

POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION IN A MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY:
THE CASE OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Political Science
University of Houston

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Political Science

By: Roberto S. Guerra
August 1969

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ABSTRACT

In the embryonic stages of ethnic politics, conflict plays a major role in the orientation of the ethnic group toward political activity and organization. Utilizing the concept of conflict, then, as the broad framework for this study, the focus of this analysis was on the specific patterns of fragmentation that exist in the Mexican American community in Houston, Texas. Specific patterns of fragmentation were investigated and delineated.

Believing that fragmentation and conflict are brought to the forefront by organizational activity, an analysis of three Mexican American organizations--a political organization, a social-civic organization, and a community action organization--was undertaken. To reinforce this mode of analysis, a second technique was used--a content analysis of two Spanish-English newspapers operating in the community. This case study focused on the year 1968 and on several key symbols which reflected some type of political fragmentation.

The twofold approach to the problem of community political fragmentation brought into sharp focus several characteristics of Mexican American political life. Inter- and intra-organizational patterns and relationships indicated the difficulty encountered by Mexican

American organizations in attempting to organize for effective political action. The content analysis spelled out the direction and intensity of political fragmentation found in the community.

Perhaps some aspects of this analysis have served to illustrate the type of problems encountered by the Mexican American group while operating politically, not only within their own group, but in the broader community as well.

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CHAPTER ONE

POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION IN A MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

Systematic studies of the Mexican American population in the United States are generally lacking. However, there is presently a growing interest in this particular minority group as evidenced by the various research projects which have recently been completed or are now in progress. Anthropological studies have been very useful in determining life styles and cultural traits of the Mexican American. Survey research has produced much demographic data not available to the researcher before. But there still remain large gaps of knowledge about the Mexican American that need to be filled.

Julian Samora, in reviewing areas which need to be researched further, has pinpointed one specific problem:

The establishment and effectiveness of voluntary associations (organizations) within the Spanish-speaking group has not yet been adequately researched. Hundreds of organizations have come into being the last thirty years, two or three of which have achieved national prominence. There is a need for research concerning the proliferation of organizations, their history, influence, and objectives. There are also questions about the types of people to whom these organizations appeal, the kinds of problems with which they are concerned, and the areas in which they are effective.¹

¹Julian Samora, La Raza: Forgotten Americans (Notre Dame, 1966), 208.

Although this study will not deal specifically with all of the above problems, it will encompass, among other things, organizational activity and the types of problems which confront the various organizations found in the Mexican American community in Houston, Texas.

The major assumption made in this study is that political conflict exists within the Mexican American community in Houston, Texas, and that this conflict can be pinpointed through an analysis of organizations, and more specifically, through a content analysis of two community newspapers found in Houston: El Sol and Compass. Morris Janowitz has suggested that:

...the content of the community newspaper is representative of a wide range of activities, values, and aspirations present in the community which are not given expression in the daily press.²

It is further assumed that an analysis of these two papers will produce divergent political views and consequently shed some light on the nature of political fragmentation found in the community.

Although this analysis will stress community conflict and fragmentation in Mexican American political life and organizations, it provides an opportunity to investigate some of the areas suggested by Samora, such as types of organizations found in the community, their history, their influence and

²Morris Janowitz, The Community Press in an Urban Setting (Illinois, 1967), 73.

objectives, their composition, and to some degree, inter- and intra-group relationships.

Difficulties Encountered in Mobilization

There are approximately five million Mexican-Americans in the United States, with the bulk of them located in five Southwestern states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. Although Mexican-Americans constitute the second largest minority group in the United States, they are often overlooked or bypassed by the society at large and referred to as the "forgotten Americans" or the "invisible minority." Only recently have the problems of this ethnic group come to the forefront.

Mexican-Americans are beset by a multitude of problems which have retarded the ability of the group to assimilate into the mainstream of society. Foremost among their problems is education, or rather the lack of it. Low income levels, inferior and sub-standard housing, inadequate living conditions and health practices, inadequate employment training and opportunities, language difficulties, and discrimination in some areas rank as major problems that the Mexican-American people encounter in the United States.

Traditionally, the Mexican-American has been unable to organize effectively for political action that could remedy their situation. They have been unable to form any type of cohesive and effective organization which could apply political pressure at the local, state, or federal level for the imple-

mentation of specific programs which could benefit them directly. The question immediately presents itself: "Why has the Mexican-American been unable to form such an organization?"

Perhaps it would be in order to investigate certain factors which may have accounted for the lack of success on the part of many Mexican-American organizations. This, again, is not to imply that there has not been any successful organization. Indeed, organizations such as LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) have done much to further the advancement of many Mexican Americans. However, our focus here is not with the achievements that these organizations have attained, but rather with the lack of success by Mexican American organizations in general in attacking effectively the multitude of problems facing the people. In an era when it is considered essential that problems be taken care of today and not "manana," Mexican American organizations cannot afford to stand by idly and watch opportunities for improvement slip through their fingers. The civil rights movement and the poverty program are two critical areas in which the Mexican American must move rapidly and effectively in order to improve his status.

In attempting to conceptualize the difficulties presently encountered by the Mexican American organizations in mobilizing effectively, it is necessary to investigate several factors which, to some extent, have served to hinder effective organizational activity. Primarily, one must examine their historical background, their cultural values, and their general socio-

economic status in order to gain an insight into their organizational behavior patterns.

Where exactly does the Mexican American stand in relation to the rest of the population? What percent of society does he comprise? One has only to glance at the demographic data to determine that the Mexican American constitutes the second largest minority group in the United States and the largest minority group in Texas, larger even than the Negro. Educationally, the Mexican American rates lower than both the Anglo and the Negro population. The income level of the Mexican American is also below the national average.³

Samuel H. Barnes, in his study of Italian mass party members, has found that:

...unless the number of individuals is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some special device to make individuals act in their own common interest, rational self interested individuals will not act to achieve their common goal or group interest.⁴

This "logic of collective action," as Barnes labels it, assumes that the cost of participation for low income persons is extremely high, thus making collective action difficult for people with limited political experience; in addition, many low status individuals seek affective rather than rational

³See Appendix A for complete demographic characteristics of the Mexican American in the Southwest and Houston.

⁴Samuel H. Barnes, "Party Democracy and the Logic of Collective Action," Approaches to the Study of Party Organizations, ed. William J. Crotty (Boston, 1967), 109.

collective benefits from party or group membership.⁵ This, to some extent, is applicable to the Mexican American, but there are other more tangible characteristics which contribute to organizational difficulties.

The heterogeneity of the group plays a very important role in limiting the cohesiveness of the Mexican American organizations. Mexican Americans are characterized by differences in rates of acculturation, differing lengths of residency in the United States, differences among persons who come from different regions in Mexico or from different states in the United States or even from different regions of the same state. In addition, social class differences and urban-rural dichotomies contribute to the heterogeneity of the group.⁶

Traditional Mexican cultural values are also opposed to any type of effective organization. Strong familial ties which stress loyalty to the family first, individualism, distrust of organizations, and suspicion of leaders unfortunately are characteristic of many Mexican Americans.⁷ The suspicion of opportunism on the part of leaders and the dislike for individual advancement at the expense of one's peers are also

⁵Ibid., 127.

