



www.ijccr.org · ISSN: 1325-9547

Didier, R. (2022). Dimensions of organizational resilience in a local currency association: An analysis based on the Florain during the first Covid-19 lockdown. *International Journal of Community Currency Research* 26(2), 36-51. <https://doi.org/10.15133/j.ijccr.2022.006>

This article is published under a *Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International* (CC BY-NC-SA): <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0>



© The Author(s), 2022



International Journal of Community Currency Research

VOLUME 26 (2, 2022) 36-51

DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN A LOCAL CURRENCY ASSOCIATION: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON THE FLORAIN DURING THE FIRST COVID- 19 LOCKDOWN

Raphaël Didier

PhD, Temporary Teaching and Research Fellow (ATER) in economics, University of Lorraine, BETA laboratory (UMR University of Lorraine, University of Strasbourg, CNRS, BETA, 54000, Nancy, France). E-mail: raphael.didier@univ-lorraine.fr

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we investigate the dimensions of organizational resilience of a French local currency management association in the face of a shock. Our study focuses on the local currency of the Nancy area, the Florain, which suffered a sudden halt of exchanges during the first lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic (March 17, 2020 to May 11, 2020). We highlight that, like other organizations, the organizational resilience of the Florain's management association stems from dimensions linked to its structure. However, we must add a territorial dimension specific to local currencies, which relates to the relations that the management association maintains with the geographical and political territory in which the local currency circulates.

KEYWORDS

Local currency, Covid-19, lockdown, organizational resilience, analysis grid, territory, catchment area.

1. INTRODUCTION

The singularity of the crisis linked to Covid-19 is not so much that it is a major economic and social crisis (Heyer and Timbeau, 2020) following a global health crisis, but rather that it results from the will of governments to stop part of the production in the name of the higher interest of human life. In this way, the economist's conceptual tools for analyzing the effects of an economic crisis on organizations (companies, associations, territories, national economy, etc.) are difficult to use as they stand (Boyer, 2020). The effects of the first lockdown are very different according to the French regions, the sectors of activity (Guerini, Nesta, Ragot and Schiavo, 2020) and the types of organizations (administrations, SMEs, large companies, associations). Emerging from this Covid-19 recession therefore depends on the resilience of organizations and, in particular, of the associations that are the subject of this article.

The ability of organizations to react and overcome this new kind of economic crisis invites us to mobilize the psychological concept of individual resilience (Cyrułnik and Jorland, 2012), and to extend it to organizations. Weick (1993) defines the resilience of a smokejumpers team, mobilized during the famous Mann Gulch fire, as its ability to maintain a system of organized actions in the face of an unusual or dangerous situation, where the individuals in the organization lose their bearings and are consequently unable to make sense of events. Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) analyzed the fundamental principles that high reliability organizations (hospital emergency rooms, nuclear power plants...) must implement to anticipate crises and react effectively to any unforeseen event. Bégin and Chabaud (2010) continue the path opened by Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) by analyzing the organizational resilience of a family business in three closely interrelated stages: the ability to absorb the shock, the ability to create new solutions, and the ability to learn from shocks.

According to Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2009), organizational resilience is characterized by its multidimensionality. We propose to classify them into four main dimensions: reflexive (learning from the crisis, reflection on the context...), communicative (interactions between members, public announcements...), creative (implementation of solutions to overcome the crisis), and organizational (members' responsibilities, governance...). In the case where it is difficult to directly analyze the dimensions of an organization's resilience, the analysis grid of Bégin and Chabaud (2010) can be a very rich operational tool for bringing out the underlying dimensions of organizational resilience, regardless of the nature of the organization (government agencies, SMEs, large companies, associations).

We will therefore use it to study the dimensions of organizational resilience in an association that manages a local currency, since to our knowledge no such work has yet been done. We will take as our starting point the first lockdown in France (March 17, 2020 to May 11, 2020), which was a shock for the Florain, a local currency in the Nancy area created in 2017. Indeed, as the Florain only exists in paper form for the time being, the lockdown has de facto blocked its circulation, insofar as the closure of shops except for essential goods has not only deprived users of places to buy, but also of exchange counters allowing the replenishment of bills. This was particularly detrimental at this time of year, as spring is very conducive to shopping trips after the long winter in this French region characterized by a continental climate.

Our article therefore proposes to analyze the main dimensions of the organizational resilience of the Florain management association on the basis of a field survey conducted before the pandemic, three interviews conducted between the first and second lockdown, observations and figures obtained during the participation in the association's general assembly and publications found on the structure's blog. It is divided into three parts. In the first part, we will define organizational resilience and outline the main dimensions. Then, we will present our field of study, the Florain, our survey, and the interviews conducted. Finally, we will go through the three stages of the organizational resilience of the Florain's management association to highlight the dimensions of its organizational resilience linked to its structure and the importance of a territorial dimension specific to local currencies.

2. THE RESILIENCE OF AN ORGANIZATION

The capacity of organizations to react and overcome a shock invites us to mobilize the concept of organizational resilience, whose contours and dimensions we will define.

2.1 From individual resilience to organizational resilience

Resilience is a term that comes from the Latin “*resilientia*” (to bounce back, to rebound), which in the physical sciences in the 19th century referred to the ability of a material to withstand shocks. This physical phenomenon was then used as a “metaphor to illustrate the idea that a human being can resist a trauma, hold on and start again” (Cyrulnik and Jorland, 2012, p.8). This concept originally related to the individual was later extended to the organization, understood as “the rational coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of a common explicit goal, via a division of labor and a hierarchy of authority and responsibility” (Schein, 1970). Since then, this concept of resilience has been applied to various cases: firefighting teams (Weick, 1993), high reliability organizations (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2007), companies (Bégin and Chabaud, 2010), etc.

For Weick (1993, p. 628), the resilience of an organization can be seen as the capacity to maintain a system of organized actions in the face of an unusual or dangerous situation, where the individuals in the organization lose their bearings and are consequently unable to make sense of events (“disruptions of sensemaking”). For Weick and Sutcliffe (2007), organizational resilience consists of three capacities: absorbing a shock to keep working, bouncing back and learning from the crisis. Generally speaking, Pinel (2009, p. 71) defines organizational resilience as the “capacity to maintain or restore an acceptable level of functioning despite perturbations or failures”. However, Somers (2009) points out that organizational resilience is not only about surviving a shock and then bouncing back. It is also about identifying potential risks so that the organization can take the necessary steps to respond and adapt to them.

