

Children's Light:

The Participation of the Child in the Construction of Twelve Eagle's Narratives of Resilience
Among Rural Families Facing Extreme Poverty and Food Insecurity.

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Abstract

The study of resilience is approached by current development initiatives through the physical dimensions of resources' management. Alternative contemporary social studies approach resilience through its social ecology dimension. Within social ecologies, cultural-specific studies further present emic notions in the definition of resilience and determinants. In both social ecologies and emic notions, children emerge as potential important contributors in building resilience. This study then chooses to immerse in the daily life of the Q'eqchi of Twelve Eagles to explore narratives that could account for the roles of children in the physical and social ecologies, attempting to balance the etic and emic perspectives in understanding their role in resilience building. The study suggests children have important roles in both physical and social ecologies, yet great differences between emic and etic notions of resilience start to emerge as the immersion encounters poverty and suggestions of well-being interwoven. The study finishes reflecting how emic and etic perspectives, the management of the unexpected and the right methodological principles are indispensable for studying resilience in the future.

Chapter I: Setting the context

1. The Q'eqchi in Guatemala - a history of destruction, displacement, and resilience

The Mayans are one of the four major population groups of Guatemala that constitute almost half of the population of the country. Essentially they form a regional group of twenty six ethnicities localized mainly in the North and Western highlands of the country. Of these the K'iches, the K'achiquels and the Q'eqchi constitute the majority of the population (Mckillop, 2004). The Q'eqchi are an ancient traditional group of communities, united mainly by their linguistic similarities.

Since the times before the Spanish invasion of the Americas, the Q'eqchi were living in the decadent times of the post-Mayan empire when the city empires of the K'iche, K'achiquel and Q'eqchi were engaged in a long history of political and military conflicts (Mckillop, 2004). During this period the Spanish invasion began in Mesoamerica in 1518 and moved to Guatemala in 1523. The colonization period was characterized by brutal and inhumane treatments of the local population coupled with a Christian-led ethnocide and mass exterminations of the population by the introduction of previously unknown diseases (Mckillop, 2004). Yet, the Q'eqchis were successful in containing the military incursions and after long and repeated failures by the Spanish to siege their land, a compromised agreement was signed in 1529 allowing the Q'eqchi to remain independent but force them to grant access of catholic missionaries (Wilk and Chapin 1990, p.18, cited in Wichmann and Planck, 2009). Eventually, Las Casas and other Dominican missionaries were successful in bringing the Q'eqchi under the influence of the Spanish (Weeks 1997, p. 62; Kockelman 2003p. 468 cited in Wichmann and Planck, 2004). The conversion of the population to Christian philosophy led to the gradual opening of the Q'eqchi region to the establishment of large towns that remain until today as important commercial centres (Wichmann and Planck, 2009). The Church's influence, nevertheless, didn't protect the Q'eqchi from the introduction of many forms of exploitation (Wilson, 1999). The major one began with the expansion of the agricultural trade. By the mid nineteenth century, agriculture was the most important source of economic growth and the major source of livelihood for the Q'eqchi population (Wilson, 1999). Coffee plantation was the first major agricultural product introduced by German migrant landowners (King 1974, pp. 20-27, cited in Wichmann and Planck, 2009). In 1877, through the introduction of the "Mandamiento" law, Guatemala's government authorized the use of Q'eqch workers as employees with meagre eligible wages which coupled with the expansion of the coffee land acquisitions of communal lands, pushed many Q'eqchi communities to migrate to the nearby state of Belize (Thompson 1930, p. 36, cited in Wichmann and Planck, 2009). By the early twentieth century, the Catholic Church introduced a new wave of religious and economic reforms in Q'eqchi communities with major repercussion on their cultural and social norms. The converted Q'eqchi catechists were instructed to introduce new forms of economic development strategies including the use of cooperative and technologies of the green revolution. Since then, spiritual evangelization and economic reforms were joint strategies used in all proselyting attempts across Guatemala from which the Q'eqchi faced a continuous process of multi-dimensional colonization (Wilson, 1993). In time, the lack of public investment in infrastructure and unemployment produced rampant poverty among Q'eqchi lands. The combination of increasing land disputes between large agro-businesses (e.g. the case of the United Fruit Company), the petrol crisis in the mid 1970's that pushed commodities prices at exorbitant prices and the political unrest driven by the guerrilla movement of the 1960's, led many Q'eqchi communities to support insurgent movements (CEH, 1999). From 1970 to 1980, the Catholic Church actively supported communities' insurgency under the liberation theology giving even more impetus to the constitution of communities in resistance (CEH, 1999). By the 1980's, with the support of Mayan communities, the

country had already experienced twenty years of consecutive civil conflicts. By 1981, almost a third of the country was on the control of the insurgent movement. Led by the guerrilla, the uprising was at the verge of appointing a provisional government. The escalation of the situation led to a *coup de E'tat* by General Rios Montt, who in his presidency counteracted the insurgency with massive and brutal responses specifically aimed at the guerrilla and Mayan rural communities. The brutal "scorched earth" strategy that typified the years from 1982 to 1985 were eventually described by the international community as a systematic genocide that accounted for 200,000 assassinations, 45,000 forceful displacements and the diaspora of a million peoples (CEH, 1999). During and after the war, "poles of development" were enforced by the army which constituted the resettlement of hundreds of communities. At the new sites, sizes of forty families per village and paramilitary structures known as the Civil Defence Patrols (CDP) were institutionalized upon traditional community organisations (Foxen, 2000). In most cases, war crime perpetrators and victims were forced to live together (Foxen, 2000). After the 36 years of internal conflict, Guatemala finally signed the Peace Accords in 1996. This constituted an accomplishment of ten years of negotiations and historical agreements from all diverse social actors and sectors under the auspice of the international community. Nevertheless, this didn't translate into the reestablishment of peace and reconciliation among the different social groups in conflict, especially among the long rooted disputes between the ladino and Mayan groups (Mendizabal, 2010). From the 2000's onwards, new economic policies of development supported the expansion of large land holdings for the production of coffee, cardamom, sugar and African palm (Trucchi, 2012). Hydroelectric projects and mining exploration concessions which generally destroyed and contaminated the natural environment became part of the new agenda (Trucchi, 2012). These concessions eventually pushed the Q'eqchi population, as many other Mayan groups, to migrate to more remote areas where subsistence farming has become since the major livelihood alternative. As Mendizabal (2010) describes on his historical recompilation, the Mayan people of Guatemala have been exposed to three periods of colonization: the Spanish invasion, the civil war-genocide and lately, the post-peace accords period of gradual and systematic loss of control of the government to an elite minority. As of now, several land conflicts between the private sector and Mayan communities have led to official displacements of hundreds of Q'eqchi families and the destruction of their natural environment.

The community of Twelve Eagles

Twelve Eagles is a Q'eqchi community located in the Polochic Valley, in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. Their history begins in 2004, when two hundred and thirty five families revolted against the Mocca agro-business to reclaim more land for subsistence. Since generations, the German-Guatemalan agro-state had been the physical geography of living and the main source of livelihood for the families (PBI, 2006). At the time of the conflict, nearly eight hundred families lived and work in the state.

The conflict arose as population pressure increased. Being sub-employed and under-paid with €7 a week, livelihood incomes and limited land were considered by the insurgent families as insufficient to achieve subsistence. The critical point of the conflict began in 2006, when the landlords and managers refused to negotiate a concession of land, resulting in the disabling of the administration centre and the production facilities by the insurgents. Reactions by the management escalated into acts of violence between the agro-business private security and the insurgents. Eventually, conflicts between the non-rebellious families and the insurgents emerged, resulting in several attacks to the insurgent families, leaving thirty nine people injured and two dead (PBI, 2010). The government intervene in February 2006, with police and military forces, leading to the displacement of the two hundred and thirty five families (GHRC, 2006). After the displacement, the community settled in a highway between La Tinta and Panzos, Alta Verapaz near the Mocca state where they remained for four years in conditions of complete destitution and in subsistence of sporadic food aid (PBI, 2010). Non-governmental organization and community leaders began negotiations with the National Fund for Peace, the National Fund for Land and the Agrarian Affairs Secretariat which after four years, by beginning of 2010, finalized

with the negotiation of a new land (PBI, 2010). During the negotiations, nearly one hundred families declined the offer, claiming that the new land was infertile and unusable for cultivation. After failure to reach consensus, such families went disperse and some sought asylum with extended family members in Mocca. By mid-2010, only one hundred forty families moved to the new area where the community is located nowadays. The new area lacked of any infrastructure and public services (PBI, 2010). The new community was named Twelve Eagles.



Map 01: Map of Guatemala, indicating the district of Panzos, Alta Verapaz.



Map 02: Map of Twelve Eagles Community, Panzos.

Children amid current contexts

In post-genocide researches, children have been used to testify on past atrocities to construct meanings out of tragedies and encourage the break of silence of many communities (Lykes, 1997; Miller, 1996). But beyond that, while submerged in contexts of high complexity, children are often excluded from participating in activities of high social relevance that define the situations they experience. Generally, they are also disregarded as incapable to fulfil responsibilities in which they are needed (Dijk, 2007; Lisuntha, 2009; Lansdown, 2001). In many resilience literature they are portrait as vulnerable and exclusively dependants of their community's social services (Ungar 2008, Ungar et al., 2008; Lisuntha, 2009). Yet, although such vulnerability and dependency are required to be acknowledged, their

interpretation hide other set of roles children present in their communities. Studies by Caraveo (2006) with traditional Mayan communities in Mexico describe, for example, how the inclusion of children in culturally significant activities served as mechanisms to safeguard notions of traditional organisation and values, and therefore promoting resilience through culture. As the author later argues, the communities constructed spaces for all members of the community, including children, to participate in communal strengthening activities. Likewise, alternative researches account for children's participation in many development initiatives as fundamental mechanisms to improve focus, broadness, effectiveness and sustainability of community building projects (Dijk, 2007; Lansdown, 2001; Mitchel, Tanner and Haynes, 2009; Stephenson, Gourley & Milles, 2004). But beyond the physical and economically views of their contributions, children can also be portrayed as contributors of socially relevant services and as capable of shifting the boundaries of adaptation. A study by Bedón (2006) on migrant street-children living in dispossession suggested for example that through the comprehension of children's games and rules, it was possible to understand how children could create different configurations for the perception of reality and bring new adaptive forms of subsisting. Games allowed them to construct and own their personal public spaces, in a display of capabilities far from what is expected from the perspective of defenceless and weak subjects generally portrayed on them. This should lead to understand how children can then be integrated in notions of resilience, understanding resilience within a broad context of social relationships and non-physical adaptation capabilities. As some research have suggested:

"[resilience] is not merely about survival, but [also] about attachment, love, earning, laughing, and having a grasp on life" (McAdoo, 1999 cited in Tousignant and Sioui, 2009, p. 46)

The definition connotes a potential children have in constructing positive perceptions and approaches to life during crisis. With such perspective, they could be considered co-authors of narratives that help to sustain morale in times of crisis and therefore build resilience.

Nevertheless, by owning complex natures, children can also pose contraposition stands in rebellion to their own cultural identity and in rejection of their community's values. As Foxen (2010) describes in her studies on Maya communities in Guatemala:

"...many of the interviews are filled with rather desperate discussions about K'iche' youth, who (their parents state) either claim not to believe that the genocide happened, or do not want to hear about it, and are more concerned with leaving for the United States and acquiring material goods, thus fragmenting families further and abandoning community norms for a more global materialistic culture".
Foxen (2010, p. 78)

The complex realities that globalization and cultural evolutions can generate in inter-generational conflictive views of life should not be underestimated. Here, children and their narratives stand as complex and diverse as any other and require due consideration in exploring resilience of communities like Twelve Eagles.

