

# Preface and Acknowledgements

For most of the twentieth century there was considerable confidence that large-scale activities could help create more effective and more stable societies and companies. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and various problems associated with economic and political stability in the United States and the European Union have challenged this assumption. In fact, some of the most successful countries in terms of economic prosperity, quality of life, and human development are fairly small and rather homogenous. Among these are the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, and the Benelux countries. The bailouts of General Motors and a number of gigantic banks show that even very large companies may face cessation of operations. Factors such as innovation and adaptability are often as important for survival as financial resources. National economies and organizations may even become so large and complex that they are almost unmanageable. Two possible examples are the United Nations and the European Union.

*The Resilience Framework* describes the resiliency factors at companies and organizations that sustain them when they face crises—financial, managerial, and operational—and the characteristics that help them maintain their success over time. The book goes beyond the traditional perspective on organization resilience as the ability to avoid or recover from accidents and disasters. The reason for this is that it is not very common that catastrophic accidents determine the survival of companies and organizations. Of course, it is important to take actions intended to avoid accidents and disasters even though such actions cannot guarantee organizational survival.

The book also analyses why companies and organizations may fall into stagnation despite their previous achievements. These analyses are based on a new framework of organizational resilience that focuses on how financial, technical, and social resources can be combined to manage global, economic, and environmental challenges and to seize market opportunities. The book's claim is that a resilient organization needs to use such resources in order to strike a dynamic balance between reliability, efficiency, and change capacity. With this perspective, the book presents a new response to the classic question of how companies and organizations can achieve and maintain long-lasting success.

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