Resilience

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> *'We hear about resilience, bouncing back, never surrendering and giving it another go. But there's only so long this kind of talk can go on.'* (from *The Book of Life*) http://www.thebookoflife.org/on-losers-and-tragic-heroes/)[1]

A chapter on resilience in a book on critical transitions is something of an anomaly; resilience is the playing out of latent capacities that prevent a critical transition that might otherwise have come about and as such, in relation to critical transition, is an absence, an anticipatory event not just anticipated but successfully avoided. Nonetheless, despite the conservative nature of an engineering metaphor of resilience as an ability to return to the prior state, most uses of resilience understand the 'bounce-back' effect in terms of mitigation or adaptation rather than strictly as the maintenance of an existing and stable set of relationships. This understanding of resilience as associated with change in terms of subtle shifts, as opposed to the radical change of a critical transition, depends on a set of capacities that are already in place. As such, resilience is latent and therefore both invisible and unspecifiable until need prompts its agency. What can be said about resilience as a latent set of capacities, is that those capacities must be such that they enable a flexible responsiveness to unforeseen events and circumstances.

Resilience is one of those concepts, along with others including wellbeing or sustainability, that carry an inalienable sense of the desirable good, in this case, a desirable good to help us through unforeseen and uncertain change. And, similar to these other concepts, the term exhibits a certain conceptual vagueness which allows it to function as a boundary object, discursively to open policy dialogue across a wide range of settings, scales and practices (Brand and Jax, 2007; Welsh, 2014). Thus, resilience is mobilised as a term across different sectors of government, across scales of practice from that of global security to that of individual daily lives, and across the ideological range of the political spectrum (Ball, 2011; Walker and Cooper, 2011). By the second decade of the millennium, the term resilience had been picked up in key influential policy materials, for example, in the United Nations' Panel on Global Sustainability, 'Resilient people, resilient planet' (see Brown, 2014 for other examples). In 2013, Time Magazine claimed that 'resilience' was the buzzword of the year (Walsh, 2013), and the pervasive presence of resilience in a wide range of political arenas,

everyday spaces, and our personal lives suggests that we may have entered an 'age of resilience'. However, such widespread enthusiasm for the concept indicates that resilience is not only slightly vague in terms of the processes that it describes but, perhaps more importantly, sufficiently malleable in meaning as to be amenable to being interpreted and operationalised in different ways by different constituencies (Turner, 2014). In the domain of security, policy focussed on prevention of security events such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters, is gradually being replaced by policy focussed on preparedness and resilience to the effects of such events (Neocleous, 2013), particularly evident in relation to natural disasters such as flooding (Bulley, 2013). This shift in focus may reflect some overdue humility in relation to our human and institutional capacities to fully predict and control the world around us, but may also reflect a shift in the focus of our predictive technologies away or beyond the event and forward and onto its consequences. In the domain of environmental management, exploration of the dynamics of ecosystems and their response to rapid change has popularised ideas of interdependency, contingency and resilience so as to emphasise the complexities inherent to a dynamic system in terms of multiple interdependencies, multiple scales of influence, and multiple expressions of time.

These two examples of common engagements with the notion of resilience across the domains of security and of ecology share an attention to resilience in relation to systems, albeit systems of different sizes and across different temporal scales. By contrast, this chapter will attend to a rather different mobilisation of the term, that of resilience at an experiential scale and within a single lifetime. At the scale of personal experience, resilience has been used to address why it is that some people function better than others when they are all living through similarly demanding and difficult circumstances, and to explore what modes of intervention might support such resilience. This demands two different but commonly aired positions in relation to resilience: that of the ecological and that of the constructionist; or, to put it another way, resilience as found and resilience as made (Ungar, 2004: 2010). The possibilities for building resilience indicate a feature shared across almost all engagements with resilience, that it is not just a pre-disposition of preparedness, but, 'a systematic, widespread, organizational, structural and personal strengthening of subjective and material arrangements so as to be better able to anticipate and tolerate disturbances in complex worlds without collapse, to withstand shocks, and to rebuild as necessary' (Lentzos and Rose, 2009: 243).