In searching to understand adaptation of children and communities in such contexts, one is faced with many difficulties for its study. As it can be deduced from previous presentations, the contexts in which resilience is situated, from the people's perspective, is rich in diverse political, economic and socio-cultural realities submerged in complex historical backgrounds. The notions that construct the process of resilience are furthermore embedded by multiple discourses that lie on constantly evolving cultural perceptions and inter-generational encounters. As a process, resilience is even a fluid construction of historical experiences that when perceived by people, cannot be separated from the continuous

experience of life when life has always been defined by resistance. Furthermore, in acknowledging the existence of different discourses and notions of resilience by people, and therefore in potentially contextualizing resilience through a broader context of *having a grasp of life*, one could find new perspectives in which children can participate in its construction and sustaining.

Contrastingly, present day development perspectives that focus the study and intervention of resilience in physical and resource management relationships and that are contextualized within the specific time of current circumstances leave many undefined notions and historically important contexts outside of its study. This study therefore aims at understanding resilience in Twelve Eagles and contributing to the current discussion on studying resilience by documenting the resilience narratives of Twelve Eagles that focus on the participation of the child in their construction, and that are presented through their own contextualized perspectives.

Chapter II: Exploratory perspectives of resilience and its study

2.1 Resilience studies

The broader academic definition of resilience refers to an individual's tendency to cope with stress and adversity (Masten, 2009). It is a concept understood as a process rather than a state of being (Rutter, 2008). It is as a concept embedded in notions of the *positive* resulting from coping strategies (Crawford, Wright and Masten (2005).

Resilience studies, depending on the discipline involved, vary greatly in their main focus. Within rural development, sociology and anthropology is mainly centred on the study of physical and social ecologies. As contemporary social studies present, these dimensions play an important role in the building of capacities used to overcome adversities and construct resilience (Seccombe, 2002; Wolkow & Ferguson, 2001 as presented in Ungar, 2008). Nevertheless, in rural development interventions and research the reconciliation between the physical and the social ecologies has not fully materialized. This can be observed from the tendency of food security research since the mid-1980's to emphasize on issues related to the diversification of strategies of food consumption and resources management (Waal, 1989; Corbett, 1998; Davies, 1996; Swift, 1989, Deverux, 2000; Adams, 1993). Many frameworks like the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, have since developed and are currently widely used to analyse resilience strategies (Elasha, Elhassan, Ahmed and Zakiieldin, 2005; Alinovi, D'Errico, Mane and Romano, 2010; FAO, 2011; Marschke and Berkes, 2006; Tien, T. 2010). Beside the urgent concerns of the natural resource management, the development of studies on physical ecologies has facilitated most international development interventions to focus mainly on the physical aspects of resilience building (DFID, 2011; CARE, n.d; USAID, 2011). In practice, this fostered the development of projects based on economic approaches to capital and resource-management (e.g. agricultural innovation, watershed management, etc.).

Alternatively, social ecology dimensions present the functions of social capitals in the influence of adaptations through social environments and relationships (Ungar, 2011). The difference lies in that social ecology considers social institutions and structures as determinants for the capacity of an individual to achieve positive adaptation. It further claims the need to support social relationships as forces central to the protection and restoration of social capital that are important bases of community building in traditional communities (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003; Tousignant and Sioui, 2009; Ungar, 2011).

Traditional social ecology studies nevertheless don't account for the more complex and varied emic notions of resilience and social capitals found in various cultural contexts. For example, cultural specific research uses alternative and often emic resilience definitions produced by less researched groups, as this extract from a study of First Nation communities presents:

"...[resilience is] a long process of healing that allows to supersede the multiple trauma and the loss of culture experienced during the colonization and after. The presence of social capital is central to this process in building bridges between persons, families and social groups with the aim of developing a spirit of civic culture" (Tousignant and Sioui, p. 1, 2009).

Likewise, several exploratory works have found that, from an emic perspective, *culture* and *historical contexts*, emerge as fundamental issues to be addressed by traditional communities in their search for wellbeing and resilience (Kirmayer, Tait and Simpson, 2000; Foxen, 2000, 2010; Denham, 2008; Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003). For instance, Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo (2003) emphasize that First Nation communities' notions of tradition are essential to efforts of confronting and healing a legacy of "*historical injustices*" and suffering brought by a long history of colonialism. As explored below, these perspectives present an important divergence with Western notions: the contextualization of present day crisis within long rooted historical experiences. Likewise, their "*notions of tradition*" as drivers of processes used to supersede crises has to be highlighted for its implications to the study of resilience. As Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo (2003) state:

"...recuperating the traditions was seen as a way to reconnect contemporary Aboriginal people to their historical traditions and mobilises rituals and practices that promoted community solidarity. Hence, efforts to restore language, religious and communal practices have been understood by contemporary Aboriginal people as fundamentally acts of healing". (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003, p. 16)

The acknowledgement of the importance of such notions emphasizes the extent to which historical contexts are closely linked to experiences that affect traditions, cultural identities and community cohesions, and to which degree such issues continue to be linked to present-day crisis and the quest of resilience. Emic notions, as complements to etic notions (e.g. resource-management approaches), present the potential to explore other priorities in the study and intervention on resilience building within more specific and relevant interpretations of the primary actors of resilience. As presented earlier, this is relevant when the study of resilience encounters a reality that is contextualized by complexity, present and historical, and can be constituted by diverging and even contradictory notions that define it. However, the exploration of emic notions cannot follow similar approaches of etic methodologies. It requires the exercise of deep contextualization within the larger historical, sociocultural and political cultures of a specific group, and an intimate communicative relationship, whereas conflicting constructions of the *self* formed by contrasting memories, feelings, cognitions and attitudes make space for a genuine interpretation of what resilience means to the *other*. Such possibilities are reachable, but require the exercise of deep "*immersions*" within the *other's* reality. In the case of this study, such methodology was used and will be presented, as it was considered essential in encountering the findings.

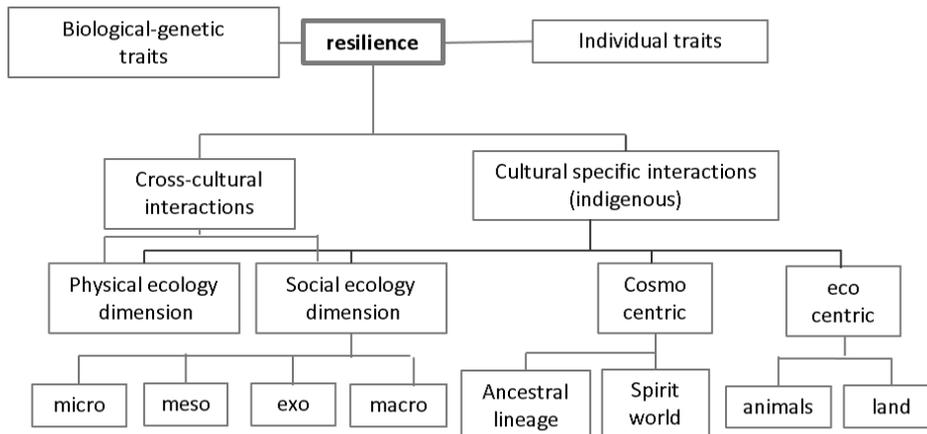
Theoretical framework of resilience studies

Given the many dimensions merged in the study of resilience, the study was placed amid a broad academic framework that could allow flexible yet focused explorations of the subject. Within the framework, resilience is framed among four dimensions: individually learned competencies, biological-genetic traits, cross culturally studied notions and cultural specific notions. The cross cultural notions are further defined by the traditional studies of physical and social ecology dimensions. The social ecology dimension is comprised by the microsystem interactions, which represent an individual's interactions with family members, peers and close-relationships. The meso-system level describes the interactions and determines the relationship between the families, peers and close-relationships and the individual. Thirdly, the exo-system interactions explore the more physical and institutional environments, such as public services in which both care givers and care receivers interact. Finally, macro-system interactions refer to contexts such as the rule of law, a community ethos, customs and cultural practices that define social relationships (Ungar, 2011).

Additions to the framework were made to incorporate alternative resilience notions from studies that used cultural specificity and emic findings to present such variations. Resulting, two new potential

dimension of study were introduced derived from the study of Canadian First Nation communities, namely the cosmocentric and ecocentric interactions (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003). In short, ecocentric relates to the relationship of man as *connected to the land and to animals* and cosmocentric as *connecting the person to an ancestral lineage or the spirit world*. Although these additions were not necessarily expected to be found, they were relevant for the present study since research of Q'eqchi communities found a special relationship some of these communities have to their environment and to their ancestral and spiritual heritage (Cabarrus, 1979; Wilson, 1991).

Figure 2.1 - Theoretical framework for categorization of resilience



Sources: Elaborated from Ungar (2011) and Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo (2003)

2.2 Narratives of Resilience

Narratives can be understood as a flow of expressions like events, experiences, thoughts and feelings presented in the form of speech, writing, song, games, photography, theatre or body language. They can be verbal and non-verbal and generally aim to express or transmit knowledge or messages formed by symbolisms or codes for which interpretation is required. In essence, they are the main source for the creation of discourse and in this research they are the means for which resilience can be studied in its dimension as presented in the theoretical framework.

The study of narratives, and specifically “resilience narratives”, is certainly not new. Researchers from very varied fields of study used them to present emic knowledge as means to enrich understandings of less researched groups (Kirmayer, Tait and Simpson, 2000; Foxen, 2000 and 2010; Lykes, 1997). Tousignant and Sioui (2009) described that in combination with efforts to rescue cultural heritage, narratives also served to present ways to provide a coherent meaning and understanding of catastrophes. Colson (2003) presented narratives to portray a more positive future, transmit rich moral lessons and confront adversities. Other studies suggested that narratives have also been used as traditional processes of self-healing (Tousignant and Sioui, 2009; Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003) and as means to build socio-political contexts to help children make sense of their experience of political oppression and thus promoting their psychological resiliency (Dawes, 1990; Punamaki & Suleiman, 1990; Straker, 1988 as seen in Miller, 1996).

Although being widely developed, resilience studies remain full of methodological problems in presenting resilience conceptualizations (Foxen, 2010). The specific cultural and historically contexts make every researched group to potentially present different notions in which resilience can be

understood, therefore making their resilience narratives difficult to identify and differentiate from other types of narratives existing in their oral traditions (Foxen, 2010). As such, the operationalization of codes and symbols that define them require a mix between emic and etic notions that can account for a more integrated and realistic representation. To face this issue, a combination of comparative cultural-specific notions was used to operationalize the identification of resilience narratives. Notions used were taken from First Nation communities' concepts to define processes of healing (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003), the Mayan discourses of resilience in post-war periods (Foxen, 2000, 2010) and other resilience symbols identified in other less researched groups (Colson 2003; Tousignant and Sioui, 2009). In combination, the following notions comprise the positive side of resilient expressions:

Forgiveness, overcoming, past accounts of success over tests, hope, positive insights about the future, healing through own traditions, repairing of cultural ruptures, the continuity in the transmission of traditional knowledge, the knowledge of living on the land, the sense of community connectedness, historical consciousness, making meaning of past atrocities, collective identity, understanding past atrocities, acceptance.

Nevertheless, given the generally complex violent historical contexts in which many Mayan communities exist, notions of violence, aggressive resistance and mutiny also need to be contemplated. Such notions have been documented and are ascertained as evidence of the existence of processes of adaptation (Tousignant and Sioui, 2009). The specific case of communities in marginal areas of Medellín, Colombia, can be mentioned, where findings suggested that children's aggression was functional to their environment as it promoted a sense of vigilance and self-defence (Duque, Klevens, & Ramirez, 2003). Research by Sebescen (2000) also pointed out that projecting aggression towards an abusive environment was a rational mechanism to refuse circumstances endangering the individual's well-being. Using such researches, several negative notions were compiled to operationalize the identification of the negative side of resilience expressions:

Resistance, violence, anger, aggression, condemnation, discrimination towards other ethnic groups, (such as the ladino), social class' struggles, forgetting and denial.