2.2 Four main dimensions of organizational resilience

Using the same definition as Pinel (2009), Robert (2010) considers that organizational resilience can be analyzed on the basis of three dimensions: the role (technical, administrative or regulatory) played by each functional unit of the organization, the characterization of the organization's reference state and acceptable perturbations, and finally the organization's ability to adapt its management modes when perturbations occur. Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2009, p. 40) point out that the resilience capacity is “a multidimensional, organizational attribute that enables a firm to effectively absorb, respond to and potentially capitalize on disruptive surprises”.

Sometimes it is not easy to bring out and analyze directly the dimensions of an organization's resilience. In this case, the analysis grid of Bégin and Chabaud (2010) can be a very rich operational tool for bringing out the underlying dimensions of resilience by analyzing organizational resilience in three closely interrelated stages: the ability to absorb the shock, the ability to create new solutions, and the ability to learn from shocks. The first refers to the organization's ability to avoid collapse in the face of shock, which requires the management team to clearly display its willingness to fight for the survival of the organization and to make effective use of resources (human, technical, financial...). The second is the organization's ability to renew itself in the face of an unusual and uncertain situation, which implies rethinking its operations, inventing new activities or new ways of doing things, etc. Indeed, it is not a matter of systematically opposing any change concerning certain parts of the organization, which might for example no longer be adapted to the current socio-economic situation or simply have been deficient for a long time. By highlighting the weaknesses of the organization, the shock can be beneficial. The last stage is the learning capacity, i.e., the organization must be able to learn from shocks and draw lessons for the future, to be able to respond more effectively to a future shock.

After reviewing the literature, we infer that organizational resilience is made up of many factors: reflection on the context, members' responsibilities, governance, capacity to deploy resources, capacity to implement solutions to overcome the crisis, etc. So, we propose to classify them into four main dimensions as shown in Figure 1. The first dimension, the reflexive dimension, refers to all the reflections within the organization (before or after the crisis) to make it more resilient to shocks: learning from past shocks, learning from mistakes, preventing future crises. The second, the communicative dimension, mainly concerns the communication between members during the crisis and the public announcements that are made. The creative dimension is related to the organization's ability to renew itself in the face of a shock and to implement new solutions to overcome the crisis. The last dimension, the organizational dimension, essentially refers to the efficient use of resources (human, technical, financial...), to the responsibilities of each member of the organization and to governance.

These different dimensions are complementary to each other, in that they affect various aspects of the organization: governance, communication between members, etc. This is why we argue that organizational resilience is stronger when the number of dimensions is large.

Figure 1: Four main dimensions of organizational resilience. Source: Author.

Reflexive dimension	Communicative dimension	Creative dimension	Organizational dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning from the crisis, reflection on the context... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interactions between members, public announcements... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation of solutions to overcome the crisis... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • members' responsibilities, reference state, governance...

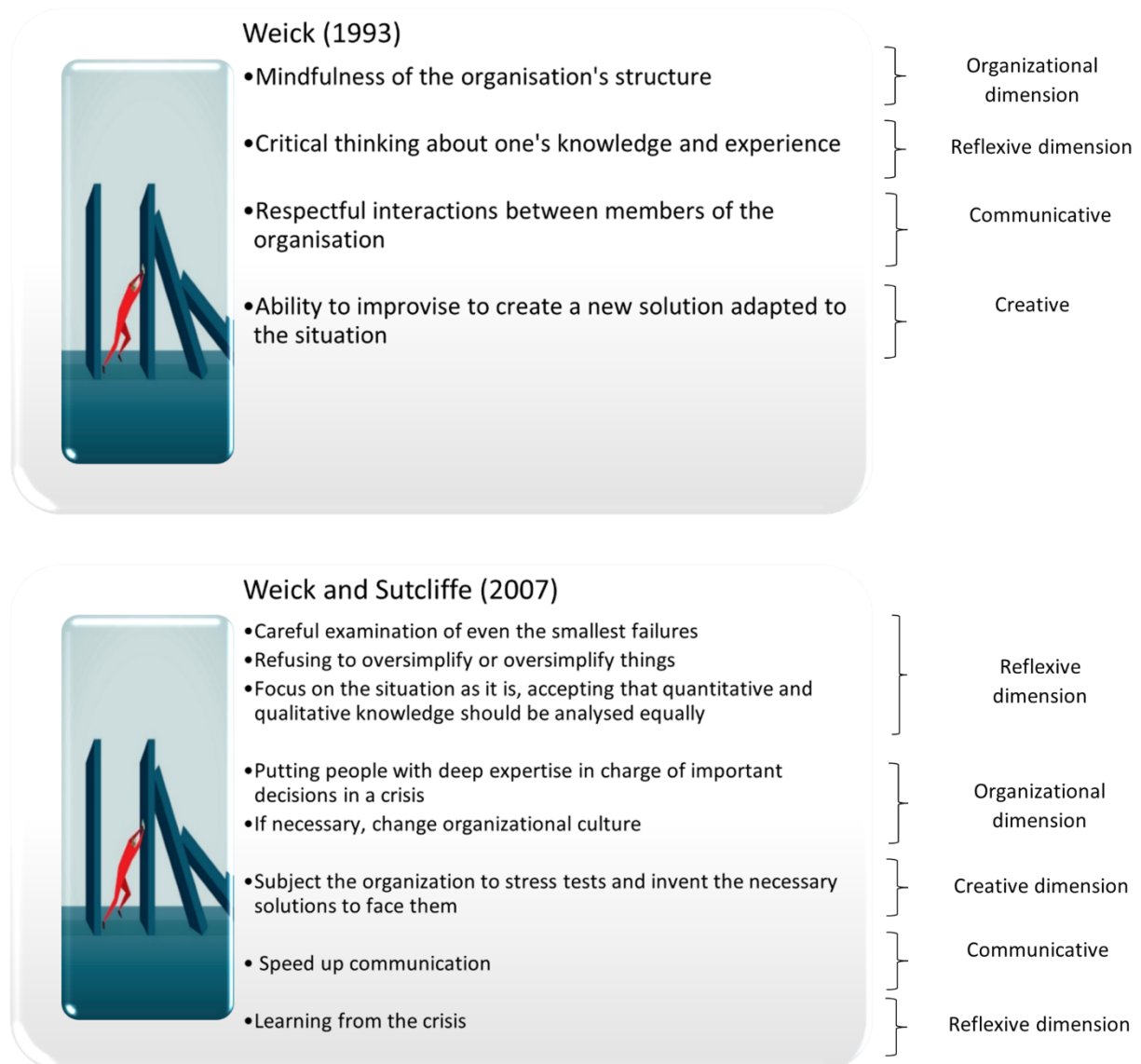
2.3 Analysis of the dimensions of organizational resilience: case studies

