

Adapting Visual Methodologies to Identify Youth Protective Processes in Negotiating Resilience across Cultures and Contexts

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This paper reports on methodological innovations in an ecological investigation of protective processes in the experiences of youths in transition in eight locations around the globe. Several visual methods were enlisted in working with thriving early adolescents in challenging transitional or relocational situations. Resilience is viewed here as processes that are contextually and culturally specific functional adaptations to environmental challenges. Such adaptations were determined by local Community Advisors (CAs) to signal that a youth was 'growing up well' (Ungar, 2008). The methodologies adapted to this study of youth involved videotaping one full day in the life of each participant (Gillen, Cameron, Tapanya, Pinto, Hancock, Young, & Accorti Gamannossi, 2006), a photo elicitation procedure (Liebenberg, 2009), and semistructured interviews with the youths to engage their reflective responses to our interpretations of their daily experiences. The international, interdisciplinary research team co-constructed their understanding of protective factors in the youths' days through viewing and reviewing the visual materials in concert with the participants' perceptions of them and in consultation with local CAs. The lessons learned from adapting these visual methods to gain appreciation of protective processes in youths' lives are offered.

The current research programme follows from an international ecological study of thriving in the early childhood years. Gillen, Cameron, Tapanya, Pinto, Hancock, Young, and Accorti Gamannossi (2006), reported details of a new methodology they had developed to investigate somewhat naturalistically the in-home experiences of toddlers in seven locations around the globe (Thailand, Canada, Italy, the UK, Turkey, Peru, and the US). The method involved filming an entire 'day in the life' (DITL) of each participant. The purpose of the investigation was to extend understanding of the roots of early-years' thriving in diverse contexts and to focus on an understudied population, namely, young girls. The investigations of this international,

interdisciplinary team of researchers have revealed in-depth understanding of aspects of the toddlers' musicality, symbol system acquisitions, and eating experiences and highlighted interactions enhancing expression of their emotional security and ways in which the children used humour to negotiate the rich landscapes of their daily lives. Many of these studies are expanded and integrated in Gillen and Cameron (2010).

Visual methodologies are not new in social science research; in fact many innovative enquiries have employed various versions of them (e.g., Pink, 2007). However, Pauwels (2010) has suggested that there is a need for a conceptual framework for considering visual data, as there is not a broadly accepted systematic body of literature

to guide researchers in their diverse application. He helpfully listed some of the many issues that arise in collecting, reporting and analysing such data, including the traps of naïve realism in viewing visual representations as reality, concerns as to how to report such data in traditional scholarly outlets, and the need for a greater level of theoretical and methodological rigour in visual inquiry. Hancock, Gillen, and Pinto warn against “an exaggerated sense of confidence” (2010, p. 39) in the veracity of interpretations from viewing visual materials, while on the other hand, the opportunity for repeated viewing is very helpful to achieving deep analyses and rich interpretations of representations of participants’ experiences. Visual data are multimodal; human interactions are multimodal; capturing natural exchanges, be they in video or on film enhances conceptual perspectives, especially when deployed systematically and respectfully in collaboration with research participants and the people and environments in which the engage.

This visual methodology of filming a child’s day in the life seemed a generative avenue for investigating the ways in which resilient adolescents might negotiate their daily lives as well. It was thus that a new interdisciplinary team of international scholars and their community advisors (CAs) came together to examine the protective processes that might be in place for resilient youth in transition across cultures and contexts. This new ‘Negotiating Resilience’ project’s aim was to explore and understand pathways to resilience from youths’ own cultural and contextual perspectives. Observing youth in micro- to macro-contextual situations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) enhances endeavours to identify the nature and texture of their ‘growing up well’. Furthermore, recent developments in resilience research have urged deeper understandings of how specific cultures and contexts nuance the processes of resilience

(Boyden, 2003; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007; Clauss-Ehlers, Yang & Chen, 2006).

This new aim with older children necessitated youth-friendly adaptations of the day in the life (DITL) methodology that would afford a depth of understanding of resilience processes through asking the following research questions: First, are protective factors and processes associated with resilience that contribute to the positive development of young people culture- and context-specific? Second, how might culture- and context-specific protective processes inform resilience-theory building? And what do protective processes identified by resilience researchers contribute to understanding challenges of young people in transition between cultures or contexts?

