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Synecdoche

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SYNECDOCHE

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Synecdoche, *n.* A figure of speech in which a part is substituted for a whole or a whole for a part, as in *50 head of cattle* for *50 cows*, or the *army* for *a soldier*.[1]

Metonymy, *n.* A figure of speech that consists of the use of the name of one object or concept for that of another to which it is related, or of which it is a part, as *scepter* for *sovereignty* or *the bottle* for *strong drink* or *count heads (or noses)* for *count people*.[2]

INTRODUCTION

These two terms, synecdoche and metonymy, came to mind when I agreed to participate in the discussion panel assembled by Professor Valdes, called *Latina/o Education and Justice: Leading Voices, Lessons Learned*.[3] While this panel endeavored to answer many questions of great importance to the Latino community,[4] this article focuses on the related question of whether there are necessarily unstated assumptions regarding the relationship between facts we observe and a theory of change these facts may suggest. This question raises a puzzling kind of synecdoche. Namely, to what extent could the present part (an elite status Latina/o) represent and/or influence a future for the whole (greater success for Latina/os who aspired to social mobility and public service)?

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[1] *See* Synecdoche, Dictionary.com, http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/synecdoche (last visited Feb. 13, 2011).

[2] *See* Metonymy, Dictionary.com, http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/metonymy (last visited Feb. 13, 2011).

[3] The panel was composed of the following panelists, each of whom shared an identity as Latina/os who recently headed or currently head a national legal organization: Raquel Adana and Steve Bender, Co-Presidents of SALT (The Society of American Law Teachers); Laura Gomez, President, Law and Society Association; Kris Gutierrez, President, American Educational Research Association; Beto Juarez and Margaret Montoya, Past Co-Presidents of SALT; Michael Olivas, President-Elect, AALS (The Association of American Law Schools); and the Author as a Past President of the AALS. The discussion was moderated by Professor Valdes.

[4] The questions for the panel's consideration were: 1) Given predictions of U.S. Hispanicization, what is the significance, if any, of this historical coincidence, where the main institutions of (legal) education all have turned to Latina/os for leadership in recent/current times? 2) What is the future of outsider groups, theory, organizations, and discourse in education, academia, and/or in law and policy? 3) What would you describe as the key challenges/opportunities for people of color, women, sexual minorities, and other "outsider" groups in U.S. education and culture today? 4) To meet those challenges/opportunities, how can/should Latina/o and other outsider scholars become more effective within the organizations you lead/led? 5) What does your work teach you about "justice" or about struggles for it? 6) Based on the sum of your particular experience, what should progressive scholars do to make our work more socially relevant and justice oriented?

Though this article will not address the formal questions directly, it will make three small but related points that probe the necessarily unstated assumptions behind the themes of this panel. For example, exploration of Latina/o leadership in major legal organizations seems to rest on the assumption that mere leadership reflects broader social change and that exploration of the views of Latina/o insiders will somehow produce a theory of that broader social change. Professor Valdes may not have intended any of these implications, but he probably would have to concede that they exist.

First, one lesson the author has learned in his years of organizing, is that one always has to be cognizant of the problem of capture. For those who study administrative law or organizational theory, this is an old point. On a personal level, it was perhaps best summed up by my mother who remarked during a long conversation after my sophomore year in college: "Gerald, you are white in ways you don't even know." Importantly, it was not intended as a critique rooted in any sense of ethnic authenticity, but rather as an observation of the ways I had changed in response to the different cultural and institutional settings in which I found myself. She may have even meant it as a compliment.

Second is the problem of the tyranny of tokenism. Derrick Bell and Lani Guinier are probably the best-known expositors of this political and intellectual hazard. Briefly described, tokenism arises when homogenous institutions make a commitment to heterogeneity without fully contemplating the meaning of the change. As an example, the introduction of a few people of color (to take but one category) concentrates the obligation for change in that small group. This, in turn, causes them to become both the arbiters of the meaning of racial heterogeneity, as well as the police at the boundaries. In addition, they also take on the burden of providing continuing education for their colleagues or peers. Resisting those obligations is necessary, in the author's view, to enable the construction of a complex understanding of institutional change to occur.

