nigeria have not received formal orientation (Nigeria)

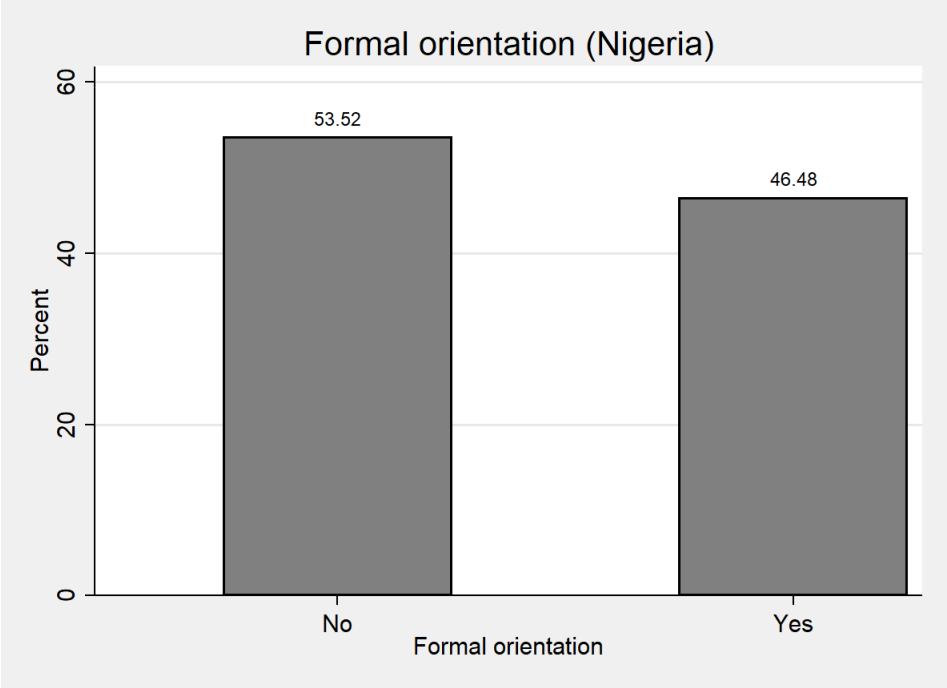


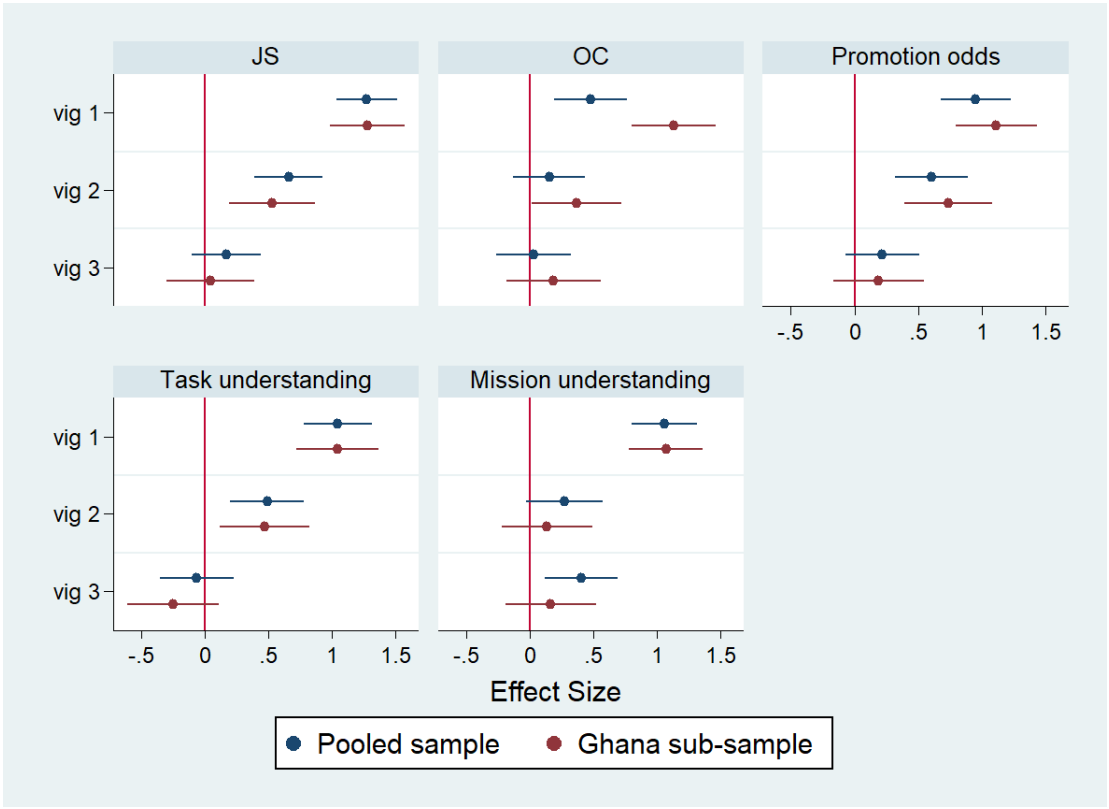
Table 4.18: Vignette assignments are balanced on observable individual characteristics

