

E-ISSN: 3108-4192

APSSHS

Academic Publications of Social Sciences and Humanities Studies

2023, Volume 3, Issue 2, Page No: 84-92

Available online at: <https://apsshs.com/>

Journal of Applied Organizational Systems and Behavior

How Institutionalized Agility Produces Organizational Forgetting and Memory Erosion

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Abstract

Agility is commonly presented as an organizational capacity for sensing change, reallocating resources, and reconfiguring work. Yet when recurrent transformation becomes an institutionalized expectation rather than a bounded response, renewal may weaken the organizational conditions through which prior knowledge remains retrievable, interpretable, and transferable. This original conceptual theory article examines how agility may generate organizational forgetting and memory erosion without assuming that agility, change, or unlearning is inherently dysfunctional. It integrates scholarship on organizational agility, intentional and collective forgetting, unlearning, reinvention, personnel transitions, knowledge loss, intergenerational transfer, and knowledge hiding. The article proposes the Theory of Agility-Induced Forgetting, a conditional process account in which institutionalized renewal pressures may produce temporal compression, personnel fluidity, repeated displacement of routines, and devaluation of prior knowledge. These pressures are proposed to erode memory when they interrupt retrieval cues, handoffs, contextual documentation, provenance, rationale, and distributed knowledge of who knows what. The theory distinguishes adaptive, deliberate unlearning from unintended degradation and treats organizational memory as socially and materially enacted rather than merely stored. It develops propositions and memory-preserving design principles concerning retention decisions, transition interfaces, documentation stewardship, and distributed expertise. The proposed relationships remain conceptually plausible rather than empirically validated. Their relevance is expected to depend on knowledge tacitness, task interdependence, turnover, documentation capacity, trust, occupational identity, and safety or accountability demands. The contribution is a bounded explanation of when institutionalized agility may narrow, rather than expand, an organization's adaptive range.

Keywords: Agility and organizational memory loss, Organizational forgetting, Reinvention cycles and knowledge discontinuity, Speed, turnover, and documentation failure, Memory-preserving organizational design, Institutionalized

How to cite this article: Weber L, Janssen S, Richter J, Fischer E. How Institutionalized Agility Produces Organizational Forgetting and Memory Erosion. *J Appl Organ Syst Behav.* 2023;3(2):84-92. <https://doi.org/10.51847/mH0mNrjSVj>

Received: 23 August 2023; **Revised:** 26 December 2023; **Accepted:** 30 December 2024

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Introduction

Organizational agility is usually associated with timely sensing, rapid response, flexibility, resource redeployment, and reconfiguration. However, the construct remains conceptually fragmented, and speed is only one possible dimension of a broader organizational capacity [1]. This ambiguity matters because prescriptions to “be agile” can travel from a contingent capability claim into a durable legitimacy rule: units, leaders, and employees may be expected to demonstrate recurrent change even when continuity has strategic value. In this article, institutionalized agility denotes the proposed condition in which



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repeated reconfiguration becomes normalized, identity-consistent, and symbolically associated with competence. The term produces in the title therefore names a theorized, conditional process rather than an established causal effect. The focal problem is not change itself, but whether the organization preserves sufficient access to the knowledge, rationale, provenance, practices, and expertise needed to interpret what preceded the change.

Technology illustrates why acceleration cannot be treated as equivalent to adaptation. Information technology may support sensing, coordination, and response, but technological capability alone does not guarantee that an organization becomes agile or that its knowledge remains usable [2]. Digitally mediated work can increase the volume of traces while reducing the time available to contextualize them; it can improve access while fragmenting responsibility for curation. These possibilities require distinctions among technological capability, enacted organizational practice, behavioral visibility, and legitimate authority. They also require distinguishing organizational memory from data accumulation. Memory is useful only when traces, routines, narratives, artifacts, and distributed expertise can be retrieved and interpreted in relation to current work. Thus, the presence of repositories, dashboards, or searchable communication does not by itself establish continuity, learning, or consequential influence over decisions.

