Social Capital and Resilience: A Review of Concepts and Selected Literature Relevant to Aboriginal Youth Resilience Research

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Summary

Social capital, as an asset or a resource for resilience, can be a characteristic of the community or the individual. As an individual asset, social capital consists of a person's relationships to available social resources. As a characteristic of communities, it consists of attributes such as trust, reciprocity, collective action, and participation. Closely related to community social capital is the concept of collective efficacy. Some social networks, however, can be violent, repressive, bigoted, or otherwise destructive.

Resilience is also a characteristic of both individuals and communities. This means that the relationship between social capital and resilience is four-dimensional. In discussing each of these dimensions, we highlight the ability of resilience research to link evidence on community social capital with individual data and the recognition that individuals can be resilient even if the communities they live in have low or even negative social capital.

Recommendations for future research include greater attention to the social capital potential of Aboriginal spirituality, more comparison of urban-rural differences in social capital, and a better understanding of the factors that underlie Aboriginal youth resilience where social capital is defective.

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of numerous studies on Aboriginal youth resilience (see "The CIET Aboriginal youth resilience studies," pp. 65–88), CIETcanada began to clarify the concept of social capital as it relates to resilience. Initially, in the context of the ACYRN project on suicide risk (pp. 129–154), we undertook a review of the extensive literature on social capital with a particular focus on mental health. This quickly led to a broader consideration of the meaning of social capital as it relates to resilience in a variety of risk situations. This article contributes to the development of a conceptual framework on social capital and resilience that may a) serve the pragmatic need to interpret a considerable body of data already gathered on Aboriginal youth resilience and b) help to guide future Aboriginal youth resilience research on this topic.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

We discuss the concept of resilience in "Resilience: An evolving concept," pp. 7–24. The most commonly used definition of resilience is "positive adaptation despite adversity," and most authors consider the presence of some demonstrable substantial risk to be essential to the very concept of resilience. While some Aboriginal authors prefer to see resilience as more than overcoming stress and trauma, seeing it as a natural, human capacity to navigate life well, all the literature on resilience discussed here situates resilience in a risk situation. Definitions of social capital will be developed in this article.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the article on resilience (pp. 7–24), we discuss two kinds of resilience: individual and community. Here, we examine social capital from both perspectives. The social capital literature reveals a second dichotomy between individual and community or ecological social capital. This suggests a four-dimensional framework that would take into account a) community resilience and community social capital, b) community resilience and individual social capital, c) individual resilience and community social capital, and d)

individual resilience and individual social capital. From an Aboriginal perspective, however, individuals should not be considered in isolation from their communities. In Figure 1, we present a simple initial conceptual framework of concentric circles in which the dotted circumference of the inner circle is meant to signify the interdependence of individual and community.

**Figure 1: Initial Conceptual Framework for Resilience
and Social Capital**
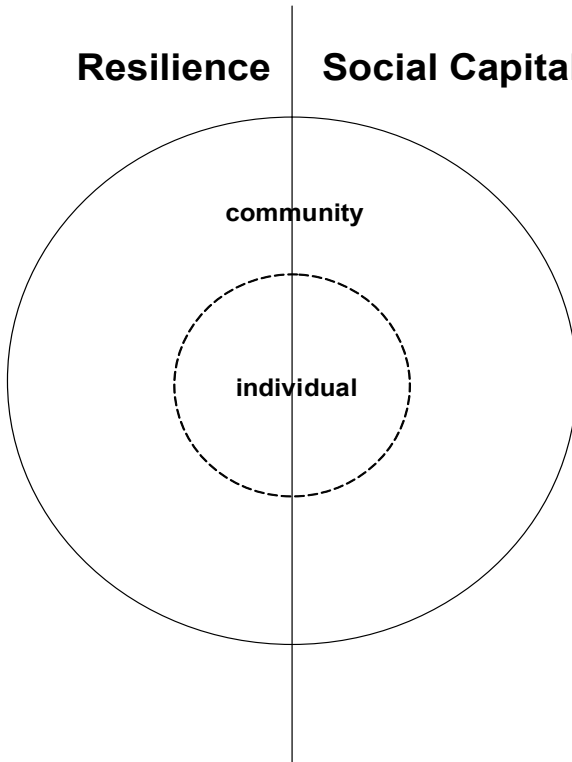
This framework enables us to categorize the literature, identifying strengths and weaknesses of each concept, and clarifying the relevance of the various theoretical approaches to Aboriginal youth resilience research.