| | Vig 1 Mean (SE) | Vig 2 Mean (SE) | Vig 3 Mean (SE) | Vig 4 Mean (SE) | 1-4 Pairwise t-test Mean difference | 2-4 Pairwise t-test Mean difference | 3-4 Pairwise t-test Mean difference | 1-2 Pairwise t-test Mean difference | 1-3 Pairwise t-test Mean difference | 2-3 Pairwise t-test Mean difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| tenure | 2.465 | 2.407 | 2.316 | 2.345 | 0.120 | 0.061 | -0.029 | 0.059 | 0.150 | 0.091 |
| | (0.795) | (0.699) | (0.802) | (0.784) | (0.117) | (0.112) | (0.119) | (0.109) | (0.114) | (0.111) |
| age | 2.406 | 2.341 | 2.337 | 2.464 | -0.058 | -0.124 | -0.127 | 0.065 | 0.069 | 0.004 |
| | (0.666) | (0.600) | (0.576) | (0.667) | (0.098) | (0.096) | (0.093) | (0.092) | (0.089) | (0.086) |
| gender | 1.663 | 1.615 | 1.642 | 1.536 | 0.128* | 0.080 | 0.106 | 0.048 | 0.021 | -0.027 |
| | (0.534) | (0.489) | (0.544) | (0.502) | (0.077) | (0.075) | (0.079) | (0.074) | (0.077) | (0.076) |
| edu | 3.990 | 3.967 | 4.095 | 4.393 | -0.403 | -0.426 | -0.298 | 0.023 | -0.105 | -0.128 |
| | (2.128) | (1.912) | (2.053) | (2.077) | (0.311) | (0.302) | (0.309) | (0.293) | (0.299) | (0.291) |
| region | 31.584 | 32.703 | 32.621 | 34.595 | -3.011 | -1.892 | -1.974 | -1.119 | -1.037 | 0.082 |
| | (14.224) | (13.178) | (13.770) | (12.835) | (2.010) | (1.969) | (1.998) | (1.986) | (2.002) | (1.978) |
| prior | 1.842 | 1.879 | 1.884 | 1.845 | -0.004 | 0.034 | 0.039 | -0.038 | -0.043 | -0.005 |
| | (0.367) | (0.328) | (0.322) | (0.364) | (0.054) | (0.052) | (0.051) | (0.050) | (0.049) | (0.048) |
| orient | 1.594 | 1.659 | 1.621 | 1.714 | -0.120* | -0.055 | -0.093 | -0.065 | -0.027 | 0.038 |
| | (0.494) | (0.477) | (0.488) | (0.454) | (0.070) | (0.071) | (0.071) | (0.070) | (0.070) | (0.071) |
| grade | 7.604 | 8.132 | 8.516 | 8.667 | -1.063 | -0.535 | -0.151 | -0.528 | -0.912 | -0.384 |
| | (4.697) | (4.856) | (5.023) | (4.835) | (0.703) | (0.733) | (0.739) | (0.690) | (0.694) | (0.725) |
| allOrg | 17.327 | 18.143 | 17.652 | 18.714 | -1.388 | -0.571 | -1.062 | -0.816 | -0.325 | 0.491 |
| | (16.575) | (16.669) | (16.578) | (15.982) | (2.408) | (2.473) | (2.459) | (2.402) | (2.389) | (2.458) |
| Observations | 101 | 91 | 95 | 84 | 185 | 175 | 179 | 192 | 196 | 186 |

