University of South Florida
Scholar Commons

Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

2009

Facilitating youth participatory action research: Reflections, strategies, and applications at the institute for community research

Aki Nakanishi
University of South Florida

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd

Part of the American Studies Commons

Facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research:

Reflections, Strategies, and Applications at the Institute for Community Research

by

Aki Nakanishi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Kenneth Williamson, Ph.D.
Susan Greenbaum, Ph.D.
Jacqueline Messing, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
April 10, 2009

Keywords: community development, educational anthropology, non-governmental organizations

DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to the staff members and youth at the Summer Youth

Research Institute of the Institute for Community Research during the summer of 2008,

to those who shared their invaluable knowledge and life experiences with me in

completing this project, and to the future generation of participatory action researchers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Facilitating Youth Participatory Action Research:
Reflections, Strategies, and Applications at the Institute for Community Research

Aki Nakanishi

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the instructional and organizational strategies used by participatory action research (PAR) facilitators at the Summer Youth Research Institute of the Institute for Community Research in Hartford, Connecticut (US), a six-week program that engages urban multi-ethnic teenagers in youth participatory action research (YPAR) for social change. During the last three decades, PAR has proven to be a very effective methodology for creating sustainable solutions to social problems by involving community members in the process of identifying, investigating, and collectively resolving them. In particular, YPAR provides young people with the opportunity to study social problems that affect themselves and their communities. Through experiential learning, YPAR allows youth to understand that structural injustices are *produced*, not natural, and can be challenged. Youth discover spaces for hope and resistance and become agents of change for their own communities. While recent years have witnessed an increased effort from researchers and practitioners alike to apply PAR approaches to various fields within community and international development, little has been written addressing educators about the designing and implementation process of a curriculum in PAR methodology. The present exploratory ethnographic study aims to address the theory-practice gap of PAR literature, which

offers only a limited number of case study analyses of the facilitation and implementation

process of PAR projects, and offer advice for PAR facilitators which is currently lacking.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The present study, which took place during the summer of 2008, investigated the instructional and organizational strategies used by participatory action research (PAR) facilitators at the Summer Youth Research Institute of the Institute for Community Research, a six-week program which engages Hartford area teenagers in youth participatory action research (YPAR) for social change. Currently, there exists relatively little literature addressing the distinct difficulties, challenges, and pleasures of teaching participatory research within school and community settings (McNicoll 1999). The present study aims to provide teaching guidelines and advice for PAR educators which is elsewhere lacking. My investigation seeks to respond to the need for guides and a learning community supportive of education in PAR methods. Furthermore, I argue that PAR education in institutionalized spaces – such as school and the workplace – can facilitate the transformation of power relations in processes of knowledge production.

The Institute for Community Research (ICR), an independent research organization based in Hartford, CT, was selected as the site of study for its longstanding commitment to action research and community-based partnerships to build community capacities (ICR 2008). I was interested in analyzing how Youth-PAR (YPAR) was developed by ICR, particularly its curricular components and implementation process. Consistent with the expressed desires of my internship supervisor, Marlene Berg,

Associate Director of Training at ICR, I participated as an intern and PAR facilitator for ICR's Summer Youth Research Institute (SYRI) program.

Research methods consisted of (1) participant and unobtrusive observation, (2) formal and informal interviews, and (3) archival research. Participant and unobtrusive observation was conducted to investigate the implementation process of the SYRI PAR curriculum. Formal interviews and informal interviews in the form of conversations with PAR facilitators and program evaluators at ICR and SYRI were carried out to collect ethnographic data on experiences in PAR facilitation and implementation. Archival research examined the philosophies and histories that inform PAR practices and curriculum development at ICR today. The time frame of the research consisted of 10 weeks during the months of June – August 2008.

Researcher Positionality

In light of the importance that contemporary feminist scholars and others place on highlighting a researcher's own positionality to promote transparency in the dialectic between his or her own views and the representation of his or her subjects (Stephen 1997), I offer my own standpoint and pertinent pieces of life history as an individual and scholar-activist: Over the last several years, I have participated in communication, information, and education for diverse groups. As a Study Abroad student in a program of the School for International Training, I spent the fall of 2005 in Ecuador, conducting ethnographic fieldwork while working with the non-governmental organization Solidaridad Japonesa Ecuatoriana para la Educación (SOJAE) in Cayambe and assisting educational projects in surrounding poor, rural communities. My research examined the tension between processes of self-empowerment and relationships of dependency induced

by the ask/give paradigm between international aid organizations and their clients.

The following summer (2006), I collaborated on projects regarding education for all and education for sustainable development as an intern in the Education sector of the UNESCO Office in Quito, Ecuador. I was entrusted with a week-long mission to independently evaluate the teaching methodologies of various primary schools in the central coastal region of Ecuador, one of the poorest regions of the country. Having experienced both bottom-up and top-down approaches to development initiatives aiming to improve the life quality of disadvantaged populations, I became convinced of the need to identify more participatory means of engaging marginalized peoples in self-empowerment processes. This led me to pursue an MA in Applied Anthropology at the University of South Florida and laid the foundations for the present research involving facilitation strategies in pursuing participatory action research (PAR) with youth.

Terms and Definitions

Action research is broadly defined as an "inquiry that is done *by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community, but never *to* or *on* them," which consists of a systematic and cyclically reflective research process (Herr and Anderson 2005:3-4). This includes a multiplicity of research that varies widely in purpose, positionality, epistemology, ideological commitments, and historical context (Herr and Anderson 2005:2). At the Institute for Community Research, participatory action research involves a "transformative approach to anthropology… [that] fosters critical thought and produces viable research skills that are transferable to other community social problems" (Schensul and Berg 2004:84). In particular, the YPAR process is described as: transformative, participatory, science-based, discipline-connected, and ethnographic (Schensul and Berg

3

2004:79). Additionally, participatory action research at ICR prioritizes the negotiation of power, envisioning PAR as an empowerment process that can reduce social disparities and bring about transformational change (Schensul and Berg 2004:85).

Organization of Thesis

To briefly outline the remainder of the thesis, Chapter Two situates the research context by describing the city of Hartford and the Institute for Community Research, where my internship and the present study unfolded. Chapter Three discusses the present research in relation to anthropology and the existing corpus of literature on participatory action research and models for youth development, and establishes the study's conceptual framework. Chapter Four offers a description of the research design and methodology used in approaching this study, and Chapter Five presents its major findings, which examine the multiple perspectives and levels of PAR at the SYRI. Finally, Chapter Six provides a brief summary of findings and conclusions thereof, offering recommendations for further SYRI staff training and development. In my closing comments, I reflect on my personal experiences as a budding applied anthropologist and PAR facilitator at the ICR.

CHAPTER 2: INTERNSHIP SETTING

It is important to situate research in the particular context in which it was conducted in order to allow for its critical evaluation. This is especially true for PAR projects, given the weight that PAR places on local realities and perspectives to inform the research process. This chapter details the internship setting of the present investigation, offering a basic description of the city of Hartford and outlining some of the problems that affect Hartford youth. It also provides background information on the Institute for Community Research (ICR) and its philosophies and organizational activities, focusing specifically on the Summer Youth Research Institute (SYRI) Youth PAR program. The chapter concludes with a brief description of the internship roles and responsibilities that were assigned to me as a staff member of the program.

Hartford: A City of Disparities

Hartford, Connecticut is imbued with a deep sense of irony in its jarring juxtaposition of the poor and the rich. Hartford is home to an urban population of approximately 117,000 residents and is located in Connecticut, a New England state in the northeastern region of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). While Connecticut is the nation's third richest state with a median household income of $78,154 (Christie 2007; Roberts 2007), Hartford, its capital city, suffers a poverty rate of 31 percent, one of the highest among cities across the country (Bishaw and Iceland 2003:7;

U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

Part of a larger national trend described by the *New York Times* as the "rich-state, poor-cities phenomenon," Connecticut, along with other similarly wealthy states, share a pattern of "extremely wealthy suburbs and almost universally distressed cities" (Herszenhorn 2001). The "yawning chasm" (Motavalli 2008) between the state's haves and have-nots has widened since the late 1980s. By 2006, the poorest 20 percent of families had lost an average of $4,437 of their income, while the wealthiest 20 percent of residents witnessed an income gain of $52,439. The richest residents in Connecticut earn, on average, eight times that of the poor (Motavalli 2008).

The economic segregation that distressed areas such as Hartford experience is coupled with severe racial segregation (Herszenhorn 2001). According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2006 report, 84.6 percent of Connecticut's population self-identified as white, in comparison to the 28.3 percent of Hartford residents who identified similarly in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006; 2007). While situated within a state population that is predominantly wealthy and white, Hartford consists of a significant and largely poor minority population. Hartford's ethnically diverse population is 39.3 percent black or African American, 44.2 percent Hispanic or Latino, 2.8 percent Asian, and 0.6 percent American Indian. In particular, 36.7 percent of the Hispanic population self-identifies as Puerto Rican (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

The racial segregation that goes hand in hand with economic segregation in Hartford can be explained by a number of factors, including labor migration patterns, housing segregation, and economic trends. The onset of World War I brought increasing numbers of blacks to Connecticut as the supply of immigrant workers from Europe for

6

the state's industrial plants dwindled. At the same time, widespread depression and the severity of Jim Crow laws in the South caused many Southern blacks to seek employment elsewhere, creating the great migration of blacks to the North. However, the arrival of newcomers overcrowded the already limited housing in Connecticut's urban black neighborhoods, forcing these neighborhoods to expand. In response, many white home-owners moved out into the suburbs, setting a new racial pattern in the state (White 2003).

Similarly, Hartford's Hispanic roots developed during the 1940s in response to a need for cheap Puerto Rican labor to harvest Connecticut's tobacco. Since the 1960s, greater numbers of Puerto Rican immigrants have settled in between the largely African American North End and Hartford's declining population of white residents on the South End (Von Zielbauer 2003). While the Hispanic population in Hartford has steadily increased since the 1980s, many families relocating to Hartford do so without first having secured a job and with few employment prospects (Cruz 1998). Cruz asserts that "in many ways, socioeconomically, they are jumping from the frying pan into the fire" (Von Zielbauer 2003:2), citing that poverty rates in some Puerto Rican neighborhoods approach 45 percent (Cruz 1998).

Once a booming industrial center popularly referred to as the "Insurance Capital of the World," Hartford has since been plagued by economic difficulties resulting in limited employment opportunities for local residents. In particular, Hartford's manufacturing sector experienced a severe downsizing during the recession of the national economy in the late 1980s (Simmons 1994:4). Good manufacturing jobs were replaced by a mix of much higher- and lower-paying jobs in the service sector

(Herszenhorn 2001). Like in many of the other larger cities in Connecticut that once

offered factory employment, the concentration of poverty grew in Hartford following the

loss of jobs and declining wages (Motavalli 2008). Hartford's economic instability

contributes to the city's "truly distressed social environment," afflicted by a litany of

problems including "shortages of affordable housing, soaring crime rates, youth gangs,

drug trafficking, a tragically high incidence of AIDS, [and] racial segregation and

isolation within the city's educational system," among others (Simmons 1994:2).

Issues Facing Youth in Hartford

Needless to say, youth in Hartford are gravely impacted by the structural

inequalities that surround them in their everyday lives. In particular, the Hartford public

education system has been severely affected by the city's racial and economic isolation.

In a critical study of the de facto school segregation in Hartford, Pillawsky (1998:29)

illustrates the plight of public schools:

> The second largest school district in New England, enrollment in
> Hartford's 32 schools is 96 percent persons of color, with about eight
> percent more Latinos than African Americans. Forty-seven percent of
> Hartford's children live in poverty, the second-highest rate of any U.S.
> city. Over 78 percent of those attending public school receive subsidized
> meals, while 54 percent come from single-parent families, with 51 percent
> representing non-English speaking households. The combined effects of
> racial segregation and poverty result in Hartford students consistently
> scoring the lowest of any of Connecticut's 166 school districts on state-
> mandated academic tests.

Subsequently, in the summer of 1996, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in the "Sheff

v. O'Neill" case that the combination of racial and class segregation in Hartford's public

schools deprived students of their right to an educational opportunity equal to that

available elsewhere in the state (Judson 1993; Pillawsky 1998).

Following the plaintiffs' return to court in 2002 accusing the state of "dragging its feet" (New York Times 2003) in meeting the terms of the 1996 Supreme Court ruling, the state agreed to implement a 4-year plan to reduce racial and class segregation in Hartford schools (Office of Legislative Research 2003). The agreement consists of creating inter-district magnet schools in Hartford, expanding the Open Choice program – which offers minority public school students from Hartford the option to attend suburban schools based on space availability – and increasing financial support for inter-district cooperative programs serving Hartford public school students (Connecticut State Department of Education 2008; Office of Legislative Research 2003).

Despite these measures, the high school dropout rate among Hartford's public schools remains disturbingly high, leading some education researchers to consider them "dropout factories," a term used to describe schools where no more than 60 percent of freshmen reach their senior year (WFSB 2008). Youth who investigated the teen dropout rate during the 2003 SYRI program, collecting and analyzing data from surveys, interviews, and mapping techniques, suggest that teen pregnancy, drug abuse, and family problems are principal contributors to teen stress, which can lead youth to drop out of school (Becker 2003). During the 2008 SYRI program, youth further identified gang violence, personal abuse – such as, for example, self-inflicting injuries – lack of motivation to succeed, need for more recreational spaces and programs for youth, and neighborhood neglect as urgent concerns for Hartford youth.

Of course, these observations and findings developed by Hartford youth action researchers confirm that the overly simplistic assumptions of "deficit" views – such as that of Pillawsky (1998), who equates poverty with low student test scores – should be

critically examined and scrutinized. The use of such explanations to predict student outcomes is problematic in manifold ways. For example, such claims legitimize the banking theory of education, where teachers are inscribed with traditional authority and given the role of the "expert" who unidirectionally imparts knowledge to their students, imagined as "empty vessels" or slates (Freire 2007). However, Gonzalez and colleagues, supported by other educational anthropologists, argue that people are competent and have valuable knowledge based on their lived experiences, local histories and community contexts. It is important to explore these strengths and resources as pedagogical assets applicable to classroom practice (Gonzalez et al. 2005).

Relying on "culture of poverty" theories (Lewis 1966) to explain student achievement is also problematic in that they frame the individual as constrained by the group, simultaneously placing blame on group pathology and robbing the individual of his or her agency. In fact, in response to the essentializing tendencies of anthropological discourse that can undermine individual autonomy and sanitize local politics, homogenizing the "other" – racially, economically, geographically – critics such as Abu-Lughod argue for "writing *against* culture" (Abu-Lughod 1991; 1993). Meanwhile, scholars such as Smith suggest less extreme solutions, promoting the integration of macro-level theories and on-the-ground experiences, where "cultures" as systemic and historical forces "lie behind the backs of people," and the role of the anthropologist consists in "[tramping] the muddy boots of experience across the patterned carpet of system" (1999:15). ICR is a locally based, community-oriented organization that provides a safe space for youth to engage in critical dialogue with peers and others to deconstruct their worlds and address such larger issues of structural inequalities present

within them.

The Institute for Community Research

The Institute for Community Research (ICR), an independent research organization based in Hartford, CT, was selected as the site of study for its longstanding commitment to action research and community-based partnerships to build community capacities. ICR was established in 1987 in Hartford, Connecticut, as a non-profit research institute to develop collaborative community partnerships for applied and action research in New England and beyond (ICR 2008a). By gathering information in partnership with residents, ICR aims to "help communities locally and globally to ask better questions and get better answers about the complex problems that they face" (ICR 2008a). ICR uses various qualitative and quantitative methods rooted in the social sciences and has made a significant investment in employing ethnographic research methods to train community residents to systematically examine the issues that affect them (Schensul and Berg 2004:80).

ICR emerged out of the Community Council, which previously served as the planning board for the United Way in the Hartford area by assisting in developing and evaluating their projects (Fox 1998:11). Due in part to a recommendation made by the Greater Hartford Needs study sponsored by the Greater Hartford Foundation, the Community Council separated from United Way to take on a broader community planning role serving not only United Way, but also others. Dr. Jean J. Schensul, who believed that a non-profit research organization could, in fact, play a significant role in improving community conditions in Hartford, became the first director of ICR.

