Crisis, Resilience and Communication in Organizations

by

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4th European Communication Conference

24-27 October, 2012, Istanbul, Turkey
Abstract

“Formally, resilience is the “capability of a system to maintain its function and structure in the face of internal and external changes and to degrade gracefully when it must,” Resilience occurs when the system continues to operate despite failures in some of its parts.”
(Weick & Sutcliff, 2007: 69)

A significant part of modern crises management and crisis communication research is based on a normative research tradition aiming at anticipating future crises and developing crisis management plans that fit the scenarios (cf. Johansen & Frandsen, 2007; Coombs, 2007). In recognition of the limitations of this approach and the organizations' inability to foresee all potential crises in a world of constant change, the concept of resilience is starting to gain ground in crisis studies (cf. Weick & Sutcliff, 2007; Somers, 2009; Powley, 2009). This increased interest in resilience can be traced back to a discussion initiated by Wildavsky (1988), concerning whether organizational crises is best handled proactively by anticipating and planning in relation to potential crises, or whether to work with the organization reactive abilities when the crisis has manifested itself. This discussion has not diminished its currency in light of the global financial crisis and the crisis rhetoric that follows, therefore, it is still discussed in scientific literature how crises are handled in the best possible way (cf. Weick & Sutcliff, 2007). Nevertheless, in literature, resilience is often taken for granted as a distinct characteristic of the organizational system which can be activated and used whenever necessary, with little reflection on how it got there in the first place. Thus the purpose of this paper is to investigate 1) which understanding of the phenomenon of resilience that characterizes the crisis field anno 2012, and 2) discuss the phenomenon of resilience from a communicational perspective.
Methodology

The study is designed as a combined content analysis and literature study, with the ambition of a systematic review of the research field. Data collection is performed on the English abstract and citation databases SciVerse Scopus and Web of Knowledge. The database Scopus is provided by Elsevier and the database indexes more than 17,500 peer-reviewed journals. The social sciences account for about 5,900 of the journals in the database. In addition to peer-reviewed articles the database contains over four million articles conference proceedings, making Scopus one of the largest abstract and citation database (SciVerse Scopus, 2012). The database selection criteria are anchored in input from Scopus Selection Advisory Board, consisting of researchers and librarians from all areas of scientific research and from different geographical areas. For a more thorough review of Scopus selection criteria see Kähler (2010). In addition to Scopus the abstract and citation database Web of Science, is also used as a supplement. Web of Science is provided by Thomson Reuters and indexes approx. 12,000 journals from natural science, social science and humanities (Thomson Reuters, 2012). Scopus and Web of Knowledge complement each other well, since the former can be said to focus on European journals (approx. 45 percent) while the latter weights American journals (Petersen & Kampf, 2011).

Different approaches to content analysis have been in play, especially for database searching process. Initially it was attempted with a method where resilience served as dependent variable, while crisis and all synonyms for crisis according to The Oxford paperback thesaurus (2006), served as independent variables. Nevertheless the 23 keywords led to a too complex query for the databases to honor it. Furthermore, there are differences in Web of Science and Scopus SciVerse search options, For example, in Scopus it is possible to search by keywords, which is not an option in the Web of Sciences database. Because of this diversity an adjusted search strategy that was applicable to both databases was used. In all its simplicity, the dataset for this article is based upon a relative simple, yet considered, search on resili* and cris* in the article title, combined with a delimitation to English-language peer-reviewed articles. Such a search results in 31 articles
on ScriVerse Scopus and 29 articles on the Web of Knowledge. When the two data sets are composed and doublets are removed, it results in a single dataset for a total of 41 articles, of these, nine articles were excluded because they did not contain an abstract. The title and abstract of the remaining 32 articles, which constitute the dataset, was then the subject field for a content analysis.