Significance: ***=.01, **=.05, *=.1

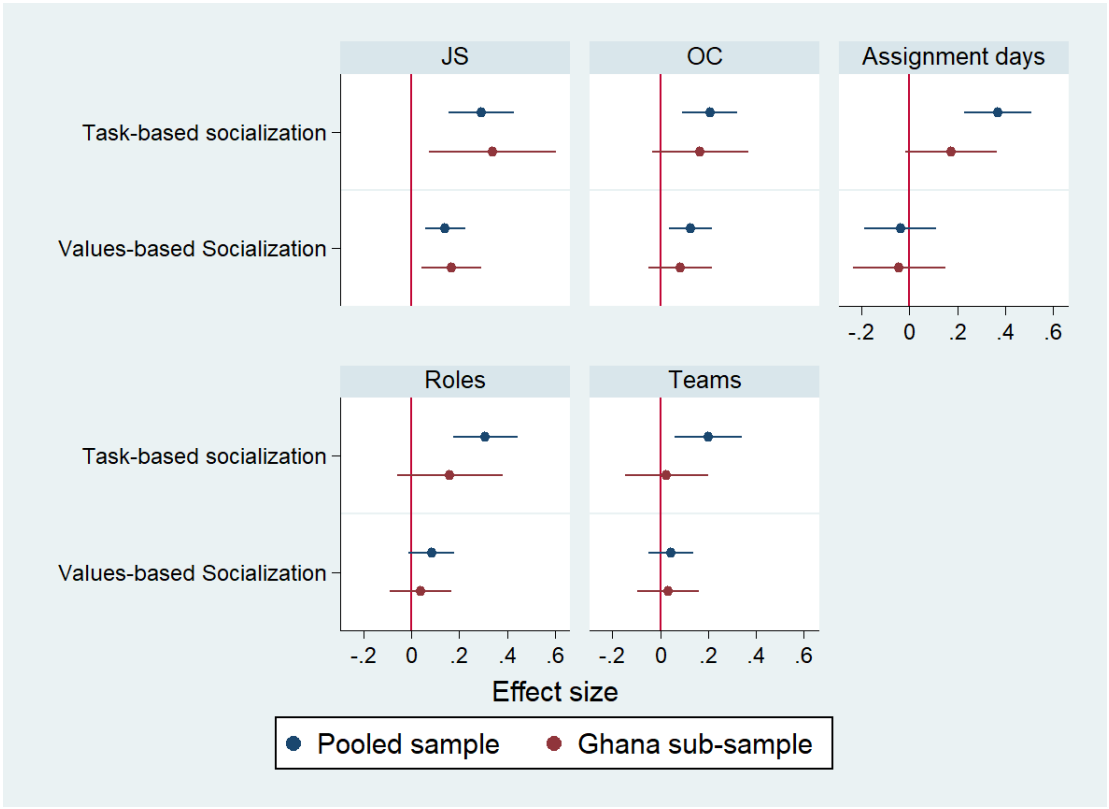
Note: edu = education, prior = prior work experience, orient = formal orientation received, allOrg = organizations

Figure 4.25: Effect sizes are comparable across regressions using the pooled and Ghana sub-samples (vignette experiment)



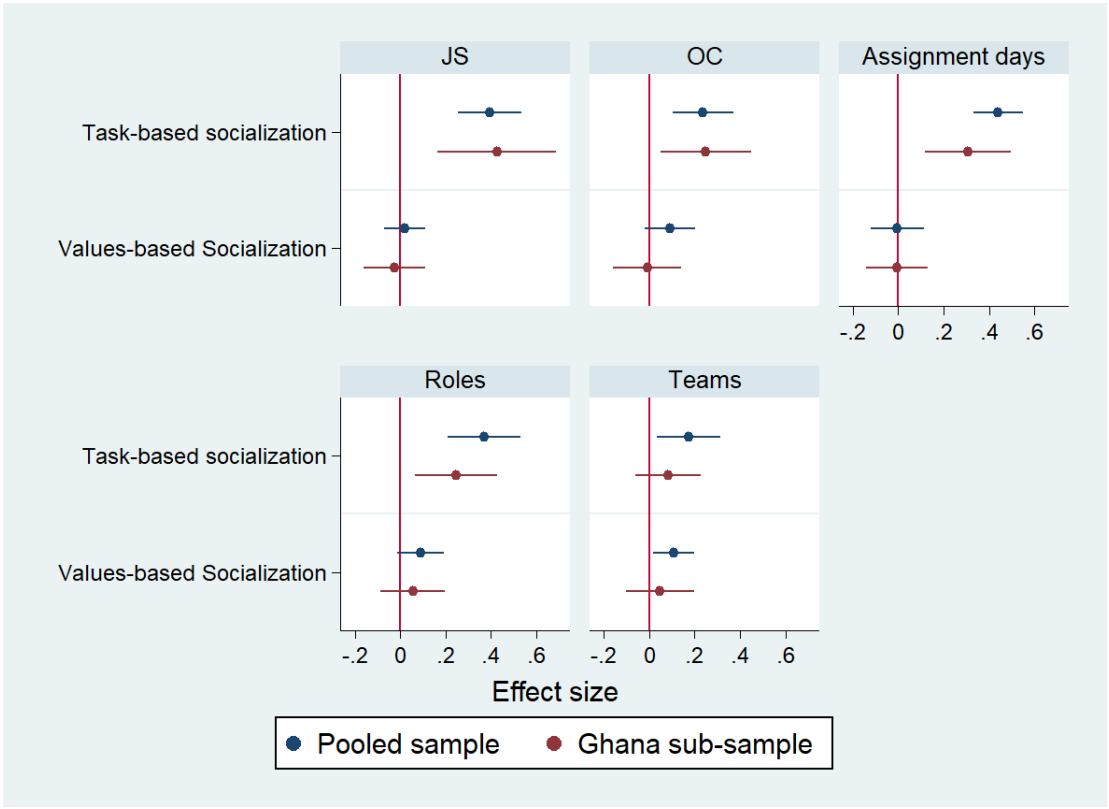

Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment

Figure 4.26: Effect sizes are comparable across regressions using the pooled and Ghana sub-samples (BVR-adapted measures)



