Extended Paper: Reconceptualising Foundational Assumptions of Resilience: A Cross-Cultural, Spatial Systems Domain of Relevance for Agency and Phenomenology in Resilience

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This article seeks to amplify Bronfenbrenner's (1979) concerns with concentric structured, nested systems and phenomenology, for Ungar's (2012) extension of resilience to systems based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) socio-ecological paradigm. Resilience rests on interconnected assumptions regarding space, agency and system blockage, as well as the role of individual phenomenological dimensions. This article proposes a specific model of dynamic spatial systems of relation to underpin agency and phenomenology in resilience, building on a reinterpretation of Lévi-Strauss' (1962, 1963, 1973) cross-cultural observations of contrasts between concentric and diametric spatial systems; space is a key bridge between material, symbolic and interpersonal domains of relevance for resilience. Agency in resilience is interpreted in terms of movement between concentric and diametric spatial systems at social and school microsystem levels, as well as for individual phenomenology. Space is not just an object of analysis but an active constituent part of educational and developmental processes pertaining to resilience, as a malleable background contingent condition for causal trajectories. This framework of spatial-relational agency shifts focus for resilience from bouncing back into shape, towards transition points in space, moving from diametric spaces of splitting to concentric spatial relations of assumed connection across different system levels.

Keywords: Resilience, Agency, Systems, Concentric and Diametric Space, Phenomenology

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Introduction

The concept of resilience in developmental and educational psychology rests on fundamental spatial assumptions that require further interrogation. There is firstly a spatial preunderstanding or metaphor built into conceptions of resilience as a regaining of shape, a bouncing back into shape (Ungar 2005, 2015). The important broadening of resilience by Michael Ungar and his colleagues from the individual to include systemic dimensions as part of a cross-cultural understanding typically relies on Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) social-ecological systems approach which itself rests on other foundational assumptions regarding space. Ungar et al. (2007) observe "a shift in focus from individual characteristics to protective factors, and finally to health resources and assets in a child's community" that "has taken place in mostly western contexts" (p.288). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework assumes concentric structured spaces as nested systems of relation, with the "ecological environment…topologically as a nested arrangement of concentric structures, each contained within the next" (p. 22). This concentric spatial understanding of Bronfenbrenner - from which Ungar draws his systemic broadening of resilience beyond the individual - did not engage with cross-cultural understandings of concentric spatial structures and systems interrogated in more detail by structural anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1963, 1973). It is through a reconstruction of these concentric spatial systemic understandings that a domain of relevance for resilience can be forged.

Building on reconceptualisation (Downes 2003a, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2015) of an aspect of structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss' (1963; 1973) understanding of space as cross-cultural structures of relation, this article seeks to establish a specific domain of relevance for resilience based on interactive tension between diametric and concentric relational spaces. Space is a key bridge between material, symbolic and interpersonal domains of relevance for resilience in developmental and educational psychology. Focus will be on both system supports and individual phenomenology.

Key goals of this spatial interrogation are twofold. Firstly, there is a need to identify structural features of blockage in systems hindering resilience and to develop structural features of inclusive systems for fostering resilience in the face of adversity and vulnerability. Secondly, resilience rests on assumptions of agency, of the active experience of the individual in the face of causal influences by environmental and/or genetic factors; pluralistic conceptions of agency underlying the domain of relevance for active experience in resilience require a spatial excavation.

Concentric and Diametric Spatial Systems of Relation

Jahoda's (1982) cross-cultural, anthropological review concludes that "the simplest and at the same time most common type of symbolic classification … is the dual one" (p. 251). Jahoda (1982) recognizes that the Chinese classification of *yin/yang* is "perhaps the best known case" (p. 251) of fundamental bipolar oppositions. *Yin/yang* encompasses both diametric and concentric spatial relations (Downes 2011). Lévi-Strauss explored physical structures within and across different cultures, as well as mythological systems, to uncover not only examples of concentric and diametric structures but also initial steps to understanding their mutual relation. Concentric structures can be found also in Islamic, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, Jewish,

Celtic, African, ancient Greek and Estonian contexts, while Jung locates the concentric mandala structure in Buddhist, Hindu and Christian traditions (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 1973; Downes 2012)

The contrasting structural relation of diametric spatial opposition has also been observed cross-culturally, by Lévi-Strauss (1962): he notes that examples of diametric dualism "abound" (p. 135), citing specific tribes in North and South America. Moreover, the simple "subjective" (Leach 1965/2000, p. 111) everyday cross-cultural oppositions between 'good' and 'bad' are structured in a diametric oppositional way.

A diametric spatial structure is one where a circle is split in half by a line which is its diameter, or where a square or rectangle is similarly divided into two equal halves (see Figure 1). In a concentric spatial structure, one circle is inscribed in another larger circle (or square); in pure form, the circles share a common central point (see Figure 2).
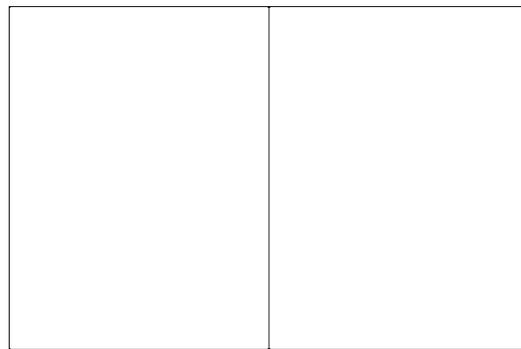
Fig. 1 Diametric Dualism
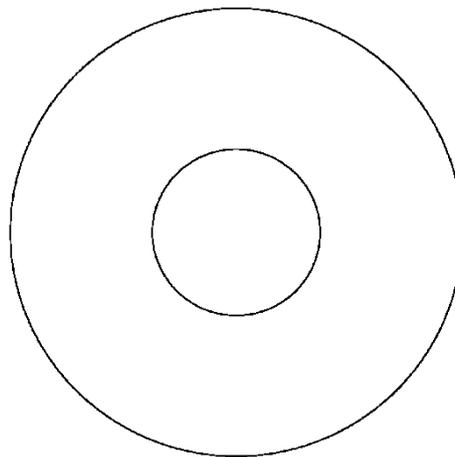
Fig. 2 Concentric Dualism

