The second goal is what Appadurai calls "rhetorical." By opening up the notion of "research," we "de-parochialise" it, taking these tools out of the hands of an elite group of specialists and professionals, making it a "much more universal, elementary and improvable capacity" (168). As the editors and authors of this text make clear, PAR is intimately concerned with extending the notion of the so-called "expert" to encompass a wider range of stakeholders. At its very best, PAR opens up a space for a critical, multi-generational dialogue about research itself—one that looks beyond rarified university walls. This is a fundamental challenge to the ways that research is traditionally conducted and knowledge is traditionally stratified. It too is necessary for universities to meaningfully engage in democratic dialogue in these new and uncertain times.

None of this is easy work. As the editors and authors argue, PAR forces us to abandon the categories often used to sort, classify, and essentialize youth. These categories can be deployed by both conservatives and progressives. The former often treat young people as a pathological problem to be managed—"at risk" as defined by adults. The latter often treat young people as incipient radicals, "resisting" dominant culture through everyday cultural practices. Working with youth, in distinction, means seeing young people as partners in struggle, as resources to be drawn upon in common cause. As Cammarota and Fine make clear in their excellent introduction, PAR does not allow us to "freeze" young people in such fashion. PAR treats young people as agents in ongoing, critical struggles.

As *Revolutionizing Education* makes clear, PAR blurs the lines between pedagogy, research, and politics. Yet, as we see in the chapters that follow, each does not extend from the other in seamless fashion. Each demands specific competencies and skills, both on their own and when taken together. If nothing else, PAR is an invitation to a long-term struggle that forces us to operate in these "in between" spaces. This is a site of intense possibility as well as uncertainty. It is one best seen in its specificity and detail, as the volume's contributors make clear. At stake here is what Appadurai calls the "capacity to aspire," the capacity to imaginatively link one's own personal problems and issues to a broader set of social, political, and economic forces and pressures—and to work to transform them (176). This, again, should be a basic human right—a point evidenced on every page of *Revolutionizing Education*.

Greg Dimitriadis
University at Buffalo,
State University of New York

Note

1 A. Appadurai (2006). The right to research. *Globalisation, Societies, and Education* 4(2), 167–77. Special thanks to Bob Lingard for alerting me to this article.

CHAPTER 1

Youth Participatory Action Research

A Pedagogy for Transformational Resistance

JULIO CAMMAROTA AND MICHELLE FINE

In the film *The Matrix*, Morpheus, played by Laurence Fishburne, places Keanu Reeves' character Neo in a chair to tell him face to face about the real truth of his experience. Morpheus shows Neo a red pill in one hand and a blue one in the other, describing that the red pill will lead him "down the rabbit hole" to the truth while the blue pill will make him forget about their conversation and return everything back to "normal." Neo looks confused and worried, hesitates for a moment, and then reaches to grab and then swallow the red pill. The "blue and red pill" scene in *The Matrix* serves as an excellent metaphor for the relationships some educators/activists have with their students, and the kinds of choices we ask them to make. The critical educational experience offered might lead the student "down the rabbit hole" past the layers of lies to the truths of systematic exploitation and oppression as well as possibilities for resistance. After he ingests the red pill, Neo ends up in the place of truth, awakening to the reality that his entire world is a lie constructed to make him believe that he lives a "normal" life, when in reality he is fully exploited day in and day out. What is "normal" is really a mirage, and what is true is the complete structural domination of people, all people.

This book, *Revolutionizing Education*, literally connects to the metaphorical play on chimera and veracity forwarded by the narrative in *The Matrix*. Examples are presented throughout in which young people resist the

normalization of systematic oppression by undertaking their own engaged praxis—critical and collective inquiry, reflection and action focused on "reading" and speaking back to the reality of the world, their world (Freire, 1993). The praxis highlighted in the book—youth participatory action research (YPAR)—provides young people with opportunities to study social problems affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems. YPAR, and thus *Revolutionizing Education*, may extend the kinds of questions posed by critical youth studies (Bourgois, 1995; Fine and Weis, 1998; Giroux, 1983; Kelley, 1994; Macleod, 1987; McRobbie, 1991; Oakes et al., 2006; Rasmussen et al., 2004; Sullivan, 1989; Willis, 1977). How do youth learn the skills of critical inquiry and resistances within formal youth development, research collectives, and/or educational settings? How is it possible for their critical inquiries to evolve into formalized challenges to the "normal" practices of systematic oppression? Under what conditions can critical research be a tool of youth development and social justice work?