These guiding questions foregrounded the more recent calls to culturally and contextually sensitive resilience research (Boyden, 2003; Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007), as noted above. Resiliency processes, that is, thriving in the face of significant adversity, have long been investigated. Early studies, moving from risk factors and vulnerability turned to emphasise individual (Anthony & Cohler, 1987) and then a triad of individual, familial, and community strengths (e.g., Garmezy, 1991; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2002; Werner & Smith, 2001), importantly countervailing earlier investigators’ tendencies to pathologise. More recently, investigators (Cameron 2009; Theron & Theron, 2010; Ungar, 2008) have voiced concerns that many resiliency investigations narrowly focus on minority youth, often failing to acknowledge cultural complexities and dynamics and thus centering more on individual characteristics than on socio-cultural factors in strength-based analyses (Boyden & de Berry, 2004). Explorations today seek an understanding of positive development of at-risk youths considered through the observation, examination, and analysis of a broader social-ecological

environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in order to understand thriving from a strength-based perspective (e.g., Jelicic, Bobek, Phelps, Lerner & Lerner, 2007; Grotberg, 2003) within specific cultural contexts (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2006; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2007).

Our research acknowledges and builds on these historical roots, but takes this newer approach in order to deepen understanding of youth who not only survive adversity, but who even thrive in the face of it (Cameron, Lau & Tapanya, 2009). This work is somewhat naturalistic, it is cultural and contextual, and it focuses specifically on the perspectives of the youth through the deployment of sensitive visual methodologies. The challenge with which each participant in this study was confronted, and that we sought to explore visually, was a significant transition, which placed each youth at risk for maladaptive outcomes. The youths were enrolled in schools, where their teachers, youth workers and CAs remarked on their efficacious survival strategies. Our task then was to spend some considerable time (approximately 20 hours) with each youth, using intensive visual methodologies to unearth constructive factors in their experience from which they derive their strengths. Our interpretations are grounded in the rich data gathered in active collaboration with the youths themselves for the purpose of uncovering factors and processes that reveal sources of their well being and indeed thriving. However, the purpose of this paper is not to document these emerging interpretations of youth resilience (in this regard see, for example, Cameron, in press; Cameron et al., 2009; Cameron, Fox, Anderson & Cameron, 2010; Liebenberg, Didkowsky, & Ungar, in press; Theron, Cameron, Didkowsky, Lau, Liebenberg, & Ungar, in press; Ungar, Theron & Didkowsky, 2011) but to comment critically on the methodology. We hope that our methodological reflections and subsequent

questions will encourage other resilience-focused researchers to utilise visual methodologies, and to use them more critically.

The present paper describes the adaptations and additions made to the early childhood DITL procedures to allow the capturing of the teenagers' personal perspectives and perceptions, and their projections of what they believed were keys to their own doing well within the challenges they faced. Following this detailed description of the methodologies, we reflect critically on the advantages, caveats and challenges of the adapted procedures for the study of resilience.

Methodology

In the present study the DITL methodology was transformed from an early years focus to an application suitable for the investigation of resilient adolescents who had experienced significant transitions, poverty, and possibly even refugee status, in diverse locations around the globe.

The original DITL study, in brief, relied on researcher-community networks to recruit thriving toddlers and on parents willing to invite researchers into their homes for a full day of filming. The DITL methodology encouraged the toddlers' parents to script the day: for example, although the focus was on the thriving toddler, parents chose on which day to invite researchers into their homes and what activities the child engaged in whilst the filming took place. The toddlers' parents participated in two interviews: one in advance of the filming on their family demographic circumstances and parenting practices; and later, they also helped researchers to interpret segments of the visual data (parents viewed one half hour of excerpts of the toddler's day that were selected by the researchers in collaboration): parents were invited to comment critically on the explicit and implicit meaning of the data for understanding of their own toddler's thriving (see Gillen & Cameron [2010]