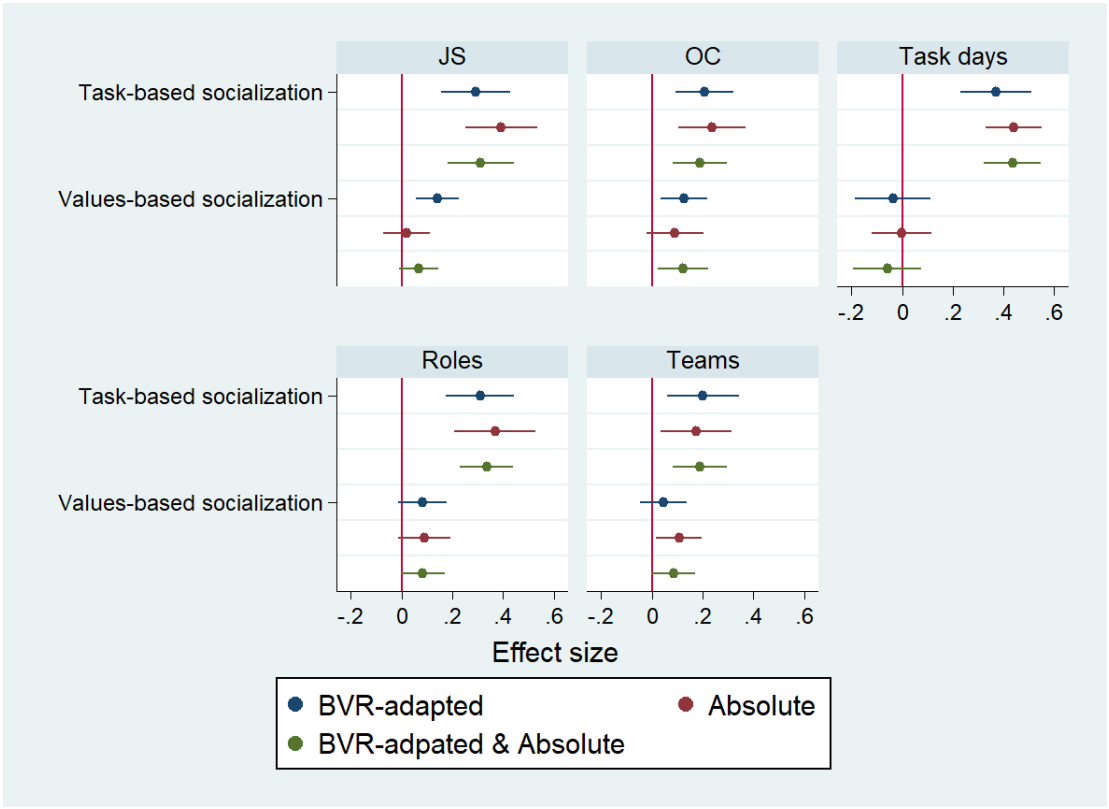

Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = number of additional team assigned beyond the primary team

Figure 4.27: Effect sizes are comparable across regressions using the pooled and Ghana sub-samples (absolute measures)