For Weick (1993), when the individuals in the organization lose their bearings and are consequently unable to make sense of events, this leads to a breakdown in communication between members of the organization during the crisis. However, in this context, the lack of communication prevents them from correctly anticipating the consequences of their actions. To avoid this situation, Weick puts forward four principles that should allow the organization to continue its activities despite the crisis. First, each member of the organization must keep the structure of the organization in mind, so that everyone is in his or her role and at his or her position under all circumstances (organizational dimension). In addition, they must adopt an attitude of wisdom, which consists of keeping a critical mind with regard to their acquired knowledge and experience or else they will misinterpret the information gathered from the current environment (reflexive dimension). In addition, interactions between members of an organization must be respectful to create a climate of trust (communicative dimension). Finally, in the face of a shock, improvisation or tinkering with a new solution adapted to the situation can be indispensable (creative dimension).

In studying high-reliability organizations (hospital emergency rooms, nuclear power plants, etc.), which regularly have to deal with unusual situations, Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) put forward some fundamental principles implemented by these organizations to respond effectively to any unexpected event: Carefully examine even the smallest failures; refuse to oversimplify or to oversimplify too quickly, to be sure that crucial data useful for problem solving are not missed; stay focused on the situation as it is, accepting equal analysis of quantitative and qualitative knowledge; after the crisis has passed, learn from it, keeping in mind that an organization must continually adapt to changing circumstances and create new solutions; and assign responsibility for important decisions during a crisis to individuals with deep expertise. While the first three principles relate to anticipating crises, the last two relate to the organization's reactions once a crisis has occurred, i.e., resilience itself, which the authors define as a set of three capabilities: absorbing the shock, bouncing back, and finally learning from the crisis.

These two case studies clearly highlight the four main dimensions of organizational resilience as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: The four main dimensions of organizational resilience in the two case studies of Weick (1993) and Weick & Sutcliffe (2007). Source: Synthesis of Weick (1993), Weick and Sutcliffe (2007).



Now, let's see how the analysis grid of Bégin and Chabaud (2010) is a relevant tool for bringing out the underlying dimensions of resilience of a family business and a meta-organization of the social and solidarity economy.

Firstly, Bégin and Chabaud (2010) apply their analytical framework to the case of a family business founded in 1826 in Le Havre, which faced three major shocks during its existence, including a collapse of its main market. The company had diversified into coffee trading, at a time when multinational food companies were beginning to cut out intermediaries. This led to a continuous collapse of margins and many years with a negative result. But the company showed remarkable organizational resilience.

First of all, the authors show that the company was able to absorb this shock by mobilizing its financial (reserves and assets) and reputational assets, to obtain the funds necessary to continue the activity. The managers clearly demonstrated their determination to overcome this ordeal and were able to count on the support of the family shareholders. Secondly, the company was able to renew itself in time, insofar as even before the decline of its market it had chosen to diversify and therefore accelerated in this direction once the crisis had started. The authors show that the company was able to create a network allowing it to obtain regular and precise information on the state of

the market. This is combined with an increase in business relationships with trusted individuals who share common values and are therefore able to contribute to renewing the business while respecting the integrity of the founders' business plan. Finally, even if the learning stage of resilience is more difficult to highlight because of the time it requires, the authors show that it materializes among the members of the board of directors through a critical memory of the events and sequences following the shock.

In any case, their study shows that the resilience of this family business is based on the following dimensions: communicative (willingness to overcome the crisis, support of the family shareholders), creative (creation of an information network, implementation of solutions to overcome the crisis, commercial diversification, multiplication of business relationships with trusted people), organizational (Mobilizing financial and reputational assets, support of the family shareholders), and reflexive (learning from the crisis, critical memory of the events).

Based on the work of Weick (1993) and Bégin and Chabaud (2010), Lapoutte (2020) looked at the resilience of a meta-organization of the social and solidarity economy, i.e., an organization whose members are organizations. The CLAD (Conseil Lyonnais de l'Alimentation Durable) brings together some twenty sustainable food actors from the social and solidarity economy, researchers and representatives of the city of Lyon. The author analyzes the three stages of CLAD's organizational resilience in the face of the shock of the end of the European program, which provided a large part of the organization's funding. First, the organization turned to its partners, primarily the city of Lyon, for financial and human support, then to a member organization. The second step consisted a rapid diversification of activities, which mainly involved carrying out more concrete actions, for example promoting sustainable food (preparation and tasting of a meal, elaboration of recipes with the inhabitants of a district...). Finally, the learning stage of resilience is, according to the author, still in progress: "Collective learning and knowledge transfer have hardly been observed".

Thus, we see in this study the communicative (discussions among members about what strategy to pursue, promotion of sustainable food), organizational (appealing to partners and member organizations for financial and human support), and creative (diversifying activities) dimensions of resilience. The reflexive dimension remained ongoing at the time of the study.

The table below summarizes the dimensions of organizational resilience for the different case studies:

Figure 3: Table of the dimensions of organizational resilience for the different case studies. Source: Synthesis of Weick (1993), Weick and Sutcliffe (2007), Bégin and Chabaud (2010), Lapoutte (2020).

	Reflexive dimension	Communicative dimension	Creative dimension	Organizational dimension
Weick (1993)	-Critical thinking about one's knowledge and experience	-Respectful interactions between members of the organization	-Ability to improve to create a new solution adapted to the situation	-Mindfulness of the organization's structure
Weick and Sutcliffe (2007)	-Careful examination of even the smallest failures -Refusing to oversimplify or oversimplify things -Focus on the situation as it is, accepting that quantitative and qualitative knowledge should be analyzed equally - Learning from the crisis	-Speed up communication	-Subject the organization to stress tests and invent the necessary solutions to face them	-Putting people with deep expertise in charge of important decisions in a crisis -If necessary, change organizational culture

Bégin and Chabaud (2010)	-Critical memory of the events -Learning from the crisis	-Support of the family shareholders -Willingness to overcome the crisis	-Commercial diversification -Creation of a network to obtain regular and precise information on the state of the market -Increase of business relationships with trusted individuals who share common values	-Mobilizing financial (reserves and assets) and reputational assets -Support of the family shareholders
Lapoutte (2020)	x	-Discussions among members about what strategy to pursue -Promotion of sustainable food	-Diversifying activities	-Appealing to partners and member organizations for financial and human support

Insofar as the association that manages a local currency very often has one or more employees, it is both an association (very often under the 1901 law in France) and a company (Labour Code), to the point that it is preferable to speak of an “associative company” (Hély, 2004). We will therefore use the analysis grid proposed by Bégin and Chabaud (2010), which seems to us to be the relevant tool for highlighting the underlying dimensions of the Florain’s organizational resilience.

