**Responses To Proposal Comments**

**A Dissertation Supplement**

Christopher R. Dishop

**Purpose**

This document describes the changes I made in response to committee concerns that were raised during my proposal.

*Are you saying that requests are random? If you are, how are you going to respond when others comment that their own work is not random and so your manuscript can be ignored?*

I made three changes to (hopefully) appease this issue. First, I better articulate why the “random” perspective is appropriate. It does not mean that requests are necessarily random, or that they must be due to chance. Instead, the perspective sits at a downstream – and more abstract – level of analysis focusing on request trajectories. Requests may come and go due to any number of systematic factors. My paper, though, begins with request movement and then describes downstream behavioral consequences. At this posterior level of analysis, the random perspective is appropriate because time series data often exhibit random movements – and indeed, the data that I collect do. I am not saying that the world is random, but that request trajectories can (and do) exhibit random movements. It is still an open question as to what generates requests consistent with random walks. My dissertation does not answer the question of what generates random walk pleas for help. My research begins with random walk pleas for help and asks how they might generate extra milers once combined with employee reactions.

Second, I reframed the paper so that both the random and systematic schools of thought are consistent with one another – at least in the context of my study. At their core, my hypotheses predict whether or not extra milers emerge when you combine (a) the idea that some employees receive more requests than others with (b) different employee reactions. In my simulations, I create request pool sustained lead – i.e., some employee request pools are consistently larger or smaller than others…the people with the most requests at *t* also tend to be the people with the most requests at *t* + 1 – by using random walks. Random walks are embedded into the simulation so that some employees consistently have more requests than others. But I could have used a different method, one that does not rely on random walks. I could have, for example, given Jared 10 requests at all *t* and Jacob 0 requests at all *t* with a simple script in Julia – Jared would then always have more requests than Jacob. Doing so would not change my simulation results. I used random walks to generate request sustained lead. I could have used a “systematic” method to generate sustained lead. I chose the random perspective to demonstrate that its possible for randomness to create sustained leads, and because the trajectories I examined in my pilot were consistent with random walks. In the context of my study, therefore, the same predictions and results emerge when you replace “accumulate by randomness & inertia” with “accumulate due to some systematic factor.”

Third, I conducted a small review to demonstrate that researchers in our field do not evaluate the presence of random walks in longitudinal data. Based on my review, there were no studies in JAP, OBHDP, or AMJ examining random walks in the past year. Every study that collected longitudinal data with more than 3 time points (with each construct measured at each *t*) had the opportunity to do so. When we do not evaluate the presence of random walks, then we do not know whether observed results culled from a random-coefficient, multi-level, or growth model are meaningful. Someone can certainly say, “well the content area that I study examines systematic effects,” but my review suggests that we have no evidence to support that statement – irrespective of the content area.

*Your perspective is consistent with a person by situation interaction. Use that body of work as an overarching scheme, then embed your own study within it. Make sure you adequately describe and are fair to prior work on* ***p****x****s*** *interactions.*

The situation by person framework now takes centerstage in my paper. It guides the theoretical development, predictions, simulation, and Discussion sections. As we discussed, I tried to start broad and then embed my study within the literature that already exists in this space.

*Include “person reactions to pleas for assistance” in your simulations and in your theory. Your proposal only examines the situation. You need to unpack how individuals might respond when asked for help.*

My theory and simulation sections now discuss how employees might react to pleas for assistance. I used self-regulation theory and literature on persuasion to make my predictions. The second half of my introduction, which broaches this topic, is almost entirely new.

*Social capital is one reason why some individuals may receive more requests for help than others. You may want to consider how to use this perspective in your study.*

After introducing requests for help and sustained lead, I now unpack two sections. One is called the “random school of thought,” and it describes what happens when you combine randomness with inertia. The other is called the “systematic school of thought,” and it describes social capital and cumulative advantage. What I tried to do in my paper was describe both perspectives, offer reasons for why I focused on the random perspective, and then state that the perspectives need not be orthogonal. I tried to be fair to this second line of reasoning without making it the main thrust of the article. It’s a reasonable perspective for follow-up research but isn’t the main emphasis here.

*What about when employees offer help without being prompted by a plea?*

When we spoke during our proposal meeting, the main issue here was that I was loose with my wording. I was using words like “opportunity” to describe prompts/notifications for help. An opportunity, though, is often something one creates for him or herself. In the new write-up, I stick with passive language, and I acknowledge early in my introduction that my study is limited to only reactionary help.

*How is this more than the fundamental attribution error?*

In my original write-up, I did a poor job of separating my study from its implications. FAE has to do with a perceptual error that a manager might make when witnessing his or her employees. My paper, conversely, is about a mechanism that generates employee behavior. It has to do with a process, not a perception. The process I unpack is one mechanism that a manager could miss by making the FAE. It is one of many “inside” events that may be invisible to an observer on the “outside.” FAE has to do with the perceptual error on the outside actor, my paper has to do with the behavioral scheme at play on the inside. My paper does have implications for manager perceptions, but I didn’t study nor did I evaluate manager perceptions. I tried to do a better job of separating these ideas in my new write-up.

Additional Changes

I also made some miscellaneous changes from the proposal to the defense document. We did not discuss the items below in our proposal meeting, but I thought adjustments were necessary for reasons I state.

1.. No email or Facebook data

I decided not to gather data on my own emails or on a public forum such as Facebook. Instead, I collected twice as many GitHub repositories as I had originally intended. I made this change for two reasons. First, after collecting GitHub and MSU admin data, I had gathered enough to make my point in the pilot study – that time series trajectories exhibit random walks. I collected 35 time series on GitHub, and the length of those series ranged from 500 to 3000 days. This amount of data felt like enough for a pilot demonstration. Second, it is surprisingly difficult to obtain email and Facebook data due to privacy concerns. There are work-arounds, but I’m not a strong enough programmer to properly implement them. The extra time it would have taken to gather these sources would have outweighed their utility.

2.. Figure change

I present my simulation results in a different format than what was proposed. I made this change purely for clarity. My impression is that this second format is easier to understand. It is explained at length in my dissertation.

3.. New title

I changed the title from “A good soldier or random exposure? Chance opportunities to explain citizenship” to “A good soldier or random exposure? A stochastic accumulating mechanism to explain frequent citizenship.” The second title downplays the notions of chance and opportunity and replaces them with the core idea of accumulating. Titles are challenging for me, I’m still thinking through best routes.

4.. Evaluating random walks with ADF only rather than both ADF and KPSS

I use the augmented dickey-fuller test to evaluate the presence of random walks in the pilot data. I do not combine that analysis with KPSS assessments, which is what I had proposed. It seemed unnecessarily long to explain both the ADF and KPSS tests in my document. The ADF is by far the most popular test, so it makes sense to cut the other. I also read more about both tests and found that most employ the KPSS test to assess stationarity. Stationarity is a related but separate topic from random walks. It felt like too far of a tangent to include it in my dissertation. Random walks are the core idea, and the ADF is appropriate for evaluating them.

5.. Simulation changes

My simulations now include “person” conditions: respond to many, few, influx, outflow, and norm conformity. Given these changes, I removed some of the original “environment” conditions. I no longer evaluate the effect of the forcing term or the number of agents. With respect to the current results, these other aspects are irrelevant.