In the first section of this article, we will consider the two kinds of social capital: community or ecological social capital and individual social capital. Related to community social capital is an important body of literature on collective efficacy. We then consider literature that relates these social capital concepts to resilience, and briefly discuss the concept of negative social capital.

Results

Two Kinds of Social Capital

Just as one should not isolate the individual from the community, so the line of distinction between individual social capital and community social capital is porous. The distinction has consequences, however, for research in general and Aboriginal research in particular, as we shall see.

1.   Community or ecological social capital

Community social capital has had the strongest influence in the public health literature (Moore et al., 2005; Kawachi et al., 1997a). This is the version popularized by Putnam (1993; 1995), sometimes called "ecological social capital" (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005; McKenzie et al., 2002).

Communitarian or ecological social capital is generally described in terms of the following five components (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005; De Silva et al., 2005; Putnam, 1993):

- community networks: number and density of voluntary, state, and personal networks;

- civic engagement: participation and use of civic networks;

- local civic identity: sense of belonging, of solidarity and of equality with other members of the community;

- reciprocity and norms of cooperation: a sense of obligation to help others, along with a confidence that such assistance will be returned;

- trust in the community.

Mignone and O'Neil (Mignone, 2003; Mignone and O'Neil, 2005a; 2005b; 2005c) developed a model of social capital specifically targeted to First Nations communities in Canada. Viewing social capital as a social environmental or ecological determinant of health, they base their definition on a study among three First Nations communities in Manitoba.

> Social capital characterizes a First Nation community based on the degree that its resources are socially invested; that it presents a culture of trust, norms of reciprocity, collective action, and participation; and that it possesses inclusive, flexible, and diverse networks. Social capital of a community is assessed through a combination of its bonding (relations within the community), bridging (relations with other communities), and linkage (relations with formal institutions) dimensions. (Mignone and O'Neill, 2005b, p. 27)

The second sentence in this definition illustrates one way in which the concept of communitarian social capital has been subdivided. The subdivisions of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital are common in the literature on community social capital (see also Whitley and McKenzie, 2005; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004; Lofors and Sundquist, 2007). Mignone and O'Neil explain that

> bonding social capital refers to relations within each First Nations community. Bridging refers to horizontal links with other communities, be they First Nations communities, or other communities of place…. Linkage refers to connections between a particular First Nation and institutions like federal/provincial government departments and public/private corporations. (Mignone and O'Neil, 2005b, p. 14)

There is some debate about the role of the state or governments in social capital, with implications for one's view of linking social capital. Some authors restrict social capital to the local community level (see Grootaert, 1998; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Onyx and Bullen, 2000).

Mignone and O'Neill identify three additional components to each of the bonding, bridging, and linking dimensions: socially invested resources, culture, and networks. Socially invested resources are resources potentially accessed by, or of potential future benefit to, any member of the specific community. Their definition of culture is one that, by their own account, "has generated the most discussion" among their First Nations partners:

> Culture, as a component of social capital, refers to values and norms of trust, reciprocity, and collective action. Values related to aspects of First Nations culture such as spirituality are not included in this definition. Similarly, culture in this paper does not refer to the idea that there are many First Nations "cultures" that have unique traditions and practices. (Mignone and O'Neill, 2005b, p. 13, note 5)

We return to this issue of culture in our discussion section.

