



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Organizational resilience

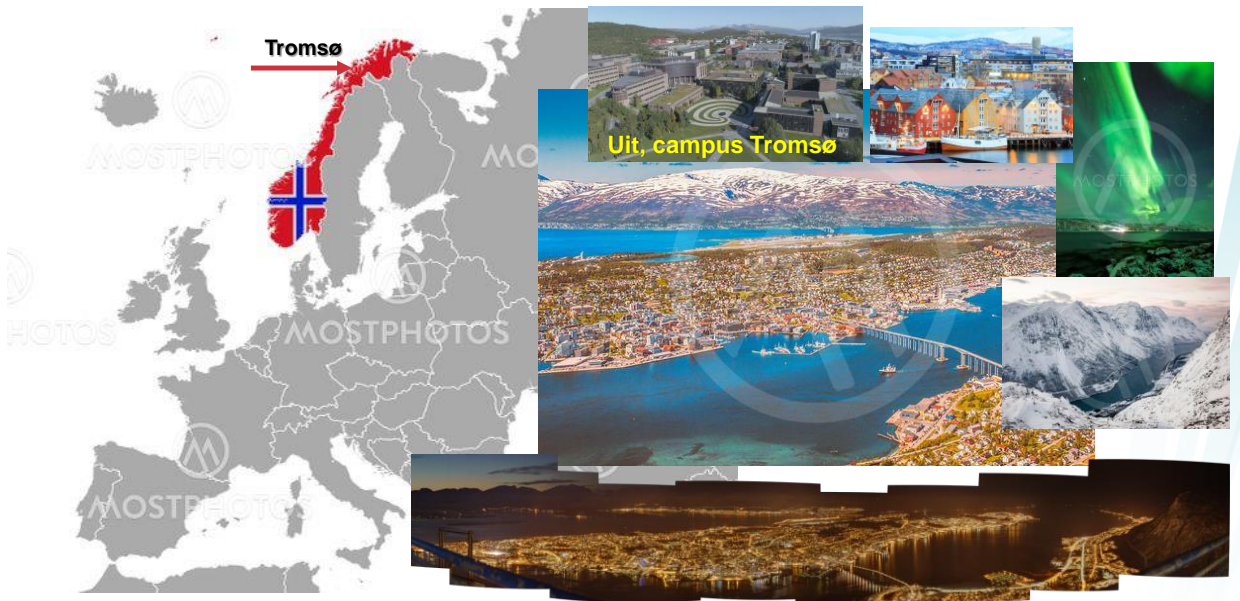
How can we build it?

DRM online training series (Coventry University)

Maria Sydnes
07 November 2023

1

UiT the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø



2

Our aims today

- How are risk and resilience connected?
- How do we understand and conceptualise organizational resilience?
- How can we model organizational resilience?

3

«Entry» ticket

1 min, write in chat or just talk ...

What is the 1st thing that comes to your mind when you think about organizational resilience?

please mention at least 1 thing 😊.



4



Resilience is founded upon good risk management

FINANCIAL CRISIS

5

The concept of resilience is becoming a pervasive idiom of global governance

(Walker and Cooper, 2011, p. 144)

Without increased action to build resilience to systemic risk, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved.
 UN, Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022

“...the new normal” for organisations



How can we address all dimensions of disaster risk?
 Priority 1: Understanding disaster risk.
 Priority 2: Strengthening disaster risk governance.
 Priority 3: **Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.**
 Priority 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response.
 Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030

6

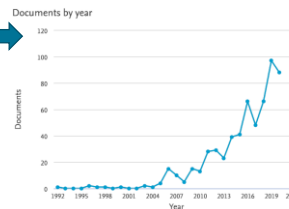
Academic status of the concept

Research has grown dramatically in recent decades. →

- ✓ Lack of empirical research.
- ✓ Lack of an overarching theoretical framework of OR.
- ✓ No unified definition of the concept.
- ✓ No consistent understanding of
 - ✓ which elements OR contains
 - ✓ what resilient organizations actually do

The question of how to achieve OR remains unanswered (Chen et al. 2021).