Third, every person who is trying to change an institution must have an insider/outsider strategy in order to confront the ways in which institutional power is deployed to resist change and to transform the transformer. This is something that is known—or certainly becomes known—through practice by everyone who has tried to move institutions.

This article hopes to briefly lay out each of these questions and the implications that they have on pertinent theories of social change. In doing so, it also wishes to illuminate the topic of this panel and instill questions of interest into the community of lawyers and academics committed to the idea that law can be a vehicle for social change.

I. Preliminary Discussions: Capture and the Tyranny of Tokenism

A. Capture

A discussion of capture within the context of the phenomenon under discussion at this conference might seem misplaced, but the questions posed today must confront the idea of capture if there is a correlative unstated assumption that Latina/o leadership in these organizations somehow signifies a difference in kind. It may even be subversive, but that conclusion should not be presumed.

When people in law schools talk about the problem of capture, they typically refer to the occasion of a regulatory agency that has ceased to act in the public interest (or towards the specific regulatory objectives detailed in their operative statute) and instead acts in the interest of the parties it is supposed to be regulating. There are different opinions about the underlying mechanism of capture, but the dominant view is represented by economists and public choice theorists who suggest that because the regulated parties have higher stakes than the public as a whole in the outcome of any particular regulation, they will concentrate resources on influencing the decision-making process of the regulating agency. This focused tactical and strategic effort to intervene in the regulatory process tends to influence the final outcome in a manner that exceeds the expectations contained in the statutory mission. For example, such a classic case of capture occurred when the Minerals Management Service failed to effectively regulate the actions of BP and Transocean's Deep Water Horizon drilling rig. The utter erasure of the distinctions between the regulators and the regulated clearly illustrate the hazards of regulatory capture.[5]

The insight of those economists and public choice theorists ought to be generalized to participants in every institution. As psychologist Mahzarin Banaji puts it: "What social psychology has given to an understanding of human nature is the discovery that forces larger than ourselves determine our mental life and our actions—that chief among these forces . . . [is] the power of the social situation."[6] Psychologists and other specialists suggest that what drives capture is more than mere rent-seeking behavior. The circulation of power throughout institutions creates the channels through which, to the extent possible, those who are more powerful structure the social situations that produce definitions of what is real. At the same time, they frame responses in ways that so vehemently conceal the force of the institutional structure, that even those who are subject to it cannot see it. This was pre-

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⁵ *See generally*, Peter Lehner, In Deep Water (2010) (the Macondo Well blowout occurred on Earth Day 2010 (April 20) and was finally capped on July 15, 2010); *see also Crude Justice*, Alliance for Just. (Feb. 5, 2011, 4:12 AM), http://www.afj.org/resources-and-publications/films-and-programs/crude_justice/.

⁶ Mahzarin R. Banaji, *Ordinary Prejudice*, 14 Psychol. Sci. Agenda 8, 8 (2001).

cisely the point of my mother's observation. Jon Hanson describes this process as "deep capture."[7]

The notion that changes in institutional leadership at any level of the organizational hierarchy necessarily imply changes in the way that power will circulate or in whose interest it will be used, begs too many questions. The main point of the discussion of capture and power is that the mere occupation of a leadership role is not sufficient to promote significant institutional change. Unless an internal leadership role is also accompanied by an agenda and a constituency of accountability, as well as an external force for change, it is highly unlikely that the power will be exercised in the interest of those who were formerly excluded from its benefits. This suggests that one ought not to extrapolate too much from the success of a few elite members of a group; it seems premature to conclude that the group as a whole has–or soon will–benefit from the success of a few "transcendent" members.[8] For example, during the time period represented by the tenure of the panelists, the number of Latina/os graduating from high school and matriculating and graduating from four-year colleges remained disappointingly low.[9] Similarly, the continuing nativist attacks on Latina/os' right to be here should not be overlooked because of the success of a few. It is fallacious to assume that there is a deep significance to the simultaneous presence of Latina/os in leadership positions at this time. The significance should be demonstrated. Thus, an appropriate metric should be determined to measure this significance. One way to begin that inquiry is to ask: what were the forces that produced this cohort of Latina/o legal academics such that they would be in a position to occupy the leadership roles they did? The next question would be: what did they do with those opportunities? While one question demands a broader historical and sociological inquiry, the other is specific to the institutions and requires a fine-grained analysis of the possibility for institutional transformation contained within each one.