An individualised notion of resilience shares much with the related concept of wellbeing and either may be seen as contributory or complementary to the other. In order to use either of these concepts to determine intervention demands consideration of how we understand the meanings and influences of 'doing and being well'. However, addressing 'doing well' and 'being well' as desirable outcomes, directly engages a politics of what it is that society deems to make a good citizen, and, as such, the ways in which resilience is mobilised and practiced in academic thinking and in policy interventions constitutes a significant intervention into this broader politics. The modalities of our interventions into this broader politics through the uses we make of the notion of personal resilience have changed over the last thirty years – a change that has accompanied a shift of focus and approach in the relevant strands of the discipline of psychology; a shift that can be seen as a critical transition in the ways resilience and related terms are mobilised and enacted.

Complexity and Contingency in Personal Resilience

Resilience as a feature of living with adversity on a personal level began to attract research attention in the 1970s, accompanying a wider trend in health, medicine, and social care of addressing health not only from the perspective of preventing or treating deficit and disease, but also in terms of enabling strengths, adaptations and wellbeing (Masten, 2011). Given the importance of the early years in informing later adult life experiences, much of the research focussed on identifying the pathways to resilience built during childhood. In particular, the observations that some children show positive development despite significant adversity, and that some people cope better than others with major trauma or upheaval, indicate possible protective factors, coping processes, and modes of positive adaptation that research aims identify and that intervention aims to strengthen. As such, resilience must be thought of as a two-dimensional construct (Luthar et al., 2000). On the one hand, resilience is effected in relation to a stressor of some kind. Given that resilience marks the absence of a significant and detrimental response to such stressors, to assert the action of resilience requires a judgement that there has indeed been exposure to a significant form of adversity, whether through a short-term event or a longer-term set of life circumstances. On the other hand, again in the absence of evident deterioration or significant lack of childhood development, the assertion of resilience requires that a judgement be made both on the probable effects of the adverse circumstances, and on the evidence of a successful adaptation that has maintained or recovered functioning. As such,

resilience becomes ‘a dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma’ (Luthar and Cicchetti, 2000: 858). This is where the politics of citizenship begins to enter the discussion. First, the political import of intervention derives from how evidence of good and proper functioning is defined. Secondly, the political import of both research and intervention derives from how resilience is understood to be built and enabled and, specifically, whether the influences are positioned as external or internal to the individual. Thirdly, depending in part on where such influences are thought to lie, the final political import derives from whether and to what extent personal resilience is considered to be amenable to change.

A first strand of psychological research on resilience, which emerged in the seventies and continues to the present-day, has emphasised the embedded and complex interrelationships from which resilience as a response may emerge. Research has compared resilient with non-resilient individuals, the multiple variables that may be associated with differential responses of groups in similar circumstances and life-course narratives. Research data have been used to model pathways to resilience and to establish risk gradients to identify those ‘‘off-gradient’’ as displaying resilience (Masten, 2011).

Debate around the temporality of responsiveness have led some researchers to distinguish resilience, in which a return to normal functioning takes place in a relatively short period, from recovery, in which return is a longer-term or prolonged process (Bonanno, 2004). The factors explaining resilience cover a full range of influences from individual personality (human capital), parenting, other supportive relationships (social capital), and multiple contextual factors such as socio-economic advantage and the complex interrelationships between all these factors. The complex nature of resilience is further demonstrated in that some high-risk children may exhibit resilience by functioning well in some areas of their lives, whilst not doing so in others, or at some points in their childhood, but not at others (Luther et al., 2000). The importance of a longer-term perspective on development and normal functioning is also evident in findings of some children as ‘late bloomers’, moving across categories from ‘maladaptive’ to ‘resilient’ in late adolescence (Masten, 2011). More recent work aims at an even fuller integration of life factors, including aspects of brain function, genes, complex systems, culture and context.