⁶Paul M. Sheldon, "Community Participation and the Emerging Middle Class," La Raza: Forgotten Americans, ed. Julian Samora (Notre Dame, 1966), 126-128.

⁷Ibid.

detrimental factors in attempting to build strong cohesive organizations.⁸

Other impediments in the development of effective organizational activity include the nature of organizations and the general apathy on the part of many Mexican Americans. Most of the existing organizations are non-partison or bi-partisan in nature, thus limiting their political maneuverability and their internal cohesion; furthermore, many Mexican American political organizations are plagued by the failure to raise money for political activities.⁹ Another obstacle to effective organization among Mexican Americans is the apparent lack of participation in organizations and in positions of leadership. There is no widespread source of trained leaders who possess the organizational skills and political sophistication to build effective organizations among Mexican Americans. A combination of the above factors, then, leads to the inability to develop strong leadership which in turn could form strong organizations for the purpose of articulating the needs of the Mexican American people to the broader community.

Prothro and Matthews have found three conditions essential for organizational effectiveness in Negro organizations operat-

⁸ Jose de la Isla and Mary Ellen Goodman, Houstonians of Mexican Ancestry: Report on a Study in Progress (Houston; 1967), p. 7-8.

⁹ John R. Martinez, "Leadership and Politics," La Raza: Forgotten Americans, ed. Julian Samora (Notre Dame, 1966), 52-53.

ing in the Negro community. These are:

1. close ties between leaders and followers,
2. organizational continuity, and
3. organizational cohesiveness.¹⁰

It is painfully apparent that Mexican American organizations, in general, lack two of the above conditions which could render effective organizations. Mexican American organizations in Houston do not foster what might be called "close ties" between leaders and the rank and file. Although there is continuity in several organizations, there is a minimum of organizational cohesiveness among the various organizations that operate in the Houston area.

The preceding difficulties in mobilization and organizational effectiveness on the part of Mexican Americans have been superficially touched upon, but they nevertheless set the framework for this study. The description of organizations in Chapter Two should reinforce the above assertions. All of these conflicts, it seems, come to the forefront when one aspires to a position of leadership within the community, and especially when he seeks to form strong organizations that are necessary if Mexican American needs and desires are to be brought effectively to the attention of those in authority in the broad urban community.¹¹

¹⁰Donald Matthews and J. Prothro, Negroes and the New Southern Politics (New York, 1966), 223.

¹¹Sheldon, op.cit., 125.

A Model of Conflict in the Mexican American Community

Most of the activists in the Mexican American community belong to one or more organizations, just like their Anglo counterparts. Robert Lane suggests that "political participation for an individual increases with (a) the political consciousness and participation of his associates, (b) the frequency and harmony of his interpersonal relationships and group memberships, and (c) the saliency and unambiguity of his group references."¹² This increased participation in politics by the ethnic person will no doubt lead to some type of group conflict with political overtones. Lane proposes that there are three types of conflict that emerge based on the direction of the identification:

1. those composed of two or more positive identifications (attractions).
2. those composed of conflicts between two dis-identifications (as when a person opposes the ethnic group of his candidate but also the party of the opposition).
3. the conflict may be between two alternatives, each of which has partially attractive and partially repellent features (this alternative is much more ambiguous in attempting to predict political behavior).¹³

From preliminary data, the conflict in the Mexican American community in Houston seems to be of the third type, the conflict between alternatives which may have equally attractive and equally repellent features, although there are certainly shades

¹²Robert E. Lane, Political Life (Illinois, 1959), 187-189.

¹³Ibid., 197-202.

of the other two types also. However, the above typology is not sufficiently broad to allow a thorough analysis of the fragmentation found in the political environment in the community. Therefore, a broader framework for analysis is required for determining political fragmentation and differing political values and orientations found in the community. Some type of conflict model would seem appropriate for the analysis of the Mexican American community. It has been pointed out that minorities can be described and analyzed in terms of the give and take or organized interest groups (regardless of degree of organization) who have some stake in the operation of the minority relation complex.¹⁴ A close examination of the conflict model approach to the study of Mexican American political fragmentation follows.

From the preceding discussion of Mexican American organizations and the group as a whole, it is fairly evident that group conflict plays a major role in the final development or non-development of inter-group organizations. Conflict, rather than consensus, characterizes the Mexican American ethnic group. Conflict, then, can be used as an analytical tool for the investigation of minority group status. Contemporary events in American life seem to be centered around social conflict; therefore, the Mexican American pattern is by no means unique.

¹⁴Donald Henderson, "Minority Group Response and the Conflict Model," Phylon XXV (1964), p. 23.

Nimmo and Unga have stressed the universality of human conflict and defined politics as "the resolution of social conflict."¹⁵ Kenneth Boulding has identified three conflict situations: economic conflict, interaction conflict, and internal conflict. The third type of situation, Boulding suggests, involves a situation in which the individual or organization is incapable of making a decision because it is pulled in two opposite directions and at the same time leads to disorganization.¹⁶

Louis Wirth has observed that:

...no ethnic group is ever unanimous in all its attitudes and actions, and minority groups are no exception. They, too, have their internal differentiations, their factions and ideological currents and movements.¹⁷

Wirth then proposes a framework for investigating minority groups that allows for a fourfold response to minority group status, namely:

1. pluralistic, in which minorities live side by side, although not as part of the community;
2. assimilationist, in which the minority seeks to be integrated unidentifiably into the majority group. Failing this, however, the minority assumes a stature of

¹⁵Dan Nimmo and Thomas Unga, American Political Patterns (Boston, 1967), 1-18.

¹⁶Kenneth Boulding, "Organization and Conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution I (June, 1967), 132-133.

¹⁷Louis Wirth, "Types of Minority Groups," Collective Behavior, ed. R. Turner and L. Killian (New Jersey, 1957), 321-326.

3. separationist, and seeks autonomous existence, and, if successful, the minority becomes
4. militant, and attempts to assert its dominance over groups, sometimes the majority from which it separated.¹⁸

Although Donald Henderson goes beyond Wirth and modifies his typology somewhat into broader and more general categories (Adjustive, Protest, Maintenance, and Synthesis), it is felt that Wirth's typology is more applicable to the Mexican American group.¹⁹ It is assumed that the Mexican American group presently falls into the first two categories, assimilationist and pluralistic, but with a few indications in some urban areas that perhaps there is an emerging trend toward the other two categories. It is in this general framework, then, that the analysis of Mexican American political fragmentation in the city of Houston is undertaken.

Note on Data and Methodology

Much of the data presented herein comes from the files of the research study project, Houstonians of Mexican Ancestry, which is currently being conducted by Dr. Mary Ellen Goodman of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Rice University. The writer has been associated with the project for the past two years, doing some of the field research and analyzing the data gathered. Most of the data was acquired

¹⁸Henderson, op.cit., 22.

¹⁹Ibid.

through techniques common to the discipline of Anthropology as well as to the behavioral sciences. Survey research, life histories, participant observation, interviewing, and content assessment of a community newspaper were some of the techniques utilized in this research project. Appropriate credit will be given to the Project Reports whenever any references from them are used, regardless as to whether the Reports are published or unpublished. Most of this material will be put to use in Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two will include a general setting of the study and a description of the various organizations. Chapter Three will draw heavily from Project Report Five, which is a content assessment of El Sol for another time period. Chapter Four is an analysis of the two community newspapers, and Chapter Five includes the summary and conclusions of this study. Appendix A will draw from Project Report Two for demographic characteristics of Mexican Americans in Houston.