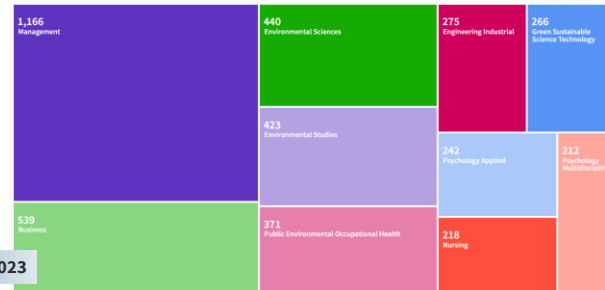
Search results for OR on Scopus



Google Scholar search

1985-2000	98
2001-2015	3270
2016-2021	40 100
After 2022	19 100
After 2023	14 000

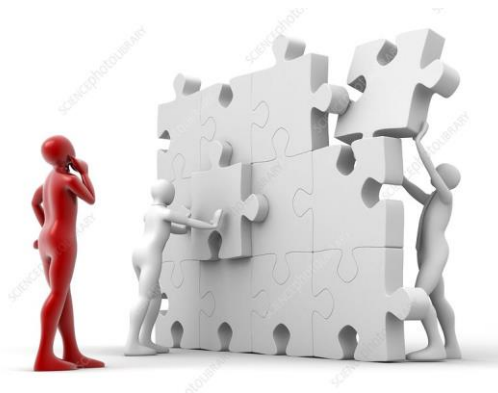
Web of Science, 2023



7

A major organizational challenge is

how to achieve resilience in practice



(Boin and Lodge 2016; Duchek 2020; Chen et al. 2021; Galy et al., 2023)

8

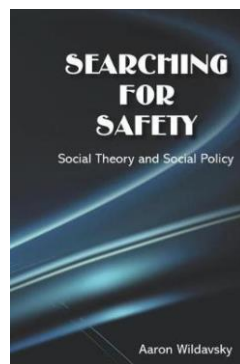
How do we understand organizational resilience?

9

Resilience: one strategy for decision makers dealing with risk and uncertainty

“**Anticipation** is a mode of control by a central mind; efforts are made to **predict** and **prevent** potential dangers before damage is done...

effective in coping with known threats and problems



Anticipation vs resilience

Resilience is the capacity to cope with **unanticipated dangers** after they have become manifest, **learning to bounce back.**“

(Wildavsky 1988, p. 77)

10

OR is about organizational **ability to cope**, i.e. respond

- OR "... is a fundamental quality (...) to **respond productively** to significant change that disrupts the expected pattern of event without engaging in an extended period of regressive behavior" (Horne and Orr, 1998, p. 31).
- OR is "organizational capacity to **absorb the impact** and **recover from** the actual occurrence of an extreme weather event" (Linnenluecke et al., 2012, p. 18).
- Recovery resilience means "**bouncing back** to a state of normalcy" (Boin and Eeten, 2013, p. 431)

Key focus is on **coping strategies** and a **quick ability to resume expected performance levels**

11

OR is about organizational **ability to adapt**

- OR is "ability of an organization to **absorb and adapt** in a changing environment" (ISO, 2017).
- OR is "the **maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions** such that the organization emerges from those conditions strengthened and more resourceful" (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007, p. 3418).
- OR capacity is an "... ability to **effectively absorb, develop situation-specific responses to, and ultimately engage in transformative activities to capitalize [i.e. benefit] on disruptive surprises** that potentially threaten organization survival" (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011, p. 244).

Key focus is on organisational ability to:

- ✓ **change**
- ✓ **adjust to improve** organizational processes and capabilities
- ✓ organizational capabilities that **enable to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure** internal and external resources and competences **to match the requirements of changing conditions**

12

Resilience implies **more than** a **specific adaptation**

NB: competence in one period does not predict later competence in a linear deterministic way; rather **competence in one period increases the probability of competence in the next** or any kind of unexpected event.

To be resilient is to be **vitaly prepared** for adversity which requires **“improvement in overall capability**, i.e., a generalized capacity to investigate, to learn, and to act, **without knowing in advance what one will be called to act upon”**.

(Wildavsky, 1991: 70)

13

«Reactive» vs «Proactive» resilience

“A society relying on **reactive resilience** approaches the future by **strengthening the status quo and making the present system resistant to change**, whereas one that develops **proactive resilience** accepts the inevitability of change and tries to **create a system that is capable of adapting to new conditions and imperatives**“

(Klein, Nicholls and Thomalla 2003, p. 39)

Strategic resilience

... depends on change before change becomes desperately obvious (Hamel and Välikangas, 2003), and thus entails **continual metamorphosis** (Morais-Storz et al., 2016).

14

How to ensure ongoing adaptation?