This body of research on childhood development, competence, and resilience emphasises the socio-economic nature of risk and adversity, and locates the influences on resilience as deriving from a wide range of life experiences and relations. Whilst individual traits of personality, genes, and so forth are part of this set, they are imbricated in a mesh of complex and multiple interactions across time. Intervention can variously aim to offer cumulative protections, to disrupt negative cascade effects, or to promote positive cascade effects and to be sensitive of the complex temporalities of resilience and the little-understood roles of culture and context (Marsten, 2011). The approach is well summarised by Ingrid Schoon writing in 2006: 'Individual development is continually produced, sustained and changed by the socio-historical context experienced' (Schoon, 2006: 16).

Governance and Responsibility in Personal Resilience

A second strand of psychological research on resilience has emerged over the last two decades as part of the work of the positive psychology movement. The positive psychology movement shares with the first strand of research, a redirected focus to include within psychology's remit not only dysfunction, but also what William James referred to in 1902 as 'healthy mindedness'. However, despite the similarity with the first strand's work in the emphasis given to strengths – such as resilience – and to exploring how to build such capacity, there are several important distinctions. First, the work on childhood resilience, despite its emphasis on positive human development, remains grounded in a concern with dysfunction; resilience is framed as countering processes leading to lack of competence, interrupted normal development, and as facilitating the prevention of dysfunction. The work on resilience combines a focus on both deficit, in terms of risks and specific adverse events, and on assets, in terms of capacities and competencies. By contrast, the positive psychology movement has as its primary focus not just an adequacy, but an optimisation of human functioning. As such, it focuses almost entirely on assets in the work of building strengths and resilience. In this respect, the two waves of research on resilience are distinguished not so much in categorical terms, as in being located at different points on a continuum (Linley et al., 2006).

A second area of difference in the two bodies of research does, however, mark them as more categorically distinct. The mainstream outputs coming from the positive psychology movement are much more dominantly centred on the characteristics and behaviour of an individual, particularly on personality, on emotions, and on attitudes. The external stressor or the embedding environment is given a place in analysis merely as that to which resilience

is demanded, and intervention in building capacity is fully targeted at the capacities required for individual management. For example, Barbara Fredrickson's extensive research through a positive psychology lens, informs her broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which specifies different roles for positive and negative emotions. So, for her, negative emotions are associated with a narrow range of pre-defined, specific behavioural responses, such as the fright and flight response. By contrast, positive emotions are associated with a broader range of possible behavioural responses which, in turn, enable the capacity-building of further personal resources, physical, mental and social. Fredrickson has applied and validated her theory across responses in a range of situations, from the extreme event of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 (Fredrickson et al., 2003), through to situations of experimentally-induced anxiety (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004) and self-reporting coping styles (Tugade et al., 2004). The implications for intervention are that individuals are to be encouraged and enabled through training modules to broaden their cognitive capacities, or mind-set, in terms of their attention, thinking, and behavioural repertoires (Tugade et al., 2004). The connection of such cognitive broadening to resilience is established through the definition of personal resilience as a 'flexibility in response to changing situational demands, and the ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences' (Tugade et al., 2004: 5).

The positive psychology movement became well established in the late 1990s, but this reflected less the creation of a new attention within psychology on positive functioning, so much as the bringing together and affirmation of the direction of disparate and fragmented pockets of research (Linley et al., 2006). Nonetheless, the field has shown a meteoric growth in its outputs, the academic and policy uptake of its research messages, and the popularisation of publications to a wide audience over the last twenty years. As such, it can itself be seen as constituting a critical transition within the intellectual history of psychology. The rise of positive psychology exhibits several features that resonate with Malcolm Gladwell's elaboration of rapid change in his popular book *The Tipping Point*, a concept which he defines as 'the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point' (2000: 12). In particular, the field can be seen as characterised by variants of Gladwell's three agents of change: the importance of a few key persons; the importance of the 'stickiness' of the message; and the importance of context in terms of time and place. As already mentioned, various but disparate research endeavours were already tackling the underrepresentation of positive functioning within the discipline; what facilitated the integration of these activities was the emergence of a key figure in Martin Seligman, who in 1998, as president of the

American Psychological Association, used his presidential address to effectively launch the movement by arguing that psychology was neglecting two of its core missions: that of helping people to lead more productive and fulfilling lives; and of identifying and nurturing talent (Seligman,1999). In addition to creating a legitimated intellectual space for disparate strands of research to come together under a single label, Seligman was successful in promoting his ideas to a wide audience being a prolific writer of popular best sellers and a powerful advocate of the field's approaches to policy communities.

