A DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE OF A LATINX RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP TO DEVELOP THE *ROOTS Y RESISTENCIA* INTERVENTION

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Abstract

A key component of community-based research is the development of research-practice partnerships (RPP) with community-based partners. These partnerships are often developed with adults (e.g., community-based organizers) outside of higher education institutions (Farrell et al., 2021). This approach to RPP development may exclude youth contributions to RPPs, which may reduce the impact of research that aims to impact youths' lives. With the intent to disrupt adultism and white supremacy in the development of RPPs and the practice of YPAR (Aldana & Richards-Schuster, 2021), this descriptive narrative account employs a counter-storytelling approach to make explicit the relationship and team development processes that serve as the bedrock for the early-stage development of a RPP between youth, students, (post-baccalaureate and graduate students) and faculty—all of whom identify as Latinx—in the context of a Hispanic Serving Institution. In detailing the processes and structures that support our team's development, we aim to make the process, pivots, and promises of YPAR with Latinx young people more explicit, which may increase YPAR with Latinx youth, particularly research on youths' racialized and sociopolitical experiences.

Many researchers who intend to disrupt the sociopolitical status quo in their careers may resonate with the values of youth participatory action research (YPAR) and may yearn to engage in this work in ways that honor the ethos—research with and for youth in service of social justice—of the approach. However, people may wrestle with how to engage in YPAR in ways that are collaborative, sustainable, and beneficial for all members. Individuals interested in collaborating with youth to engage in YPAR may ask: How do authentic, collaborative, and participatory research partnerships with youth emerge? What is the "in" to engaging in YPAR?

According to conceptualizations of YPAR, the answer to these questions would be to, presumably, start with youth and their interests (Horn et al., 2016). It is, therefore, advisable to routinely question and reflect on whether a team's research and approach to research are truly aspiring to the radical ethos of YPAR and other participatory approaches (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Fine et al., 2021) There are multiple "in" points to engaging in YPAR, starting with the development of research-practice partnership (RPP) teams rooted in authentic relationships, shared experiences, and values between youth and adults who are invested in youth development and liberation, such as academic faculty and higher education students (Bañales et al., 2021).

A key component of community-based research, such as YPAR, is the development of a RPP. A RPP is "a long-term collaboration aimed at educational improvement or equitable transformation through engagement with research. These partnerships are intentionally organized to connect diverse expertise and shift power relations in the research endeavor to ensure all partners have a say in the joint work." (Farrell et al., 2021, p. 5). Although there is growing work that documents well-established RPPs (Collier, 2019; Farrell et al., 2022; Ozer et al, 2020), there is a need for work that documents how RPPs form at the early stages of development. There is a particular gap in work that illustrates the development of RPPs that include young people as authentic collaborators, especially racially/ethnically minoritized youth, alongside adults.

The development of youth-adult partnerships has become a central focus of research that aims to communicate mechanisms that undergird the YPAR process and other youth engaged work (Akiva et al., 2014; Zeldin et al., 2008; Zeldin et al., 2013). Core elements of youth-adult partnerships include creating equitable decision-making processes between youth and adults and sharing intentions to promote community connectedness (Zeldin et al., 2013). Importantly, by focusing on bridging relationships between both youth and adults, youth-adult partnerships aim to support collective reflection and action to address community and social issues that matter to all members in the partnership. The structure of youth-adult partnerships, such as who represents the "adults" in the partnership, may take different forms. For example, adult partners might include community leaders, community organizers, and research scholars in university settings. Although youth-adult partnership implies singular interactions between youth and adults, youth-adult partnerships may include multiple relationships across youth and adult leaders. This can look like youth-leading activities or trainings for younger peers, as well as adult interactions with both groups of youth (Akiva et al., 2014). Focusing on the development of authentic relationships between youth and adults may increase the likelihood that RPPs that include youth and adults are more loving, sustainable, and impactful, as strong relationships with people on the team—not systems of oppression—are what drive efforts in the partnership.

Current Project

In this article, we bridge research on YPAR (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Ozer et al., 2018), related youth voice and development research (Aldana & Richards-Schuster, 2021; Bañales et al., 2023; Zeldin et al., 2013), and research on RPPs (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Farrell et al., 2021) to document the early-stage development of a RPP that centers the voices and contributions of youth, student leaders, and faculty—all of whom identity as Latina/x/o.

The collaboration aims to develop an intervention, or *Roots y Resistencia*, that fosters anti-racist identity and actions among Latinx youth through youth participatory action research (YPAR) practices. Employing a counter-storytelling approach, we present a descriptive narrative account of the development of our RPP. In doing so, we highlight the nature of, and processes associated with, 1) team development, 2) the formation of participatory structures that guided team involvement, and 3) building capacity for future participation. By interrogating our personal and group experiences while considering the broader literature, we aim to make explicit the invisible, often relational, work associated with YPAR. We hope this introspective examination of our collaborative work may inspire and support early career faculty, practitioners, and students to engage in YPAR work within RPPs that is sustainable, authentic, and impactful. The overall guiding question of this descriptive narrative account is: What relational and decision-making processes, team structures, and training opportunities are needed to create a RPP team that centers the active collaboration of Latinx young people in the development of an intervention that aims to promote Latinx youths' anti-racist identity and anti-racism action?