This study will utilize two methods of analysis. Primarily, a general analysis and investigation of three Mexican American organizations--a political organization, a social-civic organization, and a community action organization--will be employed to determine if indeed political fragmentation exists in the community. The focus of this investigation will be on LULAC, PASO (Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations), and UOIC (United Organization Information Center). The data for this analysis was obtained through the sources cited earlier (Project: Houstonians of

Mexican Ancestry). Additional data was gathered through other sources: independent interviews conducted by the writer, pamphlets and articles made available by the Mexican American organizations, and references made by the community mass media to these organizations.

To reinforce the above method of analysis, a second technique was used. A case study of two community newspapers was conducted to determine if indeed fragmentation did exist, what general direction or orientation this fragmentation took. A content analysis of El Sol and Compass for the year 1968 was undertaken. The responses of the two newspapers to certain political symbols should reflect the specific nature of community organizational and leadership relationships and roles. Chapters Three and Four will have a detailed description and explanation of this mode of analysis.

The relationship between the general analysis of the Mexican American organizations and the content analysis of the two community newspapers can perhaps be better understood in the broader content of communication theory. Although this aspect will be further explained in Chapters Three and Four, a brief reference to communication theory will suffice here.

All communication is composed of six basic elements: a source or sender, an encoding process which results in a message, a channel of transmission, a detector or recipient of the message, and a decoding device.²⁰ Holsti has pointed

²⁰Ole H. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Massachusetts, 1969), 24.

out that the results of content analysis may be used to make inferences about all other elements of the communication process.²¹ Inferences, then, can be drawn about the sources of communication and also about receivers.

Content analysis is used most frequently to describe the attributes of messages and compare them meaningfully in one of three ways:

1. the analyst may compare documents derived from a single source in several ways (trend analysis),
2. hypotheses may also be tested by comparing the messages produced by two or more different sources (usually, the purpose is to relate theoretically significant attributes of communicators to differences in messages they produce),
3. content data may be compared to some standard of adequacy or performance.²²

A variation of the third type of analysis, comparing content data to some standard of performance, such as non-content indices representing aggregate data consisting of material gathered through sociological research (Chapter Two), will be used to bring together both aspects of this study. While examining the general nature of organizations and their inter- and intra-group relationships, a specific case study of the sources of communications (El Sol and Compass) will also be utilized to relate one to the other. Schematically, this approach can be represented as follows:

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 27-32.

Messages produced
by sources A_x, A_y
(El Sol, Compass)

Standard B
(Aggregate Data)

Content
Variables A_x, A_y ----- B_x
 A_x, A_y
Comparison of
B and A_x, A_y

The content data found in the community newspapers (A_x, A_y) should result in messages which relate, either negatively or positively, to B (Aggregate Data). The combination of the two techniques will not only assert if community fragmentation is present, but if it is, the specific nature and orientation of such fragmentation will be described and defined.

CHAPTER TWO

AN ANALYSIS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

The Mexican American community in Houston, Texas, is characterized by a proliferation of Mexican American organizations. The community contains a substantial number of social, civic, religious, literary, fraternal, recreational, mutual aid, community action, and political organizations. A large percentage of the Mexican Americans who do belong to any type of organization are members of the middle class. Table 1 describes the socio-economic characteristics of a selected sample of middle class Mexican Americans.¹ Although some Mexican Americans belong to other organizations in the community at large which are mostly Anglo in nature, the focus of this chapter will be on those organizations which are predominantly Mexican American and on the Mexican Americans which compose these organizations.

Robert Lane has summarized some of the reasons why people join groups and organizations:

¹ A survey conducted by the Project Houston: Houstonians of Mexican Ancestry found this to be generally true (see Table 1). This correlates with studies done by others on the society as a whole (Robert Lane, Angus Campbell and Associates, Lester Milbrath) that persons with higher socio-economic characteristics (income, education, and occupation) enjoy higher levels of political participation than persons of lower socio-economic status.

Table 1

INCOME, EDUCATION, AND OCCUPATIONAL STATUS
OF MIDDLE CLASS MEXICAN AMERICANS

<u>Occupation:</u>	Professional	(11)	26.2
	White Collar	(16)	38.1
	Semi-Skilled	(11)	26.2
	Unskilled	(01)	2.4
	Other	(03)	7.1
		<u>42</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Education:</u>	B.A. and over	(13)	30.9
	12, and some college	(08)	19.1
	12	(01)	2.4
	9-11	(07)	16.7
	0-8	(12)	28.5
	Other	(01)	2.4
		<u>42</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Income:</u>	\$10,000 and over	(09)	25.0
	\$8,000 - \$10,000	(08)	22.2
	\$5,000 - \$8,000	(10)	27.8
	less than \$5,000	(09)	25.0
		<u>36</u>	<u>100.0</u>

A sample of middle class Mexican Americans was taken as part of a general survey on attitudes, values, cultural patterns, and demographic data in Houston, Texas

Although a person may belong to certain groups because of birth (family and ethnic groups), or because of choices relevant to other goals (occupation), there are many groups that a person consciously decides to join because the group offers him certain advantages (i.e., unions, business organizations, fraternal organizations, recreational clubs, veterans' organizations, farm groups, and political groups).²

The Mexican American belongs to an ethnic group because of birth, but this group is an informal group within the community based on common ancestry.³ Occupational groups are found throughout the community, both professional and non-professional, business and non-business (i.e., Mexican Chamber of Commerce, Mutualistas). The Mexican American also joins groups like his Anglo counterpart because he derives certain advantages. For example, a person may decide to join one of the elite social clubs because he feels that it would give him certain status in the community; he might join LULAC because he feels he can find the type of social life he is looking for, or he might decide to join a union because the pay is much better and the hours are shorter. A veterans' organization such as the G.I. Forum might appeal to him as a means of fulfilling his sense of identification with the Mexican American soldier, or he might feel compelled to join a political club such as PASO to campaign for his favorite candidates.

²Lane, op.cit., 74.

³Lester Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago, 1965), 131.

Recent surveys made of the Mexican American community have revealed that PASO and LULAC are the two organizations most frequently belonged to by Mexican Americans in Houston (See Table 2, page 21).

Organizations such as Familias Unidas, Club Verde Mar, Sembradores de Amistad, Mexico Bello, and other such groups are primarily social groups with no political orientation whatsoever. Their principal goal is either social, recreative, or cultural in nature. Familias Unidas, for instance, has as its motto, "Por el Progreso y Cultura de Nuestra Juventud" ("For the Progress and Culture of Our Youth"). Other clubs are more traditionally oriented. They celebrate Mexican patriotic holidays with a dance or a parade or some other social event. These types of organizations usually sponsor dances, picnics, suppers, and other fiestas with their main purpose being social, recreative, and civic, but rarely political.