A purportedly key distinguishing feature of concentric and diametric structures, observed by Lévi-Strauss (1973), is that they tend to co-exist in "functional relation" (p. 73) and not simply in isolation. They are structures of relation as part of a system of relations. Being mutually interactive, at least potentially, they

are observed as structures *of* relation but also structures *in* relation. Lévi-Strauss recognizes that they are fundamentally interlinked, so that an increase in one is compensated for by decrease in the other. They express a dynamic compensatory quality – a relational and temporal quality that appears to be missing from other cross-cultural, symbolic structures (Downes 2012). Thus, they are not to be viewed as simply static images or symbols, but more as opposing directions of spatial relation in dynamic tension. Meaning is in their contrasting relative differences, rather than in either space considered in isolated, absolute atomistic or essentialist terms.

It was in the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss (1962, 1963, 1973), in his cross-cultural accounts of *systems*, whether social structures or mythological systems, where dynamic relations of contrast between concentric and diametric structures of relation began to be made more explicit. However, Lévi-Strauss did not realise the full potential of his systemic insights or interrogate the transferability of these dynamic diametric and concentric spaces to other kinds of systems (Downes 2012, 2014). He tended to treat diametric and concentric modes as structures and underemphasised their dynamic as spaces and as spatial systems. Revitalisation of understanding diametric and concentric spaces can move beyond Lévi-Strauss' structuralist commitments drawn from a paradigm of linguistics (Downes 2012).

Lévi-Strauss' (1962, 1963, 1973) structural anthropology observed contrasting implications of diametric and concentric structures, while also recognising their mutual function interrelation, where they co-exist in mutual tension. It is this tension that leads to inferences regarding contrasts between these spaces. Key entailments of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spaces include: contrasts between i) assumed separation (diametric space) and assumed connection (concentric space), ii) relative closure from background (diametric space) compared with relative openness to background (concentric space) and iii) mirror image inverted symmetry (diametric space) contrasted with symmetry as unity (Lévi-Strauss 1962, 1963, 1973; Downes 2003a, 2012). Only entailment i) is examined in the scope of this article.

Methodology

An Interpretative Approach to Space Focusing on Silent Background Conditions for Causal Trajectories

The proposed interpretative approach to relational spaces is at two distinct, though related levels with regard to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social-ecological framework, relied upon by Ungar's extended model of resilience to systems. A critical spatial interpretative inquiry examines Bronfenbrenner's system level concerns; a spatial-phenomenological approach interrogates individual lived experiences in spatial-structural terms. Both can be understood in terms of entailments of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spatial systems.

Dynamic Reference in a Critical Spatial Interpretative Inquiry: Interpreting Spatial Structures as Malleable Contingent Conditions in Empirical Accounts of Systems

An acceleration of focus on spatial understandings for resilience builds on the key point of Michael Rutter regarding neglect of silent contingent conditions in developmental psychology. Rutter (1985) argues that

change to background supporting conditions have been frequently overlooked within developmental psychology:

> It is commonly but wrongly assumed that a significant main effect in a multivari¬ate analysis means that that variable has an effect on its own. It does not. What it means is that there is a significant main effect for that variable, after other variables have been taken into account: that is not tantamount to an effect in the absence of all other variables (p. 601).

Space is such a silent background contingent condition.

Rutter's (1985) position here on the tendency to ignore background necessary or even simply supportive conditions for the cause to 'work' is resonant with Mill's (1872) challenge to a clear-cut distinction between causal and non-causal states:

> It is seldom if ever between a consequent and a single antecedent that this invariable sequence subsists. It is usually between a consequent and the sum of several antecedents the concurrence of all of them being requisite to produce, that is, to be certain of being followed by the consequent (p. 327).

Mill (1872) noted that very often one antecedent is termed the cause, the other antecedents being conditions. Intervention models that 'work' causally have hidden contingent conditions, without which the more obvious causal elements could not have occurred, just as striking a billiard ball to hit another presupposes the condition of gravitation. Causes necessarily operate within a background of supporting conditions that are structured sources of the cause's efficacy. With regard to challenging causal determinism, an implication of this insight is that change to background supporting conditions may shift the whole causal trajectory of a system. This need not be a negative phenomenon, it may potentially be a constructive phenomenon if the causal trajectories from the environment are destructive ones. In other words, a focus on changes to contingent or supporting background conditions may play a key role in resilience to undermine damaging causal trajectories; if the individual or wider societal system can be active in fostering other background supporting conditions, this may be a key avenue for resilience and change.

Space is not just an object of analysis but an active constituent part of educational and developmental processes. It is active as a dynamic, malleable silent contingent condition for sustaining causal trajectories. Diametric and concentric spatial interactions are not only as a background framing content but as an active process pertinent to understanding of social-ecological systems for resilience. This critical discourse on divisive and relational spaces recognises space as "a powerful project of segregation" (Armstrong 2007, p.107). This critical spatial interpretative inquiry (see also Downes 2015) interrogates not simply random system features but a distinctive spatial structure of relation. It is a dynamic referential inquiry as it investigates the possibility of change to a system for fostering resilience, starting from where a system is currently at. The science of resilience in human development has had the goal to inform practice and policy from the outset (Masten 2011).