Counter-Storytelling and Narrative Approach

We use a counter-storytelling approach (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) to document the development of an equity-focused RPP between Latinx young people and adult researchers to advance the academic discourse on intergenerational RPPs. Counter-storytelling, as part of critical race methodology, may involve three forms of narrative inquiry: personal narratives, third-person accounts of others, and composite stories of collective experiences for building knowledge based on lived experience that critically examine how power and privilege operate in specific contexts (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In our case, we draw on our joint experience to present a composite and descriptive narrative account of the development of our RPP.

Per counter-story methodology, the goal of this descriptive narrative account is to provide a comprehensive summary and reflexive exploration of the decision-making processes, team structures, and training necessary for building an equitable and inclusive intergenerational RPP. A descriptive narrative account serves as a detailed documentation and systematic exploration of a unique context by considering people's motivations, perspectives, and relational dynamics and how these psychological and group processes shape events and experiences that occur within the context (Riessman, 2015; Sandelowski, 2000). To ensure trustworthiness of our practical insights, we highlight patterns within our shared experiences, offering sufficient detail for others to assess their validity and determine how they might apply them to their work (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002). We hope the rich description of individual and group experiences serves as anecdotal data for future inquiry that aims to understand similar psychological, behavioral, and structural processes.

The anecdotes provided in the following narrative were informed by various data sources, which included weekly group-level discussions that encouraged reflection on our team development processes, written notes from faculty and graduate student team members that captured continuous evaluation of team processes and experiences, and written outlines that supported young people collaborators to first reflect on and document their experiences on the RPP. These young people's narrative reflections were done without any adult members'

input (initially) in order to center youth voice and increase the likelihood that individuals would share their experiences on the RPP most honestly. Young people shared their reflections with the first and second authors of the manuscript, both of whom were tasked with integrating narrative accounts to streamline all sections of the manuscript. The content of all first-hand testimonies was retained verbatim with only stylistic edits made, such as deleting redundant information. The above data sources informed the development of themes highlighted in the current piece, which were documented in an outline and shared with the co-author team for feedback via email and a meeting. In accordance with our counter-storytelling and narrative approach, next we present the composite story that centers the voices and contributions of Latinx young people (Garcia, Reyes), Latinx faculty (Dr. Bañales, Dr. Aldana), and Latinx graduate students (Cabrera, Rodriguez) in the early-stage development of a RPP at a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Developing a Research-Practice Partnership with Latinx Youth

Team Development

Our composite narrative highlights the intergenerational journey of team development within the RPP. Initially framed as an adult-initiated project, the evolution of the partnership has shifted focus to centering relationships with young people. First, we review the adult-initiated origins of the work and the tensions and difficulties that arose from such an approach. Second, we discuss how we pivoted from centering adult voices in our work to instead center the relationships we already had with Latinx young people to (re)envision our YPAR approach to co-develop *Roots y Resistencia* and support related Latinx-youth serving initiatives.

Adult-Initiated Approach to Youth Participatory Action Research

The development of our RPP officially began in 2021 when academic faculty, community-based organizers, and research staff who are all adults came together to develop an intervention that aims to stimulate an anti-racist identity and anti-racism action among Latinx youth, or *Roots y Resistencia* (see Figure 1). The academic faculty members' interests to develop such an intervention were rooted in our programs of research on racially/ethnically minoritized youths' critical racial consciousness, ethnic-racial identity, and sociopolitical development (Aldana et al., 2012; Bañales et al., 2023; Rivas-Drake et al., 2021). These research interests are heavily informed by our commitment to translate research into practice, or to advance rigorous theory and empirical research on racially/ethnically minoritized youths' racialized and sociopolitical experiences that result in programs and practices in community and school-based settings that promote youths' awareness of and actions against racism (e.g., Aldana et al., 2016; Bañales et al., 2021). This commitment is intricately connected to our personal experiences
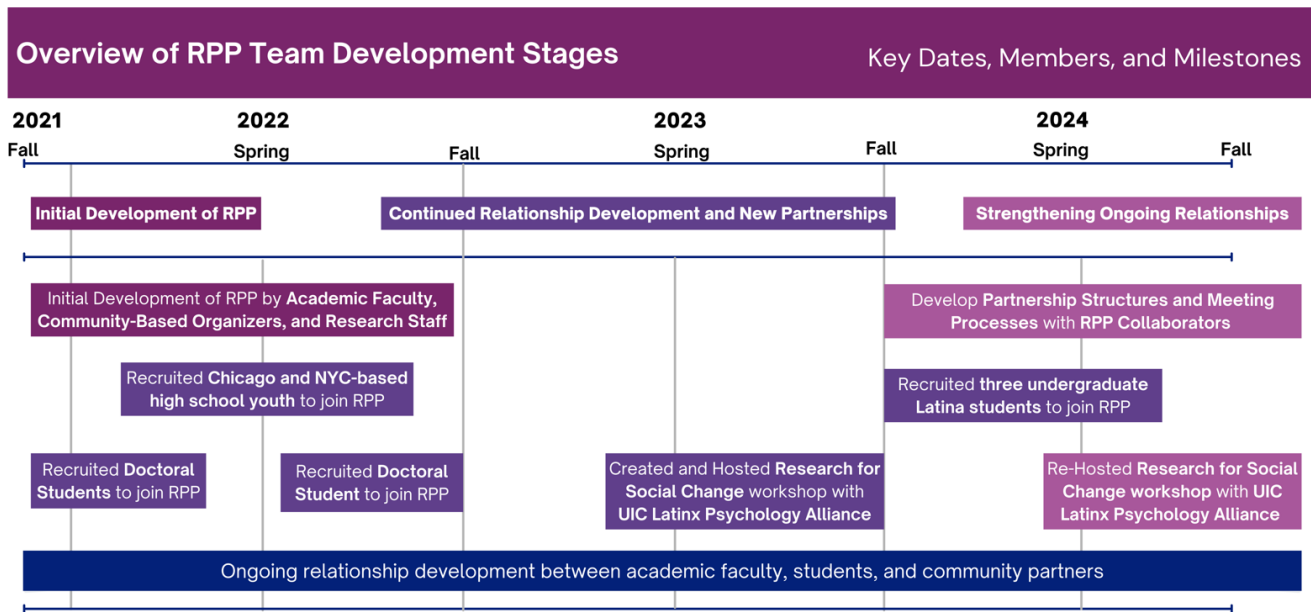
Figure 1 Key Dates, Members, and Milestones in RPP Team Development to Develop the Roots y Resistencia Intervention: 2021–Present.