The Matrix infers revolution by showing how Neo learns to see the reality of his experiences while understanding his capabilities for resistance. The YPAR cases presented in this book also follow a similar pattern: young people learn through research about complex power relations, histories of struggle, and the consequences of oppression. They begin to re-vision and denaturalize the realities of their social worlds and then undertake forms of collective challenge based on the knowledge garnered through their critical inquiries. As you will read in this volume, the youth, with adult allies, have written policy briefs, engaged sticker campaigns, performed critical productions, coordinated public testimonials—all dedicated to speaking back and challenging conditions of injustice.

What perhaps distinguishes young people engaged in YPAR from the standard representations in critical youth studies is that their research is designed to contest and transform systems and institutions to produce greater justice—distributive justice, procedural justice, and what Iris Marion Young calls a justice of recognition, or respect. In short, YPAR is a formal resistance that leads to transformation—systematic and institutional change to promote social justice.

YPAR teaches young people that conditions of injustice are produced, not natural; are designed to privilege and oppress; but are ultimately challengeable and thus changeable. In each of these projects, young people and adult allies experience the vitality of a multi-generational collective analysis of power; we learn that sites of critical inquiry and resistance can be fortifying and nourishing to the soul, and at the same time that these projects provoke ripples of social change. YPAR shows young people how they are consistently subject to the impositions and manipulations of dominant exigencies. These controlling interests may take on the form of white supremacy, capitalism, sexism, homophobia, or xenophobia—all of which is meant to provide certain people with power at the expense of subordinating others, many others. Within this matrix or grid of power, the possibilities of true liberation for young people become limited. Similar to the film *The Matrix*, the individual, like Neo, may be unaware of the inflections of power fostering oppression. The dawning of awareness emerges from a critical study of social institutions and processes influencing one's life course, and his/her capacity to see differently, to act anew, to provoke change.

Critical youth studies demonstrate that the revolutionary lesson is not always apprehended in schools; sometimes, young people gain critical awareness through their own endogenous cultural practices. Such is the case of Willis' (1977) Lads in *Learning to Labor*. Working-class youth attain insights about the reproductive function of schools through their own street cultural sensibilities. However, they use these insights to resist education en masse by forgoing school for jobs in factories. Scholars (Fine, 1991; Solórzano and Delgado-Bernal, 2001) identify this form of resistance as "self-defeating," because the students' choice to forgo school for manual labor contributes to reproducing them as working class. Although the Lads resist the school's purpose of engendering uneven class relations, their resistance contributes to this engendering process by undermining any chance they had for social mobility.

Young people also engage in forms of resistance that avoid self-defeating outcomes while striving for social advancement. Scholars (Fordham, 1996) identify this next level of resistance as "conformist"—in the sense that young people embrace the education system with the intention of seeking personal gains, although not necessarily agreeing with all the ideological filigree espoused by educational institutions. They use schooling for their own purposes: educational achievements that garner individual gains with social implications beyond the classroom, such as economic mobility, gender equality, and racial parity.

Solórzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001: 319–20) contend that students may attain another, yet more conscious form of resistance, which they call "transformational resistance." A transformational approach to resistance moves the student to a "deeper level of understanding and a social justice orientation." Those engaged in transformational resistance address problems of systematic injustice and seek actions that foster "the greatest possibility for social change" (ibid.).

Although Solórzano and Delgado-Bernal (2001) provide a useful typology (self-defeating, conformist, and transformational) that acknowledges the complexities of resistance, the education and development processes

leading to resistances are somewhat under-discussed. Apparently, the production of cultural subjectivities (Bourgois, 1995; Levinson et al., 1996; Willis, 1977) is related to resisting ideological oppressions. However, these cultural productions tend to occur in more informal settings (non-institutional, non-organizational) such as peer groups, families, and street corners.

The work presented in this volume agitates toward another framework—where youth are engaged in multi-generational collectives for critical inquiry and action, and these collectives are housed in youth development settings, schools, and/or research sites. With this series of cases, we challenge scholars, educators, and activists to consider how to create such settings in which research for resistance can be mobilized toward justice.