Other community social capital subdivisions found in the literature are:
- horizontal and vertical
- structural and cognitive

In the first distinction, horizontal refers to linkages between groups that have an equal standing in the community, while vertical social capital refers to interactions within a hierarchical society (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005).

The second distinction highlights the tangible and intangible dimensions of social capital — structural and cognitive. Structural social capital consists of relationships, networks, associations, and institutional structures that link people and groups together (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005). It is often measured as organizational membership (Yip et al., 2007). Cognitive social capital consists of values, norms, reciprocity, altruism, and civic responsibility. It has to do with shared ways of thinking and behaving and "collective moral resources" (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005, p. 74).

The related concept of collective efficacy

There is an important body of work that typically does not show up in the main reviews of social capital research — the work on collective efficacy by researchers associated with the Project on Human Development (PHD) in Chicago. These researchers define collective efficacy as "the capacity of a group to regulate its members according to desired principles — to realize collective, as opposed to forced, goals" (Sampson et al., 1997, p. 918; see also Sampson et al., 1999; Earls and Carlson, 2001).

Collective efficacy combines two concepts, social control and social cohesion. The PHD researchers were interested in the impact of social control on different levels of violence across neighborhoods of Chicago. Their focus was on informal social control mechanisms, as opposed to formal ones such as the police. Examples of social control include willingness to intervene when a child is disrespecting an adult, when a fight breaks out, or when a community service is threatened with cuts by city government. Considered in this way, social control has a wider reach than, for example, the public actions of a community organization; it includes large numbers of individual actions carried out by private residents.

The researchers joined this notion of social control with that of social cohesion or mutual trust and solidarity. The result was a scale called collective efficacy. They found that collective efficacy was strongly associated with reduced violence (Sampson et al., 1997). Others extended this basic approach to the mental health of children: collective efficacy and organizational participation were associated with better child mental health, measured by reductions in depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and other such problems (Xue et al., 2005; see also: Deng et al., 2006; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn, 2000).

Collective efficacy takes into account the gross inequalities that exist from one community to another, the geographic isolation of racial and eth-

nic minority groups, and the "concentrated disadvantage" that character-
izes many minority communities. Its proponents reject the notion that all
neighbourhoods are characterized by dense, intimate, emotional bonds.
Collective efficacy is a task-specific concept. Residents are asked about the
likelihood that their neighbours could be counted on to take action under
specific circumstances such as children skipping school and hanging out on
a street corner. In the words of Sampson:

> Some density of social networks is essential, to be sure, especially networks
> rooted in social trust. But the key theoretical point is that networks have to
> be activated to be ultimately meaningful … while community efficacy may
> depend on working trust and social interaction, it does not require that my
> neighbour or the local police officer be my friend. (Sampson, 2004, p. 108).

The concept requires community social capital to be activated in concrete
circumstances if it is to be a meaningful identifier of resilience.

2.   *Individual social capital*

One of the earliest critics of the ecological or communitarian approach was
Portes, a sociologist who emphasized individual actors and their actions. He
claimed there had been a growing consensus in the sociological literature
that social capital stood for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue
of membership in social networks or other social structures (Portes, 1998).
For Portes, the growth of this consensus was interrupted by political sci-
entists, especially Putnam, who shifted the notion of social capital toward
the communitarian viewpoint. Portes considered Putnam's argument to be
logically circular: if it is a property of communities and nations rather than
individuals, social capital is simultaneously a cause and an effect.

Coleman, one of the "founders" of the social capital field, based his
view of social capital on individual action and actors, but connected social
capital as an individual asset to the social dimension, stating that it exists
in the *relations* among persons (Coleman, 1988). He saw social capital as
fitting into modern decision theory, apparently Ajzen and Fishbein's theory
of reasoned action (1980).

> If we begin with a theory of rational action, in which each actor has control over
> certain resources and interests in certain events, then social capital constitutes
> a particular kind of resource available to an actor (Coleman, 1988, p. S98).

