

Running Head: A comparative study of new faculty socialization in tertiary education in Taiwan and the U.S.

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One's career is a major anchor for human beings, particularly for those who are highly involved professionally (Levinson & others, 1978). Most careers progress from an initial entry period through to a period of establishment and continue to evolve through the process of socialization over different periods. Theory and related research on new faculty and junior faculty socialization appear in a number of different disciplines. Many of these articles fall within the American higher education context and focus on the importance of socialization in graduate education. Nonetheless, socialization is an ongoing process, as people accept employment in colleges or universities, and this becomes an important transition for new faculty. Thus, in order to have a better understanding of new faculty socialization, the purpose of this paper is to explore the experience of new faculty in the anticipatory socialization and entry stage of their career in the academic workplace. What are the experiences they encounter in the new academic environment? What characteristics do they have as new faculty to facilitate their transitions in the new environment? What difficulties do they typically encounter? How do they determine what is valued and what is not valued within institutional expectations? I begin with an overview of the faculty career and the socialization process, particularly for new faculty and early faculty members (junior faculty) in higher education. Next, I discuss variations of socialization and strategies for new faculty and junior faculty in the academic workplace. In the third section, I illustrate the research method used for this study. In the final section, I compare Taiwan and the U.S. in terms of socialization for new faculty and early faculty members.

## **Overview of new faculty socialization**

### **Definition of the Socialization**

In general, the concept of socialization is the process by which individuals acquire attitudes, beliefs, values and skills that are needed to participate in institutions (Dunn, Rouse, & Seff, 1994). In this paper, a new faculty member is defined as one working on tenure-track within the first seven years of appointment or those who have not received tenure (Austin, Sorcinelli, & McDaniels, 2007).

### **Variations of Socialization in Higher Education**

How new faculty socialization takes place differs by discipline as well as by type of institution and the degree to which new faculty members or junior faculty are usually socialized either individually or collectively, such as interaction with peers, personal friends and family, senior faculty, and others. The peer group in particular is not only a strong source of personal support but also assists in socialization itself through group efforts as new faculty begin to perform their work role. This interaction creates feelings of connection between faculty. Graduate students' mentoring arrangements and networking relationships are a form of collective socialization that is analogous to the mentoring that senior faculty provide for new faculty in institutions, an arrangement that enhances productivity as well as promotes professional advancement (R. G. Baldwin, & Chang, 2006). Similarly, when mentors work with new faculty individually, they help to facilitate their smooth socialization.

As previously noted, the path of socialization varies across disciplines and institutions. In this sense, disciplinary and institutional contexts play an important role in

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the process of new faculty socialization(Austin, 2002). For instance, doctoral granting institutions typically socialize their students to engage in research (Malaney, 1988).

### **Literature review**

Due to the small amount of existing literature that specifically concentrates on faculty professionals in Taiwan, I am going to use literature related to the faculty profession from U.S. higher education as the primary context. Each different career phase requires different socialization processes. Scholars have conceptualized career stages and their associated characteristics. Baldwin (1996) outlined the faculty career stages in five phases, including career entry, early career, midcareer, late career, and career plateau, and concluded that each career stage poses distinctive challenges that serve as an influential transition to the next period (Baldwin, 1996). He particularly mentioned that it is a demanding process to get into the academic world as a novice professor. Developing major competences and mastering faculty roles become significant and will lead new faculty to achieve this important transition.

Scholars have developed different classifications of the socialization process. In general, the socialization process includes anticipatory socialization, occupational entry and induction, and the beginning stage of the socialization process while accepting a faculty position (see Figure 1)(Corcoran & Clark, 1984). Austin and McDaniel (2006) further illustrated in detail that graduate education functions as a socialization process for students as they prepare for future faculty roles. In this sense, doctoral and postdoctoral experiences serve as periods of anticipatory socialization. The second phase of occupation and induction occurs as graduate students move toward participating in

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classes and engaging in internships as well as beginning to get published and attending professional conferences and workshops. The third phase begins when scholars assume faculty positions (Austin, et al., 2007). The process is like an escalator because the career path may not be safe, clear, or smooth at all times, particularly in the face of an early turning point (Corcoran & Clark, 1984).

Research by Dunn et al. (1994) identified three phases of the socialization process slightly differently from the previous schemes, including the first formal phase of socialization for the professoriate, graduate or professional training (such as post-doctoral experience). The second phase of socialization begins when faculty accept employment in higher education, and the third phase involves the interaction between the institution and faculty via different interactions; for example, institutions may their socialization programs for new faculty collectively or individually based on their nature and characteristics (Dunn et al., 1994). The last stage is a key transition as to whether or not new faculty may be a good fit to the institution. When new faculty are hired, it is assumed that prior socialization has appropriately instilled values and beliefs within the individual; and accordingly, it is not necessary to re-socialize. Alternatively, institutions may consciously design socialization programs, such as orientation, and alter the behaviors of new hires.

Other research focuses on experiences of new faculty (Menges, 1996; Menges & Associates, 1999). In the latter study, Menges and Associates conducted a project, inviting new faculty and junior faculty to participate in a study over a three-year time frame in order to better understand the experiences. Their main findings cover four dimensions, including faculty stress, time allocation, job expectations, and the evaluation

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process. In addition to teaching, research, and service, most new faculty reported that they had a hard time in balancing their work and personal life. In terms of job expectations, newly hired faculty stated that there are unclear job expectations. Throughout the three-year period, they stated they received unfocused and insufficient feedback on performance and that there was a lack of clarity about tenure expectations and about new faculty members' progress. The authors argue that faculty professional socialization must ensure that new faculty members are made aware of job expectations.

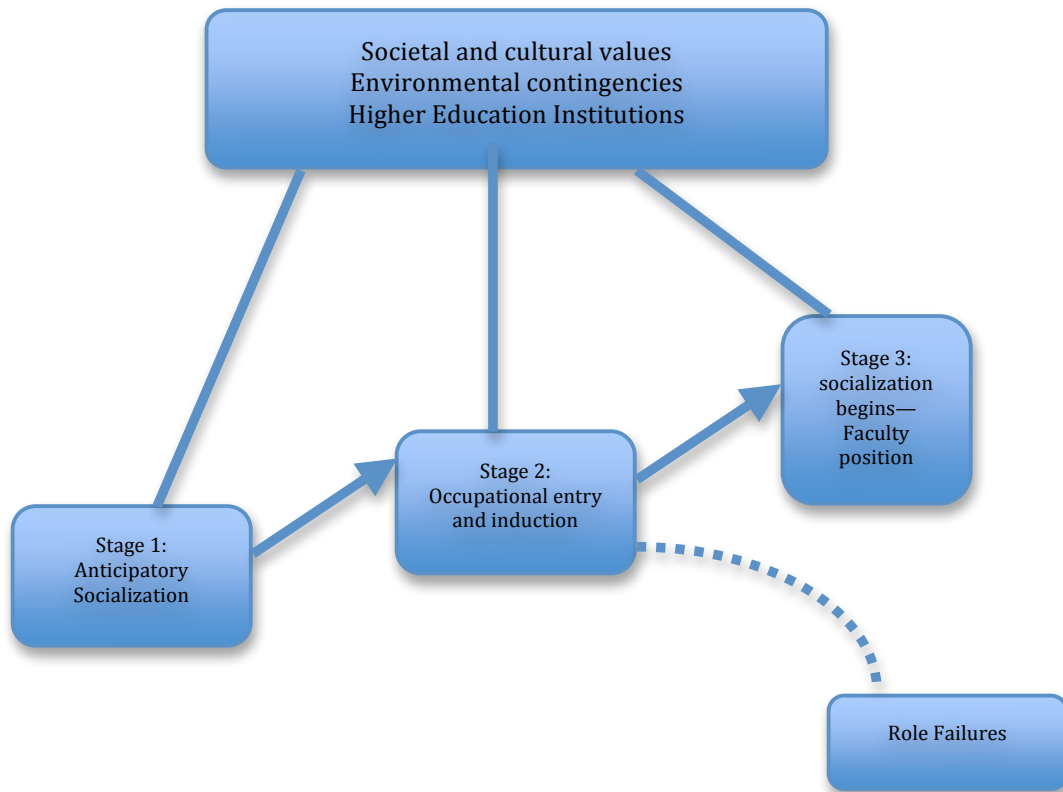


Figure 1: Stages of professional socialization. Source: A revised version of figure 1 from Mary Corcoran and Shirley M. Clark's "Professional socialization and contemporary career attitudes of three faculty generations."

Furthermore, most early career faculty members believe that the nature of the academic environment involves autonomy, flexibility, and academic freedom.

Nonetheless, as they assume their new role, the reality seems inconsistent with their

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expectations. As institutions increase the emphasis on both research and teaching for many early career faculty members, the added expectations create a tension and much pressure on new faculty (Gappa et al, 2007). Accordingly, the majority of new faculty and junior faculty members in Menges and Associates (1999) study felt like the workload was very demanding in the first few years and had a hard time in balancing their life. Another important issue is the phenomenon of neglected socialization for part- time, fixed- term, and non-tenure- track faculty. Although they may have less commitment to their employing institutions and spend minimal time on campus, it is significant for institutions to pay attention to these faculty to provide appropriate social support as the number is constantly increasing (Clark, 1999).

To sum up, socialization is an ongoing process, not just the consequence of occasional events. Reviews on new faculty socialization indicate that graduate education and post- doctoral experience function as initial socialization for becoming future new faculty as the students strive to make sense of the academic career and fit their interests and values within academe, as well as envision their future. Socialization provides the theoretical framework for studying new faculty and junior faculty by sharing a broad picture about the role they play in the academy and contributes to the understanding that “socialization is a two-way process where individuals both influence the institution and are influenced by it” (Austin, 2002).

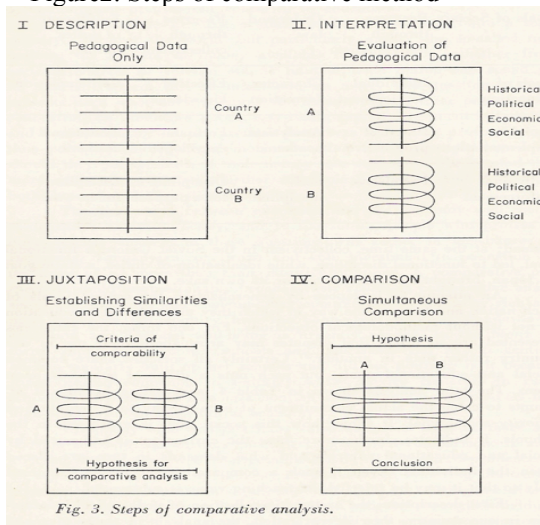
### **Methodology**

By and large, comparative educational studies take many forms both substantially and methodologically, and this form is determined by the purpose of the study (Kandel,

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1959). In the field of comparative social science, the qualitative tradition is more appropriate rather than statistical methods, which would force the disaggregation of cases into variables to examine relationships (Ragin, 1987). In this study, I did a review of extant research in internationally recognized journals as the primary method to collect data. Given these circumstances, the best way to analyze, interpret, and make meaningful comparisons of two countries as a whole is to conduct a direct examination of the differences and similarities among cases. Therefore, I used the comparative approach based on Bereday's (1964) framework to interpret and make comparison, about the socialization of new faculty in tertiary education between the U.S. and Taiwan. The steps of comparative analysis included description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and finally comparison (Bereday, 1964).

Figure 2: Steps of comparative method



Resource: Bereday, G. Z. F. (1964). *Comparative method in education*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, INC.

In addition, since a lack of empirical study in faculty profession in Taiwan, I developed a semi-structured interview protocol from the research questions and literature review to explore the current new faculty socialization in Taiwan. To sum up, this



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comparative study relies primarily on field research methods to collect data, such as phone interviews, pen pal and archival analysis to have a closer understanding of new faculty socialization in Taiwan's higher education. To triangulate these data, I also analyzed a wide array of archival documents, including government policy reports and scholarly publications to enhance reliability and trustworthiness. As to the data of the U.S., I did a review of extant research and internationally recognized journals. More importantly, the way for peer debriefing (e.g., feedbacks from advisor and peer groups) is significant to rectify my blindness.

### **Comparison of new faculty socialization in the U.S. and Taiwan**

On the whole, the American professoriate is more heterogeneous and demographically diverse today than in the past. The tremendous growth of new faculty members in the entire system of American higher education system over time has resulted in a diverse group in terms of race, gender and ethnicity (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). Simultaneously, fiscal constraints have forced institutions to change types of academic appointments, and to employ significant numbers of part-time, contingent employment, and contract-term faculty (Hamilton, 2006). On the one hand, these faculty members exhibit less commitment to their employing institutions and can lack a supportive peer group to support socialization on campus. On the other hand, academic institutions may be less willing to invest any socialization initiatives for those "temporary" faculty members. Socialization must also be considered in terms of women and faculty of color, who have been long underrepresented and marginalized in higher education. Due to gender role socialization and discriminatory preferences, women have limited access to the higher status areas of academe (Dunn et al., 1994). New faculty of

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color often faces much pressure for research productivity and institutional service. Both groups encounter a shortage of mentors and role models in the professoriate (Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991). Therefore, as entering faculty members are more heterogeneous, individual priorities and circumstances have become more complex, making it more difficult to develop a sense of collegiality in the academic workplace for higher education institutions (Gappa, et al., 2007).