Strategic agility is supported by international coordination, dynamic talent capabilities, and digital-organizational co-evolution rather than by speed alone [3-5]. These accounts locate agility in configurations of sensing, mobilization, redeployment, and organizational choice, but they do not test memory erosion as an outcome. Building on that boundary, this original conceptual theory article asks when a capability for renewal may become a recurrent organizing expectation that destabilizes its own memory infrastructure. Its contribution is the proposed Theory of Agility-Induced Forgetting: a multilevel, temporal synthesis connecting reinvention cadence, personnel flow, compressed transition time, and valorization of novelty to declining retrievability, contextual richness, provenance, rationale, and know-who continuity. The synthesis does not claim exhaustive literature coverage, universal applicability, or empirical validation. Alternative explanations—including environmental turbulence, restructuring, workload, ordinary obsolescence, or deliberate suppression—must remain available wherever observed memory loss cannot be uniquely attributed to institutionalized agility.

Theoretical foundations of organizational forgetting

A theory of agility-induced forgetting must first separate intentional forgetting from unintended memory erosion. Intentional organizational forgetting can involve reducing or removing retrieval cues that continue to activate obsolete routines [6]. Retrieval cues may be procedures, artifacts, language, spatial arrangements, technologies, or social prompts that make prior action patterns accessible. Their deliberate alteration can support implementation of a replacement routine. This mechanism is not equivalent to destroying knowledge, and it does not show that an organization has lost the capacity to reconstruct what it ceased using. The relevant analytical distinctions are therefore accessibility versus existence, non-use versus loss, and deliberate cue management versus accidental disembedding. Transferring a cognitive mechanism to organizations also requires caution because organizational remembering is distributed across people, practices, and material arrangements rather than located in a single mind.

Unlearning and forgetting overlap but are not interchangeable. Unlearning generally concerns a process of questioning, revising, or releasing assumptions, beliefs, or routines, whereas forgetting more often describes reduced accessibility or usability of prior knowledge [7]. Either construct can be specified at individual, team, or organizational level, and intentionality cannot be inferred simply from a formal change program. This article defines organizational forgetting as diminished organizational access to or use of previously available knowledge. It defines memory erosion as a proposed temporal trajectory in which retrievability, contextual richness, provenance, rationale, or know-who continuity progressively declines. The distinction protects adaptive unlearning from being mislabeled as damage: releasing an obsolete routine while preserving its rationale and replacement logic is analytically different from losing the capacity to understand why the routine existed.

Collective forgetting can emerge when memories become unusable, whereas workplace unlearning is discussed as an intentional or adaptive process across levels [8, 9]. Ethnographic evidence shows that change may uproot mnemonic practices and artifacts from the social contexts that gave them meaning; review evidence, by contrast, identifies heterogeneous antecedents and outcomes without establishing one causal pathway. This contrast suggests that formal policy and enacted practice may diverge. Leaders may authorize selective unlearning, while employees experience an unplanned loss of context; employees may retain prior knowledge even after official routines are withdrawn. The proposed theory therefore treats forgetting as a possible process outcome, not a necessary consequence of agility. It also rejects cross-level shortcuts: an employee's inability to recall, a team's interrupted coordination, and an organization's inability to reconstruct a decision are related but non-equivalent observations. The evidence establishes conceptual plausibility and process distinctions, not a general rate or universal direction of effect.

Reinvention cycles and knowledge discontinuity

Reinvention cycles are proposed as repeated episodes in which new structures, labels, routines, roles, or technologies displace recent predecessors. Their defining property is recurrence: renewal begins again before prior changes have been fully integrated, evaluated, or narrated. Evidence from new-product-development teams indicates that adaptive renewal may honor retained knowledge while selectively welcoming new knowledge [10]. Reinvention therefore need not create discontinuity when organizations retain the reasoning behind earlier choices, distinguish obsolete content from reusable expertise, and preserve access to people or artifacts that enable comparison. Wholesale novelty is not a logical requirement of agility, and the observed balance between old and new knowledge remains context-specific.

Repeated change may distort retention because beliefs about success and failure can follow different unlearning dynamics. Computational modelling suggests that decision makers may revise failure beliefs and success beliefs asymmetrically as environments change [11]. Organizations may therefore abandon visible failures rapidly without preserving diagnostic context, while retaining successful routines beyond their useful conditions. Either pattern could weaken learning across cycles if assumptions, feedback histories, and contextual limits disappear. This is a methodological implication rather than field evidence: simulation demonstrates conditional logic, not the prevalence of organizational memory erosion or an effect of agility.