The movement also came at the right time and place, not only in terms of harnessing a wave of on-going work under a single umbrella, but also in terms of the closeness of fit between the movement's approach to personhood and the dominant political ideology of neoliberalism in the United States. The intellectual position of the positive psychology movement is that certain psychological traits and processes are inherently beneficial for fostering resilience and wellbeing. Whilst these traits and processes are part of a personality, attitude, and mind-set, they are not immutable and can be learned or developed through training. In this, the positive psychology movement aligns with the tenets of individualisation and self-actualisation which are argued to be central to modern forms of governmentality in late capitalist societies (Rose and Miller, 2008). Positive psychology not only presents the desirable outcomes for resilience and wellbeing as uncontested, but also as influences on achieving equally uncontested markers of success in society such as income, social status, and health. But perhaps most importantly, achieving such outcomes becomes less a concern of social welfare and more a matter of personal responsibility and management.

The success of this alignment between positive psychology and political ideology can be seen in the extent to which an understanding of resilience and wellbeing as every individual's personal responsibility, has permeated popular understanding of the concepts that underpin a growing self-help industry. Table 1 presents the elements of resilience promoted by popular writers and agencies through online sites – the first few found by a simple Google search for 'resilience'. Alongside this on-line advice, self-help books, a sample of which are listed in Table 2, and courses for self-management related to resilience and wellbeing are legion. In the United States, Barbara Ehrenreich has documented the expense incurred by attending such courses for those seeking to improve their life-chances, especially through employment (Ehrenreich, 2009). In the United Kingdom, Lynne Friedli highlights how those unemployed may be sent on courses for 'attitude' training. Friedli describes this as a shift from welfare to wellbeing and a politics of personality, which, in turn, reflects a move to

privilege response over risk in a political age of resilience (Friedli and Stearn, 2015). Ehrenreich and others have also challenged the claim that positive thinking mediates other outcomes, especially the outcome of serious ill-health episodes such as cancer (Coyne and Tennen, 2010; Ehrenreich, 2009).

The movement has been further challenged on its claim that particular psychological traits and processes always facilitate resilience and wellbeing. Some of the aspects of mind-set in close relationships such as marriage claimed to be beneficial include forgiveness, optimistic expectations, positive thinking and kindness. However, others claim that these benefits and attitudes depend on a range of contextual factors, such as whether a marriage is healthy or troubled. This finding regarding the significance of contexts in determining whether or not features of a positive mind-set have a beneficial or harmful outcome undermines the positioning of certain traits as always intrinsically positive (McNulty et al., 2012). Thus, a major criticism of the positive psychology movement's engagement with resilience (and wellbeing) is its lack of attention to issues beyond the internal mind-set: 'Decontextualized, this understanding of resilience stresses individual responsibility for success and negates the role of social, political, economic, and cultural forces that promote or inhibit access to the social determinants of health' (Libório and Ungar, 2014: 683).

This is not to say that the approaches of the positive psychology movement have no traction; they clearly do. The particular strength of the approach lies in its attention to the here and now. The focus on positive thinking as a strategy for functioning within the world as it is, including within the values of a given society, offers a therapeutic alternative which many prefer to the backward-looking psychoanalytic techniques of reworking a personal history. However, this attention to the here and now is simultaneously its weakness, in that personal circumstance, socio-economic status, and political context are all disregarded in an approach that locates all problems and solutions as internal to the individual. The movement has some notable success stories. Seligman and his colleagues (see Seligman, 2011) have pioneered training programmes in resilience for those in active army service aimed at mediating the effects of trauma and stress, under the strap-line, 'Building Resilience, Enhancing Performance' (Neocleous, 2013). Their claim is that what they have learned in this context may be transferable to other settings. Others, however, feel that those engaged in war are exposed to very exceptional aspects of life, are certainly in need of techniques for management and resilience, but that the circumstances of the common daily lives of civilians should not demand similar training in resilience technologies. Somewhat ironically, given the claim for a focus on optimal functioning, the approaches emerging from the

positive psychology movement continue to have greatest impact in exceptional, therapeutic situations rather than in the everyday.

Resilience in Context

The approach of those working within the positive psychology movement is, then, at some distance from those in the first strand of resilience research in psychology, despite some overlap of concepts, attention to positive functioning, and a commitment to intervention. The major difference emerges through the different attention that is accorded to context. While no-one would deny the value of personal development and techniques to manage undesirable circumstances, the approach of the first strand gives attention to the circumstances themselves through the primary focus on those living with adversity. The first strand also retains an important emphasis on diversity, as opposed to the positive psychology movement in which negative emotions and pessimism are explicitly framed as problematic and barriers to material success and status (Seligman, 2011; Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004). Although placing responsibility for failure with the individual has a powerful agency as a theory in contemporary capitalist societies, and despite the motivational you-can-do-it rhetoric, the majority of people are, by definition, not the highly successful few. Moreover, quite a number do not even seek success in these conventional terms. For those who do strive but fail, the rhetoric of positive psychology offers no consolation, since it stresses that the fault must lie within themselves, their inadequate mind-set, and their inability to change. The argument is, of course, both circular and unprovable: your mind-set is faulty; you attend a course to gain new techniques; you still do not achieve your goals; the fault is not with the techniques but with your failure to adopt them properly. This line of reasoning marks the logical flow from an argument for a meritocracy, the moment when failure is positioned at the door of the individual, and sympathy for the plight of others is eroded. The rhetorics of modern society increasingly make it difficult to countenance the possibility of someone who is essentially good, conscientious, and focussed, not doing well; we are more likely to reappraise our prior suppositions about that person to identify some personal failing. In contrast, the first strand of psychological research on resilience never made invisible or irrelevant the realities of an unequal and unfair distribution of advantage and disadvantage within which success and failure are judged.

Societies have not always adopted this rhetoric of what might be called an ‘extreme meritocracy’. The ancient Greek exploration of tragedy specifically demands our

engagement with how it is that someone essentially good may fail, how easily a minor error leads to calamity, and how vulnerable we all are to finding our lives out of control (Nussbaum, 1986). Aristotle saw the power of tragedy as a balance to any meritocratic inclinations amongst the privileged, and advanced the idea that people should see tragedies regularly. As summarised in *The Book of* Life[1], 'Tragedy is meant to be a corrective to easy judgement, it exists to counter our natural instincts to admire only the successful, to spurn all those who fail, and to dismiss unfortunates as losers' (http://www.thebookoflife.org/on-losers-and-tragic-heroes/).

The pressure to succeed, understood as part of good citizenship, existential competence, or metaphysical security, inevitably brings its own negative impacts. Suniya Luther and her colleagues, key figures in the first strand of psychological research on resilience, have demonstrated unexpectedly elevated levels of problem behaviour amongst affluent, upper-class youth (Luther and Barkin, 2012). Characteristically, they connect these problems to multiple factors which include the context of their status as 'privileged and pressured': 'All of these pathways are considered within the context of broad, exosystemic mores: the pervasive emphasis, in contemporary American culture, on maximizing personal status, and how this can threaten the well-being of individuals and of communities' (Luthar, Barkin and Crossman, 2013: 1529). These researchers begin to bring considerations of resilience as personal attributes into dialogue with ecological and political considerations of resilience as system attributes. Luthar's summary above foregrounds how uncertainties in the social, economic, and political spheres are re-categorised as personal challenges, and how failure to negotiate such uncertainties and perform effectively within the economies of late capitalism, constitutes a failure of good citizenship (Neocleous, 2013). The risk that the next generation may fail to thrive under this model of citizenship, or, worse, may fail to collude with its values, may be seen as the driver for calls to invest in an extensive roll-out of modules for resilience-training in schools in the United Kingdom, based on the Penn Resilience Programme of Karen Reivich and Martin Seligman. The impact in British schools to date has been both minimal and unsustained, although inputs were of short duration (see a discussion by Jules Evans, http://www.philosophyforlife.org/teaching-flourishing-in-schools-and-this-time-we-mean-it /). This institutionalisation of 'resilience thinking' in and across domains from the global concerns of climate change and security, to personal concerns of wellbeing, points to the importance of examining the different ways resilience is mobilised, the underlying assumptions and the fractures or interstices offering an entry-point for critical reflection.