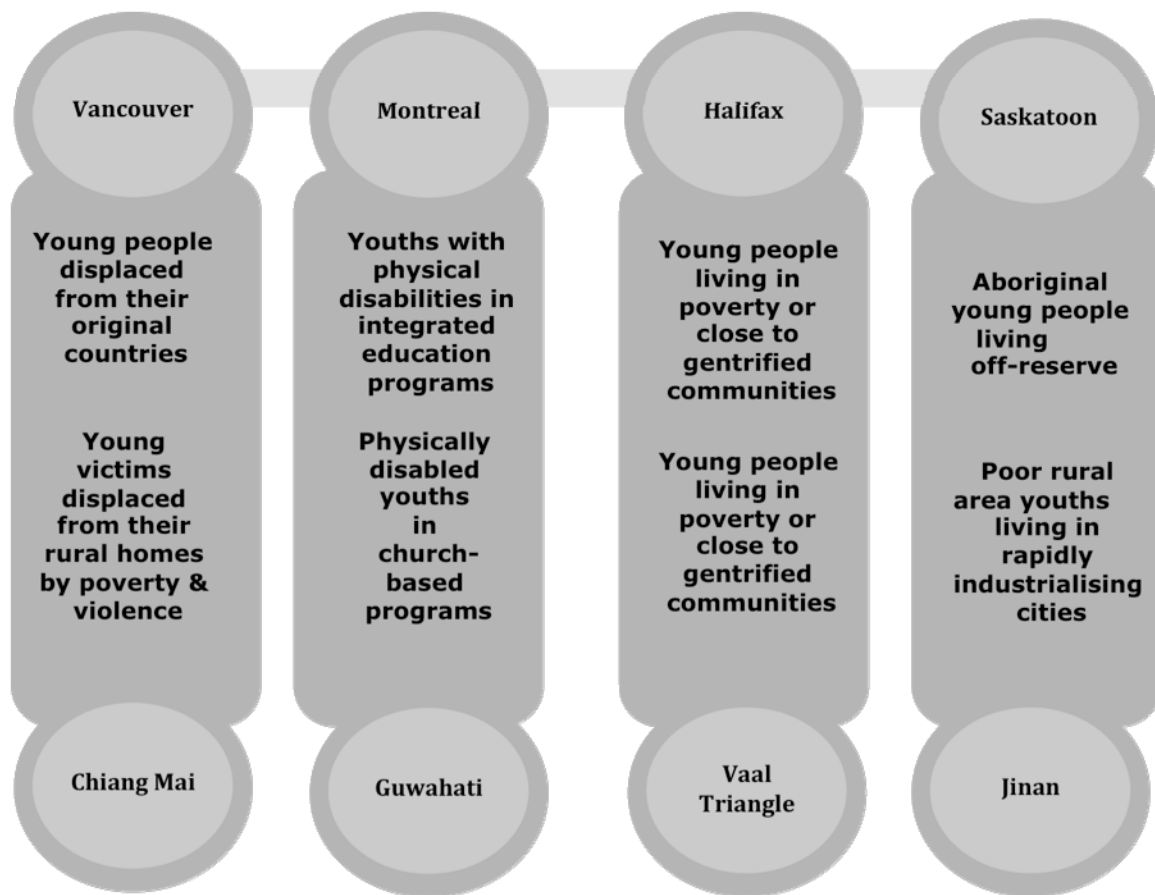


Figure 1. Participant location pairings

Chapter 1 for a detailed account of the toddler DITL methodology as it was effected in seven locations around the globe and Chapter 2 and Hancock et al. [2010] for an extended critical review of that particular use of visual methodologies).

The above procedure was modified and extended to accommodate the habitus of adolescents. For instance, the teenagers (both males and females this time), rather than their parents, orchestrated how the day should be played out. A standardised interview adapted from the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM, Ungar et al., 2008) was conducted with the youths rather than the demographics and parenting practices interview with parents. A photo elicitation procedure (Liebenberg, 2009) in which participants were provided a disposable camera for a week to take photographs of

people, places and things of importance to them was added to the methodology. In essence, this adapted DITL offered a participatory qualitative methodology delineated in full below as eight phases of data generation with thriving teens in transition.

Teen Participants

Sixteen resilient adolescents were purposefully recruited from four Canadian sites and one site each in China, India, South Africa, and Thailand. Each Canadian site was matched with one of the international ones, where the young people faced similar displacement issues. There were four pairings: (a) young people displaced from their original countries matched with youths displaced from their homes because their parents sought work in another region or country (Vancouver, Canada and Chiang

Mai, Thailand); (b) youths with physical disabilities in integrated education programs matched with physically disabled youths in religion/faith-based programs (in Montreal, Canada and Meghalaya, India); (c) young people living in poverty close to gentrified communities (in Halifax, Canada and the Vaal Triangle, South Africa); and (d) Aboriginal young people living off reserve, paired with poor rural area youths living in rapidly industrialising cities (in Saskatoon, Canada and Jinan, China, respectively). Figure 1 depicts these pairings.

Community leaders in each location purposively chose participants who: 1) were actively experiencing a targeted challenge relating to transition, poverty and/or other adversity at the time of the study, 2) were seen by community advisors as “growing up well under adversity”, 3) had caregivers who would consent along with the youths themselves, and 4) were between 13 and 15 years of age at time of videotaping.

Procedures

The teenager DITL methodology included eight distinct phases summarised in Table 1.

Phase one: An ethical introduction. To commence, it is important to identify the critical ethical considerations associated with deployment of these visual participatory methodologies: Before beginning the study we obtained institutional ethical approval in each research location. As noted above, a community advisor (CA) in each context recommended adolescents that appeared to be thriving in spite of a transition and/or other adversities. Upon the CA’s suggestion (and subsequent to the advisor’s having spoken to the youths and their families who invited our call), we contacted each recommended youth and requested a visit to their homes where we would discuss the full extent of the study with them and their families.