Organizational unlearning may be open-ended, where a replacement is unknown, or goal-directed, where an alternative is specified [12]. Both forms require preparatory work: actors must identify what is questioned, create conditions for release, and negotiate what should replace or remain beside prior knowledge. Reinvention becomes discontinuous when the launch of the new eclipses this transition. The proposed mechanism is an incomplete bridge between knowledge states—weak articulation of what changed, why it changed, which elements remain valid, and who can interpret exceptions. The typology is analytically useful but not exhaustive, and consultant-based evidence cannot establish a general causal sequence.

Prior knowledge may remain consequential during mandated transformation. In the UK Fire and Rescue Service, employees retained older knowledge as a benchmark for evaluating new routines, while trust and consent shaped whether unlearning appeared legitimate [13]. Retention should not automatically be coded as resistance; it may reflect professional judgement, risk control, or comparison across regimes. Nor should voice opportunity be confused with consequential influence. The proposed theory expects greater erosion risk when old knowledge is delegitimized before its continuing value is assessed and participation is ceremonial. The safety-service context limits transferability but clarifies an important boundary: in high-consequence work, memory preservation may enable responsible change.

Speed, turnover, and documentation failure

Temporal compression and personnel fluidity can convert transitions into knowledge discontinuities. Longitudinal case evidence shows that critical knowledge-holder departure can be associated with consequential loss when expertise is neither transferred nor reconstructable [14]. Turnover is an event, not a sufficient mechanism: effects depend on tacitness, distribution, task interdependence, overlap, and access to contextualized records and knowledgeable contacts. Institutionalized agility is proposed to increase exposure by normalizing rapid redeployment, short handovers, and recurrent restructuring. The evidence does not test agile practices, and workload, restructuring, or resource scarcity remain rival explanations.

Onboarding is a continuity interface because entry can require learning and selective unlearning. A conceptual framework proposes that newcomers revise incompatible assumptions while preserving transferable knowledge [15]. Rapid assimilation may therefore be counterproductive when prior experience provides useful comparison, just as unexamined carryover may reproduce errors. Memory-preserving onboarding would make retention decisions explicit: which schemas should be questioned, which expertise translated, and which organizational rationales taught. These are proposed design questions, not an evaluated intervention; ordinary socialization may explain adjustment without organizational forgetting.

Knowledge continuity is also relational. Perceived age discrimination can impair older employees' sharing with younger colleagues through social-cognitive processes [16]. Repositories cannot compensate fully when expertise is not offered, requested, respected, or incorporated. Yet individual perceptions do not establish organization-level erosion. The bounded inference is that status relations may weaken intergenerational transfer, especially when redeployment or turnover reduces repeated interaction. Relationship quality, work design, and task arrangements remain plausible alternatives.

Defensive routines and knowledge hiding can interrupt the movement from individual knowledge to collective use. Cross-sectional evidence from a narrow service context associates unlearning with lower defensive routines and hiding [17]. This suggests that questioning entrenched responses may reduce transfer barriers, but it does not show that unlearning repairs documentation or causally preserves memory. Documentation failure is proposed as failure to capture, update, contextualize, preserve, or retrieve rationale and provenance. More records are not necessarily better: decontextualized traces may create overload while obscuring why a decision was made.

Table 1 organizes the evidence, constructs, relationships, uncertainties, and boundary conditions required for definitions, constructs, and conceptual boundaries for how institutionalized agility produces organizational forgetting and memory erosion.

Table 1. Definitions, constructs, and conceptual boundaries for How Institutionalized Agility Produces Organizational Forgetting and Memory Erosion.