Context, complexity and a critical resilience

Ecological models of resilience have also been subject to various criticisms. An important criticism – shared with the positive psychology movement – is that these models lack recognition of the social contingency of both people and systems. Social scientists have bemoaned the simplistic assumption that ecological and social systems have essentially similar dynamics that, in the absence of any engagement with a more critical social science, has informed a growing field of research on resilience within ecology (Cote and Nightingale, 2012; MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013). Both ecological and positive psychological models of resilience demonstrate a lack of engagement with the critical and spatial social sciences, resulting in a limited, functionalist understanding of social science (Hatt, 2013). Similarly, both approaches use resilience in a largely conservative sense, one that seeks to maintain or enable the persistence of a given system, whether of ecological interactions or of political economy and values. Indeed, both accounts eschew any discussion of politics or relations of power in their understanding or application of resilience: the avowed products of resilience are presented as uncontested, desirable goals, and the processes through which resilience is achieved or exerts its effects are presented as unaffected by conflicts over resources, power asymmetries, or inequalities (Brown, 2014). In ecological models, however, complex relations and interconnections are strongly emphasised, whereas the positive psychology approach tends to simplify and draw out key processes. Relatedly, the ecological models tend to focus on the disruptive effect of and resilience to external forces or events, whereas a positive psychology approach locates the challenges to resilience and success as solely and fully internal to the mind-set.

A growing body of research draws on Foucauldian modes of analysis to engage more critically with resilience as something that can be produced, constructed, made, and fashioned, and which, as such, constitutes not an attribute or something we have, but rather a practice or something we do (Aranda et al., 2012). The production of resilience as a necessary personal attribute in contemporary, high-income societies has been explored in a number of contextual settings. For example, legal professionals show high levels of mental ill-health, and so modern legal education endeavours to engage the pressures of the workplace by fostering resilience. An analysis of the discourses and presentations of the self in three prescriptive documents, draws out five modes of fashioning resilience. First, checklists of symptoms, tools, strategies, and so forth effectively position the law students

as subjects of a psychological discourse which, as already seen, carries considerable authority. Alongside the self-help, psychological management discourse is a small, but growing, discourse of the neurochemical self for whom diet, supplements, and medications can manage moods. Together, these two discourses indicate the importance of self-discipline in the self-management of stress through time-management, health- related practices, relaxation techniques, and self-diagnosis. The fourth discourse takes a different and rather interesting angle. Here, the importance of context is acknowledged in the stresses of competition, the adversarial environment of legal practice, and the long hours demanded of professionals. A work-related discourse frames personal responsibility in terms of resisting and renegotiating workplace relations. The virtuous person is, despite all pressures to the contrary, an ethical practitioner, a collegial employee, and a committed family member. Again, the solution to the problem is presented not in changing the workplace culture, but in how the individual manages his or her own ethical practice in a challenging context. Finally, alongside all the self-management techniques required, the young professional entering the market must understand his or her own bargaining position as a desirable commodity and, again, through his or her own 'entrepreneurial' subjectivity, control the workplace demands (Ball, 2011).