Note. RPP = Research-Practice Partnership; UIC = University of Illinois at Chicago.

as Latinas navigating different racialized and sociopolitical contexts, such as navigating white dominated spaces in higher education as the first people in our families to do so. The decision to select initial RPP members who are adult, academic faculty with shared research interests and commitments was also motivated by our long-standing partnerships with one another, as we have nearly 10 years of successful collaboration together (e.g., Aldana, Bañales, Richards-Schuster, 2019; Bañales & Rivas-Drake, 2022).

From the initial development of the RPP, we (adult, academic faculty) routinely asked ourselves: Who is already promoting Latinx youths' critical racial consciousness? What programs and interventions might already exist? Guided by these questions, we connected with community organizers in New York who were leaders at a non-for-profit that focused on engaging Latinx adults in critical exploration of their identities as Latinx people in the context of a Spanish speaking program. Two Latinx community-organizers from the organization were excited about the idea of extending their work to Latinx youth so they joined the team. Our team began meeting weekly to discuss approaches on how to develop our intervention.

In light of the incredible strengths of an RPP that consisted of academic faculty, staff, and community organizers who all identified as Latina/x, we were unsettled by the reality that Latinx youth were not core members of our team and turned our primary efforts to recruit youth to join our emerging RPP. Through a series of interactive recruitment sessions with high school youth across Chicago and New York City (two locations of team members) in Spring 2022, we successfully recruited four Latinx youth high school students as paid collaborators to join our team (see Figure 1). In light of youths' excitement, we found it incredibly difficult to engage and thus retain youth collaborators due to barriers related to transitions of adolescence (e.g., graduating high school), and obstacles unique to minoritized youth, such as not having time for extracurricular activities due to

work expectations. The rigorous demands of academic schedules can also limit the availability of both youth and adult researchers, further hindering sustained involvement from members. Such difficulties have been reported in other work that emphasizes practical challenges associated with YPAR (Teixeira et al., 2021). Creating a RPP team that centered youth across state lines was a unique barrier we faced, particularly during the early stage of team development as we were in the process of identifying members' roles, team processes, goals, and outcomes of our work. As we navigated these difficulties, we decided to take a few months off from our work to re-orient ourselves. We asked ourselves: What existing relationships with young people in Chicago (the location of the primary adult, academic researcher of the intervention) do we already have? Who are young people in Chicago already engaging in anti-racism work with Latinx youth? Taking time to reflect on these questions allowed us to see that an exciting partnership between Dr. Bañales and a group of Latinx college student leaders was already blossoming in our own institutional backyard, or at the Hispanic Serving Institution.

Centering Relationships with Young People to (Re)Envision Participatory Action Research

As we reflected on our "in" into furthering our RPP development and related YPAR goals, we turned our attention to focusing on the relationships we already had with Latinx young people at the Hispanic Serving Institution. Dr. Bañales and a team of Latinx college student leaders (Garcia & Reyes) of the Latinx Psychology Alliance (LPA) connected around their shared interests to support the social and academic development of Latinx college students on their campus. Through a series of conversations in Summer 2023, we decided that we would create and host a series of virtual and in-person workshops in collaboration with multiple organizations across the University, including a large Latinx serving organization and an organization focused on student success, that introduced the topic of "Research for Social Change" to incoming Latinx college students (i.e., recent high school graduates) (see Figure 1).

The workshop had multiple goals. First, we recognized the importance of exposing college students to the importance of research, particularly early in the undergraduate years. Undergraduate students who participate in research experiences early in college are likely to experience a host of academic, social, and cognitive benefits, such as interest in obtaining Masters and Doctorate degrees (Russell et al., 2007). Minoritized college students, such as Latinxs and first-generation college students, significantly benefit from early exposure to research opportunities (Carpi et al., 2017), as they gain access to information (e.g., how to get involved in research) they would not normally be exposed to due to being "firsts" in college. Secondly, we valued the importance of introducing first-year college students to the notion of "Research for Social Change," or research that is grounded in our experiences as Latinx people that has the potential to advance social justice for Latinx communities. Informed by research and teaching perspectives that frame minoritized individuals' lived experiences as wisdom and knowledge (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Kim et al., 2022), we recognized the importance of grounding the content and process of workshops in students' sharing of their diverse lived experiences as Latinx people in order to promote students' engagement in workshops.