There are different approaches to a content analysis methodology and the field ranges from the qualitative content analysis where the aim is to understand a phenomenon to the quantitative content analysis, which aims to quantify qualitative data and thus make the data subject to statistical analysis. For the purposes of this article the source of inspiration is a conventional qualitative content analysis, where title and abstract of all articles are read as a starting point to create an overview. Then, each title and abstract was read individually to classify and code the articles. Then there is inductively generated categories, rooted in the articles (parts) and their relationship to the whole (Dey, 1993). The different encodings is thus not an expression of - or the operationalization of a theory, but the conceptualization of an emergent pattern of different understandings of resilience that characterize the data set. Nevertheless, the ambition of this article is greater than simply categorize the dataset into different categories according to characteristics. The purpose of this maneuver is to create categories and emphasize the distinct differences that exist across the different categories, which help toward the development of a vocabulary that is useful to create awareness and explain the different understandings of resilience at a different level of abstraction than the dataset independently provide (Elo & Gyngäs, 2007). Besides drawing up a typology to answer this article first research question, the content analysis is also used to support the literature and to select additional articles that serve as the basis for answering the article’s second research question.
Content Analysis - Conceptualization of a phenomenon

The total data set of 32 articles has been published in the period 1993 to 2011 and consists of 20 conceptual and 12 empirical contributions, divided, as illustrated in figure one. The various research areas represented in the dataset are numerous and include such distinct disciplines as economics, psychotherapy, ecosystems, political science and engineering. It appears from figure one above, that the concept of resilience, combined with some variation of the concept of crisis, is found more and more frequently used in peer-reviewed journal articles since 2007. Why this is the case can only be guessed at, but one possible explanation could exist in the global financial crisis. Several of the studies in the dataset treat economic systems in relation to economic crisis, but still the research fields represented in the data set is more diverse than just economics, why it is difficult to provide a clear answer.

In the overall analysis of the data set, there are examples where resilience understood in relation to political and economic systems resilience against economic crises (cf. Wringley & Dolega, 2011; Aiginger, 2009; Fay & Nordhaug, 2002; de Azevedo, 2009), furthermore there are examples of resilience in relation to organizations (cf. Powley, 2009; Somers, 2009; Edward, 2004) and individuals (cf. Braverman, 1993; Riolli et. al., 2002; Frederickson et. al., 2003). These multiple purposes indicate that resilience can be understood at different levels. Nevertheless, it is difficult to level divide the articles because each article can operate at different levels in the same article, regarding how resilience is understood in the very same article. As exemplified in the quote below:
“Authors emphasize that resiliency begins in the individual, as it should; however, obligation, beyond self, allows one to appreciate resiliency as essential to community recovery.”

(Burkle, 2011:1)

The above quote exemplifies the dilemma; it appears explicitly in the article’s abstract that the article discusses resilience at a community level. Yet resilience is understood ambiguous as a phenomenon that operates at both the individual and at a societal level (Burkle, 2011). Thus there are implications associated with the level splitting of the various abstracts in the dataset, because shades of the individual contributions can be lost in such a subdivision. Nevertheless, it can still be argued that resilience is understood at different levels in the dataset, where for example the resilience phenomenon in 12 of the articles is understood in relation to or as arising from human actors. At the same time 20 of the articles in the dataset understand the phenomenon of resilience in relation to, or based on what can be categorized as a system. If we elaborate a little on the two levels, the following can be said to be true:

- **Individual level**: Articles where the resilience phenomenon is understood in relation to one or more individuals. This may relate to an individual’s personal resilience in relation to a critical incident (cf. Sells et. al., 2009) or initiatives that contribute to the creation of resilience among one or more individuals (cf. Berger & Lahad, 2010).

- **System level**: Articles where the phenomenon of resilience is not understood in relation to one or more people, but in relation to objectified entities, such as a supply chain (Jüttner & Maklan, 2011), an organization structure (Somers, 2009) or a political and economic systems (cf. Borchert & Mattoo, 2010).

An interesting note in extension of the splitting of the dataset into levels is that despite the fact that there are 12 articles at the individual level and 20 at the system level, the empirical research distributes evenly in the two levels with six publications within each level.