Dynamic Reference in a Spatial-Phenomenology: Interpreting Spatial Structures as Malleable Projections in Lived Experience

It is not only space that is a key contingent background condition affecting causal trajectories for resilience; individual experience is another contingent condition that needs to be amplified and made active for further understanding of resilience, whether of the individual or social and educational system within which the individual lives. Lived experience is first phase of phenomenological descrip¬tion in psychology and sociology, where voices of those experiencing vulnerability can provide insight into resilience processes. Phenomenology is an attempt to perceive the world as it appears to the individual (see also Laing 1959). This involves an epistemological commitment to the validity of the lived experience of individuals, as an important truth in itself, whether or not it corresponds with an 'external' reality. The work of Carol Gilligan in developmental psychology on reinterpreting Kohlberg's moral reasoning stages and Erikson's identity development stages has been analysed elsewhere (Downes 2012) as being part of a relational phenomenological approach. Bronfenbrenner (1979) placed phenomenological issues as integral to his systems theory, mainly relying on Kurt Lewin's conception of phenomenology rather than through an existential-phenomenological "predilection" (p.22).

Other traditions in phenomenology focus not only on lived experiences but also on structural features of such experiences. A focus on phenomenology such as in Bronfenbrenner (1979) is being supplemented here by a distinct process of spatial phenomenology (Downes 2012) which focuses more on structural dimensions underlying experience. Gould et al. (1974) highlight the importance of clear separation between descriptive accounts in phenomenology and subsequent interpretation.

This spatial-phenomenological inquiry involves excavation of not only the existence of such spatial projections in a given set of empirical observations, whether qualitative or quantitative. It also requires exploration of the meanings of the existence of such a spatial-phenomenological projection in any given context with regard to potential malleability of contingent conditions for causal effects in a system with a view to changing causal trajectories to foster agency for resilience.

Concentric Relational Spaces of Assumed Connection: System Supports as Silent Conditions

A key relative difference between diametric and concentric spaces, overlooked by Lévi-Strauss, is ascertainable in principle. It is evident that the inner and outer poles of concentric structures are more fundamentally attached to each other than diametric structures. Both concentric poles coexist in the same space so that the outer circle overlaps the space of the inner one. The outer circle surrounds and contains the inner circle. The opposite that is within the outer circle or shape cannot detach itself from being within this outer shape. And though the outer circle or shape can move in the direction of greater detachment from the inner circle, it cannot fully detach itself from the inner circle (even if the inner circle becomes an increasingly smaller proportion of the outer). Full detachment could conceivably occur only by destroying the very concentric structure of the whole opposition itself.

In contradistinction, in diametric space both oppositional realms are basically detached and can be further smoothly detached from the other. These conclusions operate for both structures, whether they are viewed as being two-dimensional, or three-dimensional. As structures in relational difference, this contrast is a relativistic one of degree. A concentric relation assumes connection between its parts and any separation is

on the basis of assumed connection, whereas diametric opposition assumes separation and any connection between the parts is on the basis of this assumed separation (Downes 2009, 2012, 2013). A concentric spatial relation is a structure of inclusion compared to a diametric spatial structure of exclusion. In Bachelard's (1964) words pertinent to diametric space, "simple geometrical opposition becomes tinged with aggressivity" (p. 212).

Concentric and diametric spatial structures invite application to relations between self and other, thereby entwining the spatial and relational. Diametric opposition as a relational space of assumed separation can pertain to the domain of *interpersonal* relations. For example, diametric spatial structures of opposition emerged in Conquergood's (1994) three-year ethnographic portrayal of how male teenage street gangs in Chicago divide into diametric structured opposition, even though there is no tangible reason for the content of these oppositions such as ethnic, socio-economic, racial or regional differences. Observing that "there are hundreds of gangs in Chicago, but all of them align with one of two Nations: People or Folks" (p. 204), Conquergood (1994) emphasises that "the division between the two Nations, People and Folks, is absolutely arbitrary and constructed" (p. 207).

A systemic focus on the presence or absence of key supporting conditions to alter causal trajectories invites a spatial-relational focus on systems in education that provide concentric relational spaces of assumed connection to promote resilience and more positive outcomes in high risk students. An example of this is Markussen et al.'s (2011) longitudinal study following a sample of 9,749 Norwegian students over a five-year period, out of compulsory education and through upper secondary education. Markussen et al. (2011) notably found that students with high scores on an index measuring seriously deviant behaviour were less likely to leave early than students with low scores on this index. This finding is explained by the extra resources, support and attention these students are provided with, making it less probable for them to leave. This longitudinal study which, at least to some degree, examines active mediating variables of supports of assumed connection in concentric relational systems is more of an exception with regard to longitudinal studies in developmental and educational psychology.

Many longitudinal studies tend to operate with a pervasive silence about the background space of systemic supports that may be a potentially active mediating variable for fostering an individual's resilience in the face of adversity. The Finnish population based, longitudinal birth cohort study of 2551 boys from age 8 years to 16–20 years (Sourander et al., 2007) found that frequent perpetrators of bullying display high levels of psychiatric symptoms in childhood. Sourander et al. (2007) observed that frequent bullying perpetrators with conduct and hyperactivity problems and not the bullying perpetrators *per se* are the ones at elevated risk for later criminality. Correlational studies cannot demonstrate causality, only associations of varying strengths. In contrast, longitudinal studies can provide stronger inferences about causal relations, when controlling for other factors. However, though history effects are often referred to, it is noticeable that longitudinal bullying outcome studies seldom provide information or a focus on historical changes to the availability or otherwise of school and system level support services available to students who have experienced bullying and/or other trauma (e.g. Sourander et al, 2007). Availability of support services, such as emotional counselling services or their lack in schools, may be an important potential mediating variable in outcomes.