These five modes of continual fashioning of the resilient persona combine internal and contextual factors in the challenges to be faced and, as such, go beyond the simplicity of the positive psychology approach. However, the pathways to the resilient persona are, nonetheless, all located as internal to subjective self-management. This mode of analysis has been taken further to explore not only how resilience is fashioned, reflecting the submission of bodies to the discourses of subjective resilience, but also how the normative values typically underpinning discourses of resilience are negotiated, subverted, resisted, and opposed (Chandler and Reid, 2016). Indeed, in some contexts, it is the very processes of resistance of normative values, labels, and prescriptive behaviours that generate modes of agency, wellbeing and resilience (Bottrell, 2009). The body of research produced by Michael Ungar and colleagues, has documented great diversity in how resilience is expressed and produced across an international range of different social, economic, and cultural settings. Their work specifically attends to the situated and diverse processes involved and stresses the multiple interactional processes that function at the meso-, macro-, and exosystem levels (Ungar, 2011), and the importance of cultural and contextual relevance in modes of constructing resilience and wellbeing (Libório and Ungar, 2014). Resilience, in this work, is not understood as dependent upon an individual's characteristics,

but as firmly embedded within other social structures such as family, community, schools, and cultures through which resources may be available to foster resilience (Ungar 2011).

The constructionist accounts of Ungar and colleagues emphasise difference and re-politicise the notion of resilience. They do, however, maintain a distinct binary between the inner world of the self and the outer world of the social. A complement and an expansion to their approach come from a fuller account of the subject, drawing on feminist post-structuralist and psychosocial understandings. Such theorisations reconceive the self from the subject whose external expressions reflect an internal essence, to one produced relationally and discursively – a self who emerges performatively through daily embodied and intersubjective practices (Aranda et al., 2012). In this account of the self, identity, subjectivity, resilience, and wellbeing are in a continual process of becoming, and as such, are necessarily and always unfinished. This proposition of resilience as part of constant ontological becoming is in radical opposition to those psychological accounts that identify resilience through a chronologically defined process of development. Instead, such an account advances the theorization of the observations made by Ungar and other researchers on diversity in modes of resilience, the situated specificities, and the importance, particularly in contexts of disadvantage and inequality, of resistance and negotiation as processes themselves geared towards resilience (Aranda et al., 2012).

Concluding thoughts

The importance of considering agency in relation to the emergence of the concept of resilience within contemporary political practice is evident across a range of spheres. In focussing on the experiential scale, this chapter has drawn out several different modes of engagement with the concept and contrasted the underlying assumptions or constructions that relate to the self. These concern the relationships between an inner and outer self, the subjective individual and the embedding environment, the relevance of contextual variability, the universality of personality traits for resilience, the governance of the modern subject, and the political import of the various mobilizations of the term. The dominant ways in which the term resilience has been employed to demonstrate a clear political agency in positioning the modern subject as responsible for self-management, resilience, wellbeing, and an associated range of measures of life-course success. By contrast, other researchers emphasize complex interrelationships within a range of contextual social, economic, and

political factors. Engagements that understand resilience as constructed or made, or emergent and always becoming, have demonstrated the immense variability in modes of resilience and its production. This dynamic mobilization of resilience brings us full circle to the start of this essay in which the anomaly of resilience in a volume on critical transitions was noted. In this respect, the constant negotiations, subversions, or resistances in relation to normative values and processes offers, if not a moment of dramatic critical transition, at least a continuum of negotiated relations which inform both gradual and critical transitions. The production of the discourses of a knowledge industry, the rapid emergence and rise to a position of dominance of an approach to resilience informed by the positive psychology movement, may be similarly resisted and renegotiated by alternative modes of analysis that allow for context, relations, diversity, and emergence.

Notes

1. *The Book of Life* is an off-shoot of *The School of Life*. This is a centre for enabling ideas to impact on how we live which was set up in 2008 by Alain de Botton together with various colleagues. 'The School has a passionate belief in making learning relevant – and so runs courses in the important questions of everyday life. Whereas most colleges and universities chop up learning into abstract categories ('agrarian history' 'the 18th century English novel'), The School of Life titles its courses according to things we all tend to care about: careers, relationships, politics, travels, families.'