The Mexican American organizations in Houston vary from the very elite ones to ones of more modest means. LULAC seems to be a marginal organization consisting mainly of middle class Mexican Americans, or at least Mexican Americans who want to identify with the middle class. The specific function of an organization varies as to its role in the community. The more elite organizations, oriented toward the preservation and observance of Mexican culture and customs, have a social function more than anything else. Individual members of these organizations may be individually active in politics, but the

Table 2

GROUP MEMBERSHIP IN MEXICAN AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS

League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC)	23%
Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations (PASO)	21%
G. I. Forum	08%
Organizations concerned with voter registration	26%
Any other group concerned with minority relations	17%
Others (UOIC fits into this category)	<u>05%</u>
	100%

The above data comes from an unpublished thesis by John A. Garcia, "Mexican American Political Leadership in Houston, Texas," 93. He interviewed a sample of 19 community influentials. Preliminary data from Goodman's Project Houston: Houstonians of Mexican Ancestry indicates that 15% of their sample belong to LULAC, while 14% belong to PASO and 5% belong to UOIC. The rest were dispersed among nearly 40 other organizations. Both surveys show overlapping memberships, especially in the case of LULAC and PASO.

group as a whole is not. Those organizations which consist of middle class Mexican Americans tend to be more politically active.

However, different segments of the same organization may be characterized by different degrees of political activism. There are several LULAC councils in Houston, and each one, depending on its membership composition (age, income, occupation) has differing attitudes towards their specific role in the community. The attempt to delineate specific functions of the various organizations is complicated by the dual or multiple membership of the middle class segment. Some individuals are members of both social and political organizations. This makes it difficult to determine what his precise role is in either of the organizations.

As a general rule, the low socio-economic segment of the population does not participate to a large degree in the activities of their community. The lack of time and money, among other factors, accounts for this. Mexican Americans who fall in the low socio-economic bracket do not deviate from this pattern. The majority of the persons in this category belong to no group or organization (See Table 3), and the ones who do usually belong to a church or church-sponsored group.⁴ Persons in this category who are active in politics usually belong to PASO, a political organization which appeals to the

⁴Data gathered by Goodman, Project Houston.

Table 3

GENERAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF
MEXICAN AMERICANS BELONGING TO NO ORGANIZATIONS

<u>Occupation:</u>	Unskilled	(17)	47.2
	Semi-Skilled	(15)	41.7
	Unemployed	(03)	8.3
	No answer, don't know, other	(01)	2.8
		36	100.0
 <u>Education:</u>	 0-8 years	 (29)	 80.5
	9-11 years	(05)	13.9
	Don't know	(02)	5.6
		36	100.0
 <u>Income:</u>	 \$0 - 2,000	 (03)	 8.0
	\$2 - 3,000	(09)	25.0
	\$3 - 4,000	(05)	14.0
	\$4 - 5,000	(01)	3.0
	\$5 - 8,000	(05)	14.0
	No answer, don't know	(13)	36.0
		36	100.0

low income groups in the community, or to a community action program neighborhood center (Harris County Community Action Association).

Political Involvement of Mexican Americans in Houston

Persons of ethnic background are interested in politics for the same reason as the rest of the population: they have occupational interests which may be affected by tariffs or regulations; they are subject to local and national taxation; they have personal preferences among candidates and parties.⁵ In the case of the Mexican American, he is drawn into politics in many cases because of educational issues, for that is one of the main problems confronting him, or because of the poverty program and the increasing ethnic rivalry in that program.

Participation in politics and organizations is higher in urban areas than in rural areas, and within an urban area ethnics are generally more active in politics than non-ethnics.⁶ In Texas, Mexican Americans in urban areas have been more active both politically and socially than the rural Mexican American. This is especially true of the Mexican American living in large metropolitan areas, such as El Paso, San Antonio, and Houston. Only recently have some of the small towns in South Texas become more politically aware and active (Rio Grande Valley). The activities of the poverty program and unionizing

⁵Lane, op.cit., 236.

⁶Ibid., 243.

attempts (farm laborers) have been the major impetus of this development. Recent Mexican American youth movements have also contributed to a new awareness among Mexican Americans.

There is more of a feeling among urban dwellers that they can do something politically to fight the system, and this sense of high political efficacy enhances their participation in social, political, and civic organizations. In addition, persons in an urban area live close together and are more anonymous, thus reducing the threat of punitive measures on the part of the dominant society. In many small towns and cities across Texas there is more apathy among the Mexican Americans perhaps because they feel they cannot fight "City Hall," and most importantly, they are often economically dependent on those who in fact run City Hall.

In Houston, then, there is a wide range between political activism and non-participation among Mexican Americans. The politically apathetic Mexican American is found throughout the social class structure, but he seems to be concentrated in the low socio-economic segment, where political ignorance is commonplace.⁷ In addition, Mexican Americans who have just migrated into Houston generally do not engage in political activities for two different reasons:

1. they frequently belong to the low socio-economic segment of the population, or
2. they are professional people, or middle class people who have come to Houston for higher occupational opportunities, and who choose to disregard politics in the community either be-

⁷Goodman, Project Houston.

cause they are not knowledgeable about them or choose to immerse themselves in total middle class Anglo life, values, and culture.

Some Mexican-Americans who do not engage in politics take the view that "I have my own needs to attend to," or "I don't think Mexican American political organizations can do anything to help the Mexican American, but hard work can." These statements attest to the loyalty of the Mexican American to his family, and also to his distrust of politics, and politicians in particular. Of those that do participate in politics, personalistic politics play a major role in their participation.

In examining the role of personalistic politics, leadership patterns, and organizational patterns among Mexican Americans, the focus will be on those Mexican Americans who belong to the middle class or are just entering that class. Although this does not entirely discount the participation of the lower socio-economic class, their participation is limited. Data gathered through field research by the Project Houstonians of Mexican Ancestry conducted by the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Rice University indicates that the middle class Mexican American plays a major role in the organizational patterns and political activity of the Mexican American community in Houston, Texas.⁸ This group, then, will be our primary concern in the following analysis.

⁸For example, responses by a selected sample of middle class Mexican Americans indicate that degree of political interest is high (33.3% greatly interested, 47.6% somewhat interested, and only 19.1% showed little or no interest). Nearly half of this sample (42.9%) had been involved in politics in one way or another.

The Role of Personalistic Politics Among Mexican Americans

The concept of personalism has long been a prevalent characteristic of the Mexican people. Mexican political leaders, even in pre-revolutionary times, tended to engage in personalistic politics. After the 1910 Revolution, personalistic politics marked a long and bloody era in the political development of the country. The Carranzistas, the Maderistas, and the like point to the Mexican tendency to identify with personalities rather than issues. This characteristic has persisted to some extent among the Mexican Americans in the United States. They identify with charismatic leaders, especially ones who fulfill the image of machismo.⁹ However, this assertion is more characteristic of the lower socio-economic group than other segments of the Mexican American population. Among the more acculturated Mexican Americans, machismo might have no appeal whatsoever.

PASO was born out of an attachment to a personality, in this case, John F. Kennedy. Prior to the candidacy of Kennedy, Henry B. Gonzalez ran for the office of Governor of Texas, and this produced similar effects, except on a much smaller scale. In all probability, the candidacy of John F. Kennedy politically motivated more Mexican Americans than any other single event or person. Here was someone the Mexican Americans could identify with: he was a Catholic, just like they were, and he exemplified the highest virtues of machismo. One Mexican

⁹Machismo or "manliness." This is the ideal male role, and it stresses male superiority, honor, and virility.