ICR's principal funding strategy takes advantage of staff experience and networks

to maximize community benefits. Based on Schensul's experience as the research director at the Hispanic Health Council – another non-profit organization located in Hartford – as well as research experience among other staff members, ICR's initial and ongoing fundraising efforts have been oriented towards obtaining large federal grants typically sought by university affiliates and academics. Because ICR's fundamental aim consists of serving community needs through community collaboration, the organization avoids competing with other community groups for local resources. Rather, it attempts to share the resources it generates with groups that do not necessarily have the same degree of access to those resources. ICR continues to uphold its founding philosophy in practice despite recent serious fiscal trouble, which has resulted in a severe reduction of both personnel and office space.

Consistent with Schensul's initial vision of ICR as an action research agency which "stresses collaborative research for change, critical thinking, and cultural enhancement and development" (ICR 2008a), ICR adopted an interdisciplinary and inclusionary approach towards creating and implementing programs to address community issues. ICR manages a variety of programs, including projects in health and mental health, arts and culture, and education. Examples of programs in past years specifically targeting youth include the Urban Women Against Substance Abuse (UWASA) project, which aimed to increase school attachment and reduce or prevent substance abuse and risky sexual behavior among girls, and more recently, the Xperience Project, designed to support Connecticut youth in their decisions to stay drug-free by working with them to develop alternative drug-free entertainment events (ICR 2008b; Schensul et al. 2000). In particular, the Summer Youth Research Institute and Youth

Action Research Institute programs are based on "youth-led action research for

development, risk prevention, and social change" (ICR 2008c).

The Summer Youth Research Institute

The Summer Youth Research Institute (SYRI) is ICR's six-week program for

youth development that offers multiethnic high school students in the Hartford area

intensive training in PAR methods for social empowerment and change. Summer is

uniquely opportune in terms of offering a "methods camp" for youth because of both the

availabilities of youth participants as well as public funding for youth employment

programs such as the SYRI (Schensul et al. 2004:6). High school students who are hired

by ICR as SYRI youth action researchers are introduced to social science research as a

means to develop individual critical consciousness and drive positive social change. ICR

also envisions the SYRI as an education and prevention program that increases school

and community attachment among youth by linking an educational process with a project

that invests in the community of the participants. Brase et al. explain (2004:16):

> The basic theoretical framework of ICR's model is that PAR will benefit
> youth with respect to their self-concept, life skill attainment, and
> community awareness, which in turn will improve their educational
> attachment/attainment and reduce risk among engaged youth.

The educational components of the SYRI focuses on identity formation in its

various facets – ethnic, gender, sexual orientation – in addition to personal capacities,

work and learning skills, research skills and action strategies in civic engagement

(Schensul and Berg 2004:81). The SYRI curriculum is revised each year to improve upon

the last and to reflect the specific strengths and interests of program facilitators as they

change from summer to summer. Its foundations are rooted in the core curriculum

13

Participatory Action Research: A Curriculum for Empowering Youth (Sydlo et al. 2000),

developed by adult and youth staff based on fourteen years of experience in the YPAR

approach with teens both within and outside of Hartford.

The basic steps of the PAR process, which are incorporated into the weekly

activities of the SYRI, begin with exercises in identity exploration and practices in

collaborative problem solving in "Houses." Houses represent the two smaller groups into

which youth are organized and conduct most activities for the first few weeks of the

SYRI program. Because Houses create smaller groups of youth, they are more

manageable for staff facilitators in terms of carrying out discussions and group activities.

Their smaller size also facilitates youth in building relationships with each other and

thinking critically about group processes and their own positionality within groups.

This is followed by an introduction to PAR and various research methods and

models. In the past, youth have been exposed to a variety of data collection methods

including but not limited to: surveys, visual methods, observations, network analysis,

geographic mapping, interviews and other data elicitation techniques (Schensul et al.

2004:7). They also learn to conceptualize the relationship between structural factors and

events that happen on the ground through ecological modeling.

Then, using the criteria of "researchability, social relevance and whether youth

believe they can make a difference in that topic area" (Schensul et al. 2004:7), youth

collectively negotiate and identify a research topic that will be the focus of that summer's

scientific investigation. Topics selected in the past tended to be oriented towards mental

health wellness and awareness and substance abuse due to the research interests and

funding requirements of the financial sponsor in those years. These topics, for example,

included teen dating violence and substance abuse. Teen hustling, or the "illegitimate involvement in the sale of products and services to generate income" (Morgan et al. 2004:203), school dropout rates, and issues surrounding racism have been the focus of more recent investigations. Following topic selection, youth are led through exercises in horizontal and vertical modeling and develop hypotheses regarding the relationship between the independent and dependent research domains, which are later tested through data collection and analysis.

At this point, youth are typically divided into three groups, each facilitated by one or more adult staff members. Each method group is responsible for carrying out a different data collection method, where a mixed method research design that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods is intended to strengthen the validity of research results. Youth are instructed in what their respective data collection method entails and assisted in creating and piloting research instruments, developing parental consent and youth assent forms and research protocols, administering the research instrument, and analyzing collected data. While the means for data analysis differs depending on the data collection method, past SYRI projects have provided training in such data management programs as EZ text, ARC info, ANTHROPAC, and SPSS (Schensul et al. 2004:8). Later, youth also carry out data triangulation with their peers in the other method groups.

The last step in the SYRI program consists of a final presentation of research findings, where youth share the results of their research with an invited audience. The presentation takes the form of a combined gallery installation and poster and power point presentation session. Posters in the gallery are organized by research domain – rather

than by method – and presentations are scripted by teams of youth in preparation of the event. All youth take on at least one speaking role during the presentation to help develop public speaking and presentation skills. Youth who are interested in staying on as action researchers at the ICR after the conclusion of the SYRI program are invited to apply to the Youth Action Research Institute (YARI) program, which is an extension of the SYRI that takes place throughout the school year. These senior youth researchers are joined by other successful applicants to form a new cohort at the YARI, focusing on creating an action agenda addressing the research topic and issues that were identified and investigated during the preceding summer. Typically, several youth also go on to participate in other ICR projects.

Internship Roles and Responsibilities

I learned of the internship opportunity with SYRI through my faculty advisor at the University of South Florida (USF) Anthropology Department, Dr. Kenneth Williamson, whose prior employment was at ICR as a facilitator for PAR projects with adults. In mid-January of 2008, he inquired of his friend and former co-worker Marlene Berg, Associate Director of Training at ICR, regarding the 2008 SYRI program and internship possibilities. At the time, the decision to implement SYRI for the summer of 2008 was still tentative and dependent on program funding. Nonetheless, the internship advertisement posted for SYRI of the previous year was relayed to me, and I was invited to begin the application process, which consisted of a letter of interest, resume, and phone interview with Marlene.

Traditionally, ICR recruits two to three graduate students to assist permanent staff with the SYRI program every summer, offering a small stipend in return. ICR seeks

graduate level interns who are well-versed in research methods – especially in the social

sciences – who can support permanent staff, typically more experienced and

knowledgeable in areas of youth engagement than in research methodologies, to develop

and carry out learning exercises in research methods for youth. Interns are also expected

to have experience working with diverse populations of youth, and often come from

minority backgrounds themselves, bringing further diversity to the SYRI program and

encouraging youth to understand and identify with diversity in its many expressions.

Ability to work in a team is also emphasized, as staff members are expected to

collaborate closely in program facilitation. The 2007 paid summer internship position

announcement gives a brief description of the goals of SYRI and further summarizes

work expectations:

- Demonstrate to young people the ways research can be used to solve community problems;
- Teach skills such as problem identification, research methods, computers, and information presentation and dissemination;
- Demystify the process of research by engaging teens in a project which investigates issues of importance to them, their peers, and their communities;
- Increase school and community attachment by linking an educational process with a project that invests in the communities of the participants;
- Create group bonding around positive community participation;
- Improve community conditions by disseminating and applying the results of research through education and advocacy.

I was accepted for the position in early February pending program funding.

Throughout the following months leading to my arrival in Hartford, Marlene and I

exchanged emails on a more or less regular basis regarding program logistics and how I

would pursue my individual thesis research to best serve ICR's needs. My research

proposal to document, identify, and analyze strategies used at ICR in implementing and

facilitating the SYRI program was reviewed and approved in mid-April. Research

outcomes and recommendations were expected to benefit SYRI staff members for further teaching purposes and curricular development. Meanwhile, my unique positionality as both outside researcher and PAR facilitator would provide an alternative grounded perspective on the teaching experiences surrounding implementation of a PAR curriculum.

As a full-time member of the SYRI staff team, I fulfilled various roles both in planning and carrying out the program on a day-to-day basis. Throughout the first three weeks of the internship, I attended various workshops as required by the program's funding agency, helped to set up SYRI's youth participant roster, conducted initial interviews of youth participants, assisted in developing and preparing materials for curricular activities, filed and inventoried SYRI data, and organized program space and school supplies as necessary. During the 6 weeks of SYRI, I took turns with other staff members in leading program activities, setting and overseeing the daily agenda, reading and responding to youth journal entries, administering, scoring, and recording various youth assessments as required by the funding agency, training a third of the program's youth in survey development, administration, data input and analysis, participating in staff meetings, and responding to any other needs of the program and its youth participants.

Theoretically, I was also to receive training in cooperative learning instructional methods to encourage youth to consider information and actively engage in discussion and development of ideas without imposing my own values, as well as receive technical preparation in the use of research tools such as Photovoice. Extreme time constraints, however, permitted for only one staff meeting to discuss key instructional techniques

identified by ICR as supportive of the YPAR approach, which includes: modeling, scaffolding, explication, and reflection (Schensul et al. 2004:6). Two additional workshops organized during the summer focused on mental health issues regarding children and youth. While staff members initially discussed holding weekly staff workshops throughout the summer to exchange views on PAR philosophies, methodologies, and applications to inform the practice of YPAR at SYRI, time grew scarce and individual stress levels and team tensions rose during the program, preventing this from actually occurring.

As a researcher, I faced the same principal difficulty of limited time resources, where rapport-building and the iterative cycle of data collection and analysis had to fit within the unnatural time constraints of 10 weeks. I had been forewarned by both my faculty advisor at USF and internship advisor at ICR that work as a PAR facilitator with SYRI would be intensive and the hours would be long. Indeed, balancing internship responsibilities and research needs was, at times, a great struggle. I maintained an open line of communication regarding my research progress with Marlene and other staff members throughout the summer, and, halfway through the SYRI program, re-negotiated work responsibilities to include more co-facilitation and less individual leadership of curricular activities to make available some of the time spent on program preparation to dedicate to my own research. Negotiations to redistribute work responsibilities were not sought out lightly, and I am appreciative of the willingness that my internship supervisor and co-facilitators expressed in working with me to resolve the situation under stressful circumstances.

CHAPTER 3: RELEVANT LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of selected literature regarding the topics of applied anthropology, participatory action research (PAR), youth-led participatory action research (YPAR), and PAR facilitation[1]. Specifically, it locates the present study within the discipline of anthropology and the existing literature on PAR and youth development. I argue that PAR is an effective approach to analyzing power relations, oppression and resistance in institutionalized spaces. In particular, YPAR allows youth to understand that structural injustices are *produced*, not natural, and can be challenged. Furthermore, the implementation and facilitation process of a curriculum in PAR methodology merits further examination. I will begin by exploring the relationship between applied anthropology and PAR in its historical context, then examine the unique contributions of PAR as both a method and a theory for human inquiry. This is followed by an analytic description of YPAR and case studies in YPAR. The chapter concludes with a brief overview regarding strategies and challenges in facilitating PAR projects.

Applied Anthropology

Since its early history as an imperialistic science and the "handmaiden of colonialism," anthropology has evolved into an epistemologically self-critical and reflexive discipline in which scholars engage with questions regarding the social

---

1 Readers are advised to refer to Chapter 1 for an introduction of basic terminology.

relevance and responsibility of research and the role of researchers in social change. Applied anthropology, for example, attempts to address these concerns by using historically and culturally holistic approaches to resolving – or redefining the means to resolving – problems existent in contemporary society.

The Fox and Vicos projects during the early 1950s, for example, marked the first significant collaborative efforts in anthropology and are regarded as landmarks in applied anthropology for their dynamic endeavor to "blend social science knowledge with action" (Eddy and Partridge 1987:42). Both the Fox and Vicos projects consisted of long-term experimental programs that direct economic and social change towards the problematic situations of politically marginalized indigenous communities (Eddy and Partridge 1987:42). Later adopted under Sol Tax's term "action anthropology," both projects essentially sought to "[create] collaborations with peoples whose ideas are worth listening to" (Greenbaum 2007, Oct 16 ANG6931 lecture) and empower the oppressed community with which they worked, while at the same time building a theory for "how change happens" (Greenbaum 2007, Oct 16 ANG6931 lecture). Challenging the heretofore dominantly held assumption that anthropologists cannot be involved with the people they study, the Fox and Vicos projects posited that scholarship that leads to social change is, in fact, valid scholarship.

The Fox and Vicos projects, however, attracted criticism regarding their paternalistic approaches to collaborative development and the lack of sustainability in derived solutions. While the Fox project sought a reciprocal relationship between anthropologist(s) and the Native American community, the political macro-context of the project was informed by the Bureau for Indian Affairs' (BIA) termination era policies,

21

and decision-making power in the research process ultimately fell more heavily towards the researchers (Greenbaum 2007, Oct 16 ANG6931 lecture). The Vicos project, too, was shaped by post-WWII dominant US development ideologies that emphasized the "institution of American-style democracy" and a Rostovian strategy of "bringing peasants into the modern world" (Greenbaum 2007, Oct 16 ANG6931 lecture). Additionally, Cornell University arranged the latter project through a direct partnership with the Peruvian state to resolve "the Indian problem" as espoused in the community of Vicos, resulting in a vertical rather than horizontal approach to collaborative research and community development (Doughty 1987).

Where anthropologists involved in the Fox and Vicos projects failed to account for their own sociopolitical assumptions in approaching their work and asserted researcher objectivity, many anthropologists today call for a "humanistic science" (Blakey 1998) or a "critical humanist perspective" (Knauft 1996) in anthropology that recognizes an anthropologist's own values and positionality as they influence a particular project and promotes awareness of the social and political implications of anthropological work (Blakey 1998:387). Humanistic anthropology acknowledges and critically examines the "limits of objectivity and the value of subjectivity" (Blakey 1998:380), and "assumes… that its practitioners and the rest of society share responsibility for the world they help create" (Blakey 1998:386). Anthropologists are called to step out of their roles as passive observers and become active social commentators, embodying the discipline with both a critical reflexivity as well as a sense of social responsibility that lends to the purpose of illuminating areas of public interest (Blakey 1998; Knauft 1996; Scheper-Hughes 1995).

Opponents of anthropological action, activism or advocacy often assert an exclusive focus on "scientific standards" (Hastrup and Elsass 1990:388) as the defining element in the production of anthropological knowledge, relegating the ethical and moral dimensions of anthropological research to secondary significance. For instance, Hastrup and Elsass argue that although "even anthropologists have moral responsibilities" (Hastrup and Elsass 1990:301), "no scientific standards for intervention exists" (Hastrup and Elsass 1990:389). They claim both that anthropologists are "almost completely at a loss in the world of politicking," and that "wherever value judgments are made… 'objectivity' eludes us [anthropologists]" (Hastrup and Elsass 1990:389). However, ethnography is inherently value-laden. As Oquist explains: "Science is a purposive activity, and thus values are part and parcel of scientific research" (Oquist 1978:153). PAR embraces the notion that knowledge is socially constructed and favors knowledge production processes that are explicitly political, democratic, and action-oriented (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003).

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

The term "action research" was first coined by Kurt Lewin during his push in the 1940s to reorient the social sciences towards "research which will help the practitioner" take, jointly with researchers, "organized, efficient action" to address the socio-political and economic problems that they face (Lewin 1946:34). Lewin argued for a shift of paradigm in the social sciences from one defined by positivism to one in which research processes are iterative, collaborative, and transformative (Lewin 1946). David Coghlan cites one of the principal critiques and contributions that came out of Lewin's work as the basic tenet in action research that "human systems [can] only be understood and changed

if one [involves] the members of the system in the inquiry process itself" (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003:13-14). Action research as advocated by Lewin redefined the role of the practitioner or non-researcher in a way that engaged them as active and equal partners in the research designing and implementation process. Furthermore, Lewin emphasized the importance of multidisciplinary efforts in addressing complex social phenomena, promoting the "serious [attempt] of an integrated approach to social research" (Lewin 1946:34).