Sourander et al.'s (2007) conclusion recognises the key role of such supports "mental health services should be an integrated and active part of the school environment, as effective prevention requires the shortest possible delay between detection and intervention" (p.550). Despite this, they did not document in any detail the availability or otherwise of such supports over the course of their study. Supports fostering resilience are in a background diametric space of assumed separation from the domain of relevance of the key variables documented in this study. This is not to state that such supports were not in existence at the time of the study, simply that they have been excised from view as key variables for fostering resilience.

Similarly, Wolke, Angold & Costello (2013) in the western North Carolina longitudinal study examined 1400 people regarding their reported experiences of bullying perpetration, victimisation, or both between the ages of 9-16. Follow up at ages 19, 21 and 24-26 indicate that those who were bullied were more likely to have a diagnosable anxiety disorder in adulthood, while both perpetrators and victims were more susceptible to depression. Perpetrators were more at risk of later anti-social personality disorder. Both female perpetrators and victims were increasingly likely to experience adult agoraphobia, in contrast to males who were more at risk of suicide. This study controlled for pre-morbid childhood psychopathology, so it can be implied that these were consequences of the bullying experiences and not simply antecedent to them. In this study, victims and particularly bully-victims differed from children not involved in bullying by growing up more often in marginalised families and having more mental health problems in childhood. Longitudinal bullying outcome studies seldom provide a focus on historical changes to support services (e.g., school counselling services) in systems that may be a mediating variable in outcomes. Likewise comparison studies for bullying in schools tend not to control for emotional support services' availability across groups. Yet again, the issue of system supports and concentric relational spaces of assumed connection as a potential mediating variable to buffer against negative clinical outcomes is split from the domain of key variables for the study.

Radliff et al. (2015) examine hopelessness as a mediator within the context of bullying. In a sample of 469 US middle school students, victims reported the highest levels of hopelessness and significantly higher scores compared with students not involved in bullying. Hopelessness was a mediator for victims, but not for bully-victims. Thornberg's (2015) Swedish ethnographic fieldwork in two public schools was located in urban neighbourhoods of different socioeconomic statuses. In total, 96 students (50 boys and 46 girls) from four school classes (from 10 to 12 years) participated. Striving towards normal identity and social acceptance appeared to be associated with efforts to change oneself and to socialise, perceiving the deviant identity as unchangeable and inevitable; social rejection appeared to be linked to resignation and a range of escape or avoidance behaviour, such as social withdrawal and trying to be socially invisible in the classroom and other school settings. Again these studies have implications for the potential mediating role of emotional support services in helping students construe their reactions to bullying and to minimise self-blaming. Such concentric relational background spaces of assumed connection are again a key dimension of system agency to alter a trajectory of destructive processes leading to detrimental outcomes following trauma, stress or adversity.

Another illustrative example is Lester et al.'s (2013) Australian study which analysed accounts of 3459 students, aged 11–14 years, during the transition from primary to the end of the second year of secondary school. They found that victimisation significantly increased over the first year of secondary

school. However, this study did not collect information on transition activities offered by primary schools. In other words, concentric relational spaces of assumed connection to bridge diametric splits between different primary and postprimary school environments were again overlooked as a key mediating variable.

Ungar (2008) broadens Rutter's conception of resilience to a socio-ecological model of resilience:

In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of the individual to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways (p.225).

However, this broader environmental model does not include a focus on State systemic supports, as integrated services (Edwards & Downes 2013), in its role of developing inclusive systems of care. Ungar's (2012) socio-ecological broadening of Rutter's resilience needs to go further in its systemic concerns, for example, to include a systemic focus on outreach to marginalised families (Downes 2014a) and a relational space of assumed connection between individuals and system supports.

Diametric Spaces of Assumed Separation: System Exclusion, Splitting and Blockage as Silent Conditions for Vulnerability and Adversity

Diametric spaces of system blockage have been highlighted as structures and processes of exclusion leading to early school leaving in the education system (Downes 2013). Such diametric relational spaces of assumed separation between teachers and students include teacher discriminatory bullying of students in a sample of 1352 immigrant and Roma students as part of a wider sample of 8817 students across 10 European countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain) (Elamé 2013). Elamé's (2013) observed the fundamental importance of teacher influence on discriminatory bullying. Those immigrant and Roma students who think the teacher exhibits similar behaviour towards 'native' and immigrant and Roma children in the class are those bullied least in the last 3 months. In contrast, those who declare that their teacher favours native children over immigrant/Roma students are more vulnerable to suffer some form of bullying. Specifically, less than half (48 %) of the 123 [immigrant/Roma] children [across the 10 countries] who sense bias in the teachers' attitudes towards native classmates declare to have never been subjected to violence (Elamé, 2013). Those immigrant or Roma children who sense an imbalance in the teacher's attitudes to different ethnic groups in their class are also those who have been bullied with the highest frequency during the previous 3 months (Elamé, 2013). It is the propagation of diametric spatial relations of splitting and exclusion by the teacher that reveals a system level impact upon the classroom relational space for those experiencing the teacher discrimination. The fracturing of concentric relational spaces of trust in bullying leads to a system reaction of diametric oppositional relations. It is important that a school response does not perpetuate a diametric relational space (through, for example, a hostile and punitive reaction to students) and goes beyond focus simply on the individual to one on promotion and restoration of concentric relational spaces across the school as a system (Downes 2015).