According to the theory of rational action, subjective norms are one
element in a flow of steps internal to the actor which result in a particular

choice or action (Ajzen, 1985). My subjective norms combine what I perceive is expected from me by people I consider important, and my intention to comply with these expectations. Norms are social in nature and are effective by virtue of their enforcement by other members of a network. Enforcement involves the application of sanctions or incentives. James Coleman's (1990; 1993) work specifically highlighted this aspect of social capital (see also Coleman, 1990; 1994).

Resilience and Social Capital

The key to relating the literature on social capital with that on resilience is the concept of risk. By itself, social capital is not limited to risk situations whereas, according to general understanding, some kind of risk or adversity is required for resilience to manifest.

Resilience and community social capital

There is a body of resilience literature that does not use the term social capital, but is clearly dealing with components of community social capital, especially in the realm of shared identity and shared norms. This literature speaks frequently of "cultural resilience" a term used to denote the role that culture may play as a resource for resilience in both the individual and whole communities or entire cultural systems. For this, a useful definition is supplied by Healy (2006): community or cultural resilience is the capacity of a distinct community or cultural system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to retain key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness.

In "Resilience: An evolving concept," pp. 7–24, we discuss the use of this concept in South Africa and Bolivia. Here, we are especially interested in its use in an Aboriginal context (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998).

These authors first used the term "cultural continuity," and later, cultural resilience, as an attribute of those First Nations communities that have acted to preserve and rehabilitate their cultural heritage. They compared a set of cultural continuity indicators with suicide rates among Aboriginal youth and found some remarkable correlations. The indicators were: self government, land claims, education, health services, cultural facilities, and community services such as police and fire protection. For bands that had none of these cultural continuity indicators, the suicide rate was 137.5/100,000. For bands with all six of the indicators the youth suicide rate was 0.0/100,000. Bands that had even one of the indicators showed some

reduction in relative risk of youth suicide (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998). More recently, Hallett et al. (2007) found that a simple language-use indicator was an even stronger predictor of resistance to suicide than any of the above six cultural continuity factors.

Resilience and individual social capital
Coleman, though he did not use the term resilience, described cases of children in religious schools — as opposed to public and nonreligious private schools — who were more likely to stay in school despite family problems. The children resisted dropping out, according to Coleman, due to the social capital inhering in the closed networks of those religious schools where norms were enforced and sanctions applied for breaking with those norms (Coleman, 1987/88).

Runyan and various colleagues took Coleman's model of social capital and developed it explicitly in terms of resilience. In two separate studies, they explored social capital as a protective factor for children at risk of maltreatment. A 1998 study found that the presence of any social capital indicator (two parents or parent figures in the home; social support of maternal caregiver; no more than two children in the family; neighbourhood support; and regular church attendance) increased the odds of children doing well by 29% and adding any two increased the odds of their doing well by 66% (Runyan et al., 1998). A later study found that each one-point increase in a four-point social capital index was associated with a 30% reduction in the odds of neglectful parenting, psychologically harsh parenting, and domestic violence (Zolotor and Runyan, 2006). Their social capital index consisted of four factors: neighbourhood characteristics; willingness to take action to stop negative events or activities in the community; regular religious service attendance; and parental partner in the home (Zolotor and Runyan, 2006).

Negative Dimensions of Social Capital

Unfortunately, social capital is not always a positive asset. In 1998, Portes pointed out that the same mechanisms that result in positive social capital for individuals and groups can have other, less desirable consequences. He highlights four of these: exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward-leveling norms (Portes, 1998). A fifth consequence — network closure around nega-

tive norms, such as norms of aggression or violence — is also implicit in this work. Portes used the term "bounded solidarity" to refer to the group relations and identity that impose norms of behaviour on group members. These norms may be negative ones, perhaps favouring aggression or violence. Examples given include the Mafia and youth street gangs.