In particular, participatory action research (PAR) integrates research with action in ways that offer a powerful strategy for advancing both science and practice (Whyte 1989:368). By placing the tools of research in the hands of people who are traditionally the subjects of anthropological study, PAR integrates diverse perspectives on both macro and micro levels of social science research, offering unique and significant contributions to theory and to practice. For instance, PAR can serve as a means to democratize research by engaging marginalized populations in a way that enables them to move from the peripheries to the center of knowledge production processes. Stavenhagen (1971) describes this participatory approach to research as the "decolonization of applied social sciences." This view is supported by Fals-Borda, who, in examining PAR studies as they were undertaken by local scholars and activists in developing countries during the 1970s, refers to its participatory discourse as a "counter-discourse" to the hierarchical structure of knowledge imposed upon the Third World by foreign powers in an "oppressive and exploitative [form] of domination" (Fals-Borda 1987:331). PAR, in this manner, questions dominant frameworks of knowledge on the macro-level, proposing a larger framework of inquiry encouraging of a plural landscape of "world anthropologies,"

envisioned by Restrepo and Escobar as a space involving the "critical awareness of… the microtactics and relations of power within and across different anthropological locations and traditions" (Restrepo and Escobar 2005:99).

In terms of methodology, PAR resembles participant observation and participatory research, but differs in key ways. The researcher as participant observer normally uses participation as a means to gain access to members of a group or community for the purposes of behavioral observation and to build rapport with informants to elicit "reasonably frank" (Whyte 1989:368) interview data. In traditional forms of research, the participant observer attempts to minimize the impact of his or her presence on observable behavior, aiming to "accomplish what is not entirely possible: to describe and analyze the behavior of those studied as it would occur without the observer's presence" (Whyte 1989:368-369). PAR, on the other hand, supports contemporary changes in anthropological theorizing towards "placing the anthropologist within the same frame of reference as the subjects of anthropology" and "recognizing that anthropology is part of the world it studies" (Moore 2000:19). Acknowledging that the practice of anthropology is "always an intervention" (Moore 2000:14), action researchers strive to "change themselves, support others in their own efforts to change, and together work to change institutions and society" (McTaggart 1997:34).

PAR distinguishes itself from participatory research through its criteria of praxis, or authentic and practical commitment (Fals-Borda 1987). Whereas participatory research might simply imply working with members of a community to generate knowledge that "someday somehow might be useful to society" (Whyte 1989:369), PAR visualizes more direct linkages between research and action. PAR takes to heart the

often-quoted Marxist adage: "Philosophers should not be content with just explaining the world, but should try to transform it" (Fals-Borda 1987:332). Robin McTaggart explains the difference between action research and other forms of inquiry, "the crucial difference lies in the commitment of action researchers to bring about change as a part of the research act. Fundamental to action research is the idea that the social world can only be understood by trying to change it" (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003:15).

Furthermore, commitment to collaborative change as embodied in PAR is of a long term and personal nature. This is illustrated by Freire in an anecdotal example of an educator working in rural areas of Brazil, who experienced a surprising turn of events when he was finally invited to attend the Sunday meetings of a group of peasants after months of asking and waiting for permission to do so (Freire 2006:58, emphasis mine):

> …as the meeting opened, and as he [the rural educator] was being introduced to the group, he had to listen to the following speech by the leader [of the group of peasants]… "Today we have a new member, and he's not a peasant. He's a well-read person. I talked about this with you at our last meeting, whether he could come or not." …He turned to the candidate himself, and, fixing him intently, said: "We have something very important to tell you, new friend. If you're here to teach us that we're exploited, don't bother. We know that already. What we don't know… and need to know from you… is, *if you're going to be with us when the chips are down.*" That is, they might have said, in more sophisticated terms, whether his solidarity went any further than his intellectual curiosity. Whether it went beyond the notes that he would be taking in meetings with them. *Whether he would be with them, at their side, in the hour of their repression.*

For action researchers, the research process is also an interrogation of the self, oftentimes resulting in profound and personal change (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003:14; Herr and Anderson 2005:72). Action researchers reject the "asymmetry implied in the subject/object relationship" characteristic of traditional academic research and "break up voluntarily and through experience the… relationship of submission and dependence

implicit in the subject/object binomial" (Fals-Borda 1987:332). PAR consists of an explicit ethical orientation of the researcher to the "subject" of study in that he or she facilitates individual and collective agency, advocating for peoples' *right* to direct their own lives and futures (Singer 1994).

Of course, PAR is "not merely about doing 'good,' it is also about doing things well" (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003:25). In fact, Brydon-Miller and others argue that action research can, in many ways, produce results that are more "valid" than conventional science (2003:25):

> This [increased validity in research results] is because expert knowledge and local knowledges are combined and because the interpretation of the results and the design of actions based on those results involve those best positioned to understand the processes: the local stakeholders. Further… action research projects test knowledge in action and those who do the testing are the interested parties for whom a base result is a personal problem. Action research meets the test of action, something generally not true of other forms of social research.

Fals-Borda supports this claim, pointing out that the combination of theoretical or academic knowledge and popular or experiential knowledge in PAR provides a "total scientific knowledge of a revolutionary nature" (1987:332). Whereas the traditional model of research tends to offer little or no opportunity for study participants to check facts or offer alternative interpretations and explanations, PAR provides a rigorous process of cross-checking facts (Whyte 1989). The cyclical nature of PAR methodology allows for participants to continually reevaluate, modify, adapt, and improve the research process as it is being implemented. This generates critical dialogue and deepens the understanding of the issues under study as well as the solidarity of participating stakeholders. Furthermore, advocates of PAR assert that one test of scientific value of research outcomes should be their applicability to solving practical problems. As Brydon-

27

Miller et al. state, "Conventional researchers worry about objectivity, distance, and controls. Action researchers worry about relevance, social change, and validity tested in action by the most at-risk stakeholders" (2003:25).

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

Schensul et al. describe youth participatory action research (YPAR) as a "social science and advocacy-based approach to working with young people" that incorporates elements of "positive youth development, experiential education, prevention and service learning" (2004:5). They elaborate (Schensul et al. 2004:5):

> Because it [YPAR] is inherently critical, addressing structural as well as individual and group level disparities, it is particularly suitable for working with disenfranchised or marginalized youth to assist them to gain a more central position and greater voice in shaping their own and their communities' socio-political, cultural, educational and public health futures.

In light of the problematic assumptions underscoring popular conceptions of urban youth and the limitations of dominant models of youth development, YPAR offers an alternative approach to effective youth engagement. Ginwright and Cammarota argue that the "get tough on youth" public policy discourse criminalizes young people – particularly urban youth of color – in detrimental ways, shifting the focus of attention away from the complex structural problems which create and maintain negative pressures in the lives of youth, framing youth problems instead in terms of individual and group pathologies (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002).

More specifically, Ginwright and Cammarota posit that "the limits of current youth development models are bound by an inability to examine the complex social, economic, and political forces that bear on the lives of urban youth" (Ginwright and

Cammarota 2002:82). The existing corpus of literature regarding youth development is informed heavily by psychological theories of human development originating in the 1980s and early 1990s, which place emphasis on the identification and prevention of youth problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, and violence. While a positive youth development model based on youth assets rather than youth problems gradually developed in the early 1990s, applied independently, this approach too is inhibited by a narrow socio-cultural outlook on youth experiences and lives. The emphasis that the positive youth development model places on youth capacity-building and agency runs the risk of dismissing the larger economic, social, and cultural forces that influence every day youth choices, such as racism, poverty, and unemployment (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002). Both youth deficit and asset models assume that "youth themselves should be changed, rather than the oppressive environments in which they live" (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002:85), placing social accountability upon individual and collective youth rather than upon the institutions and institutional arrangements that dominate their lives (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002).

Critics of traditional models of youth development maintain that individual agency is necessarily underpinned by existing structural inequalities; therefore, it is unreasonable to hold the individual solely accountable for the indicators that characterize at-risk populations (Cammarota 2007). In particular, Foucault (1978) describes individual agency as prescribed within dominant social structures, such as government and scientific institutions, which "administer exams not to evaluate their institutional structures but to measure the individual and understand how he or she can best adhere to the norms of society" (Cammarota 2007:88). Assumptions of academic incompetence are part and

parcel of the normalization process inherent to the standardized test-driven culture of today's educational institutions. Advocates of YPAR like Cammarota promote the importance of deconstructing assumptions regarding "at-risk" or academically "underperforming" youth, and assert the need for "curricular changes that motivate and challenge students, instead of remedial approaches that simplify the curriculum to rote learning" and focus on improving test scores (Cammarota 2007:88).

Rooted in the critical theories advocated by the works of Paulo Freire (1981; 1998) and others, PAR as an educational practice can facilitate empowerment by shifting normalized unequal distribution of power and resources (Schensul and Berg 2004:76). While critics point out that no educational practices are inherently more empowering than others and that participatory reforms only induce less subtle forms of coercion (Anderson and Grinberg 1998:329; Foucault 1977; 1982), such critiques create a closed system of oppression that precludes any possibility of resistance (Clegg 1989). PAR education can play a significant role in opening up participatory spaces in school and society by constructing systems that are able to engage in reflexivity rather than marginalize voices of resistance, as well as shift the educator to a less prescriptive and more problem posing role (Anderson and Grinberg 1998:346). In carrying out large-scale PAR studies in public institutions such as schools and prisons, Fine and Torre maintain (2004:17):

> We recognize the paradoxes of participatory research where power is always present in the socio-political theatre of the public sector, within institutional arrangements and within the praxis of social research. We nevertheless consider social research to be a tool of democratic engagement in ongoing struggles for social justice.

YPAR as a transformative educational strategy can take on many different forms. YPAR in the context of Fine and Torre's (2004) work, for example, focused on pursuing

educational justice in racially desegregated high schools characterized by persistent 'achievement gaps.' Initially, the Critical Gap project examined the 'achievement gap' in terms of the dominant explanation of this phenomenon, which holds that "students' race, ethnicity, and class predict academic engagement, motivation, connection to school, preparedness for college" (Fine and Torre 2004:22). Indeed, analysis of survey results regarding academic engagement, motivation, and achievement indicated a significant and consistent correlation between ethnicity/class/race and academic achievement. However, in working with youth researchers, an alternative explanation emerged involving the effects of 'tracking' on student outcomes. Fine and Torre explain, "tracking, or leveling, designates those well established and hard to undo structural practices by which schools organize students' differential and racialized access to rigor" (Fine and Torre 2004:22). Ultimately, YPAR served to widen the analytic lens and decenter the dominant explanation, indicating that academic track predicts student outcomes better than race/ethnicity. The study concluded that fifty odd years after Brown v. Board of Education, racially desegregated suburban high schools still "walk a precarious line between racial/ethnic/class access and re-segregation within" (Fine and Torre 2004:16).

In another case study, Cammarota (2007) not only conducted youth-led action research with participants in their high school, but carried it out as part of the school's social science curriculum. Through collaboration with two teachers at Cerro High School in Tucson, Arizona, Cammarota developed a sub-curriculum focusing on critical theory and a PAR project, which was folded into an existing Chicano studies curriculum offered at the school. Called the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), the class ran for four consecutive semesters, during which 17 Latino/a students were introduced to advanced

level material, including concepts of "hegemony," "social reproduction," "banking education," and "critical pedagogy," while simultaneously learning research methods such as participant observation, interview protocol, and visual documentation and analysis (Cammarota 2007:89). This challenging educational curriculum contextualized students' pursuit of YPAR in smaller groups, where they investigated a variety of self-selected topics ranging from issues surrounding cultural assimilation to media representations of students of color. Cammarota compellingly argues that "a social justice alternative is far more successful [at elevating educational achievement among Latinos/as] than the dominant strategy of high stakes testing and remedial education" (2007:95), at the same time suggesting that more research is needed to assess the educator's role and influence in facilitating socially relevant curricula.

Facilitating Participatory Action Research (PAR)

While recent years have witnessed an increased effort from researchers and practitioners alike to apply PAR approaches to various fields within community and international development, little has been written addressing educators about the implementation process of a curriculum in PAR methodology, its distinct challenges and benefits. This is partially due to the very nature of PAR, whose application is necessarily heavily informed by specific local realities, which tends to discourage 'cookbook' approaches to addressing any given social issue. However, PAR as an educational practice can challenge the normalized assumptions embedded in dominant epistemologies and respond to the need for innovative pedagogies and methods instruction.

The little literature that exists regarding instruction in PAR methods documents a variety of challenges unique to PAR's transformative pedagogy, including: instructor

32

capacity to facilitate mobility from one research paradigm to another, the tension between grading and modeling, limited time resources, the tension between research and action, systematic self-reflection on instructional techniques and group processes and relationships, and more (McNicoll 1999:3; Schensul and Berg 2004:84). There is a particular emphasis on instruction guided by "cooperative education instructional techniques," consisting of a constructivist approach to education, the co-construction of knowledge, and multiple perspective taking (Schensul and Berg 2004:83). The current study proposes a closer examination of these and other emergent instructional strategies and their applications at the Institute for Community Research.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The following chapter offers an overview of the research design and methodology used in identifying and analyzing the facilitation techniques and implementation processes involved in carrying out PAR projects, particularly in the context of collaborating with co-facilitators and working with youth. Beginning with an outline of the research focus, the chapter describes the investigation's data collection methods and their contributions, providing justification for their use. The subsequent section identifies participant inclusion criteria and recruitment strategies, recognizing the limitations of this study. The chapter concludes with a report on the investigation's approach to data analysis and a discussion of the ethical considerations salient to the present research, with special attention placed on issues regarding informed consent, participant anonymity and confidentiality.

Research Objectives

The original objectives of this research study were to identify and analyze instructional strategies used by participatory action research (PAR) adult and youth facilitators at the Institute for Community Research (Hartford, CT) and situate them ethnographically in the particular experiences of teaching PAR methods. Based upon this research, the goal then was to provide teaching guidelines and advice for PAR educators, especially classroom teachers, which is elsewhere lacking. During the actual research and

data analysis process, these objectives shifted as I became increasingly aware of the deeply dialogical nature of PAR, which prompted a reappraisal and critical reframing of the given question. The principal research question motivating the study was reframed from "How do facilitators inform the PAR process?" to include "How does PAR inform facilitation strategies?" According to Fine and Torre, this critical reframing of the research question is consistent with the PAR process, where "PAR insists that researchers… contextualize and fracture the 'common sense' story" (2004:20) and provokes them to "strategically widen" (2004:21) the analytic lens of social research.

The overarching purpose of this study is to address the theory-practice gap of PAR literature, which offers only a limited number of case study analyses of the facilitation and implementation process of PAR projects. In light of Ortner's critique of many studies of resistance for "their 'ethnographic refusal' – that is, for 'thinning' culture, sanitizing local politics, and 'dissolving' subjects by neglecting the wider ethnographic context in which resistance occurs" (Constable 2007:151), the present investigation also aims to provide a "thicker" sense of the ethnographic context in which PAR facilitation takes place.

Specifically, I was interested in analyzing how Youth-PAR (YPAR) was developed by the Institute for Community Research (ICR) and implemented at the Summer Youth Research Institute (SYRI), a six-week program which engages Hartford area teenagers in YPAR for social change. Consistent with the expressed desires of my internship supervisor, Marlene Berg, Associate Director of Training at ICR, I participated as an intern and PAR facilitator at the SYRI during the summer of 2008. My unique positionality as both outside researcher and PAR facilitator was intended to provide an

alternative grounded perspective on the teaching experiences surrounding implementation of a PAR curriculum.

The investigation's objectives are consistent with the general goals of applied anthropology, which attempts to resolve or redefine the means to the solution of contemporary human problems by employing a holistic approach and generating socio-culturally sensitive policy recommendations and action. PAR is intrinsically action-oriented and anthropological in that it seeks socially diverse perspectives in approaching a problem. In addition, the present research contributes to applied anthropology's urgent pedagogical need to provide more methods instruction (Price 2000:55; Schensul and Berg 2004).