A key question is whether resistance can develop within formal processes (pedagogical structures or youth development practices). If this question is left unattended, we risk perceiving youth resistances as "orientations" as opposed to processes. In other words, the kinds of resistances, whether self-defeating, conformist, or transformational, will be identified as emerging from some inherent fixed, cultural sensibility. This perspective of young people sustains the ridged essentialization trap that has plagued studies of youth for years (Anderson, 1990; Newman, 1999; Ogbu, 1978). The traditional essentialized view maintains that any problem (poverty, educational failure, drug and alcohol abuse, etc.) faced by youth results of their own volition, thereby blaming the victim for the victim's problems.

Critical youth studies goes beyond the traditional pathological or patronizing view by asserting that young people have the capacity and agency to analyze their social context, to engage critical research collectively, and to challenge and resist the forces impeding their possibilities for liberation. However, another step is needed to further distance critical youth studies from essentialized perspectives by acknowledging that resistances can be attained through formal processes in "real" settings, through multi-generational collectives, and sometimes among youth alone. YPAR represents not only a formal pedagogy of resistance but also the means by which young people engage transformational resistance.

PAR in Education

Participatory action research (PAR) (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991; McTaggart, 1997; Selener, 1997) has long been associated with revolutionary pedagogical projects. The history of popular education (Kane, 2001; La Belle, 1987; Wanderley et al., 1993) reveals that PAR has often served as the research arm, so to speak, of many popular education programs. Similar to PAR, popular education (Torres and Fischman, 1994) seeks to engage

people in a learning process that provides knowledge about the social injustices negatively influencing their life circumstances. The knowledge about social injustice includes understanding methods for change and thus organizing skills necessary to remedy the injustice. Highlander, the most recognized popular education school in the United States, trained civil rights organizers with this pedagogical approach, including most notably civil rights leader Rosa Parks.

PAR follows popular education by focusing the acquisition of knowledge on injustice as well as skills for speaking back and organizing for change. However, the pedagogy is specifically research such that participants conduct a critical scientific inquiry that includes establishing key research questions and methods to answer them, such as participant observation, qualitative interviews and questionnaires, film, and speak outs. PAR follows and extends principles of validity and reliability by challenging, for instance, where "expert validity" and "construct validity" live—in conversations with those who experience oppression, not simply those who decide to study social issues. Our projects seek new forms of reliability, including theoretical and provocative generalizability, trying to understand how youth research in East Los Angeles schools (see Morrell, this volume) confirms and challenges similar work undertaken by and on high school push outs in New York City (Tuck et al., this volume). In and across sites, we work to craft research designs to dig deeply into local youth politics and also speak across sites and historic moments to understand the long reach of injustice and resistance over time and place. In many ways, PAR challenges and extends "traditional" research such that problems or conditions are analyzed through a rigorous, systematic process.

Herein lie the differences. The first and most important difference is the "researcher." In most PAR projects, the researcher is not a lone investigator but individuals in a collective. Together, or individually in the group, they are systematically addressing the same problem (high-stakes testing, inadequate conditions in schools, anti-immigration policies, push-out practices, violence against women) with a lens that may be crafted individually or collectively. Researchers engage in ongoing conversation and reflection with others, across generations, similarly poised to inquire and act. Research is therefore a collective process enriched by the multiple perspectives of several researchers working together. Second, the researcher, or more appropriately, researchers, are more or less "insiders" in a given situation. In other words, they are the stakeholders within a particular institution, organization, or community. For example, a PAR project in prisons would include prisoners as researchers, or a school project might include student researchers as well as push outs, educators, university professors.

Stakeholders should not be narrowly defined or limited. In any given

situation, there might be different types of stakeholders with different interests. Education-based PAR projects feasibly could include policy makers, teachers, administrators, parents, students, push outs and the public, since they all are stakeholders.

Third, stakeholders participating in PAR projects tend to be critical race researchers, adhering closely to the Critical Race Theory (CRT) tenet of intersectionality (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Although understanding that race and racism are formative processes within their social contexts, PAR stakeholders look to analyze power relations through multiple axes. Thus, race intersects with gender, class, and sexuality within typical PAR inquiries.

Fourth, the knowledge gained from the research should be critical in nature, meaning that findings and insights derived from analyses should point to historic and contemporary moves of power and toward progressive changes improving social conditions within the situation studied.

Finally, PAR knowledge is active and NOT passive (i.e. mere facts and figures organized for storage). Research findings become launching pads for ideas, actions, plans, and strategies to initiate social change. This final difference distinguishes PAR from traditional research by pointing to a critical epistemology that redefines knowledge as actions in pursuit of social justice.