Rerup, 2001: '*Resilience as rule following and rule breaking*'

1. **Anticipation:** anticipatory organizations actively try to forecast in order to determine ways in which they can avoid the success and failure trap.
2. **Improvisation:** focus on building skills in order to cope with the failure or success trap when the organization experiences these traps despite their anticipatory efforts.

Success trap: result of blindly repeating for too long the experience of the past (March 1995). **Failure trap:** result of trying out new ideas, strategies, concepts and fads without staying long enough with these innovations in order to realize their capabilities.

Mindful organizations invest in building experiences with **both of these techniques** because each of them improves distinct aspects of the adaptive capability of the organization

(Wildavsky, 1988).

15

OR is about organizational ability to anticipate

- R is the “capacity to cope with unanticipated dangers after they have become manifest, learning to bounce back” (Wildavsky, 1991, p. 77).
- OR potential “is more than mere survival; it involves identifying potential risks and taking proactive steps (...) to ensure that an organization thrives in the face of adversity” (Somers, 2013, p. 13).
- **Precursor resilience** “prevents budding problems from escalating into a full-blown crisis or breakdown” (Boin and Eeten, 2013, p. 431).
- R is “the incremental capacity of an organization to anticipate and adjust to the environment” (Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2015, p. 6)

16

Stop and think



Do you see any immediate challenges associated with this strategy?

“Anticipation can create a false sense of security and can compromise the coping ability of the organization” (Rerup, 2001).

17

Regardless of how mindful a social system is, it will **never be able to imagine, simulate, anticipate, and prepare** for every error or contingency in advance (March, 1995).

Stop and think



How to solve this dilemma?

“... the uncertainties are so substantial that **we cannot tell in advance** which, if any, among a multitude of hypothesized dangers will actually turn out to be real ones. ... **How**, then, with the best will and the brightest thinkers in the world, **can we know in advance** which dangers will really come about?” (Wildavsky 1988, p. 77).

18

OR is not only a cognitive activity involving anticipatory preparation but also a developmental process involving expansion of improvisation skills (Rerup, 2001). We have to **balance anticipation and resilience** (Wildavsky, 1988).

e.g., changing SOPs to increase efficiency

Resilience is produced by both «**exploiting**» old certainties (rules) and by «**exploring**» new alternatives.

e.g., changing organisational structure

(March 1991 cited by Rerup 2001)

* NB “**organisational ambidexterity**” refers to organization's ability to align and be efficient in its management of today's business demands while simultaneously be adaptive to changes in the environment (Duncan, 1976). It is about the ability of an organization to both explore and exploit. Ambidexterity leads to higher performance but at the same time it emphasises that the tension between two distinct capabilities is a key challenge.

19

Organizations should build **resilience potential**

✓ Anticipation capabilities help to identify potential risks and take proactive steps against them.

e.g., develop contingency plans

✓ Anticipation capabilities lead to the development of a **resilience potential**—that means “**resilience that is not presently evident or realized**” (Somers 2009, p. 13).

e.g., apply contingency plans in action

✓ However, organizations must also possess **coping capabilities** to realize their resilience potential. Resilient organizations must possess proactive capabilities (**resilience potential**) and reactive capabilities (**resilience realization**).

Researchers have also used the terms **capacity for resilience** (i.e. factors that increase the probability for resilience to be demonstrated) and **demonstration of resilience** (i.e. the actual demonstration of positive adaptation).

Britt and Sawhney (2020)

20

Putting together the three abilities ...

OR is “an organization’s ability

- to **anticipate** potential threats,
- to **cope** effectively with adverse events, and
- to **adapt** to changing conditions”

(Duchek, 2019, p. 6)



21

Stop and think



How do we distinguish resilient organizations from less resilient ones?

22

Resilience is an **outcome**

When organizations **perform well during crisis** or bounce back from interruptions (e.g., Horne and Orr 1998).

The most frequently mentioned attributes that may enhance OR include:

- ✓ general resources, i. e. adequate resources, redundancy, positive relationships;
- ✓ collective behaviors;
- ✓ specific organizational strategies or processes

One of the first and most important conceptualizations: Weick, 1993, The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster: identified 4 potential courses of R: improvisation and bricolage (i.e. construction), virtual role systems, an attitude of wisdom, and respectful interaction. These four principles facilitate collective sensemaking and, therefore, can help to avoid dramatic consequences from unexpected events.



