

Consensus Building Summary Report

The ultimate objective of the 2021 consensus building was to better understand the concept of resilience, the theoretical frameworks, measurement, and how the conceptual definition should consider aspects specific for Latino and Mexican populations.

We first convened as a group and then moved into five breakout groups via the Zoom platform. Each group had at least one moderator. Four groups had conversations conducted in English, and one was bilingual. Three questions guided the discussion: 1) What does resilience mean conceptually? (i.e., frameworks and domains), 2) What are the characteristics of resilience? (i.e., variables and measurements and methods), and 3) How might we contextualize our conceptual definitions and methods specific to the Latino and Mexican Populations? After discussing all three questions in the breakout rooms, all participants returned to the main room. Moderators were asked to summarize the discussions, and participants provided further comments.

Participants acknowledged resilience as the ability to cope and adapt positively in the face of adversity, trauma, and stress. Therefore, resilience is more than the ability to bouncing back. Resilience is also multidimensional, and there are different types of resilience. Following the discussions from previous sections, participants highlighted the need to understand resilience using a life perspective. As our network focuses on older ages, one risk of age segmentation is that early experiences shape several factors affecting resilience at older ages. Adverse events and resilience exist throughout the life course, and early life events can be built resilience and inform later life outcomes. Many current studies focus on cumulative disadvantages, but resilience can be seen as a way to accumulate advantages and ways to adapt throughout the lives of individuals. The concept of resilience crosses several disciplines and can be examined at multiple levels from the individual, families, societies, and countries to global issues. There are complex relationships on how resilience is formed and evolves, so it is crucial to have an ecological perspective of risk and protective factors and how they interact over time. Incorporating the social context and environment in which individuals live is critical to understanding their resilience and its changes over time.

Regarding data requirements for variables and measurements, participants highlighted the need to collect data on individual and macro-level social determinants that shape resilience. Measures need to consider stressors, mechanisms, and outcomes. Given that resilience is seen as a way to adapt in the face of adversity, trauma, stigma, racism, discrimination, and stress, adequate measures that capture these life challenges, including markers at young ages, are needed. Some of these measures may be complemented by biomarkers, such as cortisol and allostatic load. A critical aspect of resilience that often is overlooked is agency – both individual and collective. The agency processes in which individuals act on their behalf or when social groups act together shape resilience. In addition to agency, measures of internal locus of

control, self-efficacy, and self-esteem are also important. Measures of cognitive flexibility and reserve can also help understanding resilience at older ages. Given the multilevel nature of resilience, measures of social engagement, connections, and social adaptations are needed. Methods should consider the multilevel and longitudinal dimensions of resilience. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that individual studies may not incorporate all these complex levels and relationships. Data limitations may continue to exist as many of the variables we can collect are proxies of what we want to measure.

Given the specificity of the experience of older adult Latino and Mexican populations, the concept of resilience needs to consider these populations' experiences, including culture, norms, values, and religion. Measures should also include pride and aspirations for diverse groups of Latinos and Mexicans. Because the aging process is gendered, a gender perspective with a shared understanding of the feminization of aging is essential. Given that these populations may experience several stressors given their identities, taking into account intersectionality is critical as well. In particular, understanding issues related to ethnicity, gender, migration, and legal status are important. Finally, given that social and economic context matter, understanding work and living conditions and broader policies are also important.