From a holistic perspective it makes sense to differentiate the dataset based on level. This kind of differentiating is not an option in relation to an analysis of the different ways the phenomenon of resilience
is understood in the data set. It is important to emphasize that the understanding of resilience is far from clear in the various titles and abstracts, either across or within each article. Resilience can in one abstract be understood as the systems adaptability in relation to an incident; while it also is understood as the resistance of the same system in, relation to the same event, in the same abstract (Wringley & Dolega, 2011). Nevertheless, adaptability and resistance are not necessarily mutually exclusive understanding of a phenomenon. A system’s ability to adapt may be what makes the system exhibits resistance in relation to the previously mentioned incident.

That the concept of resilience has different connotations, assumed to be a purely linguistic premise because resilience is an ambiguously concept that arising from biology and the ecosystems capacity for self-production and self-preservation and then later on is transferred to the social sciences among others (Wildavsky, 1988; Walker & Cooper, 2011). The concept resilience can act as synonym for springiness, elasticity, survivability and robustness. That the concept is rooted in biology and natural science disciplines can be seen when resilience is used as a synonym for robustness and/or elasticity which refers to properties of a material. Therefore, it is expected that resilience is used and understood in different ways in different abstracts. Nevertheless, there are also some common elements for the understanding of resilience across the data set, as will be evident, when resilience is understood in the context of the abstract as a whole.

There is, as mentioned, different understandings of the word resilience itself, but there can also be said to exist various assumptions of what constitutes the phenomenon understood as resilience in each study. These are influenced by the context in which resilience as a phenomenon is understood in each article abstract. For example, when resilience is understood in relation to political regimes ability to withstand a financial crisis, relative to other regimes forms, the implicit argument is that it is the historical and current
design of the institutionalized system that creates the resiliency of the system. As exemplified in the quote below:

“This paper shows that Malaysia's hybrid approach to authoritarianism has been most resilient, Indonesia's harder authoritarian rule was most brittle, and Thailand's democratic politics displayed an intermediate level of sturdiness, hence delaying - but not preventing - their breakdown.”

(Case, 2009: 1)

Thus it is not the word resilience, which is interesting and is the subject of this analysis, but the explicit and implicit assumptions about the characteristics of resilience that exist in each abstract as a whole, that is the subject field for this analysis - that is how the phenomenon understood. As mentioned in the methodology section each abstract is analyzed from an open coding strategy in which each abstract is subject to a content analysis. As an example of this process, the abstract quoted above is used and the analytic treatment of this is illustrated in the table (1) below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“After the Crisis: Capital and regime resilience in the ASEAN Three” (Case, 2009:1)</td>
<td>Resilience understood as the system’s resilience relative to other alternatives</td>
<td>Resilience as a system’s resilience relative to other systems relies on the historical and current design of the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A decade after the Asian financial and economic crisis, assessments can be made about the varying capacities of different political regimes to withstand economic shocks” (Case, 2009:1)</td>
<td>The system’s ability to withstand economic shock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This paper shows that Malaysia’s hybrid approach to authoritarianism has been most resilient, Indonesia’s harder authoritarian rule was most brittle, and Thailand’s democratic politics displayed an intermediate level of sturdiness, hence delaying - but not preventing - their breakdown” (Case, 2009:1)</td>
<td>The characteristics of the different systems are causal explanation of the degree of resilience in the system relative to alternative systems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“However, this paper argues also that in trying to explain these varying amounts of resilience, it is not enough to examine the institutions and procedures of which regimes are composed. Instead, in taking a political economy approach, attention is given to prior patterns of capital ownership involving the state, indigenous tycoons, ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs and foreign investors” (Case, 2009:1)</td>
<td>The historical and incremental development serving as additional explanation reason for why a system is more resilient than the alternatives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Illustration of the analysis process
This analytical approach is applied to all abstracts in the data set, in order to ensure a structured and systematic analytical approach to the various abstract constituting the data set, while still maintaining a degree of transparency and anchoring in the dataset. The analysis results in a number of understandings of the resilience phenomenon, which can be assembled in fewer and broader understanding categories that can help to describe the different understanding of the phenomenon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Design   | "Supply chain risk effect and knowledge management seem to enhance the Supply chain resilience by improving the flexibility, visibility, velocity and collaboration capabilities of the supply chain." (Jüttner & Maklan, 2011) | Arrangement of the system processes results in a number of effects, which increase the degree of resilience in the system. | Resilience as something a system structural can be designed into | Hills, 2000  
Krane, 2002  
Fay & Nordhaug, 2002  
Anderies, 2006  
Boin & McConnell, 2007  
Crouse Quinn, 2008  
de Azevedo, 2009  
Aiginger, 2009  
Case, 2009  
Burkel, 2011  
Gasparini et. al., 2011  
Walker & Cooper, 2011  
Schlüter & Herrfahr-Pähle, 2011  
Jüttner & Maklan, 2011  
Nemeth et. al., 2011  
Wringley & Dolega, 2011 |
| Latent   | "When external events disrupt the normal flow of organizational and relational routines and practices, an organization’s latent capacity to rebound activates to enable positive adaptation and bounce back” (Powley, 2009) | Resilience as a latent property of the (social) system, which can be activated in the event of a critical incident. | Resilience as something that exists latent in the organization and which are activated spontaneously by an event. Resilience belonging to the system. | Somers, 2009  
Zelený, 2010  
Johnson & Luna, 2011  
Powley, 2009 |
| Relational | "Shared beliefs and narratives that foster a sense of coherence, collaboration, competence, and confidence are vital for the development of adaptation and coping strategies.” (Walsh, 1996) | Common understanding, narratives and opinion is vital for the development of adaptation and coping strategies. | Resilience as a social phenomenon, related to sensemaking at the individual and the intersubjective level. | Walsh, 1996  
Namysłowska, 2001  
Walsh, 2003  
Sells et. al., 2009  
Berger & Lahad, 2010 |
Mediational analyses showed that positive emotions experienced in the wake of the attacks - gratitude, interest, love, and so forth - fully accounted for the relations between (a) precrisis resilience and later development of depressive symptoms and (b) precrisis resilience and postcrisis growth in psychological resources.” (Fredrickson et. al., 2003)