Furthermore, introducing college students to topics related to race, racism, and anti-racism before their official college career begins increases the likelihood that students may engage in social justice efforts throughout their college careers (e.g., Bañales et al., 2021). In addition to the benefits we hoped students would gain from participating in workshops, the workshops were used as a strategy to recruit first-year college students who were recent high school students to join our RPP. This strategy aimed to bypass barriers to recruitment and retention we faced in our initial recruitment of high school students. We believed that students' connection to the Hispanic Serving Institution and the workshops' focus on learning about how research can be used to positively impact *our* Latinx communities would increase students' interest to join and remain active on our RPP.

In Spring 2023, we (Garcia, Reyes, and other undergraduate college student members of the Latinx Psychological Alliance [LPA]) and Dr. Bañales' team—The CAMBIAR Collective—began to plan the content and logistics for the "Research for Social Change" workshops (see Figure 1). Due to our previous connections and work with a large campus service that served Latinx college students, we (Garcia, Reyes) introduced Dr. Bañales and her team to a staff member at the organization, who was vital in co-planning logistics for the workshops (e.g., reserving a room the in-person workshop and disseminating workshop flyers). Indeed, previous research documents that community members (e.g., undergraduate students, staff members on campus) serve vital "brokering" roles that support the research process (Fornssler et al., 2014). LPA was involved in all aspects of workshop planning and implementation. We worked with Dr. Bañales and her team to create an online RSVP form for the workshops, engaged in computer programming to disseminate the form to over 1,000 incoming Latinx undergraduate students, co-created the workshop PowerPoint, collected feedback on the workshop from other LPA members, co-facilitated the workshops, and took notes during the sessions. We were especially critical in ensuring that the presentation was accessible to incoming Latinx undergraduate college students who likely never engaged in formal conversations about research. For example, we thought that storytelling would be a creative and interactive component to integrate into the workshops. Storytelling and other qualitative approaches that center discussion and relationships (e.g., pláticas) serve as sensitive pedagogical and research approaches that capture nuances within and across members' experiences and validate individuals' lived experiences (Aldana, in press; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016).

The workshops were deemed a success on the basis of multiple metrics. Due to our collaboration with multiple campus organizations, particularly the large campus service that served Latinx students, we advertised our workshop to over 1,000 incoming first-year college students who identified as Latinx. Forty-six students RSVP'd for the workshops, five of whom attended the in-person session and six of whom attended the virtual session. Multiple student attendees at the workshop shared that discussing their experiences with other Latinx people made them feel understood and seen, and that they were excited to connect with other Latinx students, staff, and faculty so early in their college careers. Consistent with our goal for workshops to serve as a strategy to recruit Latinx youth to join our RPP, 26 interested undergraduates applied to the position and three were hired as paid research collaborators in Fall 2024 (see Figure 1). Although the CAMBIAR Collective had explicit research goals around hosting the workshops (i.e., we aimed to use workshops as a recruitment tool), ensuring that young people on the workshop development team (i.e., LPA members) felt valued and respected was the prime goal of our efforts together.

In addition to the research benefits of hosting the workshops, we (Garcia and Reyes) also experienced benefits from creating and facilitating the workshops. Throughout the process of creating the workshop, we felt enthusiastic and supported while working with Dr. Bañales and her team. The meetings we had with Dr. Bañales and her team were well organized. She and her team always came to the meetings with an agenda. There are considerations around how to approach community-based partnerships, particularly around navigating power dynamics with youth (Ozer, 2016; Teixeira et al., 2021). In the case of our work together, we found Dr. Bañales and her team's leadership around creating agendas and facilitating meetings helpful because it was LPAs first time hosting a type of event like this. We also think that Dr. Bañales and her team created a very inclusive space during the planning process of the workshop. They (Cabrera and Bañales) were open to listening to our ideas and supportive in incorporating those ideas into the workshop. During the process of working with Dr. Bañales and her team, we were assured that this was going to be a collaborative effort. We participated in many Zoom meetings and developed ways on how to implement LPAs missions and values into the presentation. In both workshops, I (Reyes) was free to talk about my experiences as a Latino undergraduate and how it has contributed to my success at the Hispanic Serving Institution. Throughout the process of working with Dr. Bañales and her research team, I felt secure about the collaboration, as well as supported. Overall, our ability to successfully reach a research goal (i.e., recruit Latinx youth research collaborators on the RPP team) can be largely attributed to the strong relationships we had between adult researchers and young people leaders, underscoring the relational nature of research.

Factors that Facilitate Equitable and Inclusive Youth-Adult Partnerships

Next, we explore the key factors that facilitated the development of strong youth-adult partnerships within the RPP. By engaging in reflexivity about our positionality and power dynamics, alongside implementing intentional group structures and processes, we created a supportive environment that nurtured meaningful intergenerational collaboration. Our engagement in reflexivity and awareness of our positionality allowed us to create youth-centered research structures that facilitated youths' contributions on our research team.