“Good outcomes are not enough to define resilience”
(Sutcliffe and Vogus 2003, p. 108)

Stop and think



How does conceptualizing OR as and outcome limit us?

“Organizational resilience is **not a static attribute** that organizations either do or do not possess. It is a **path-dependent, latent set of capabilities** that organizations develop by noticing and correcting for maladaptive tendencies that help them to cope with unexpected circumstances”

(Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal, 2016, p. 1617)

Stop and think
What does this imply for our discussion?



25

Resilience is also a **process**

Process approaches are **based on different definitions** of OR and they therefore vary in the type and number of suggested process stages.

- Provide important **insights into the resilience construct**.
- Define discrete **elements of the resilience process** and thus contribute to opening the black box between resilience resources (inputs) and resilience outcomes (outputs).
- Recognize the **dynamic nature of resilience** and thus provide a foundation for studying the **long-term development** of organizational resilience.

An overarching process framework that highlights individual elements of the different resilience phases is lacking within this approach.

26

Resilience is further a set of **organizational capabilities**

- Offer important insight into **how resilience may be achieved** in practice.
- Provide insight into the **internal workings** of resilience and conditions for its development.
 - ✓ operational and strategic capabilities
 - ✓ general capabilities (eg. cognitive, behavioral, contextual) and organizational routines that trigger OR

Resilience capacity “is derived from a **set of specific organizational capabilities, routines, practices, and processes** by which a firm conceptually orients itself, acts to move forward, and creates a setting of diversity and adjustable integration” (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011, p. 245).

27

***How can we model
organizational
resilience?***

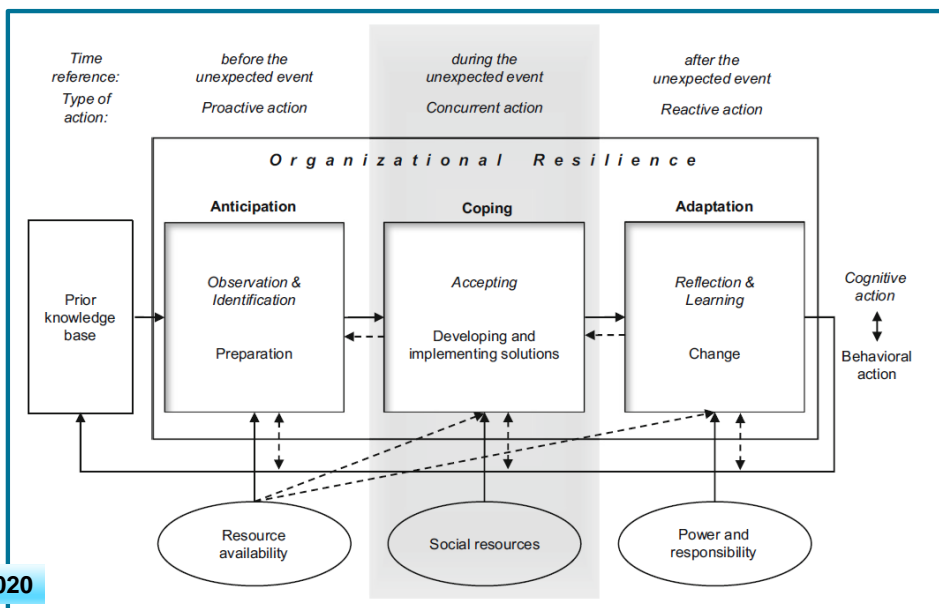
28

Why is it difficult to measure / model OR?

- Resilience is a dialectical phenomenon, a **unity of opposites** (Giustiniano et al, 2018).
- Resilience is **relative, emerging and changing** in line with specific circumstances and challenges: it is a **path-dependent** organizational feature that grows and develops over time (Boin, Comfort, and Demchak 2010 ; Sutcliffe and Vogus 2003; Gittell et al., 2006 ; Giustiniano et al, 2018, p. 130).
- OR is **dynamic** (Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2005), i.e. OR is not something that organizations have; it is **something that they express or fail to express over time**.
- Resilience is **often latent** in organization before the actual need for it arises (Somers, 2009).
- OR is a **“sustained target movement”** (Suryaningtyas D., et al. 2019). Construction of OR is **“a never-ending story”** (Giustiniano et al., 2018, p. 124).
- OR **cannot always be measured directly**, as its benefits may take a long time to become evident.