American precinct activist in Harris County expressed very eloquently the influence that Kennedy had on him:

In 1960 I was still a Mexican citizen enclosed in my own little world afraid to join groups and afraid to speak out. Then when Kennedy became a presidential candidate, somehow I found myself, an introvert, campaigning for this great man. When he won, I felt deep personal victory as I had never felt before. I felt that I had done something meaningful to help him get elected. That was the turning point of my life. From then on I joined as many organizations as I could, actively participating in them because now I felt I was part of the American way of life. I am now an American citizen and proud of it. I now understand that to participate in community affairs is a responsibility I have to assume. And all this I attributed to one man: John F. Kennedy.

One Mexican American politician, in addressing the Valley Farm marchers at Austin, Texas, expressed his philosophy, and stated that he had obtained it from the examples of John F. Kennedy and Pope John XXIII.¹⁰ Such speeches by Mexican American politicians and other prominent persons do much to reinforce the already ingrained affection for the Kennedy name among the Mexican American poor. In a survey taken of Mexican American precinct activists in Harris County, five of seven interviewed considered personal attachment to a candidate a major factor in their becoming active in politics.¹¹ Personalism, however, has led to two diametrically opposed developments, one positive, the other negative.

¹⁰Albert Pena, founder of PASO and Bexar County Commissioner. Pena addressed the Valley Farm marchers during a rally held in Austin, Texas, Labor Day, 1966. He also used the same speech in addressing himself to the Cabinet Committee Hearings on Mexican American Affairs in El Paso, Texas, on October 26-28, 1967.

¹¹Survey conducted by Dr. Richard Murray, University of Houston Political Science Department, "The Impact of Partisan Organization in a Transitional Political Environment: The Case of Houston, Texas."

On the positive side of personalism is the Mexican American who, as a result of a certain personality, has become highly involved in politics. He has become more "politically conscious," if not aware, and he has acquired a sense of community obligation, feeling that he can play an important role in the political process of his country. His political efficacy increases.

On the other hand, there are the negative effects of personalism: personalistic inter- and intra-group conflicts among Mexican Americans which frequently lead to disunity among the various groups and even within the various groups. This disunity continues to be a problem among Mexican American organizations, and it is one factor which contributes to the political fragmentation of the Mexican American community.

Presently, it is difficult to determine which effect of personalism is prevalent within the Mexican American community. During the Gonzalez candidacy for Governor and the Kennedy candidacy for President, personalism seems to have had a positive effect, but recently, despite calls for unity, personalism seems to be having negative effects in Harris County. Perhaps had Robert F. Kennedy been nominated, there would have been the same fervor among Mexican Americans to campaign for him. PASO, during its state endorsement convention held in Houston in March, 1968, endorsed Robert Kennedy on the same day he announced for the presidency of the United States. The Harris County delegation voted against the endorsement of Kennedy

"at this time," feeling it was a bit premature. However, this was before President Johnson's announcement that he would not seek the nomination of his party for the presidency of the United States. After the surprise announcement, there was no doubt that Kennedy's endorsement was now unanimous. His untimely assassination left the Mexican Americans without a national leader with whom they could identify. PASO subsequently endorsed Eugene McCarthy at its annual state convention, but not unanimously; however, after the Democratic National Convention, they supported Hubert H. Humphrey. This, too, was not unanimous. Other Mexican American organizations supported Richard Nixon.

This illustrates the basic problem with which we are dealing: there exists fragmentation in the Mexican American community because of the style used by the Mexican Americans themselves (personalism). In addition, fragmentation exists because of the varying degrees of acculturation among Houstonians of Mexican ancestry. The possibility of the totally acculturated Mexican American joining hands with or even identifying with the lower income group is remote to say the least. Fragmentation within the Mexican American community comes into clearer focus when one analyzes state politics and Mexican American leadership patterns.

Leadership and Leadership Potential in the Mexican American Community¹²

Schernerhorn has noted that leadership generally rests in the hands of various types of individuals from the upper and middle classes, and he has categorized them into five types of leaders:

1. The natural leader, who is likely to have personal magnetism and the knack of getting his colleagues to follow him, but who often lacks status in the Anglo community and is often of but limited vision.
2. The accommodating leader, who is friendly with the Anglos, deriving much of his group status from his friendliness and who is likely to be the counterpart of the Negro leader of the "Uncle Tom" type (Tio Tomas in Spanish).
3. Mexican consuls, who may appear to be a present help in times of trouble for the alien, but who retard assimilation by encouraging nostalgic nativism of Mexicanism.
4. Temporary political leaders who achieve brief status because they can get out a substantial vote by the reason of their enthusiasm and their acceptance in the neighborhood.
5. Professional and business leaders, who have money, education, and the respect of the Anglos, but who may be somewhat isolated from the masses despite having status with them.¹³

In Houston, the last two types of leadership are the most promising in terms of providing adequate guidance. The temporary political leader, providing he can perpetuate himself in office, could become a permanent political leader capable of being a true spokesman for the Mexican American people he represents.

¹²See John A. Garcia, "Mexican American Political Leadership in Houston, Texas," Master's Thesis, 1968. University of Houston.

¹³John Burma, Spanish Speaking Groups in the United States (North Carolina: 1954), 96.

It seems that the professional and business leaders constitute the most encouraging political leadership, with the professional Mexican American taking the initiative. Recent events have caused a split in the direction they want to go. Professor John R. Martinez has characterized the split as between two elements: the "radicals" and the "diplomats."¹⁴ The radicals are outspoken, hard-driving persons who want action now; the diplomats are those who, although aware of the problems confronting the Mexican American, are unsure of what route to take in dealing with these problems. Houston has its share of both.

The neighborhood and professional leaders, in addition to a few independents, comprise the leadership of the many organizations in Houston. The main groups with which this analysis will concern itself include PASO, LULAC, and UOIC. The type of leadership found in these organizations relates somewhat to the organizational schism found in the community. The UOIC is a relatively new organization, as contrasted to PASO or LULAC, and it was formed primarily to present a united front of Mexican American organizations. However, it has turned out to be more of an offshoot of the Harris County Community Action Association. UOIC has attracted a diverse membership, but a highly articulate one. Some of its leaders are members of the Houston Legal Foundation, a branch of the HCCAA which dispenses free legal aid to indigents in target areas. Some Mexican

¹⁴Martinez, op.cit., 59.

American area and precinct leaders have formed their own political organizations, and there are various other minor political organizations, but they do not have substantial following.¹⁵ The three major organizations found in the Mexican American community are described below.

Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations (PASO)

The major political organization in Harris County for Mexican Americans is PASO, which had a membership list of one hundred persons in 1967. The Houston Chapter, as compared to other PASO chapters in the state, has always been strong. PASO is (according to its bylaws and constitution) a non-partisan organization which seeks to improve the educational, economic, and civic aspects of the Mexican American people through political action. Such sweeping statement of objectives is common among Mexican American organizations.

PASO has had its ups and downs throughout its brief history which began in 1960 when the VIVA Kennedy Clubs were formed to campaign for John F. Kennedy. After the elections of 1960, the VIVA Kennedy Clubs became PASO. PASO is a liberal organization, and consequently it does not appeal to many conservative Mexicans. In Houston, PASO is a member of the Harris County Democrats, a liberal coalition consisting of Negroes,

¹⁵There are various other splinter groups which are mainly neighborhood clubs. During the 1968 presidential election a Mexican American group emerged and organized to support Nixon. They called themselves the "Good Latin American Democrats for Nixon" (GLAD). Many of them were LULAC members and professional people.