Elamé's (2013) findings on the key influence of the teacher regarding parity of esteem among students, the absence of which can foster a negative climate of bullying, gains support from a Greek study

(Kapari and Stavrou, 2010) of 114 secondary school students (58 female, 56 male) drawn from three Greek public middle schools. In schools with high levels of bullying, students consider their treatment by adults to be unequal, the rules to be unfair, and student participation in decision-making to be very limited. According to Kapari and Stavrou (2010), particular attention must be given to the significant strong correlation between bullying and authoritarian practices of enforcing discipline in the school. It seems that levels of bullying are higher in schools where teachers use authoritarian and inflexible practices to cope with student misbehaviour. Again the issue of system malleability to move from diametric spaces of exclusion towards concentric spaces of assumed connection emerges to foster resilience and inclusive systems.

Concern regarding a school climate of violence influenced by the role of some teachers also emerges from a Polish national survey of 3085 students across 150 schools (CBOS, 2006). Experience of school violence from teachers towards students was reported directly as being hit or knocked over by 6 % of students with 13 % reporting having observed this occur to others. Teachers' use of offensive language towards students was reported by 16 % as having been experienced directly individually and 28 % as observed towards other students. Public humiliation of students by teachers, as part of exclusionary communicative processes of authoritarian teaching in the classroom has been highlighted in both qualitative and quantitative research (Downes and Maunsell 2007; Cefai & Cooper 2010; WHO 2012; Downes 2013).

In an Irish context, 'The Ryan report' (2009) highlights a diametric splitting in location and from family, as a key feature of Letterfrack residential Industrial School, run by the Christian Brothers from 1887 to 1974:

> The physical location of Letterfrack in remote Connemara created a very real sense of isolation, felt by both the boys and the Brothers in the School…most of the children sent there came from many miles away. This created obvious difficulties for families wishing to visit their children. The isolated environment in Letterfrack nurtured an institutionalised culture separate from society and other institutions. It also led to another unforeseen problem: those people who chose to abuse boys physically and sexually were able to do so for longer periods of time, because they could escape detection and punishment by reason of the isolated environment in which they operated. (p. 289)

While such industrial schools reveal a range of diametric spatial features (Downes 2014b), such diametric structures of exclusion pervade other features of school systems, including through expulsion and suspension (Downes 2013), with suspension rates being predictive of early school leaving rates (Lee, Cornell, Gregory & Fan 2011).

A related issue here is the lack of concentric spatial supports of assumed connection and system splits of diametric spatial assumed separation as being distinctive features of system blockage and inertia. This diametric spatial feature is the precise aspect of system blockage and displacement that Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1995) overlooked in his static concentric spatial model of social-ecological systems. In the proposed spatial framework of this article, system change is understood as an interplay between diametric and concentric spaces of relation, where diametric space is the blockage to be restructured to fluidate the system towards change. Inclusive systems of concentric space as assumed connection are a key directional movement for overcoming system blockage (Downes 2014a). Bronfenbrenner (1995) recognised that a key limitation of his systemic framework of concentric nested systems was that they were basically static and without a dimension of change in time. He sought to address this deficiency with the concept of a chronosystem which

examines the developing person, the nature of the environment and their interaction over time. Yet his attempted temporal dynamism fails to envisage movement within and from the concentric structures themselves.

In proposing a spatial systemic domain promoting concentric relational spaces and moving from background contingent conditions of diametric space as relevant to resilience, it is not so much being argued that a conception of resilient systems needs to be fostered; rather it is a focus on prevention and early intervention that is proactive rather than a more reactive systemic approach that resilience as resilient systems connotes. A proactive movement from diametric spatially structured blocked systems characterised by splitting and exclusion is proposed, to move in the direction of concentric systems of inclusion and assumed connection.

Whereas much concern with transitions in resilience research concentrates on transition points in time, current focus is on transition in space, from diametric to concentric (and vice-versa) structural features of a system. System change is not mere empty logical possibility but is embedded in contingent conditions of a system; it is as structural modification of diametric spatial conditions towards concentric spatial conditions. These modifications are to impact on systems' causal trajectories, as part of a process of early intervention.

Interplay between Concentric and Diametric Spaces: A Discourse Relevant to Experience and Agency for Understanding Resilience

Another silent contingent condition arguably neglected as a key assumption in understanding of resilience is the role of *experience* (Downes 2014a), including intrapsychic experience in fostering experiential possibilities for change to develop resilience. Developing Ungar's extension of resilience to systems needs to address not only the stasis in Bronfenbrenner's spatial understanding of concentric nested systems. It also needs to interrogate the frequently neglected phenomenological concerns of Bronfenbrenner that are embedded in his systems model relied upon by Ungar.

Ungar's (2005, 2015) analysis of pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts conceptualises resilience as a capacity to recover its original shape after having been deformed under extreme stress, where the focus is on coping skills and the ability to 'bounce back' despite various difficulties. The question arises as to whether this original or optimal 'shape' can be meaningful in terms of spatial structures of experience, as well as what shapes changed under stress may mean in spatial terms, as structuring modes of experience. Specifically, a process of resilience in experience is envisaged a) as growth from defensive diametric structured modes of experience towards concentric spatially structured modes of experience based on assumed connection and b) a capacity for movement between concentric and diametric spaces of relation.

Understandings of experience as a distinct domain of relevance are frequently neglected in psychology, beyond phenomenological traditions. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that conceptions of lived experience going back to William James' (1890) phenomenological stream of consciousness invoke experience in terms of spatial presuppositions:

> Traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river [stream of association] consists
> of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartpotsful, barrelsful and other moulded forms of water.
> Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free

water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. (p.255)

This conception of mind as lived experience, as a river actively influencing what is within it, contrasts a foreground of objects with the need to recognise a neglected dynamic interactive spatial background. Lived experience is a broader conception than cognition, affect, behaviour and interpersonal, social interaction; it encompasses these and more, as the background relational space (or river, in James' terms) mediating and interacting with these dimensions of being human. Here experience is not only a reactive mode to events but a proactive, structured relational space. The phenomenon of differential sensitivity to experience, where children who are more responsive to experience could be sensitive to negative environments but also differentially responsive to more healthy ones (Belsky et al. 2007) implies a proactive experiential role.