29

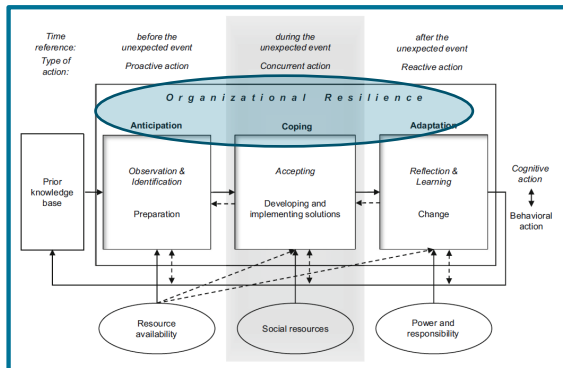
A capability-based conceptualization of OR



30

A capability-based conceptualization of OR

the three resilience stages



Duchek, 2020

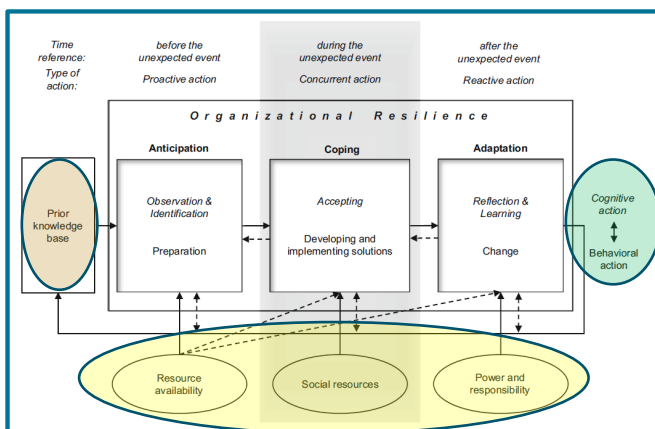
- ✓ builds on the 'resilience-as-a-process' perspective and combines it with the idea of resilience as a **unique blend of organizational capabilities and routines**;
- ✓ illustrates the main stages of the resilience process and points to underlying capabilities that together constitute OR;
- ✓ resilient organizations respond not only to the past (reactive action) or to current issues (concurrent action), but also to the future (anticipatory action);
- ✓ **anticipation**, **coping**, and **adaptation** are the three resilience stages.
- ✓ the three stages of the resilient process are based on organizational capabilities;

OR is a meta-capability consisting of a set of organizational capabilities/routines that allow for a successful accomplishment of the three resilience stages.

31

A capability-based conceptualization of OR

capabilities, antecedents and contextual factors



- ✓ the three resilience stages cannot be clearly separated. They show some **overlaps** and **build on each other**;
- ✓ organizations need to develop capabilities of all three resilience stages that together form the meta-capability of OR;
- ✓ successful completion of the three stages always depends on an interplay between **cognitive** and **behavioral capabilities** and actions;
- ✓ contextual factors (**drivers**: resources, social capital, and power and **antecedents**: knowledge base) are important to the successful accomplishment of the three resilience stages as well as the development of resilience capabilities.

32



Interplay between organisational resilience and safety culture



Development of resilient organisational capabilities through audits and organisational learning



A study of organisational resilience in municipal preparedness future climate change

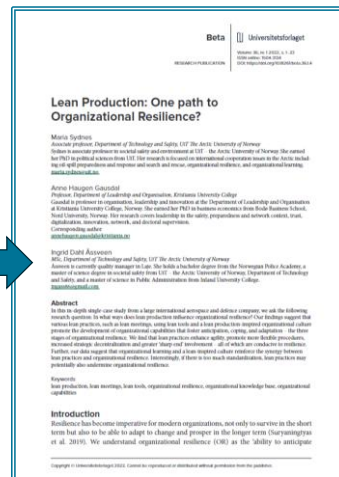


Learning as the driver of organisational resilience

33



Lean production and safety in the defence industry



34

Concluding remarks

- The concept of OR is complex and multidimensional and is still at its infancy.
- OR builds on the multi-faceted capabilities that an organization develops into routines and are influenced by a unique interaction and combination of strategic and operational factors.
- OR is **relative**. Organizations can only be more or less resilient; there is no absolute measure, definitive goal or single approach to enhance OR.
- OR is dynamic and has active nature.
- Resilience vs related constructs.