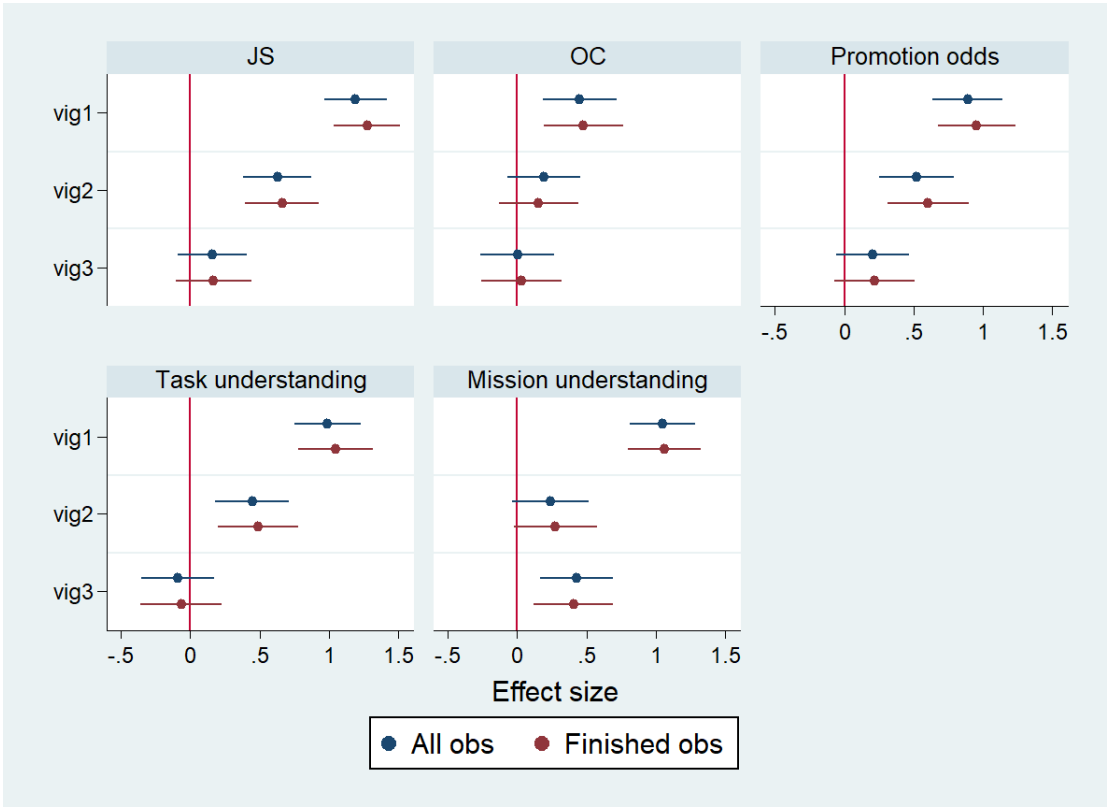

Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = number of additional team assigned beyond the primary team

Figure 4.28: Effect sizes are comparable across different measures



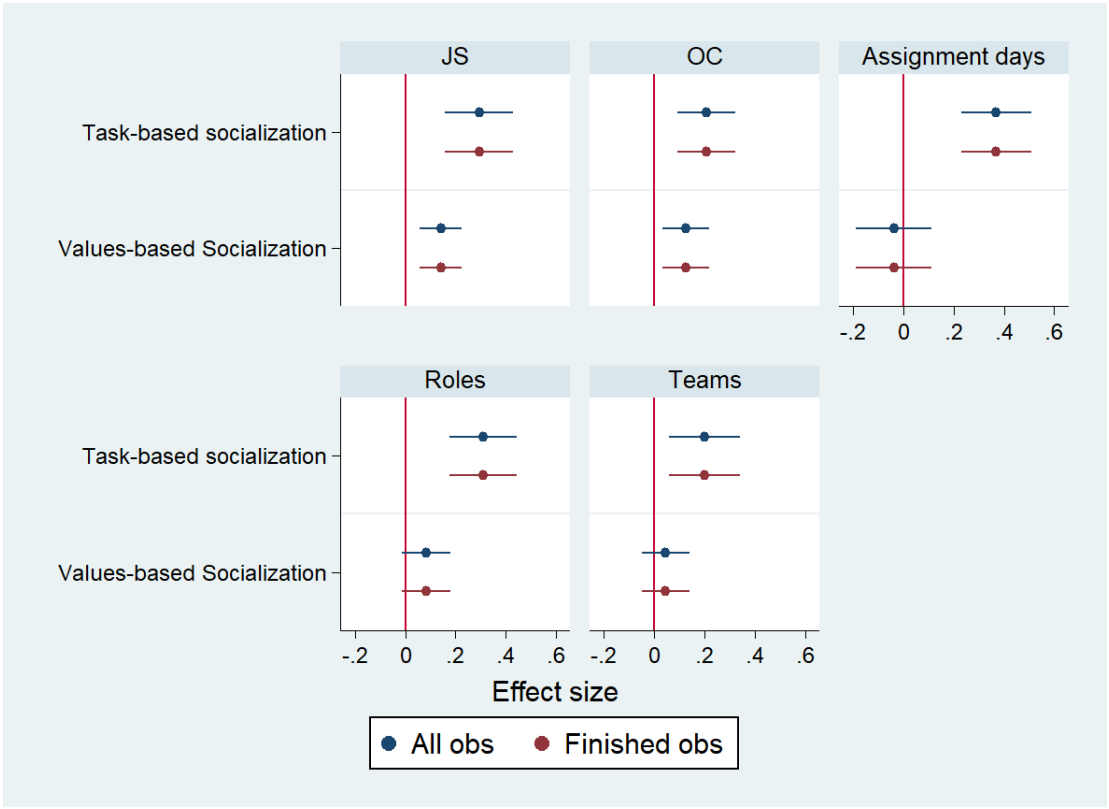

Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = number of additional team assigned beyond the primary team

Figure 4.29: Effect sizes are comparable across regressions using all observations and only finished observations