Data Collection

The present study took the form of individual research carried out within the structure of the larger SYRI Youth-PAR program for which I participated as an intern and member of a team of PAR facilitators. My internship with ICR spanned the length of nine weeks, beginning on June 6, 2008 and ending on the last day of the SYRI program, August 8, 2008. I arrived in Hartford, CT two weeks prior to the official start date of the internship, during which I took a first tour of the facilities at ICR, met with staff working on a variety of projects – some with youth, some not – attended ICR functions, and began the data collection process.

Data collection methods consisted of (1) participant and unobtrusive observation, (2) formal and informal interviews, and (3) archival research. Participant and unobtrusive observation was conducted to investigate the implementation process of the SYRI PAR curriculum. Formal interviews and informal interviews in the form of conversations with

PAR facilitators at ICR and SYRI were carried out to collect ethnographic data on experiences surrounding the facilitation, implementation, and evaluation of PAR. Archival data examined the philosophies and histories that inform PAR practices and curriculum development at ICR today.

Archival Research

Data collection largely occurred in two stages. The first stage involved archival research related to the design and implementation process of past and current YPAR projects at the Institute for Community Research. Memos, statistical data, policy guides, external regulations, grant proposals, publications, periodical sources, and other material documenting ICR's history were identified and analyzed to the extent to which they were accessible. Of special interest was the design and implementation process of ICR's *Participatory Action Research Curriculum for Empowering Youth* (Sydlo et al. 2000). Additionally, documents of multiple forms and sources were triangulated for data accuracy (LeCompte and Schensul 1999:131).

Participant and Unobtrusive Observation

The second stage consisted of data collection through the daily routines of work. Since the research role was carried out as part of the larger YPAR program at the Summer Youth Research Institute, and in light of the unique "insider" researcher position, the routines carried out by the researcher as YPAR facilitator were systematized to become part of data gathering. An autobiographic account of teaching as reflexive practice, separate from other field notes, was explored for its data generating properties (Anderson and Herr 2005:79). This was carried out throughout the duration of the SYRI program as well as during the directed preparation of curricular activities and materials

by facilitators at ICR before the program.

Interviews

Furthermore, an ethnographic study of the instructional strategies, applications, experiences and reflections involved in teaching PAR methods was conducted with staff members at ICR who currently or in the past have worked as or collaborated closely with PAR facilitators in the SYRI program. In addition to participant and unobtrusive observation, this involved individual informal and formal audio-recorded interviews, where interviewees were encouraged to speak freely at their own pace and use their own terms. While research consisted of an iterative cycle of data gathering and identifying domains and questions, the preliminary focus consisted of the following (for complete interview protocol, refer to Appendix A):

1. Instructional methods or strategies used in teaching PAR methods

2. How the Action Research curriculum is applied at SYRI

3. How PAR facilitators negotiate relationships of power between youth and themselves as well as between co-facilitators

4. Theoretical approaches that are used in implementing PAR and how they are applied

5. The strengths and weaknesses of a PAR curriculum

These methods reflect a holistic approach to the research problem characteristic of research in applied anthropology, which privileges "on the ground" perspectives, prefers ethnography, and engages in project implementation or policy intervention objectives that both inform practice as well as theory.

Sampling/Inclusion Criteria

38

My original research proposal called for formal and informal interviews with 30

participants, including past and current as well as both adult and youth PAR facilitators at

the YARI and the SYRI. The number of participants was chosen largely on the basis that

it constitutes a statistically adequate sample size. However, once in the field, it became

apparent to me that time restrictions and limited accessibility to former SYRI facilitators

rendered such sample size very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Ultimately, I relied

on personal networks and snowball sampling to conduct formal and/or informal

interviews with a total of 13 participants, where I concluded each interview by asking

participants to recommend others who might offer valuable contributions to the study.

These contacts were especially helpful in locating past SYRI facilitators, two (2) with

whom I conducted interviews. Among the other participants, six (6) comprised the

current team of SYRI facilitators in its entirety, one (1) was the principal statistical

analyst in a past project evaluating the Youth Action Research and Prevention Program

(YARP) program assessments, three (3) were current SYRI youth researchers – of which

two were senior youth – and one (1) was the founding director of the Institute for

Community Research. While the sample population's limitations in terms of both size

and representation mean research conclusions are not generalizable, it is sufficient for the

purposes of this study, which aims to provide a rich qualitative understanding of

experiences surrounding the facilitation and implementation of PAR projects.

Data Analysis

Formal interviews were transcribed during August and September 2008,

generating a total of 90 pages of transcript. These data, in addition to archival data and

over 30 pages of field notes – including both informal interviews, observational and autobiographical data – were coded and analyzed from October 2008 through February 2009 using an inductive approach. Whereas deductive data analysis begins with the researcher's hypothesis, which is tested by the data for fit, an inductive approach to data analysis consists of identifying emergent themes and organizing data around these themes (LeCompte and Schensul 1999). The dominant themes that were elicited from the data are presented and used to guide the discussion in the subsequent chapter.

Ethical Considerations

Guidelines for research put forth by the American Anthropological Association (AAA), the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) were followed carefully to ensure the safety of study participants and confidentiality of the research. Informed consent is crucial to avoid coercion in the research process. Upon arrival at ICR, I requested permission from my internship supervisor and other staff as necessary to arrange for a public introduction of myself and the purpose and nature of my research. I explained clearly that participation in the research is on a voluntary basis and that any individual may refuse or discontinue participation in the study at any time. Individuals were presented with informed consent forms (refer to Appendix B) at the time of formal interview; key informants were presented with these same forms as they were identified.

Because the present study worked with youth under the age of 18, which the IRB identifies as a vulnerable population, special precautions were taken to assure their protection and privacy. Where the adolescent was not emancipated from his or her parents, parental consent was obtained through the same procedure described above. I

explained the content of the consent form – and offered to do so on a sentence by sentence basis – and asked whether the content and purpose of the form were clearly understood before asking for assent. In addition, permission from ICR staff was requested before any minor was approached for interview.

While participatory action research is by nature a collaborative endeavor, theses are typically produced individually. Issues of knowledge ownership can emerge where individual research draws upon collective work. With much of action research, this issue of who owns the data is an ongoing conversation as the research evolves (Herr and Anderson 2005:74). A clear initial agreement and ongoing negotiations were established with ICR staff members regarding the use of data and its dissemination in the form of a thesis, as well as possible subsequent publication. An upfront, clear working agreement and relationships were initiated early on in the research process.

During the writing sequence of this process, I also confronted issues of confidentiality and anonymity, which Fine and Torre describe as a "simple, yet profound, ethical bump" (2004:27) that researchers consistently face within institution-based PAR. Truthfully, I did not fully anticipate *a priori* the gravity of the potential ethical challenge posed by questions of confidentiality and anonymity in working with members of a relatively small institution. In entering the field, I expected a larger number of facilitators to be working in conjunction with the SYRI program, and assumed – naively – that this would provide adequate anonymity, protecting the identity of informants. Not only was the actual pool of informants very limited, but as Fine and Torre point out, "the task… is not as straightforward as altering the names and the demographics, because everyone in an institution knows everyone else… We [the researchers] could change the names so

that no one outside the institution would know, but most within the institution [know] the players well" (2004:27). In negotiating the ethics of local visibility, I followed the recommendation of Fine and Torre to "build in ways to anticipate varied responses to work; to avoid the misinterpretation of empirical materials; [and] to prevent the misuse of findings" (2004:27) by keeping in touch with my internship supervisor, Marlene Berg, in finalizing the thesis manuscript.

For future collaborative research endeavors, I would also suggest exploring "appreciative inquiry" as an approach to the process of writing up for action research projects. Matsaert and her colleagues, who examined the potential benefits of appreciative inquiry in an action research project in Bangladesh, report that shifting from a critical to more appreciative stance in their research analysis did not lessen its rigor but helped to present information in a "more constructive way which is conducive to partnerships and action" (Matsaert et al. 2007:1). They advise to "keep the text a 'work in progress' for as long as possible, using this time to share and revise it with others and to build consensus before publication" (Matsaert et al. 2007:1). While not entirely appropriate in the context of writing a thesis, where the time frame is typically limited, the approach merits serious future consideration.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

As indicated in the preceding chapter, the overall focus of the present study shifted during the iterative research process of fieldwork from an explicit focus on the identification and analysis of PAR facilitation strategies as they are applied at the SYRI to include a broader examination of facilitator experiences with and understandings of PAR and how facilitator attitudes and positionalities affect the overall implementation of PAR processes. The purpose of the research to provide educational guidelines for facilitating PAR projects, however, remains unchanged. In the following sections, I approach the presentation and discussion of data by organizing findings in three separate parts, examining the multiple perspectives and levels of PAR at the SYRI. The first two sections offer a contextual framework of the (1) SYRI 2008 program and an understanding of the (2) plural perspectives of its diverse actors. This serves as a reference for the concluding section, which focuses more explicitly on the role of the facilitator in implementing PAR, and provides a closer examination of (3) facilitator positionality and its bearing on program implementation.

SYRI 2008

During the summer of 2008, 30 youth participants, assisted variously by 6 staff members, collectively identified and examined the issue of personal abuse and group violence (PGA) among youth in the local urban Hartford area. The study consisted of the

three primary data collection methods: survey, photovoice, and interview/pile sorting. The purpose of the study was to identify the relationship between PGA and the key factors that youth participants collectively hypothesized as contributors to PGA – peer pressure, critical life events, and negative emotions – to inform an action agenda addressing PGA among Hartford youth.

The SYRI is primarily funded through grant monies procured by ICR staff. One of the principal funding agencies for the SYRI in 2008 was Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), a regional Workforce Investment Board serving North Central Connecticut. CWP was established under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to coordinate federal job training programs (Morgan et al. 2004:204). In particular, its Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP), which provided ICR the financial means to hire youth as action researchers at the SYRI, subsidizes teen work experiences with the aim of future workforce development (CWP 2008). Staff and intern salaries came from the Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), while ICR absorbed the project overhead itself.

Youth participants of the SYRI were recruited through CWP's Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program, where CWP disseminated application information and materials to various Hartford high schools, whose guidance offices were then responsible for notifying students of the summer employment opportunity. The application process consisted of providing a series of documents, including a formal picture ID, a copy of the youth applicant's report card, and forms that must be completed by parents or legal guardians. Typically, the high school students who applied were encouraged to do so by their school guidance counselors. Once the application was

submitted, youth were assigned a summer work position through the CWP "lottery" system or placed on a waiting list.

Initially, ICR received a working roster of approximately 50 youth selected by CWP as possible program participants. In composing the final participant roster, SYRI staff sought an even distribution of sexes, ethnicities, residential representation, and age groups. Ultimately, a total of 30 youth researchers were hired for the summer, including four Senior Youth Researchers selected from among the previous summer's cohort. Youth consisted of high school students ages 14-16 from high-risk neighborhoods in the city of Hartford and were predominantly African American and Latino with a Puerto Rican majority. For many SYRI youth, their employment with ICR was their first work experience.

The 2008 SYRI program was led by a team of facilitators comprised of three permanent ICR staff members and three graduate student interns who were recruited for the summer, including myself. The interns were all female and consisted of Julie[2], a Caucasian doctoral student in child psychology with experience in visual research methods, Lauren, an African American doctoral student in communications studies, and myself, an Asian American MA student in applied anthropology with interests in participatory research and community development. Although none of us was originally from Connecticut, all of us had recent long term living experience in the New England area, and two of us, myself included, found housing in Hartford for the duration of the summer internship.

Among the three permanent ICR staff members, Marcie played a chiefly

---

2 Throughout this thesis, pseudonyms are used to maintain informants' anonymity.

45

administrative role, where she hired the program's summer interns, exposed us to the objectives, philosophies, and practices of the SYRI, and directed the overall curricular planning and preparations for the program. As one of the founding members of the SYRI and YARI programs, she possessed the most experience in all aspects of the SYRI, which she willingly shared with other program facilitators. She split her time between the SYRI program and other ICR projects and activities, and supported, advised, and directed staff where needed.

James, another permanent ICR staff member, also played a particularly integral role in the success of the SYRI. Excluding Marcie, he was the only other staff member among the 2008 team of facilitators who had any significant previous experience with the SYRI. After leaving his career in corporate America and finding his place in the community as a poet and spoken word artist, he was "discovered" by the YARI/SYRI director at that time at a community event and invited to perform at ICR for their youth researchers. He accepted, and was eventually asked to stay on permanently as a program facilitator. Since then, he has co-facilitated the YARI and SYRI programs for over 6 years.

In the beginning of June 2008, Carmen, the program director of both the YARI and SYRI, left her position after exactly 7 years of serving ICR and Hartford youth and communities through YPAR. She was replaced by Mayra, another strong Puerto Rican female personality and a longtime community activist who has, intermittently, enjoyed a working relationship with ICR spanning 12 years. Because of the rather short notice of the employment opportunity, Mayra shouldered work responsibilities at both her former workplace and ICR during the three weeks of preparations preceding the SYRI program

commencement date, working both jobs part-time. While it would be difficult, if not impossible, to define a "typical" summer at the SYRI, these conditions and personnel changes have undoubtedly impacted the SYRI experience in 2008.

Plural Perspectives

Research findings indicate a multiplicity of perspectives regarding PAR facilitation and program implementation among the immediate actors, or stakeholders, who affect or are affected by the Summer Youth Research Institute. These distinct understandings of YPAR as it occurs at SYRI are, in certain ways, conflicting, and place the program under multiple tensions and pressures. The following section offers an analytic breakdown of the diverse views that inform SYRI as a site of ongoing negotiation for individual and collective agency, power, and change.

The "Official" SYRI Program View

ICR envisions PAR as involving a "transformative approach to anthropology… [that] fosters critical thought and produces viable research skills that are transferable to other community social problems" (Schensul and Berg 2004:84). In particular, the YPAR process is described as: transformative, participatory, science-based, discipline-connected, and ethnographic (Schensul and Berg 2004:79). Emphasis is placed on instruction guided by "cooperative education instructional techniques," consisting of a constructivist approach to education, the co-construction of knowledge, and multiple perspective taking" (Schensul and Berg 2004:83).

Furthermore, program administrators describe the SYRI as an "intervention program" for at-risk youth. As mentioned in an earlier chapter (Brase et al. 2004:16, emphasis mine):

47

> The basic theoretical framework of ICR's model is that PAR will benefit youth with respect to their self-concept, life-skill attainment, and community awareness, which in turn will *improve their educational attachment/attainment and reduce risk among engaged youth.*

In an informal interview preceding the commencement of the SYRI 2008 program, Marcie corroborated this statement, indicating that SYRI is an intervention program in the sense that it has impacted school dropout rates in a positive manner. She further explained that because high school dropout rates are so high in Hartford, simply motivating students to stay in school is an accomplishment, or "first step."

This notion of the SYRI as offering a "first step" in positive youth development and self-empowerment is echoed by another program administrator, who, in describing critical consciousness as a program goal, stated:

> Another way to think of it [critical consciousness], in terms of where *these* youth are, is… help enabling them to look – some people might frame it in terms of social capital – to how they can move the resources and connections and capital that they have in order to achieve goals… Personal goals first, and then maybe social goals, or where those two interface.

She also pointed out in the same interview that, while action agendas and other output from the SYRI and YARI programs at ICR are not necessarily successful in generating structural change addressing large-scale inequalities, they can create dialogue through which solutions are achieved. She commented that she dislikes taking a "structural, critical sort of [PAR] approach… for youth, because it *can* be disempowering." Rather, the focus of YPAR at the SYRI is "on a much smaller scale," where youth are encouraged to identify and address one or two of the structural factors that contribute to larger issues of structural violence. She reiterates:

> *With* that [YPAR approach to action], the youth – what happens to youth is that they *gain* a sense of empowerment, they gain a sense of collective

identity, they gain a sense that they *can* bring about change, *and* they change their attitudes and remove themselves to some degree from risk behavior.

Funding Organization Perspective

In contrast to the institutionalized views of the SYRI expressed by program administrators, who framed it in terms of an education and intervention program that empowers youth as agents of change through YPAR, the principal funding organization for the SYRI 2008, Capital Workforce Partners, prioritizes the goal of future workforce development at the SYRI. In fact, at the mandatory CWP "CAMP Youth Development Practitioner Academy" two-day orientation session regarding the CWP "career competency system" that the three interns – Julie, Lauren, and I – attended, a CWP representative and workshop facilitator explicitly stated:

> A lot of programs [participating in CWP's Summer Youth Learning and Employment Program] see us [CWP] as a violence prevention program, but it's not. It's [*sic*] train the future work force.