3. A LOCAL CURRENCY IN THE GRAND EST REGION: THE FLORAIN

The law of July 31, 2014, relating to the SSE gave a legal framework to local currencies in France, defining them as payment instruments that are complementary to the official currency, which can only circulate in a restricted geographical area and concern a limited number of goods and services. Given their complementary nature, they seek above all to change consumption patterns, by promoting local and ethical dimensions.

3.1 A local associative currency

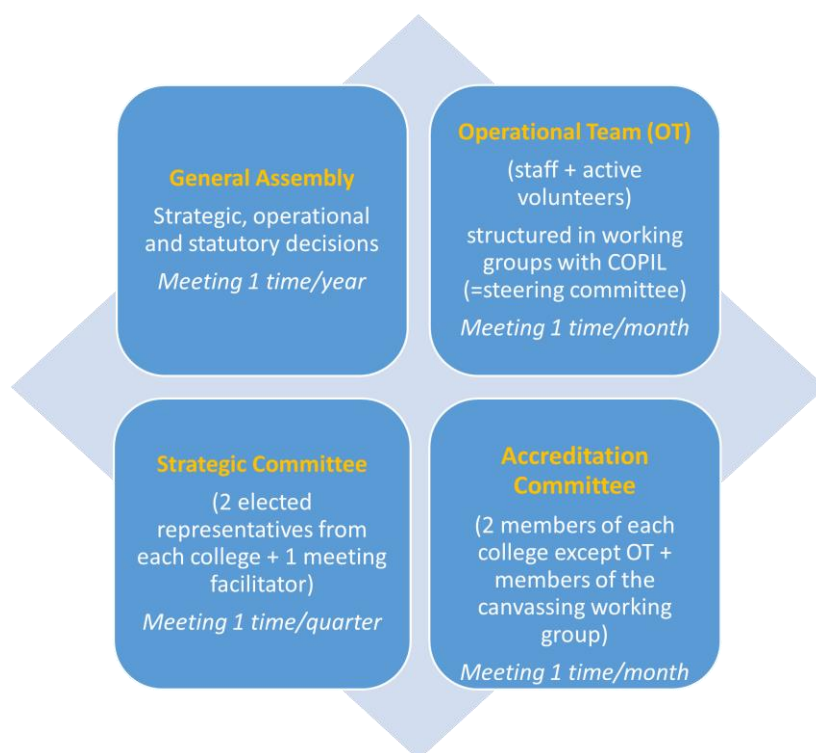
After a two-year period of maturation of the project, during which participatory meetings were multiplied to decide, among other things, on the governance of the association, the name of the local currency, and the charter of values, the Florain was officially put into circulation in October 2017. In accordance with the law, an association (law of 1901 in France), whose sole purpose is the management of the Florain, which circulates according to the statutes revised in 2020 on a now enlarged basin: “the areas of life of Nancy and Barrois”. The association is made up of associate members (individuals, businesses who accept the Florain as payment for their products or services) and non-adherent members (ex officio members) who are local authorities, financial backers contributing to the project, partner organizations or any other organization designated by the steering committee. The association considers as active members the employee, the possible interns and civic services, as well as the active volunteers. In total, there are about 25 very involved people who contribute to the smooth running of the association. Until 2019, Florain has seen a continuous increase in the number of members (individuals and professionals) and in the amount of money in circulation. At the end of 2019, the association managing the local currency announced 102,000 florains in circulation, only in paper form, 12 exchange counters, 195 businesses in the network and 531 individual members.

From the first thoughts in 2015 about creating a local currency, sociocratic governance emerged as a way to manage what would become the Florain, insofar as it is, to paraphrase Parker et al. (2014) “a system which proposes organizational answers to political questions”. Sociocracy is conceived as “decision-making and governance method that allows an organization to manage itself as an organic whole”: instead of being in the hands of a board of directors, power is under “the organization as a whole” (Buck and Endenburg, 2004). In other words, sociocracy appears as a management device (Moisdon, 1997), which can simultaneously satisfy the needs of organizational efficiency and self-expression of the members of the organization. It is based on four fundamental rules (Romme, 1995): organization in circles, consent, election without candidates, and the double link.

The circle is a functional working group, which pursues a clearly defined goal and self-organizes as a subsystem of the whole. The circle therefore has a semi-autonomy, which makes it the time-space of strategic decision-making based on the equivalence of the participants: a circle holds regular meetings where decisions are made about orientation, means to be implemented, and measurement of results; this triple process of orientation-execution-measurement allows the system to self-regulate (Carbonnel and Didier, 2020). When it comes to choosing a person from the circle to take on a particular role (meeting secretary, representative to another circle, etc.), an election without a candidate is planned (Buck and Endenburg, 2004). The most important decisions, i.e., those that affect the functioning of the organization in any way, are made by consent: this means that a decision is adopted if there are no objections based on valid arguments, which is the theoretical guarantee of the equivalence of all participants in the decision-making process. Finally, to articulate the circles between them and to obtain governance, sociocracy foresees that at least two people of a circle are members of the circle to which they are connected. In practice, each circle has, among others, one person designated by consent as a representative of the other circle and a leader of that other circle as a member. This dual linkage between circles is intended to ensure the equivalence of information and power flows at all levels of the organization, while promoting feedback loops within the organization.

In the case of Florain, sociocratic governance is composed of five colleges, with one person belonging to only one college: the college of the operational team, the college of businesses, the college of users, the college of guarantors of the charter, and the college of partners. The colleges designate the members who will represent them in the strategic committee and in the accreditation commission (figure 4):

Figure 4: Florain's governance. Source: Author based on Florain statutes.