Mexican Americans, white liberals, the Teamsters Union, and the AFL-CIO. PASO coordinates some of its activities with the Harris County Democrats, thereby cutting down on its operating costs since PASO, like most Mexican American organizations, is not a strong financial organization.

Statewide, PASO has been involved in many activities since 1960. PASO engineered, along with the Teamsters, the election of a Mexican American mayor and city councilmen in Crystal City, Texas, heretofore an Anglo stronghold despite the 85:15 per cent ratio in population favoring the Mexican American. PASO was one of the many supporters of the Rio Grande farm workers' strike and subsequent march to Austin. PASO also engages in annual voter registration drives throughout the state of Texas, especially in the large urban areas. PASO also holds annual statewide conventions, and during election years, endorses candidates for public office from Governor to President. State politics play a major role in PASO's political activities, and they play an important role in mobilizing Mexican American voters.

In Harris County, as throughout the state, the feeling toward PASO is one of ambivalence. Some Mexican Americans are completely against it, believing that they should integrate into the Anglo society, rather than segregate themselves into ethnic organizations; others regard it as very ineffective; still others are ardent supporters.¹⁶

¹⁶See "Inter- and Intra-Organizational Pattern," this Chapter, 40 .

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

LULAC is one of the oldest national Mexican American organizations, having been organized in 1933. LULAC is a strong, middle class organization and it is highly regarded in the Anglo community. Nelson Rockefeller was their convention speaker at the last convention held in San Antonio in the summer of 1968. Although LULAC many times acts as the spokesman of the Mexican American community, this act produces an uproar from the other segments of the population who claim that there is not a single representative spokesman for the Mexican American community at either the local, state, or national level. It has been given the stigma of being a "social club" for acculturated, middle class Mexican Americans, having no contact with the grass-roots people. However, LULAC has done many things of a civic nature to help out the less fortunate Mexican American.

LULAC has devoted itself mainly to educational projects, civil rights suits arising from discrimination against the Mexican American, and recreational activities. LULAC publishes a national newsletter, and it awards various scholarships each year to deserving Mexican American students. However, LULAC has retained its reputation of primarily being a social club, and it is many times unduly criticized for this.

The fact that LULAC is associated with the successful, fully acculturated, middle class Mexican American tends to isolate it from the lower socio-economic segment of the population. It is often accused of being politically ineffective

when attempting to help the poor. It should be noted that there are several LULAC organizations within the city, and they sometimes function in isolation from each other. In addition, LULAC is a non-partisan organization, thus limiting the extent of its political activities. This organization fits more accurately into the assimilationist category proposed by Wirth.

However, there are some individuals in this organization who feel that a more militant stand must be taken in matters pertaining to civil rights. A former LULAC national president, addressing the LULAC convention in San Antonio during the summer of 1968, declared:

The black people of this country are setting the example for us to follow--us, who have been here since before the coming of Christ...isn't it a shame?... I am not condoning violence, but we should stand up for those who are bleeding.¹⁷

LULAC, however, while intensifying its fight against poverty and the lack of education among many Mexican Americans, is not likely to abandon its non-partisan position or engage in militant activities as an organization. Such individuals, while still remaining LULAC members, may act independently or join other organizations through which they may work more effectively. United Organizations Information Center is one such organization.

¹⁷Speech by Judge Alfred J. Hernandez. See The Houston Chronicle, July 1, 1968.

United Organization Information Center (UOIC)

The UOIC came into being about two and one-half years ago with the expressed purpose of bringing together the leaders of thirty-seven organizations in order to establish better rapport among the many Mexican American organizations in Houston. Its main purpose was to disseminate information regarding Mexican American problems in the community:

...to develop, promote, and encourage, by the preparation and distribution of literature, pamphlets, magazines, periodicals, tokens, and otherwise to act as a clearing house of information.¹⁸

In addition, it sought to encourage new leadership and to "stimulate a broad base of interest in and support of the Mexican American."¹⁹

The UOIC has undertaken several projects during their two years of operation. Such projects dealt with employment and education, the sponsoring of a Raza Unida Conference in Houston which brought together several hundred Mexican Americans from throughout the state and some of the local Mexican American organizations, and perhaps most importantly, the UOIC has tried to secure a "fair share" of the poverty program funds for the Mexican American neighborhoods.²⁰ The UOIC has also attempted to coordinate the various programs of other Mexican

¹⁸ Pamphlet, United Organization Information Council.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ There have been three Raza Unida Conferences: one was held in San Antonio, the second one in Laredo, and the last one here in Houston and sponsored by the UOIC.

American organizations to make them more effective by acting collectively instead of individually. The sponsoring of the Raza Unida Conference was such an attempt.

UOIC frequently employs the term Raza Unida. The term is considered to be part of a movement rather than part of any specific organization. It attempts to unite all Mexican Americans through the bond of nationalism, emphasizing La Raza and focusing on the problems of the poor Mexican American. Julian Samora has found the same type of nationalistic appeal in his study of Mexican Americans in a midwestern metropolis. Samora describes it in this manner:

In most cases, however, Mexican American nationalism represents a strongly emotional and somewhat defensive response to the homogenizing pressures of the American society. It is the group's way of emphasizing the positive values it places on its cultural distinctiveness and does not seem to create any problem of divided loyalty. The Mexican Americans are Americans and their patriotism and loyalty to the United States is beyond question, but, like Southerners, they have a special sense of group identity and a history and culture that sets them apart....²¹

The Raza Unida concept embraced by the UOIC is similar to the one described by Samora, but it is less patronizing to American society and definitely more militant in its approach. It is an action-oriented approach rather than a nostalgic approach to nationalism. UOIC, in theory at least, subscribes to this philosophy.

Although the UOIC includes, or was originally intended to include, representatives from each of the thirty-seven groups

²¹ Julian Samora and Richard Lamanna, Mexican Americans in a Mid-West Metropolis: A Study of East Chicago, Mexican American Report No. 8 (Los Angeles, 1967), 88.

and organizations, their bi-monthly meetings draw no such representation, though there are some representatives who attend meetings regularly and actively take part in the activities of the organization. These are very few, however.

Although there are some interested Mexican Americans who claim no group affiliation who attend the meetings, the core of the organization revolves around professional people--mostly lawyers--and other paid members of the Harris County Community Action Program. These activists are fully-informed of the many local issues that arise in the community, and they are usually an articulate and outspoken group. Ultimately, this organization, which had originally been set up as an organization of organizations, has actually become an organization itself, a specific pressure group.

The three organizations which we have examined constitute the three major factions in Harris County. One is a social civic organization catering to the middle class Mexican American (LULAC), another is a political organization appealing to the lower socio-economic element and attempting to politically mobilize them, and the third is a civic action group composed of both professional people and grass roots people who have been motivated to civic and political action by the local war on poverty. Perhaps by examining some of the behavioral patterns of these organizations we can focus on the political fragmentation found in the broader community and formulate some key symbols to which these organizations react.

Inter- and Intra-Organizational Relationships

The division in the Mexican American community is brought into sharp focus whenever some individual or some organization attempts to act as the "spokesman of the community." PASO has long claimed the distinction of being the strongest political organization in Harris County in the sense that it clearly takes a stand on issues, endorses candidates, and actively campaigns for them. However, when PASO makes this implication, many Mexican Americans take issue with it.

Even when PASO makes no such assertion, the rivalry is still apparent, as evidenced by the recent attempt to select a Mexican American representative on the Executive Board of the Harris County Community Action Association. The mayor asked that one representative be selected by the Mexican Americans, but he was not to come from a political organization. The mayor contacted a leading member of the LULAC to help select a representative; UOIC was excluded because it was supposedly a political organization. However, some argued, a meeting in which representatives of thirty-seven organizations would democratically elect a representative from the Mexican American community would avoid the usual criticism that follows such elections, because a larger and more representative group would have had its say as to who was to represent them. Four persons were nominated for the post, from which the mayor and the county judge would select

a representative. Ironically, the Chairman of the UOIC was nominated, but nevertheless UOIC deplored the undemocratic process of the appointment.

Another example of rivalry and disunity is provided by a recent meeting in Houston of Raza Unida, sponsored by UOIC, in which many organizations came together to arrange for workshops and discussion groups dealing with Mexican American problems. As far as the UOIC was concerned, the major purpose of this meeting was to bring the problems of the Mexican American to the attention of the local, state, and federal governments so that perhaps various agencies or projects might be created or funds provided to deal with such problems. PASO boycotted the meeting, and even criticized UOIC for calling such a meeting. Several persons were of the opinion that PASO was already dealing with such problems, and the meeting was only overlapping with the activities of PASO.

PASO is sometimes accused of being a "closed organization," and its leaders are sometimes regarded as dictatorial, providing little intra-party democracy. An editorial in El Observatorio Latino, another community newspaper that seems to be to the right of El Sol and Compass, summed up this criticism of PASO. The editorial was by no means accidentally distributed at the annual PASO convention held in Houston in August, 1968. It said in part:

PASO was not formed for the benefit of a few individuals who upon knowing some coyotitos politicos (big shot politicians) try to im-

press (people). Houston should be a mecca for many new members of PASO. But many new members are persona non grata and consequently are not admitted as members....²²

PASO's decision not to endorse Waggoner Carr over John Tower in the 1966 senatorial race created some controversy in the community. Some members of the community, notably LULAC members, supported Carr, the Democratic nominee. They had no qualms about supporting Carr because, even if he was a conservative, he was the best alternative to a Republican senator. PASO, on the other hand leaned toward Tower, not because he was their choice, but because PASO leadership perhaps felt that it would be easier to oust an incumbent Republican over an incumbent Democrat at the next election (1972). PASO knew it was headed for criticism with its non-endorsement of Carr, but it was willing to risk the consequences. And although PASO was indeed severely criticized for this action by many in the community, some hailed the action as an indication that a two-party system in Texas would be more beneficial to the Mexican American. In addition, Mexican Americans believed that the Democrats would take notice of the voting power behind the "Sleeping Giant."²³

²²El Latino Observatorio, Vol. 4, No. 19, August, 1968. This newspaper is published by Juan Coronado.

²³Term applied to the large, dormant, and largely apathetic Mexican American vote. Texas has a total of 1.5 million Mexican Americans. See Clifton McClesky, Government and Politics of Texas (Boston, 1966), 1-24, 99-102, for a general overview of the Mexican American population in Texas.

Another reason PASO decided not to endorse Carr was more symbolic in nature. Carr was identified with the pro-Connally forces during the confrontation between the Valley farm marchers and Governor Connally at New Braunfels in 1966. PASO was one of the main organizations behind the march, and the "establishment" (Connally, Carr, Barnes) was its major opponent. Although Tower did not by any means sympathize completely with the marchers' demands, he was not yet a member of the "establishment."

At its 1968 State Convention PASO for the first time openly endorsed the Republican candidate for governor and other Republican candidates. PASO even voted to forward a telegram to Hubert Humphrey requesting that John Connally, their old political foe, not be considered as a vice-presidential candidate. Senator Ralph Yarborough appealed to PASO to endorse Preston Smith in order to maintain party unity, but PASO had long before made up its mind not to support the "establishment." PASO, during the general election of 1968, supported Hubert H. Humphrey along with Paul Eggers for Governor of Texas, although its main choices in the primaries had been Don Yarborough for governor and Eugene McCarthy for president.

After the Eggers endorsement, Preston Smith labelled the endorsement as "the most ineffective possible," and described PASO as "a splintered group which once had some power in the state."²⁴

²⁴The Houston Chronicle, August 18, 1968.

In addition to the organizations described in this chapter, there are certain individuals who seem to be caught in the middle of this conflict. Such persons, although they may belong to PASO and/or LULAC, are responsible to the total community and not to any single organization, even if that organization has previously supported him in some endeavor. They cannot lean to one side without being accused of favoritism.

Although appeals for unity among Mexican American organizations and leaders are being heard more frequently, there are certain indications that such appeals will not be fulfilled immediately because the Mexican American community in Houston seems to be going through a period of transition. Such transitional periods also accentuate fragmentation in the community, even though in reality the Mexican American is desperately striving for unity within his own group. Conflict, however, indicates change, and change is not necessarily negative; in the case of the Mexican American, it may be positive. And there are indications that the overall effect of this period will be positive. That is, Mexican American organizations may emerge stronger than before, and leaders may hold their goals and the goals of their group in much clearer perspective.

The remaining chapters will further explore the questions raised in this discussion.

CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS AND COMMUNICATION

It has not been determined whether the Spanish-English newspaper plays a major role in the Mexican American community of an urban area. However, it has been proposed that community newspapers in general express a wide range of activities and values present in the community.¹ It is in these differing values and activities in the community that political fragmentation should manifest itself. A symbol analysis of the community newspaper media should reflect differing political values and orientations, and perhaps correlate to the organizational schism outlined in the previous chapter.

Nature and Function of the Community Press

The urban community newspaper has been defined as a weekly addressed to the residents of a specific area of the urban metropolis, and furthermore being directed to a delimited audience within the metropolitan district.² The community press can be viewed as an operating system; it links the producers of the community newspaper, the content of the paper, and the readership.³ The assumption in this study is held that community

¹Janowitz, op.cit., 61.

²Ibid., 7.

³Ibid., 9.

leaders and others who participate in organizations are active and frequent readers of the newspapers. Janowitz has found that "community leaders reveal a slightly higher community newspaper readership index than do community residents."⁴ In Houston, El Sol readership more closely correlates to this finding.⁵

Morris Janowitz lists several hypotheses concerning the purposes of the community newspapers and their role in the community. Some of them correlate with this analysis, others do not. They are listed below:

1. The community newspaper participates in the process of integrating the individual into the urban social structure by assisting in the complex balance between local and non-local activities and identifications.
2. The content of the community newspaper is representative of a wide range of activities, values, and aspirations present in the community which are not given expression in the daily press.
 - a) Community newspaper content supplies a flow of specific news to assist adjustment to the institutions and facilities of urban life and to interpret relevant external events to the local community in a meaningful and affectual context.
 - b) Community newspaper content is designed to help the individual orient himself in time and space in the local community by building and maintaining local traditions and local identifications.