From such notions and previously presented functions of narratives, a working definition of resilience narratives is proposed accounting for the specific context in which Q'eqchi communities exist. It presents nevertheless several epistemological problems in the management of emic and etic notions.

In conditions where poverty is a continuously faced and complex reality rooted amid long-standing historical repressions, resilience narratives are the multiple and mutually converging or contradictive expressions in which communities can opt to resist by rejecting their reality, rising against it or transforming it into a new self-created perception of their existence, whereas all of them represent accessible opportunities for a process of self-healing to be initiated and where perceived notions of wellbeing can develop and be achieved individually or in commonality.

This definition should be further understood within the perspective that resilience narratives constitute a source for individuals to extract lessons from past crises (Miller, 1996; Lykes, 1997). They differ from other narratives for their use and ability to support processes of healing through expression, reflection and the finding of meanings of current adversities (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003, Tousignant and Sioui, 2009). They are generally historically, inter-generational and culturally contextualized (Colson, 2003; Miller, 1996; Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003; Foxen, 2001, 2010; Tousignant and Sioui, 2009). In

their collective form, they do not only construct a diversified and complex body of collective memories and foster the building of a historical contextualized identity, but also serve as families' or communities' reservoir of cultural and family-lineage heritage through which wisdom and cultural identity is preserved (Foxen, 2010; Tousignant and Sioui, 2009). Re-taking previous reflections of the context-specific and contrasting multiple notions of self and experiences of contexts, the above presented definitions need also to be understood as a broad guideline from which the Q'eqch'i own emic multiple definitions can be interpreted and understood. To exemplify these reservations, the following reflection is useful:

“For most, there was not a single social memory or narrative which can accommodate their pain and confusion, but many conflicting memories vacillating around feelings of guilt, sorrow and pain, the desire to forget as well as the impulse to create meaning out of chaos – a meaning embedded in complex past and present cultural realities” (Foxen, 2000, p.358).

In such regard, it will be important to recognize that even within similar ethnic groups or communities there are different experiences of geo-political historical contexts, for which perceptions of reality and cultural identities may diverge greatly. In reality, cultures are constantly adapting. Even within social groups one can find great variations in knowledge, practice and attitudes which are generally in contestation of dominant values. The global systems, media and other forms of globalized exchanges now bring diverse people and conceptions into a complex mix of cultures where most individuals have access to and participate in multiple cultures (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003). Therefore, researchers studying traditional cultures should be aware that communities could present a mix discourses used to construct their strategies for positive adaptation which may present great syncretism.

Furthermore, the research needs contextualization within the wider discussions of quality of life and well-being research that emphasizes the subjective quality of well-being or, as used here, the emic notions of resilience. Having distinguished the Q'eqchi in a context of poverty and historical repression, to understand their possible ways of adaptation it is necessary to introduce the existence and understanding of those states of subjective satisfaction within objectively unsatisfactory living conditions known as “the satisfaction-paradox” (Zapf, 1984 cited in Olson and Schober, 1992). The study of resilience from these perspectives then leads to the exploration of three different theories of adaptation. The first, the Hedonic treadmill theory (Brickman and Campbell, 1971) and its contemporary revision (Diener, Lucas, Scollon, 2006) claim that most people adapt to external circumstances in different degrees and given certain contexts, perspectives and aptitudes. Happiness and well-being therefore can be found in strong adverse contexts (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003; Stewart, 2003; Diener, Lucas, Scollon, 2006) and in varied cultural and physical contexts like that of the Amish, the Masai and the Inughuit (Biswas-Diener, Vittersø, and Diener, 2005). The theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and its socio-economic adaptation (Oxoby, 2004; Olson and Schober, 1992) explore the potential causes for adaptive behaviours to poverty. According to the main theory, people in general avoid sustained mental stress caused by lasting dissatisfaction or unhappiness (cognitive dissonances) by aiming to change their subjective evaluations of their life situation through its rationalization to a normal state or satisfactory result (Festinger, 1957). Therefore, the individual chooses to either change the situation to meet his satisfaction, or he adapts the standards to the situation (Glatzer, 1987 cited in Olson and Schober, 1992). In this theory, people's decision to adapt to poverty implies their awareness to or perception of a reality of poverty that is unmovable. The causes of why poverty seems unmovable to the poor are then open for examination. Last, the affective habituation theory suggests that people can adapt through a process of habituation that reduces the effects (perceptual, physiological, attentional, motivational, etc.) of constant repeated stimulus (Frederick and Loewenstein, 1999, p.302). According to this theory, adaptation appears when an extreme positive or negative stimulus is encountered frequently. Our evaluative system then reacts with

intensity once and then reduces it to avoid cycles of overwhelming reactions and let appropriate actions take place (Dijksterhuis and Smith, 2002). This theory explains how the lack of negative expressions in extreme contexts serve to prove the opposite positive adaptation to the otherwise development of deeper psychopathologies such as depression, aggressiveness, pessimism, violence or alcoholism that can be expected from the consistent exposure to negative contexts (Cohen, 1993; Padilla, Mishel, & Grant, 1992 as presented in Stewart, 2003).

Besides psychology, this has been widely studied among socio-economic perspectives, concentrating on adaptations to changes, positive and negative, where income, unemployment, divorce and poverty eventually become neutral perceived realities (Nussbaum, 2001; Teschl and Comim, 2005 cited in Clark, 2007; Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003; Diener, Lucas, Scollon, 2006; Di Tella, Haisken, MacCulloch, 2007; Clark and Qizilbash, 2008). As depending on both physical and social ecologies and in individual traits, these theories are framed in several dimension of the theoretical framework.

2.3 Historical memory in resilience narratives

Following from previous discussions, historical contexts can be important in understanding processes of resilience in traditional communities where long history of repercussion and violence is present, as in the case of the Q'eqchi. For one side, it helps in understanding that in contexts of long term instability and structural violence, notions of wellbeing differ greatly from those found in relatively stable contexts (Foxen, 2010). Furthermore, historical contexts serve to recognize the existence and importance of communities' historical memory. In historically conflictive regions, it has been suggested that narratives serve as mechanism in which historical memory is built and preserved, and from which the understanding of deeper and long established communal mechanisms of resistance are generated to overcome traumas that are accessible to future generations (Foxen, 2000). In this process, narratives and memories are both influenced *by* and actively influence *the* wider collective memory (Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo, 2003).

In his work, Dernham (2008) clearly identifies the role of historical memory and contexts:

"[...] family members also construct their sense of self from a network or chain of intergenerational memories and narratives situated within the larger sociocultural, political and historical context. That is, narratives and memories of previous generations, often dating back hundreds of years, are internalized by subsequent generations and used to construct one's sense of self". (Dernham, 2008, p. 400)

In Guatemala, historical contexts have been used to understand the complex body of discourses that portrait contrasting social dynamics of communities where past roles of victims, perpetrators, and victim-perpetrators of the internal conflict continue to be re-enacted in the community members, as many of them continue to live together in present days (Garavito Fernandez 2003; Anckermann et al. 2005; Esparza 2005; Zepeda Lopez 2005; as seen in Foxen, 2010). In this regard, the historical dimension of narratives not only allows the study of resilience to be contextualized into the wider political, cultural, social and economic historical relationships between several actors, but also incites the research to re-define the very concept of well-being and resilience in the presence of heterogeneous body of discourses present among conflicting intra-community narratives and cross-generational constructions of identity.

Yet, one should be careful in understanding historical memory as being a mutually cohesive and homogenous knowledge of the past. Findings from studies of K'iche groups in Guatemala suggest that:

“For many Mayan Indians, however, experiences of, and explanations for, past violence are not accommodated or represented by a unified narrative of ‘social memory.’ The post-war memory work of many Mayan Indians vacillates between a multitude of discourses and strategies (subjective, local, national and transnational) used to ‘make sense’ out of a chaotic past and unstable present” (Foxen, 2000, p. 1).

2.4 Resilience narratives in rural Mayan communities

As it has been documented in the K’iche’s own historical accounts of their civilization (Recinos, 1947, Colop, 2004) and in the K’akchikel’s own accounts on the process of colonization (Recinos, 1950), narratives have been historically used by Mayan communities to transmit essential messages of morality and resistance (Colop, 2004). More recent Mayan narratives, for instance by de León, portray the most recent predominance of negative discourses used by Mayan population in their resilience discourses (Ix’loom, 2005). Similar findings can be observed in studies among Mayan K’iche and Q’eqchi, where narratives are generally characterized by notions of trauma, violence, migration and explanations of past brutalities (Foxen, 2000, 2010). Nevertheless, positive perspectives have also been identified among resilience discourses. Foxen (2000) portrays in her study, *the right to the land, the care and respect for nature, the hope to return home and the return to natural and traditional ways of farming* as notions important for the successful adaptation of Guatemala’s Mayan people.

Nevertheless, these narratives often tend to present complex and interwoven discourses that steam from many different sources that have influenced the communities since the times of the internal conflict. The liberation theory philosophy (e.g. discourses of social class and capital based conflicts between *Ladinos* and *Indígenas*) and the human rights movements (e.g. discourses of indigenous empowerment) are identified as two examples that have often been mixed with communities’ expressions and personal memories in ways that often present contradictive notions (Foxen, 2000). Foxen (2010) argues that such complex syncretism is present among most Mayan narratives as a tendency of combining traditional and modern worldviews for the strengthening of resilience discourses. As she further argues, the blending of cultural models have been for the Mayans a successful way of accessing several coherent sense making narratives that give a more reassuring account of the past, since no individual or community account was able to provide a meaningful explanatory whole. This syncretism was the result of sense-making strategies that range from the use of disjointed past memories, external explanatory models of violence and the continuous changing representation of the self (Foxen, 2010).

Nevertheless, given the past experiences of persecution by causes of one’s expressions and the pain of re-counting past tragedies, many Mayan communities have refused to re-tell narratives that relate to those experiences as they believed re-counting the stories could only bring back profound sensations of suffering and pain (Foxen, 2000). Since those days many Mayan communities have used *silence* as one of the most valuable expressions of their coping mechanisms available. They differentiate silence from traumatic reactions or repressions of memory, and understand it instead as a dignified acknowledgement of a past brutality too horrific to understand or make meaning of which should remain in silence (Zur, 1998: 166 from Foxen, 2000). As expressed in a study of the K’iche:

“Silence and secretiveness are historically rooted forms of communal resistance, elements of the profound pride and inviolability characterizing Mayan discourses on identity and the past. Elusiveness visà-vis outsiders is used to maintain a distance from, and ward off, intruders who might seek to appropriate such secrets into their own discourse and hence acquire power” Foxen (2000, p. 363).

Other findings suggest that narratives have also been significant tools for encouraging the break of silences of post-genocide research. Studies of the genocide and of subsequent crises have adopted methodologies that serve to bring voice to communities in silence (Miller, 1996; Lykes, 1997; Foxen, 2010). In his study with genocide child survivors in Guatemala, for example, Lykes (1997) used children's testimonies to help them construct meanings of the tragedies.