3.2 Survey and interviews

At the beginning of 2019, the Florain's management association agreed that we conduct a survey among the Florain's users. We thus prepared a questionnaire in three parts with the objective of recovering usable data on many fields: the uses of the Florain (9 questions), the perception of the Florain (5 questions maximum), and the users of the Florain (11 questions maximum). While many of the questions classically asked respondents to choose from among several proposed answers, others offered them the possibility of expressing themselves freely through a text or of classifying words that come to mind when the concept of money is mentioned. Since we had several questions related to the same subject, we tried to group them together as much as possible in a table, for which it was proposed to choose a nuanced answer ranked between 1 and 5. We improved the questionnaire by submitting it in advance to the association's steering committee, to obtain their comments, criticisms, and proposals for improvement. The complete questionnaire was then programmed on the LimeSurvey software, which provides the necessary tools to anonymously process the answers to the different types of questions and to generate a link in the communication plan.

The survey took place between July 16 and October 1, 2019, with a follow-up by newsletter and Facebook twice in September 2019. Owing to the absence of an updated email address file, the steering committee suggested that we send the link of the questionnaire to all supporters, first through a mention in the newsletter concomitantly with a publication on their Facebook page, and finally through an article on their blog. Altogether, 87 people answered the questionnaire in part or in full, but only 65 declared themselves to be members of Florain for the year 2019 and five did not even answer this question. Of the 65 people who declared themselves members of the Florain in 2019, 57 answered all of the questions submitted to them. The association told us that as of December 31, 2019, the Florain has 531 individual members. In doing so, since we do not know their number at the end of the survey on October 1, 2019, we calculated the lower bound of the response rate (Figure 5), which in any case seems close to that obtained by Fare (2011):

Figure 5: Lower bound of the response rate. Source: Survey on Florain by the author.

	Number of respondents	Lower bound of the response rate
Total respondents with or without membership	87	$87 / 531 \approx 16,4 \%$
Total respondents who are members 2019	65	$65 / 531 \approx 12,2 \%$
Complete answers members 2019	57	$57 / 531 \approx 10,7 \%$

The following analysis is thus based on the 57 complete responses. The survey will be used to analyze the association's governance, which has remained largely unchanged since the Covid-19 crisis, but played a major role in organizational resilience during the pandemic. In addition to this survey, to explore all the dimensions of resilience, we have three semi-directive interviews (two with different founding members who are still active volunteers, designated by Nathan and Michel, and one with the employee) conducted between the first and second lockdowns, i.e., between May 12 and October 30, 2020, publications on the association's blog and the minutes of the association's general assembly that we attended on February 14, 2021 (the general assembly gave an initial assessment of the shock suffered and future projects).

4. THE RESILIENCE OF THE FLORAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Le Florain suffered a shock during the first lockdown, which resulted in the impossibility of practicing exchanges during a very favorable period of the year, spring. In this section, we will apply the analysis grid developed by Bégin and Chabaud (2010) to the association managing Le Florain, to highlight the dimensions of its organizational resilience linked to its structure and to highlight the importance of a territorial dimension specific to local currencies.

4.1 Three steps of organizational resilience of the Florain and its dimensions

Even though some businesses tried to continue their activity during this period, purchases in florains were made very difficult, as the lockdown blocked the supply of currency exchange counters and thus the possibility of converting euros into florains, only existed in paper form. Moreover, as the association's employee told us, "We could not ask the volunteers to take risks to deliver the bills, or even to disinfect them".

Faced with this unpredictable shock, the association first demonstrated a great capacity for absorption, which is the first step in its resilience. Its sociocratic governance allowed each member, during and after the first lockdown, to keep in mind the association's functioning structure, to cooperate, to communicate, and to give meaning to the events ("sensemaking" according to Weick (1993)). As a result, important decisions concerning the daily management of the association could be taken quickly, since each person in the operational team knew perfectly well the role they had to play. In particular, the decision to put the employee on short-time work was made in less than two weeks and the employee agreed to continue working a few hours a week to coordinate the work of the volunteers and update the association's administrative documents. Here we see the organizational and communicative dimensions of organizational resilience.

Although users of a local currency are not obliged to get involved in the operation of the system, their feeling of belonging to a local monetary community (Figure 6) is, in our opinion, a strong bond that contributes to the association's resilience in the face of this shock, in its organizational dimension. Indeed, for them, it is a matter of pursuing an ideal based on strong shared values, even when it has become impossible to use the local currency. This was confirmed to us by a founding member (Nathan): "The crisis has not diminished our desire to continue to develop the Florain; on the contrary, it reinforces our observation that the local currency is useful in moving towards another system, based on the values that unite us in the group".

Figure 6: Florain users' sense of belonging to a monetary community. Source: Survey on Florain by the author.

Survey Question 10 - On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree), you would say: by using Florain, I feel part of a community.

1	2	3	4	5
5,26 %	5,26 %	19,30 %	31,58 %	38,60 %

As for the second step of resilience, the association has undoubtedly been able to create new solutions. During the lockdown, the members found themselves isolated in their homes, even though the Florain has always wanted to be a convivial association, both in the common sense of pleasant relations among the members of a group, and in the sense given to it by Illich (1973), i.e., the capacity of a structure to be at the service of human beings and even to be on their scale. To remedy this, the volunteers made an effort to contact the businesses by phone at first, to maintain the link, but it is the use of digital communication tools (Zoom, Jitsi...), once mastered by the majority, that allowed to find the conviviality through regular contacts. This has allowed not only to implement click and collect solutions, but also to continue the work of the association's steering bodies from a distance. This usage was extended after the first lockdown, leading to a mix of remote and face-to-face communications/meetings.

We see an interesting combination of the communicative (use of digital tools for meetings) and creative dimensions of resilience (implementation of click and collect), dimensions that were all the better implemented because the active members showed great adaptability (organizational dimension). Indeed, the development of new solutions necessarily goes hand in hand with the adaptability of the active members to this new context, insofar as they are the ones who keep the association alive. In this regard, another member of the operational team (Michel) confided to us that "Florain's resilience has been possible thanks to the unfailing commitment of active volunteers". According to him, this commitment was due to the fact that the association has allowed them to express their skills effectively till now, which makes them more willing to accept possible changes resulting from a crisis, thus contributing to the resilience of the association. These changes are all the more accepted because they are discussed in the different governance circles where everyone has the opportunity to express themselves according to the principle of

equivalence of individuals in sociocracy (Romme, 1995). In the end, each Florain volunteer has a proven autonomy within his or her circle, so that, as a whole, they declare that they do within the association what they wanted to do when they joined it. This genuine satisfaction in terms of real individual freedoms within the association is reminiscent of the notion of “capability” developed by Sen (1993).