35

Resilience vs related constructs

- **Flexibility**: ability to rapidly adjust to environmental changes (Golden and Powell 2000)
- **Agility**: ability quickly to recognize opportunities, change direction, and avoid collisions (McCann 2004, p. 47)
- **Robustness**: ability of a system to maintain functions despite disruptions (Kitano 2004).
- **Reliability vs Resilience**: 'reliability' refers to a continuous strategy of protective shielding designed to create reliable systems, whereas 'resilience' is the ability of a system to absorb and bounce back if the protective shielding fails (Warrick 1982, 209).

36

Let's discuss: A global well-being problem

Task: you are working in (leading?) an organization that has experienced increased number of burnouts among the employees. You have to address the situation at systemic level to make your organization more resilient. Which measures will you focus on? Take as starting points the issues that we discussed during the lecture. Apply Duchek's framework.

You may have a look at:

[Not just surviving: Addressing burnout by building a thriving organisation : Resilient Organisations \(resorgs.org.nz\)](https://resorgs.org.nz)

Reports of rapidly rising burnout among the employees are an international phenomenon resorgs.org.nz



37

«Exit» ticket

1 min, in chat ...

What are your key lessons learned after this lecture?

✓ please mention at least 1 thing 😊.



38

Literature

- Duchek, S., 2020. Organizational resilience: a capability-based conceptualization, *Business Research*, 13, pp. 215–246.
- Klein, R. J. T., Nicholls, R. J., & Thomalla, F. (2003). Resilience to natural hazards: How useful is this concept? *Environmental Hazards*, 5 (1-2), 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hazards.2004.02.001>
- Sutcliffe, Kathleen M., and Timothy J. Vogus. 2003. Organizing for resilience. In *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*, ed. Kim Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn, 94–110. San Francisco: Berrett-Kehler.
- Somers, S. (2009), "Measuring resilience potential: An adaptive strategy for organizational crisis planning", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 17: 12–23.
- Ortiz-de-Mandojana, N. & Bansal, P. (2016), "The long-term benefits of organizational resilience through sustainable business practices", *Strategic Management Journal* 37, 1615–1631.
- Giustiniano, L., Clegg, S.R., Cunha, M. P., & Rego, A. (2018). Introduction to *Elgar Theories of Organizational Resilience*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786437044>
- Home, John F., and John E. Orr. 1998. Assessing Behaviors that Create Resilient Organizations. *Employment Relations Today* 24: 29–39.
- Linnenluecke, Martina K., Andrew Griffiths, and Monika Winn. 2012. Extreme weather events and the critical importance of anticipatory adaptation and organizational resilience in responding to impacts. *Business Strategy and the Environment* 21: 17–32.
- Lengnick-Hall, Cynthia A., and Tammy E. Beck. 2009. Resilience capacity and strategic agility: Prerequisites for thriving in a dynamic environment. In *Resilience engineering perspectives, Volume 2. Preparation and restoration*, ed. Christopher P. Nemeth, Erik Hollnagel, and Sidney Dekker, 39–70. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Lengnick-Hall, C.A., Beck, T.E. & Lengnick-Hall, M.L. (2011), "Developing a capacity for organizational resilience through strategic human resource management", *Human Resource Management Review* 21 (3), 243–255.
- Suryaningtyas, D., Sudiro, A., Eka, T.A. & Dodi, I.W. (2019), "Organizational resilience and organizational performance: examining the mediating roles of resilient leadership and organizational culture", *Academy of Strategic Management Journal* 18 (2), 1–7.
- de Bruijne, M., Boin, A. & van Eeten, M.J.G. (2010), "Resilience: exploring the concept and its meanings". In: L.K. Comfort, A. Boin & C. C. Demchak, eds., *Preparing for Extreme Events*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 13–33.
- Gittel, J.H., Cameron, K.S., Lim, S., & Rivas, V. (2006), "Relationships, layoffs, and organizational resilience", *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 42(3), 300–329.
- Rerup, C. (2001). "Houston we have a problem": Anticipation and improvisation as sources of organizational resilience", *Comportamento Organizacional e Gestão*, 7 (1), 21–44.
- Boin, A. & van Eeten, M.J.G. (2013), "The resilient organization", *Public Management Review* 15 (3): 429–445.
- Vogus, T. J. & Sutcliffe, K.M. (2007), "Organizational resilience: Towards a theory and research agenda." Paper presented at the IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man and Cybernetics (SMC 2007), Montréal, Canada, 7–10 October.
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2022). *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022: Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for a Resilient Future*. Geneva.

39

Thank you for your attention and best of luck with your further studies! 😊



40