Reflexivity and Awareness of Positionality

One way to promote the development of RPP teams that include youth and adults involves all members' engaging in reflexivity around their positionality. Reflexivity refers to researchers' exploration, questioning, and discussion of their relationship to the team's research (Rivas-Drake et al., 2016; Stamatis & Lee, 2021). This process is predicated on the basis of individuals' reflection on their positionality, or individuals' questioning of how their social identities and positioning (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, neighborhood residence, housing structure, language use) shape the lenses they bring to the work and the "why" behind their engagement with

work. Indeed, research on the development of RPPs often describes the occupational roles of team members (Farrell et al., 2022), which is related to engaging in reflexivity. RPPs are often described as having members who are academic faculty and community-based members who engage in direct action with community members the partnership aims to impact (Cohen et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2022), although there is diversity in RPP members' roles (Farrell et al., 2019). Detailing differences in RPP members' occupational roles is incredibly valuable, as it aims to uplift the unique knowledge members have surrounding the issue (e.g., practice or research based). However, the majority of work on RPPs does not explicitly describe members' positionality or the reflexivity processes members engage while developing RPPs, such as describing all members' relationships with one another, the work, and communities the RPP intends to impact.

Given that higher education remains a predominantly white institution wherein the majority of faculty are white and male (Buchanan et al., 2021; Settles et al., 2023), it is likely that RPPs do not often include racially/ethnically minoritized faculty members and young people. It is vital for RPPs to be diverse along various aspects of social identity and positioning, especially ensuring that individuals who are members of communities the work aims to impact are collaborators on the team. This standard for representation should not be relegated to community-based members of the RPP as "diversity tokens" (Bess et al., 2009) and should be applied to all members of the RPP. There are significant scholarly and practice-based benefits for RPPs to be co-led by community-based leaders (e.g., young people), academic faculty, and students who are community members the team aims to impact (Malone, 2015; Vetter et al., 2022). There is an additional strength when women/girls of color, individuals from low-income backgrounds, people with non-traditional family structures and others with minoritized social experiences in U.S. society contribute to setting the agenda and execution of participatory scholarship (Friesen & Goldstein, 2022; Suarez-Balcazar, 2020).

Indeed, we believe that our ability to develop and implement the "Research for Social Change" workshops was facilitated by the strong relationships between adult researchers and young people leaders on the RPP. Our strong relationships were already in motion and were formed on the basis of members' routine engagement in reflexivity around our positionality as Latinx people. Indeed, my (Garcia) relationship with Dr. Bañales started in Fall 2022 when I took her *Psychology of Racism* class. Before the start of class, we talked about my plans for graduate school and our undergraduate school experiences. We realized that we had similar educational experiences, such as being participants in the Summer Research Opportunities (SROP) Program, which is a pipeline program for underrepresented college students to have rigorous research experiences that may result in obtaining a PhD. In our discussions before and after class, we also learned that we both served as leaders of Latinx-serving organizations during our college careers. In class, Dr. Bañales routinely spoke about her YPAR work with Latinx youth and encouraged us to apply for research positions to join her team. Through these conversations, I became interested in having Dr. Bañales collaborate with LPA. I thought that she would be a great professor to collaborate with because she is Latina and because of her research, which is connected to LPAs focus on supporting the well-being of Latinx communities. My experiences working with Dr. Bañales and her team were memorable because of the connection that I was able to continue to develop with her and the new connections I made with

her team. I believe that my relationship with her has grown more due to working with her on the workshop. Dr. Bañales is one of my professional role models.

Throughout the years of getting to know Dr. Bañales, I (Reyes) have learned that through her perseverance and experiences she has paved the way for many younger generations being a Mexican American woman and first-generation high school and college student. As a result, the work ethic behind her team has positively impacted LPA in ways that contribute to their missions and values. LPA believes in advocating for Latinx voices and under-represented groups by raising awareness on mental health and well-being. Additionally, LPA values togetherness through community bonding and experiences through storytelling to provide a supportive environment for Latinx students at our University. For this reason, I wanted to work with Dr. Bañales and her research team. Dr. Bañales and the CAMBIAR Collective supported me by giving me a platform to talk about my experiences at UIC and facilitate group discussions both online and in-person. Cabrera (a doctoral student in the Collective), in particular, has been a great resource for LPA, as she is very communicative, transparent, and honest. One thing that I take away from this experience is the bonds that flourished with Dr. Bañales and her team, including the memories that I will forever cherish with my organization. Not to mention the work that we created as a team was recognized by students on campus. I hope to see LPAs work continue to grow alongside Dr. Bañales and her team. The "Research for Social Change" workshops were only the beginning of a joint effort of ideas and projects. I anticipate our collective work will expand outside our Hispanic Serving Institution.

In summary, the above section illustrates the power that strong relationships between Latinx young people (college students) and faculty have in advancing research, and how individuals' engagement in reflexivity around their positionality supports the research development process. The above testimonies underscore that, although all students benefit from the presence of women of color faculty on college campuses (Vetter et al., 2022), racially/ ethnically minoritized students, in particular, benefit from having women of color faculty on campus, as women of color faculty provide informal and formal mentoring and research opportunities that are rooted in their shared cultural values and racial/ethnic experiences with students (Griffin, 2021).

Creating Partnership Structures and Processes

We are actively defining and negotiating youths' roles in our RPP alongside the development of other student leaders and the greater success of the team. Our access to opportunities, frameworks, and resources to support youth, student, and faculty development on the RPP is informed by the structural conditions of higher education, which are shaped by white supremacy culture and adultism (Buchanan et al., 2021; Teixeira et al., 2021). Consistent with our experiences as YPAR researchers who have trained or worked across multiple institutions, there are no formal undergraduate or doctoral courses on YPAR in the department. There are minimal opportunities to support faculty who engage in YPAR or yearn to develop YPAR practices. The minimal support to develop YPAR practices is intricately tied with broader incentive structures of academia that prioritize publishing quantitative research and grant writing (Aldana & Richards-Schuster, 2021; Teixeira et al., 2021).

In the context of and in response to white supremacy norms in higher education, our team has developed a "multi-tiered" scaffolding process to support youths' and students' development and participation in our RPPs research process (see Figure 2). This multi-tiered scaffolding process aims to support all members' understanding and application of YPAR frameworks in our RPP work, while situating YPAR frameworks in the context of our racialized and sociopolitical experiences as Latinx people. The process includes five meetings, all of which aim to support "Goal Implementation Sessions," or sessions that support youth researchers (first-year college students who recently graduated high school), student facilitators (post-baccalaureate and doctoral students), and student leaders (doctoral students) to collaborate in the RPPs research. These meetings include: 1) Planning Youth Engagement on Project—Meeting 1; 2) Planning Youth Engagement on Project—Meeting 2; 3) Large Group Team Meeting: Overview of Goals, Pre-Work, and Activities; 4) Goal Implementation Sessions; and 5) Large Group Meeting: Goal Implementation Share Out Session. These meetings have different foci, attendees, modes of connection (i.e., in person sessions vs. virtual sessions) and are developed in relation to one another.

The "Planning Youth Engagement on Project—Meeting 1" is a meeting where Cabrera and Rodriguez (doctoral students) and Dr. Bañales (the primary faculty investigator) create and discuss the goals, activities, and pre-work materials (e.g., empirical research articles, podcasts) that youth researchers and student facilitators will engage during "Goal Implementation Sessions." These meetings are used to brainstorm activities that are active, collaborative, and youth centered. Our team supports student facilitators to lead activities with youth researchers by including guided questions for facilitators to ask youth researchers around pre-work materials during group discussions. Student facilitators are also provided guidance on how to document the processes and outcomes of

RPP Partnership Structures and Meeting Processes

Meeting	Focus	Attendees
I. Planning Youth Engagement - Meeting 1	Discuss goals, activities, and pre-work materials for goal implementation / **Meeting IV** sessions.	Primary Investigator; Doctoral Students
II. Planning Youth Engagement - Meeting 2	Discuss best practices to support youth researchers or student facilitators' engagement in **Meeting I** materials.	Primary Investigator; Doctoral Students
III. Large Group Team Meeting: Overview	Learn about assigned activities to engage in during goal implementation / **Meeting IV** sessions; Discuss activity outcomes and facilitation and documentation protocols.	Primary Investigator; Doctoral Students; Youth Researchers; Post-Baccalaureate Fellows
IV. Goal Implementation Sessions	Engage in **Meeting I** activities that contribute to the advancement of RPP goals and student development.	Doctoral Students; Youth Researchers; Post-Baccalaureate Fellows
V. Large Group Meeting: Share Out	Share reflections on **Meeting IV** activities and processes; Provide updates on independent projects; Solicit team feedback.	Primary Investigator; Doctoral Students; Youth Researchers; Post-Baccalaureate Fellows

Figure 2 Overview of RPP Partnership Structures and Meeting Processes.
Note. RPP = Research-Practice Partnership.

each discussion, such as taking pictures of whiteboards. After these meetings, Cabrera and Rodriguez, as student leaders, continue to solidify the activities and pre-work materials team members will engage. The "Planning Youth Engagement on Project—Meeting 2" is a meeting that provides Cabrera and Rodriguez an opportunity to receive support from Dr. Bañales around questions they have around supporting youth researchers or student facilitators. The "Large Group Team Meeting: Overview of Goals, Pre-Work, and Activities" is the meeting where our team walks youth researchers and student facilitators through activities they will engage in for the week, outcomes of the work, and how to facilitate and document the process. Rodriguez and Cabrera co-facilitate this meeting as an opportunity to practice their skills as teachers and facilitators. The "Goal Implementation Sessions" are a series of in-person sessions that include only youth researchers and student facilitators to collaborate on activities that contribute to the advancement of RPP research goals and student development. Dr. Bañales intentionally does not attend these sessions, as to promote young people's autonomy and expression of ideas (Ozer, 2016). Finally, "Large Group Meeting: Goal Implementation Share Out Sessions" are meetings that include youth researchers, student facilitators, student leaders, and faculty. Facilitated by Dr. Bañales, these meetings provide a space for youth researchers and student facilitators to "share out" how they thought team activities went, as well as engage in reflection on the research outcomes they created. Youth researchers also have the opportunity to provide updates on their independent projects, such as the development of their podcast, which communicates their experiences on our research team and experiences as Latinas in the U.S.

Participation in the multitiered scaffolding approach to support youth researchers' collaboration on our RPP has served as a learning opportunity for all members on our RPP. Indeed, many of our members are experiencing shifts from previously engaging in traditional research and learning opportunities, including learning about action research in the classroom with little opportunity to engage in the practice. For example, during my first undergraduate research experience, I (Cabrera) primarily traveled to and from research sites and engaged in data collection and entry. Although these tasks contributed to research projects, my siloed and passive engagement often left me unsettled about the broader goals for conducting research. Too often, it felt that I was selfishly taking from participants rather than collectively working alongside them. These sentiments were shared by Irizarry (a post-baccalaureate student in the Collective). During my early undergraduate career, I (Irizarry) never learned about YPAR nor knew of opportunities to engage in YPAR. Like Garcia from LPA shared, my relationship with Dr. Bañales began when I took her *Psychology of Racism* course during the final year of my undergraduate career, and it was there that I first learned about YPAR. In this course, we reviewed resources and materials from the YPAR Hub—a digital repository at U.C. Berkeley. Eager to delve into opportunities to develop YPAR skills in practice, I then joined Dr. Bañales' research team. Although I had learned about YPAR content in Dr. Bañales' course, working on the team provides me direct hands-on experience to practice YPAR.