| Traits | Resilience as psychological ability to withstand critical incidents. | Resilience as an individual characteristic qua different personal characteristics and emotions, which can be argued to be more or less deterministic. | Braverman & Paris, 1993  
Riolli et. al., 2002  
Frederickson et. al., 2003  
Pillai, 2004  
Edward, 2005  
Lating & Bono, 2008  
Borchert & Mattoo, 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|

Table 2 – Placing abstracts in broader categories

Table two above illustrates the broad understanding categories and illustrates examples of an analysis sequence from each category. It is in this context relevant to stress that one indicator alone cannot justify an understanding category, and there are often several indicators within each abstract, as exemplified in table one. At the same time, it takes more than just one abstract to justify a broad understanding category. As shown in table two above, the various abstracts distributes fairly evenly across the four different resilience understandings, however, with most of the normative design category.

**Developing the resilience typology**

Anchored in the two parameters (level and understanding of the resilience phenomenon) it becomes possible to set up an ideal-typical typology of resilience, as illustrated in table three below. As shown in the previous table two there can be said to exist four different understandings, that characterizes resilience in the data set. These understandings of the phenomenon can be placed in a typology based on whether each study is at an actor or a system level and whether the nature of resilience is understood to be a feature of the actor or the system - or as a function of various aspects of the actor or the system. The four understandings are in this article called traits, relational, latent and design and the four understandings distribution at the above dimensions is illustrated in table three below.
Resilience as feature | Resilience as funktion
---|---
**Actor level** | 
Traits: resilience as personal characteristics of the individual | Relational: Resilience as a function of social interaction

**System level** | 
Latent: Resilience as embedded in a system. | Design: Resilience as a result of system design

Table 3 - Typology of resilience understandings

In addition to summarize the four different ways in which the resilience phenomenon is understood in the data set, the typology can also be used to reflect upon the basic assumptions the phenomenon of resilience is associated with in the dataset. A more detailed description of the four categories emphasizes differences and similarities between the different understandings of resilience:

- The understanding of resilience as traits, can be said to focus at the individual level and the phenomenon of resilience is understood at being closely linked with the personal characteristics of an individual. These characteristics may be more or less deterministic, in the sense that the field range from a pathological genetic understanding that women are more resilient than men (Rutter, 1985) to the understand that resilience is dependent on positivity, self-esteem, optimism, extroversion and so forth (a Riolli. al., 2002; Frederickson et. al., 2003; Edward, 2005). This understanding of resilience can be related to the traits discipline in management research (Lynch, 2006).