Using powerpoint slides, the same representative explained in detail the "school-to-career strategy," which consists of helping youth build the "basic skills needed for career competency," or, in other words, the "basic skills that kids need to get an entry level job." The first content slide of his powerpoint presentation clarified CWP's view of participating summer youth programs (emphasis mine):

> *CWP Career Competencies are used as the foundation for all programming:* Basic Skills, Customer Service, Computer Literacy, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Interpersonal Communications, Personal Qualities, Job Seeking Skills

Furthermore, in response to a question posed anonymously by one of the orientation participants implicitly criticizing CWP's emphasis on a school to career trajectory for youth rather than college preparation, the representative firmly stated: "You don't *have* to

go to college, but everyone's got to work."

During one of our first SYRI staff meetings, both Marcie and James expressed

frustration with the demands of CWP, which holds the SYRI accountable for prioritizing

workforce development and, to this end, administering youth a plethora of self-

assessment tests, surveys, and other forms:

1. CASAS appraisal
2. Personal Development Profile #1
3. CASAS pre-test
4. Competency Learning Plan #1
5. Personal Learning & Career Plan
6. Personal Development Profile #2
7. Competency Learning Plan #2
8. Dream/Present Resume Building

These programmatic requirements that the SYRI must meet in order to receive funding

from CWP demand a significant time commitment, particularly considering the SYRI

program's limited 6 week time frame. James pointed out that many of these required

program components overlap in their evaluations, thus being redundant and unnecessary.

Marcie commented that she tried to talk her way out of some of the newer requirements

without success.

In many ways, the SYRI is a tremendous balancing act between the priorities and

demands set forth by the funding organization and the SYRI's desire to provide income

to youth researchers. According to Marcie, CWP is unique in its providing support for

youth to train to become researchers at ICR, whereas most youth program funding does

not provide the financial resources to offer salaries to youth. However, the relationship

between CWP and the SYRI has been strained by CWP's push for a school to career

trajectory, which Marcie qualifies as targeting youth who are particularly not doing well

in school.

The SYRI represents a space for resistance; the program aims to provide an educational setting that allows for youth input in ways traditional school settings do not. At the same time, by being too accommodating of the funding organization's perspectives and goals, the SYRI has the potential for reproducing structural violence, participating in what Marcie describes as a "tracking system" channeling at-risk youth towards unskilled labor markets. Marcie comments, "We *want* to continue with the [SYRI] program, but the more it becomes *their* [CWP's] program than *our* program, the more complicated it seems to be becoming."

Marcie explains that CWP's curricular demands dramatically increased beginning with the 2007-2008 school year's Youth Action Research Institute (YARI) program, up to which point "they basically funded programs," and "they didn't have any of these demands." Since the onset of newly required assessments and other curricular materials, ICR has made an active effort to incorporate program requisites in a way that maximizes their relevance to the core PAR curriculum and, in turn, participant benefits. In light of the ongoing efforts of Marcie and other PAR scholars to integrate participatory action research and/or experiential learning components into the core curricula of public schools, Marcie described the constructive integration of CWP programmatic requisites and the core PAR curriculum as "very much feasible" during the school year. She notes some of the positive potential of CWP's required assessments:

> …and at the end of the school year, when we actually did it [the CASAS test required by CWP] the second time, when I was actually able to look at some of the results and see what the youth weren't able to do? So some things [items on the CASAS post-test] I really objected to. Like net growth, that was crap. But… I could also see that certain youth who really were smart couldn't calculate percentages. So how can you… when you're actually doing data analysis, begin to introduce in a way that is more interesting, those kinds of skills? And then, in terms of

51

explication, how do you explicate so that they're able to learn those skills and generalize them to other situations, including school situation? …So, you know, there are parts of it I don't object to.

However, she adds that the effective integration of curricula is challenging without the aid of staff trained in curriculum development. She also elaborates that, while the flexibility of the time frame of the school year might allow for better integration of the CWP and YARI curricular components, she "objects to doing all [any] of it" during the intense 6-week time frame of the summer program. In fact, during the 2008 SYRI program, staff cut out a portion of group building and self-identity activities as well as a session linking participatory research to action agendas in order to accommodate the burgeoning curricular demands made on the program by CWP.

Youth Participant Views

The PAR process and program implementation were further complicated by youth participant perspectives, which included perceiving SYRI as: an opportunity for professional and career development, an extension of school, a source of income, a safe space, an inclusive social network, and/or a place to build individual skills and capacities and explore social change. Most youth who accepted the summer youth researcher position at ICR had never heard of the organization before, were not necessarily invested in community activism or research, and were not entirely aware of what being a youth action researcher would entail. This is indicated, for example, by the following dialogue excerpt with a youth participant:

> Aki: So… what brought you to ICR? Like, how did you hear about it, and…?
> Youth: I just signed up for the Capital Workforce Program, and… they just placed me here, really, to be honest.
> A: Did you know anything about this place [ICR] before?
> Y: No. Not at all.

52

A: Ok… and did you know that you were getting into research, or…?
Y: No.
A: You were just placed.
Y: Yeah.

Another youth responded to the same question, saying: "ICR… I heard about it through school. Not ICR, but a summer work program. I figured it was a good way to make money over the summer. I signed up." These responses suggest that youth at the SYRI viewed their participation in the program as a summer job and were driven by monetary incentives. They valued workplace responsibilities and financial compensation. Moreover, these attitudes are not unique to the 2008 summer program, as one administrator notes:

> The summer work… *always,* always we have recruited youth who want to work and don't have any sense of what they're getting into. We've tried to recruit kids who might have an interest, but kids, for the most part, are not activists.

In addition, youth participants often conceived of "work" differently than what fell within the parameters of their job as youth researchers at the SYRI. Youth who participated in the SYRI conveyed their work preference as being in the "Health & Human Services" industry in their initial application to CWP. While CWP assigned this category as appropriate to work done by the ICR, many youth – at least initially – were frustrated with program activities, which belied their expectations of work in their focus on introducing social science education and building individual and group identity to facilitate the PAR process. During this time, one youth wrote in her daily reflection journal entry, "Where is the job?" In a formal interview at the conclusion of the program, another senior youth participant reflected:

> Aki: …What's something that you want to take away [out] from the program?

53

> Youth: Um… I'd like to take away… a lot from the program. Most of the
> youth in the program, they… since it's the summer, they're glad to be out
> of school. What I hear is, this is more… like, school activity-like. …It's
> more school-based, more than job-based.
> A: Yeah… yeah.
> Y: So… that's what I'd take away. Somehow, the school feeling.

Administrators at the SYRI recognize that these youth attitudes towards employment at
the SYRI are a recurring issue for the program, which espouses the objectives of
education and prevention under the umbrella of summer youth employment. However, as
Marcie pointed out, the SYRI offers youth the opportunity to learn that social science
research is legitimate and valuable work, as they are exposed to role models who are
employed researchers at the ICR, as well as through direct experience of the potential
power and social relevance of YPAR in their lives.

Alternatively, some of the same youth who were initially drawn to the SYRI in
search of summer employment indicated that the SYRI also represented a safe, inclusive
social space for youth participants. When asked what he enjoyed most about being at
ICR, a senior youth responded: "I'd say one of the main things that I enjoyed was… just,
um, chillin' with the staff. [They're] my friend… and James' been my friend for awhile,
and getting to know new staff. So it's been a good experience." The same youth, asked
what he felt was most important to him about ICR's YPAR program, stated:

> Just the people that I've met, and that I've gotten close to. I'd like to still
> talk to them, and say, you know, how ya doin'? How was your day? Even
> though we're not [working here anymore]? Still want to be friends, stuff
> like that.

Another senior youth indicated in a formal interview that he still communicates on a
regular basis with Carmen, the previous SYRI/YARI program director, who until recently
served as one of the principal facilitators for both programs. This is confirmed by

Carmen, who, in conversations and email correspondence during SYRI 2008, has

mentioned her ongoing relationship with senior youth, who continue to call and/or text

her about their progress and experiences at ICR.

Youth also expressed their experience at the SYRI as significant in terms of

building individual skills and capacities. In a formal interview, I asked one youth to

describe something that she considered most meaningful to her in the SYRI program. The

youth, who had worked with Marcie, Mayra, and me in the survey data collection group

during the latter half of the program, and was ultimately one of the few youth who grew

comfortable enough with the SPSS program to learn how to run basic statistical tests and

understand the significance of their results, responded:

> I guess learning about the different computer programs, the SPSS
> program, 'cause I know that I'm probably going to be using that like in
> college and stuff. I guess it's going to help me, because I'm going to
> know how to use it. A little bit, beforehand. That can help. And also with
> like… I'm not good with public speaking. I don't like that; I don't like
> presenting, so I guess, um, the Final Presentation. And when we were
> data collecting, that can help with… yeah, with me being more
> comfortable with that [public speaking].

A senior youth also responded in terms of increased self-awareness and sense of social

responsibility and professionalism:

> …when I first studied here [at ICR]… how do I put this. I was a little bit
> of a… jerk. So… I guess I had to learn, like, how to… speak,
> appropriately, at the right time. Like, sometimes I can't talk when it's not
> the right time, or I have to do work; I can't just joke around. And, like,
> that's what helps me when I have… when I had, because I already have a
> job, but it's somethin' that helps me. So when I go to work, I… I'm
> already experiencing it. So I wouldn't go in there talkin' like I would,
> with my friends.

He adds:

> And… my parents have noticed it, that I've matured. And so have my
> friends. Uh… my friends are all comedians, they all like to joke around.

> And yeah, I love chillin' with them. But they don't understand that sometimes… you just can't do that, all the time. So, sometimes, you know… I'm kinda the party pooper, but… hey, I go to work, you know.

These opinions and experiential accounts offered by youth suggest that the SYRI provides a safe space for youth to explore and build on individual skills and work capacities, while also allowing them to critically reflect on and address the issues that they consider important in their lives.

Of course, youth also collectively identified personal abuse (i.e., cutting) and group violence (i.e., gang violence) as an important issue currently facing Hartford youth that they felt could and should be addressed. Personal and group abuse was selected as the final research topic for the summer vis-à-vis an intensive day-long affair involving an exhibit displaying photo essays by each youth regarding a community or youth-related issue they felt was important to address and youth peer evaluations of each photo essay, followed by a series of debates in small and large groups in which youth eliminated certain topics while negotiated support for others.

In the first round of debates that took place in Mayra, Maisha, and my House group, one senior youth passionately reasoned for her peers to select gang violence as the final research topic, repeatedly arguing that the criterion of researchability and the impact that they themselves as Hartford youth can make on the issue should be employed in selecting the final topic. Another youth was so adamant about advocating for his individual photo essay topic regarding environmental concerns in Hartford neighborhoods that he continued to argue – alone – for the need to address this issue into the final debate of the day, even while all his peers integrated into one or the other of the two remaining competing topic groups.

Although the SYRI addresses issues central to the lives of youth, the program's limited time frame does not allow for its curriculum to explicitly address at any significant depth the development of an action agenda regarding the summer's research topic based on data analyses and results. Rather, the action phase of the PAR project is largely carried out in the YARI program, which takes place during the school year. However, youth directly engaged in questioning common social forms of oppression and reflecting on ways of creating social change in a number of the identity building exercises at the beginning of the program, including those dealing with stereotypes and essentialized gender differences. A field diary excerpt illustrates youths' deconstruction of social stereotypes:

> At the end of the debriefing of the Where the Wild Wind Blows Extension [the previous activity], Lila gave an example of how not all Americans are the same by comparing black neighborhoods in Hartford versus Puerto Rican neighborhoods. She characterized black neighbors as always hating on each other, whereas Puerto Rican neighbors might fight one day but be best friends the next. Cristina and Gaby responded that this was not true. Cristina described how such behavior might be true for some Puerto Ricans but not others, giving her family as an example. She and her mother would not be friendly with any Puerto Rican neighbor who disrespected them the day before. She went on to say that many Puerto Ricans would consider such behavior to be hypocritical. Gaby also dispelled Lila's assumption that all Puerto Ricans like gold jewelry, saying that not all Puerto Ricans, herself included, wear gold jewelry.

> This discussion led into the Stereotype Web activity, where I asked all youth to write down the ways in which they have been stereotyped on an index card and, in turn, report back to the group. Cristina was the first and most eager to volunteer her story, which was about how she has been stereotyped in different ways by her being a teen mother. The youth disclosed many personal stories, and I had the chance to disclose my own experiences with stereotypes as well.

This particular activity concluded with a discussion regarding how to take action against stereotyping, where youth filled out a handout about how they might make the SYRI a

safe and comfortable space for their youth co-workers, then discussed their responses

with peers. It is evident from the level of engagement that youth demonstrated and the

personal nature of the discussion that ensued that youth at the SYRI do – at least to some

extent – perceive the SYRI as a possible space for exploring social change.

Facilitator Positionality

PAR facilitation at the SYRI takes place within a context of wide-ranging

perspectives and through the collaboration of diverse stakeholders. Brydon-Miller et al.

aptly note that the ability to find – or at least functionally cope with – the "beauty of

chaos" is a fundamental characteristic of participatory action researchers, who are

typically "able to handle a certain degree of chaos, uncertainty and messiness" (2003:21).

They explain (Brydon-Miller 2003:21):

> Russell Ackoff's (1999) term 'messes' sums up one of the ways a great
> many action researchers differ from their conventional social science
> colleagues. Messes are complex, multi-dimensional, intractable, dynamic
> problems that can only be partially addressed and partially resolved. Yet
> most action researchers have disciplined themselves to believe that
> messes can be attractive and even exciting. We try not to avoid messy
> situations despite knowing that we do not always have the 'magic bullet'
> because we believe that, together with legitimate community
> stakeholders, we can do something to improve the situation.

Of course, the "we" of action researchers referred to by Brydon-Miller and his colleagues

can also be "messy." Contrary to what Brydon-Miller et al. seem to implicitly suggest,

PAR facilitators, like their co-constituents of the PAR process, represent diverse

backgrounds and perspectives. PAR facilitators at the SYRI are no exception; they

negotiate their postionality in terms of their own beliefs and ideologies, understandings

of PAR, practical commitments to youth development and engagement, and relationships

of power.

The wide range of staff experiences and attitudes towards research, PAR, youth

engagement and collaborative work existent at the SYRI is due in part to ICR's staff

recruitment strategy, which espouses an explicit commitment to diversity. Staff at the

SYRI serve as role models and mentors for youth, and a conduit for understanding and

"[bridging] cultural gaps, and [reinforcing] and [expanding] notions of identity" (Berg et

al. 2004:6). This emphasis on staff diversity is consistent with the basic theoretical

premises of PAR at ICR, which recognize the introduction of new knowledge and ideas

as pivotal to the realization of reform or transformational change within social systems

(Schensul et al. in press; n.d.). Marcie explained in one interview:

> You know, when people talk about empowerment, the idea is that, you
> know, we're going to talk about empowerment, so it's going to be totally
> about what people say, and that's empowerment. That's not
> empowerment. If you don't introduce new information, new knowledge,
> then it's… it's not totally. But the question is the where and how, in
> terms of moving it [the empowerment process] and backing off to give
> others space to move it.

This stance is further supported by other PAR scholars such as Fine and Torre, who

"purposely created research collectives where varied perspectives could be aired,

challenged, and thoughtfully discussed – without the implementation of 'making nice' or

reaching unanimous agreement" in their PAR endeavors in public schools and state

prisons (Fine and Torre 2004:20).

At ICR, past SYRI facilitators – both core staff and interns – have variously come

from anthropology, public health, sociology, psychology, social work, community

organizing, urban planning, business, communications, and women's studies (Berg et al.

2004:6). As mentioned previously, for example, core staff members of the SYRI 2008

program were variously involved in anthropology, urban planning, business, and

59

community organizing, while staff interns who co-facilitated the program were graduate students in applied anthropology, child psychology, and communication studies. In describing SYRI staffing in previous years, Berg et al. further elaborate: "Some had PhDs and years of experience. Others had less formal education but more experience in youth development and a desire to use research for change" (2004:6).