In sum, the capture thesis, at least as outlined here, is about how power is mobilized in service of those who already hold "power over" others.[10]

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[7] See Jon Hanson & David Yosifon, The Situation: An Introduction to the Situational Character, Critical Realism, Power Economics, and Deep Capture, 152 U. PA. L. REV. 129, 218 (2003) ("By 'deep capture' then, we are referring to the disproportionate and self-serving influence that the relatively powerful tend to exert over all the exterior and interior situational features that materially influence the maintenance and extension of that power—including those features that purport to be, and that we experience as, independent, volitional, and benign.").

[8] See generally, EUGENE ROBINSON, DISINTEGRATION: THE SPLINTERING OF BLACK AMERICA (2010) (describing a "transcendent" elite as having "different profiles, different mind-sets" that separated them "by demography, geography, and psychology" from poor or working-class black Americans); see also, Raymond Arsenault, The Great Unraveling, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 2, 2011, book review available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/02/books/review/Arsenault-t.html?_r=1&ref=books.

[9] See, Gerald Torres, The Elusive Goal of Equal Educational Opportunity in LAW AND CLASS IN AMERICA: TRENDS SINCE THE COLD WAR (Paul D. Carrington & Trina Jones eds., 2006).

[10] See, Lani Guinier & Gerald Torres, Rethinking Conventions of Zero-Sum Power in THE MINER'S CANARY 108-30 (2002).

Those who find themselves in a position to use the institutional regulatory authority are going to be subject to pressure from those who have traditionally benefitted from the way the institution has functioned. The easiest route to conventional success within such organizations is to understand the wisdom of the way power has always worked and to act consistent with the normative vision contained within that wisdom. That some might be cajoled into imitating the easiest or most likely route to traditional ideas of success is certainly understandable, but that is not the path to change. The next section tries to explain why.

B.   The Tyranny of Tokenism

What happens when a relatively homogeneous institution initiates a movement towards greater heterogeneity? Do the steps undertaken reflect a deep commitment to change or to stability? Surface changes may do more to solidify power in the hands of the powerful than the reverse. The process that leads to the inclusion of those who were previously excluded has, in some sense, helped legitimize the norms that had previously been used to exclude. Token changes at the top may obviate the need to pursue more fundamental structural changes. Uncovering the ways in which this occurs raises troubling problems, but also suggests a means forward, because they can create the opportunities for real change.

One of the dominant norms in our culture is the belief in possessive individualism and our reliance on it to explain social failure or success on the basis of the actions of individual persons rather than on the structural constraints (or opportunities) that institutions may present. The idea that each of us is individually responsible for the way our lives turn out as well as for the effects of specific decisions is deeply ingrained in American life. Of course, individual responsibility is hardly insignificant, but it is not completely explanatory.

Relatively unconstrained social mobility is another important belief[11] that when linked to the idea of personal individual responsibility, conflates the two convictions. In other words, the presence of formerly excluded persons in what had previously been a homogeneous dominant group legitimizes the idea of individual social mobility as the principal justification for appropriate techniques of social engineering. If you create opportunities for individuals, then you do not need to question the deep values ingrained in the exclusionary structure of the institutions that are now, at least on their face, open to former outsiders.[12]

By acting in ways that increase the belief in the permeability of the boundaries between dominant and subordinate groups, what is also rein-

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[11] *See*, Lani Guinier, *Admissions Rituals as Political Acts: Guardians at the Gates of Our Democratic Ideals*, 117 Harv. L. Rev. 113, 143-71 (2003) (illustrating the distinctions between contest, sponsored and structural mobility).

[12] For a more in-depth analysis of this point, see Guinier & Torres, *supra* note 10, at 32-66, 108-30.

forced is the idea that those who continue to be excluded deserve their fate as much as the now included persons deserve theirs. This is not premised on the presence of a left/right ideological divide in the struggle over integration of our civic and civil institutions. Instead, by endorsing strategies that are premised on individual advancement in order to achieve social goals, civil rights advocates partake in the same metanarrative as the opponents of those efforts: when individuals get ahead, the group triumphs, and the basic democratic structure of American social life prevails. While the individual Latina/o's advancement to a leadership position involves an act of "transcendence" (moving beyond the reach or stain of group identity and stigma), that same "transcendence" is simultaneously used to legitimize the status of those left behind. In other words, that an individual leader could advance in the name of the group could be interpreted as distinguishing that individual from the other members of the out-group who were left behind. The merit of the individual is used to establish the demerit of the group as a whole.

The difference may lie in the definition of the group that is benefitting, but the logical structure is identical. That is why, for example, the *Grutter* opinion upholding the University of Michigan's affirmative action plan pivots on the idea of "critical mass."[13] However, while the concept of "critical mass" is a response to "tokenism," the concept of "critical mass" does not include access for the "masses."

What is the meaning of "critical mass" in the context of educational affirmative action? According to Justice O'Connor's opinion in *Grutter*, it meant a number of things while signifying no commitment to a particular percentage of admits (since such a target would come dangerously close to transforming a constitutionally permissible goal into an unconstitutional quota). Among the many things critical mass did mean was that a sufficient number of "underrepresented minority" students would be admitted to prevent the admittees from feeling isolated or feeling as if they had to speak for their entire group whenever they participated in class. Importantly, there also had to be enough "underrepresented minorities" to ensure that non-members receive the educational benefits gained from the presence of the minority class. The multiple meanings of critical mass suggest that the entire process is not really aimed at transforming the institution in ways that challenge any of its fundamental commitments. A critical mass of former outsiders may safeguard the institution from threats of external pressures and also provide the kind of individual access that will produce institutional loyalty from the beneficiaries. All of this makes sense, but it has costs and it should not be confused with more ambitious transformative goals.

One of the costs is that if a program like *Grutter's* is successful, it will serve to disconnect the admitted individual from the previously excluded group.[14] This happens when the program for inclusion is justified by the

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[13] *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 330 (2003).

[14] The author does not want to overstate this point because as Richard O. Lempert, et al. suggest in *"From the Trenches and Towers"*: *Law School Affirmative Action: An Empirical*

same or similar norms that had previously justified exclusion.[15] According to social psychologist Stephen Wright, this process discourages the accepted out-group members from employing disruptive actions, which might be consistent with the interests of the excluded out-group members because it would weaken the identity of the "token" with the dominant group.[16]

It is completely understandable why the successful member of the subordinated group begins to identify with the dominant group. The value of being part of the dominant group comes from being acknowledged as a legitimate member of that group. Inclusion that is premised on individualistic norms suggests that "successful social mobility will have a very positive impact on the individual's social identity."[17] The status of the dominant in-group will be reflected on the status of the persons who legitimately claim to be a member of that group.[18]

Where boundaries between groups in a hierarchical relationship are seen to be semi-permeable, the presence of subordinate group members within the dominant group has strategic consequences. The fact that a subordinate group member has succeeded "climbing backwards up the cheese grater," may influence the social change trajectory for other out-group members whose attention shifts away from collective agitation towards their own individual exit strategies. The mere presence of the newly-minted insider can demobilize outsider agitation for more fundamental change of social institutions. Individual social mobility refocuses attention on opportunities for exit from the subordinate group rather than on the fundamental unfairness of the existing institutional relationship.[19]

Professor Wright's work stands for these two points. First, tokenism changes the "peer group" of the token who begins to adapt to the insider culture, and second, tokenism reinforces the illusion of upward mobility in ways that divert attention from the unfairness of a structure that limits opportunity to a very few. To test these hypotheses, Wright designed experiments that demonstrated that the creation of an exit strategy for one or two former outsiders reframes the problem for those left behind. They no longer challenge their condition as members of a subordinate group but instead fight each other to claw their way into the dominant group. By providing an individual justification for minor changes to the dominant institutions and by using those changes to suggest the basic permeability of the boundaries be-

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Study Michigan's Minority Graduates in Practice: The River Runs Through Law School, 25 LAW & SOC. INQUIRY 395, 424 (2000), a higher percentage of minority graduates go on to public service practice than graduates as a whole.

[15] *See*, Stephen C. Wright, *Ambiguity, Social Influence, and Collective Action: Generating Collective Protest in Response to Tokenism*, 23 PER. SOC. PSYCHOL. BULL. 1277, 1277-78 (1997) [hereinafter *Ambiguity*].

[16] *Id.* at 1279.