2.5 The research issue

As a form of clarification and synthesis, and after having exposed the background of the study, it was deemed important to merge the separated parts into a single whole. To begin with, the problem of the research is contextualized within a very complex and long-standing socio-political, economic and cultural history. It is further situated among the difficulties and complexities found when studying emic notions such as "resilience" within pre-conceived etic perspectives. In doing so, the divergences that arise from the multiply conflicting, diverse, changing and context-specific individual notions that construct the processes of resilience become difficult to reconcile with more concrete, strictly defined and decontextualized notions etically proposed. This is especially the case in Mayan narratives that present high degrees of syncretism rising from the blend of several borrowed and self-constructed discourses, memories, past and present, and inter-generational perspectives in contestation (Foxen, 2010). As a notion itself, "resilience" is also a fluid construction of historical realities that when emically conceived might not be easily separated from the continuous experience of life, when life through generations has always been defined by historical contexts of resistance. The dynamics of social ecologies then also arise as important considerations where micro social interactions (e.g. as that between children and adults) pose mechanisms to explain how adaptation occurs through the use of social capitals or by subjective adaptation as considered by the Hedonic treadmill and related theories, and therefore open opportunities to understand how children within the broader considerations of the study, can present important links in the construction of resilience and its narratives.

Under these considerations, the proposed working definition (p. 14) stands congruently, yet still a *working definition* for the study of Twelve Eagles' narratives. The theoretical framework further allows the exploration and sets the findings of the social interactions between children and adults and between them and their social environments in the micro and meso levels, as etically researched by cross-cultural western notions. With its proposed additions, the framework also allows the placement of emic findings to the cross-cultural levels while adding the cultural-specific cosmocentric and ecocentric levels. The historical context, although could be seen embedded to several findings in the framework, is also linked to the theory of cognitive dissonance as there it can be explored for as the causes that constituted the adaptations. This theory in combination with the hedonic treadmill and affective habituation theories, open the opportunity of subjective emic notions to help contextualize resilience through the perception reality and deepens into people's relationship with it in the quest for *having a grasp of life*.

The problem of the study is then presented among current development perspectives and interventions on resilience that focus mainly in the physical and resource management relationships, that limit the scope of their focus to the present day circumstances. In doing so, these practices leave many dimensions (e.g. cultural specific, socio-ecological, historical, emic) important for portraying a realistic picture of the resilience of people. This study then aims at understanding resilience in Twelve Eagles and contributing to the current discussion on studying resilience by documenting the resilience narratives of Twelve Eagles that focus on the participation of the child in their construction, and that are presented through their own contextualized perspectives. In doing so, the study addresses the following research questions:

Main research question:

- a) What roles do children play in the processes of resilience building of their community during times of crisis as expressed in the community's resilience narratives?
- b) What reflections can the use of an immersion present in studying resilience?

Supporting questions:

- a) What does the resilience narratives of Twelve Eagles say about their resilience children's help to construct?
- b) How do the reflections collected from the immersion contribute to studying resilience?

Chapter III: The research project

3.1 The research strategy

The research is set up as an exploratory qualitative study using an immersion as the research strategy. Complementing approaches and techniques included the use of emic and etic data, inductive methods of data analysis and participatory approaches of data collection. Visual media (photography and videos) were tools specifically used to portrait data in rich contexts and to produce emic data. The documentation process sought a combination of planned and open interactions situated at several times and spaces where all study groups could be documented.

The immersion as a research strategy is considered essential in providing context-rich insights and opening opportunities for emic perspectives to build the understanding of children's role in resilience processes in extreme, complex, poor and unstable settings. It is further used to present reflections of studying resilience in context-rich and complex environments. By choosing to experience daily physical, emotional and cognitive deprivations, the research is placed in a position that allows interpreting hunger, homelessness, stress and resilience from the stand point of personal physical and emotional insecurity. It was selected as an alternative to positioning the observer in an "outside" context and complete security. As Clark (2007) would argue:

"Development studies cannot be conducted in a vacuum. There can be no substitute for experiencing poverty or encountering underdevelopment. For those analysts and practitioners from the Northern hemisphere (and arguably many upper class scholars from the Southern hemisphere) who have never known real hardship, the best available strategy for understanding 'the condition he [or she] seeks to abolish' is to engage directly with the experiences and views of the poor" (Clark, 2007, p. 15)

The immersion was also designed to align with several principles considered important in undertaking contemporary social science researches. The following principles were considered:

1. To respect the dignity and act with humanity towards the people experiencing the crisis.
2. To attempt a genuine participatory approach for the community.
3. To balance potential power relationships between the research and researcher.
4. To engage into processes of knowledge co-construction respectful of the Q'eqchi's ownership of their traditional knowledge.
5. To shift the extractive methods of data collection into processes of open communication.
6. To avoid excess disparities of benefits between the controllers of the knowledge (e.g. the academia) and the primary information owners (e.g. the communities).
7. To open spaces for the unexpected to enrich the findings of the research.

To materialize these principles, several considerations and activities were planned. Nevertheless, many principles are materialized in the mix of several considerations here presented:

Ethical considerations

The immersion proposed complete transparency. A meeting was planned to introduce the objectives, research methodologies, reasons for choosing the community, their rights and conditions of participation and a brief description of my personal background. It was planned to gather their individual consent (annex 006) at every interview and to inform them that all interactions could be sources of recording and further transcribing. In the end, a draft of preliminary results was expected to

be presented to re-confirm their consent and explore different interpretations. Due to time poverty, no more than one hour per week of productive time per person was planned for activities related to the research. In expecting their crisis situation, activities were meant to provide comfortable spaces instead of scrutinizing stressing memories. An economic reimbursement for food and accommodation was planned.

Participation and co-construction

The research was open to changes of design and focus proposed by the communities. Methodologies such as the co-construction of community and individual narratives allowed people to produce and interpret their own observations (emic data). Their reflections and feedbacks were sought to validate interpretations and re-form them. The sharing of daily life conditions and interactions already implied their opportunity to participate by present any notion they considered relevant.

Power imbalances: the sociological *other* and balancing of benefits

This required the exercise of horizontal and inclusive communication at all times and to include all ages, gender and social classes. It allowed people to maintain secrets and withdraw their information at any moment during the research. The use of adjectives of ethnicities such as “indigenous” was replaced by specific denominations used by people to describe themselves (e.g. Mayan, Q’eqchi, K’iche). To balance the benefits of the research towards the community, the research was open to contribute to explore solutions to some needs they presented.

The planned unexpected:

In being exploratory, seeking emic notions and open participation, the research opened to the opportunity for the incorporation of findings that emerge outside the research framework and for the possibility of the research methodology to change during the immersion. This didn’t mean that the divergences would change the focus of the research, but rather that they will enrich it.

3.1.1 Issues of subjectivity: self-critical epistemological awareness

Given the implied subjectivity of the immersion, the research incorporates Chambers’ (2007) suggestion to attempt to make our subjectivity as explicit as possible to enhance the interpretation of our findings. In such reflexive process, he argued, the author and the reader should be aware and critical of the ways of thinking, framing, conceptualizing, choosing and predispositions. Hence, the following considerations are presented:

I’m most interested in the human rights of the marginalized and oppressed. Power imbalances in relationships between researcher and researched are part of that agenda. I’m most interested in indigenous rights at all levels, where normal extractive research methodologies and knowledge ownership (intellectual property) stand in conflict. I favour the protection of indigenous knowledge systems and methods of knowledge creation and I try to avoid the imposition of etically created knowledge. I equally disregard such knowledge as universally veridical. I also stand critical to the scientific methods as the only way of knowledge construction. Finally, I favour the study of complex social systems where positivist and reductionist quantitative methodologies are severely limited in deepening our knowledge. I hold that qualitative, inductive and even cultural constructivist epistemologies can lead in the future to reliable knowledge as the social sciences continue to construct on their present limitations.

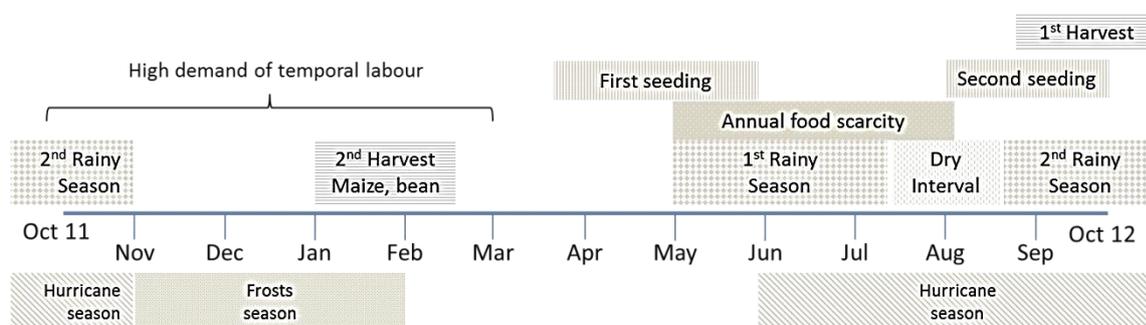
This reflexivity accompanies the reflections on the process of studying resilience aimed by the second research question and accounts for the practical attitudes of doing so.

3.2 The research methodology:

The following methodology accounts for what was planned initially. Given the principles of participation and the planned unexpected, the methodology was kept open for enriching divergences to occur. The actual materialization of the methodology is presented subsequently to show such divergences.

The immersion constituted twenty-five consecutive days of interaction with the community situated during the rainy season of July-August and the period of unemployment for temporal labourers of the coffee, banana and sugar cane industry. It was the period before the harvest of maize and beans when food insecurity is expected and when the highest frequency of tropical storms occurs.

Figure 3.1 – Food insecurity seasonality in Guatemala



Source: Self-made from data from the Ministry of agriculture, husbandry and alimentation (2011).

One family was selected as basecamp from which visits to other families were planned. During the immersion people were accompanied in their daily work and leisure activities, and in varied spaces and times used by all members of the community (maize fields, soccer fields, weekend church, spring talks, etc.). A daily activity calendar was planned to be produced for each member of the study group to help organize visits, meetings and observations. The approach aimed at sharing the life of people all the conditions they experience. Several activities were planned to facilitate the documentation.

Table 3.1 – Monthly calendar of planned activities, July 14th to August 5th, 2012

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
					Jul 14	15
16	17*	18	19*	20*	21	22*
23	24*	25	26*	27*	28	29*
30	31*	Aug 1	2*	3	4	5*
6						

 group meetings	 * fire meetings
 collective narrative	 individual narratives
 final feedback	 filmed interviews

3.2.1 Identifying the crisis

Identifying the crisis was an activity of contextualization. This is because the processes that constitute the construction of resilience are preceded by crises or factors that generate stress from adaptation can occur and be proven to exist.

To identify a crisis in Twelve Eagles, it was planned to document different dimensions of poverty that could be interpreted as environments where stress is present. As the immersion placed the research amidst the crisis, personal observations and experiences were chosen as the most important source of identification of such dimensions. Supportive sources of information were interviews with people and local development reports (e.g. primary health centre documentation). Conditions and contexts expected to be defined included food security (e.g. food production, consumption, variety and reserves), physical insecurity (e.g. natural shocks, violent acts and life threats), economic insecurity (e.g. types of employment, remittances and debts), habitational security (infrastructural conditions, state of permanence and overcrowding) and health (e.g. types of diseases, morbidity, mortality and environmental health infrastructure).

3.2.2 The identification of resilience narratives

The research explores the role's children play in strengthening their community's resilience in times of crisis. Two dimensions were chosen to contextualize their roles: the physical and social ecologies. These dimensions were operationalized as:

1. Children's contribution to daily labour and other labour-related activities that refer to the community's adaptation to a crisis.
2. Children's contribution to inter-personal interactions and participation in social activities of relevance to the community's adaptation to a crisis.

The findings are investigated mainly through the narratives of adults, but complemented with those of children. The narratives are expected to be mechanisms from which roles in resilience are described and as mechanisms of resilience building. For the identification of resilience narratives the following choices were made:

Typology of expressions

All sources of expression (e.g. vocal, visual, written, musical, body movement, etc.) were recognized as forms of expression of resilience narratives. Consequently, children's play, open conversations, stories, silence, etc. were potential relevant observations.

Studied population categories

The authors of narratives were classified according to the relationship they had with children. This was meant to establish more explicit linkages with children that could help in observing more detailed relations in practice. The categories are:

Father: a male, above 18 yrs, living by himself, with his wife and/or his children. Married and/or employed. He is the main or very important source of economic revenue and productive labour of the family. He has a child.

Mother: a female, above 15 yrs old, married, living with her parents and/or own family. She plays the most or an important role in the reproductive roles of the family. She is pregnant or has a child.

Grandparent/Grandmother: a man or woman, above 40. They are identified by others as q'awach'in (elder). Their daily work routine is similar to that of a father or mother, depending on the gender. They have grandchildren.

Older Brother/Sister: male or female. Unmarried and without children. Has younger siblings. Would generally live in the same house with their parents. Are an important source of productive or reproductive labour depending on gender. They would generally support their siblings.

Child: less than 18 years old. Unmarried and without children. Living with parents. Their participation with daily productive or reproductive activities is limited. They present more time for playing. They might assist to school.

Categories can be overlapping and not exclusive. A person could belong to one or two categories (e.g. child and brother). It is used to structure the findings.

Interactions: Open

In open activities, narratives were sought by means of observing, listening, experiencing and sharing. This approach didn't aim to guide any interaction into a specific finding. Instead, interactions were allowed to flow and present potential findings. Photographs, videos, audio and ethnographic notes were used to document such observations and interactions. Notes were taken mentally and written later in notebooks to avoid "explicit information-collecting" interactions that could disrupt honest and trustful communication. Interactions were planned for any time and space. Emic and etic data could be collected. It was expected to be an important source of information.

Fireplace: to foster open interactions, a fireplace was planned in the late evenings several days to share life stories or to have personal talks.

Interactions: Planned

The planned activities were anticipated beforehand and sought to explore directly and explicitly specific issues regarding resilience narratives and children's participation. The following activities were intended:

Groups meetings

Two to three group meetings were programmed to explore several topics:

- a) The knowledge of collective narratives, their symbols and their interpretation.
- b) The use of resilience narratives from oral traditions, their interpretation and relevance to present day contexts.
- c) The adult's perception on how children participate consciously or unconsciously in the existence and persistence of resilience narratives.

The groups meetings expected open discussions and were planned to be guided by insights emerging from findings on daily interactions and other activities. The facilitation was planned to balance the participation of different voices in the group. They were planned in weekend evenings at a common venue. Both emic and etic data could be collected.

Filmed interviews

Five days were planned for five filmed interviews. Some of the following topics were planned to be discussed (annex 008):

- a) The knowledge of individual/family narratives, their symbols and their interpretation.
- b) The adult's perception on how children participate consciously or unconsciously in the existence and persistence of resilience narratives and in the development of the community.

- c) Their own perception and relationship with their children, and the acknowledgement of how they helped them
- d) (in the case of children) their own perception as members of change or importance in their communities.

The selection of the persons interviewed relied on my personal insights after having previous conversations with them that motivated me to believe that their information had to be documented. At least one member of every study population was selected. They were planned during weekdays' free time at people's home or work area. The data was considered etc.

Children's meetings

Two meetings were planned to be dedicated to talk to children. The topic was to explore their perspectives on the participation they had in constructing resilience narratives in their communities (annex 008). The meetings were expected to take place during free times on weekends, at any place. The data was considered etc.

Co-construction of individual narratives:

It was planned to give cameras to five members of the community (from every studied population category) at different times during the immersion. They were asked to photograph moments, people and objects they encountered during the day that they considered relevant in their lives (positive or negative). A previous briefing contextualized the activity around children. After their impressions were collected, a small session was planned to review the media and prompt a reflection on each impression to identify a flow that eventually could construct a narrative or a concept of resilience (annex 005). People were selected subjectively by personal insight gathered through daily observations and interactions. The activity could take place any day and at any time the person chose. The space to take pictures could be anywhere, while their home was selected to make the reflection. The data was considered emic.

Co-Construction of collective narratives

It was planned to invite the community to participate in a workshop of story-telling. The one hour session was planned to prompt the participants to identify the most important positive or negative impressions in their daily lives related to their building of resilience. Such impressions were then planned to be used to create a flow that eventually turned into a story. A reviewed methodology was researched for this (annex 003). The activity was planned to be held in a weekend evening. This was considered emic.

3.2.3 Planned unexpected

This is part of the planning to materialize the openness of the research and the materialization of the participatory and unexpected principles. In practice it meant to follow the exploration of findings and activities that were regarded as relevant to the research questions. These activities were recorded in photographs and in a notebook of unexpected findings.

3.2.4 Documenting personal reflections

In its aim to present reflections emerging from the studying of resilience, the immersion and the reflections arising from the study of resilience through the immersion were documented daily in the notebook of epistemological reflections, a video diary and digital audio files.

3.2.5 Management of data

Choices and considerations in situ

To optimise the immersion, it was decided not to document and record findings during the day. Notebooks were used to document daily records of observations, contexts, epistemological reflections, the construction of individual and collective narratives, the film interviews and unexpected activities. Observations were written as a diary to allow cross-checking by date and the contextualization of the data to singularities of day, week or any period of the immersion. Transcriptions and revision of video interviews were made twice during the immersion to review mistakes in translations and formulation. The emic produced photographs were organized in independent storage devices. The etic video, photographic and audio observations were taken and kept with a different camera and storage devices. These findings were recorded by dates in the notebooks. If unexpected findings emerged, they were to be identified and eventually assessed as pertinent. Such assessment was based in their functionality to answer the research question or provide more comprehensive context to the research framework.

Identification of narratives

Once collected, findings were immediately classified by their way of collection: emic or etic. Then they were to be presented to individuals and groups to manage interpretations and translation. Repetitions of words, concepts and notions among all observations were searched to identify emic categories, codes and meanings important for identifying the emic characteristics of the narratives. Etic notions extracted from literature review served as guidelines for the identification of possible narratives that could be categorized as pertaining to resilience. A final review with the community was planned at the end of the immersion to share, edit and endorse findings and interpretations.

Processes post field work: an inductive method

The narratives, observations and notions found were carefully reviewed. Following an inductive method, observations, notions and categories that repeated the most were selected as it was assumed that their frequency could account for their characterization. The characteristics that could best typified the narratives or other findings in regard to the role of children in the physical and social ecologies were then selected. From such characteristics, insights and concepts were extracted that were relevant to answering the main research question. Other supportive data was then organized around such findings to improve their description and contextualization. The unexpected findings that were considered relevant to the research (by answering the main research question) were also analysed and assessed to be included. Their inclusion required the extension of literature review post-fieldwork. Some reflections documented during the immersion were selected.

The findings are presented by the physical and social ecology. Differences between genders are made explicit. Children's self-perceived role is presented as a counter perspective to that of adults. Context-rich observations and extracts of interviews are presented with the findings to contextualize, strengthen and enrich them. The planned unexpected findings related to Twelve Eagle's resilience follow. Finally, the reflections of the immersion process are included to introduce later discussion relevant to the study of resilience in context rich and complex environments.

3.3 Activities that resulted from the open process of immersion

The following paragraphs present the actual activities that occurred during the immersion. As expected, many divergences occurred to the planned activities. For instance, since the beginning the community proposed an alternative choice to living with one family. They proposed a visit to each family per day in order to perceive more diverse and contrasting realities from the community. The new option was accepted for the potential benefits it presented. Yet, other divergences were encountered.

Table 3.2 - Actual activities from the immersion. July 14th to August 5th, 2012

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
					14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
	focus groups				Giardiasis day off	
	collective narrative				individual narratives	
	final feedback				filmed interviews	
	full observation day				transcription	

The principles

Ethics: Since the beginning the community was unwilling to take time to hear explanations of ethical principles, participatory approaches or the author's background. The introductory meeting lasted fifteen minutes. They explained that enough trust was already given by the introduction of the research through a catholic priest (a field contact), so there was no need for further explanations. As it was later clarified, no one was interested or had time to hear explanations. The consent forms were signed in fingerprints, after two weeks later during church service.

Participation and co-construction: The community showed an active interest in participating with the research and therefore changed some choices of the immersion as presented earlier. But also chose not to participate in several planned activities presented later (p. 28). They co-constructed narratives using cameras but also refused to give feedback for interpretations on the final findings.

Power imbalances: Communication was always kept horizontal and respectful. Yet the community treated me as an authority. In searching to participate in objectives of their interest, the research shared time (also used for search findings) to organize two malaria camps, the construction of five organic garden beds and the capacitation ten children in doing so. Two bread-making workshops were also held by the translator.

The planned unexpected: The above mentioned activities were part of the planned unexpected. Findings regarding to discussions of quality of life and subjective well-being were also incorporated, for which literature on the Hedonic treadmill and other adaptation theories were included.

The methodology

Measuring the crisis: observations and interviews were the main sources of information. Talks were held with the primary health staff. They refused to give documentation unless the Ministry of Health gave authorization, which they didn't.

Open interactions: As being flexible and spontaneous, open interactions were numerous. In total it was documented one hundred and sixty one photographic observations, two hundred and twenty eight videos and seven notebooks. This accounted for twenty days of reporting, interviews and reflections.

Fireplace: was cancelled due to the high presence of mosquitoes.

Planned activities:

Group meetings and the construction of collective narratives: The community proposed it was possible to meet peacefully and with enough time only on weekend's evenings in the church. Only the first meeting took place. People argued they preferred to use the time to be with their families, rest and avoid the mosquitoes in the church.

Filmed interviews: in total fourteen people were interviewed. Two interviews were discarded due to errors in translations found later during the transcription process. As results there are interviews of two elders (man and female, both age 75), three mothers (age 53, 30, 42), three fathers (age 47, 45, 21), two male children (age 18, 13) and two female children (age 15, 12). Translations were made from Q'eqchi to English, and all errors of translation and interpretations during interviews were highlighted. The translation was a major limitation in the entire immersion process. It was expected due to the lack of professionalism of the translator but also the specificity of cultural and local linguistic variations.

Children meetings: The children meetings happened without minor positive changes. The planned took place during an hour in a weekends rest, using a school class. Two extra meetings were made in the school during school days with the facilitation of the teacher.

Co-construction of individual narratives: as planned, four different emic notions were co-constructed. Here participated one mother (age 57), two sisters (age 11 , 15), one father (age 36), one elder (male, age 65).

Documenting personal reflection

One self-reflection notebook was kept with daily entries of the methodology and reflections about the immersion. Four videos were produced and several audio notes.

Planned unexpected

This was presented in principles of the planned unexpected.

Management of data

A final draft of the observations was read to the community in the last days, but contrary as planned, they accepted it without major feedback over my interpretations. The positive and negative notions from the literature review were not used as comparative notions as the form of the narratives found and their contents had different characteristics. The new unexpected findings were included in the literature review and a revision was made of the research framework.

Chapter IV: Findings

Findings that relate to the first research question are presented. These include: the identification of the crisis, the findings in the physical and in the social ecologies. Following, the reflections of the immersion process are presented in relation to the second research question.

