Research in Human Development

The Study of Youth Resilience Across Cultures: Lessons from a Pilot Study of Measurement Development

Michael Ungar [a] , Linda Liebenberg [a] , Roger
Boothroyd [b] , Wai Man Kwong [c] , Tak Yan Lee [c] , John
Leblanc [a] , Luis Duque [d] & Alexander Makhnach [e]

[a] Dalhousie University,

[b] Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute,

[c] City University of Hong Kong,

[d] University of Antioquia,

[e] Russian Academy of Sciences,
Version of record first published: 03 Sep 2008.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Ψ Psychology Press
Taylor & Francis Group

The Study of Youth Resilience Across Cultures: Lessons from a Pilot Study of Measurement Development

Michael Ungar and Linda Liebenberg
Dalhousie University

Roger Boothroyd
Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute

Wai Man Kwong and Tak Yan Lee
City University of Hong Kong

John Leblanc
Dalhousie University

Luis Duque
University of Antioquia

Alexander Makhnach
Russian Academy of Sciences

Resilience researchers from diverse disciplines and cultural settings face formidable challenges in conceptualizing and developing standardized metrics of resilience that are representative of adolescent and young adult experiences across cultures. We discuss these issues using the case example of a pilot study involving researchers in 14 sites in 11 countries. The goal of the International Resilience Project was to develop a culturally and contextually relevant measure of youth resilience, the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM). Cultural sensitivity and an iterative

Address correspondence to Michael Ungar, Dalhousie University, School of Social Work, 6414 Coburg Rd., Halifax, NS Canada B3H 2A7. E-mail: Michael.ungar@dal.ca.

research design introduced to the study a number of problems that future studies of resilience will need to address: ambiguity in the definition of positive outcomes; a lack of predictability of models across cultures; and measurement design challenges.

A hundred years of anthropological study of youth has shown homogeneity and heterogeneity across cultures in the practices related to nurturing and maintaining well-being. Sexual practices, rites of passage, the nature of attachments, and peer associations are all known to vary by context and culture while still being thematically relevant antecedents to psychosocial maturation among youth (Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002). Young people's patterns of coping are embedded in the complex social ecologies of their families and communities. Despite our knowing that context and culture confound development, sensitivity to global manifestations of youth culture has not resulted in generalizable models or measurement design capable of capturing diversity. For example, though globalization theory contends that there is a convergence of values and behavior (Liebel, 2004) acculturation theorists have shown that well-being among children and families results from the resistance to the hegemonic pull of the dominant culture usually associated with modernity's Western-style consumerism, secularism, and democratization (Grant et al., 2004). Childhood, and adolescence in particular, is no longer seen as a generic experience.

Complexity resulting from cultural sensitivity introduces to the study of resilience a number of problems: ambiguity in the definition of positive outcomes, a lack of predictability of models, and measurement design challenges. It is this contested territory that we seek to explore in this article. We show that resilience is variable by context and culture through discussion of a pilot study in 14 communities on five continents, the International Resilience Project (IRP) (Ungar, in press; Ungar, Lee, Callaghan, & Boothroyd, 2005; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). The iterative design of the IRP helped demonstrate the problems related to developing a reliable and valid measure of resilience across multiple settings. As a team, we sought to understand if psychological and cultural factors demonstrate sufficient diversity globally to argue for a plurality of patterns associated with resilience, or whether universal principles are applicable across diverse populations of youth? Results of our work have led to an ecologically dynamic definition of resilience and suggested methods to deal with measurement problems.

DEFINING RESILIENCE ACROSS CULTURES

Resilience is typically understood within a Western psychological discourse as good outcomes despite serious threats to well-being (Luthar, 2003). The term is used interchangeably to mean the processes that lead to well-being when

individuals face significant adversity and the outcomes associated with positive adaptation under stress. This definition has been challenged as being too focused on individual capacities (Seccombe, 2002; Ungar, 2005). A more ecologically sensitive definition of *resilience* is offered by Ungar (2006) who explained that resilience is the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-enhancing resources and the capacity of individuals' physical and social ecologies to provide those resources in meaningful ways. Here, the emphasis is not only on beating the odds, but also changing the odds stacked against vulnerable populations (Seccombe, 2002). Therefore, two processes explain resilience: navigation and negotiation. The individual must demonstrate the personal agency to navigate her way to resources such as positive attachments, experiences that bring self-esteem, education, and participation in one's community and family. However, the youth's family and community must also be available and accessible if resources are to be located. A process of negotiation is required to ensure that the resources provided are meaningful to those requiring support. Thus, for example, the provision of mentors to youth requires variability in who is provided and how mentorship programs operate when serving diverse youth populations (Gilligan, 1999).