Construct or Component	Definition	Problem Addressed	Distinction From Adjacent Concepts	Proposed Role	Uncertainty	Boundary Statement
Institutionalized Agility	Proposed norm of recurrent reconfiguration.	Episodic response versus durable rule.	Not speed or one change project.	Proposed distal condition.	Not directly measured.	Agility is not inherently harmful.
Organizational Forgetting	Reduced access to previously available knowledge.	Loss state versus change process.	Not identical to unlearning or deletion.	Possible process outcome.	Intentionality varies.	Missing records do not prove forgetting.
Intentional Unlearning	Purposeful revision or release of obsolete knowledge.	Adaptive release versus erosion.	Process, not inevitable loss.	Adaptive pathway and boundary.	Definitions vary by level.	Value depends on replacement.
Reinvention Cycle	Proposed repeated displacement of recent arrangements.	Renewal cadence versus integration.	Not continuous improvement.	Proposed renewal pressure.	Cycle boundaries need testing.	Reinvention may generate learning.
Knowledge Discontinuity	Break in access to know-how, rationale, provenance, or know-who.	Handoffs and collective continuity.	Not individual forgetting alone.	Proposed erosion pathway.	May be recoverable.	Assess at task and level.
Documentation Failure	Inadequate capture, context, updating, or retrieval.	Trace volume versus usable memory.	Not simply few documents.	Proposed disembedding mechanism.	Use is context-specific.	More records may create overload.
Memory Erosion	Proposed decline in retrieval, context, provenance, rationale, or know-who.	Gradual degradation short of amnesia.	Not deliberate cue removal.	Proposed state and outcome.	Requires longitudinal validation.	No cited study validates the construct.

Note: Evidence-derived claims are bounded by cited designs. “Proposed” denotes original synthesis, not validated causation or universal prescription.

Institutionalized novelty and devaluation of the past

Organizational memory is not a passive inventory of facts. It is enacted through interacting narratives, routines, artifacts, communities, and mnemonic practices that make prior experience available for present interpretation [18]. Institutionalized novelty is therefore proposed as more than frequent innovation: it is a legitimacy rule under which visible newness becomes evidence of relevance, competence, or progress. The predicted risk is retrospective devaluation, whereby prior knowledge loses standing before its continued applicability, provenance, or diagnostic value is examined. This is an interpretive mechanism, not a claim that organizations should retain every legacy practice or that novelty necessarily reduces memory. Claims about a devalued past also require historiographical reflexivity. Archives are selective, organizational narratives are constructed, and surviving traces do not transparently reproduce prior experience [19]. Consequently, an absent document cannot establish forgetting, while a complete-looking archive cannot establish usable memory. What matters is whether actors can reconstruct the origins, assumptions, alternatives, and authority behind a decision. The proposed theory therefore separates historical trace from current retrievability and separates record availability from contextual interpretation. Memory erosion may reflect lost custodians, changed vocabulary, inaccessible systems, or detached practices rather than physical deletion. Novelty and value are empirically distinguishable. Experimental evidence from innovation work indicates that iterative coordination can improve assessed value while reducing novelty [20]. The result does not test organizational memory or a novelty-oriented culture, but it challenges the assumption that more original outputs are necessarily better outputs. Institutionalized novelty may become erosive when organizations use newness as a proxy for quality and discount incremental repair, recombination, or historically informed refinement. Conversely, experimentation can preserve memory when teams compare alternatives, retain decision rationales, and make reversibility visible. The proposed relationship is therefore conditional on evaluation criteria and on whether prior knowledge is assessed rather than symbolically dismissed. Devaluation may also be purposeful. Historical analysis shows that organized forgetting can be strategically produced and ethically consequential, with power shaping which materials are preserved, suppressed, or made unusable [21]. This evidence should not be generalized into a claim that all forgetting is misconduct. It instead establishes a governance boundary: memory is political because retention and deletion distribute accountability. Institutionalized agility may unintentionally enable selective memory by making frequent replacement appear operationally necessary, yet deliberate suppression, legal strategy, or reputational protection remain distinct rival explanations. Any application of the proposed theory must therefore examine who authorizes forgetting, whose experience is excluded, and whether formal opportunities to speak produce consequential influence over organizational accounts.

Proposed theory of agility-induced forgetting

Existing organizational-unlearning research contains multiple thematic streams but does not provide an integrated explanation of how institutionalized agility might generate unintended memory erosion [22]. The proposed Theory of Agility-Induced Forgetting integrates those streams through a conditional sequence. Institutionalized agility is treated as a distal organizing condition that may amplify four renewal pressures: temporal compression, personnel fluidity, reinvention cadence, and novelty valorization. These pressures are proposed to matter only when they exceed or bypass memory-support capacity. Digital trace production sharpens this distinction. Behavioral visibility makes activities observable to particular audiences, but visibility is socially and technologically constructed and is not equivalent to accurate, contextualized, or retrievable organizational memory [23]. A system may reveal that an action occurred while obscuring why it occurred, which alternatives were rejected, who possessed authority, and under what conditions the action was appropriate. The proposed visibility-substitution mechanism arises when organizations treat recorded behavior as sufficient memory and withdraw stewardship from narratives, rationale, provenance, and know-who. Visibility may instead preserve memory when metadata, interpretation, custodianship, and retrieval practices remain aligned.