- The relational understanding of resilience also centers about individuals, but include the social context as a parameter and potential resource in relation to the creation of resilience. The focus is therefore not on individual traits alone, but on a unit or group of individuals’ functional behavior in relation to creating inter-subjective meaning and understanding in the event of a critical incident (Walsh, 1996; Walsh, 2003). Thereby the context and subjectivity of the individual is included as parameter in relation to how resilience is understood, and the approach can be related to process
and interpretation oriented research disciplines, such as sensemaking (Weick, 1988). Thus resilience is in this view not seen as a universal condition of an individual, but as a continuous process or meaningful negotiation in relation to a crisis and with the possibility of different outcomes of success or failure.

- The focus of latent understanding of resilience can be said to exist in after resilience in the face of a critical event or incident has occurred. Thus focusing on how the system returns to a normal state of affairs. The nature of resilience thus has a less central role and is assumed to be embedded or latent existing in a system. The ambition of the latent resilience understanding is the descriptive description of how resilience unfolds after an incident and not how it is created in relation to the incident. The understanding can be related to the system theoretical concept of autopoiesis that explains how the social system can be viewed as being self-referential and a system that reproduces itself (Luhmann et. al., 2005). Based on the assumption that a crisis can be divided into a before, during and after phase (Johansen & Frandsen, 2007), it is the crisis after-phase, which is the subject of research in the latent understanding of resilience - that is how the system builds its functionality after the crisis.

- The design understanding can be said to be the normative understanding of resilience at a system level. The basic assumption in the design understanding of resilience, is that resilience as a state can be achieved through an appropriate arrangement of for example organizational structure (Somers, 2009), work-processes (Jüttner & Maklan, 2011) or a macro systems (Case, 2009). The design understanding of resilience can be related to disciplines such as business process engineering, classical organization theory and macroeconomics, whose normative ideal is to develop the optimal way to organize an area or system, that are all other ways of organizing within that area or system superior.

Based on the above discussion and the different understandings represented in the different categories of the typology, it appears that there is a fairly distinct difference as to in resilience is seen as something that
exists objectively out in the field, or whether it is viewed as a social or structural product. The different perceptions are also of importance when a resilience understanding to operationalize at an organizational level. In principle, it can be postulated that the ideal of a resilient organization viewed from the perspective of the trait-understanding of resilience, is a staff policy issue as to recruit staff with the right characteristics. When the organization purely consists of what can be characterized as resilient people, the organization will as a consequence be resilient. Both research and practice recognizes that reality is more complex than this and several factors come into play, therefore the typology can help to create reflexivity in relation to understanding the phenomenon of resilience from several different perspectives. Thus the typology has more far-reaching application than the dataset from which it originates. The typology indicates the ontological and epistemological assumptions that form the basis for the individual study in the data set and the associated theoretical apparatus, but the typology is also useful for categorization of future works. Furthermore, the typology helps to emphasize the differences that exist in the four approaches to and understanding of resilience, thereby allowing the researcher to take different positions and create a more nuanced understanding of resilience in a potential study. Nevertheless, it is also important to stress that the establishment of a typology - the placing various research contributions in boxes - reduced complexity of certain works, why the typology should be view as being an ideal-typical typology.

It is not inconceivable that actor created resilience, rather than having to be viewed as either traits or relational, should be seen as a phenomenon that exists in the combination of these two understandings. A significant part of the research in traits understanding of resilience emphasizes also the importance of good social relations, when an individual is facing a crisis or adversity (Rutter, 1985; Walsh, 1996 and Walsh, 2003). Assuming that an individual possesses certain subjective qualities which distinguish the individual from others in terms of ability and expression, it alone is not enough to guarantee resilience in all conceivable situations. It is rather how the subject is able to use these qualities in relation to a specific social and material context, i.e. to experience context and relate to the world. In addition, it is difficult to
distinguish the understanding of latent perceptions of resilience, since the social dimension also plays a major role in this understanding, just from a more holistic perspective and as something that exists embedded in the system (Powley, 2009).