[17] Stephen C. Wright & Donald M. Taylor, *Success Under Tokenism: Co-option of the Newcomer and the Prevention of Collective Protest*, 38 BRIT. J. OF SOC. PSYCHOL. 369, 371 (1999) [hereinafter *Success*].

[18] *Id.*

[19] *Ambiguity, supra* note 15, at 1279.

tween the groups, tokenism can be an effective form of managing dissent.[20] As Professor Wright pointed out: "It appears that the success of a very small number of disadvantaged group members can undermine endorsement of collective action by focusing attention on personal rather than collective injustice and by reducing confidence about the illegitimacy and instability of the intergroup context."[21] Thus, to the extent that disadvantage is perceived to be a result of personal failure or personal injustice, the systemic sources of injustice are insulated from critique. By deflecting attention from the institutional sources of disadvantage, the dominant group can reduce "the level of disruptive collective action . . . preventing real social change."[22]

II. A THEORY OF CHANGE

The pressure for change will not come from people who are happy with the way things are or from people who feel hopeless. Change can be imagined only when the boundary between dominant and subordinate groups is at least semi-permeable and where the institutional structure that regulates power is seen as unstable. That much is a truism. So how does someone who wants to use his/her access to dominant groups resist the problem of capture or the tyranny of tokenism?

Membership in the elite by a member of a formerly excluded group can lead to change only if that person has a systemic agenda that is supported by an external constituency to whom that individual remains accountable.[23] Consider the experience of a black lawyer in Selma, Alabama in the 1960s. J.L. Chestnut, in his memoir of his days in Selma at the beginning of the civil rights movement, noticed that he was witnessing "a transformation from civil rights leaders to politicians, from outside protesters to inside manipulators."[24] The problem arises from overconfidence on the part of insiders as to their ability to "manipulate" the institutions of which they now find themselves a part. So how is the insider/outsider divide negotiated in the interest of subordinate groups? Professor Guinier and the author have suggested one possibility:

> [O]nce an outsider is put in such a position, the key to resisting power—to the extent that it is a zero-sum resource—is to remain "critical." In the words of W.E.B. DuBois, to be critical means one is capable of experiencing double consciousness. It is

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[20] *Id.*; *see also*, Gerald Torres, *Local Knowledge, Local Color: Critical Legal Studies and the Law of Race Relations*, 25 SAN DIEGO L. REV. 1043 (1988) (discussing civil rights law as a form of racial management).

[21] *Ambiguity*, *supra* note 15, at 1286.

[22] *Id.* at 1287.

[23] *See generally*, Gerald Torres, *Social Movements and the Ethical Construction of Law*, 37 CAPITAL L. REV. 535 (2009).

[24] J.L. CHESTNUT, JR. & JULIA CASS, BLACK IN SELMA: THE UNCOMMON LIFE OF J.L. CHESTNUT, JR. 212 (1990).

not impossible to be an insider and an outsider simultaneously. But [sic] if outsiders who have become insiders desire to retain their critical double consciousness as they exercise power or authority within the status quo, they need an independent source of power. In other words, if one is an outsider now operating as an insider, unless mechanisms are in place that give other outsiders power, the insider's power will come to depend increasingly on the views of other insiders. This makes it less likely that an insider, acting alone but in good conscience or with good intentions, can simultaneously enlist and resist authority.

Thus, infiltrating hierarchy in order to redistribute power usually will not succeed unless the new insider has an energized or powerful base of outsiders as support. In fact, only by having a real and vital connection to such a base can new insiders remain politically or intellectually independent of the enormous pressure otherwise to conform. Marooned individuals, cut off from their base, may be reluctant to push for change; or they may be marginalized and unable to do so.[25]

Accordingly, an insider/outsider theory of change depends on the correlative construction of a constituency of accountability, i.e., a group of people who share a common identity, who are jointly committed to a transformative vision, and who work together to hold their members accountable to that vision. This depends in large measure on the insider retaining a principal connection to a group of outsiders. This is precisely the strategy that is most problematic because, as Professor Wright has demonstrated, the tension between expectations for systemic change and what it takes for newly-minted insiders to burnish their insider credentials among dominant group members is what is most commonly exploited by the more powerful as a mechanism of management.[26]

A successful insider/outsider strategy not only depends on the dynamics within a single organization or institution, but it also depends on using competing agendas of a variety of social organizations to produce pressure for change. What it demands of the insider is that he or she maintain a legitimate presence in both the dominant group and in whatever outsider or subordinate groups have produced him or her. It is neither bottom-up nor top-down, but a combination of those strategies—especially because bottom-up or top-down will have a different valence depending on where one is standing and what result one is trying to achieve.

A school reform project in Texas reflects a version of this insider/outsider strategy. In *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby*,[27] the Texas Supreme Court declared that the state has an obligation under the

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[25] Lani Guinier & Gerald Torres, The Miner's Canary 122 (2002) (footnotes omitted).

[26] *Success, supra* note 17, at 382; *Ambiguity, supra* note 15, at 1278.

[27] 777 S.W.2d 391 (Tex. 1989).

Texas State Constitution to equalize funding in public schools. The
Edgewood court noted that "[t]he wealthiest district ha[d] over
$14,000,000 of property wealth per student, while the poorest ha[d] approx-
imately $20,000; this disparity reflects a 700 to 1 ratio."[28]

Despite attempts to solve the political problems invariably connected to
school finance reform, the ultimate legislative fix was able to reduce the
disparity ratio from 700:1 to 28:1.[29] Nonetheless, the reform did not resolve
the many problems associated with chronic underfunding.

Because school finance reform had largely failed to produce real educa-
tional reform, a local organization called Texas LEADS (Local Empower-
ment for Accessible and Diverse Schools) was born.[30] The guiding principle
behind the organization was that poor schools would have to figure out how
to achieve academic success without additional funding. If a school could
succeed on a local level, it could provide a model for more general school
reform at the same time that it activated the community towards that effort.
Some poor districts across the state had been achieving academic success for
their students and LEADS was determined to figure out how they were do-
ing it.

After LEADS conducted surveys and on-the-ground interviews in the
respective schools, a local school was chosen. Texas LEADS entered into a
partnership with the school as the school was planning to implement an
afterschool program for "at risk" children that required some parent pro-
gramming. The school was also busy planning the opening of a magnet pro-
gram in government, law, and humanities. Magnet programs were often
contentious because new resources associated with them had typically been
concentrated on students from outside the local community. At around mid-
year, these issues were compounded when the principal announced that he
was leaving. Texas LEADS played a crucial role in gathering the views of
parents and in helping to integrate them in the selection of a new principal.
LEADS was only able to play this role because of its active engagement
with the parents and the community surrounding the school, as well as with
the school district and the local administrators.

Because LEADS was committed to working with all parents, it had to
deal with traditional parents as well as with those whose own histories in-
cluded negative school experiences. One of the first steps was to create a
public space that the parents "owned"—through which they could engage
the school. The creation of this space prompted the development of tools to
engage the parents in broader conversations about the school and educa-
tional policy. A team of teachers, parents, and staff was created to direct and
oversee the partnership project and to implement state required site-based

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[28] *Id.* at 392.
[29] *See* J. Steven Farr & Mark Trachtenberg, *The Edgewood Drama: An Epic Quest for
Educational Equity*, 17 YALE L. & POL'Y REV. 607, 634-703 (1999) (detailing the aftermath of
Edgewood).
[30] The author founded Texas LEADS in 1998.

planning. A parent was hired as an on-site peer parent coordinator who developed links to local resources related to parent involvement and began implementing parent programming based on the stated desires of parents and school officials. This group of parents became "The Action Team," which could function as an adjunct to the Campus Advisory Council (CAC), the state-mandated, site-based decision making body that was made up of teachers, parents, community members, and staff. LEADS intended to incorporate the Action Team into the existing structure to become an "inside" project that would not be perceived or treated as a temporary program operated by outsiders. LEADS also embedded the programming in the school by adopting the Action Team's parent/teacher/staff structure as a strategy to ensure long-term continuity.

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), one of the key players in the school equity litigation, led a series of parent leadership workshops at Texas LEADS' invitation. They taught parents to interview each other at the workshops, and they soon began to appreciate the need to provide feedback on what they learned to inform other substantive conversations concerning education.