Finally, the appropriation stage of resilience was quickly implemented, as soon as the first lockdown ended, as evidenced by an article published on the Florain blog by one of the members of the operational team, the first and last words of which are very clear: “This lockdown has had a real impact on the activity of our association and we have put a lot of energy into finding answers to the questions that the period has generated. [...] And we will have to work twice as hard to convince people that the Florain, like all the other complementary local currencies, is one of the solutions to the coming crises”. Moreover, during the general assembly of the association, on February 14, 2021, a first assessment was made of the shock suffered, of the solutions brought, and of the means to face another shock of this type. The second lockdown in France (October 30 to December 15, 2020), admittedly less strict than the first one since many businesses remained open, was thus overcome without a hitch by the association, which testifies to the importance of the reflective dimension of resilience. On the other hand, the active volunteer Michel pointed out to us that “the dematerialization of money would have served us well during this crisis”, the shock suffered by the association resulting, as we have seen, essentially from the impossibility of using the paper form. This project is in the process of being completed in the fall of 2022.

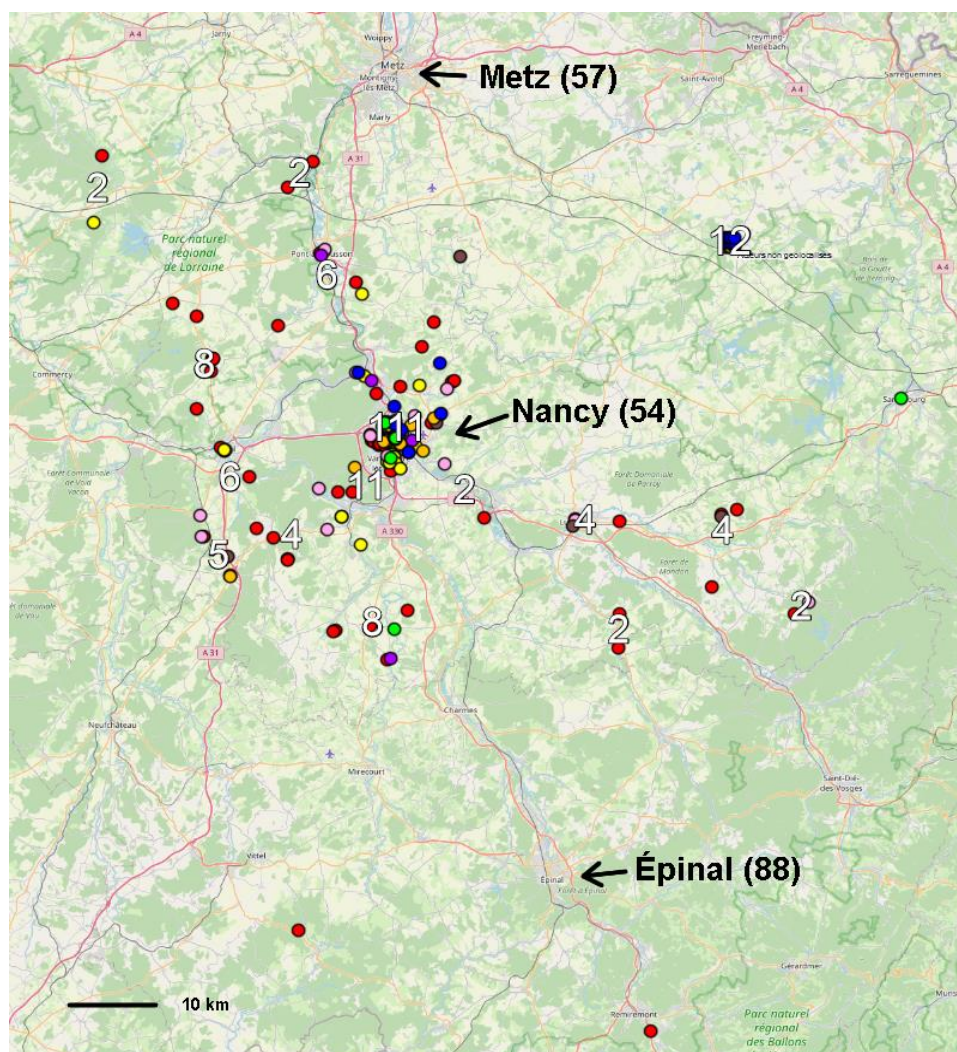
We have demonstrated that the association managing Le Florain went through the three stages of organizational resilience: absorbing the shock, creating new solutions, and learning from shocks. We have also seen that the association's organizational resilience is based on four dimensions: reflexive, communicative, creative and organizational. This suggests that the organizational resilience of the Florain's management association was stronger than other SSE structures with fewer dimensions. Moreover, it is important to note that the reflective dimension was not implemented only after the lockdown (reflection on the crisis), but also before during the meetings of the strategic committee, which in addition to being in charge of the strategic follow-up of the association's projects also reflects on the major orientations. This demonstrates a willingness to anticipate crises, which contributes to organizational resilience.

4.2 The territorial dimension of Florain's resilience

It is true that the organizational resilience of the Florain management association has dimensions similar to those of other organizations. However, in our opinion, its organizational resilience has an additional dimension, linked to the association's relationship with the geographical and political territory in which the local currency circulates. Indeed, according to Article 16 of the 2014 French SSE law, a local currency only concerns a reduced number of goods and services, and can only circulate in a restricted geographical area, which implies from the outset a spatial proximity between members. Some thinkers of local currency, like Lepesant (2012), wonder whether it would be better to speak of “territorial currency”, recalling that “a catchment area is a social and political construction rather than a geographically defined ‘location’”. This concept of catchment area—sometimes referred to as a living area—seems to us to be relevant in describing the way in which a local currency takes on its territory socially, transforms it, and in return accepts that it must adapt to it.

Regarding the Florain, our survey shows that users have a strong feeling of contributing to the development of the former French administrative region called Lorraine with this local currency (Lorraine was composed of 4 departments: Moselle [57], Meurthe-et-Moselle [54], Meuse [55] and Vosges [88]), even though the majority of businesses in 2019 and 2020 were located within a 40 km radius of the city of Nancy, the biggest town of the department of Meurthe-et-Moselle (figure 7):

Figure 7: Territory of the Florain's businesses (November 2020). Source: <https://www.monnaie-localenancy.fr/#map-section> - map completed with scale and geographical annotations.