4.1 Identifying the crisis: extreme poverty and food insecurity

Twelve Eagles lacked all public service infrastructures (electricity, water, landfill, sanitation, roads). The school consisted of two classrooms made of thatch and bamboo. In one classroom thirty students shared primary first, second and third, and in another classroom twenty students shared primary four, fifth and sixth. In none of them they would speak Spanish, for which some adults sent their children to other schools in other villages. At the household level, houses were poorly constructed with wood, some used thatch and others oxidised tin as roofs. Self-made latrines and holes were used for sanitation. All houses had mud floors and a fireplace inside the house used for cooking, which filled the house with high concentrations of smoke. On average, a family of seven lived in 10m² and shared three wooden boards as beds. Food was characterized by three meals a day, each meal per adult consisted of a dozen tortillas (half per children) accompanied by half an avocado or some wild leaves, but never combined in a single meal. Gastro intestinal, skin and respiratory diseases were common depending seasonality, and according to the district's primary health centre, the entire region presented high incidence of malaria and dengue. The presence of mosquitoes, day and night, was vast. Their best maize production (in their 60m² of land available), which occurred in mid-August to September was 300 lbs less than their neighbouring villages (700lbs from 1000lbs expected). Their second maize production, which occurred in mid-February to March, gave them from 300 to 500lbs less (300 to 500lbs from 800lbs expected). Families and animals consumed 100lbs per month for which food stocks depleted in June, urging them to buy maize for over three months with debt and own savings. Their daily income from March to October had been two euros a day, mainly from the selling of firewood. This was used to support a family of seven members on average. The collecting and selling of such firewood was the main labour activity that comprised six hours of work at day covering nearly 15kms of walking distances from collection to selling point and back in steep and mountainous terrain. No other sources of employment were available at the time but temporal sub-employment was available from November to late February from nearby agro-states. One cause of unemployment was the illiteracy of most adults and their consequent inability to speak Spanish. Children instead, especially boys were learning it and could speak it. Other daily activities done included the de-weeding of the maize fields which could take up to six hours. Three families had a small snack store managed by women and two families bought and sold pigs as a source of livelihood. No occurrences of violence or natural disaster were yet observed by the community.

4.2 The physical ecology dimension:

Daily calendars were produced from talks with children and the mix of several interviews. The calendars showed children had higher scheduled time of labour (four hours for male children and eight for female children) than the adults, and that those adults tended to rest more than children (one to three hours) (annex 004). The information was confirmed by observation, although differences were perceived as some adults and children worked several more hours than the ones interviewed.

Through filmed interviews (annex 007) and open conversations, children's labour was mentioned frequently as the most apparent contribution children gave to the community (as documented from

fourteen of sixteen conversations and ten of twelve filmed interviews). Focusing on labour, mother's engaged in ten different activities in a day while father engaged in two or three yet intense activities. Those activities also reflected on children's labour maintaining the differences in gender and intensity.

Tables 4.1 – Children's daily activity calendars for July to August, 2012

Daily Activity Calendar (male child, age 16)		Daily Activity Calendar (female child, age 10)	
hour	Activity	hour	Activity
5:00am	Wake up	3:30am	Wake up
6:00am	Shower	3:30am	Makes fire, boils water, washes corn, cleans house
7:00am	Breakfast	5:00am	Grinds corn
8:00am	Go to school	5:30am	Makes tortillas/ starts cooking
12:00pm	Come home	6:00am	Eat
12:30pm	Rest	6:30am	Wash dishes, take a shower
1:00pm	Lunch	7:00am	Prepare for school
2:00pm	Field Work	8:00am	Go to school
5:30pm	Shower and rest	12:00pm	Come home
6:00pm	Rest	12:00pm	Makes tortillas/ starts cooking
7:00pm	Dinner	1:00pm	Lunch
9:00pm	Sleep	2:00pm	Do dishes and clean house
		3:00pm	Fetch water
		4:00pm	Wash clothes/rest
		5:30pm	Grind corn in mill
		6:00pm	Makes tortillas/ starts cooking
		7:00pm	Eat
		7:30pm	Sleep

Source: children meetings and open conversations

From children meetings and open interviews, children presented fourteen activities they are engaged in as daily labour. There were no observable differences in activities between age groups, only in increase of the intensity of the work with the age. Most remarkable are the distinction between male and female children in different activities they engage. A daily labour calendar based on the findings is presented below.

*Table 4.2 - Daily labour activities identified by children for July-August, 2012
(separated by gender)*

Male child	Female child
De-weed the maize fields	Fetch water
Cut firewood	Sweep the house
Transport firewood	Feed the babies
Fetch water	Shower the babies
	Wash the corn
	Grind the corn
	Make tortillas
	Feed the animals

Source: children meetings and observations from the immersion.

Additional activities collected in videos (annex 001) for both sexes from observations were the doing of errands (video observation 015) and the managing of the snack stores (photographic observation 006). For male children, the eventual selling of snacks in soccer games or inter-schools activities was also observed (video observation 010).

These findings are contextualized in times of absence of temporal employment from large agro-business and previous to harvest and preparation of the next crop cycle as presented in the food security cycle (p. 22). When such periods arrive, more activities need to be performed which make the gender and number of children in the family important to manage time. This is exemplified by a discussion with the father of three female children who admitted being unable to meet his demands of labour even during the current period of low labour. In crop growing times he often had to leave the maize fields unfinished from de-weeding, which negatively affected the yields. He considered the roles of his daughters no to be interchangeable for the role of male children.

The role of female children was also described as that of a caretaker as in the case of one father who after losing his wife he depended on his only daughter:

“I am happy for having my daughter. She takes care of me. She works in everything. What am I going to do without my daughter? When she is here I have everything.”
Pedro Chup (father), age 54, Day 3, Sunday 15th of July.

As seen in the female child daily activity calendar (p. 30), for many fathers the child’s role of household caretaker was seeing as needed full time job. As described by a father in a co-constructed narrative:

[Talking about the picture of her daughter] *“My daughter supports us. I’m happy that she is all the time with us. She helps in the house.”* Reyes Ché (male elder), age 65. Day 20, Wednesday 1st of August.

Mothers, presented the roles of their female children as supportive but also as an opportunity to free resting time for them. As one of them states in a co-constructed narrative:

“I’m happy that she helps me because I need to rest a little bit. If she doesn’t help me, no one helps me. Before I did everything and it was too much. Now I can rest and use my time to go to town and sell chicken.” Letona Choc (mother), age 57, Monday 16th of July.

To account for the children’s perspective and as findings from meetings with them, children identified other roles not yet mentioned. The voice of one child states:

“I don’t think I can help my community with education. But we are the future of the community. We are the replacement of our parents. Without us there is no one to take care of the elders.” Name restricted (male child), age 15. Day 5, Tuesday 17th of July.

The second one comes from an “elder brother” living with the family. His statement reflects the educational differences between generations as presented in section 4.1. As he stated:

“We can help the community with everything the leaders ask from us. Without the youth the community cannot prosper, the young bring the changes. We are the ones that speak Spanish, we are the ones that link the community with the others from the other side. Without communication there will be no change. Without exchanges with others we cannot see other important things.” Avelindo Chup (elder brother), age 21. Day 5, Tuesday 17th of July.

The ability to speak Spanish and not education, was referred by people as an important sub-product of schooling. This is because Spanish language is the commercial and social medium in which interactions with the wider society takes place. Education on the contrary, was said not to provide any direct and practical sources of employment. Similar notions were documented by an elder in a filmed interview. Reflecting on children role’s he states:

“The thoughts of our children are some good. Some will give strength to our children. Not like with us, our children now can have good “thought”. They are thinking of “sowing” and having other thoughts. Where there is no education, we don’t have anything. But when there is, they will see something. Is already time to build something”. Name restricted (elder), age 75. Day 3, Sunday 15th of July.

But according to children, their contributions were also important since the times of displacement and reconstruction of the new village. An account from an open conversation is as follows:

“When we were coming from Mocca, I helped my family. I brought tin sheets, chickens and wood. Many kids also helped their parents. They helped to burn land to grow something, to sow and bring firewood”. Victor Coc (male children), age 14. Day 8, Friday 20th of July.

The specific context in which male children engaged in the last mentioned role but also daily labour was characterized by demanding physical demanding activities. Carrying firewood implied taking several pounds of firewood for ten kilometres up steep terrains (video observation 016, annex 001). Sowing or clearing the fields meant working in 50m² with machete under full sun for four hours at day. The activities of female children were less physically demanding (except for fetching up to twenty litres of water up a steep hill) but used consistently more time of the day and less resting time (video observations 007, 008, 018, annex 001). Yet, boys and girls worked with a consistent ingestion of poor meals and consequently long term poor nutrition, especially during displacement. They lacked proper conditions for sleep and rest in the evenings and depending seasonality, they would work under the

effects of some disease. Nevertheless, during the immersion and repeated observations of the work of children, no negative expression could be observed or were expressed by them. This was nevertheless not an isolated finding.

From Twelve Filmed interviews made during the immersion only one person (Victoria Tox, age 75, interview 01, annex 007) communicated strong negative expressions from the consequence of the displacement in the family structure. From open talks and individual co-constructed narratives, four accounts were collected that referred to negative experiences of the current situation. These came from three out of twenty families visited. One undocumented household was the case of an elder that lost his wife and had no young children left to help him. He showed the highest expressions of distress (verbal and non-verbal) in the village. In all, the negative expressions were four out of sixty observations and conversations documented. Additionally, the most frequent yet undocumented daily interactions and observations were characterized by experiences of social environments that lack expressions of stress, anxieties, anger, alcoholism and any negative expressions of the sort. Instead, from several undocumented observations and conversations, people presented how they differentiate their progress with each other from which expressions of pride and satisfaction emerged. Some of these included:

Table 4.3 – Indicators that differentiate degrees of success and poverty in members of Twelve Eagles (by gender)

Adult Male	Adult Female
The building of mini-enterprises (e.g. store, mobile selling of food, etc.).	The building of mini-enterprises (e.g. store, mobile selling of food, etc.).
The learning of Spanish.	The learning of Spanish.
The construction of the houses with better materials (type of wood, cement blocks, tin roofs, improved latrine, etc.)	The construction of the houses with better materials (type of wood, cement blocks, tin roofs, improved latrine, etc.)
The acquisition of large animals for income activities (pigs and cows)	The acquisition of more expensive house animals (ducks and turkeys).
The ability to provide the family with the basic needs.	The ability to serve the family in meeting the basic needs.
The school they sent the children (if the school taught in Spanish or not).	The treatment of guests with better food (from no soup, to chicken soup, to beef or pork soup, and finally turkey soup).
The variety of crops and the harvest yields.	

Source: self-made from observations and undocumented open conversations.

As one man describes in words:

“I am watching over their lives and I want them to be proud of me. Although I do not have money, I always see how to get them something to give them to live from day to day”. Filiberto Chup (father), age 25. Day 2, Saturday 14th of July.

Another man, accounting for his pride of seeing his woman work, states:

“I’m happy here. I’m better. My wife is working selling tamales. She sells in our little store.” Pedro Chup (father), age 54. Day 3 Sunday 15th of July.

4.3 The social ecology dimension

The following observations were documented through video, photographs and audio (annex 001). They constitute the micro level of the social ecology dimension which relates to the relationships between children, relatives, friends and other close relationships. They represent the roles of children in the different relationships they can develop and from which positive expression emerge:

- a. At age 10, a child plays marimba (wooden xylophone) with his father and uncle. They prepare concerts for the community but also get together to play as a family twice a week.
- b. Some children from 12 to 16 of age form part of the choir of the church. They rehearse twice during weekdays at 23:00hrs and prepare different songs to interpret to the community on that day.
- c. Some children different from the singing group are part of the praying group of the Church. At several moments during the mass they are called to leads the prayers of the congregation. They are from 10 to 15 years of age.
- d. Children from 8 to 18 years of age, organize soccer games daily with other children. Many day during the week, but especially on weekends, adults join them.

Other roles of children were more widely documented. From the individual co-construction of narratives the most recurrent emic notion found in the mother's description of children's role was "[keeping] company". As stated in two extracts from the activities:

"I get happy because I have my children. Tomorrow my husband dies and I still have a home with them. My heart is happy to have them, they keep me company. Having their company makes me happy, and now these two [her children] make me happy because they are with me. To whom am I going to talk if not with them?" Adela Choc (mother), age 53. Day 8, Friday 20th of July.