This definition opens to consideration differences between emic and etic perspectives on resilience. The emic–etic paradigm was well articulated by Brislin, Lonner, and Thorndike (1973) who explained that the emic perspective seeks to understand a concept from within the cultural frame from which the concept emerges. In contrast, an etic perspective seeks to evaluate phenomena by assuming cultural neutrality or objectivity in the use of concepts across settings.

Understanding patterns of navigation and negotiation across cultures requires the reconciling of emic and etic perspectives. To accomplish this, one may view indicators of youth resilience as embedded in discursive practices that institutionalize their objectivity. As Trickett and Birman (2000) noted: "If outcomes and wellness are to be understood as individual efforts to cope and adapt to the demands of the surrounding culture, community, and institutions, then the definition of what is positive will be different across situations, and even among individuals in similar circumstances" (p. 381). There is need for caution when research extends beyond dominant cultural groups. Arguably, little of the discourse regarding resilience has been influenced by the perspectives of those outside western Eurocentric cultures. A cluster of methodologists are now actively seeking to decolonize methods to better capture the plurality of signifiers associated with well-being (e.g., Smith, 1999). The practice requires a change in perspective. Like turning a map of the world upside down, resilience in its more individualized manifestation has been validated for only a small minority of the world's populations despite the influence (discursive power) of the existing literature. Kağitçibaşi (2006) suggested we consider

Western countries as the minority world, while the numerically greater majority world includes countries that do not reflect the primacy of historical and political Eurocentric democratic traditions. We believe the term *majority world* should also encompass marginalized populations living in minority world settings, such as racialized minorities and aboriginal peoples (see McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005).

To illustrate, young people who are racially marginalized in countries such as Canada may have their own distinct ways to account for the resources they require to ensure psychosocial development. As Dei, Massuca, McIsaac, and Zine (1997) showed, African Canadian youth leave school because educational attainment is not necessarily equated with future employment and economic viability in a racist society. Such findings suggest that to assess resilience by an ecological benchmark such as formal education might presuppose cultural hegemony when the specificity of a population's social ecology suggests young people pursue alternative pathways to success. Even though youth and their families may still value education, there may be greater tolerance for a plurality of definitions of resilience than standardized measures based on normative (White) samples would suggest. The muddle for researchers is even more complex if we consider the export of majority (non-Western) standards for successful child development to minority (Western) contexts. Do more collectivist societies as found among aboriginal peoples and in less economically developed countries show strengths that would make their minority world counterparts appear less healthy? Anomie, obesity, delayed psychological maturation, lack of access to rites of passage, poor community cohesion, and lack of opportunities to contribute to one's community through alternatives to education are all challenges facing minority world youth. One might speculate a more equitable program of research would require the import of majority world perspectives into the West and the accurate measure of the navigational advantage youth in less economically viable communities enjoy (see Liebel, 2004; Ungar, 2005).

THE EMERGING LITERATURE

The literature to support an emic perspective is growing as researchers look across cultures and contexts. For example, Berry (1969) developed an ecocultural framework to capture variability across countries in how family functioning is understood. At root is an emerging appreciation for greater complexity in models of positive development. Elliott et al. (2006) studied poor and financially better off neighborhoods in Denver, Colorado, and Chicago, Illinois. Even in such locale specific research, variability trumps homogeneity: "Our individual-level findings indicate that the variation in successful developmental outcomes within good or bad neighborhoods is typically greater than the variation between

neighborhoods. Clearly, neighborhood Disadvantage and Deterioration as contextual influences do not have an all-powerful influence on development and behavior in this study" (p. 93). Although the measures used by Elliot et al. presuppose a constellation of positive outcomes, their results (qualitative and quantitative) indicate that generalization across arbitrarily determined groups (like a neighborhood) can overlook the complexity of young people's individual experiences in complex ecologies.