**Unfolding resilience definitions**

Following the above discussion, it seems reasonable to explore the very definition of the phenomenon of resilience within each level of the typology. It appeared above that far from each abstract in the data set defines the phenomenon, however there does exist definitions which may be useful to illustrate the different definitions within the each of the four resilience understandings and still illustrate the convergence there exist between the four different understandings of resilience.

Taking the actor level where resilience is viewed as a feature of the actor, as a starting point, Edward (2005) has developed an interesting study of resilience amongst crisis care mental health clinicians, where resilience is defined as follows:

“For the purpose of this research, the term 'resilience' was defined as the ability of an individual to bounce back from adversity and persevere through difficult times, and return to a state of internal equilibrium or a state of healthy being” (Edward, 2005:1)

As shown in the above quotation the definition focuses on the individual abilities of the subject, in relation to to overcome adversity and make it through a difficult situation in a reasonable way, which means an end situation that is not significantly different than before the adverse situation manifested itself. The study results in five exhaustive descriptions that characterize the individuals from the study and which help to make them resilient. These were “The team is a protective veneer to the stress of the work; Sense of self; Faith and hope; having insight; and Looking after yourself” (Edward, 2005:1). Thus the study operated with
individual characteristics that exist in the non-deterministic end of the spectrum which characterizes the traits understanding of resilience.

Then turning to the relational understanding of resilience in the typology, Walsh (1996) in a conceptual paper defines the concept of resilience as such: “The concept of resilience, the ability to withstand and rebound from crisis and adversity” (Walsh, 1996:1). According to Walsh’s definition, this, like Edward’s definition, centers on the ability to withstand and return to some kind of normal state after a crisis or emergency. Nevertheless, the focus on the individual subject is removed in this definition, which can be explained by the focus of the papers interest, which are family therapy and the family is in this context viewed upon as a functional unit. Thus the starting point is not characteristics of an individual subject, but the interactional processes over time that can contribute to strengthen both individual hardiness and the hardiness of the functional unit (Walsh, 1996). That is why this understanding is at the actor level and with an understanding of the nature of resilience as a function of human actions.

Moving away from the actor level in the typology, which characterized the two definitions above, the next definition, is placed on the system level and with an understanding of the nature of resilience as being something that characterize the system. The understanding of resilience as a latent capacity of a system is defined by Powley (2009) in a study of a shootout at a business school, as such:

“When external events disrupt the normal flow of organizational and relational routines and practices, an organization’s latent capacity to rebound activates to enable positive adaptation and bounce back”

(Powley, 2009: 1)

As is apparent from the above definition resilience is to be understood as a latent capacity in the system which performs a specific function in relation to change in the environment of the organization. I can be said that the definition above and the definition of resilience provide by Weick and Sutcliff (2007) in the
papers introduction are quite similar. Nevertheless, this definition, in similarity with the three previous definitions from the dataset, focus on the ability to rebound/bounce back to what can be characterize as a normal state after a disruption.

In the fourth and final understanding, the design-understanding from the typology, which operates on the system level and with a view of resilience as something that is created through an appropriate design of the system, there are no examples of a definition in the data set. This is probably due to resilience often is used as a synonym for robustness and flexibility of the system within this understanding. The idea of the above unfolding of resilience definitions is to concretize what resilience is all about, but also to emphasize that despite the difference in the level-perspective or the nature of the phenomenon, that the various studies impose on the phenomenon of resilience, there are still convergence around what the resilience phenomenon should try to explain in relation to adversity and crisis.

After the development of the above typology, as an attempt to categorize resilience in a clear way and illustrate the various resilience understanding which characterizes the research field anno 2012, the article first research question is considered to be answered. Moving on to the articles part II, that seeks to explore the second research question of this paper - discuss the phenomenon of resilience from a communicational perspective. This part will be based on a resilience understanding, which is inspired by the understanding of resilience that the typology categorized as relational resilience.