The deep attachment of the users to the catchment area is evident in the charter of values (“Relocate the economy by supporting local businesses to boost employment”), as well as in the publications of the association in the media (blog, Facebook, interviews in the regional press...) and in our interviews conducted before the pandemic (“Let’s think local, let’s think Florain!” said Corinne, a volunteer). This attachment constitutes, in our opinion, an important element of the resilience of the association managing the Florain, insofar as it allows a strong identification between the association and its territory, according to a formula used by a participant at the general assembly of 2021: “Helping the Florain is helping the territory”. This form of attachment to the territory can also be found in other local currencies, such as the Eusko, the local currency of the French Basque Country, which places the development of the territory and even the preservation of the Basque language among its objectives (Edme-Sanjurjo, Fois-Duclerc, Lung, Milanesi and Pinos, 2020). The national survey conducted in France by Blanc, Fare, and Lafuente-Sampietro (2020) shows that local currencies circulate in both rural and urban areas, reflecting a general willingness to develop complementarities and synergies between the different territories that make up their catchment areas.

Their survey also shows that 90% of the French local currencies responding maintain at least one relationship with another actor in the territory, essentially with structures that are part of the transition or with local associations (culture, organic agriculture, short circuits, participatory housing, third places, etc.). This is the case of Le Florain, which maintains relationships with ecological and cultural organizations, which are not necessarily members. These are all opportunities to build a network of links between individuals from these organizations whose values

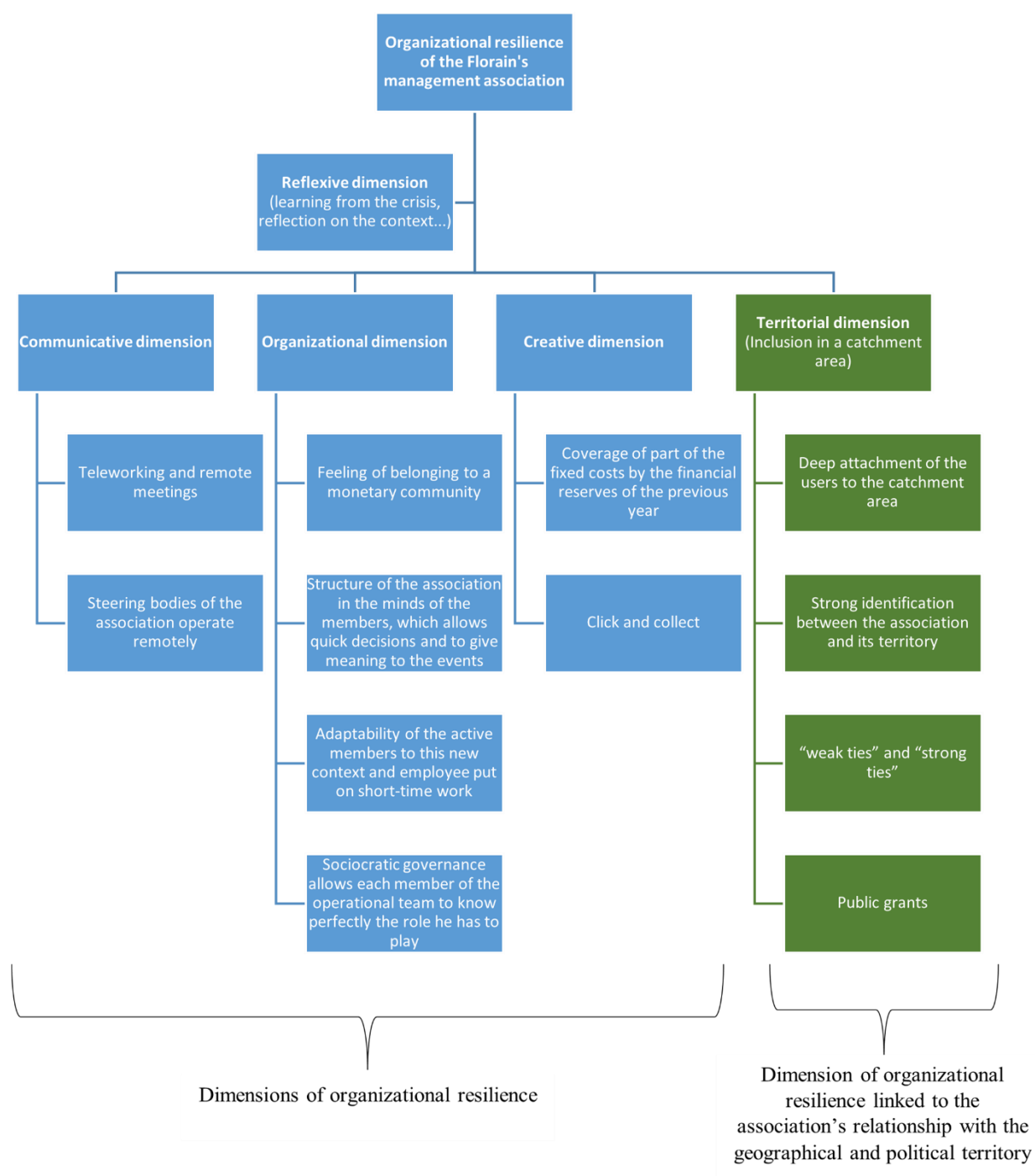
are certainly compatible, but not necessarily identical. These ties may be characterized by a low frequency of contact, a very relative emotional intensity, and a very limited intimacy between people, which Granovetter (1973) describes as “weak ties” as opposed to the “strong ties” associated with people with whom one lives and works regularly. However, Granovetter (1973) shows that the particularity of these weak ties is precisely that they serve as “bridges” between organizations. In the case of the local currency, these “bridges” allow the ideas and values promoted by the association to reach people who are socially distant from the members. The result is an increase in the number of supporters who are able to contribute to organizational resilience, in the form of material or human support. Le Florain was able to count on a significant donation from another local currency, whose launch had failed.

However, the territory in which a local currency circulates is also political. The links between public authorities and local currencies, although far from uniform from one territory to another, also play an important role in the resilience of the managing association. They can provide material, human, and financial resources—not only during periods of crisis—that contribute to the resilience of the association when a shock occurs. Le Florain has thus benefited from numerous grants since its launch, which proved indispensable to its organizational resilience when membership fees, the association’s main source of income, dropped drastically with the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdowns. The association has thus managed to cover part of its fixed costs with the financial reserves of the previous year and to balance its accounts thanks to the financial support provided by the local authorities (city, department, and region).