Importantly, differences in academic background and standing among facilitators can also mean varying levels of internalized norms and values regarding social capital and hierarchical knowledge structures (Bourdieu 1982; Foucault 1961). A program administrator explains:

> …Often, you know, the PhD is a *huge* problem… I mean, the PhD is a valuable degree, but it's an elitist degree no matter what, so overcoming [that for] those people with PhDs is very difficult. For [one particular adult PAR facilitator], it wasn't, but for people who aren't politicized… to see the degree as privilege is, um… So you really have to toss it. Out the door. And people who don't do that don't like it here [at ICR] much.

Aside from a possibly internalized sense of elitism, facilitators may also varyingly struggle with an ingrained sense of competitiveness or individualistic notions of success, values normalized in academia and, in many ways, dominant US culture. Because PAR projects depend on the "constant re-equilibration of power and resources" and "balanced collaboration… based on mediating privilege" (Schensul et al. in press; n.d.), facilitators must consciously and intentionally curb competitive urges to work effectively with co-facilitators and PAR participants. The following field diary excerpt illustrates this need (emphasis added):

> One of today's lows happened during the morning, when I discussed with Marcie what the agendas for the next few days should look like, and Marcie basically declared that my youth were "nowhere near done" with their survey questions, and that they would have to spend at least another day putting the rest of their questions together. I was discouraged and

frustrated, as I knew it would be difficult to prevent youth from becoming so discouraged by the repeated cycles of revision and creation as to stop engaging in the process of survey-making. I was also stressed out as I could not see where to fit another entire day of working on questions into the tightly knit survey calendar. When Julie stopped to read and critique the questions that my youth had produced in their initial round of question construction by domain group which were posted in Mayra's House, I snapped at her for criticizing the youth's questions. *I realize now that, like in the Houses, I am prone to comparing myself and "my" Method and youth to the other Methods and youth, and that I need to learn to step back, to take things much less personally, and to take a critical look at my Method in its own context instead of in comparison to other Methods.* No use in comparing apples to oranges.

Additionally, PAR co-facilitators at the SYRI are intentionally arranged in diversifying team configurations to offer youth participants exposure to a wider variety of leadership styles and instructional techniques. This is indicated in the following field diary excerpt describing a staff meeting preceding the start date of the SYRI 2008 program:

> …Marcie wanted to intentionally place staff in Houses so that different staff would be working with each other in Houses and Methods, meaning youth would be exposed to different kinds of role modeling, leadership, and personalities. Consequently, I was put in Mayra's House with Lauren… Julie was placed with James in the [other] House…

Key facilitators for each Method group were chosen earlier in the same meeting based on individual research capacities and through group negotiations. Staff configurations in Houses were largely arranged to counterbalance the staff arrangements in Methods so that youth who initially participated as a member in one House would not proceed to work with the same staff members during data collection in Method groups.

Clearly, staff members at the SYRI do not merely facilitate the "messy" process of PAR, but actively contribute to the "mess." Abu-Lughod (1993) argues that social science researchers are not simply "outsiders" external to the research context, but are

61

characterized by individual standpoint and relationship to the social phenomenon and actors under study. She states: "The outsider self never simply stands outside; he or she always stands in a definite relation with the 'other' of the study… What we call outside, or even the partial outside, is always a position *within* a larger political-historical complex" (Abu-Lughod 1993:40). Similarly, the individual positionality of program facilitators at the SYRI has a significant bearing on the implementation of the PAR process. Different staff interpretations of PAR and understandings of "participation" and youth engagement impact the PAR process.

Staff Interpretations of PAR

Staff interpretations of "critical consciousness," a key concept in developing social empowerment through PAR, ranged the gamut from "critical thinking" to "politicizing the self." The literal interpretation of Freirian critical consciousness, or *conscientização*, is "consciousness-raising." According to Freire (2007), it consists of "education as the practice of freedom," and signifies a radical act of engaging marginalized populations as active participants in their own societies by empowering them with *both* "critical reflection and political consciousness" (Arney 2007:25).

In an informal interview, two SYRI staff members insisted that critical consciousness is synonymous to "just critical thinking." In contrast, Mayra defined critical consciousness during a formal interview:

> Well, it's actually… political awareness? And so it's, it's taking the personal into the political realm, and doing that sort of shift paradigm. And so… I… I was politicized when I was 18 so it really, you know, happened at an early age, where I just gained a political awareness. First, part of a national identity, like I would tell everyone, being Puerto Rican is being political… because of, you know, all the, um, just… political reality. Our political reality. So for me, it's that awareness of… you know, looking at that individual within the ecosystem, and how we're

62

impacted, and at the same time, how we *can* impact. And… you actually find a mechanism, a model, a tool to do that – participatory action research has that aim and has that goal. And that's why I have always been ignited. With PAR. Because it really speaks to, you know, my interests, my passions… in regards to social justice education, community-based education… critical thinking, as well as critical consciousness, and a liberated self, really. And so… when you can actually look at, oh! So… *this is the truth*! You know, and this is actually what *I* can do with this truth.

Unlike the two SYRI facilitators who identified critical consciousness as equivalent to basic critical thinking skills, Mayra differentiates between critical consciousness as a personal versus political capacity. While she acknowledges that critical thinking is a necessary part of conducting PAR, she describes critical consciousness as a distinct process of politicizing the self. Furthermore, she defines critical consciousness in terms of self-empowerment and identifies more direct linkages between critical consciousness and social justice and action.

Marcie, on the other hand, responded to the same prompt to describe her perception of critical consciousness:

...it's interesting in terms of the literature, because you know, um, a lot of the literature that has to do with measuring critical consciousness has to do with identifying critical consciousness... like self-efficacy, has to be tied to a particular... area. You know, it's not a very generalized thing, although Freire talks about it as a generalized thing. Um... But also, there's also other work that's shown that it doesn't necessarily generalize from one area to another. That if you develop critical consciousness in one area, it doesn't necessarily mean that you're politicized in all areas.

Again, Marcie's interpretation of critical consciousness differs from that of other SYRI facilitators in that she takes a much more critical approach to the concept, indicating that Freirian assumptions should be questioned. Her argument that the development of critical consciousness in one area is not inherently generalizable to other areas poses a striking contrast to Mayra's understanding of critical consciousness as a "liberated self."

During the same formal interview, Marcie also described the backgrounds and

perceptions regarding critical consciousness of the SYRI staff of the preceding year. She

focused on two particular graduate student interns:

> Marcie: Their backgrounds were both in education. Um… Gaby had, you
> know, taught in middle school for a couple of years, and was then, after
> the summer, going back for a PhD in sociology. But she was an educator.
> And Reuben PhD was in education: education fundamentals, philosophy,
> and theory.
> Aki: Kind of like Mayra.
> M: Kind of like Mayra. Well – Mayra's more hands-on, pragmatic. You
> know, teaching education. His was more philosophy of education,
> education fundamentals, that kind of thing. Both of them are… from their
> personal experience, highly politicized. Gaby was doing work on the area
> of children who crossed the border unaccompanied, and what happens to
> them, and had actually come from Mexico. And Reuben was very
> engaged in the whole area of migration and immigration rights… So
> given where they were at, given their orientation to this, their focus on
> critical consciousness was *huge*. It was huge. And so… part of the
> adaptation was, you know, how to get it [the SYRI curriculum] to really
> focus [on] that piece of it. And… it was interesting. It was interesting. So
> that's why this summer, I kind of wanted to follow that up, and actually
> look at the process to see whether or not critical consciousness actually
> does develop and how it develops, and how much of it was them [the
> facilitators, Gaby and Reuben] and how much of it was the youth, and
> how much of it is actually retained.

Marcie further juxtaposes interpretations of critical consciousness between staff involved

in the SYRI 2007 and 2008 programs, suggesting that the focus of the SYRI 2008 staff

on individual development compared to the emphasis that the SYRI 2007 staff placed on

group processes significantly influenced program implementation and outcomes:

> Marcie: …Ok, so, that's a long story to basically say that this year,
> again, you see… you see the effect of the interns on the project. Not only
> the process. I think you also see it in the selection of the issue [personal
> and group abuse].
> Aki: Hmm… ok. How do you see that?
> M: I see that to some extent in the focus on… on the personal levels… I
> see a strong emphasis in terms of the psychological in this. You know, is
> that sort of just by chance? It might be. And you know, it interfaces with
> some of the issues that the youth have brought, and the like, but to what

extent? It's about looking at positionality.

She continues:

> I also see Lauren as very much focused on individual kinds of things…
> And I don't, I don't mean that people [the SYRI staff of 2008] aren't –
> that they don't see a broader picture, but it's funny in terms of how…
> where some of this kind of comes from. And Mayra, even though she
> understands critical consciousness and talks about it, she's also fairly
> focused on the individual… I don't know. I don't know what amount that
> plays in the whole process.

Marcie's comments confirm that facilitators not only differ in their understandings and

priorities regarding PAR both within and among co-facilitating teams, but also indicate

that facilitator positionality plays a significant role in the process and product of PAR

endeavors.

Varying staff interpretations of PAR result in differences in intentionality that

inform curricular activities at the SYRI. The "drive by," for example, was developed by

the SYRI staff in 2007 as an identity and group-building exercise. Introduced early on in

the program calendar, the activity was originally developed with the intent of "building

significant relationships of mutual respect" between adult facilitators and youth

participants, encouraging group solidarity. It was also intended to prompt both youth

participants and facilitators alike to practice multiple perspective-taking and actively

reflect on the theory of self by exploring the multiple facets of self that compose

individual identity. According to the facilitator handout, the activity begins and ends with

a "solidarity clap" by all participants, and consists of the following:

> a. The activity is called, "Drive by," and the purpose of this activity is
>   for the youth to get know the facilitators. The youth will be given the
>   opportunity to ask the facilitator any questions about themselves. In
>   other words the youth will have the opportunity to "shoot" with all
>   kinds of questions. At this time the facilitator will be able to share
>   his/her story.

b. If you find that students are not to [*sic*] enthusiastic about asking questions, the facilitator can begin sharing his/her story using the following themes: (Self, Family, Community/Culture, Education)

Marcie elaborates on the original intent of the activity (emphasis added):

> Marcie: The drive by was something that the interns [of SYRI 2007] brought, that was not something that we'd done before.
> Aki: Oh, really?
> M: Yes. And that was very specific, in the way that they saw that. The way they saw that was very theoretically framed.
> A: Oh! Ok.
> M: Ok? So that if you actually… now, the problem is that you can't actually see it in the activity.
> A: Right. It's in the way you facilitate it.
> M: But you see it in the way you facilitate it. If you see it in the way that… *the idea that when you're working with groups of youth, you need to become part of the process*, that they need to understand… it's not just at the level of "you have to build a good, trusting relationship." That's classic youth development kind of work, ok? But where it moves from classic youth development to this other arena, is where you're really ready to *put yourself on the line* in terms of what's going on.

This approach to PAR is consistent with what Duncan-Andrade (2007) refers to as "duty," where facilitators "come to view themselves as part of and committed to the communities with which they are working," and adopt a "form of unquestioned ethical obligation to do whatever is necessary to solve the problem – to live the work" (Schensul et al. in press; n.d.).

In contrast, the drive by as facilitated by Mayra, Lauren, and I with youth in Mayra's House group ultimately consisted of a basic icebreaker activity, despite our having used the same curricular guidelines as James, Julie, and last year's staff. I record and reflect in a field diary entry:

> Again, the youth surprised the facilitators with their eagerness to take the hot seat [where they answer questions "shot" at them by others] themselves and their lack of curiosity in regards to our personal lives and identities. I feel that it had something to do with how we answered our first question, "What's your age?" While I answered truthfully, both

Lauren and Mayra responded with obviously fabricated ages, saying that they should never ask a lady her age. We lost our opportunity to connect with the youth and show them that we are open to their questions and honestly want to engage in meaningful dialogue with them. While seeing the youth engaging with each other and building group rapport with even the quieter members of the House was wonderful, I was especially frustrated with Mayra when she commented that "they did not care about us."

The original authors of the curricular activity intended it to be an exercise in rapport building between adult facilitators and youth participants where facilitators willingly submitted to youths' questions as part of their "duty" and as a means of upsetting the obvious power imbalance between the two parties. The willingness of staff members to participate in the process of their own undressing and share personal facts and stories, however, depended on the degree of staff buy-in of PAR as such.

Understandings of "Participation" and Youth Engagement

Facilitators at the SYRI also hold diverse views as to what is meant by authentic youth "participation." Staff members attribute the participatory nature of YPAR at the SYRI to varying degrees and nature of youth input. James, for example, expressed that youth are the driving force of the SYRI program and that the youth, rather than adult staff members, typically decide the direction in which the program should be taken. He elaborated in an interview (emphasis added):

Aki: How participatory would you say… you know, the program is, because at least the rhetoric of it, you know, is participatory action research. So, um, how… the action part, I understand because of time limitations – the YARI program has more of an action program component to it, but SYRI can't… what about the degree of participatory-ness?

James: Um, I can't… I would say, on a scale of 1 to 10, the degree of participatory…ness…? I would say, 8.5, closer to a 9? Because we really think about the project in a whole, just from the summer time perspective, it really are the youth that are driving… most of it. Like, as staff, we don't pick the topic [of research]. *So it doesn't matter what I think should*

67

be the most important thing that impacts young people in the Greater Hartford area. It's irrelevant. My opinion does not matter. What matters is what they think is the most important topic, and what they feel are the three or four main areas that contribute to that particular issue. So I say from that perspective first and foremost, it's definitely participatory. Cause they pick an issue that impacts them.

In direct contrast to James' perception of YPAR at the SYRI as principally driven by youth with minimal facilitator input, Carmen responded to the same question by highlighting facilitator influence on youth participants and the YPAR process: "How much [of] everything is the youth's idea? Depends on the facilitator." She followed up with an example:

> This school year [2007-2008], was it the youth's idea to paint a mural? *No!* Whose idea was that? *Mine.* It was my idea, because that's what *I* wanted to do. Of course, it talks more about where I personally was, which is why I'm leaving. [Laughs] Because I'm not about… I try… I'm very, um… I personally am a Type A personality. I'm very… and I tend to take control.

She added:

> So your [the facilitator's] suggestions? Weigh a lot. 'Cause they [youth participants] don't know what to do and they don't want to be *wrong.* That's the biggest thing you have to fight against. They're feeling that they're gonna be wrong, or that they don't wanna be wrong – it's okay to be wrong! It's okay to say your opinion, it's okay to disagree, but you have to create a space where that's okay. And naturally, it will not come, and it will not happen on its own. You have to create the space. …And they'll always just look for you to tell them what to do, and that's not the point… So then again it depends on the facilitator.

Carmen further argued that facilitator input is an inherent component of the PAR model, and that facilitators at the SYRI are responsible for actively mitigating the power imbalance that characterizes the adult-youth, facilitator-participant, and employer-employee relationship as they collaborate with youth in the PAR process:

> Um, it [the SYRI program] is very participatory. The youth can and are the leads on this more than other youth programs I've seen. Um, it's

obviously not totally up to them, because *you* are also part of the PAR model, you are also part of that group. And, so… and your influence as the facilitator and as their boss, because they're getting paid, what you say can be law to them unless you tell them that it's not. You know? So… so your responsibility as the facilitator is to keep your ears open to everyone's ideas, even the little, you know, the little ones that hardly ever get said, because they mumbled it, and bringing it to the group. And challenging them, and being the devil's advocate for things, you know, even if that's the idea you really want, you know? And try not to show favoritism on particular ideas, because the whole point is for the group to pick what's *their* best idea. You know, and not just 'cause *you* think it's great.

Even though, I… sometimes they get discouraged with each other as well, and so they get [makes whiny sound] and their energy gets all low, so then I use my approval, as far as, "Noo! That's a really good idea, I like that one, we should do *that* one," and be like dah dah dah and be like "Ohkay!" and they'd be like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah! You're right, because it'll do this," and then you ask them questions. Right, about their own ideas, because they… all they want is for somebody, for you and all the adults to like them, to think they're great, to love them. All kids… just want that. But, so… you got to remember that and play with that. And when you get mad at them, and scold them for something they didn't do right or you call their attention on it, never leave it angry. You know? I mean, you can be serious and stern, but always remind how much you care about them and this and that. Not everybody does that and it jacks them up.