"I'm happy to see my children because God left them to me. I'm happy when I see them play, because they are healthy and do not have a disease. I'm happy when they are with me. If I didn't have any children, with whom would I talk? To whom would I request errands or help me in the house?" Angelina Chen (mother), age 45. Day 11, Monday July 23rd.

"He [the son] is my company. When they are grown-ups they don't go out with me. Without them I feel lonely. Although older they bring money" Letona Choc (mother), age 57. Day 6, Wednesday 18th of July.

The context of these observations is the women's fifteen daily hours spent inside the home (mainly due to work) from the seventeen hours they used in a day. As observed in such context, they had only frequent communication with female children and daughters in law. In the house of elders, the elderly women would spend most of the day alone. Only when grandchildren visited them would the atmosphere emerge out of silence. Children's "noise" could then be also a manifestation of children's company. There were no observed negative expressions of adults disapproving their "noise".

Fathers also identified other bonding relationships with children. The first one, documented during an open conversation relates to an individual expression of their relationship:

"Our children help us to think with the heart. For me is a joy to have them next to me, supporting me. Without me needing to request them to do so, they bring to the family things to live. This is why I get happy with them. When I get sick or I die, they

will take care of their mother, whom I love.” Pedro Sawi (father), age 56. Day 6, Wednesday 18th of July.

Other two statements, one from an individual co-construction of narratives and the other from a filmed interview, present notions that refer to children’s role in the constitution of a family:

“I’m happy that I had kids. If I didn’t have them I wouldn’t take them pictures. I like them because they are a Gift of God. If it wasn’t for them we wouldn’t be here. I want to see them healthy. We are happy because they are here. If they were not here, to whom we would talk? If my wife is left alone, to whom would she talk?” Santiago Che (father), age 36. Day 5, Friday 17th of July.

“We are all happy, let’s say. Our family, we have cousins and nephews, so they also come to see my mother. They [nephews and cousins] come very often to see my dad and mother. And like this we are all together happy. Nobody rejects the other.” Marcos Rax Chun (father), age 21. Day 5, Friday 17th of July.

Furthermore, in looking at children within their roles of creating positive atmospheres within adult’s leisure moments, two extracts of observations serve to exemplify:

[9pm at night. I’m trying to sleep inside the tent, inside the house] *“...I heard something beautiful. The family got together around 9 or 10pm, with as many mosquitoes as there normally are in the evening and under a candle-light they sang together”.* Personal observation. Day 10, Sunday 22nd of July.

“It is dinner time and we were all in a tiny room with smoke, the fire and a few wood trunks to sit on. The dinner went for an hour and they all talked quite lively about the day. The atmosphere was a friendly family time where the father reacted very attentively towards the children”. Personal observation, Day 6, Wednesday 18th of July.

In the micro level interactions, children also related to other children (video observations 002-005 and 011; photographic observations 002-005 and 007-008, annex 001). One of such interaction is the female children’s roles of caretakers of their younger siblings (p. 31). As caretakers, beside their physical contributions (e.g. washing, cooking) they also developed special relationships with their brothers. As one girl states:

“I am happy with my younger brothers because I like seeing them. I help them, I wash them [their clothes] and feed them. That makes me happy.” Irma Caal (female child), age 10. Day 11, Friday 13th of July.

Outside the family nucleus, children also created many shared spaces of interaction with each other. These spaces were documented in video observations (video observation 002, 003, 005, 011, 013, annex 001) and are characterized by games, talks, walks, sharing of laughs and accompanying each other. Such spaces were described by one child as:

“For me my friends are important because we play and learn together and we go to hear the word of God together.” Victor Coc (male child), age 14. Day 8, Friday 20th of July.

As with the previously presented statement, another child linked the existence of such interactions with his own (emic) notion of processes towards happiness (well-being):

"I love my brothers. We get happy when we play all together and love each other. They are important for me because we are happy together". Roberto Qi (male child, brother), age 13. Day 11, Monday 23rd of July.

Other sources of positive expressions in Twelve Eagles

Besides relationship with children, people of Twelve Eagles also presented other sources of positive expression important to them. From the co-construction of narratives two people mentioned animals as valuable sources of positive expressions. This constituted accounts of the eco-centric dimensions of the cultural specific interactions of the resilience framework. As two statements remark:

[Describing her pictures of the rooster and the chickens]: *"I get happy to see my animals. I grew them. I like to hear them sign in the night and early in the morning. The chickens are really pretty. They put eggs and I really like to see them."* Letona Choc (mother), age 57. Day 6, Wednesday 18th of July.

[Describing his pictures of his dog]: *"Rex, is my dog. He used to make me more happy when he was more fat. But now he is getting so skinny."* Santiago Ché (father), age 36. Day 15, Friday 27th of July.

From observations, it was possible to identify several opportunities and spaces where people showed consistently positive expressions (annex 002). These constitute part of the exo-system interactions of the research framework, formed by the physical and institutional environments of the community. Among them could be included: the soccer field (video observation 001), the bicycles (video observation, 008), the musical instruments (video observation 003), the eventual consumption of beyond-the-budget sodas and snacks (photo observation, 001), the talks at the springs (video observation 002), the town, the listening to radio shows (video observation 004), the church and mass on Sundays.

One more detailed example of a space that is related both to the exo and como-centric level of the research framework is the church and mass on Sundays. These were the space and moments where mainly elders, women and children got together to share several activities. Here people showed many positive expressions such as smiles, laughs, hugs, amicable talks, etc. At its altar, elders would kneel for half an hour in prayers. It's importance is told by two undocumented conversations with the elder Jorge Che and the village leader Emiliano Xe, who explained that the church as a communal space had become so important to the community that they had started to save money to reach six thousand euros to rebuild the current wood and thatch structure into a cement block and tin roof building. This similar type of spending, amid their poverty, was seen repeated in the examples of the bicycles and the musical instruments which would cost around forty and hundred euros respectively.

4.4 Personal experience of the immersion and reflections

During twenty five days the research was conducted with Twelve Eagle's families in their daily environments. The house would wake up at 4:00am with the daily work of women, although together with children and men we would mostly stand up at 6:00am. Men and male children would then walk during the day fifteen to twenty kilometres between plain and steep mountainous terrain, sometimes under full sun and high temperatures to cut and carry 60lbs to 200lbs of firewood. Women would be working all day in the house, sometimes carrying up to 24lts of water up a hill. In accompanying all of them I only carried my camera. Food was scarce, not diverse and felt in the stomach like dry paste. Drinking water was always warm and had a distinctive taste as a result of boiling corn paste. Generally I was hungry and weak. We ate tortillas and half an avocado (or an egg, or a handful of beans) for a meal.

Sleeping was difficult while breathing the smoke that burned all night to keep mosquitoes away. In the first three nights without a tent or screen (as they sleep), I counted nearly sixty mosquitoes' bites in my body. I couldn't rest. I then decided to sleep in my tent inside every house that was visited, which also kept me safe from the tropical storms that hit the village during the evenings. The next day one needed to be ready, early, hungry and with poor rest, for the work of the day. Yet, these were the times before harvest of maize when minimum or no attention is required to the fields and processing. It was also the period of unemployment from the banana, coffee and sugar agro-states. Work was therefore not heavy, or at least they told me.

Encountering poverty was an experience that produced many questionings to established notions: what is poverty? By who's definition? Theirs or mine? Can poverty be subjective? How can poverty be poverty in realities where poverty has always been the usual way of living? How can we define as "poor" people they have never called themselves poor? Do people then strive for better because they want to get out of poverty or because striving for better is an inherent human ambition? What is then resilience? How can resilience be studied when it is termed as an adaptation to crisis but is encountered as a continuous process of living regular life? Is resilience then different from experiencing life?

During the immersion, these and other conceptual questions arose together with reflections on the methodologies. Few of them were selected for their relevance to the research questions.

Experiencing the deprivations and documenting the factors that could account for a crisis helped to portrait the existence of a crisis of food insecurity amid extreme poverty. But contrasting to such assessments, life in the village was observed and experienced through expressions of normality (pp. xx). Contradictions started to emerge between the conceptualizations of crisis, poverty and resilience and the emic perceptions people had of such concepts. Due to the scarce collection of expected negative expressions and narratives that referred to the resistance to the crisis, it started to become difficult to assess whether the expected expressions of crisis were not being shared or there were no expressions that related to the resilience of the crisis or the crisis itself was not being experienced as a crisis. The very concept of poverty came into conflict as people portrayed themselves beyond such conceptual determinisms. This was observed when people were facing some deprivations, regarded some of them as importantly afflictive, but many others as normal circumstances of life where wellbeing was according to them still achievable. This also constituted a very conceptually troubling merge of etic concepts such as poverty and wellbeing which are expected to be contradictive and exclusive to each other. To utilize poverty and crisis concepts then implied to make assumptions and choices that restricted an accurate description of the observed complexities, especially because their existence and characterization depended much on diverging perceptions by the researcher and the researched, between the etic and emic. Ethically speaking, it was disconcerting to define some of them as poor when the negative connotations of such word contrasted to my perception of their rather positive experience of life and their self-perceived image of living a normal life. This conflict between the etic and emic, constantly emerged as tried to separate the children's contribution to adults from the physical and the social, but for them were embedded as the same type, because the emotional relationships were materialized by physical expressions such as supportive labour. Was this an error of assessments? A limitation of my conceptualizations? The use of an incorrect or limited theoretical framework? Or was this an expected contradiction that emerges at some researches where emic and etic perspectives meet and cannot be reconcile because research methodologies require very clear, limited and forthright conceptualizations that in reality can be more complex? In the end, what should be used to define reality, etic or emic notions? A combination of both? For which study one is better than the other?

The unexpected also constituted the basis for many reflections. During the immersion the idea of how happiness or wellbeing was constructed emerged unexpectedly. It became important as it helped to understand parts of the construction of resilience of the people, yet it couldn't be fitted in the

conceptual framework. As it was instructed by my advisors, it was essential to keep the research focus and therefore disqualify divergences. Nevertheless, being the research exploratory and inductive in nature I decided to continue exploring the new finding. In the end I had to re-design my literature review and referential framework. This led to many questions: how could a researcher manage the unexpected? With what methodological basis can one reject the appearance of factors that cannot be define *a priori* as significant or irrelevant? Does the new finding requires a re-definition of the theoretical framework or is the data going to be arranged to fit pre-established frames of references? Is that a decision of scientific rigour or time management? If there are conflicts between the scientific rigour and the time management, could the researches be designed as reiterative process constituted by several research cycles that allow the incorporation of unexpected findings at every end of a research cycle? If we, as researches, consistently reject the emergence of the unexpected, do we engage only in the evaluation of pre-conceived ideas? Is there space for new concepts or theories to rise from the complexities of the unexpected when studying pre-conceived ideas? Would allowing the unexpected lead to the redefinition of many of them? As it became clear, when being submerged in the reality that is being studied, the research design is challenged by the rising of unexpected relationships, concepts and context that require a methodology to manage them scientifically; a methodology of the unexpected.

Chapter V: Discussion

Chapter one is organized according to the research questions. The findings of the physical and social ecologies are first presented followed by their contextualization. Following, the reflections of the immersion are presented.

Research question 1: What roles do children play in the processes of resilience building of their community during times of crisis as expressed in the community's resilience narratives?

- a) What do the resilience narratives of Twelve Eagles say about the resilience children's help to construct?