Certainly, the most advanced stage in the relationship between local governments and local currencies is the participation of the former in the local currency circuit set up by the latter, either because certain local public services, such as libraries or municipal swimming pools accept payment in local currency, or because local governments make payments in local currency. The association that manages the local currency then becomes an essential link in a public/private circuit that gives credibility to its action and allows it to benefit from recurring financial revenues linked to the community’s membership, all factors that contribute to organizational resilience. The Florain understands this and that is why, following the first lockdown and the joint reflection (reflexive dimension of resilience), the association sought to develop the local governments’ membership. This has been done for the city of Nancy, which joined Florain on September 27 2021. By a unanimous vote, it was decided to appoint a representative of the city to sit on the association and to pay an annual fee proportional to the number of inhabitants of the city, with the idea of eventually allowing “the city to be able to offer services in Florain”.

Ultimately, using Bégin and Chabaud’s (2010) grid, we highlighted that the organizational resilience of the Florain management association depended on reflexive, communicative, creative, and organizational dimensions, and that it was necessary to add a territorial dimension linked to the association’s relationship with the geographical and political territory in which the local currency circulates (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Analysis grid for the organizational resilience of the Florain's management association.



5. CONCLUSION

In this article, we studied the dimensions of organizational resilience of a local currency management association in the face of the sudden halt in exchanges during the first lockdown period related to the Covid-19 pandemic (March 17, 2020 to May 11, 2020). We have pointed out that, like other organizations, the organizational resilience of the Florain's management association stems from dimensions linked to its structure (reflexive, communicative, creative and organizational). However, it seems essential to add a territorial dimension specific to local currencies, which relates to the relations that the management association maintains with the geographical and political territory in which the local currency circulates.

Our study was only conducted on one local currency, the Florain, and in the case of the very particular shock constituted by the first lockdown. It would therefore be interesting to test this analytical grid with other French or even international local currencies, to build a specific operational tool for analyzing the organizational resilience of an association managing a local currency. And given the strong link between a local currency and its territory, it would be very interesting to analyze the links between organizational resilience and territorial resilience.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bégin, L. and Chabaud, D. (2010). La résilience des organisations. *Revue française de gestion*, 200(1), 127-142.
- Blanc, J., Fare M. and Lafuente-Sampietro O. (2020). Les monnaies locales en France : un bilan de l'enquête nationale 2019-20. https://archivesic.ccsd.cnrs.fr/SCIENCESPO_LYON/halshs-02535862v2, last accessed: March 2022.
- Boyer, R. (2020). *Les Capitalismes à l'épreuve de la pandémie*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Buck, J. A. and Endenburg, G. (2004). *Sociocracy. The creative forces of self-organisation*. Rotterdam: Sociocratic Center.
- Carbonnel, A. and Didier, R. (2020). La gouvernance partagée pour des organisations plus résilientes en période de COVID 19 ? Les cas d'une monnaie locale et d'un magasin bio et tiers lieu en Grand-Est. Paper presented at the Workshop "ESS et transitions : vers des territoires soutenable et inclusifs ?". University of Reims, 18 novembre 2020.
- Edme-Sanjurjo, D., Fois-Duclerc, M., Lung, Y., Milanese, J. and Pinos F. (2020). The Eusko's trajectory. Hypotheses to understand the success of the complementary local currency of the Northern Basque Country. *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, 24(Summer 2020), 14-29.
- Fare, M. (2011). *Les conditions monétaires d'un développement local soutenable : des systèmes d'échange complémentaires aux monnaies subsidiaires*. PhD thesis, Université Lumière Lyon 2, Lyon.
- Granovetter, M. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360-1380.
- Guerini, M., Nesta, L., Ragot, X. and Schiavo, S. (2020). Dynamique des défaillances d'entreprises en France et crise de la Covid-19. OFCE Policy brief, 73.
- Hély, M. (2004). Les différentes formes d'entreprises associatives. *Sociologies pratiques*, 27-51. <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00009569>, last accessed: March 2022.
- Heyer, E. and Timbeau, X. (2020). Évaluation de l'impact économique de la pandémie de COVID-19 et des mesures de confinement sur l'économie mondiale en avril 2020. OFCE Policy brief, 69.
- Illich, I. (1973). *La convivialité*. Paris: Le Seuil.
- Lapoutte, A. (2021). Résilience d'une méta-organisation : le cas d'un commun de l'alimentation. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 92(1), 79-100.
- Lengnick-Hall, C., Beck, T.E. (2009). Resilience capacity and strategic agility: prerequisites for thriving in a dynamic environment. In: Nemeth, C.P., Hollnagel, E., Dekker, S. (Eds.). *Resilience Engineering Perspectives*, vol. 2, Preparation and Restoration. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 39-69.
- Lepesant, M. (2012). Éléments d'analyse pour se repérer dans un projet de MLC. <http://monnaie-locale-complementaire-citoyenne.net/elements-danalyse-projet-mlc>, last accessed: February 2023.
- Moison, J.-C. (eds.) (1997). *Du mode d'existence des outils de gestion. Les instruments de gestion à l'épreuve de l'organisation*. Paris: Seli Arslan.
- Parker, M., Cheney, G., Fournie, V. and Land, C. (2014). The question of organization: A manifesto for alternatives. *Ephemera Theory and Politics in Organization*, 14(4), 623-638.

Pinel, W. (2009). La résilience organisationnelle: concepts et activités de formation. M.A.Sc. thesis, École Polytechnique de Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Robert, B. (2010). Organizational Resilience — Concepts and evaluation Method. Montréal: Presse de l'École Polytechnique de Montréal.

Romme, G. (1995). The sociocratic model of organizing. *Journal of Strategic Change*, 4(4), 209-215.

Schein, E. H. (1970). *Organizational Psychology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Sen, A. (1993). Capability and Wellbeing in Nussbaum. In: Sen, A. (Eds.). *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 30-53.

Somers, S. (2009). Measuring resilience potential: An adaptive strategy for organizational crisis planning. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 17(1), 12-23.

Sutcliffe, K. M. and Weick, K. E. (2007). *Managing the Unexpected. Resilient performance in an age of uncertainty*, 2nd edition, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Weick, K. E. (1995). The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38(4), 628-652.

NOTE

My thanks go to Professor Yamina TADJEDDINE-FOURNEYRON for her valuable advice, but I remain solely responsible for any errors or inaccuracies.