BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Routine dynamics: Beyond routines as things

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Routines are fundamental to organizational operations and strategy. Organizational members enact routines to design and manufacture products, develop strategic plans, hire/fire personnel, create budgets and account for the money, time, and other resources spent, and perform myriad other tasks, both profound and mundane. While the term routine may conjure up an image of stability and inertia, recent research shows that enacted routines are a potential source of continuous change. The field of routine dynamics explores the relationality of stability and change in organizational routines and how the process of enacting or performing routines is a source of both organizational stability and organizational change. While much of the work in routine dynamics is found in journal articles, the following books provide opportunities for rich empirical examples and extended discussions. Martha S. Feldman is professor of Social Ecology, Political Science, Business, and Sociology and Johnson Chair for Civic Governance and Public Management, University of California, Irvine.

ORGANIZATIONAL ROUTINES: How they are created, maintained, and changed.

Process theorizing articulates the dynamism of routines and their role in organizational stability and change. While routines have always been seen as processes (depicted as arrows) enabling organizations to turn inputs into outputs, recent theorizing has evolved to explore that relatively undifferentiated arrow. This edited volume is comprised of nine papers exploring routines from a process perspective and a conclusion that provides a philosophical discussion of process theorizing.

ORGANIZATIONS AND UNUSUAL ROUTINES: A system analysis of dysfunctional feedback processes.

While most recent research in this field focuses on the understudied role of routines in change or the interplay between stability and change, this book emphasizes the inertial qualities of routine dynamics. The authors define unusual routines as “repeated and change resistant precisely because there is some process that generates, reinforces, or hides the initial problem” (p.332). Unusual routines are illustrated with examples from common organizational operations and a preliminary integrative model incorporates everyday organizational performance in single- and double-loop learning, supporting inertia and prompting its further development.

HANDBOOK OF ORGANIZATIONAL ROUTINES.

This edited volume provides a much-needed overview of research on routines in terms of the way they relate to stability and change in organizations. Two introductory chapters provide historical and conceptual overviews. Four chapters connect the concept to various fields, including political science, sociology, and accounting. Six chapters zoom in on the role of routines in search and learning. Two concluding chapters discuss how to conduct empirical research on routines.