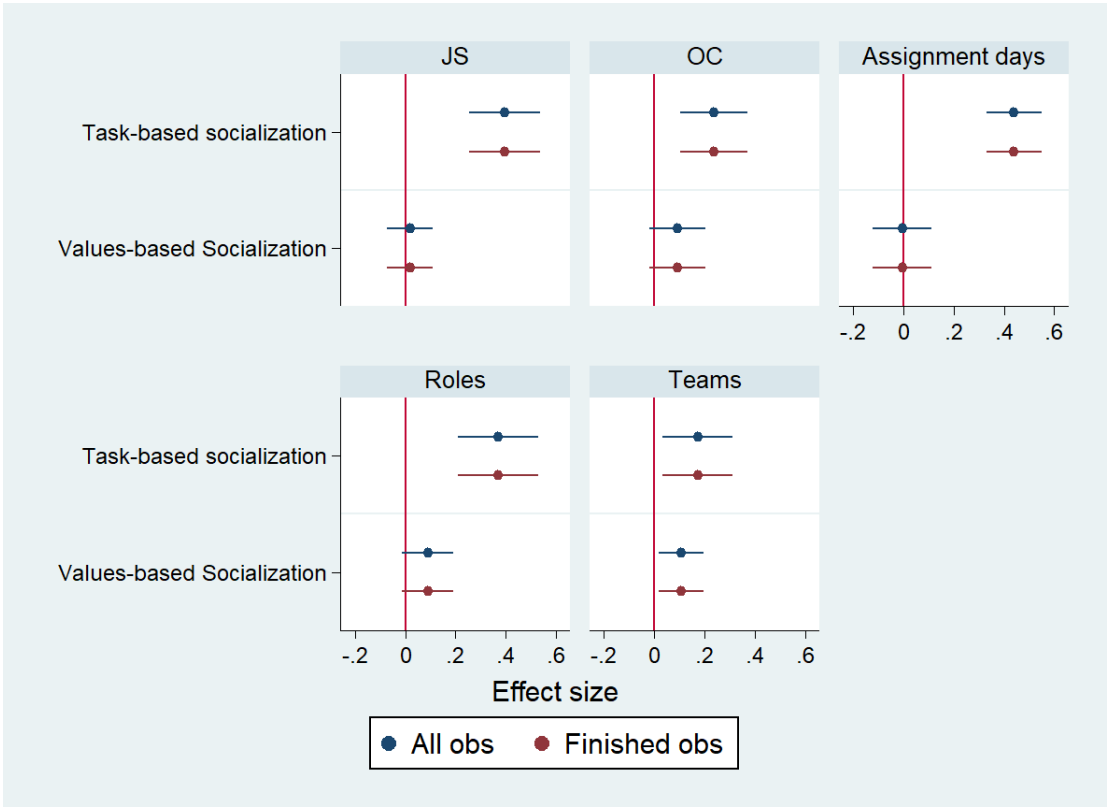

Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment

Figure 4.30: Effect sizes are comparable across regressions using all observations and only finished observations, BVR-adapted measures




Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = number of additional team assigned beyond the primary team

Figure 4.31: Effect sizes are comparable across regressions using all observations and only finished observations, absolute measures




Note: JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational commitment, Assignment days = days spent on assignments in the previous month, Roles = number of roles assigned within the primary team, Teams = number of additional team assigned beyond the primary team

Table 4.19: BVR-adapted measures of task assignments, task guidance/feedback, and direct values communication

In your first year in your current work group/ team, what did your direct supervisor do with regards to assigning you a role and tasks to complete?

- ○ My direct supervisor did not assign me any role and tasks to complete. (1)
- ○ My direct supervisor gave me some guidance about my formal job schedule, but I didn't know what tasks I was responsible for. I was dependent on being assigned tasks occasionally by my direct supervisor, and I was often idle between task assignments. (2)
- ○ On my first day on the job, my direct supervisor assigned me a specific role that I was to play in my work team. Since then, my supervisor kept me occupied with tasks to complete. (3)
- ○ I am not sure/ I cannot tell. (4)

In your first year in your current work group/ team, what did your direct supervisor do with regards to giving you guidance and corrections on your tasks?

- ○ My direct supervisor did not give me any guidance and corrections on my tasks. (1)
- ○ My direct supervisor did not give me guidance and corrections without being asked. However, when asked, my supervisor gave me guidance and corrections. (2)
- ○ When assigning me a task to complete, my direct supervisor always gave me guidance first on how to complete the task and what the final product should look like. When I submitted completed tasks, my supervisor would give me corrections if necessary. (3)
- ○ I am not sure/ I cannot tell. (4)

In your first year in your current work group/ team, what did your direct supervisor do with regards to explaining you the mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations of your ministry?

- ○ My direct supervisor did not explain me anything about my ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. (4)
- ○ My direct supervisor occasionally explained and reminded my ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations to the entire work team in staff meetings. (5)
- ○ On my first day on the job, my direct supervisor explained me my ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. Since then, my supervisor regularly reminded me of these things. (6)
- ○ I am not sure/ I cannot tell. (7)

Table 4.20: Absolute measures of task assignments, task guidance/feedback, and direct values communication

In your first year in your current work group/ team, how many weeks in a typical month did you have assignments from your direct supervisor to work on?