Though not explicitly related to understandings of resilience as such, a process of bouncing back into shape from defensive structures of diametric space has been developed for unconscious processes impacting upon experience from a psychoanalytic perspective (Downes 2003a, 2012, 2013a). For example, Freud (1914, p.11) treated splitting as a feature of 'defence' in repression. Defence mechanisms as diametric space can be examined as diametric spatial projections, as assumed separation, a structure of exclusion – as a dynamic splitting structure (Downes 2003a, 2012, 2013a). The diametric spatial splitting offers a conception of system fragmentation and blockage, not only for social systems but also for intrapsychic systems of experience. A compensatory relation implies that concentrically structured experience is an underlying potential structural *telos* for a psychological shift away from diametric spatial modes of relation (Downes 2012). In other words, concentric space offers a direction of healing of splits, a bouncing back, a direction of connection as a key aspect of intrapsychic resilience in reaction to trauma.

Beyond psychoanalytic and intrapsychic accounts of bouncing back into shape from diametric structures of experience, an examination of concentric and diametric spaces in phenomenological terms can illustrate processes which are relevant to resilience, such as a) the capacity to connect and b) modes of framing problems, including the capacity to emotionally distinguish.

The capacity to connect. The capacity for trust as an implicit concentric relational space of assumed connection emerges as an aspect of resilience in semi-structured interviews with 27 predominantly Russian-speaking heroin addicts in Estonia (Downes 2003). Those heroin addicts who are most clearly lacking in trust and open communication with their peer group or even with individual friends are those with most distance from their parents. This is evident from a range of interview responses including as follows:

#25 Do you think anyone understands you either now or in the past?

"No... I don't think so.

Don't you have any real friends or people whom you trust?

No I don't believe I have someone like that".

He says he is not close to his parents.

#17 Do you have anyone who you can trust and talk about your stresses to? Do you think most people trust each other? "No, I can count only on myself".

His family rejected him after his drug taking (Downes 2003, p.99).

In contrast, those with relatively good ongoing relationships with at least one parent tended to have at least one peer who could provide trust and open communication. Illustrative examples of this are as follows:

#20 Do you have anyone who you can trust and talk about your stress to?

"My mom. I have the greatest mother in the world".

Do you think most people trust each other?

"No. We all expect that your neighbour hits you. So you hit him first".

Do you wish or think you will have the same friends in five years time?

"I hope not. From my today's friends I want to see in five years only two. They are real friends […] I trust my closest friends."

Even though he does not view people as trustworthy in general, he does trust his mother and at least two friends. He recognises the realism of the harshness of his environment yet can integrate conflicting emotional realities, namely, a generalised distrust and a particular trust of concrete others.

#11 Do you have anyone who you can trust and talk about your stresses?

"I can always talk to my mother. I do not think that most people trust others. It is because life is very complicated. I do not think it is a good idea to trust others. I have had many situations where I afterwards regretted trusting people. Now I believe it is better not to trust people…Of course, I trust a couple of people, but only them. And among drug addicts it is better not to trust anyone at all. They are just like this."

Do you wish or think you will have the same friends in 5 years time?

"I do not know what will happen after five years. I do not change friends very often; I have steady relations. I trust some of them fully, but do not trust others..."

For him, "Of course" he trusts some people. He assumes connection to at least some

people as well as his mother (Downes 2003, p.100).

Resilience here in the second group of heroin addicts can be understood as a capacity for concentric structured relational spaces in experience, combined with a flexibility to move between diametric spaces of assumed separation of distrust in some appropriate contexts. Resilience additionally involves a capacity to mediate emotional complexity and shift between concentric and diametric relational spaces. In contrast, the first group of heroin addicts are entrenched solely in diametric spaces of splitting, distrust and assumed separation.

Modes of framing problems, including the capacity to emotionally distinguish as a dimension of capacity for identity. Gilligan's (1982) qualitative research in a United States cultural context highlighted two contrasting relational states framing moral problem solving. It is these prior relational frames that can be interpreted in spatial terms as based on key experiential conditions of concentric and diametric space. One relational state is an assumed connection between self and other in an 'ethic of care'. She contrasts this with

an abstract, hierarchical impersonal 'logic of justice' approach, based on a prior relational state of assumed separation between self and other. Gilligan (1982) contrasts two eleven-year-old children's modes of relation:

> To Jake, responsibility means *not doing* what he wants because he is thinking of others; to Amy, it means *doing* what others are counting on her to do regardless of what she herself wants … she, assuming connection, begins to explore the parameters of separation, while he, assuming separation, begins to explore the parameters of connection. (p. 38, italics in original)

The contrasts between the frames of assumed separation in a logic of justice and assumed connection in an ethic of care offer direct correspondence with diametric and concentric spaces structuring experience, respectively. Diametric and concentric structures are spatial-relational conditions for framing the two different modes of Gilligan's moral reasoning process.

Gilligan (1982) contrasts the approach of 'Jeffrey' and 'Karen' to a moral dilemma: "Both children deal with the issues of exclusion and priority created by choice but while Jeffrey thinks about what goes first, Karen focuses on who is left out" (p. 32). Karen's approach is an inclusive one of concentric structured assumed connection rather than a diametric spatial assumed separation from the person who is left out (Downes 2012). Karen's reasoning serves to avoid a diametric splitting in relation.

This plurality of paths for resilience, including problem framing issues, gains further importance against the backdrop of recognition of the weaknesses of common understandings of agency in resilience. Resilience typically assumes a framework of personal agency that can be characterised as constructivist agency (Williams 1992), namely, of choice between alternatives. However, a plurality of understandings of agency is needed for resilience, given the limitations of this mode of agency. Resilience in such a constructivist framework is envisaged as capacity to make better choices among alternatives in the environment. A key limitation of this understanding of agency is, as Williams (1992) highlights, that choices are based on criteria and the issue arises as to the choices made for basing a choice on particular criteria; this sets up an infinite regress of criteria chosen for criteria for choices. Choice is less a rational process than one ultimately which is based on some taken for granted criteria. A difficulty here is that such criteria are merely conditioned by a given culture, so the individual is a pawn in a culture, what Garfinkel (1967) describes as a 'cultural dope' incapable of resisting cultural conditioning. In terms of resilience, the question is raised as to how an individual can be active enough in his/her choices, as to resist cultural conditioning in the criteria for selection of choices for their action (Downes 2012). This cultural conditioning in the criteria for choosing may be with regard to drug use, early school leaving, crime etc. The limits of this infinite regress for cognitive choosing invites focus on a level prior to cognition for a different kind of agential process. Experience is a wider concept than cognition, where agency as different modes of experience, different ways of experiencing, invites further phenomenological interrogation.

Resilience as resources for resisting cultural pressures in decision-making also invites critique of the relational agency of Gilligan et al. (1982; 1990) in developmental psychology, where choice emerges from dialogue through interpersonal relationships of care and assumed connection. Interpersonal relational contributions and supports for agency may be highly flawed, as well as conditioned by wider socio-cultural forces (Downes 2012). For example, in 17 semi-structured interviews in the Baltic States, phenomenological

accounts of victims of human trafficking (Downes et al. 2008), highlight deception by friends who involved them in human trafficking:

Most of the victims interviewed were deceived by friends or acquaintances - people that they believed they knew and could trust…:

> I simply trusted people who were good acquaintances… A woman, who persuaded me to go, works nearby my house as a pharmacist…The woman introduced me to her family, to her daughter who is three years younger than me…she persuaded me to go.
>
> (Latvian, age 20)

> A good friend of mine is married to an Albanian. She got to know that my family was in need of money so she offered me a job of a cleaner abroad. I trusted her…She told me…I would live at her and her husband's house…On the third day the Albanian told me that I have lost this job. I ordered a ticket to return to Lithuania…We did not go to the airport but to a brothel. (The) Albanian sold me to other Albanians
>
> (Lithuanian, age 35)

Deceit and betrayal were unfortunately familiar themes to all the experiences of the victims. (Smelt 2008, p.241).

These victims of betrayal were of varying education levels, with a higher level of early school leavers among the Lithuanian than the Estonian victims who had all completed formal education until age 18 (Smelt 2008). This is not to neglect structural issues such as poverty and social marginalisation forcing people to take risks, as well as lack of information in unemployment agencies in areas of high unemployment, regarding the risks of human trafficking (Smelt 2008).

Similarly, first use of heroin leading to addiction was frequently based on friendships inviting and pressuring people to try heroin (Downes 2003) in Estonia. Experiential resources to defy not only the group but interpersonal influence from friends and acquaintances is arguably a key dimension of resilience in high risk contexts. Resilience requires experiential resources to resist groupthink and the capacity to emotionally distinguish as a dimension of capacity for identity. A widely accepted perspective in criminology is Sutherland's (1939) theory of differential association, namely, that peer pressure is a key factor in crime and drug-taking. Many of the interviews with heroin addicts in Downes (2003) support this view of the role of peer pressure in the first steps of drug taking. Agency here in relation to peer groups can be interpreted as the scope to: either surrender to a monism of identity with the group, develop a diametric splitting from the group or a concentric assumed connection with the group while retaining an identity of distinction within it. These variants of relational spaces and the capacity to have the experiential flexibility to move in, between and from these kinds of relation are arguably significant for resilience and are framed through diametric and concentric spatial projections.

Erikson's (1972) view of the establishment of individual identity through rebellion is expressed in his words, "much horrible hate and much resultant paralysis is…transferred to the inter-generational struggle where it appears to be hopelessly raw…for the sake of a vindictive illusion of extinguishing the established" (p.700). A diametric spatial opposition between generations based on splitting and assumed separation is but one experiential capacity for distinction. The other relational spaces of assumed connection between adolescents and parents is emphasised by Gilligan's (1990) challenge to Erikson's (1968) conception of adolescent identity as being fostered through splitting from parents. Such a concentric relational space of

assumed connection implied by Gilligan (1990) (see Downes 2012) is to be distinguished from a surrender of identity to a monism, where the individual slavishly follows the norms of the parents or previous generation. Again concentric and diametric spaces furnish background contingent conditions facilitating capacities to emotionally distinguish that are central to agency in resilience.

These cross-cultural spaces of concentric and diametric structures of experience are at least candidate preconditions for an agency in resilience that can somehow resist the pressures of cultural conditioning, at least to some degree, through fostering the capacities for a) connection, b) problem framing and emotional distinguishing. They arguably offer a site for freedom in experience, as a bounded agency.

A concern here is how the systemic and causal concerns of Bronfenbrenner, applied by Ungar to resilience, are commensurable with experiential aspects. Traditionally phenomenological concerns and causal trajectories are like oil and water, they do not tend to mix. A more adequate understanding of phenomenological aspects of resilience require the phenomenological and causal levels of explanation to be commensurable discourses, rather than operating on parallel tracks of meaning. This difficulty is a variant of the wider concern with how understandings of human agency operate within closed systems of complex causal explanations.