Learning algorithms and algorithmic control can reorganize expertise and authority through opaque, data-intensive, and contested mechanisms [24, 25]. These sources do not demonstrate forgetting. They support the narrower premise that technological outputs can alter who is recognized as knowledgeable, what becomes visible, and how decisions are governed. The proposed theory therefore distinguishes technological capability from legitimate authority and automated recommendation from organizational responsibility. Memory erosion becomes plausible when algorithmic outputs replace rather than complement human explanations, when system migrations sever provenance, or when employees lose practical access to the reasoning needed to challenge a recommendation.

Figure 1 presents the original conceptual synthesis for theory of agility-induced forgetting, showing how the article's principal constructs, mechanisms, uncertainties, and decision boundaries are connected.

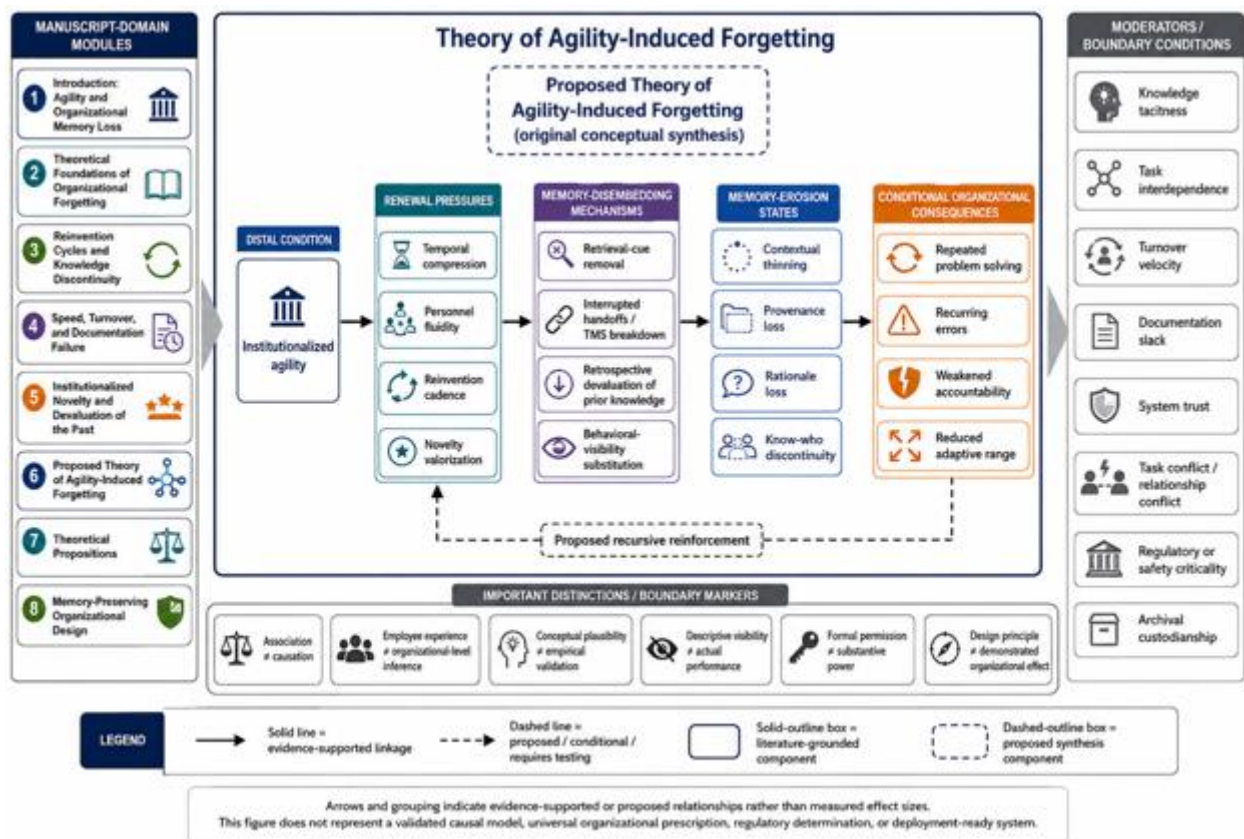


Figure 1. Theory of Agility-Induced Forgetting.

