

The dominant view in strategic management emphasizes the adaptation of individual organizations to changing competitive and environmental circumstances. From this perspective, strategy is about the alignment (and realignment) of internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, which requires organizational learning and change. The crux of this perspective on strategy is that organizational flexibility is associated with superior performance.

The dominant logic in organizational ecology in contrast, emphasizes adaptation through environmental selection at the population or industry level, rather than by individual organizations. Ecological approaches embody a sociological framework of organization theories emphasizing evolutionary dynamics that favor structurally inert organizations. Inertia is not only a survival-enhancing feature, but also a by-product of prior success and a consequence of selection. Thus, ecological accounts of strategy associate organizational inertia with superior performance.

This volume tackles these contradictory views of the performance-enhancing effects of organizational flexibility and inertia head on, as well as exploring wide ranging additional connections between ecological and adaptationist approaches to strategy. In doing so, this compendium seeks to serve as a catalyst for bringing strategic and ecological perspectives closer together by contributing to the development of theory and empirical evidence at this important interface.

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