- ○ 0 week (8)
- ○ 1 week per month (10)
- ○ 2 weeks per month (3)
- ○ 3 weeks per month (12)
- ○ Every week (5)

In your first year in your current work group/ team, how often did you direct supervisor give you guidance and corrections on your task assignments?

- ○ No, for any task assignment (5)
- ○ Yes, for less than half of task assignments (2)
- ○ Yes, for about half of task assignments (3)
- ○ Yes, for the majority of task assignments (6)
- ○ Yes, for every task assignment (4)

In your first year in your current work group/ team, how often did your direct supervisor explain and remind you the mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations of your ministry?

- ○ None (1)
- ○ Once every nine months (6)
- ○ Once every six months (2)
- ○ Once every three months (7)
- ○ Every month (4)

Table 4.21: Vignette experiment

| | |
|---|---|
| Imagine yourselves to be a newly recruited employee into the civil service. You are posted to a particular department of a ministry and assigned a supervisor to whom you must report directly. You have now been with this department for 3 months. Below is a scenario which portrays how your direct supervisor typically behaves towards you. Please read the scenario carefully and evaluate your responses based on it. | |
| Vig_1: Task-based socialization (Yes) * Values-based socialization (Yes) | On your first day on the job, your direct supervisor assigned you a specific role that you were to play in your work team. Since then, your supervisor kept you occupied with tasks to complete. When assigning you a task, your supervisor always gave you guidance first, and after your submission, your supervisor would give you corrections if necessary. In addition, on your first day on the job, your supervisor explained you your ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. Since then, your supervisor has regularly reminded you of these things. Beyond your supervisor, your colleagues sometimes helped you figure things out, and you sometimes asked them questions. |
| Vig_2: Task-based socialization (Yes) * Values-based socialization (No) | On your first day on the job, your direct supervisor assigned you a specific role that you were to play in your work team. Since then, your supervisor kept you occupied with tasks to complete. When assigning you a task, your supervisor always gave you guidance first, and after your submission, your supervisor would give you corrections if necessary. However, your supervisor did not explain you anything about your ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. Beyond your supervisor, your colleagues sometimes helped you figure things out, and you sometimes asked them questions. |
| Vig_3: Task-based socialization (No) * Values-based socialization (Yes) | On your first day on the job, your direct supervisor explained you your ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. Since then, your supervisor regularly reminded you of these things. However, your supervisor did not assign you any specific role to play in your work team and tasks to complete. Your supervisor also did not give you any guidance and corrections on your tasks. Beyond your supervisor, your colleagues sometimes helped you figure things out, and you sometimes asked them questions. |
| Vig_4: Control | Your direct supervisor did not assign you any specific role to play in your work team and tasks to complete. Your supervisor also did not give you any guidance and corrections on your tasks. In addition, your supervisor did not explain you anything about your ministry's mission, objectives and goals, and performance expectations. Beyond your supervisor, your colleagues sometimes helped you figure things out, and you sometimes asked them questions. |

# 5 | Conclusion

Together, the three articles of my article-based dissertation contribute to the theoretical and empirical knowledge base of the literature on how public organizations and managers together socialize recruits. Paper 1 offers the first synthesis of the academic literature and practice on how organizations socialize recruits using organization-level socialization practices. Findings inform that organizational practices with respect to recruit socialization are under-researched in public administration in contrast to a substantial body of evidence on how private firms socialize recruits in adjacent fields. Similarly, in practice, recruit socialization is a minor concern of civil services preoccupied with the continuous upgrading of competencies, leadership for change management, and technological adaptation. Whereas the academic literature approaches organizational socialization from socialization practices (i.e., its antecedents) and explores recruits' intra-organizational learning and the role of organizational insiders in recruit socialization, civil services approach it from competencies (i.e., its outcomes) and prioritize recruits' learning of technical skills and external stakeholders while largely neglecting how organizational insiders socialize recruits.

Paper 2 and 3 complement Paper 1 by focusing on how supervisors socialize recruits once the latter experience organization-level socialization and are posted in teams. Paper 2 proposes a theory of task-based socialization in which supervisors influence recruit outcomes by assigning tasks, and giving guidance and feedback rather than directly communicating organizational values. Subsequently, Paper 3 demonstrates that task-based socialization is not only relied upon more by supervisors in socializing recruits but also matters more than values-based socialization in influencing recruit outcomes.