Alegria et al. (2004) detailed this same complexity in the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) that investigated mental health and illness among Latinos and Asian Americans. Findings suggest that psychiatric illness is linked to risks associated with social position, environmental context, and psychosocial factors. These contextual and cultural factors influence the course of illness and patterns of service use. Similarly, Dawes and Donald (2000), in their work in South Africa, demonstrated that a "cultural practices approach alerts us to the fact that all communities have understandings of childhood and what is 'good' for children. These may or may not reflect 'mainstream' approaches to child development that are common to the Western mental health professional model" (p. 16).

Understandably, much of the literature on young people's alternative discourses of resilience is still emerging and therefore frequently qualitative. A good example is Morris's (2007) account of Black girls' experiences in classrooms. A school-based ethnography over 2 years showed that Black girls were expected to conform to expectations of their behavior that ignored their racialized position in society and promoted values associated with hegemonic definitions of Whiteness. The intersectionality of oppressions (gender, race, class, and age) meant that the girls were sidelined in the discourses defining their behavior as pro- or antisocial: "Girls not privileged by Whiteness, as well as those not privileged by class status, most likely posses unique tools to carve out counter-hegemonic ways of being female" (p. 492). The girls Morris observed at Mathews, a U.S. middle school, show that "Black girls [are] less restrained by the dominant, White middle-class view of femininity as docile and compliant, and less expectant of male protection than White girls in other educational research" (p. 499). Teachers may not always interpret such behavior positively. The girls were thought by their educators to be "too assertive" and "unladylike."

Although the literature referred to above demonstrates efforts in Western contexts to better document the experiences of marginalized youth, similar efforts are under way in majority world contexts though they are less well represented in the literature. Compilation volumes by Brown et al. (2002), Ungar (2005), Carrey and Ungar (2007), and Wong & Wong (2006) all make an attempt to bring together international perspectives on youth well-being. Localized efforts by Van Hoorn, Komlosi, Suchar, and Samelson (2000) in Eastern Europe, Donald, Dawes & Louw (2000) in South Africa, and Lee (2005) in Hong Kong

have attempted to represent more fully the plurality of youth experiences as they guard against stress in less studied settings.

THE IRP AS METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTION

In an effort to explore methodological challenges investigating resilience across cultures and contexts, a team of 35 researchers from 11 countries with varied disciplinary and cultural backgrounds were brought together to examine successful developmental outcomes associated with resilience. Our goal was to understand patterns of homogeneity and heterogeneity in a purposeful sample of young people under stress in differentiated communities around the world. Among the tasks undertaken during on-line communication and face-to-face meetings in 2003 and 2005 was the development of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM). Sanchez, Spector, and Cooper (2006) noted that a serious limitation in cross-cultural/cross-national (CC/CN) stress research is the

> reliance on measures that are developed in a single country and exported for use elsewhere. Even if the items are successfully translated linguistically, there exists the possibility that the individual items don't do a good job of reflecting the construct universally. In other words the scale suffers from ethnocentrism in its development. (p. 197)

To address this problem, the IRP enlisted researchers from multiple countries for their help with scale development.

Using an iterative mixed methods design (for a detailed discussion see Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005) a total of 32 domains were identified by the team for study across all cultures and questions solicited from community advisory committees. Domains included individual qualities such as assertiveness, problem-solving, self-efficacy and optimism; relational factors such as mentors and quality of parenting; community factors such as opportunities for age-appropriate work, exposure to violence and meaningful rites of passage; and cultural factors such as affiliation with a religious organization, tolerance for other's beliefs, and experiences of cultural dislocation. Focus group interviews with youth and adults in each participating community generated questions relating to the 32 domains. Generic questions relevant across all sites were compiled and aggregated in the CYRM, whereas questions that were too specific to one culture or context were administered in only that setting. In total, 58 items were included in the original CYRM for piloting using a 5-point Likert-type scale, translated into local languages. Person-related context variables were also included to establish participants' racial and ethnic backgrounds and living arrangements.

The original 58-item version of the CYRM was administered to 1,451 youth at risk aged 12 to 23 years in 14 communities (694 males = 47.9%, 757 females = 52.1%; mean age = 16 years, SD = 2.65). The communities included Sheshatshiu, an Aboriginal Innu community in Northern Canada; Hong Kong, China; East Jerusalem and Gaza, Palestine; Tel Aviv, Israel; Medellín, Colombia; Moscow, Russia; Imphal, India; Tampa, Florida; Serekunda, The Gambia; Njoro, Tanzania; Cape Town, South Africa; Halifax, Canada; and Winnipeg, Canada (two sites, one with urban aboriginal youth, the other with nonaboriginal youth in residential care). Sites were selected for the variability they introduced to the sample. A minimum of 60 youth participated in each site. All young people were known to be facing at least three significant challenges related to culturally relevant stressors (poverty, racial discrimination, war, social marginalization, mental illness of a parent, etc.) as judged by local committees of community members with expertise in the area of child vulnerability.

Exploratory factor analyses to test for rational item groupings and internal consistency by domain helped establish the CYRM's measurement unit equivalence (van de Vijver & Leung, 1997) and cultural variation. This analysis first explored the hypothesized nested ecological model, followed by the logical sort of the youth by context (final selection of groupings included: minority world boys and girls; majority world girls; majority world boys living in high context/cohesive communities; majority world boys living in low context/fractured communities). Commonality of questions in the original 58-item CYRM was also assessed to allow for comparisons between site populations. Results were shared and debated between team members to ensure explanations are valid across contexts.

Calculating Cronbach alpha scores for questions grouped by the four nested levels demonstrated adequate reliability for the piloted version of the CYRM: individual (.84), relational (.66), community (.79), and culture (.71). However, when a valid factor structure was sought for the global sample the ecological nested model could not be reproduced. Using the total variance explained, rotation sums of squared loading and related scree plots, four separate factor structures were found that reflect participants' response patterns. Groups vary by social ecology with minority world (Western) youth, boys and girls, sharing a common factor structure. Girls in the majority world, in settings as diverse as a northern Canadian aboriginal community and a Hong Kong school, share more in common with each other than with boys in their communities. The final logical sort distinguished young males who live in communities that our advisors report share a common purpose and are characterized as cohesive (such as Russia, Palestine, and Hong Kong) and those that do not (such as Colombia, South Africa, and a northern Canadian aboriginal community). Factors grouped items related to themes such as efficacy (across individual and relational levels) and access to material supports (such as medical care and family support).

Based on results from the pilot administration, the CYRM was shortened to 28 items (see Table 1) by examining nonresponse rates and variance on the 58 questions, then calculating the communality of items. An unrotated factor analysis solution of the entire data set was then used to identify questions loading on the first factor. The unrotated solution was preferred as it allowed us to capture a greater amount of variance among the responses of a highly variable group of young people.

Although results are not generalizable, initial work suggests both hypotheses of homogeneity and heterogeneity in patterns of resilience are partially true for global populations of young people under stress. However, the ecological framework commonly adhered to in Western research is not necessarily valid for majority world populations of young people. As well, weak factorial invariance suggests different meanings of the questions to different youth populations.

TABLE 1
28-Item Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) Questions

To what extent . . .
1. Do you have people you look up to?
2. Do you cooperate with people around you?
3. Is getting an education important to you?
4. Do you know how to behave in different social situations?
5. Do you feel that your parent(s) watch you closely?
6. Do you feel that your parent(s) know a lot about you?
7. Do you eat enough most days?
8. Do you strive to finish what you start?
9. Are spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?
10. Are you proud of your ethnic background?
11. Do people think you are fun to be with?
12. Do you talk to your family about how you feel?
13. Are you able to solve problems without using illegal drugs and/or alcohol?
14. Do you feel supported by your friends?
15. Do you know where to go in your community to get help?
16. Do you feel you belong at your school?
17. Do you think your family will always stand by you during difficult times?
18. Do you think your friends will always stand by you during difficult times?
19. Are you treated fairly in your community?
20. Do you have opportunities to show others that you are becoming an adult?
21. Are you aware of your own strengths?
22. Do you participate in organized religious activities?
23. Do you think it is important to serve your community?
24. Do you feel safe when you are with your family?
25. Do you have opportunities to develop job skills that will be useful later in life?
26. Do you enjoy your family's traditions?
27. Do you enjoy your community's traditions?
28. Are you proud to be (Nationality: _____)?