While both James and Carmen agree that YPAR at the SYRI is definitively participatory, their views diverge regarding the role of the facilitator in promoting youth participation during group processes.

Different staff understandings of youth participation can potentially impact program implementation in significant ways. The structure of the photovoice curriculum in Method groups, for instance, was radically altered from its original plans in the initial stages of program preparation through a series of dialogues between Julie, the principal photovoice facilitator, and Marcie, who advocated for the curricular changes. Youth participants involved in photovoice received basic training in photography from

professional guest photographers and were taken on a number of supervised "fieldtrips" outside of the ICR building to take pictures thematic of the factors that SYRI youth had collectively hypothesized as principal contributors to personal and group abuse. Youth also captured images at home and in their respective neighborhoods. Among the pictures that were taken, youth participants selected one or two images that they felt meant the most to them and developed personal narratives describing their significance.

This would conclude the typical extent of youth participation in a photovoice project. However, Marcie convinced Julie, who had previous experience in "traditional" photovoice methods, that photovoice in its conventional form is adult-ist and researcher-centric. According to Marcie, conventional photovoice assigns the adult researcher the traditional role of designing the research, eliciting data from participants through image-making and narrative-producing exercises, then ultimately controlling the interpretation and dissemination of that data. Thus, Marcie and Julie worked collaboratively to adapt photovoice to a PAR approach.

Youth, as SYRI action researchers, presented their images and narratives anonymously to SYRI youth colleagues and peers outside of the SYRI, eliciting responses to the images and narratives through focus group interviews. With staff assistance, they also drafted youth assent and parental consent forms for these interviews and asked focus group participants to read and sign these before each interview session. Youth later transcribed and coded the interview data. Their final presentation of research findings included a gallery of their individual images and narratives, followed by the narratives they developed in analyzing interview data. These were identified as the collective voice of Hartford youth. Finally, the two narratives were followed by a brief

paragraph comparing the two perspectives, highlighting their similarities and differences. By negotiating their respective understandings of youth participation and engaging in constructive dialogue, Julie and Marcie were able to offer an innovative approach to traditional research methods where dominant research traditions have historically favored the authority of the researcher over that of the research subject, even when study participants have largely consisted of marginalized populations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The conceptual framework used in this exploratory ethnographic study of participatory action research (PAR) program facilitators and how their understandings of PAR and youth engagement impact program implementation incorporates anthropological approaches and methods. The present chapter offers a summary of major research findings and conclusions, followed by a presentation of future recommendations, as well as reflections on my own experiences and positionality.

Research analysis suggests that a multiplicity of perspectives is involved in negotiating program priorities in carrying out YPAR at the ICR. Stakeholders of the SYRI lay claim to the program in different ways, shaping the PAR process. Staff members of the SYRI program at ICR also contribute a diverse range of perspectives regarding assumptions and expectations of PAR and priorities and styles of youth engagement. PAR co-facilitators must work in close collaboration to engage youth in both the iterative process of critical reflection, encouraging them to examine their social world through wider personal, political, and ecological lenses, as well as critical dialogue with staff and youth co-researchers about the nature of PAR itself. These efforts and will to commit to working with and through the complexities of PAR are critical to successful project implementation, to the development of critical consciousness, and ultimately, effecting structural change.

While PAR is an inherently "messy" process that seeks out diverse perspectives

to produce new readings of resistance and create new spaces for democratic engagement, divergent views without dialogue lead to less effective program implementation. As such, I present recommendations for increased facilitator awareness of individual positionality and the development of greater channels of communication among facilitators for the improvement of program efficacy. Finally, I contribute to this dialogue by offering my personal experiences as a PAR facilitator at ICR and reflections on my professional development as an applied anthropologist.

Conclusions

During the summer of 2008, I participated in the SYRI program at ICR as an intern and member of a team of staff members co-facilitating its YPAR agenda while carrying out individual research on facilitation and implementation strategies regarding YPAR at the ICR. More specifically, my research investigated how individual theoretical understandings of PAR and participation as well as different conceptualizations of meaningful youth engagement among program facilitators impact the PAR process. By examining multiple perspectives and employing a variety of research methods, the present study promotes a multifaceted understanding of the facilitation and implementation process of YPAR at the ICR. The following offers a summary of the major findings based on the study's results.

As indicated in the findings and analysis presented in Chapter Five, the SYRI is characterized by the diverse and oftentimes conflicting views of its stakeholders, who affect program implementation by placing the SYRI under multiple tensions and pressures. For example, the "official" SYRI program view advocated by ICR administrators emphasizes intervention and prevention for at-risk youth; it describes the

SYRI primarily in terms of its providing teens in Hartford with an educational experience that invests in their own communities, thus motivating them to stay in school. The principal funding organization, Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), on the other hand, prioritized the goal of future work force development, and underscored the function of the SYRI as a career and employment services provider for teens in Hartford.

While sharing the mutual desire to offer summer youth employment, the contradictory nature of the SYRI's emancipatory goals to provide an educational space that engages youth in a process of developing critical consciousness and improving community conditions and CWP's primarily economically-based motivations gave rise to tension in their relationship as well as the overall implementation process of YPAR at the SYRI. Given the use of PAR in Fine and Torre's (2004) study showing the devastating effects of academic tracking, Marcie ironically yet appropriately warns of the danger of co-optation, where the SYRI carries the potential risk of acting as CWP's instrument for tracking at-risk youth into low-level service employment. Youth participants brought yet another dimension to the program, as they alternatively viewed SYRI as: an opportunity for professional and career development, an extension of school, a source of income, a safe space, an inclusive social network, and/or a place to build individual skills and capacities, and explore social change.

Interview, observation, and archival data support literature that conceptualizes PAR as a "messy" process, characterized by "complex, multi-dimensional, intractable, dynamic problems that can only be partially addressed and partially resolved" (Brydon-Miller 2003:21). These data also suggest that PAR facilitators, as active agents in the PAR model, contribute to the "mess" by informing the PAR process with their own ideas

74

of what constitutes PAR and meaningful participation, as well as their own ideologies and priorities regarding youth engagement and collaborative work. Staff members at the SYRI during the summer of 2008 came from diverse backgrounds and experiences, creating an interdisciplinary team of co-facilitators with varying leadership styles and personalities.

The differing individual positionalities of PAR facilitators affected program implementation in various ways. For example, differences in staff interpretations of "critical consciousness," a key concept in Freirian notions of social empowerment through PAR, resulted in staff placing varying emphases on the development of more personal versus political areas of youth participants' critical thinking skills. Findings also indicate that program facilitators at the SYRI hold diverse views in regards to the nature of authentic youth "participation." While facilitators generally agreed that the SYRI allowed for a great degree of youth participation and input, differences in opinion arose regarding the role of the facilitator in promoting youth participation during group processes. Finally, YPAR at the SYRI and in general demands a balance between process and product for both facilitators and participants – iterative interrogation and critical reflection regarding the PAR process amongst and between facilitators and youth researchers is essential for advancing individual and collective transformation and social change.

The present ethnographic case study analysis offers valuable contributions to anthropology, which has often been criticized for its "generalizing discourse" that creates "cultures" through "producing the effects of homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness," and "flattening out" differences within populations (Abu-Lughod 1993:9). Abu-Lughod

contends: "The effort to produce general ethnographic descriptions of people's beliefs or actions risks smoothing over contradictions, conflicts of interest, doubts, and arguments, not to mention changing motivations and historical circumstances" (1993:9). The present ethnographic account addresses this critique by illustrating the diversity of perspectives and experiences espoused by individual PAR facilitators at the SYRI, exploring the internal negotiation of difference among stakeholders in the PAR process, and interrogating their publicly constructed unity.

Foucauldian scholars also argue that traditional knowledge production processes promote a way of ordering the world that favors the powerful and maintains the status quo (Erickson and Murphy 2003). In this study, I challenge the researcher/subject dichotomy that characterizes traditional forms of anthropological investigation, as well as the use of conventional categories that erase difference within and between participants in the PAR process. As Moore reiterates (2000:19):

> The major change in anthropological theorizing [through time] has come about through placing the anthropologist within the same frame of reference as the subjects of anthropology; through responding to the changing nature of anthropology inside and outside the academy; and through recognizing that anthropology is part of the world it studies.

The present study contributes to contemporary anthropological theorizing in its refusal to essentialize – to dissolve the particular in the universal. It also maintains a focus on program facilitators at the SYRI as active agents in the PAR process, rather than conceptualizing them as separate and external to the immediate social context and research framework of PAR.

Additionally, the thesis advances a dialogue about the nature of YPAR and its possibilities and potential limitations, which Packard suggests is vital "so that future

76

researchers will not expect more than can realistically be delivered" through participatory research techniques and to "[reveal] the work which must still be done" (2008:63). As in the title of Freire and Horton's book (1990) *We Make the Road by Walking*, we make the way through dialogue, awareness, and resistance to structural constraints.

<center>**Recommendations**</center>

Far from a "magic bullet," then, PAR is a "messy" and longitudinal process that, not unlike other instances of collective action, "incorporates a wide range of issues and experiences into one struggle that might not appear logically compatible to outsiders" (Stephen 1997:275). However, "challenges to unequal relations of power come logically in contradictory packages" (Stephen 1997:275). Stephen elaborates (1997:275):

> As Hall (1989, 1995), Roseberry (1994), and others working from a Gramscian perspective have reminded us, power and hegemony are not absolute. The presence of ideological contradictions within any system of unequal power relations both validates the power of forms of domination and provides the potential for challenging them. The possibility for the emergence of new political and social subjects is dependent upon the contradictory and uneven ways in which structures of domination function.

Rather than ignoring or silencing through consensus the disagreements and tensions that emerge among co-facilitating team members of PAR, staff at the SYRI should "seek meaning in the friction" (Fine and Torre 2004:23), mediating, rather than erasing, difference.

In terms of the SYRI, there is a need for further staff training and development to increase facilitator awareness regarding individual identity and positionality and how the perspectives and the way a facilitator carries him or herself affect the PAR process. By first understanding where one stands as an individual PAR facilitator, a dialogue can follow regarding how others perceive their roles and responsibilities, and a systematic approach to resolving group conflicts might be developed. The balanced collaboration of co-facilitators should also be sought through promoting relational effectiveness among SYRI staff members. Schensul and her colleagues identify the four key components that compose relational effectiveness among members of a group (Schensul et al. in press;

<center>78</center>

n.d.):

> …communication (frequency and importance of communication among partners), joint work (frequency and importance of joint activities), quality of interaction (trust, cooperation and conflict/conflict resolution), and connectivity of social structure (structure and role dynamics).

Regular dialogue both at the organizational and peer-to-peer levels are needed to encourage transparency, sharing of resources, and collaboration, as well as to foster solidarity. This may take the form of frequent staff meetings and/or workshops. As Marcie pointed out in one interview, "You're going to find very conflicting perspectives about the way people see this [PAR and critical consciousness] and what they see, and how they see it. And what I always say is: consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds!" Importantly, facilitators must willingly work *with* each other in the identification and negotiation of divergent perspectives and the co-construction of participatory spaces for democratic engagement.

Personal Reflections

Biehl describes the pedagogy of fieldwork as "mutually formative" (2005:11), borrowing Paul Rabinow's words: "As it is hierarchical, it requires care; as it is a process, it requires time; and as it is practice of inquiry, it requires conceptual work" (Rabinow 2003:90). This was true of my learning experiences at the SYRI as an intern and member of a team of program facilitators, where I was variously confused, frustrated, challenged, humbled, distraught, excited, and touched. I struggled in my own "undressing." While I like to imagine the struggle in terms of a Boasian effort to "cast away the shackles of dogma" (Stocking 1974:41-42) and tradition, I assuredly grappled with the casting away of my own socialization in a much less grandiose and much more

desperate way than our collective anthropological forefather.

Ethnographers are their own research instruments (Agar 1996). Similarly, in YPAR at the ICR, the "facilitator is the vehicle through which intervention theory is realized" (Pass and Vasquez 2004:58). Throughout my summer at the SYRI, I continuously wrestled with my own idealistic notions of PAR ("the magic bullet") and academic upbringing in traditional ideas of "scientific" research while striving to understand Hartford youth culture, reevaluating my role as an educator, and forging new definitions of leadership that emphasize "patience, listening ability, and a capacity for unifying diverse factions" (Stephen 1997:279). I learned to juggle multiple identities, as many anthropologists in the field do, and settle into what may seem like an oxymoronic existence as both critical anthropologist who *intervenes* rather than witnesses and PAR educator who intentionally steps back and consciously mitigates her authority as an adult staff member involved in a youth project.

While at times I was admittedly overwhelmed by the extraordinary commitment that is demanded of PAR facilitators at the SYRI who "*live* the work" (Duncan-Andrade 2007, emphasis mine), my experience at the SYRI has led me to wholeheartedly embrace the importance of not letting the immediate context of our work obscure the larger issues of structural violence and social injustices that inform it. Gramsci writes (1985:403):

> Fatalism is nothing other than the clothing worn by real and active will when in a weak position. Pessimism is the most serious danger we are facing at the moment – because of the political passivity, intellectual torpor, and skepticism about the future that such pessimism induces.

Freire adds that hope, which is an ontological human need – an "existential imperative" – "demands an anchoring in practice," that the "hoped-for is not attained by dint of raw hoping. Just to hope is to hope in vain" (Freire 2006:2). He calls for "a kind of education

80

in hope," which he describes as the task of the progressive educator. I extend his call to the anthropological community. I believe that anthropologists, in certain ways uniquely trained to develop holistic approaches to complex social phenomena, are able to read resistance in many ways and change the way people perceive of resistance, thus creating spaces of hope where resistance can be born.

REFERENCES CITED

Abu-Lughod, L.
>1991. Writing Against Culture *In* Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present. Richard Fox, ed. Pp. 137-62. Santa Fe, NM: School for American Research Press.
>1993. Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ackoff, R.
>1999. Ackoff's Best. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Agar, M.
>1996. The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography. San Diego: Academic Press.

Anderson, Gary L.
>2002. Reflecting on research for doctoral students in education. Educational Researcher 31(7):22-25.

Anderson, Gary L., and J. Grinberg.
>1998. Educational administration as a disciplinary practice: Appropriating Foucault's view of power, discourse, and method. Educational Administration Quarterly 34(3):329-353.

Arney, L.
>2007. Political Pedagogy and Art Education With Youth in a Street Situation in Salvador, Brazil: An Ethnographic Evaluation of the Street Education Program of Projeto Axé. M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida.

Becker, A.
>2003. Teens identify risk factors. Hartford Courant.

Biehl, J.
>2005. Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bishaw, A. And J. Iceland.

2003. Poverty: 1999, Census 2000 Brief. US Census Bureau.

Blakey,
    1998. Beyond European Enlightenment: Toward a Critical and Humanistic
        Biology. *In* Building a New Biocultural Synthesis: Political-Economic
        Perspective in Human Biology. A. Goodman and T. Leatherman, eds. Pp.
        379-406. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Brase, M., V. Pacheco, and M. Berg.
    2004. Diffusing ICR's Youth Participatory Action Research Model. Practicing
        Anthropology 26(2):15-19.

Bourdieu, P.
    1982. The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language. *In* Readings for
        a History of Anthropological Theory. Paul Erickson and Liam Murphy,
        eds. Pp. 403-421. Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.

Brydon-Miller, M., D. Greenwood, and P. Maguire.
    2003. Why Action Research? Action Research 1(1):9-28.

Cammarota, J.
    2007. A Social justice approach to achievement: Guiding latina/o students toward
        educational attainment with a challenging, socially relevant curriculum.
        Equity & Excellence in Education 40:87-96.

Capital Workforce Partners.
    2008. Future workforce programs Q & A. Hartford: Capital Workforce Partners.

Christie, L.
    2007. The richest (and poorest) places in the US, retrieved April 6, 2008 from
        www.CNNMoney.com.

Clegg, S.R.
    1989. Frameworks of power. London: Sage.

Connecticut State Department of Education.
    2008. Public school choice in Connecticut: 2008-2009.

Constable, N.
    2007. Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Migrant Workers. Ithaca: Cornell
        University Press.