Negative social capital should be distinguished from Putnam's "vicious circles," a stagnant, distrustful social environment that results from the *absence* of social capital, as distinguished from "virtuous circles," an accumulation of benefits through the existence of social capital (Putnam, 1993, p. 177). Negative social capital — the resources of social capital applied to negative ends — is different from social weaknesses that occur in the absence of social capital.

Kawachi and Berkman (2001) also noted the "dark side" of social capital for mental health. They referred to a study by Brown and Harris (1978) of rural women in the Outer Hebrides. They were protected from depression by their involvement in traditional life — church activities and craft work — but also suffered much higher rates of anxiety disorders. Drawing on Durkheim, the authors hypothesized that integration (social cohesiveness) is protective, but social regulation provokes anxiety by demanding conformity.

How does individual resilience work in the face of negative social capital? Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) presented a brief review of literature on resilience and violent behaviour. Against a variety of risk factors for violent behaviour they reported a series of compensating or protective factors — in other words: resilience factors. Among these, parental monitoring and maternal/paternal support were the most often cited.

Rutter summarized findings on resilience to antisocial behaviour. Social factors contributing to resilience included maintenance of warm stable relationship with one parent, parental supervision, good experiences at school, a prosocial peer group, and experiences that open up new opportunities through change in the peer group (Rutter, 1998).

Discussion

The purpose of Aboriginal youth resilience research is to offer Aboriginal communities and families tools for developing and fostering resilience among their youth. Our question, then, is how can social capital research

serve this purpose? Given the four dimensions of the relationship between resilience and social capital this subdivides into four questions:

1. How might Aboriginal community social capital affect the collective resilience of Aboriginal youth?
2. How might Aboriginal community social capital affect the resilience of individual Aboriginal youth?
3. How might individual Aboriginal youth social capital affect Aboriginal community resilience?
4. How might individual Aboriginal youth social capital affect individual Aboriginal youth resilience?

Keeping in mind the inseparability of individuals and community, especially from an Aboriginal perspective, we have situated these questions within the framework of Figure 1 and presented them in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Resilience and Social Capital: Four Questions for Aboriginal Youth Research
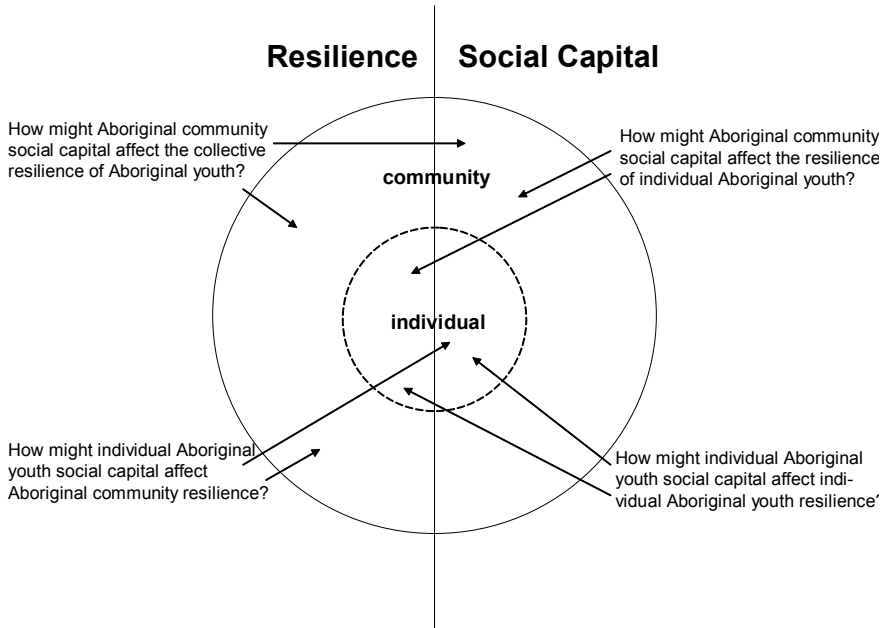
We now consider each of these questions.

1.   HOW MIGHT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY SOCIAL CAPITAL AFFECT THE COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE OF ABORIGINAL YOUTH?

While there is little theoretical doubt that Aboriginal community social capital could contribute to collective Aboriginal youth resilience, the ways that this relationship plays out in practical circumstances are extremely variable. We offer four thoughts on this topic. The first three point to the need for a very flexible approach to community social capital if the concept is to be useful in Aboriginal resilience research. The fourth consideration concerns the specific issue of linking social capital.

a.   Cultural variability

Individual components of social capital may vary among cultures, communities, and countries. De Silva and colleagues (2007) studied structural social capital in four different countries (Peru, Ethiopia, Vietnam, India) and obtained mixed results. They speculated that these mixed results were probably due to cultural variation in the makeup of structural social capital, rather than its presence or absence (see also Krishna and Shrader, 2000). The model of social capital proposed by Mignone and O'Neil (2005b) for First Nations communities leaves aside the notion that individual Aboriginal communities may have their own cultures with unique traditions and practices. Their model also excludes Aboriginal spirituality as a part of culture. This may inhibit the model's usefulness for Aboriginal resilience research. It appears that Aboriginal spirituality may be inseparably bound to culture and identifiable only in the context of cultural traditions that can vary from one Aboriginal group to another. (see "Resilience and Indigenous spirituality," pp. 47–64).

b. Adaptability to change and disturbance

Healy (2006) defined community resilience as the capacity of a distinct community or cultural system to absorb disturbance, reorganizing while undergoing change to retain key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness. There are communities with strong social capital and those with weak or even negative social capital, but, under specific conditions, individual community attributes may become stronger or weaker or even appear only until the disturbance is removed. One thinks of the massive squatter movements in Latin America, among which Indigenous groups have been prominent, where land occupations require intricate social networking, cooperation, and trust. Once the objective is achieved and

possession of the land is relatively secure these attributes tend to disappear (see Moser, 1989).

c. Concentrated disadvantage

There are many communities that, perhaps as a result of historical trauma, racism, exploitation, and poverty, do not have strong formal networks; communities where the classic characteristics of community social capital appear to be weak. Simply categorizing such communities as having low social capital is not very helpful. The question is, do they have resources for fostering youth resilience? The concept of collective efficacy appears to be much more useful than classic social capital in such circumstances. Collective efficacy draws on latent community resources under specific conditions. Although rooted in the particular situation of urban neighborhoods of industrial and postindustrial societies, the theory of collective efficacy is applicable to many Aboriginal communities, both urban and rural.

d. Linking social capital

As mentioned earlier, some researchers restrict social capital to the local community level. Some Aboriginal communities likewise wish to sever links with colonial or postcolonial government structures and seek strength in their own resources. Other authors see disadvantages in such a stance. Narayan and Cassidy cited studies, particularly from Latin America that:

> … consistently demonstrate that despite high ratings in community solidarity in Indigenous communities, communities with high concentrations of Indigenous people remain poor if they have few connections to the powerful within or outside the community. While they may manage to attract government-provided basic social infrastructure, this does not result in production opportunities. Indeed, there is little evidence that Indigenous social organizations are providing the foundation for Indigenous groups to mobilize either for fundamental rights or for greater access to economic and political participation.… In the absence of outside allies, Indigenous social capital of poor communities remains a substitute for the resources and services provided by the state. (Narayan and Cassidy, 2001, p. 60)

Hutchinson used the concept of linking social capital to examine relationships between First Nations and Canadian governments regarding health services development. He advocated some degree of active engagement with government on the grounds that "the constituents of the communities who participate in these relationships [with government social

services] have better health than those who are not effectively included" (Hutchinson, 2006, p. 117).