Resolving the tension between homogeneity and heterogeneity will require further testing, though it seems from our limited results that resilience related phenomena share culturally embedded aspects and universal dimensions making them relevant globally. Results from the qualitative aspects of the study involving 89 youth from all 14 sites show similar tensions between sameness and difference across the sample (Ungar et al., 2007).

THREE PROBLEMS

Problem of Definitional Ambiguity

Although the IRP successfully named domains of concern that were associated with positive development under stress, the way those domains were understood by different youth populations appear to vary. We conclude that definitions of *resilience* are ambiguous when viewed across cultures. A similar dynamic between context, culture and positive growth is reported in Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, and Penner's (2006) review of the psychology of prosocial behavior. Dovidio and his colleagues remind us that what constitutes adaptive behavior is dependent on how each society defines sociability: "A given behavior is not inherently or universally prosocial (or antisocial for that matter). Rather, this is a social judgment that could change dramatically as the result of changes in the cir-cumstances or historical and political context in which the behavior takes place" (p. 21). The variability in the IRP factorial models, notably for the boys in high and low cohesion context majority world settings, demonstrates that resilience related aspects of young people's lives are embedded in social discourses that delimit or expand children's choices for behavior. Similarly Tweed and Conway (2006) explained in regard to coping: "The very idea of what makes a good 'outcome' is itself subject to cultural variability, and researchers should be wary of over-applying particular measures of psychological coping success (e.g., increases in self-esteem) in cultures where these measures have less meaning for that purpose" (p. 148).

The researcher working across contexts, therefore, is wise to attend to variability in how constructs are understood locally and the value negotiated for each. A good example of this complexity is found in Burton, Allison, and Obeidallah's (1995) study of African American youth. Their work demonstrates that there are at least five dimensions to families and communities that increase the likelihood of teens making an earlier transition to an adult status: the inconsistencies teens experience regarding what is "expected adolescent behavior"; the lack of clarity in the boundaries between developmental phases in "age-condensed families"; overlap between the social world of teens and their parents; perceptions by teens and adults of an accelerated life course; and

alternative contextualized definitions of what is considered a successful developmental outcome. Based on these criteria, Burton et al. concluded that "adolescence as a distinct developmental stage among inner-city African-American teens may be ambiguous at best" (p. 127). How then are we to distinguish the resilient youth from the vulnerable? Does the "hurried child" (Elkind, 2001) actually meet social expectations for positive (and quick) development for urban African American youth? As previously mentioned, such culturally embedded expectations of resilience can be sanitized if measures are designed by those outside the population being studied. To address this problem, the IRP attempted to introduce multiple voices in its instrument development. This iterative process appears to have allowed for a reliable set of questions across contexts with good construct validity.

Problem of Predictability

It would be difficult to predict from one population to the next which constellation of items on the CYRM would most likely be associated with resilience. There is evidence in the literature that such complexity is to be expected when contexts change for young people. For example, Phelps et al.'s (2007) longitudinal component of their 4H study which included 1,184 youth found changes in risk and positive youth development (PYD) (a set of factors congruent with studies of resilience) over a 3-year period as the young people transitioned into middle school. Despite hypothesizing a steady decrease in risk and increases in PYD, six distinct patterns were evident in growth trajectories. Some youth remained stable, other decreased PYD, while still others became more at risk.

Similarly, predictability is likely to be compromised by the nature of the stressors children face. In Wyman's (2003) discussion of the Rochester Child Resilience Project, he noted patterns of behavior not typically associated with thriving among children, yet predictive of success: "The group of children who demonstrated enhanced adjustment in high-adversity families reported low levels of affective responsiveness to others' feelings and low acceptance of others' affect expressiveness compared to competent youths in more favorable settings. They also reported minimal engagement and emotional involvement with their primary caregivers" (p. 310). Wyman's results mirror those of the IRP. Distinct patterns of resilience are context dependent, and it is difficult to predict the way factors such as parental attachment are going to manifest among children who cope well across cultures and contexts.

Wyman (2003) explained such lack of predictability as the consequence of fit: "When we identify qualities of 'fit' between protective factors and contexts we will clarify positive developmental processes" (p. 295). This same concept of *fit* is found in Dei et al.'s (1997) study of the intersection of race with academic achievement discussed earlier. Dei et al. studied 200 Toronto, Canada, youth,

Black boys and girls and a comparison group of non-Black youth. They found that the phenomenon of "dropping out" (associated with risk) has many different meanings when investigated with a sensitivity to the processes of exclusion and inclusion. Dropping out, according to Dei et al. can also mean "pushed out":

> Contrary to the conventional wisdom surrounding the issue of student disengagement, Black respondents did not associate low scholastic achievement with dropping out. Dropping out was recognized as a process which had much broader social and cultural implications . . . These behaviours may be symptoms of a larger problem and can often tell us something about the process of schooling rather than simply about the individual. (p. 62)

The unwillingness of Black students to conform to the normative standards, codes, or conventions of the culture within schools can be seen as an act of resistance (an aspect of behavior typically associated with efficacy and resilience). This resistance is not simply teenage rebellion; it is a response to the oppressive conditions that constrain cultural identity and the development of a healthy sense of self. Thus, for this population of youth, the benchmark criterion for resilience of academic engagement may overlook the more culturally valid predictor of resilience: resistance to conventional expectations and norms.

Measurement Problems

When working across cultures, resilience researchers have tended to favor the export of measures from minority world contexts to validate them for different populations in the majority world. There are a number of problems with this approach related to the heterogeneity of populations under stress. When Alegria et al. (2004) sought standardized measures applicable to ethnic minority populations they realized that the heterogeneity of the populations they were studying for the NLAAS would confound the use of most measures:

> Although a thorough understanding of concepts relevant to one culture is obtained using the emic approach, these concepts are not necessarily comparable to those of other cultures. On the other hand, the etic approach emphasizes reliability by standardizing the measures at the expense of validity (measuring what is supposed to be measured). Validity may be compromised by imposing artifactual cross-cultural homogeneity due to a constricted conceptualizatioin (omitting differences across groups) embedded in the instrumentation. (p. 272)

Getting around these shortcomings inevitably leads to unsatisfactory compromises. Measures can be developed specific to each culture, thereby limiting external validity, or their design can be negotiated between cultural groups, resulting in the likelihood of weak factorial invariance (Michaels, Barr, Roosa, & Knight, 2007).

When more iterative design work, such as that employed during the IRP is used, there is the possibility of seeking concurrent validity between measures that represent emic and etic perspectives. However, standardized measures imported for purposes of comparison are unlikely to augment neither their validity nor the validity of the iterative measure unless the imported instrument is also known to be culturally relevant.

When this problem of equivalency bias and factorial invariance has been carefully examined, the results are often a patchwork of similarities and differences across domains of factors associated with resilience. A good example is work by Michaels et al. (2007) on self-esteem assessment across four ethnic groups in the United States: White, Mexican American, African American, and Native American. Putting aside the confounding influence of dominant culture (a study of these four groups in four different countries would have made for a stronger design), Michaels et al. showed that there is evidence of functional equivalence, factorial invariance, and construct validity across some but not all dimensions of self-esteem. Their sample included 1,337 ethnically diverse 9- to 14-year-olds in one low-income, inner-city school district in the Southwestern United States. Their most consistent results were for global self-worth, with the least invariance shown across populations on that subscale. Results for other subscales measuring scholastic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioral conduct, and social acceptance were less uniform. Results show that there are many dimensions to self-esteem that may vary or be unknown among populations with a more collectivist orientation. They conceded: "our results . . . indicate that some self-esteem domains may not be meaningful to certain ethnic groups or that these instruments may not adequately represent the construct in those groups" (p. 286). Results such as these, and those of the IRP, highlight that differences in how resilience related constructs such as self-esteem are understood across cultures affect the viability of cross-cultural comparisons using standardized measures.

CONCLUSION

Resilience researchers who seek to validate the construct across cultures are not likely to find satisfactory resolution to the problem of construct equivalency, nor support for universalist claims. Although the broad concept of children surviving despite exposure to adversity as the result of the provision of meaningful resources by their social and physical ecologies has been shown to be relevant to a great many populations (see, e.g., Liebel's, 2004, examination of working children across cultures), what resilience looks like and the factors that predict it are likely to vary. By defining resilience as an intrapsychic set of characteristics and a quality of extrinsic ecologies, the variability in the plasticity shown by

individual children as they achieve positive development may be better understood. The search for a singular metric with an invariant factor structure is unlikely. We need instead models to explain resilience that are more adaptable. Elsewhere we detail "tensions" between what children need and how well they are provided psychosocial and material resources (Ungar et al., 2007). We have suggested that children succeed to the extent that they balance different needs. For example, an 11-year-old child who works may forgo his right to education and social justice but may still account for his experience as positive, enabling him to feel important and make a contribution to his family and community. Standardizing the measure of children's experience runs the risk of overlooking localized discourses of healthy functioning and pathologizing (colonizing) the experience of those whose lives are different from the mainstream.

The danger of etic perspectives in applied fields of cross-cultural research like the study of resilience in different countries is that resulting programming initiatives that bolster intrinsic qualities and opportunity structures may miss the needs of target populations whose normative development follows non-normative (majority world) pathways. As sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000) wrote, "One does not plant a citrus-tree grove to squeeze a lemon" (p. 122). We speculate that indigenization of research can help contribute to more targeted and culturally embedded intervention.

REFERENCES

Alegria, M., Vila, D., Woo, M., et al. (2004). Cultural relevance and equivalence in the NLAAS instrument: Integrating etic and emic in the development of cross-cultural measures for a psychiatric epidemiology and services study of Latinos. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research, 13*(4), 270–288.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Berry, J. W. (1969). On cross-cultural comparability. *International Journal of Psychology, 4,* 119–128.

Brislin, R., Lonner, W., & Thorndike, R. (1973). *Cross-cultural research methods.* New York: Wiley.

Brown, B. B., Larson, R. W. & Saraswathi, T. S. (Eds.). (2002). *The world's youth: Adolescence in eight regions of the globe.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Burton, L. M., Allison, K. W., & Obeidallah, D. (1995). Social context and adolescence: Perspectives on development among inner-city African-American teens. In L. Crockett & A. C. Crouter (Eds.), *Pathways through adolescence: Individual development in relation to social context* (pp. 119–138). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Carrey, N., & Ungar, M. (Eds.). (2007). Resilience. *Monograph for the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 16*(2).

Dawes, A., & Donald, D. (2000). Improving children's chances: Developmental theory and effective interventions in community contexts. In D. Donald, A. Dawes, & J. Louw (Eds.), *Addressing childhood adversity* (pp. 1–25). Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip.

Dei, G. J. S., Massuca, J., McIsaac, E., & Zine, J. (1997). *Reconstructing "drop-out": A critical ethnography of the dynamics of Black students' disengagement from school.* Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Donald, D., Dawes, A., & Louw, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Addressing childhood adversity*. Cape Town, South Africa: David Philip.

Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., Schroeder, D. A., & Penner, L. A. (2006). *The social psychology of prosocial behaviour*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Elkind, D. (2001). *The hurried child*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus.

Elliott, D. S., Menard, S., Rankin, B., Elliott, A., Wilson, W. J., & Huizinga, D. (2006). *Good kids from bad neighborhoods: Successful development in social context*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gilligan, R. (1999). Enhancing the resilience of children and young people in public care by mentoring their talents and interests. *Child and Family Social Work, 4,* 187–196

Grant, B. F., Stinson, F. S., Hasin, D. S., Dawson, D. A., et al. (2004). Immigration and lifetime prevalence of DSM-IV psychiatric disorders among Mexican Americans and non-Hispanic Whites in the United States: Results from the national Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 61*(12), 1226–1233.

van Hoorn, J. L., Komlósi, A., Suchar, E., & Samelson, D. A. (2000). *Adolescent development and rapid social change: Perspectives from Eastern Europe*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Kağitçibaşi, C. (2006). Theoretical perspectives on family change. In J. Georgas, J. W. Berry, F. J. R. van de Vijver, C. Kağitçibaşi, & Y. H. Poortinga (Eds.), *Families across cultures: A 30-nation psychological study* (pp. 72–89). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, F. W. (2005). *Working with youth-at-risk in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Liebel, M. (2004). *A will of their own: Cross-cultural perspectives on working children*. London: Zed Books.

Luthar, S. (Ed.). (2003). *Resilience and vulnerability: Adaptation in the context of childhood adversities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam-Crisp, J., Aptekar, L., & Kironyo, W. (2005). The theory of resilience and its application to street children in the minority and majority world. In Author (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 71–88). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Michaels, M. L., Barr, A., Roosa, M. W. & Knight, G. P. (2007). Self-esteem: Assessing measurement equivalence in a multiethnic sample of youth. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 27,* 269–295.

Morris, E. W. (2007). "Ladies" or "loudies"?: Perceptions and experiences of Black girls in classrooms. *Youth and Society, 38,* 490–514.

Phelps, E., Balsano, A. B., Peltz, J. S., Zimmerman, S. M., Lerner, R. M., & Lerner, J. V. (2007). Nuances in early adolescent developmental trajectories of positive and of problematic/risk behaviors: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 16*(2), 473–496.

Sanchez, J. I., Spector, P. E., & Cooper, C. L. (2006). Frequently ignored methodological issues in cross-cultural stress research. In P. T. P. Wong & L. C. J. Wong (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural perspectives on stress and coping* (pp. 187–202). New York: Springer.

Seccombe, K. (2002). "Beating the odds" versus "changing the odds": Poverty, resilience, and family policy. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 64*(2), 384–394.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. New York: Zed Books.

Trickett, E. J., & Birman, D. (2000). Interventions with diverse children and adolescents: Contextualizing a wellness orientation. In D. Cicchetti, J. Rappaport, I. Sandler, & R. P. Weissberg (Eds.), *The promotion of wellness in children and adolescents* (pp. 371–394). Washington, DC: CWLA Press.

Tweed, R. G., & Conway, L. G. (2006). Coping strategies and culturally influenced beliefs about the world. In P. T. P. Wong & L. C. J. Wong (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural perspectives on stress and coping* (pp. 133–154). New York: Springer.

Ungar, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to Resilience across cultures and contexts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ungar, M. (2006). Nurturing hidden resilience in at-risk youth across cultures. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 15*(2), 53–58.

Ungar, M. (2008). Resilience across cultures. *British Journal of Social Work, 38*(2), 218–235.

Ungar, M., Brown, M., Liebenberg, L., Othman, R., Kwong, W. M., Armstrong, M. & Gilgun, J. (2007). Unique pathways to resilience across cultures. *Adolescence, 42*(166), 287–310.

Ungar, M., Lee. A. W., Callaghan, T., & Boothroyd, R. (2005). An international collaboration to study resilience in adolescents across cultures. *Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation, 6*(1), 5–24.

Ungar, M., & Liebenberg, L. (2005). The International Resilience Project: A mixed methods approach to the study of resilience across cultures. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to RESILIENCE across cultures and contexts* (pp. 211–226). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

van de Vijver, F., & Leung, K. (1997). *Methods and data analysis for cross-cultural research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wong, P. T. P., & Wong, L. C. J. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of multicultural perspectives on stress and coping*. New York: Springer.

Wyman, P. A. (2003). Emerging perspectives on context specificity of children's adaptation and resilience: Evidence from a decade of research with urban children in adversity. In S. S. Luthar (Ed.), *Resilience and vulnerability: Adaptation in the context of childhood adversities* (pp. 293–317). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.