At each site, one researcher from Canada and a local research assistant visited

the home at a mutually acceptable time and explained the study in great detail, describing our research goals, that is, ‘to understand resilient youth in context’. We explained all the procedures, including the interviews, the photo elicitations, and day in the life filming. We explained that they would be free at any time during the study to withdraw from further participation. We described constraints on any commitment to maintain their anonymity, given the visual nature of the data gathered, explaining that we intended to report our findings at academic conferences and disseminate our analyses in academic print publications. We emphasised that our focus was on the teenager but that all who entered the view of the camera would be asked to provide informed bystander consent before being filmed. We emphasised that there would be an extensive commitment of time in participating and in reflecting on materials. We also explained that we hoped to share their composite videos with their matched teenagers abroad and would like them also to reflect on their paired international partners’ video compilation. We then left it to the families to contact us if they were still interested in being involved in the study. No youths we visited refused participation. We believe that the advisory committees of community leaders must have accurately apprised the families in advance as to the extent of the expected commitments of time and effectively addressed other potential concerns that might have arisen for the teens or their families.

Phase two: Initial interview and trial filming. The second visit to the homes of the youths involved their participating in a semi-structured audio-taped interview adapted from the CRYM (Ungar, Clark, Kwong, Makhnach, & Cameron, 2005). Ten questions such as “What words would you use to describe people who grow up well here despite having problems or difficulties?”, “What kinds of things are most challenging for you growing up here?”, “What do you do

Table 1
Summary of Methodologies Adaptation

Research Phase	Researchers' task	Research activity
1. Initial recruitment: Youths (13–16 years, one female and one male in 8 locations [4 Canadian and 4 international sites]), identified by local CAs as doing well in transition, visited at home.	Family visit – researchers meet youths and their families, providing detail of research procedures and informed consents. Leave, enabling personal decisions; asking youth to contact them if they are still interested in participating.	None.
2. Preliminary research visit: Having obtained clear agreement to proceed, an hour or more is spent in family home primarily with youth.	Researchers obtain parental and youth informed consent, interview youth, practice filming, provide camera for photo elicitation task and set date for next visit to film.	Audio taped interview regarding demographic, contextual, and resilience information; acclimating filming practice; photo elicitation instructions.
3. <i>Day in the Life</i> filming	Local researchers return to youth's home on a weekend day or holiday.	One researcher films day (up to 12 hours), other takes field notes, sketches surroundings. Researchers retrieve disposable camera.
4. Compilation selection	Two researchers from the international team at other location (s) view the <i>day</i> to create half-hour compilation of exemplary interchanges.	Local & distal colleagues select approximately six 5-minute segments independently, discuss and agree on a 30-minute compilation to elicit reflections.
5. Iterative data collection phase	Researchers show youth compilation, review photos, elicit reflections.	Two local researchers tape youth viewing and discussing the day's clips as well as photos.
6. Data from the first four stages of data collection shared with team	Researchers compile information from their data collection and share with team investigators.	Interview responses, field notes, maps, video footage distributed to international team.
7. Consultations between team members, themes selected	International team members collaborate on data analysis.	Sub groups of the international team work together on member-initiated themes.
8. All available data employed for analyses, and dissemination	Investigators collaborate in examining data, selecting passages for analysis, conducting analyses and publication of findings.	Protocol analyses conducted and shared between researchers. Local researchers ensure cultural integrity of themes grounded in the data.

when you face difficulties in your life?” and “What are your hopes for the future?” were asked to identify their understandings of risk, dislocation, and resilience. The interview was conducted by the local research assistant in the participant’s mother tongue and translated into English at a later stage. Where participants could also speak English, the Canadian researcher helped probe responses. In Vancouver, Halifax, and Saskatoon, Canada the language of the interview was English. In Montreal, Canada the interviews were conducted in French.

At the close of the interview, the researchers provided the participant with a disposable camera and asked the participants to photograph (before the day’s filming) objects, people, and situations that were important to them in their lives. Finally, the researchers conducted a trial video taping session to encourage youth familiarity and comfort with the procedures to be followed during their day of filming.

Phase three: Day in the life filming. At a mutually agreed upon day (usually a weekend or holiday day) when the participant was not in school (constraints on filming in such a setting were prohibitive) and at a mutually agreed upon time, the cameraperson (the Canadian researcher) and field-note taker (the local research assistant) arrived at the home of the youth to capture an entire day in their life. Up to 12 hours of the day, were filmed, essentially following the youth’s personal agenda for the day. As noted earlier, any person entering the video field was asked to consent to being filmed or was asked to stay outside the view of the camera. During the filming the local research assistant recorded detailed observations and mapped the surroundings. When the participant called the filming to a halt at the end of the day, the researchers collected the disposable camera and had its film developed before the next iterative phase of the research.

Phase four: Creating a composite video. Following the day of filming, the

Canadian researcher who had done the actual filming distributed copies of the full day of filming along with the field notes to at least two distal researchers in the project team (investigators in another of the research locations) and to the two local researchers. All these researchers independently viewed the day and nominated at least one half dozen passages that either exemplified the day and appeared to represent a key to the strengths exhibited by the participant, or that raised questions about the activities depicted. The viewers consulted in real time, sharing their nominations with explanations, and agreement was reached as to at least six clips from the day that were to be compiled into an approximately half-hour composite which participants were to view and reflect upon.

Phase five: Participant reflection on the composite video and photographs. The local researcher(s) returned to the youths to engage them in collaborative interpretation of the compilations. The youth were shown the video compilation and were asked after each clip (in an open ended way, such as, “what does this bring to mind?”) to reflect and comment on it. They were asked if anything or any event during their day had been missed in the compilation that was especially important to them. The same reflective procedure was followed with the photographs that the youth had taken. Finally, participants viewed the compilations of their internationally matched partners and were invited to comment critically on what they believed to contribute to their matched partners’ resilience.

Phase six: Intersite data sharing. All sixteen composite videos along with translated transcripts of the videos and complete sets of translated field notes were made available to the collaborating researchers across the global sites. The collaborating researchers were encouraged to engage with the data and to comment critically on what they perceived to be encouraging resilience across sites.

Simultaneously, collaborators were cautioned to be aware of how cultural competence (or incompetence) might colour their interpretations (Mertens, 2009).

Phase seven: Intersite researcher reflection. Researchers revisited the participant co-interpreted data and reflected further on youth perspectives of what encouraged their and other youths' resilience. Researchers shared their emerging insights with one another electronically and at a face-to-face symposia and team meetings in conferences in Berlin (International Congress of Psychology, 2008); Park City, Utah (Jean Piaget Society meetings, 2009), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Society for Research in Adolescence, 2010), Lusaka, Zambia (International Society for Studies in Behavioural Development, 2010) and in Halifax, Canada (Resilience Research Centre, 2007 and 2010). This iterative process encouraged on-going data interpretation and collaborations.

Phase eight: Dissemination. During this current and ongoing phase, researchers are disseminating emerging insights of the cultural and contextual underpinnings of resilience at conferences and in journals. Each dissemination initiative is viewed as an opportunity to invite reflection from wider audiences on the nascent theory building that this project is affording and on the usefulness of the novel visual participatory methodologies employed, as in this current paper.

Lessons Learned

On reflection, we have learnt numerous valuable lessons in the process of these methodological adaptations of the DITL for international research with resilient youth. We clustered these lessons thematically as researcher diversity, contextual challenges, methodological challenges and opportunities for deeper understandings of resilience.

Researcher diversity

Because this project included researchers from five countries and multiple

disciplines (developmental and health psychology, education, sociology and social work) there was a multiplicity of mother tongues, cultures, and professional paradigms in operation. This diversity had both advantages and challenges, as discussed below.

Different first languages. All footage ultimately calls for carefully conducted transcriptions and interpretations of interchanges. Significant, though not insurmountable, challenges arise from the fact that the youths all used their mother tongues in their daily comportment. This was not a problem for the local investigators, but the distal researchers seldom had sufficient comfort with the languages of the other locations to conduct analyses in the original tongues. There were some topics like those involving movement and emotional expression that were relatively more transparent to distal researchers without detailed interpretation, but verbal interchanges, especially of a humorous or metaphorical nature required transcription, translation, and close, culturally-informed interpretation.

Cultural diversity. The issue of interpretation becomes even more challenging, perhaps, when cultural differences between researchers emerge such that observations of local mores are not simply puzzling but possibly even misleading. Behaviour in one location, be it an interchange between siblings or best friends could be interpreted very differently under different cultural lenses. This discrepancy meant that the local investigator always had primary responsibility to interpret the data with the backing of the youths themselves and the local youth-friendly advisors to ensure fidelity of meaning. It was necessary for the advisory team to be deeply involved and usually domiciled in the location of the youth. This encouraged cultural competence (Mertens, 2009) in the interpretation of the data. The best the distal

partners could do was look at the footage as well as they might, through the eyes of local researchers, their advisors and the participants themselves. Distal researchers had to question, but ultimately stand back from intervening on or refuting locally generated interpretations. Discussions with the distal partners of course enhanced the questions and interpretations, as their perspectives put local norms into a broader, and sometimes perhaps even more, informative context.

Divergent methodological expectations and disciplinary perspectives. The international team was comprised of collaborators educated and trained in diverse professional contexts that reflected diverse lenses for rich analyses. The range of disciplines represented on the team, from those who had primarily conducted quantitative child developmental studies through to social work researchers who focused on qualitative approaches to knowledge acquisition, meant that each brought their own epistemological perspectives to the analyses. To add to this diversity, there were methodological expectations brought to the table that varied in their attention both to detail and to the broader picture from micro- to macro-considerations. All this diversity yielded rich discussions and research outcomes, but also potentials for serious disagreements about priorities, and goals for the research.

Contextual challenges

Given that the eight locations ranged across minority to majority worlds, there were multiple challenges to address.

Local ethical requirements. In each of the eight locations, the local investigators sought and obtained institutional ethical approval for conducting this visual methods research initiative. This process differed somewhat between sites. For example, some local ethical review boards restricted use of the study's visual data for teaching purposes given they potentially exposed participants. Responsibility was seconded to local CAs to

recruit participants. The CAs made recommendations to the local investigators of participants who matched the criteria of the research. CAs explained to potential participants in great detail the extensive time commitments involved, the fact that the data set was visual so anonymity could easily be compromised, the fact that the visual data would be viewed in terms of their perceived strengths, and that there would be repeated communications with the researchers. A legal guardian was required to consent, but it was the consent of the youths themselves that was most critical. They were told that they could cease engagement in the research at any time, and could request the camera be stopped at any time. The former did not occur and the latter seldom did except at times when the participant went to a washroom or chose to take a nap. In repeated visits to participants, there was never a refusal to maintain engagement. Nevertheless, each location could have had its own particular sensitivity to the implications of engaging in such visual research. Further, these restrictions probably reduced the likelihood that our resilient participants were so vulnerable to personal or legal challenges as some other youths at risk might be, thus reducing potential generality of findings, but this created no problem for the team as the focus was on depth of analysis rather than breadth of variations on thriving.

Community expectations. The community youth leaders on the local advisory committees were clearly energetic advocates for youth. Several expressed the belief that these participants were thriving in spite of, rather than because of, many institutional supports they could have benefitted from. In consequence, it was their spoken agendas that the research be supported in the hope of broad dissemination of the strengths of the individuals and the weakness in the social supports the youths deserved. At the completion of the study each local researcher has been charged with

determining how the data might be disseminated to glean community resources for such enhancing at risk youth. Thus a contextual challenge is that there could be no 'one size fits all' dissemination plan.

Challenge of giving back to community. As indicated above, the research lends itself to information that could be instrumental in addressing the needs of youth at risk. But each community is different in its needs, its relationship to the research and its expectation for community mobilisation. Further, some researchers' indicated that youth community needs might not always be welcomed in a community at large, politics, financial resource deployment and policy agendas often trumping grassroots (and especially minority youth) needs. Furthermore, researchers are often not the most well trained to engage in advocacy work. The team has agreed to work with the advisory committees and youths themselves to determine a sensitive community-based manner of addressing this desideratum.

Technical capacities. Even though each location was provided with the same latest video capture equipment, the technology for exchanging data, viewing footage, and having access to speedy inter-net access for inter-location communications was variable between sites. Despite this, a very helpful localised network was established by the central investigators' research coordinator. Advances in technological standardisation were clearly made in the six years between the commencement of the early childhood and that of the adolescence research projects. Nevertheless, international standards for viewing video materials, access to high speed computing necessary for analysing visual data, and diverse economic living and working standards between majority and minority world environments created challenges to equitable, broad ranging, exchanges of insights about the full data set.

Methodological Challenges

Blurred boundaries. The DITL

methodology resulted in researchers engaging quite intimately with participants: for almost a full waking day, researchers shared the youths' life-worlds and witnessed first-hand the many challenges these young people coped well with. The researchers were privileged as well to view and hear the youths' perceptions of the photographs they took and engaged in several iterative interviews with them. Once seeing injustices being encountered, researchers were required to make decisions as to whether and how to intervene on behalf of the teenagers and their families while the study was in progress. Of course, illegal activities and abuse would have to have been reported, but areas of neglect, or lack of advocacy for whatever reason, or instances of social inequality caused researchers to agonise over boundaries. For example, in instances where youths lived in great poverty it was challenging for researchers not to act as interventionists, encouraging youth to apply for social grants, or not to return with food parcels. Thus, the methodology posed unexpected challenges for the researchers and raised questions about how ethical strict adherence to researcher boundaries is when conducting studies with vulnerable youth.

'Ecological' enough? Although the local investigators worked with their advisory committees to determine in some detail the social-ecological contexts of participants, and lived in the same broad communities as participants do, the specific contexts of the participants were not necessarily entirely familiar to the researchers. The research assistants in many cases were closer to the contexts of the youths but even then, there could have been an education, economic, or experiential gap between them raising the question as to whether the research methodology is 'ecological enough'. Participant observation was indeed only of one day's duration and though it was somewhat naturalistic, there were limits on the naturality of the participants' activities

during their day. It could not be entirely as it would have been, were there not a camera, and two researchers present. Further, the visual research techniques, while giving a deep understanding of the micro-systemic roots of resilience, provided little understanding of the meso- or macro-systemic mechanisms of resilience. However, as Bronfenbrenner (1979) asserted, some efforts at ecological validity are better than none at all. Longitudinal research with the same participants would add considerably to our understanding of the trajectories of the emergent themes in this early adolescent group of hardy individuals.

Too descriptive, too interpretive?

Concerns that the methodology is not ecological enough might be balanced by questions as to the descriptive nature of the work and whether analyses are indeed 'too interpretive'. We tried to guard against such criticism with our reflective and iterative processes and inclusion of the youths themselves in the interpretations. The video data also allow for different points of view on the analyses and consensual determinations as to the fidelity of interpretations. Thus, although a possible limitation may be that the adapted DITL is descriptive, it certainly affords rich description that was co-generated by researchers, local research assistants and youth themselves. In this sense, the participatory approach to analysis helped to counter typical criticisms of visual work, including those of uncritical acceptance of visual data as reality (de Lange, Mitchell & Stuart, 2007).

Data saturation. It is indeed important to have enough data to ensure that observations that can yield reliable findings will emerge. Whilst the current study generated the limited number of 16 cases, we believe that the multi-phased and multiple method structure of the research process did allow for saturated data. Our first visit to the family home gave considerable scope for informal observation of the family and the

youth within it. (We were very careful not to assume in that meeting, though, that the family and teen were on board yet so the conversations were respectfully formal). Once the youth contacted us and invited us back to their home, an in-depth interview with the youth followed by an hour or so of pilot filming provided a good opportunity for us to get a sense of what a usual non-school day might be like. The youths were encouraged to show just what usual activities they engaged in and later they were asked to reflect on the compilation of footage passages. Triangulating between these verbal data and the photo elicitation procedure, which provided opportunities to show us people, places and events important to them that were not necessarily visible in the day's footage, afforded another opportunity for expansion of the terrain and confirmation of our emergent, data-grounded, perspectives. Finally, triangulating between the day's footage, the iterative reflections on them, the photos and their reflections, and the interviews provided a firm ground and many hours of contact with the youth upon which to create the pictures of the protective processes at work in their lives.

Time-consuming and costly procedures.

Undoubtedly, the methodology was costly in resources, time, and professional and participant commitment in each of eight global locations. The cost of the research assistants' intensive training and financial compensation, arranging the repeated meetings with participants, the disbursements for transcriptions and translations, of transporting and supporting assistants to their partnered locations to ensure methodological reliability, and the expenditure of materials required to support the initiative in terms of computer, camera, and sound recording were not immaterial. Funding for subsequent collaborative data analysis fell and continues to fall to the responsibility of those whose professional employment supports writing research papers.

'Ownership' of the data. A critical factor to involvement in the research, perhaps, focuses on data 'ownership'. Ownership is the sense that no distal researcher should feel entitled to work with data (particularly data generated in a diverse cultural context) without the deep involvement of the local team members who are the experts on the contexts of the materials and the circumstances under which the data were collected, and who were engaged with the youths as they responded to the initial interpretations of the data. The entire project is of interest to all who is involved, but when themes are considered, the investigators at the local site must be given responsibility for the final interpretation of their data. As noted earlier, failure to do so would undermine the cultural competence (Mertens, 2009) of the project.

Desirability of longitudinal follow-through. As has been mentioned, the desirability of longitudinal data collection with these same youth was built into the design as participants were recruited to be young enough that a follow-up day could be conducted during a subsequent (three-year hence) grant funding cycle. The stability of the observations could then be assessed. Further, the processes of adaptation over adolescent development could be observed. Another opportunity inherent in such longitudinal follow-up would be to interview and publish the adolescents' perspectives on how they change over time, and how they view their early data gathering experiences. There would be challenges to this plan in that several of the youths are geographically mobile, their families are financially vulnerable, their domicile as refugee claimants is uncertain, impoverished families may not be able to sustain involvement and further, a thriving teen at age 13 might not be thriving at 16 years of age. These factors however, make such longitudinal aspirations all the more needed.

We have maintained contact with

several of the participants and such nascent follow-up suggests that their involvement enriched their perspectives on their experiences and inclined them toward communitarian commitments. As noted above, though, continued follow-up will be challenging.

In summary, each of the lessons learned, as outlined above, have not deterred the team from asserting the value of working in this fashion to develop new avenues for exploring in depth the richly variegated paths strong youths select in negotiating resilience. In addition to the caveats and challenges presented above, working with resilient youth in a participatory, multi-modal visual manner presented distinct opportunities for deep insight into the process of resilience. *Opportunities for Deeper Understandings of Resilience*

Although the adaptation of the *DITL* methodology presented numerous challenges as reviewed above, it also presented unique opportunities to scrutinise how resilience is encouraged in diverse cultural contexts around the globe. Intrinsic to these opportunities were youth voices, participatory data analysis, and visual evidence.