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Table 1 Examples of advice to enhance resilience

Time, 2014 from those surviving life threats time.com/3002830/how-to-be-resilient-8-steps-to-success-when-life-gets-hard	Perceive and believe	Manage your emotions	Be a quitter	Be delusional	Prepare (even if it's too late)	Stay busy, busy, busy	Make it a game	Get help and give help		
Jessie Scholl LifeTime Fitness 2011 (cites Siebert 2005) https://experiencelife.com/article/the-5-best-ways-to-build-resilience	Pump up your positivity (Fredrickson)	Live to learn (Sabine; Adams)	Open your heart (Sabine; Fredrickson-gratitude)	Take care of yourself (Osborn 1997 take breaks) (Fredrickson, breaks outside)	Hang on to humour (Siebert, 2010;					
WebMD (Uscher) www.webmd.com/mental-health/features/overcome-obstacles-resilience	Stay flexible	Learn lessons	Take action	Stay connected	Release tension					

About.com Kendra Cherry psychology.about.com/od/crisiscounseling/tp/become-more-resilient.htm	Find a sense of purpose in life	Build positive beliefs in your abilities	Develop a strong social network	Embrace change	Be optimistic	Nurture yourself	Develop your problem-solving skills	Establish goals	Take steps to solve problems	Keep working on your skills
Daskal, 2015 my.happify.com/hd.6-ways-to-be-resilient	Don't try to solve problems with the same thinking that created them	Master you emotions before they manage you	Stay tough	Keep growing	Stay prepared	Pick yourself up as many times as it takes	Reward the small wins	Keep giving	Build relationships	Create your own meaning
Mind tools team, caroline smith www.mindtools.com/pages/article/resilience.htm	Enough sleep	Practice thought awareness, positive thinking	Practice cognitive restructuring re how think	Learn from mistakes and failures	Choose response ie remain calm	Maintain perspective	Learn to set smart effective perso	Build your self-confidence	Develop strong relationships	Focus on being flexible

			about bad events etc.		and logical		nal goals			
Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.org/test-procedures/resilience-training/in-depth/resilience/art-20046311	Get connected	Make every day meaningful	Learn from experience	Remain hopeful	Take care of yourself	Be proactive				
American Psychological Association www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx	Make connections	Avoid seeing crises as unsurmountable problems	Accept that change is a part of living	Move towards your goals	Take decisive actions	Look for opportunities for self-discovery	Nurture a positive view of yourself	Keep things in perspective	Maintain a hopeful outlook	Take care of yourself

Table 2 Examples of Recent Self-help Books on Resilience

Author	Title	Reference
Jane Clarke and John Nicholson	Resilience: bounce back from whatever life throws at you	2010 Crimson Publishing
Donald Robertson	Build your resilience: teach yourself how to survive and thrive in any situation	2012 Teach yourself:
Steven M. Southwick and Dennis S. Charney	Resilience: the science of mastering life's greatest challenges	2012 Cambridge University Press
Mark McGuinness	Resilience: facing down rejection and criticism on the road to success	2013 Lateral action books
Liggy Webb	Resilience: how to cope when everything around you keeps changing	2013 John Wiley
Fraser J. Hay and Elsabe Smit	Resilience: how to restore and keep faith in yourself and your business idea	2014 The Ps Qs and As Ltd.
Kenneth R. Ginsburg and Martha M. Jablow	Building resilience in children and teens: giving kids roots and wings	2014 American Academy of Pediatrics
Matthew Johnstone	The little book of resilience: how to bounce back from adversity and lead a fulfilling life	2015 Robinson
Eric Greitens	Resilience: hard won wisdom for leading a better life	2015 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Greg Braden	Resilience from the heart: the power to thrive in life's extremes	2015 Hay House
Geetu Bharwaney	Emotional resilience: know what it takes to be agile, adaptable and perform at your best	2015: Pearson
Les Duggan and Mark Solomons	Building resilience: the 7 steps to creating highly successful lives	2015 Developing Potential