Although YPAR includes everything described above as participatory action research, we believe that YPAR is also explicitly pedagogical, with implications for education and youth development. The pedagogical philosophy on which YPAR is based derives from Freire's (1993) notion of praxis—critical reflection and action. Students study their social contexts through research and apply their knowledge to discover the contingent qualities of life. Thus, the important lesson obtained from engaging in this pedagogical praxis is that life, or more specifically the students' experiences, are not transcendental or predetermined. Rather, praxis reveals how life experiences are malleable and subject to change, and the students possess the agency to produce changes. The praxis aspects of YPAR inspire profound education and development outcomes.

Through participatory action research, youth learn how to study problems and find solutions to them. More importantly, they study problems and derive solutions to obstacles preventing their own well-being and progress. Understanding how to overcome these obstacles becomes critical knowledge for the discovery of one's efficacy to produce personal as well as social change. Once a young person discovers his or her capacity to effect change, oppressive systems and subjugating discourses no longer persuade him or her that the deep social and economic problems he or she faces result from his or her own volition. Rather, the discovery humanizes the individual, allowing him or her to realize the equal capabilities and

universal intelligence in all humans, while acknowledging the existence of problems as the result of social forces beyond his or her own doing.

Although YPAR provides the opportunity for young people to recognize how social constructions mediate reality, the praxis of YPAR allows them to perceive the human machinations behind these constructions and thus encourages recreative actions to produce realities better suited to meet their needs and interests. The knowledge that human agency constructs reality is power—a power that has very specific education and development outcomes. Young people possessing critical knowledge of the true workings of their social contexts see themselves as intelligent and capable. Thus, academic capacities should increase along with problem-solving abilities.

In the end, YPAR represents a fundamental, critical strategy for youth development, youth-based policy making and organizing, and education. The cases presented in this book provide a striking contrast to the many failed pedagogical and youth development approaches purporting to enhance the capacities of traditionally under-served youth. By providing the opportunity to study the reasons for under-service, youth excel personally and also address the root causes maintaining traditions of negligence and dispossession. The two strands of personal and contextual are obviously linked, and engaging youth in processes that address both lead to more profound education and development outcomes. YPAR is a process that situates an individual's learning in his or her socio-historical context—the basis of what some scholars believe is sound pedagogical practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Moll, 1990).

The chapters in this book speak more directly to how YPAR is transformative for individuals and the social context in which they are situated. Youth researchers along with adult researchers contribute to the authorship of this book. Thus, *Revolutionizing Education* represents a multi-generational collaboration for the advancement of educational practices. The youth contributors originate from different cities, and the adult researchers have multiple ties to anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, and linguistics. Therefore, the collaboration offers a unique range of generational, geographical, and inter-disciplinary perspectives on education, youth development, and participatory action research. Following the YPAR cases are senior scholars commentating on the transformative potential of the particular pedagogical approach. Sandy Grande, Maxine Greene, Pauline Lipman, Luis Moll, and John Rogers contribute senior scholar commentaries.

Shawn Ginwright contributes the next chapter and discusses in detail the critical politics of democracy, dissent, and analysis. YPAR is a prime methodology, with extensive potential for "art and imagination," for preparing and engaging youth in democratic processes as well as providing young

people with a systematic way to analyze the oppressive circumstances within various institutional settings. Ginwright argues that YPAR teaches young people to be active citizens willing and ready to expand their democratic rights and take responsibility for sustaining and promoting democracy. He also adds that YPAR is the best example of democratic and political education in the current realm of youth development programs and approaches for enhancing civic engagement among young people.

Torre and Fine et al. highlight deep participation and how YPAR represents an important example of critical epistemology. They provide examples of deep participation from *Echoes of Brown*—a project in which students participated in a series of "research camps," each held for two days at a time in community and/or university settings. Deconstructing who can "do" research, what constitutes research, and who benefits, they were immersed in methods training and social justice theory. The students learned how to conduct interviews, focus groups, and participant observations; to design surveys and organize archival analyses. They explore the methodological implications of elevating youth knowledge as an explicit engagement and interrogation of power and difference. Their chapter concludes with reflections on performance as a critical and provocative outcome of YPAR.

Tuck et al. present a youth participatory action research project in New York, Collective of Researchers on Educational Disappointment and Desire (CREDD), and their research endeavor, the Gate-ways and Get-aways Project. This project focuses on the overuse of general educational development (GED) credential to push students out of the New York City school system.

Cahill et al. describe the YPAR project of the Fed Up Honeys, a group of young womyn of color studying the effects of gentrification in their New York City neighborhoods. For the Fed Up Honeys, YPAR achieved individual and social transformation by "seeing the world through different eyes, coupled with a desire to open others' eyes." The Fed Up Honeys help us understand the power of their sticker campaign, where they placed stickers all over the Lower East Side to challenge dominant stereotypes about young womyn of color.

Romero et al. document YPAR within the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP), a social science curriculum designed to empower Latina/o students to find solutions to educational disparities. SJEP students conduct research on racial segregation in schools located in Tucson, Arizona. Findings are presented to school officials to determine the best strategies for remedying educational injustices and promoting greater equity within the school system. The students create video documentaries, presentations, and newsletter/reports based on their research findings. These products of PAR become tools for organizing necessary institutional changes within Tucson schools.

Ernest Morrell discusses a YPAR project for IDEA—UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access. IDEA is a network of scholars, students, professionals in schools and public agencies, advocates, community activists, and urban youth. IDEA's mission is to challenge the pervasive racial and social class inequalities in Los Angeles and in cities around the nation, with a special focus on high-quality schooling. IDEA's YPAR project is the summer Youth Summit that features research by youth from all over Los Angeles with the intention of ameliorating conditions in public schools.

Chiara Cannella provides a concluding chapter, which discusses PAR and its connections/tensions with educational theory, practice, and national policies. In particular, Cannella writes about how the educational approaches of the YPAR cases presented in the book contend with the NCLB climate of high-stakes testing and standardization. She discusses the differences between PAR and NCLB, and explains how PAR might achieve the objectives of NCLB, perhaps more effectively. PAR is examined in relation to the achievement gap, academic skills, accountability, and evaluation, areas for which NCLB purports to have effective systems. The discussion of PAR and NCLB exposes potential flaws and incorrect assumptions of current national policies and theories.

Michelle Fine ends our collection with an epilogue written in the form of a fictional letter recommending Assistant Professor H. for tenure and promotion. In this epilogue, she answers the following questions about YPAR: Is this scholarship rigorous? Is there an intellectual tradition within which this work is situated? What about bias? Why are so many of the articles co-authored with high school students? Isn't this just community service? These questions are in reality excuses, not necessarily questions, usually presented by ivory tower institutions to trivialize PAR in comparison to more "traditional" research methods. By answering these questions/excuses, Fine sets the record straight by arguing that YPAR contributes to serious scholarship through rigorous and valid research inquiries. Although most forms of scholarship are hesitant to make this claim, YPAR fosters the kinds of intuitional changes needed for more equitable social relations.

The YPAR projects presented in this book are located throughout the country (Arizona, California, and New York) and cover a range of educational settings—after-school programs, NGOs, and state-mandated US history courses. The diversity of locales and settings allows the reader to comprehend how to conduct similar YPAR projects in different locales (local neighborhoods, city centers, and summer camps) and different situations (classrooms, institutions, and organizations).

Most importantly, the reader should carefully attend to how YPAR represents a systematic approach for engaging young people in transformational resistance, educational praxis, and critical epistemologies. By attaining knowledge for resistance and transformation, young people create their

own sense of efficacy in the world and address the social conditions that impede liberation and positive, healthy development. Learning to act upon and address oppressive social conditions leads to the acknowledgment of one's ability to reshape the context of one's life and thus determine a proactive and empowered sense of self. The intended consequence of YPAR is praxis and thus changes of consciousness that allow the young person to perceive him/herself as capable of struggling for and promoting social justice within his or her community.

Finally, many young people involved in YPAR projects could be classified—in the traditional sense—as "marginalized" or "at risk." The standard school system was failing them; they were doing poorly in their classes and were planning to drop out. However, the YPAR project in which they participated inspires new meanings of education. The projects engender educational experiences that are rigorous, relevant, and meaningful for them. They, in turn, excel academically and have reason to not only graduate from high school but also enroll in college. For the first time, education is something students do—instead of something being done to them—to address the injustices that limit possibilities for them, their families, and communities. Consequently, education in YPAR projects includes more than learning skills and abstract knowledge, but also the acquisition of intellectual resources through which students initiate revolutionary projects to transform themselves and the worlds which they inhabit. Similar to the concluding scene in *The Matrix*, PAR is the metaphorical phone booth that allows young people to dial into the systems of domination to inform the "powers that be," like Neo, that they are here, ready to resist.

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