Youth voices. Too often studies of resilience report researcher understandings embedded in quantitative evidence (Richardson, 2002). In this current study youth perspectives were foregrounded. As noted previously, the teen participants directed the day's filming and chose what to capture with their disposable cameras. This meant that in addition to generic resilience-promoting resources (like supportive parents, access to recreation, safe neighbourhoods), themes of resilience-promoting processes emerged that have not previously been emphasised. Some of these included adult willingness to extend nurturance practices to others (Cameron et al., 2009), negotiate perilous social terrain

with humour (Cameron, Fox, Anderson & Cameron, 2010), enact protective cultural values of kinship and youth willingness to embrace cultural practices (Theron et al., in press), youth capacity for artistic expression (Cameron & Theron, in press), and youth participation in family chores (Ungar et al., 2011). In some cases, youth used the photo elicitation opportunity to raise a significant experience not evident during the filmed day (such as by photographing their favourite ('winning') soccer shoes or by photographing a photo of their first snowfall in their new residence as Pablo, the Mexican boy in Canada did) or by including reference to a deceased but psychologically significant father by photographing a photograph of him, as Dang, the Thai girl did. As such, the methodology encouraged opportunities for challenging adult and hegemonic understandings of the resources that nurture resilience.

Participatory data analysis. As described in preceding parts of this article, an outstanding feature of this study was its reliance of collaboration to make sense of the data. This included within site researcher-CA collaboration and CA-participant collaboration and across site researcher collaboration. This participatory process of involving CAs and participants in making meaning of the data not only heightened the rigor of the study, but also allowed more detailed understanding of cultural and contextual processes that might otherwise have gone unemphasised. For example, Molahlehi, the South African male participant and the CA, a Black South African who was active in this community drew researcher attention to the importance of neighbours and teachers as protective resources that shared basic necessities like food and clothing with him. The CA emphasised that this unselfish sharing was rooted in the African philosophy of *ubuntu* or collectivism (Mokwena, 2007).

Therefore, an added value of participatory data analysis is that long-standing conceptualisations of resilience are not reified and that when local people are invited to make meaning of the visual, conceptualisations of resilience reflect what is cultural and contextual.

Persuasive visual evidence. Because this study produced visual data, conference dissemination and community-focused disseminations were rooted in irrefutable, hard evidence. Words were often superfluous as the visual data spoke for themselves. For example, when a multinational audience was shown a video clip of Pond, our male participant in Chiang Mai, Thailand feeding slops to hungry dogs at a Buddhist temple, the theme of adherence to spiritual values was self-evident. Thus, even though there were questions about this work being descriptive, the descriptions were convincing because they were also visual.

Furthermore, the very nature of the visual means that it can be archived and re-visited. We wonder what youth 10 and 50 years hence would make of the days of our 16 resilient participants? We wonder what our youth would think of their days retrospectively as young adults, parents, and even later as grandparents, and what we might learn from such insights. What would service providers and psychologists from cultures not included in this study, or many years down the line, read in these data? What meaning would parents and community members make of these visual records of resilience, and what might they learn from them? The opportunities for further learning about the phenomenon of resilience are multiple.

Nonetheless, cautious enthusiasm can be practiced when engaging visual methods in social research. Interpretations must accommodate appreciation of the roles of the viewers (both authors and readers) in deriving meaning from images. Close

associations with participants, their interlocutors, and mentors can counterbalance naïve acceptance of superficial appearances. Representations are simply representations; they need to be interpreted. Systematic metrics for evaluating visual data are called for as well as more acceptances of their potential contributions to relatively more naturalistic explorations of multimodal human interaction systems. Maintaining concern for inadvertent inappropriate exposure of very private daily transactions will need self-monitoring as well as research institutional (especially ethical boards') recognition, appreciation, support and encouragement of such research.

The way forward

Our experience of the adapted DITL methodology has taught us the value of participatory visual methodologies in exploring the more unique socio-ecological underpinnings of resilience. Although we grappled with challenges embedded in a team of diverse researchers, multilingual participants, disparate cultural contexts and modern technologies, we also learnt what richness heterogeneity of sites, participants and researchers bring to the understanding of resilience. We experienced first-hand the advantages of visual explorations of resilience and of participatory analyses of subsequent data sets. Our initial plumbing of the rich data has shown us that it will keep us busy for years to come. Thus, our learning has sensitised us to the need for continued research that foregrounds youth and that generates rich, visual evidence of the complexities and idiosyncrasies of resilience across cultures and contexts.

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