Texas LEADS also helped build several links with the community, including the creation of vertical teams with those elementary schools that fed into the middle school and with the high schools into which the middle school fed. LEADS formed links with local churches and with El Buen Samaritano, a local Episcopal mission that assists poor, Spanish-speaking, working families. All of the services were available in the Parents' Room or through the Parent Liaison. Moreover, because the liaison was intimately connected to the community and was entrusted with school officials, parents, and people in the surrounding communities, the parent liaison provided a focus and a guiding hand for all parent-related activities. The Parent Liaison gave the parents the confidence that there was a dedicated, full-time person solely devoted to their needs. Virtually everyone agreed that the creation of the Parent Liaison and the Parents' Room were among the Project's greatest successes.

By changing the culture of the school, the parents came to feel that the school was theirs. Importantly, the cultural changes that allowed the parents to feel this way were the products of the physical changes in the school as well as a transformation of any us-versus-them dynamic that had predated the LEADS Project. The Parents' Room begot better communication among parents and between parents and the school, leading parents to develop peer driven surveys, a newsletter, a phone tree, and a website.

The story of Texas LEADS illustrates several elements of the theory of change being proposed here. Among them is the crucial idea that for change to be possible it is necessary to avoid both capture and premature or wholesale identification with the dominant powers. Nonetheless, agents of change have to both be invested in the institution, as well as in the community that supports or demands the change. Texas LEADS maintained strong ties to the surrounding community; it did not solely rely on the trust and confidence of

the school officials. As an agent of change, Texas LEADS invested in the school as an educational institution and worked to maintain the school as a site of refuge and source of support for community members who sought and demanded significant change. Texas LEADS learned that substantive change in a school moves at the same pace as it does in the community. It also learned to function with an ongoing inner tension, sometimes making the project an inside force for change while at other times making it an outside force.

Texas LEADS may have entered the school with the intention of being an insider whose goal was to institutionalize change. Those at the forefront of the effort soon learned, however, that "insiders" get pulled away to serve other needs of the district and of the school. To serve more effectively, Texas LEADS ultimately maintained a separation from the school and a flexibility that allowed the organization to play inside and outside roles as dictated by function. None of its successes could have been achieved if the organization had not succeeded in generating a legitimate presence both inside and outside of the dominant institutions. The redefinition of stakeholders was one of the most important ancillary benefits that the project achieved.[31]

CONCLUSION: LATINA/O EDUCATION AND JUSTICE: LEADING VOICES,
LESSONS LEARNED?

This article has suggested that the ideas of synecdoche and metonymy are not just figures of speech in which the part stands in for the whole. They are potentially useful metaphoric devices to understand the politics of institutional change through the inclusion of the formerly excluded.

Capture: here the hazard is that those who find themselves in a position to use institutional power may find themselves subject to pressure to conform to the norms and values of those who have traditionally benefitted from the conventional use of that institution's authority. This will often be subtle and it may merely be a means to reduce tension and conflict. It might be the easiest route to conventional success within such organizations; but acting in a way that is always consistent with the normative vision of the dominant institution has its costs, and one of those costs may be the loss of critical perspective.

The hazards associated with what is called the tyranny of tokenism arise from the impact of that process on neutralizing the energy for collective action. This article suggests that collective rather than individual action is necessary to produce institutional or social change, and any process that neutralizes or redirects that energy for substantive change is not likely to be in the larger interest of the subordinate group. The social psychological research seems to suggest that tokenism—when combined with cues about the individual basis for the success of the now included former outsider—often

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[31] *See generally*, Gerald Torres, *Translation and Stories*, 115 HARV. L. REV. 1362, 1383-94 (2002) (describing the Texas LEADS project).

creates a gulf between members of the dominant and subordinate groups, even if membership in the dominant group is completely contingent. It is a version of the capture thesis, but with more attention to the impact on social policies that create contingent insiders. Finally, a theory of change that does not retain an argument for continued accountability to members of the subordinate group is not an argument for serious social change.

The problem of synecdoche, the part standing in for the whole, suggests that one be cautious when trying to generalize from the presence of former outsiders in positions of leadership in dominant institutions. Although it may seem socially important, in reality, it might not be. Its meaning can only begin to be understood if one asks questions about those contingent insiders, about the dynamics of the institution within which they are functioning, and about one's own theory of change which will, of course, be informed by the goals one sets.