

Dissertation Proposal

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Organizational Routines and Adaptation

Organizational routines are repeated, interdependent patterns of action. Routines are essential for accomplishing work in organizations. Prevailing perspectives on routines suggest that routines lead organizations to be maladaptive to change. However, organizations that store knowledge in routines and remain adaptive to change are well-documented. How can organizations simultaneously store knowledge in routines and remain adaptive to change? I draw on the literature on routine dynamics and argue that the repeated use of routines can influence team processes. Drawing on the literature on transactive memory systems (TMS) and knowledge recombination, I argue that the use of routines can facilitate development of transactive memory systems, which aid teams in recombining knowledge to address changing tasks.

In Chapter 1, I review the literature on transactive memory systems and organizational routines and argue that they have a reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relationship. In Chapter 2, I investigate the relationship between routines, transactive memory systems, and knowledge recombination. I perform semi-structured interviews with United States Marine Corps officers and find that the development of a TMS facilitates recombinations of existing routine subcomponents. In Chapter 3, I propose a field experiment with United States Army and Air Force cyberprotection teams. I manipulate whether teams are trained to use a routine and measure the development of a TMS, knowledge recombination, and adaptation to a new task.