
Organizational Resilience and Adaptation in a Time of Climatic and Financial Stress

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Background

- Mixed discipline background
 - BSc Human Geography
 - MSc Meteorology & Climatology
 - Incorporate the physical environment into economic geography
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Content

- Overview of research project
 - Examination of the concept of resilience
 - Research design
 - Potential methodological challenges
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Aims of the Research Project

- To understand transformation in a context of environmental tension;
 - To explore and identify the **environments** which organizations are situated within and are affected by.
 - To examine how an organization manages changes within its external environment and the methods of **adaptation** it may undertake.
 - To ascertain how **organizational resilience** is created and maintained.
 - To determine the **relationship** between resilience and adaptation, with specific consideration of the role of competitiveness.
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Literature

- The firm and its environment;
 - The environment as a static entity or shifting boundaries
 - Multiple environmental influences
 - Process of *isomorphism* (DiMaggio & Powell)
 - Knowledge and the role of *sensemaking* (Wieck)
 - Change within the organization;
 - Self transformation vs. evolution
 - Process of adaptation
 - Dynamic capabilities, path dependence, rigidity
 - Limits to adaptation
 - How does resilience manifest itself with multiple environments?
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The Concept of Resilience

Narrow view:

Resilience as the capacity to bounce back from a perturbation and recover to the original position

Wider view:

*Resilience as a positive adjustment to change.
Connects to concepts of organizational learning,
innovation and competitive advantage.*

Resilience – a process or a state?

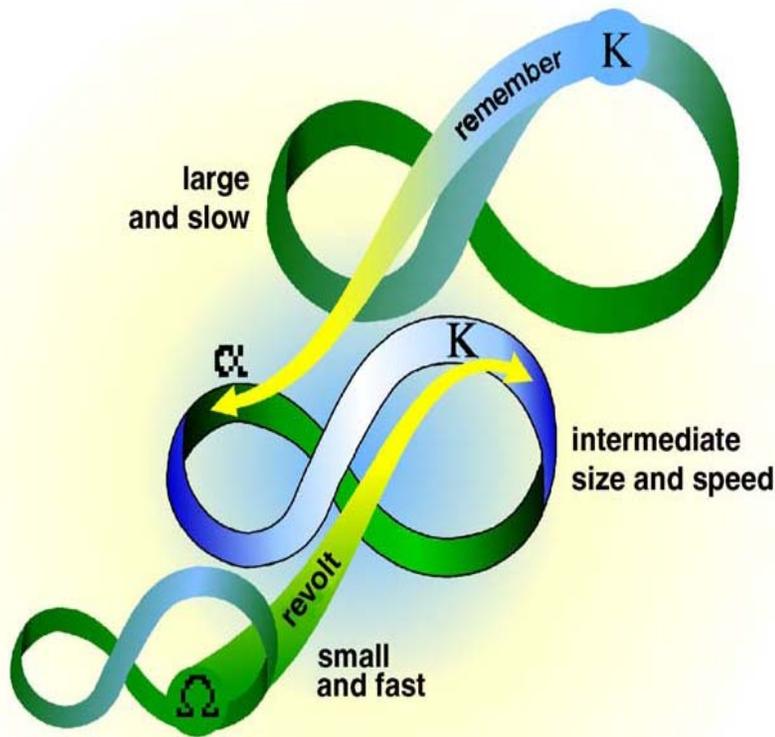


Fig. 1. (modified from Gunderson and Holling, 2002). Folke (2006)

Fig. 3. Nested hierarchy model of vulnerability Smit et al (2006)

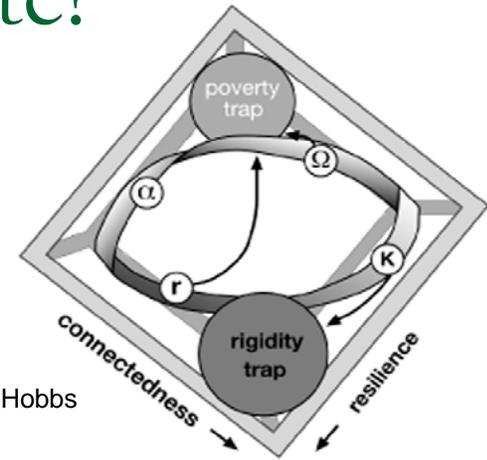
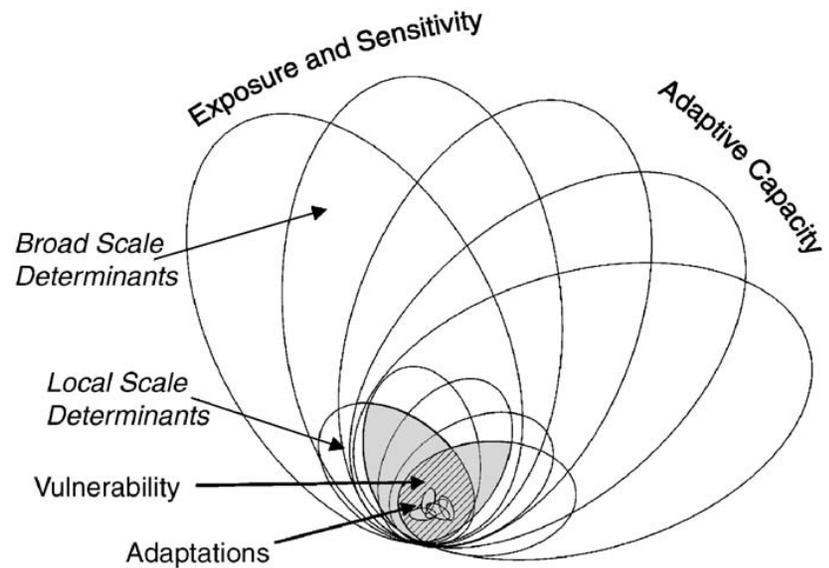
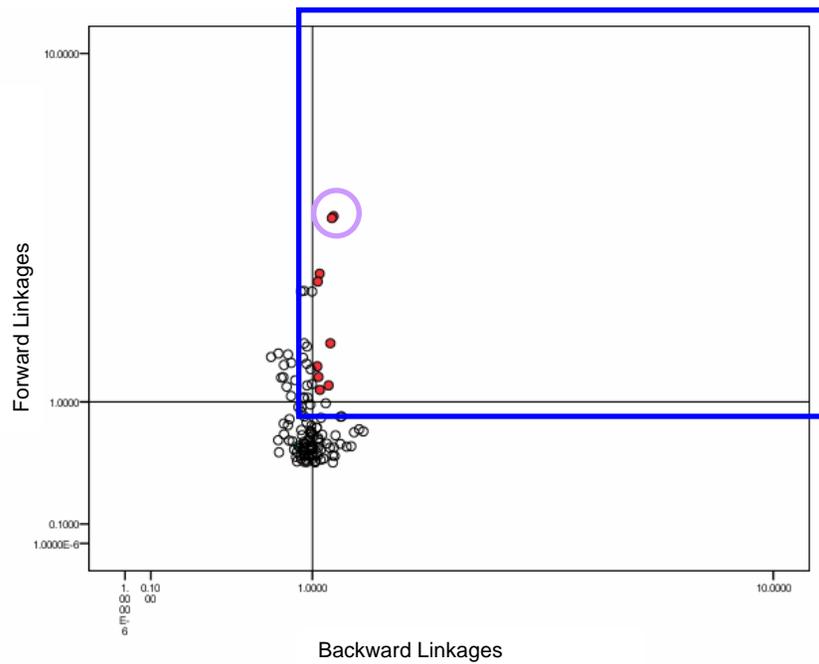