According to the research framework (p. 13), resilience is studied from several dimensions, among them the physical and social ecologies. In the physical ecology, the children's labour was most frequently mentioned by adults to be the role of children in Twelve Eagles (p. 29). Contrary to the image of defencelessness and incapability of children used by some researches and adults (Dijk, 2007; Lisuntha, 2009), children in Twelve Eagles were able to fulfil four to eight hours (one to three hours more than adults) of daily and sometimes physically demanding labour and up to three to seven different activities per day. Female children's physical roles were considered relevant by fathers and mothers for being an irreplaceable full time labour important to meet the family's needs and for freeing space for adult's rest, respectively. Voices of children accounted for other roles such as looking after the elders and their ability to bring changes to the community due to the connotation of their ability to speak Spanish (p. 32). Children also mentioned their role in the displacement as having helped in the reconstruction of their village.

In the social ecology dimension, specifically on the micro level interactions of Ungar (2011), several roles of children related to adult's display of positive expressions. As Caraveo (2006) observed in her study with Mexican Mayans, the Twelve Eagles community also provided spaces where children cooperated in activities of social relevance (e.g. mass on Sundays). In such case, children participated in leading prayers and forming part of the choir (p. 34). Similarly, children participated in family musical groups, organizing frequent soccer games, creating atmospheres during shared leisure moments and developing emotional bonding (p. 35). Fathers specifically referred to the emotional bonding they felt with their children and the importance of children in the constitution of a family (p. 35). Mothers, in a more emic and culturally-specific notions, defined one of children's roles as "*keeping company*" (p. 34). This was congruent with the observations that most women, in their daily work had to spend most of their daily time inside the house, lacking opportunities of daily socialization (p. 34) and the silence experience by the female elders during the working hours (p. 34). Yet children's roles to the community related also to other children. Children for example, played part in being care-takers, company of others children and in forming friendships (p. 35). Games, talks, walks, sharing of laughs and accompanying each other were described by a child as his source of happiness (p. 35).

The contexts, current and historical, economic, political and cultural of these observations of both physical and social ecologies of children and their families are contrastingly shocking. Their daily physical efforts occurred amid under-nutrition, periodic and constant diseases (e.g. diarrhoea and dengue, respectively), lack of sleep due to mosquitoes and smoke, intense exposure to heat and sunlight and perennial annual cycles of food insecurity among other contexts (p. 29). Politically they were displaced and abandoned for four years by their government through public actions that supported a growing trend of economic expansions on their land (p. 7). Historically, they endure a process of colonization that has extended for five hundred years by the hands of a privileged social class of Latin-mixed population (p. 6). Yet, the people of Twelve Eagles presented few negative expressions (p. 33) and

rather several spaces where positive expressions emerged constantly (p. 32-36). This suggests that many members of the community had adapted to the extreme circumstances that surrounded them as proposed by the theory of habituation (p. 15; Dijksterhuis and Smith, 2002). According to the theory of cognitive dissonance in its socio-economic adaptation (Oxoby, 2004; Olson and Schober, 1992) presented in Chapter I, another sign of adaptation is the people's lowering of standards to fit one's accessible accomplishments (e.g. when a poor compares himself to a rich, prefers to compete on other dimensions besides income, Oxoby, 2004, p. 728). Although undocumented, the observations of the means in which people would differentiate between different degrees of poverty suggest that people had formed alternative mechanisms to access accomplishments to strive for and feel proud of (p. 33). Furthermore, people had developed several relations to artefacts and spaces from which they were able to experience and show positive expressions. On the exo level, this were the soccer field, the bicycles, the musical instruments, the talks at the springs, the weekend's walks to town, listening to radio shows, etc. (p. 36). On the cultural-specific eco-centric level this was their relationships with animals. On the cosmo-centric level, it was the relationship with their church and religion. From the latter, it was most impressive to find the undocumented account from the elder Jorge Che and village leader Emiliano Xe of the plans to construct a cement church that would cost the village six thousand euros for which families had started to save money (p. 36). These findings when linked form a context that suggests that Twelve Eagle's resilience can be constituted by the adaptation of experiencing poverty as living normal life from which opportunities to achieve well-being are possible, as the hedonic treadmill theory anticipates (p. 15, Diener, Lucas, Scollon, 2006). In doing so, all the observations documented constitute *Twelve Eagles narratives of resilience* from which they transform their perceptions of their reality and achieve resilience.

An important addition to the discussion is that Twelve Eagles' suggested adaptation presented complex characteristic beyond what the theories stated. For instance, their adaptation was combined with the presence of constant third-party accounts of their poverty (e.g. the media, the NGOs, the town). This forced people to confront constantly their perception of reality to other narratives that emphasized the extreme circumstances of their surroundings. A second addition is the reflection that in the previous times of their seventy year settlement in Mocca, the families that now form Twelve Eagles were then adapted to a previous poor reality which they rejected after their population increased. This moved them to struggle and violent resistance for over six years. Nevertheless, why didn't the other six hundred families in the agro-state revolt? Given that only a third of the people revolted, it can be suggested that the limits of the adaptation were subjectively conceived. Nevertheless, the reasons that constituted their limit between adapting to poverty or rising against remain unexplored. A last addition to the discussion, explores the causes that could have led Twelve Eagles to adapt as they did. The theory of cognitive dissonance then leads the focus to the causes that could have made Twelve Eagle's poverty unmovable or seem to them as unmovable to them. In the case of Twelve Eagles, their historical context has a possible explanation. Given the multi-generational conflict between powers that until present day have kept them in resource-poor conditions (p. 6-7), Twelve Eagles might have developed a very realistic reason to believe their poverty, as a by-product of power relationships and economic dominance over them for centuries, will remain the same in the present and future as it did in the past.

Research question 2: What reflections can the use of an immersion present in studying resilience?

- a. How do the reflections collected from the immersion contribute to studying resilience?

The immersion led to confronting *others* reality. In this reality the wider domains of the unexplored *complex* rose at every choice I made in the research framework. The gaps between the etic and emic became apparent in the field and crippled pre-established notions and their operationalization. For

instance, finding etic accounts of poverty merged with emic accounts of well-being (e.g. finding that amid extreme poverty people are happy) threw away my pre-conceived understanding of poverty and its experience. But, should it be so? Couldn't the differences between the *described* and the *experienced* present opportunities to define reality more realistically in its complexity? Maybe in the study of resilience is possible to account for the existence of two dimensions to the same reality: the description of poverty (by us) and the experience of poverty (by them). To do so should lead to ample discussions of how the emic and etic can be incorporated in the further analysis of resilience, where wellbeing and poverty could coexist, or where emic social ecologies (e.g. religion, music, the constitution of family) are as important as etic physical ecologies (e.g. food, water, capacity to cope to disasters) in resilience. Here cultural specificity becomes paramount, since relativism, particularism and subjectivism are the realms of the emic.

Another reflection comes from seeing through an emic perspective the study of resilience using a cross-sectional perspective. In reflection, this is similar to assume that the evolution of a crisis and the mechanism for its adaptation appeared from nowhere. It means to strip down the subject and the context from its multidimensional historical perspective. From the same emic perspective, contextualizing resilience in the history of people, the understanding of why people adapted as they did and how they did so become different. To do so could further help to explore how the crisis began and why it happened. For Twelve Eagles this means differentiating from seeing (etically) the causes of the crisis as the food insecurity causal factors and people's adaptation as managing agro-techniques, versus seeing (emically) the cause of the crisis as a historical consequence of political and economic power imbalances and violence since colonization and people's adaptation as rejecting to participate in such reality and trying to perceive and construct a new self-made one. Emically, could furthermore be to perceive resistance not as resistance, but as living life as it has always been experienced. From such reflections, it is suggested that resilience is a notion in continuum inseparable from the experience of life. Hasn't Twelve Eagles always been resilient? Then why should they need to adapt to a specific context in single point in time? Why can't their resilience be considered through all the processes important in the building of their overall experience of life? Why should we merge resilience with crisis? Isn't life always a struggle? Perhaps Plato knew this when he said "*be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle*".

A second reflection refers to the management of the planned unexpected of studying resilience through emic and participatory approaches. In doing so, the research can realistically expect conceptual and practical divergences to occur for which a methodology is required to help identify the pertinence of an unexpected finding in understanding the issue studied, to define to what extent should the theoretical framework should be redefined if necessary and/or assess how the research question and subsequent methodology is therefore re-arranged. The practice of leaving unexpected findings without assessment for its implications to our study and excluded from potential exploration, do not allow the specificity of divergences to led the research to more complex understandings of the issue. The protection of the methodology and theoretical framework due to the practicality of acquiring pre-established directions of results in a given time should not constitute arguments for the discarding of the unexpected. But how then can the unexpected be managed?

The final reflections refer to my principles of doing research. Through the immersion, I came to realize that the knowledge I create has much responsibility in the definition of the realities of the researched and to a large extent, the definition of *their* identity as constructed by *our* perception. Moreover, it became evident that following an approach where the *researcher* is the owner, generator and articulator of knowledge, and the *researched* is only the extraction source, our research practice would support the establishment of *our* hegemony over *them*. As Young said (1990) it is as if our construction of knowledge, through its forms of expropriation and incorporation would mimic conceptually our

geographical and economic forms of colonization. In trying to overturn this approach, the participation and co-construction principles chosen were opportunities for presenting more dialogic interactions. Doing so provided the human quality around the data and its collection, and brought back the dignity that I sought for myself and which I could then perceive *from* and give *to* the others. In accepting how unexpected findings transformed and enriched the research framework, I was convinced that genuine participation could lead to the radical challenge of our theories and redefinition of current paradigms in development. More even if we open our knowledge system to other culturally specific and millenary experiential-rich knowledge of thousands of other cultures which also have much to say about their experience with reality. In the end, the experience of the immersion can be said to have the possibility to create a deep impact in shifting the perception and attitudes towards our understandings of a subject and therefore be a powerful strategy for studying a subject, resilience included.

Conclusions

In answering the first main research question, Twelve Eagle's resilience was explored through children's roles on the physical and ecology dimension.

On the physical ecology dimension, children's roles, according to adults, supported the management of time and activities important for subsistence. According to children, they also brought the ability to connect the community to urban areas and look after the elders.

On the social ecology dimension, adults considered the roles of children through their participation on personal relationships and social spaces. Emotional bonding, "*keeping company*" and the constitution of a family were some of the personal relationships documented. Participation on church activities, soccer games and resting were some spaces observed where children and adults related. Children also identified their roles with other children, as friends, accompaniment to do activities and care-takers.

The few documentation negative expressions, the presence of alternative mechanisms to achieve success and the finding of several spaces and opportunities from which people developed positive expressions, suggested that Twelve Eagles resilience was an adaptations defined by the theories of hedonic treadmill, cognitive dissonances and affective habituation.

In answer to research question two, it was discussed the difficulties in reconciling etic and emic concepts, such as assessing poverty and documenting perspectives of well-being within the same context. It was also commented the problems of studying resilience in the context of lives historically lived in crises. The role of the unexpected was then discussed for its opportunities to enrich our knowledge and the need to include it at different stages during the practice of a research based on iterative research cycles. Finally, it was argued that the principles chosen for this research have the potential to transform the research practice, for which the immersion is a powerful tool to use them.

Recommendations

- Children, in their roles in the physical and social ecologies, should be considered in the design, participation and implementation of resilience development programs
- Poverty and resilience interventions should include programs that directly benefit the constitution and strengthening of community's social ecologies as determined by emic notions (e.g. spaces for community expression, artistic skills development, spiritual priorities, etc.).
- In studies and programs on resilience from development perspectives, emic notions, social ecologies and historical contexts should be combined in analysing a situation and the possible interventions.
- In the further practice of resilience and other social studies, the principles of participation, respect, power imbalances and the unexpected should be considered as attitudes and values inherent in engaging in research practices.

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