The proposed erosion states are contextual thinning, provenance loss, rationale loss, and know-who discontinuity. Their expected consequences—reconstruction work, recurring errors, weakened accountability, and reduced adaptive range—remain theoretical expectations. A recursive loop is proposed because prior erosion may make recurring problems appear unprecedented, thereby legitimating further reinvention. True environmental novelty, growth, restructuring, and beneficial unlearning could produce similar observations. The theory requires repeated-cycle, multilevel evidence that measures renewal pressures before disembedding and distinguishes employee perceptions from team and organizational outcomes.

Table 2 organizes the evidence, constructs, relationships, uncertainties, and boundary conditions required for proposed mechanisms, relationships, and organizational consequences in how institutionalized agility produces organizational forgetting and memory erosion.

Table 2. Proposed mechanisms, relationships, and organizational consequences in How Institutionalized Agility Produces Organizational Forgetting and Memory Erosion.

Mechanism or Relationship	Antecedent	Mediator or Process	Moderator	Expected Consequence	Rival Explanation	Validation Requirement
Temporal Compression → Documentation Debt (Proposed)	Rapid change cadence	Reduced rationale capture	Documentation slack; criticality	Contextual thinning	Turbulence	Repeated-cycle documentation and retrieval measures.
Personnel Fluidity → Know-Who Loss (Proposed)	Redeployment; turnover	Interrupted handoffs	Tacitness; relationship quality	Knowledge discontinuity	Labor-market turnover	Multilevel personnel-network panels.
Reinvention And Novelty → Retrospective Devaluation (Proposed)	Repeated replacement; newness signals	Prior knowledge loses legitimacy	Custodianship; accountability	Provenance and rationale loss	Rational obsolescence	Comparative process studies.
Visibility Substitution (Proposed)	Trace volume; algorithmic recording	Observation replaces explanation	Metadata; governance	Apparent memory, low usability	Improved digital retrieval	Contextual retrieval tests.
Recursive Forgetting–Reinvention Loop (Proposed)	Earlier erosion	Recurring problems appear new	External archives; memory review	Memory debt and further change	Genuine novelty	Longitudinal archival and interview triangulation.

Note: Every arrow and expected consequence is proposed. Cited evidence supports local concepts only and does not validate the complete relationship.

Theoretical propositions

Designed forgetting can be adaptive when external decision support reliably carries information that users need not retain. Controlled evidence indicates that such support can release cognitive resources under tested task conditions [26]. The organizational implication is conditional rather than scalar: temporal compression should increase memory erosion only when change cadence exceeds the capacity to capture, curate, transfer, and retrieve context. Proposition 1: The positive association proposed between institutionalized agility and memory erosion will strengthen as renewal cadence exceeds memory-support capacity. Proposition 2: Personnel fluidity will predict know-who discontinuity more strongly when knowledge is tacit, handoff overlap is limited, and expertise-location structures are weak. These propositions extrapolate beyond individual experiments and require multilevel longitudinal testing.

Reliance on external systems also depends on trust. Experimental findings indicate that users' memory-related benefits from information systems require trust in the system [27]. Trust, however, is not equivalent to accuracy, provenance, accessibility, or legitimate authority. Proposition 3: Digital offloading will preserve organizational memory only when trusted systems retain contextual metadata, decision rationale, and accountable custodianship; otherwise, visibility substitution will be more likely. Proposition 4: Novelty valorization will strengthen the relationship between reinvention cadence and retrospective devaluation, particularly where historical challenge has low status or little consequential influence. System quality, leadership climate, and environmental turbulence remain competing explanations.

Adaptive responses further vary by cognitive-control strategy at the individual level [28]. Individual adaptation cannot be treated as evidence that a team or organization has preserved memory. Proposition 5: Memory-preserving structures will weaken the proposed relationship between renewal pressures and erosion when they support selective retention, comparison across regimes, and reversible retrieval without preventing experimentation. Relevant structures may include rationale records, custodial roles, expertise maps, and transition overlap. Their benefits are expected to depend on task interdependence and knowledge criticality, and rigid preservation may itself hinder adaptation.