Individual experience as a system of concentric and diametric spatial relations in interplay offers a phenomenological focus on resilience regarding capacity for connection, emotional distinguishing and problem framing. Against the backdrop of long-term statistical continuities (Keyes et al. 2012; Read & Bentall 2012) in developmental cascades (Masten & Cichetti 2010; Bornstein et al. 2013), search is for discontinuities in complex causal trajectories as dimensions of individual agency and wider system agency of early interventions underlying resilience. While recognition of the need to focus on outcome discontinuities is well recognised in developmental psychology (Clarke and Clarke 1984), the active shaping of process discontinuities does not so much break negative chain reactions (Rutter, Kim-Cohen & Maughan 2006) in system cascades but rather dissolves them into wider system processes as malleable contingent conditions resting on potentially dynamic spatial assumptions; it is not a deconstruction of chain reactions spreading effects across a domain but a reconstruction through modification of background supporting conditions for causal trajectories and spreading effects. The spatial-phenomenological concerns for resilience in terms of concentric and diametric spaces are less a focus on positive chain reactions than on a space for agency in resilience across a range of experiential domains.

While each of these phenomenological aspects (capacity for connection, emotional distinguishing, problem framing) are arguably of relevance to agency for at least some contexts of resilience, they are unified through the common spatial background contingent conditions of malleable interplay between concentric and diametric spaces structuring key domains of relevance for experience. Experience as a spatial system of relations offers a distinctive, though related, system level to the macro-exo-meso-micro-chronosystem levels identified by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1995).

The movement of interplay between concentric and diametric spaces as malleable contingent conditions offers a domain of relevance to explain how experience can be potentially active to change the interactive dynamic of environmental-genetic determinism. As spatial preconditions for experience affecting causal trajectories arising from environmental-genetic developmental chain reactions, this domain of

concentric and diametric spaces structuring individual phenomenology offers a mediating discourse between phenomenology and causal explanations in developmental and educational psychology; it renders both experiential and causal levels more commensurable.

Conclusion

Active movement between specific relational spaces has been identified as a domain of relevance for agency in resilience. Ungar's (2012) broadening of resilience to include a systemic focus, building on Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995) socio-ecological systems framework, has been extended to go beyond Bronfenbrenner's static model of concentric nested systems to a dynamic spatial model for concentric spatial relations, in its interplay with diametric spaces. Concentric and diametric structured spaces of relation are candidates for providing mediating spaces to disrupt causal trajectories associated with negative long-term outcomes. They are specific structured spaces of systemic relations underpinning malleable contingent conditions in wider systems identified by Bronfenbrenner and relied upon by Ungar for resilience, as well as for individual experience as a system of spatial relations.

Resilience and agency at a systemic level builds on the recognition in social psychology that observed truths may simply be cultural snapshots in historical time and thereby malleable through reflexive insights that can subsequently change lived experiences and behaviours (Gergen 1973). Yet this understanding of systemic agency to alter outcomes in longitudinal studies through mediating variables is more a spatial concern than a temporal concern with historical change; it is a concentric spatial-relational concern with system supports of assumed connection to overcome diametric systemic splits. This is a specific concern with changes to background conditions affecting causal trajectories to bring resilience in the face of adversity. It is a concern to develop modifications to spaces of diametric relations of splitting, through establishing concentric spatial-relational systems of care and assumed connection in education and wider support systems.

These spatial concerns for resilience and agency at systemic levels are less about bouncing back into shape after stress; it is not a historical return to sameness prior to the stressors. At an individual intrapsychic systemic level, this may not be possible as trauma changes a person, with stress or adversity sometimes strengthening resistance to later stress, a so-called 'steeling' effect described by Rutter (1981). The issue is less of return to a pre-trauma or pre-stress state as developing strengths in the overcoming of the trauma, stress or adversity. Moreover, a bouncing back to sameness prior to stresses as an understanding of resilience is limited for those who may not have had a level of wellness to return to. In this spatial-phenomenological approach to resilience, change is sought to structures of experience in spatial terms; a spatial restructuring towards concentric spatial experience of assumed connection is not a turning back in time, but is more a concern with present lived experience and futural possibility. Dynamic structuration processes bring system change for malleable points in the system; whereas resilience research tends to emphasise transition in time as turning points (Rutter 1987), diametric structured spaces are transition points in space for turning towards concentric structured spaces, as part of fostering system change.

Space is the key nutrient to sustain system movement for agency underpinning resilience, whether for educational systems or individual experience. Resilience becomes a directional movement in structures of experience to overcome diametric spaces of splitting for movement towards the wholeness in experience of

concentric spatial-relational structures of experience and systems affecting experience. Emotional education and supports pertain to spatial capacities for relation. Based on this proposed spatial domain of relevance, a key aspect of resilience is to refluidate a collapse into diametric exclusion, in a movement towards more inclusive concentric structures of relation. Resilience as an interactive directional process more than a static trait (see also Rutter's 2006 rejection of resilience as a single quality or trait) also raises the question of contexts where resilience is a capacity to engage in a flexible interplay between concentric and diametric spaces; it is the fluidity to move in, out and between these experiential spaces that may be the important capacity, depending on context. As a directional capacity for movement, nevertheless, the capacity to foster concentric structured spaces of experience, relationship and systemic interaction is a key dimension. Rather than resilience as a mode of bouncing back into shape, a key dimension of resilience is one of engaging in a flexible process of flowing forward into concentric structured spaces of relation and structural modification of more defensive diametric spatial systems.

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