I (Cabrera) also had my first direct YPAR learning opportunity via Dr. Bañales. At the doctoral level, a critical component in deciding where to pursue graduate school is the type of training that is afforded at an institution, including opportunities to engage in YPAR-based courses. Yet, based on our personal experiences, few research-intensive institutions offer structured coursework that allows students to engage in YPAR. For example, during my graduate application process, I sought doctoral programs and research labs that upheld a commitment to praxis that

involves action to confront social inequalities. Through my search and into my first semester of graduate school, I observed that it is difficult to locate such opportunities because they are so scarce. Despite limited-to-no course-work opportunities that highlight YPAR, I am privileged to have met an advisor, Dr. Bañales, whose research and broader values aim to uplift young peoples' voices and does so through a program of research that includes a YPAR approach. As a graduate student working in the Collective, I was quickly exposed to YPAR readings, workshops, and began planning for projects that adopt youth-led and youth-informed perspectives. To experience this abundance of opportunity in my first semester of graduate school has been incredibly affirming and rewarding.

Although there was variability in members' familiarly with and practice of YPAR, all youth and student members were invested in deepening their YPAR practice and assumed active roles in the research development process. Students who have leadership opportunities in YPAR projects are uniquely positioned to advance core aspects of research, such as the development of research protocols and processes. This engagement in research may encourage students to see themselves as leaders or mentors for younger participants (Pyne et al., 2014). Beyond merely taking on greater responsibilities on the team, students' leadership development in the context of YPAR may stimulate their reflections on what it means to undertake YPAR projects in their own careers as well as how to navigate asymmetrical power relations within traditional research programs. In the Collective, our aim is to create student leadership opportunities in order to practice and refine YPAR skills as opposed to heightening divisions that already exist within the academy. For example, in the recruitment of our youth research collaborators, the post-baccalaureate and graduate students in the Collective were instrumental in the development, conduction, and decision-making of a two-round interview process. Our team developed an interview protocol that included a set of core interview questions, criteria, and outlined the scope of the research position. For the first round of interviews, two student members on our team conducted each interview, alternating between facilitating interview questions and noting key takeaways. At the conclusion of each interview, interviewers debriefed to decide whether they recommended applicants for a second interview, which Dr. Bañales later conducted.

Finding research teams in academic settings that offer leadership opportunities to practice YPAR can be difficult. As our RPP reflects on our personal experiences with YPAR, we are consistently questioning how well we are intentionally collaborating with youth and other student leaders on our team to better ensure we avoid subscribing to more passive and extractive research models common in academia. Aside from research involvement, how we perceive each other may drive how we show up in our research space. For example, although we recruited "research assistants" to join our team, this title does not reflect their role in our lab. Our students are leaders, thought partners, and collaborators.

Building Capacity for Participation

As we are actively building partnership structures and processes to support the collaboration of youth researchers on our RPP, we are also creating structures that aim to support youth leadership around their own unique research interests and generating financial and institutional support to advance our RPP work. We see both efforts as integral to sustaining our RPP and research efforts.

Creating Opportunities for Youth Leadership and Evaluation

We recognize a need to create more opportunities for youth to practice and exercise leadership skills that steer our team's research and practice-based goals. These developing efforts are done in the context of supporting youth to lead their own research projects and to engage in evaluation of team processes that aim to promote youth collaboration. At the end of Fall 2023, three undergraduate first-year Latina undergraduate students joined our team as paid research collaborators, and we began to think about how to support initiatives that were completely youth-led the following semester. However, within weeks of joining our team, our youth collaborators proposed to embark on their own research project, expressing a passion to lead since the beginning. Given their excitement and motivation to lead, we supported students to independently conceptualize their project's idea, visions, and timeline while receiving support from the larger RPP team.

For example, Cabrera met with youth collaborators during their initial project meeting to support their idea generation. From then on, youth have met as a team to plan, decide, and execute project activities. They ultimately decided to create a podcast driven by their experiences as first-year undergraduate Latinas in research. The podcast aims to engage with themes around what it means to be a "youth," how to make a difference in a big city as a young person, stigmas associated with identifying as Latina women in psychology-based professions, and the intersections between being young and identifying as Latinas. In the planning of their project, they mutually decided that it is critical for their first episode to capture their motivations, purpose, and goals for the podcast. They also created a plan on how to facilitate episodes, deciding that they would take turns introducing each episode to practice their facilitation skills. Additionally, they discussed dissemination methods, including practical and accessible options to share their work such as uploading episodes to YouTube. These practices—choosing podcast topics based on gaps in existing media, generating questions that pique their interests and learning goals, collaborating ideas, and discussing dissemination outlets—all embody characteristics of leaders and researchers. Youth research collaborators have shared that they are excited to engage in this process as they are hopeful their podcast can be used as a tool to broaden their network at the Hispanic Serving Institution. Trusting youth to initiate and lead research efforts may be a transformative experience for them, as they exercise their autonomy and voice, which has the potential to impact future developmental outcomes.

Early in the development of our RPP, we recognized that evaluation of youth-centered research practices was vital to learn how our work impacted youth researchers, student facilitators, and student leaders. To engage in preliminary evaluation of our team's youth-centered practices, Rodriguez suggested that our team meet for 20 minutes after youth "trainings" to debrief about what went well in our preparation and facilitation of sessions, and areas where we struggled to convey points clearly. From these informal discussions, we learned that our approach to sessions as "trainings" unintentionally shifted outcomes of our work to the research itself as opposed to supporting youth researchers' collaboration in the research process. Despite our positive intentions, our approach to "training" youth in research created a dynamic where we lectured to them. Our informal evaluation allowed us to pivot and re-design trainings as "Goal Implementation Sessions" that support youth researchers and student facilitators to engage discussions around race, racism, activism and to apply knowledge learned

from these discussions to the development of RPPs research goals. Although our initial evaluation of youth-centered practices has been promising, we recognize that more continuous evaluation is needed.

A more complex approach to evaluation involves youth participation in evaluation. Youth-driven evaluation involves youth collaboration in evaluating research and practice work (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Youth involvement in youth-led evaluation fosters increased engagement among youth participants, leading to enhanced program design and research outcomes (Richards-Schuster & Plachta Elliott, 2019). In our project, youth-led evaluation may include youths' involvement in analyzing recorded team meetings to code for how they were engaged as research collaborators during RPP team meetings.

Generating Financial and Institutional Support

Another way our team aims to advance our RPP work is by obtaining external funding. There has been an increase in grants that fund the collaborative work of RPPs (Farrell et al., 2021), which is exciting. However, in applying to many of these types of grants, particularly grants deemed more "prestigious" based on allocated funds and the reputation of agencies, we have experienced several barriers/challenges. Many grants geared toward supporting RPPs include review criteria that require project teams to demonstrate that they have a longstanding record of working together. We recognize that key features of RPPs are evidence of the sustained partnership and the resulting outcomes of the group's collaboration (Farrell et al., 2021). However, funding that is awarded primarily or solely based on the length of time the partnership has been formed may unintentionally privilege RPP led by more senior faculty or professionals, irrespective of the quality of their partnership with community members. To enhance equity and inclusion in RPP, grant institutions may consider assessing other metrics of collaboration success, such as the quality of relationships between academic and community-based partners (e.g., youth), power sharing in decision-making processes, and the team's potential to implement community-driven social change. For these reasons, grants that provide financial support for early career faculty or scholars who are in the initial stages of building their collaborative RPP work is necessary. Competitive funding, either awarded internally through academic institutions or externally through foundations or agencies, is critical to support and sustain the development of early-stage RPPs, especially RPPs that include racially/ethnically minoritized members. Indeed, community-based research with underserved communities (e.g., youth and families of color) is more likely to fail in its nascent stages, as this work takes considerable time, team effort, and care (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2016). Resources that support the development and longevity of early-stage RPPs is crucial to sustain this collaborative work.

Conclusion

In summary, the above piece employed a counter-storytelling, descriptive narrative account to explore the following question: What relational and decision-making processes, team structures, and training opportunities are needed to create a RPP team that centers the active collaboration of Latinx young people in the development of

an intervention that aims to promote Latinx youths' anti-racist identity and anti-racism action? In doing so, we highlighted the development of team processes, participatory structures and processes, and building capacity for participation. By interrogating our personal and group experiences as Latinx people with broader literature on RPPs (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Farrell et al., 2021), YPAR and related youth voice work (Aldana & Richards-Schuster, 2021; Bañales et al., 2023; Zeldin et al., 2013), we aim to make the invisible work associated with YPAR more visible, particularly work with Latinx youth.

Engaging in YPAR can be incredibly difficult for individuals early in their academic careers, particularly for students and early career faculty who face incredible demands to reach academic milestones, publish, and establish research credibility in fields that still privilege quantitative research over qualitative and participatory approaches (Buchanan et al., 2021; Settles et al., 2019). Multiple intersecting systems of oppression that operate in society and manifest in academia also make it difficult for minoritized individuals (e.g., women of color, caregivers of color, first-generation college students) to engage in YPAR. Minoritized faculty (e.g., women of color) may report a dedication to engage in research that positively benefits their own communities or other minoritized communities (e.g., APA, 2023). This dedication to address community issues may not align with broader funding priorities set by grant-making organizations and ultimately hinder the effectiveness and sustainability of such initiatives. Thus, minoritized youth, faculty, and students might be especially impacted by barriers associated with YPAR given their minoritized experiences in society and in the academy.

Given these systemic barriers, we intend for our recommendations to not be prescriptive. Racially/ethnically minoritized faculty and students already must navigate and survive a host of unspoken norms in academia around what to study and how to do it (Aguirre, 2000; APA, 2023). We aim for our reflections and recommendations to provide clarity on everyday decisions and practices that can be used to engage youth in RPPs dedicated to YPAR. Flexibility, grace, compassion and critical self-reflection is needed to engage in youth-centered RPPs. In other words, what may work for us at this point in our careers may not work for you. We hope our work inspires the next generation of YPAR scholars and practitioners, particularly those with racially/ethnically minoritized experiences.

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