On the other hand, numerous examples in the recent past of exploitation, paternalism, and racism on the part of government and other outside agencies certainly encourage Aboriginal communities to emphasize bonding, over linking, social capital. The newest assaults on Indigenous social capital come from global enterprises wishing to exploit Indigenous genetic patrimony and supplant traditional agriculture. A resilience perspective suggests the need to strengthen community solidarity and community learning while seeking links with high quality and disinterested scientific and legal expertise. Examples of such a response are the Indigenous People's Council on Biocolonialism (http://www.ipcb.org), and the First Annual Interior of B.C. Food Sovereignty Conference (2006).

2.   HOW MIGHT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY SOCIAL CAPITAL AFFECT THE RESILIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL ABORIGINAL YOUTH?

An adequate answer to this question requires some discussion about research methods. When it comes to relating information about communities to information about the individuals that make up those communities there is a danger of falling into what epidemiologists and others call the "ecologic fallacy." In a community with strong social capital, some, or many, individual members may not have easy access to that social capital. Communities can take strong collective action in favour of policing, keeping a clean and safe environment, sports teams, parent-teacher meetings, and so on, but individual youth can still become alienated from such communities. On the other hand, when young individuals demonstrate resilience it is not clear to what extent the whole package of community social capital was responsible, or what particular community feature was most influential. Chandler and Lalonde (1998) found a striking correlation between certain features of self-government by First Nations communities and the absence of youth suicide. Hallett et al. (2007) subsequently found an even more striking correlation between speaking traditional languages and absence of suicide. One cannot avoid wondering if both self government and speaking traditional languages are not markers for some deeper resilience factor that can only be determined by research at the individual level.

CIET's experience during 14 years of capacity building and methods development in Canada (pp. 65–88), has been based mainly on evidence

from individuals. Community social capital is taken into account by way of mesoanalysis, which links data from household interviews and data from key informants, institutional reviews, and focus groups at community level in a special way. The "sentinel sites" that characterize CIET methods are essentially survey clusters whose size has been increased to offer a representative panel of "mini-universes." There is no sampling within a site. Thus data on individual social capital collected from household interviews are coterminous with "mesovariables" on community social capital collected at site level through key informant interviews, reviews of institutional data, etc., and codified into community profiles. Each site is part of a sample that is representative of a larger community such as a district, province, or a country. Comparison among sites often reveals variations in both individual and community social capital according to local conditions. (See Andersson, 1998 and http://www.ciet.org/en/documents/methods/200781612924.asp)

One of the strengths of this method is that it reduces the likelihood of falling into the ecologic fallacy. If a community has a certain attribute such as numerous community networks, the impact of this attribute on individual members of the community should be revealed in the data from individuals. In the 1996 nationwide WUNSKA study on smoking (see "The CIET Aboriginal youth resilience studies," pp. 66–88) it was possible, through mesoanalysis, to relate smoking as reported in the youth questionnaire with a question asked of key informants as to whether people smoke in band offices and community facilities. A youth living near a smoke-free community facility was considerably more resilient to smoking than one who lived in the vicinity of a smoking facility. Male youth were also 45% more likely to resist smoking in communities where key informants said that teachers did not smoke. On the other hand, when asked "do people smoke in the work place," 80% of all key informants said "yes"; but in these communities there was no detectable tendency for youth to smoke more than in other communities. In the 1998 James Bay Cree study (pp. 65–88), access to information on the risks of substance abuse at community level proved to be no deterrent to substance abuse by individual youth.

This suggests that certain components of community social capital have greater effects than others. Without a strong link between data on community social capital and those on individuals it is easier to misinterpret the impact of community attributes on individual community members.