The cosmology episode and Resilience

Resilience may, as shown in the typology developed above, be understood from different understandings. These understandings can also be said to have different focus in relation to the anatomy of a crisis.
If we assume that a crisis can be divided into several phases, such as a pre-crisis phase a crisis phase and a post-crisis phase (Johansen & Frandsen, 2007), then the different understandings of the phenomenon of resilience gains ground in the various phases of the cycles of a crisis. For example, it is probably not during the crisis that an organization changes the design process or organizational structure, but rater before the crisis to prepare or alternatively in the aftermath of a crisis, based on the experience and the learning the crisis has led to in the organization. Likewise is the case with latent resilience, in which, as argued in the typology, the focus is on after the crisis has manifested itself and how the organization returns to "business as usual" (Powley, 2009). The traits approach can be said to be relevant through all phases of the crisis, but not least the relational resilience understanding from the typology, can be said to be the understanding of resilience which focus on the resilience phenomenon as the crisis situation unfolds and manifest itself. The relational understanding of resilience, as mentioned above, is characterized by the understandings focus in the way in which individuals in a unit 1) relate to the life world, enact and thus actively acts as co-creator of own reality, and 2) how subjective and intersubjective meaning is created in that same reality.

Following the two characteristics of relational resilience, the interpretive approach that characterizes organizational communication act as an exciting communication approach in relation to discussing the phenomenon of resilience from a communication perspective. This is because “interpretivts focus on the subjective, intersubjective and socially constructed meanings of organizational actors” (Putnam, 1983: 8). Thus it’s focus on the interpersonal social dimension of organizational life (Zorn, 2009), which is in line with the focus that exist in the nature of the relational resilience understanding.

In addition the organizational communications principle about communication constitutes organization (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009) provides a potential explanatory framework in relation to how individuals in communicating actively create the organizational reality (enact) as specified below:
“Communication acts on the world; it is a social practice alive with potential. Not “mere” talk or transmission, it (re)produces and alters current realities. In a constitutive model, then the primary question is one of influence and possibility: How does communication constitute the realities of organizational life?”
(Ashcraft et. al., 2009:5)

At the same time, the very way in which individuals make sense of their world through communication is a central theme in the interpretive tradition of organizational communication (Putnam, 1983: 31). Thus, there exists an overlap between the features that characterize relational resilience and the interpretive approach to communication that characterizes the organizational communication as an academic tradition.

Within the field of crisis communication and crisis management, organizational communication is represented in general but in the shape of the crisis-sensemaking tradition in particular (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010). The crisis-sensemaking tradition can be said to consist of two different streams, one whose research interest is in sensemaking as it unfolds during the manifestation of a crisis (cf. Weick, 1988 & Weick, 1993), and one in which the research interest is the sensemaking processes as it unfolds in the aftermath of a crisis (cf. Shrivastava et. al., 1988). Crisis is in the crisis-sensemaking literature defined in different ways, however the notion of crisis defined as a cosmological episode takes a prominent position within the internal crisis management and crisis communications literature in general and in the crisis-sense-making tradition in particular (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Jacobsen & Simonsen, 2011; Johansen et. al., 2012). The cosmological episode is defined as such:

“A cosmology episode occurs when people suddenly and deeply feel that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system. What makes such an episode so shattering is that both the sense of what is occurring and the means to rebuild that sense collapse together”
(Weick 1993: 663)

As is apparent from the above definition, a crisis is from the definition of a cosmology episode understood as the collapse of sense among individuals. Furthermore such crisis definition is characterized by the understanding that the resources to rebuild this sense are not present in the situation. So the cosmology
episode describes the specific situation in which the individual leaves the cognitive schema, that functions as the basic of subjective causal relationships in a life-world context, and is used as a premises for the being in the situation. Thus the cosmological episode describes the time of a crisis, when individuals leave earlier expectations for the outcome of the situation and are in a situation of total uncertainty (Sellnow & Seeger, 2009).