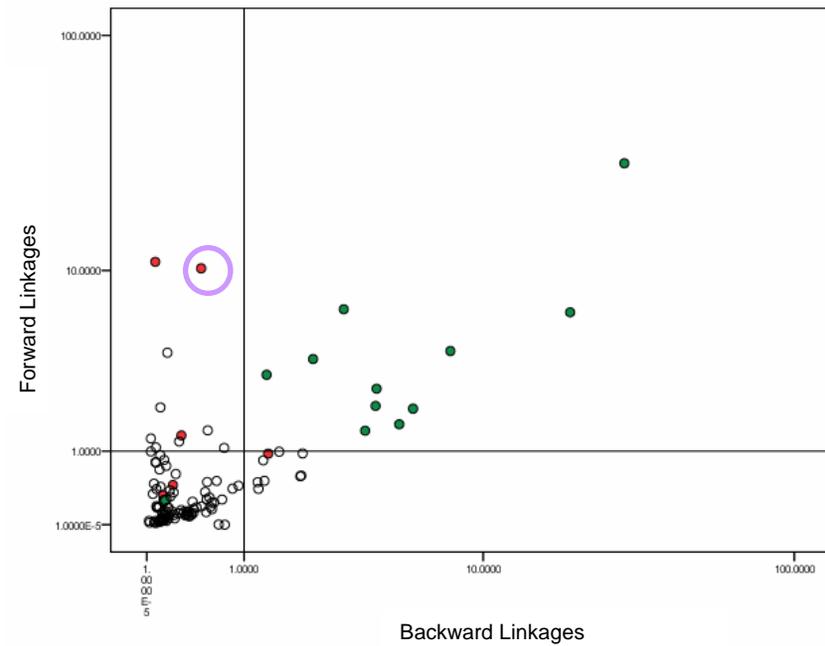
Fig. 2 Allison & Hobbs (2004)

Research Design

Research Design 1: Identification of Industrial Sector



Key Sector: Monetary Transactions



Key Sector: CO₂ Emissions

Industrial Sectors Identified

Indicator					
Economic Linkages	CO ₂ Emission Linkages	Water Use Linkages	Acid Rain Emission Linkages	Energy Use Linkages	Net VAT Registration
Wholesale	Transport	Agriculture	Energy Production	Business Services	Agriculture
Banking	Chemicals	Energy Production	Agriculture	Energy Production	Motor Vehicle
Agriculture	Metal Production	Wholesale	Wholesale	Agriculture	Retail
Energy Production	Agriculture	Ancillary Services	Transport	Wholesale	Transport
Construction	Energy production	Printing	Metal Production	Transport	Real Estate
Metal production		Health Services	Construction	Metal Production	Business Services
				Printing	
				Construction	
				Motor Vehicles	

Research Design 2: Background Research

- Interviews with industry specialists
 - Desk based research
 - Organizations identified through FAME database using credit and financial reviews
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Research Design 3: Case Study

Organizations

- 5-10 Case studies firms
 - Will attempt to target those firms both within the primary sector under study and also within the supply chain of the sector
 - Up to 10 interviews within each firm
 - Target cross-section of management hierarchy to identify tensions and changes implemented
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Potential Methodological Challenges

- Access
 - Bias
 - Firm agenda
 - Unwilling to talk about the environment
 - Disclosure of information
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Summary

- What is the research project?

To understand how multiple environmental influences affect the creation and maintenance of organizational resilience
 - Why is this important?

To understand how organizations manage and adapt to their environmental context
 - Why study now?

The economic downturn has revived the debate of organizational adaptation and comes at a time of increasing environmental pressure on the business unit
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Questions