Cruz, J. E.
    1998. Identity and Power: Puerto Rican Politics and the Challenge of Ethnicity.
        Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Doughty, P.L.
    1987. Against the odds: collaboration and development at Vicos. *In* Collaborative
        Research and Social Change: Applied Anthropology in Action. Donald D.
        Stull and Jean J. Schensul, eds. Pp. 129-157. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Duncan-Andrade, J.
    2007. Gangstas, Wankstas, and Ridas: defining, developing, and supporting
        effective teachers in urban schools. International Journal of Qualitative
        Studies in Education 20(6):617-638.

Eddy, E. and W. L. Partridge.
    1987. Applied Anthropology in America. New York: Columbia University Press.

Erickson, P. and L. D. Murphy.
    2003. A History of Anthropological Theory. Toronto: Broadview Press.

Fals-Borda, O.
    1987. The Application of Participatory Action-Research in Latin America.
        International Sociology. 2(4):329-347.

Fine, M. And M.E. Torre.
    2004. Re-membering exclusions: participatory action research in public
        institutions. Qualitative research in psychology 1(1):15-37.

Foucault, M.
    1961. The Birth of the Asylum. *In* Readings for a History of Anthropological
        Theory. Paul Erickson and Liam Murphy, eds. Pp. 387-402. Ontario,
        Canada: Broadview Press.
    1977. Truth and power. *In* Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other
        writings. C. Gordon, ed. Pp. 109-133. New York: Pantheon.
    1978. The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: An Introduction. Robert Hurley, trans.
        New York: Pantheon.
    1982. Truth, power, self. *In* Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel
        Foucault. H. Hutton, ed. Pp. 9-15. London: Tavistock.

Fox, A.
    1998. Process Evaluation of a High-Risk Prevention Program for Urban
        Preadolescent Females. M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology,
        University of South Florida.

Freire, P.
    1981. Education for critical consciousness. New York: Continuum.
    1998. Teachers as cultural workers. Letters to those who dare to teach. Boulder,
        CO: Westview Press.
    2006. Pedagogy of Hope. New York: Continuum.
    2007 [1970]. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Continuum International.

Freire, P. and M. Horton.
      1990. We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social
          Change. Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters, eds. Philadelphia, PA:
          Temple University Press.

Ginwright and Cammarota.
      2002. New Terrain in Youth Development: The Promise of a Social Justice
          Approach. Social Justice 29(4):82-95.

Gonzalez, N., L. Moll, and C. Amanti.
      2005. Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities,
          and Classrooms. New Jersey: Routledge.

Gramsci, A.
      1985. Selections from Cultural Writings. D. Forgacs and G. Nowell-Smith, eds.
          W. Boelhower, trans. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hall, S.
      1989. The Meaning of New Times. *In* New Times: The Changing Face of Politics
          in the 1990s. Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, eds. London: Lawrence &
          Wishart.
      1995. Cultural Identities on Question: Ethnicity and Difference in Global Times.
          Paper presented at the Seminar in Ethnic Studies, University of California-
          San Diego, April.

Hastrup, K. and P. Elsass.
      1990. Anthropological Advocacy: A Contradiction in Terms? Current
          Anthropology 31(3):301-311 and 31(4):387-390.

Herr, K., and Gary L. Anderson.
      2005. The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty.
          Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Herszenhorn, D. M.
      2001. Rich States, Poor Cities and Might Suburbs; In Connecticut and New
          Jersey, Urban Poverty Confronts Leafy Affluence. New York Times.

Institute for Community Research.
      2008a. About ICR. Electronic document,
          http://www.incommunityresearch.org/about/about.htm, accessed April 6,
          2008.
      2008b. Place-based social marketing to prevent drug use among urban youth:
          Xperience Project. Electronic document,
          http://www.incommunityresearch.org/programs/programssubstanceabuse.h
          tm, accessed November 20, 2008.

2008c. Youth Action Research Institute. Electronic document,
http://www.incommunityresearch.org/research/yari.htm, accessed
November 20, 2008

Judson, G.
1993. In Hartford, Data Portray Schools in Crisis of Poverty. New York Times.

Knauft,
1997. Theoretical Currents in Late Modern Cultural Anthropology: Toward a
Conversation. Cultural Dynamics 9(3):277-300.

LeCompte, M., and J. Schensul.
1999. Designing & Conducting Ethnographic Research. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira
Press.

Lewin, K.
1946. Action Research and Minority Problems. The Journal of Social Issues.
2(4):34-46.

Lewis, O.
1966. La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty. San Juan and
New York: Random House.

Matsaert, H., Z. Ahmed, F. Hussain, and N. Islam
2007. The dangers of writing up: a cautionary tale from Bangladesh.
Anthropology Matters Journal 9(2):1-11.

McNicoll, P.
1999. Issues in teaching Participatory Action Research. Journal of Social Work
Education 35(1):51-62.

McTaggart, R.
1997. Guiding Principles for Participatory Action Research. *In* Participatory
Action Research: International Contexts and Consequences, Robin
McTaggart, ed. Pp. 25-44. Victoria, Australia: SUNY Press.

Moore, H.
2000. Anthropological Theory at the Turn of the Century. *In* Anthropological
Theory Today, Henrietta Moore, ed. Pp. 1-23. Cambridge, UK: Polity
Press.

Morgan, D., V. Pacheco, C. Rodriguez, E. Vasquez, M. Berg, and J. Schensul.
2004. Youth participatory action research on hustling and its consequences: A
report from the field. Children, Youth and Environments 14(2):201-228.

Motavalli, J.

    2008. Mind the (Income) Gap. New Havens Advocate.

New York Times.
    2003. Proposed Deal Reported in Hartford Segregation Suit. New York Times.

Office of Legislative Research.
    2003. OLR Research report: Sheff v. O'Neill settlement.

Oquist, P.
    1978. The Epistemology of Action Research. Acta Sociologica. 21(2):143-163.

Packard, J.
    2008. 'I'm gonna show you what it's really like out here': the power and
      limitation of participatory visual methods. Visual Studies 23(1):63-77.

Pass, S. and E. Vasquez.
    2004. Contribution and Challenges of Observational Research in Evaluating PAR.
      Practicing Anthropology 26(2):56-60.

Pillawsky, M.
    1998. Remedies to de facto school segregation: The case of Hartford. The Black
      Scholar 28:29-35.

Price, Laurie.
    2000. The mismatch between anthropology graduate training and the work lives
      of graduates. Practicing Anthropology 23(1):55-57.

Rabinow, P.
    2003. Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment. Princeton: Princeton
      University Press.

Restrepo, E. and A. Escobar.
    2005. Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise: Steps to a World
      Anthropologies Framework. Critique of Anthropology 25(2):99-129.

Roberts, S.
    2007. New York's gap between rich and poor is nation's widest, census says.
      New York Times.

Roseberry, W.
    1994. Hegemony and the Language of Convention. *In* Joseph and Nugent 1994.

Schensul, J.
    1998. Community-based risk prevention with urban youth. School Psychology
      Review 27(2):233-45.

Schensul, J., and M. Berg.
     2004. Youth Participatory Action Research: A transformative approach to service
          learning. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning (Special
          Issue: Service-Learning and Anthropology) 10(3):76-88.

Schensul, J., M. Berg, D. Owens.
     2000. Empowered Voices: A Participatory Action Research Curriculum for Girls.
          Hartford, CT: Institute for Community Research National Teen Action
          Research Center.

Schensul, J., M. Berg, D. Schensul, and S. Sydkim.
     2004. Core elements of participatory action research for educational
          empowerment and risk prevention with urban youth. Practicing
          Anthropology 26(2):5-8.

Schensul, J., M. Berg, and K. Williamson.
     N.D. Reframing Hegemonies: Co-constructing transformational knowledge and
          action through participatory ethnographic action research partnerships.
          Unpublished MS, Department of Anthropology, University of South
          Florida.

Scheper-Hughes, N.
     1995. The primacy of the ethical: propositions for a militant anthropology.
          Current Anthropology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simmons, L.B.
     1994. Organizing in Hard Times: Labor and Neighborhoods in Hartford.
          Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Singer, M.
     1994. Community-Centered Praxis: Toward an Alternative Non-dominative
          Applied Anthropology. Human Organization 53(4):336-344.

Smith, G.
     1999. Confronting the Present: Towards a Politically Engaged Anthropology.
          Oxford: Berg.

Stavenhagen,
     1971. Decolonializing Applied Social Sciences. Human Organization 30(4): 333-
          357.

Stephen, L.
     1997. Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power From Below.
          Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Stocking, G.

1974. The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911: a Franz Boas reader. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sydlo, S.J., J.J. Schensul, D.C. Owens, M.K. Brase, K.N. Wiley, M.J. Berg, E. Baez and D. Schensul.
2000. Participatory Action Research Curriculum for Empowering Youth. Hartford, CT: Institute for Community Research.

US Census Bureau.
2006. Connecticut Quick Facts.

US Census Bureau.
2007. Hartford city, Connecticut American community survey demographic and housing estimates: 2007.

Von Zielbauer, P.
2003. Hartford Bids a Bilingual Goodbye to a White-Collar Past. New York Times.

WFSB.
2007. 14 Connecticut Schools on 'Dropout Factory' List, retrieved April 6, 2008 from www.WFSB.com.

White, D.
2003. Blacks in Connecticut: Connecticut's Heritage Gateway, retrieved November 5, 2008 from http://www.ctheritage.org/encyclopedia/topicalsurveys/blacks.htm

Whyte, W.
1989. Advancing Scientific Knowledge Through Participatory Action Research. Sociological Forum. 4(3):367-385.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barazangi, N.
2006. An ethical theory of action research pedagogy. Action Research 4(1):97-116.

Brock, K. and J. Pettit.
2007. Springs of Participation: Creating and Evolving Methods for Participatory Development. Warwickshire, UK: Practical Action Publishing.

Bronfenbrenner, U.
1979. The Ecology of Human Development. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U., and A.C. Crouter.
1983. The evolution of environmental models in development research. *In* History, theories, and methods: Handbook of child psychology. W. Kessen, ed. Vol.1:39-83. New York: Wiley.

Cahill, C.
2007. The Personal is Political: Developing new subjectivities through participatory action research. Gender, Place, and Culture 14(3):267-292.

Carlson, E., J. Engebretson, and R. M. Chamberlain.
2006. Photovoice as a Social Process of Critical Consciousness. Qualitative Health Research 16(6):836-852.

Cammarota, J. and M. Fine.
2008. Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion. New York: Routledge.

Chambers, R.
2007. Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas & activities. London: Earthscan.

Fals Borda, O.
1979. Investigating Reality in Order to Transform It: The Colombian Experience. *In* Dialectical Anthropology. Stanley Diamond, ed. Pp. 33-55. New York: New School for Social Research.

2006. The North-South Convergence: A 30-year first-person assessment of PAR. Action Research 4(3):351-358.

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence.
2007. The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Judson, G.
1993. In Hartford, Data Portray Schools in Crisis of Poverty. New York Times.

Judson, G.
1995. For Schools, Sad Echoes of Hartford. New York Times.

LeCompte, M. D.
1995. Some Notes on Power, Agenda, and Voice: A Researcher's Personal Evolution toward Critical Collaborative Research. *In* Critical Theory and Educational Research. Peter McLaren and James Giarelli, eds. Pp. 91-112. New York: State University of New York Press.

McTaggart, R.
1991. Principles for Participatory Action Research. Adult Education Quarterly 41(3):168-187.

Natriello, G.
1993. A Descriptive study of the educational resources of the Hartford public schools and disparities with other districts. U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Smith, S., D. Willms and N. Johnson.
1997. Nurtured by Knowledge: Learning to Do Participatory Action-Research. New York: The Apex Press.

Wallerstein, N.
1999. Power between evaluator and community: research relationships within New Mexico's healthier communities. Social Science & Medicine 49:39-53.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

I am carrying out research for my thesis at the University of South Florida, where I am a Masters student in Applied Anthropology. If you don't mind, I am going to record this conversation. This is so I can listen to you, rather than take notes. First, let's make up a name for you, so that your privacy will be protected. You are the expert here. I am the learner. I'll ask a few general questions, but you can talk about anything you feel is important, even if I don't ask about it. And, if you don't like my questions, you don't have to answer them. One more thing—if you want to answer off the record, we can turn voice recorder off, and then turn it on again later. In fact, why don't you hold the recorder? That way you can turn it on and off yourself. Are you ready to get started?

1. What instructional methods or strategies are used by PAR facilitators at ICR?

2. How is the Action Research curriculum utilized at SYRI?

3. How do PAR facilitators at ICR negotiate relationships of power between educator and educand?

4. What theoretical approaches are employed in implementing PAR at ICR and what are its implications?

5. What are the challenges in implementing a PAR curriculum? What are the strengths of a PAR curriculum?

6. To what extent is ICR's Action Research curriculum replicable with other participant populations? In what contexts?

Appendix B: Statement of Informed Consent

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

Researchers at the University of South Florida (USF) study many topics. To do this, we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. This form tells you about this research study.
We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called:

Teaching Participatory Action Research Methods: Reflections, Strategies, and Applications at the Institute for Community Research

The person who is in charge of this research study is *Aki Nakanishi.* This person is called the Principal Investigator.

The research will be done at the Institute for Community Research (ICR).

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study is to
- *Gather information about instructional strategies used in teaching PAR methods at ICR.*
- *Respond to the need of PAR educators for teaching guides and a learning community supportive of education in PAR methods.*
- *Inform the Principal Investigator's thesis research at the Anthropology Department of the University of South Florida.*

Study Procedures
Your perspective as a PAR facilitator at ICR offers valuable insights into the strategies and priorities of PAR educators at your organization. Interviews will be carried out focusing on perceptions, opinions, and experiences with these issues.
Information you provide will remain confidential. You will not be identified in any published or other public presentation without your express written consent and prior approval.

- The interview will last between 30 minutes and 2 hours, depending on your availability. You may be approached for further interviews, in which you may or may not decide to participate at that time.
- Interviews will take place at ICR in a space where privacy can be assured.
- With your permission, interviews will be audio-recorded. Only the Principal Investigator will have access to the digital recording. When the data is used in the future, it will be presented in a way that does not make it possible to identify you or attribute any specific information to you. If, after 10 years, the collected data are no longer in use for research purposes, records of the data will be destroyed to protect the confidentiality of the data and prevent the misuse of information.

Appendix B. (Continued)

Alternatives
You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study.

Benefits
The potential benefits to you are:
- *The documentation and in-depth analysis of educational strategies employed at ICR for the purpose of further teaching purposes and curricular development.*
- *ICR at large will benefit from the research because it will serve as a means for facilitating the diffusion of the Summer Youth Research Institute's (SYRI) Participatory Action Research (PAR) program to other areas of the US.*

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
We *will not* pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Confidentiality
We must keep your study records as confidential as possible.
- Your name will not be written down or included in the recording of interviews. You will be identified by a code and the list matching each name with a code will be kept separate and stored in a location where only the Principal Investigator will have access to it.
- In the future, the data will be presented in a format that will not allow the identification of participants or their responses.
- The digital files from the recordings will not be used for purposes apart from those outlined for the present study.
- Digital recordings of interviews will be destroyed after 10 years if, at that time, they are no longer in use for research purposes.

However, certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:
- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, study coordinator, research nurses, and all other research staff.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. These include:

95

Appendix B. (Continued)

o   the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the staff that work for the IRB. Other individuals who work for USF that provide other kinds of oversight may also need to look at your records.

o   the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not let anyone know your name. We will not publish anything else that would let people know who you are.

Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal
You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study, to please the investigator or the research staff. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.

New information about the study
During the course of this study, we may find more information that could be important to you. This includes information that, once learned, might cause you to change your mind about being in the study or allowing the Principal Investigator to use information about you. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

Questions, concerns, or complaints
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call *Aki Nakanishi* at *(765) 427-4761* or email her at *anakanis@mail.usf.edu.*

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the Division of Research Integrity and Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-9343.

If you experience an unanticipated problem related to the research call *Aki Nakanishi* at *(765) 427-4761*.

Appendix B. (Continued)

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. If you want to take part, please sign the form, if the following statements are true.

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____   _____

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study   Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands:
- What the study is about.
- What procedures/interventions/investigational drugs or devices will be used.
- What the potential benefits might be.
- What the known risks might be.

_____   _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent   Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent