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Afterword: Change and Continuity: An Introduction to the LatCrit Taskforce Recommendations

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For the past thirteen years, the LatCrit community has gathered annually to produce knowledge and promote praxis focused on the transformation of subordinate society.[5] In doing so, the LatCrit experiment in critical outsider jurisprudence is both ordinary and unique. Our efforts are ordinary in that many, if not most, genres of critical outsider jurisprudence focus their scholarly and activist efforts on the development of antisubordination knowledge and policy. However, our efforts are also unique in that the LatCrit community is the only community, among the various strands of critical outsider jurisprudence, to have managed continuity and consistency for thirteen straight years.[6] In this afterword, we reflect on the ways that this history has helped us articulate recommendations for the future of this organization. Our aim is to extrapolate the critical lessons from this collective body of knowledge, which helped guide our thoughts when developing and practicing a critical internal review of our organization. We hope these considerations will be useful to scholars of all stripes in their continuing efforts to connect law with social justice.

Of course, one immediate observation is that the LatCrit community has been committed to both community building and coalition building since its inception.[7] For more than a century, racial and ethnic majorities exploited a monopoly over formal law and have been violently degrading, if not erasing, all consciousness of community or collective identity among

People of Color.[8] Even after developing a conscious sense of community, People of Color in the U.S. remain decisively outnumbered and outgunned for precisely the same reasons as before—racial and ethnic subjugation designed to destroy any sense or possibility of collective action to secure redress and equality. Thus, the development of community and coalition-building is a prerequisite to any serious effort to establish antisubordination policies capable of redressing entrenched structures of inequality. From the outset, LatCrit participants have articulated that these commitments are rooted in both substance and structure.[9] Substantively, the pursuit of community and coalition-building is grounded in the knowledge and experience of jurisprudential brethren like feminist legal theory, Critical Race Theory (CRT), and queer legal theory.[10] Structurally, this longstanding LatCrit commitment to community and coalition-building is rooted in the pragmatic recognition that Communities of Color in the U.S. have no viable choices without building critical coalitions.

While the cumulative record of critical outsider jurisprudence shows the importance of community and coalition-building, it also shows how conflict and conflict management play a key role in antisubordination, theory, and praxis. Indeed, issues of "difference" that challenged the early generations of critical outsider scholars are a prime expression of the role that conflict and its myriad sources have played in the conception and articulation of critical outsider jurisprudence over the years. Questions of difference, whether based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, special needs, or any other axis of identity, have been, and remain, a perennial source of conflict and concern both within and beyond circles of critical inquiry. Over the years, LatCrit, Inc. has, on occasion, experienced the effects of said conflicts and concerns. In response to the most recent polemics arising from a series of concerns that came to light during the 2008 annual board meeting, which occurred at the end of the Thirteenth Annual LatCrit Conference, LatCrit quickly responded by creating a LatCrit Evolution Taskforce to engage any and all allegations and conditions that

had been affecting the organization. As members of this Taskforce, we developed a process of self-reflection for the LatCrit board of directors that produced a list of recommendations to enable the board to engage the aforementioned concerns.

Having reached a milestone in the history of the LatCrit project, in this Afterword, we aim to revisit questions of community, coalition-building, and conflict as a means of situating ourselves in a particular moment in time and as a way of looking beyond this moment to the jurisprudential horizon before us. We take this opportunity to situate the LatCrit Evolution Taskforce process and recommendations within these historical debates and introduce our perspective on the importance of continuing the LatCrit project. To do so, we divide the Afterword into three parts. The first part provides a reflection on some of the key contributions made by LatCrit scholars and other participants in this project that have shaped the contours of the way we think about LatCrit as an organization and its substantive contributions to critical jurisprudence. We engage in a critical self-reflection of some of the ways that LatCrit theory and scholarship more generally have influenced our thinking as a Taskforce. The second part introduces the reader to our efforts to translate these theoretical insights into practice through a reflection on the formation of the LatCrit Evolution Taskforce and the implementation of its charge. While the Taskforce was initially conceived as an effort to address the concerns that emerged during the 2008 annual board meeting, it has since evolved to address other efforts to renew this organization and prepare it to head into a second decade of successful engagement. We conclude with an invitation to continued dialogue and a forward-looking vision of LatCrit that aims to practice the theory.

I. THEORIZING COMMUNITY AS COALITION BUILDING

The relationship between theory and practice in LatCrit has been consistently narrated since the organization's inception and has been published in many of the yearly symposia's forewords and afterwords.[11]

These narratives not only memorialize the historical moment of critical engagement, but also provide us with a historical "road map" that guides us through the contingent terrain of change and continuity that shapes the contours of LatCrit.

Since its inception, LatCrit has provided an intellectual space to engage in community and coalition building. For example, early debates framed the LatCrit project as an effort to both "form a regular scholarly venue for the discussion of social and legal issues especially germane to Latinas/os"[12] and a critical space for coalition building that transgressed all essentializing socio-spatial boundaries. We believe that this contingent and fragile space provides both challenges and opportunities for critical praxis and the constant construction and critique of the LatCrit project.

As Francisco Valdes has noted, "LatCrit theory…is a project perpetually under construction, but one whose construction, at least in these formative moments, seems consciously guided by a progressive, inclusive and self-critical theory about the purpose and experience of theory."[13] As a project under construction, LatCrit was envisioned as a concept, entity and community subjected to constant revision and change. Permanence and stability were not the end goals; on the contrary, change and questioning were conceived as important tools for growth. As we engaged in multiple processes of reflection throughout the better part of the year following LatCrit XIII, we found several theoretical discussions to be useful guides. Essays defining LatCrit as a democratic experiment, and works on critical coalition building and self-critique, shaped the contours of our collective understanding of the LatCrit project. These works also helped inspire the methodological and interpretive approaches we adopted when developing and conducting our internal self-study project.

We relied on Valdes's seven guideposts for a LatCrit theory, outlined in the foreword to the first annual symposium proceedings, as the basis for a collective understanding of LatCrit's core principles. These include a recognition of the political nature of legal scholarship; a call to

conceptualize scholarship as a form of activism that can be used both inside and outside legal institutions; a focus on principles that foster coalition building, shared purpose, and collective solidarity; a concern with the egalitarian principles that foster commonalities while respecting differences; a commitment to the interrogation of past constructions that have enabled the subordination of historically-oppressed groups of people and the use of this knowledge to challenge continuing forms of oppression; and a continual engagement in self-critique.[14] Of particular importance to our project was LatCrit's commitment to continual self-critique and critical coalition building, which two key essays have defined in detail.

The value of LatCrit—a self-critical project always in flux—is well delineated in "Latinas/os and the Politics of Knowledge Production."[15] In this piece, Margaret Montoya and Francisco Valdes describe LatCrit as a democratic experiment characterized by openness and the ample participation of diverse scholars in diverse situations. These concepts are important and fundamental to our Taskforce work because they provide guidelines for the creation of a space that enables critical dialogue. The idea of LatCrit as a work in progress necessarily implies the possibility of self-criticality as a guiding principle. Self-criticality also includes the need for the constant questioning of our practices and the constant adjustments or modifications necessary to our principles in order to reconcile our practice with our theory and to evolve our theory in light of our practice. This is the core of democratic praxis.

This objective is not always easy to achieve, and it is not necessarily pleasant. It is sometimes conflictive and at times messy. Nevertheless, LatCrit's democratic experiment challenges us to engage in self-criticality as a basic precondition for the development of principled praxis. Through self-reflection and critique, the LatCrit community can work incrementally to refine these practices in order to advance, as best as we can, our common and basic commitment to antisubordination in multidimensional terms. This process of self-reflection and critique does not yield linear progress or tidy

solutions that satisfy our aspirations. Yet, this practice—with its emphasis on programmatic opportunities for junior scholars to develop and mature—today represents an oppositional or "dissenting" LatCrit norm, which is key to the creation of a vibrant and self-sustaining democratic academic society within the still-mostly-imperial structures and biases of the legal academy of the U.S.

To the undiscerning eye, the LatCrit experiment—and other democratic efforts—may appear to be "messy" when compared to the relatively familiar or controlled practices of the imperial or vanguardist models of academic community and scholarship. However, democratic unruliness is a reflection of the open intellectual society that the LatCrit community has sought to bring into existence.[16] LatCrit theory seeks to not only explore the promise of democratic representation and the actual operations of power in society, but also integrates these as part of its internal dynamic. The creation of the Taskforce, and the board self-study process led by this group, then, were a direct result and remain a clear example of performing the theory of self-criticality.

We believe that it is possible to agree on principled convergences of interests that transcend the limits of liberal "consensus building." Conscious of the limitations of centering a community on a single identity, we agree that it is possible to build coalitions that can be decentered from any particular identity and that build on the intersections of difference. Viewed in this way, critical coalition building can be tantamount to community building and can rest upon a foundation of principled interest convergences. Julie A. Su and Eric K. Yamamoto's definition of critical coalitions and Valdes's explanation of a forward-looking ethic guided our imagination and efforts in the Taskforce.

In "Critical Coalitions: Theory and Praxis," Su and Yamamoto explain that the future of coalition building efforts depend largely on the groups' ability to combine theory with practice, a core tenet of the LatCrit project. Of particular significance to the Taskforce was Su and Yamamoto's

assertion that "among coalition partners, intergroup healing and reconciliation are sometimes a necessary first step to, and always an ongoing process in, forging lasting alliances."[17] They remind us, in fact, that the process of building sustainable critical coalitions is also "messy"; the joys of forging critical bonds are accompanied with the struggles of finding common ground. However, Su and Yamamoto's piece provided much hope and insight to us in asserting that "a genuine sense of community often emerges only through engagement in, rather than avoidance of, nitty-gritty efforts to align." In this vein, the Taskforce developed a process where we could survey and interview board members, thereby allowing them spaces of self-expression, especially in light of frustrations generated by misunderstandings and collective hurt.

If Su and Yamamoto's piece gave us the tools with which to create our internal self-study materials, Valdes's piece on critical coalitions offered the language with which to conceive our future as an organization. Valdes's most helpful perspectives come from his definition of a forward-looking ethic, which critical coalitions need in order to move beyond "issues of sameness and difference." He encourages us to adopt a "post-subordination vision…by emphasizing a forward-looking basis for intergroup coalescence toward substantive security."[18] Rather than focus on sameness or difference, Valdes posits that we ask whether our "visions, agendas[,] and projects of substantive security" match so that the critical coalitions we foster become sustainable ones which can withstand the struggles that come with efforts to align. Once we rely on a vision as a method for critical coalition building, he continues, the forward-looking approach can solidify and further antisubordination theory and praxis. Valdes concludes: "By expanding the focus of outgroup coalitions beyond issues of sameness and difference with forward-looking assessments of hopes and aspirations, [the] postsubordination vision as jurisprudential method can help OutCrits to organize critical coalitions chiefly around the progressive principles and policies that will ensure social justice and substantive security for all."[19]

Heeding this call to adopt a post-subordination vision towards critical coalition building, the Taskforce focused on looking towards events of the past that may have led to current frustrations amongst board members. We also asked board members to share their vision of LatCrit's future projects and crafted recommendations based on a forward-looking ethic of our organization's projects.

Since its inception, LatCrit theory has called upon us to not only develop an outsider jurisprudence that focuses on democratic values, but also to consider social justice issues from an antisubordination standpoint. We are called upon to commit to those values in our practices. Therefore, to "perform the theory" means to apply those theoretical commitments to intra- and intergroup dynamics. As Valdes reminds us, "[o]ur commitment to personal, collective action in turn operates as a key method of community-and-coalition building; laboring together in principled terms produces not only knowledge but also trust and solidarity."[20] Theory should not be divorced from practice. Openness and self-criticality are seen as the vehicles for creating honest, diverse, democratic, and trustworthy practices. They are understood to be vehicles for coalition-building efforts. This constant questioning or critical self-revision inspired the work of the Taskforce and is tantamount to what Sumi Cho and Robert Westley have described as "performing the theory."[21] As Westley has described LatCrit, "It's not a safe space in the sense that no one gets criticized. But it's a safe space in that no topic is taboo."[22] Thus, to "perform the theory" in the LatCrit way means to face conflict in a self-critical, open, and democratic way. It includes an understanding of our members as multidimensional subjects who are outside the majority view and who share a common goal of working from an antisubordination standpoint. It is to recognize that our democratic experiment, our outsider project, is always under construction. And, because it is under constant construction, critique, and revision, we must be ever-vigilant in maintaining the democratic openness that defines LatCrit theory.

Cho and Westley's essay "Critical Race Coalitions: Key Movements that Performed the Theory" provides us with useful guidance in understanding the establishment and maintenance of coalitions within academic communities.[23] Like other essays on this subject, Cho and Westley's argument provides a theoretically robust framework for analyzing the community and coalition affiliated with LatCrit today.[24]

Their essay reminds us of the roots of CRT in the "subjugated knowledge" produced by race-conscious student movements at UC Berkeley and its law school from 1964–91. Cho and Westley analyze the structures of student organizations that inherited the legacy of the Free Speech Movement and its oft-forgotten origin in the antiracist student organizing of CORE—the Congress for Racial Equality—on the UC Berkeley campus.[25]

Tracking their detailed organizational history of the Third World Liberation Front ("TWLF"), Afro-American Student Union, Asian American Political Alliance, Mexican American Student Confederation, and Native American Students Association is not necessary for purposes of this afterword. What is salient, however, is one of Cho and Westley's conclusions, *viz.*, "The TWLF's race-conscious, group-based approach to coalitional leadership and decision-making ultimately would become the model for successful race-plus coalitions organized by student movements in the subsequent decades."[26] That "leadership structure featured a steering committee with equal numbers of voting representatives from each of the member groups. Decisions were taken by consensus whenever possible and by majority vote when not possible."[27]

Cho and Westley's distinction between "membership organizations from coalitions—umbrella organizations that are typically constituted by multiple membership organizations"[28]—reminds us of the need to transcend a focus on the mere differences between an organization constituted by individuals and one formed by organizations. Their extrapolation from a "key conflict between UPC [the anti-apartheid United People of Color] and the

predominantly white anti-apartheid group Campaign against Apartheid… over the decision-making process to be followed in coalitional meetings,"[29] reminds us that we should look deeper into the different processes and outcomes for antiracist student-of-color led "race-plus" coalitions. As Cho and Westley relate, in that situation,

> [A]n informal, consensus-oriented decision-making process that rejected any hierarchical leadership structure…empowered those who had the most discretionary time on their hands to persevere through hours of discussion, and it effectively excluded [those]… who had competing time pressures…to the detriment of students of color, who found they generally had less time on their hands for such open-ended meetings and less inclination for this sort of exercise in consensuality by attrition.[30]

Cho and Westley's conclusions should not be deemed to pertain only to historical student activism. Rather, the insights they derive from rigorously studying multiple student led race-plus coalitions at UC Berkeley and its law school should be regarded as having application elsewhere. Indeed, their book chapter ends by raising "some questions for the future of CRT as an organization. We see CRT in its current formation of annual workshops and occasional conferences as an individual-membership organization of progressives of color, not a race-plus group-based coalition."[31]

The questions they posed seven years ago can help us understand the community associated with LatCrit today. Like CRT in the heyday of its annual workshops, LatCrit seems accurately described as an individual-membership organization and not a race-plus, group-based coalition. However, unlike the CRT Workshop era, LatCrit is open to all—or at least to those who nominally share commitments to sociolegal scholarship, multidimensional analyses, and antisubordination struggles. As mentioned above, Montoya and Valdes have recently highlighted this key feature of LatCrit, characterized it as "democratic" and distinguished it from imperial or vanguardist modes of scholarship.[32]

For us, critical coalition building draws upon the transparency and openness of LatCrit as an organization. It is true that this openness can draw polemical individuals with personal axes to grind, but despite the occasional eruption of personality-driven challenges to LatCrit, this organization has been able to sustain a democratic space for more than thirteen consecutive years.

As participants in multiple LatCrit projects and board members of its nonprofit organization, we see many benefits to the "big tent, open to all comers" space that past LatCrit efforts have created. Theoretically, however, Cho and Westley's questions seemingly remain unanswered. Has LatCrit inadvertently evolved into "a 'colorblind' formation . . . organized around the (ironically) modernist basis of 'politics, not identity,'" and if so, has this had "a deleterious impact on the development of leadership among people of color—particularly of women of color, les/bi/gay people of color, and immigrants of color—in the larger intellectual-activist community"?[33]

While no doubt controversial for some, to us it seems imperative and a perennial necessity to surface and chart our actual shared and contested understandings of LatCrit, and we engage this necessity as individuals affiliated with LatCrit and as board members with a fiduciary duty to its organization. Those attracted to LatCrit may well share some fundamental agreements about law, subordination, privilege, and social justice. These understandings are a recipe for the development of a principled consensus. However, our interpersonal misunderstandings can not only negatively impact our individual relationships, but also the LatCrit organization, its broader community, and its contributions to other antisubordination struggles. Where the leadership of People of Color, especially those who are also women, queer, immigrant, disabled, or who otherwise experience sociolegal oppression is not sufficiently encouraged by the structure of the organization, it seems predictable that dominant, regnant, alienated, or even imperial modes of relating will tend to arise.

Indeed, organizing law professors and other scholars interested in the intersection between the law and the social seems even more difficult than organizing law students. While organizing law students poses distinctive difficulties (e.g., how the common three-year program's brevity erodes students' institutional memory), the physical proximity structured by law schools as places where hundreds of students regularly visit and commingle creates myriad opportunities for developing a multidimensional solidarity, "a sense of solidarity that is not premised on an unreflective identification with the power elite or on essentialist, usually biologistic [sic] notions about racial identity, but is instead based on a critically conscious and anti-essentialist dedication to social justice."[34]

In contrast to student activists, sociolegal scholars, especially U.S. law professors, tend to lack a "sustained engagement with a critical mass of potential insurgent … activists" and correspondingly lack a way to engage a "process of subject formation that provides significant opportunities for people to orient away from the ideology of success (elite-designed, yet mass produced) that U.S. law schools commonly engender."[35] Rather, as Montoya and Valdes have persuasively argued, many sociolegal scholars are imbricated in institutional cultures that value and reward "imperial" modes of scholarship.[36] While it may feel impolite to say that such institutional cultures engender a subject formation that cuts against the antisubordination aspirations of the LatCrit project, acknowledging the biases and privileges that structure our lives, perceptions and interactions is at the heart of the self-criticality that LatCrit has adopted and evolved from feminist, womanist, and mujerista praxis.[37]

In this spirit, we call for those interested in the LatCrit project to (re)address Cho and Westley's assertion that membership organizations that represent People of Color are needed until the larger forces of racism and the legacy of white supremacy are tamed.[38] We personally feel the tensions between heeding the recent calls to reorient LatCrit onto the sociolegal conditions and possibilities of Latinas/os and the fact that LatCrit's big-tent

democracy constitutes one of the few "queer, colored" spaces within the U.S. legal academy. However, as sociolegal scholars who are *not* U.S. law professors, we agree on the need for *critical* Latina/o legal studies that engage related projects within the emerging (and larger) counterdiscipline of Latina/o Studies.

Our concern is larger than the U.S. legal academy; and indeed, larger than any academy, legal or otherwise. We believe, however, that LatCrit has a substantial promise for larger antisubordination struggles and that critical Latina/o legal studies are particularly needed in a time of rampant nativist racism that centers on so-called "illegal" Mexican (and other Latin American) immigrants. In spite of the scholars and scholarship that have been organized around the LatCrit rubric, others are contributing to and perhaps displacing the critical insights that could (and we believe should) animate Latina/o legal studies.[39] Without unduly criticizing such efforts, we believe it inadequate to merely focus on Latinas/os with a legalistic lens, and we believe that LatCritical contributions to outsider jurisprudence have significant value to educating people about the sociolegal conditions that structure subordination, privilege, and the contemporary hegemony. Similarly, we believe that educating people about these issues has socially transformative potential. Indeed, we are engaging organizations and constructing coalitions dedicated to social change—ranging from census counting in Connecticut to ensure that Latina/o immigrants and other socially-marginalized people are not undercounted, to municipal identification card programs in Oakland, California, to ensure that the residence of socially-marginalized people are officially recognized and valued.[40]

As so many have said, and so many do, we aspire to act, think, read, write, research, and produce scholarship that significantly advances actual antisubordination struggles. Sociolegal scholars affiliated with LatCrit have done so for almost fifteen years, and we have much more work to do. The innovations of past race-plus coalitional organizing may help us flourish in

mutually-beneficial and always ethical ways that accord with our commitments to multidimensional analysis for antisubordination purposes. We believe that it is possible to build a strong sense of community through critical coalition building that engages various forms of critical praxis. We believe that it is possible to draw upon the collected body of knowledge generated by more than a decade of contributions by critical scholars as a source of guidance in this process, a process that aims to build a stronger sense of community through coalition building among individuals *and groups* committed to challenging the legacy and continuity of imperialist and exploitative traditions and institutions.

II. PRACTICING THE THEORY: THE LATCRIT EVOLUTION TASKFORCE

Since 1996, LatCrit has grown from a small colloquium to a series of meetings and projects that cover a wide range of issues. As the portfolio of projects shows, LatCrit has continued to expand in new and innovative ways, across disciplines and national boundaries. In recent years, a number of concerns have been raised regarding the organizational allocation of tasks and resources, board member accountability, coordination and communication within the organization, and the general institutional framework of the organization. The LatCrit Evolution Taskforce has begun to address these concerns and offered some recommendations that can assist in creating a better functioning organization. Central to these recommendations has been an abiding commitment to the creation of a transparent and democratic institutional framework. We believe that LatCrit's continued success has been anchored in an institutional structure that is premised on the critical coalitions of scholars who find common ground in a convergence of principled positions. Various LatCrit projects have created public spaces where these coalitions can flourish in a democratic fashion. At the core of our recommendations was a budding commitment to finding ways that could draw upon the social and political

principles that have informed LatCrit's commitments to creating these critical spaces.

The Taskforce began by collecting information that could provide a clear sense of the perspectives that board members held on various dimensions of the organization. We developed a multidimensional strategy that enabled us to collect competing opinions from fellow board members. This approach entailed inviting board members to join the Taskforce, creating various forums for dialogue, creating a survey that was sent to every board member, and requesting individual interviews of each board member. Every board member was invited to share their thoughts in multiple ways and occasions. We continue to foster the creation of a space for critical and transparent dialogue. Although at the time of this writing this process continues, the information already gathered has provided us with various substantial insights into board members' diverse understandings of LatCrit principles and organization. Based on the information gathered, we were able to articulate a series of recommendations in three broad areas. While a few board members chose not to engage this process, and several individuals left the board prior to its start, the Taskforce recommendations were based on aggregated information submitted by the supermajority of LatCrit board members who chose to participate in this process.

We found that many board members identified concerns with the organizational structures that shaped the LatCrit project. Overall, board members generally identified the relationship between the growth of the organization and its amorphous—or decentered—institutional framework as key emerging challenges. There was a general and consistent concern with the ability of the current organizational division of labor to manage the increasing number of projects. In response, the Taskforce made a series of recommendations that were anchored in a more democratic and egalitarian division of labor. We believe that it is possible to create the conditions that will enable members with principled commitments to share organizational responsibilities in a more diffused governing structure, which we have come

to describe as a *Consejo*, or council model. Not only does this structure of collective responsibility draw upon democratic principles, it also accords with the historical trajectory of the LatCrit board. Since its inception, the LatCrit board has shifted from an organization with a central figure to one with a steering committee that has, over the years, been comprised of diverse individuals whose identities cut across classes, races, genders, sexualities, and disciplinary fields. While some may find the *Consejo* model too incremental to be a substantial reform of the organization, it is a significant organizational change and can promote a renewed engagement by all LatCrit board members as the *Consejo* models democratic community and critical coalition-building as it coordinates LatCrit's diverse portfolio of projects.

Board members also identified various needs for increased and improved transparency and communication. We offered several recommendations that sought to enable more efficient communication. We also acknowledged the need for a better use of technology in an age of digital reproduction. The Taskforce envisions the use of new technologies that will enable the creation of a virtual infrastructure for the organization. We aim to ameliorate the impact of time and space on our ability to function as a democratic collective. We seek to use new communication technologies as a space that can enable more democratic, transparent, and efficient interactions across time and space. Central to this recommendation is the belief that LatCrit provides a decentered space where participants can engage in critical thinking. Rather than reifying spaces where essentialist identities are affirmed and celebrated, we believe that LatCrit should provide a space where critical dialogue can lead to progressive change and principled continuity. New technologies can facilitate the affirmation of this critical space through the establishment of modalities of communication that foster transparency and enable democratic participation regardless of the limitations imposed by time and space.

Finally, we found that there is a conceptual gap that has shaped the perceptions of LatCrit participants over the years. Whereas participants in the early LatCrit project embraced LatCrit principles as an ethos that shaped their personal, public, and professional lives, changing social conditions have created new technologies of power that recast older forms of subordination in new ways. The Taskforce is recommending that LatCrit continue to disseminate its principles in expanded ways. We believe that principles such as a commitment to anti-essentialism, antisubordination, democracy and equality, intersectionality, and multidimensionality continue to provide important avenues for critical thinking. We recommend more concerted efforts to disseminate the nuanced interpretations of these principles that emerged from the dialectical relationship between LatCrit and other critical jurisprudence projects and initiatives.

It is from these contributions, from the history of change and continuity of the LatCrit project, framed within other critical traditions of outsider jurisprudence, that we can gain the most. We call for a renewed commitment to practicing the principles that have shaped the historical development of LatCrit. We call for an affirmation of the principles that have shaped the nuanced positions that define the substance and contours of the LatCrit project.

III. AN INVITATION TO COLLECTIVE DIALOGUE

In the *Coming Insurrection*, the Invisible Committee reminds us that it is useless to wait for a catastrophe or the collapse of civilization to do something. The social and political catastrophe and the collapse of civilization is here, all that remains is for us to choose sides.[41] For more than thirteen years, LatCrit has created a critical space that enables scholars and activists alike to choose sides against a longstanding legacy of oppression and exploitation. LatCrit has created a vibrant alternative space that offers the possibility for renewed community and coalition-building projects to continue to challenge the status quo. Today, we invite a

collective dialogue that is also anchored on self-critical contributions. We invite a transparent debate, where nothing remains as "taboo," and where we are all willing to assume principled responsibility over our actions. We also invite participants in this dialogue to engage in honest and transparent dialogue with the goal of contributing to the building of stronger communities and coalitions that can help us take sides against the tyrannical legacies of oppressive regimes and subordinating traditions. We invite participants to help us perpetuate a space where community and coalition building make it possible to take sides against oppression and exploitation.

This invitation is also premised on a shared belief that critical coalitions need to move beyond the narrow confines of the legal academy and the ideological constraints presented by legal institutions. We invite participants to explore forms of praxis that draw upon local activists and community members, from the intersection of other disciplinary epistemologies, and from global sources that transgress nationalist ideologies. We invite current and future board members to consider the possibility of transgressing tradition and stepping into a fragile, fragmented, and strange future. We invite all participants in the LatCrit project to consider new possibilities and new directions for future projects.

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[5] *See* Margaret E. Montoya & Francisco Valdes, "Latinas/os" and the Politics of Knowledge Production: LatCrit Scholarship and Academic Activism as Social Justice Action, 83 IND. L.J. 1197 (2008).
[6] *See* Berta Hernández-Truyol, Angela Harris and Francisco Valdes, *LatCrit X Afterword, Beyond the First Decade: A Forward Looking History of LatCrit Theory, Community and Praxis*, 26 CHICANO-LATINO L. REV. 237 (2006).
[7] *See, e.g.*, Francisco Valdes, *LatCrit Theory: Naming and Launching a New Discourse of Critical Legal Scholarship*, 2 HARVARD LATINO L. REV. 1 (1997).

[8] *See* JUAN F. PEREA, RICHARD DELGADO, ANGELA P. HARRIS, JEAN STEFANCIC & STEPHANIE M. WILDMAN, RACE AND RACES, CASES FOR A DIVERSE AMERICA, 2D ED. (2007).
[9] Valdes, *supra* note 7, at 5.
[10] *See* Francisco Valdes, *Afterword: Theorizing 'Outcrit' Theories: Coalitional Method and Comparative Jurisprudential Experience–RaceCrits, QueerCrits and LatCrits*, 53 U. MIAMI L. REV. 1265 (1999).
[11] *See, e.g.*, Valdes, *supra* note 7; Valdes, *supra* note 10; Silvia R. Lazos Vargas, *"Kulturkampf[s]" or "Fit[s] of Spite"?: Taking the Academic Culture Wars Seriously",* 35 SETON HALL L. REV. 1309 (2005); Hernández-Truyol et al., *supra* note 6; Montoya & Valdes, *supra* note 5.
[12] Valdes, *supra* note 7, at 2.
[13] Francisco Valdes, *Under Construction: LatCrit Consciousness, Community, and Theory*, 85 CAL. L. REV. 1087, 1096 (1997).
[14] Valdes, *supra* note 7, at 52–56.
[15] Montoya & Valdes, *supra* note 5, at 1198–1200.
[16] *Id.* at 1227.
[17] Julie A. Su & Eric K. Yamamoto, *Critical Coalitions: Theory and Praxis*, *in* CROSSROADS, DIRECTIONS AND A NEW CRITICAL RACE THEORY 379, 380 (Francisco Valdes, Jerome McCristal Culp & Angela P. Harris eds., 2002).
[18] Francisco Valdes, *Outsider Scholars, Critical Race Theory, and "OutCrit" Perpectivity: Postsubordination Vision as Jurisprudential Method*, *in* CROSSROADS, DIRECTIONS AND A NEW CRITICAL RACE THEORY 399, 403 (Francisco Valdes, Jerome McCristal Culp & Angela P. Harris eds., 2002).
[19] *Id.* at 407.
[20] Francisco Valdes, *Rebellious Knowledge Production, Academic Activism and Outsider Democracy: From Principles to Practices in LatCrit Theory, 1995–2008*, 8 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 131 (2009).
[21] Sumi Cho & Robert Westley, *Critical Race Coalitions: Key Movements that Performed the Theory*, 33 UC DAVIS L. REV. 1377 (2000).
[22] Interview with Robert Westley, Professor, LatCrit Oral Histories Project, in Seattle, WA, *available at* http://www.law.du.edu/latcrit/flashvideo/latcritvideos.htm (last visited Oct. 23, 2009).
[23] Cho & Westley, *supra* note 21.
[24] Sumi Cho & Robert Westley, *Historicizing Critical Race Theory's Cutting Edge: Key Movements that Performed the Theory*, *in* CROSSROADS, DIRECTIONS AND A NEW CRITICAL RACE THEORY 32 (Francisco Valdes, et al. eds., 2002).
[25] *Id.* at 35–38.
[26] *Id.* at 36. As Cho and Westley explain, "We use the term 'race-plus' to designate the centrality and historicity of race-based organizing that recognizes a network of oppressions and embraces coalitional consciousness and solidarity with other outsider groups. As such, other axes of anti-subordination resistance—such as feminist projects, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered liberation, progressive white-identity formation, etc.—are potential bases of coalition." *Id.* at 62 n.12.
[27] *Id.* at 61 n.10.

[28] Rachel Anderson, Marc-Tizoc González & Stephen Lee, *Toward a New Student Insurgency: A Critical Epistolary*, 94 CAL. L. REV. 1879, 1898 n.80 (2006) (citing Cho & Westley, *supra* note 21, 1383, 1385–90); *see also* Cho & Westley, *supra* note 24, at 37 (discussing and distilling these different models of organizing from the establishment of "two important political structures in 1984[,]" Cal-SERVE—Cal-Students for Equal Rights and Valid Education—and United People of Color).
[29] Cho & Westley, *supra* note 24, at 37.
[30] *Id.*
[31] *Id.* at 55.
[32] Montoya & Valdes, *supra* note 5.
[33] Cho & Westley, *supra* note 24, at 56.
[34] Anderson et al., *supra* note 28, at 1926; *see also id.* at 1920–29.
[35] *Id.* at 1929.
[36] *See* Montoya & Valdes, *supra* note 5.
[37] *E.g.*, Angela P. Harris, *Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal History*, 42 STAN. L. REV. 581 (1990); Margaret E. Montoya, *Mascaras, Trenzas, y Grednas: Un/Masking the Self While Un/Braiding Latina Stories and Legal Discourse*, 15 CHICANO-LATINO L. REV. 1 (1994).
[38] Cho & Westley, *supra* note 24, at 56.
[39] *E.g.*, CARLOS R. SOLTERO, LATINOS AND AMERICAN LAW: LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASES (2006); REYNALDO ANAYA VALENCIA, SONIA R. GARCÍA, HENRY FLORES & JOSÉ ROBERTO JUÁREZ, JR., MEXICAN AMERICANS AND THE LAW: ¡EL PUEBLO UNIDO JAMÁS SERÁ VENCIDO! (2004).
[40] *See* JESSE NEWMARK, ET AL, OAKLAND CITY ID CARD COALITION, OAKLAND CITY ID CARD PROPOSAL (2008), http://oaklandcityidcard.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/oakland-city-id-card-proposal-april-final.pdf.
[41] THE INVISIBLE COMMITTEE, THE COMING INSURRECTION (2009).