3.   How might individual Aboriginal youth social capital affect Aboriginal community resilience?

The optimum situation for an Aboriginal youth, or any youth for that matter, is to have rich personal relationships with family, friends, mentors, and community that sustain her or him in adversity and also contribute to creating a community that adapts positively to challenging circumstances. Some Aboriginal youth may not be personally very resilient, perhaps for lack of the personal social capital that connects them to the community's strengths. Others may be very resilient but be unable to contribute much to their local community's resilience; the support for their personal social capital might come from somewhere outside the local community. It is, again, through linking both individual and community indicators that researchers can arrive at a clearer understanding of how individual Aboriginal youth can contribute to their community's resilience.

4.   How might individual Aboriginal youth social capital affect individual Aboriginal youth resilience?

The CIET Aboriginal youth resilience studies have so far discovered many instances of the influence of individual social capital on individual resilience. Having someone to confide in, to count on in times of crisis, someone to give advice and someone who makes one feel cared for — whether this was a parent or a peer — proved to be an important Aboriginal youth resilience factor. Parental care and support, parental monitoring, attitudes, and example were also clearly related to youth resilience in most of the settings studied over the 14 year period.

The importance of individual social capital was brought out most clearly in the case of peer relations. The strongest social influences on youth behaviour detected in the CIET Aboriginal youth resilience studies were peer influences, which were often negative.

Aboriginal youth, especially those living in urban environments, may be surrounded by a great deal of negative social capital. Many of their peers may be more of a hindrance than a resource for resilience. It is important for these young people to be able to draw on social capital wherever they can find it, and this may not be in the communities where they live, study, and work.

This is what makes the research tradition of Coleman so important. He located social capital specifically in the relations among persons as a

resource that individuals can call upon when deciding how to behave. For youth surrounded by negative social capital, their resilience is manifested in decisions to deviate from the negative norms surrounding them. The social capital they draw upon in making such decisions may be located in the family or in some wider network that provides mentoring, role models, spiritual guidance, or some other factor. There is still a great need for further research into the underlying factors that help give a young person resilience in such circumstances.

Conclusions

The preservation and revitalization of their ancient forms of spirituality and culture is a key concern for many Aboriginal communities. Researchers have begun to recognize the social capital potential of faith, religion, and spirituality (Candland, 2000). Indigenous research has focused on the relationship of enculturation, which includes Indigenous spirituality, to the resilience of Aboriginal people in a variety of risk situations (see "Resilience and Indigenous spirituality," pp. 47–64). Future research on spirituality as a social capital resource for Aboriginal youth resilience should take into greater account the spirituality that is embedded in the cultural traditions of separate Aboriginal groups. This requires a research approach that is fully participatory and, preferably, researchers who are themselves Aboriginal.

A large majority of Aboriginal youth in Canada live in urban areas. More research on Aboriginal social capital in urban areas is clearly needed. It may be that the components of social capital in urban areas are simply different. A study of social capital in five non-Aboriginal communities in Australia found that the two rural communities studied showed much higher levels of feelings of trust and safety, higher levels of participation in the local community, and more neighbourhood connections. The inner urban area, on the other hand, showed higher levels of social agency, or proactivity in a social context, and tolerance of diversity (Onyx and Bullen, 2000). One important area for future research is a comparison of social capital components available to rural or reservation-based Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal groups living in urban communities. Closely connected to the study of rural-urban differences regarding social capital would be research on types of social capital within culturally homogenous Indigenous groups compared with culturally heterogeneous Indigenous groups. There is also need for a greater understanding of the social capital components of pan-

Indigenous identity and culture and their relationship to resilience. All such studies should gather evidence at both individual and community levels and be able to link data from these two levels in a reliable way.

Finally, in the urban areas where Aboriginal youth tend to concentrate there might well be very little social proactivity and very low tolerance of diversity. And even in rural Aboriginal communities social capital may appear weak or unhelpful to youth in many aspects (See: "An Elder's view of community resilience," pp. 181–186). If social capital is to be a resource for youth resilience it must be accessible, not just in some ideal Aboriginal community, but in the many different real life communities where Aboriginal youth find themselves.

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