Higher education institutions differ in the extent to which they require faculty members to engage in teaching, research, and service. Most newly hired faculty members feel like their workload is very demanding in the first few years because many universities and colleges tend to emphasize both teaching and research. Likewise, due to little preparation for teaching while in graduate education, excessive teaching causes new faculty much anxiety (Clark, 1999). Consequently, they are unsure about appropriately allocating their time in institutional work. In sum, institutional differences in the characteristics of faculty and requirements of teaching loads may reflect variations in institutional mission (Menges & Associates., 1999). Institutions may consciously or unconsciously design and implement socialization programs for new faculty, such as orientations, mentoring systems, grants opportunities, and others. However, most still have not established systematic professional socialization programs to help equip aspiring new faculty for the demands of academic workplace (Baldwin & Chang, 2006). As a consequence, newly hired faculty and junior faculty members are heavily dependent on their peer colleagues, personal friends, and their families for social support.

As previously noted, the system of American higher education shows a fair amount of faculty diversity and transitions of anticipatory socialization become more

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critical for new faculty to get integrated with institutions. Compared to the U.S., the professoriate in Taiwan's higher education reflects a more centralized and supervised by the Ministry of Education (MOE). In principle, the MOE makes decisions regarding the level of funding and accessibility to higher education. The MOE's funding for higher education is mainly directed to national universities (also called "public universities"). With the reauthorization of the revision of University Law (1994, 2009), higher education was granted more autonomy over finance, personnel, curriculum, professors, individuals, and the community. For example, faculty members are able to set up a committee to make decisions about employment, promotions, and dismissal of their colleagues based on the regulations of each institution, pending final approval by the MOE (Mok, 2000). Meanwhile, the rank of assistant professor was created between that of associate professor and lecturer (see the figure 3 as below).

Figure 3: Academic rank in Taiwan's higher education

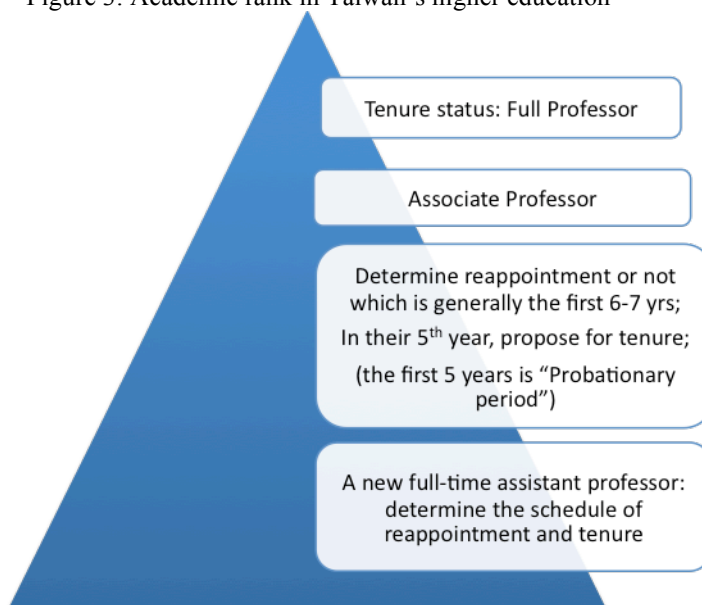


Table 1 indicates that the number of assistant professors has grown steadily between

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2000-2009, and shows close parallels to the numbers of associate professors, while the trend of the number in full- professors is steady over time. It appears that novice faculty encounter more pressure in terms of promotion and mobility seems to be more restricted than associate professors and full professors in some ways (Ministry of Education, 2009). Similar to U.S. research universities and colleges in Taiwan put highest emphasis on scholarly productivity for new faculty members. Hence, promotion often depends on publication; for instance, institutions measure the research of academics in part by relying on the Science Citation Index or other status International indicators of circulated journals (Altbach, 2003).

Table 1: the number of professors in four- year institutions from 2000-2009

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Professor	5,822	6,122	6,304	6,535	6,790	7,008	7,334	7,589	7,831	8,024
Associate Professor	7,289	7,187	7,127	7,362	7,531	7,659	7,838	7,989	8,188	8,382
Assistant Professor	2,414	3,027	3,772	4,630	5,352	6,054	6,714	7,365	7,873	8,094
Lecturer	4,309	4,352	4,104	4,097	3,880	3,589	3,417	3,187	2,928	2,622
Others	866	865	942	995	977	951	876	860	821	830

Resource: Ministry of Education (2009). Reports on Higher Education. Taipei. Taiwan.