The generalizability of findings from Paper 2 and 3 to contexts outside of Nigeria and Ghana may depend on learning mechanisms, contextual factors around tasks and supervisors, and the nature of organizational values. As long as recruits need to learn about their tasks and the fulfillment of that need depends upon supervisors, task-based socialization is likely to produce similar effects as observed in my thesis. Yet learning and its facilitation by supervisors are contextual to the nature of tasks and discretion at the disposal of supervisors. On the one hand, recruits into professional tasks are likely to enter the organization with prerequisite training and expertise. Thus, they may depend less on supervisors for learning how to discharge their duties. On the other hand, these same recruits must also learn how to be a civil servant: rules, regulations, procedures, the language of civil service, and so on. For this type of learning, they may rely upon their colleagues. Among colleagues, they may lean more heavily on supervisors where authority is centralized around supervisors with discretion over task assignments. In contrast, where authority is decentralized or tasks are clearly demarcated by formal job descriptions, recruits may depend less on supervisors' task-based socialization. Finally, whereas I find task-based socialization to be the main channel of socializing recruits into the organization in Nigeria and Ghana, values-based socialization by supervisors may be more prevalent and salient for recruits in settings where organizational values are relatively more functional, challenging, and meaningful.

More research on practices by which public organizations are socializing recruits is necessary. In Paper 1, I find that recruit on-boarding, i.e., the closest term to organizational socialization in the practitioner literature, is an under-discussed topic in practice, drawing upon secondary survey and case-studies data from OCED. Therefore, this finding is limited by secondary data from surveys and

case-studies that are not specifically designed to investigate organizational socialization, although other scholars have stated similar findings [Perry, 2021]. Future research should conduct a census of practices by which civil services and public organizations socialize recruits to validate this finding; similar censuses have been conducted in the private sector [Klein and Polin, 2012, Louis et al., 1983]. Furthermore, given that organizational socialization is an under-studied topic in public administration as highlighted by Paper 1, generally more research is necessary to build our evidence base. In this regard, collaborations between researchers and practitioners are desirable for any future research since Paper 1 also highlights gaps in their perspectives. This means taking a holistic perspective of organizational socialization, considering both its practices and outcomes. This also means taking into account the learning concerns of both the literature and practice, while investigating the role of both organizational insiders and outsiders in recruit socialization. Finally, future research should investigate not only the learning outcomes of socialization but also its influences on attitudinal and behavioral changes.

When it comes to how direct supervisors socialize recruits in teams, there are several directions for future research. First, the theory of task-based socialization proposed in Paper 2 should be validated in contexts different to Nigeria's and Ghana's. Such research may investigate when task-based or values-based socialization is a primary mean by which supervisors socialize recruits and may also discover additional socialization channels. Future research can also replicate findings from Paper 3 by using different research designs such as field experiments and panel data study. Future studies should also investigate task-based and values-based socialization's influence on additional outcomes such as burnout, organizational citizenship behaviors, and retention, focusing on behavioral outcomes, paying attention to differences in their influence, and potential non-linear

relationships with outcomes. In addition, future research should explore how the meritocratic and non-meritocratic sorting of recruits into different socialization experiences by supervisors affect team-level performance. Finally, as my thesis indicates task assignments, guidance and feedback by supervisors to be not neutral but political, future research should investigate how else everyday politics plays out in public organizations through the allocation and usages of organizational resources and processes.

Findings also have important implications for human resource management practice in the public sector. Generally, more attention on recruit socialization is desirable as this influences their identities, attitudes, and motivations. In particular, beyond traditional, classroom-based orientation and training, civil services may consider various other practices in socializing recruits. While upgrading recruits' technical competencies, they may also need to facilitate recruits' learning of how to function within teams and organizations. In particular, more attention on how supervisors and colleagues are informally socializing recruits may be required. In this regards, public organizations may consider how to facilitate, empower, and reward positive task-based socialization by direct supervisors. Some management practices that they may consider include: envisioning the role of direct supervisors in human resource strategies and policies, providing direct supervisors with necessary information and resources as new recruits are posted in their teams, training supervisors in not just operational management and hard competencies but also how to assign tasks, give guidance and feedback meritocratically and effectively, and finally integrating supervisors' efforts in recruit socialization and integration into their formal performance appraisal. On the other hand, recruit orientation may focus not just on the "dos and don't" of civil service but also on practical skills in personal and relationship management such as building

relationships and resolving conflicts, asking for feedback, and negotiating for tasks.

I had already fed back some of these policy implications to the civil services in Ghana and Nigeria and received positive interest and feedback. The Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS) in Ghana invited me to share my thesis findings with all Chief Directors (equivalent to Permanent Secretaries) across the civil service. It was very heartening to see that after I shared my research findings and their policy implications, the Head of Civil Service divided up participants into small groups to workshop how to integrate findings into their respective organizational policies and the OHCS' overall HR strategy. In Nigeria, the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation that was collaborating with the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) on a new performance index for the entire federal service also invited me to author a companion piece to its inaugural index report, drawing on the lessons from my thesis.

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