Proposition 6 specifies the proposed recursive mechanism: as contextual, provenance, rationale, and know-who continuity decline, recurring problems will be more likely to be framed as novel, increasing support for another reinvention cycle. This proposition would be challenged if observed recurrence is fully explained by environmental novelty, if memory states do not precede renewed change, or if institutionalized agility improves contextual retrieval after infrastructure and turbulence are controlled. Appropriate tests require repeated observations across several change episodes, triangulating personnel networks, version histories, decision logs, retrieval tasks, interviews, and archival records. The theory should be narrowed or rejected where the proposed mediators are absent or rival models explain the temporal pattern better.

Memory-preserving organizational design

Memory preservation is not synonymous with retaining all knowledge. It concerns maintaining sufficient retrievability, provenance, rationale, and know-who for responsible adaptation. Knowledge transfer in age-diverse coworker dyads can yield

motivational benefits for both parties [29]. This supports reciprocal continuity rather than one-way extraction from presumed experts. Proposed design principle 1, custodial continuity, assigns time-limited responsibility for translating expertise across transitions without essentializing age or status. Proposed design principle 2, handoff redundancy, combines person-to-person overlap with accessible records and successor verification. Dyadic motivation does not establish organization-wide retention, so both principles require evaluation.

Work design shapes whether knowledge is shared or hidden through differing motivational pathways [30]. Formal repositories and voice channels therefore cannot substitute for conditions that make contribution worthwhile and safe. Proposed design principle 3, minimum viable memory, identifies the smallest set of assumptions, alternatives, rationales, provenance, exceptions, and expertise contacts required to reconstruct a consequential decision. Proposed design principle 4, consequential stewardship, provides custodians with resources and influence rather than transferring responsibility without authority. Autonomy should permit judgement; it should not become an excuse to offload preservation work onto employees without time, recognition, or governance support.

Transactive memory systems organize distributed knowledge of who knows what. Evidence from temporary teams suggests that such systems can support innovativeness, while task and relationship conflict alter the association [31]. Proposed design principle 5, retrieval-ready know-who, maintains expertise maps through use, verification, and succession rather than static directories. Proposed design principle 6, retrieval drills, periodically tests whether teams can reconstruct why a decision was made and locate qualified interpreters. The hackathon setting does not establish long-term preservation, and relationship conflict, turnover, privacy, and professional boundaries may limit these practices.

Three further governance mechanisms complete the proposed design. Rationale capture records why consequential alternatives were accepted or rejected, while deletion authorization specifies who may remove cues, records, or access paths and how reversibility is assessed. Memory-debt review examines accumulated gaps during portfolio and transformation reviews rather than after failure. These mechanisms are not implementation-ready interventions. Organizations should pilot them proportionately, compare retrieval and adaptation before and after use, and discontinue mechanisms that create rigidity, surveillance, overload, or ceremonial compliance.

Conclusion

This original conceptual theory article proposes that agility may become memory-eroding when recurrent reconfiguration is institutionalized as a legitimacy rule and renewal pressures outpace the organization's capacity to preserve context. The Theory of Agility-Induced Forgetting connects temporal compression, personnel fluidity, reinvention cadence, and novelty valorization to proposed disembedding mechanisms and to declining retrievability, provenance, rationale, contextual richness, and know-who continuity. It distinguishes adaptive unlearning from unintended erosion, repositories from usable memory, visibility from performance, and technological capability from legitimate authority.

The theory does not establish that agility causes forgetting, that continuity is always beneficial, or that the proposed design principles will improve organizational outcomes. Its relationships remain conditional on knowledge tacitness, interdependence, turnover, documentation capacity, trust, conflict, custodianship, and safety or accountability requirements. Environmental turbulence, restructuring, ordinary obsolescence, strategic suppression, and beneficial forgetting remain viable alternatives.

The contribution is therefore a testable vocabulary and process architecture rather than a validated model or universal prescription. Progress requires longitudinal, multilevel, and comparative research that observes repeated change cycles, measures memory before and after transitions, triangulates social and material carriers, and tests rival explanations. The theory should be refined, bounded, or rejected wherever its proposed mechanisms fail to precede erosion or where institutionalized agility instead strengthens contextual retrieval and responsible adaptation.

Acknowledgments: None

Conflict of interest: None

Financial support: None

Ethics statement: None

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