Furthermore, the nature of socialization programs for new faculty members varies across institutions. For example, one faculty member teaching in the National Taichung Normal University expressed that “*They paired up a senior faculty with a junior faculty to share experience in research and teaching regularly (Huang, 2010).*” Nonetheless, another assistant professor teaching in the Engineering Department stated that “They don’t arrange any orientation or mentoring in the department for a newly hired faculty” (Tu, 2010). Given the testimony, there does not appear to be common and systematic

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mentoring in institutions, and therefore, new faculty members may have to rely on their own resources to get integrated into the institution as soon as possible and be familiar with the formal policy.

*“All I do is to follow the institution’s policy since I just want to survive and get promotion smoothly” (Huang, 2010/02/27).*

Interestingly, researchers consider that graduate education is an initial part of socialization as a new faculty member in the future academic career. However, it seems that not many graduate students are aware of the importance of that part until they are hired and become a new faculty member.

*“I did not pay attention to the importance of socialization until I began to work in the university now. I felt like it is important to have your network as early as possible, sometimes the tenure process is kind of political” (Tu, 2010).*

In sum, there are some commonalities and differences between both countries in terms of faculty socialization. The challenge of new faculty socialization is quite similar for new faculty in that the pressure of balancing research and teaching courses creates a struggle with time allocation and management of personal life and work. However, mobility for new faculty and junior faculty is more restricted in Taiwan than in the U.S. Each institution has its own mission, and thus socialization programs may differ by type of institution across the two countries. As institutions provide more comprehensive socialization programs, better social integration between the institution and individuals will develop. In addition, having a peer group and support from personal friends and family are very important. The difference between both countries is the new faculty member’s awareness of socialization processes; that means, faculty members in the U.S. higher education context viewed their graduate education as a part of socialization process to become

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future faculty than those of Taiwanese higher education. Nonetheless, in both countries, there are discrepancies between preparation during graduate education and the reality of the academic workplace (Austin, 2002). That is, graduate students lack systematic training in developing needed skills and abilities so as to be familiar with faculty roles. In sum, compared to American higher education, the professoriate in Taiwan's higher education is more homogeneous and centralized.

### **Conclusion**

*“Institutional socialization contains both fixed and variable elements. The functioning of new faculty socialization is based on a fixed time frame, and the length of the tenure-track or probationary period is specified in general as a part of the employment appointment” (Dunn et al., 1994, p.394).*

Dunn et al (1994) illustrated that new faculty socialization includes fixed and variable elements. For instance, course work is scheduled and completed based on a semester basis (fixed) for graduate students, but the completion of the thesis varies across students. Likewise, socialization for new faculty differs among institutions, and the length of the probationary period depends on each employment contract. Overall, beginning an academic career, whether in America or Taiwan, is a complex and demanding process, and it is a task-oriented phase with concrete goals. On the one hand, higher education institutions should foster mentoring relationships and organize well- planned orientation so as to promote rapid adjustment to the roles new faculty and junior faculty play in academies (Baldwin, 1996). Furthermore, the institution or department must be supportive and willing to give advice and feedback to questions to help young professors advance in their professional socialization as well as integrate faculty development across the career. On the other

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hand, the novice has to master the principles of faculty roles and achieve meaningful accomplishments in some ways, such as publication in respected journal articles. In the recent years, graduate education and post-doctoral professional experiences are an initial socialization phases and serve as the preparation for the academic career. In reality, socialization takes place anytime, and therefore, it is essential to make a smooth transition and create individual social network. In academies, interactions with peers, personal friends and family as well as other faculty members are critical (Austin, 2002; Austin, et al., 2007; Corcoran & Clark, 1984; Dunn, et al., 1994). If early faculty members fail to have a positive transition in the beginning of their career in the academic workplace, they are likely to have in negative attitudes throughout the career. Although the practice of new faculty socialization may differ by variations across institutional types across the board, experienced faculty members of today have a significant responsibility to prepare and support new faculty members in academies. The various pressures and demands on the professoriate in academies may encourage us to reconsideration of the nature of faculty work and the question of how to prepare new faculty members. Therefore, socializing the new professoriate is the first step to make a better transition for the future period and it requires more institutional attention.

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