The very nature of the cosmological episodes makes such a crisis definition relevant in the discussion of resilience, in the sense that the cosmology episode operates with a definition of crisis that describes the very manifestation of the crisis for the individual, and not just the technical specifications of the crisis as being low probability/high consequence events that threatens the organization basic assumptions (Weick, 1988) or “...a disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions, its subjective sense of self, its existential core” (Pauchant & Mitroff 1992: 12). The Resilience phenomenon in general, can be considered to be useful to crises in organizational contexts (Weick & Sutcliff, 2007; Powley, 2009), and relational resilience in relation to the manifestation of crisis in particular (Weick, 1993; Walsh, 1996; Walsh, 2003).

If resilience is related to a crisis defined as a cosmological episode, there are several suggestions as to and how resilience can be manifested. A very clear way to define resilience compared to a cosmology episode could be arguing that the cosmology episode would never appear, that is resilience is the phenomenon that occurs when a crisis does not include a cosmological episode. So something like”...resilience is defined as the ability of individuals to bounce back from a critical situation and not end in a cosmology episode” in this case, then the phenomenon of resilience will refer to the proactive dimension of the crisis, thus it can be described as a phenomenon occurring in the pre-phase of a crisis (Weick & Sutcliff, 2007). Nevertheless, the resilience phenomenon has, as mentioned above, impact on all crisis phases and relational resilience relates specifically to the inter-subjective sensemaking formation process, that is the phase of the crisis can
be characterized as the cosmological episode. In such a context resilience is about reestablishing meaning in a situation where it has collapsed and the immediate resources to establish this meaning is not present. So resilience can be defined in comparison to a cosmology episode as “The ability to reestablish meaning after it has collapsed so the universe yet again to some degree seems like a rational orderly system. Even though the conditions to reestablish this sense of what is occurring is challenged by the conditions of the present situation.”

Further research and concluding remarks

This article has presented a resilience-typology based upon a content analysis of the title and abstract of 32 peer-reviewed journal articles in the databases Scopus and Web of Sciences. The article present four different understandings of the phenomenon of resilience, titled traits, relational, latent and design understandings of resilience. Furthermore the article unfolds the different yet convergent definitions of resilience from the different understanding within the typology, and discusses one of these understanding and definitions from the perspective of organizational communication. Inspired by organizational communication and the crises-sensemaking tradition the articles discuss the concept of relational-resilience and argues a preliminary definition of the concept as opposed to the notion of a cosmology episode (Weick, 1993).

The idea of resilience as the opposed to a cosmological episode raises different questions relevant for future research. First, it is interesting to explore the paradox that exists in the collapses of sense and the fact that the resources to rebuild this sense are not present. Is this the case of prophecy of doom for those individuals who experience a cosmological episode or does there exist actual possibilities for action in spite of these two factors that characterize a cosmology episode.
If action is a possibility, what characterize such an action? In that sense has collapsed, any action could potentially be characterized as an improvised action since the effect of the action for the individual will not be possible to foresee or calculate, because the world do not act as an rational orderly system for the individual. An improvised action may in this respect be understood as individuals' ability to act in uncertainty, but with knowledge and experience repertoires as ballast (Rerup, 2001). That is to say, that in a situation where sense have collapsed, then resilience can consist in the action and enactment of the environment. The initiating questions in continuation of this must therefore be whether the improvised action can facilitate the resources needed in relation to once again rebuild the sense in the cosmological episode. The theory of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) indicate such a possibility, but a definitive answer must be unexplored for now.

The existing several implications and opportunities for future research in imposing the phenomenon of resilience to the crisis definition characterized as a cosmological episode. In addition, the field organizational communication and crises-sensemaking can act as an exciting optics in relation to understand, how meaning can be rebuilt after a collapse in a situation where the resources for this reconstruction is challenged or non-existent.
Reference


Rerup, C. (2001). Houston, we have a problem: Anticipation and improvisation as sources of organizational resilience. *Comporamento Organizacionale E Gestão*, 7(1), 27- 44


**Internet sources**


Appendix 1 – Dataset