⁴Ibid., 108.

⁵Data from Goodman, Project Houston, reveals that 33% of a middle class sample of Mexican Americans, including some persons considered to be leaders in the community, read El Sol. There is no data available for Compass.

- c) Community newspaper content fashions the individual integration into the social structure to the degree that the contents are designed to democratize prestige.
- d) Community newspaper content is designed to emphasize values and interests on which there is a high level of consensus in the community.⁶

Janowitz's second hypothesis expresses the view that:

...the community newspaper is representative of a wide range of activities, values, and aspirations present in the community which are not given expression in the daily press....

In some cases, however, this does not necessarily follow that the content is "designed to emphasize values and interests on which there is a high level of consensus in the community."

Preliminary data has suggested that one of our community newspapers, El Sol, does indeed focus on values on which there is a high level of consensus, but Compass does not entirely support Janowitz's proposition. Compass is more of an iconoclastic newspaper, frequently voicing strong support of some values which are alien to Mexican traditions.⁷

It is necessary, since a restricted analysis of the newspapers is being conducted, that a brief history and content assessment of both newspapers be included in this chapter. This analysis should provide an insight into the specific nature of each newspaper. This combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis tends to produce a broader perspective, although all inferences in this study will be determined exclu-

⁶Janowitz, op.cit., 61.

⁷See Page 51, this chapter.

sively from these categories which have been strictly quantified through the symbol analysis of the community newspaper.

El Sol⁸

El Sol is a community newspaper published by Lynn Montgomery and edited by the Reverend James L. Novarro.⁹ It is an English-Spanish weekly in which effort is made to keep a balance between the two languages. In some cases, and always in the case of editorials, content is the same in the two languages.

Since its first issue, published on December 31, 1965, circulation of the paper has risen to 17,000. Of these, a little more than 10,000 are local subscribers, 4,000 are non-local subscribers, and between 3,000 and 4,000 are sold on newsstands throughout the Houston area. Circulation of El Sol roughly correlates with the geographical distribution of Mexican Americans in Houston.

The following are some of El Sol's most important objectives, as set forth in the paper's maiden issue:

1. it will apologize to none for its outspoken defense of constitutional principles and its concern for the "rights and responsibilities" of our citizens;

⁸The following discussion comes from Roberto S. Guerra and Mary Ellen Goodman, "A Content Assessment of a Community Newspaper," Report Five, Project Houston.

⁹El Sol has recently added two new stockholders due to financial difficulties. Lynn Montgomery is no longer Publisher of the newspaper, although Reverend Novarro continues to be its Editor.

2. it will eternally mirror the world in which we live;
3. it will press for change and improvement in the community, the world, and the nation;
4. it will campaign for peace, but it will also campaign for military strength and courage to insure peace;
5. it will strive for objectivity and integrity in its news columns;
6. it will strive to present itself with honor and honesty;
7. it will be edited with courage and compassion;
8. it will be edited with dignity and decency;
9. it will fight evil in high places and low places;
10. it will not be a tool of any political, social, or radical group;
11. it will be a crusader for good (fearless);
12. it will champion those principles which raise and encourage the oppressed, impoverished and neglected to travel the road toward the attainment of human dignity and the rights of the individual.

The newspaper appears to be published and aimed at the middle class, although it by no means disregards the other classes. The image the new newspaper projects has many of the characteristics associated with the middle class: a relatively well acculturated segment of the population attempting to make its way in the larger society, stressing pride in ethnic origin and the inclination to forge a unified, self-conscious, and activist community led by the successful professional and businessman of the new middle class. The newspaper strongly endorses all measures believed to be of benefit to the low

income group in the community, throughout the state and to a lesser degree, the nation.

The newspaper content can be divided into four basic categories:

1. News--state, local, and national. This includes factual reports, social news and personal news.
2. Editorials
3. Advertising
4. Miscellaneous

During the first six months of publication, El Sol concerned itself with local matters, including personal achievement stories, personal announcements, group news, and a great deal of advertising, both commercial and political, since it was an election year. However, in mid-summer 1966, there was a marked change. The Valley farm strike was given extensive publicity, and there was a gradual trend toward material concerning state matters, but as expected of a community newspaper, the focus still remained on local matters.

Editorials play a very important part in the paper. Overview of editorial content showed a concentration on five subjects: voting, education, character, civil rights, and unity. All were given favorable treatment. During 1966 these themes accounted for 50% of the editorials analyzed; during 1967 they accounted for 44% of the editorials.

The analysis brought into focus several values which might be relevant in discussing political orientations. For example, there was an emphasis on activism to attain those things, both symbolic and material, that have been denied the Mexican American (e.g., first class citizenship, better eco-

conomic conditions, etc.). Also, there was an inclination to integrate with the community as a whole, but also to retain much of their culture, customs, traditions, and ethnic identity. They recognized the need to exercise rights and fulfill responsibilities and the importance of the individual with strong character. The Mexican Americans considered education as the key to success, and they never ceased to emphasize the importance of their cultural heritage and the pride they placed on being of Mexican extraction.

The preceding analysis covered the time period from the inception of El Sol (1966) through 1967. The year 1968 will be analyzed in our next chapter, but it will be analyzed in a different perspective and compared to another newspaper of a more liberal nature, i.e., Compass.

Compass

Compass originally began publication in April, 1967, as the official newspaper of LULAC Council 406; however, four months later Compass disassociated itself from LULAC because many of the articles were of a political nature. Compass later became a member of the Chicano Press Association.¹⁰ Compass is published by Felix Ramirez, with Raul Gutierrez being one of the main contributors, especially with articles of a political nature written in Spanish. Although Compass

¹⁰The Chicano Press Association (CPA) is a chain of sixteen such newspapers found in six southwestern states. They frequently exchange pictures, articles, and other newsworthy material.

does not have a large circulation (presently a little over 5,000), it was selected for the study because of the nature of its content. It is clearly more outspoken than El Sol on many issues, especially political issues relating to the Mexican American community.

Compass seems to represent the mood of the emerging militant youth movements. Their activities are given extensive coverage in Compass. Compass, being a member of CPA, can readily make itself available of news material which published by any of the other CPA members. The content presented in Compass seems to reflect a dissatisfaction with the status quo in many areas: Mexican American leadership, Mexican American organizations, city officials, state political leaders, the local poverty program, and other politically relevant issues.

Compass is a monthly publication which averages about twelve pages in length. Basically, Compass can be divided into six categories:

- I. Newsstories--local, state, national
- II. Personal Columns--mainly local in content, but some pertaining to state matters
- III. Editorials
- IV. Reprints from other CPA members
- V. Advertising--averaging about one and one-half to two pages per issue
- VI. Miscellaneous

No systematic content assessment is available for Compass, as there is for El Sol. Individual categories were not analyzed as to scope and frequency. For purposes of this study, only the first three categories were utilized since those categories reflected the highest number of political symbols relevant

to the problem at hand, that of determining political fragmentation in the local community.

The style of writing in Compass is markedly of lesser quality than that of El Sol. Editorials and personal columns occasionally are wordy and confusing, especially articles written in Spanish. Compass does not systematically attempt to balance the number of articles in English and Spanish. Over one-half of the articles are in Spanish. Beginning in January, 1969, all editions of Compass are in English; articles in Spanish are appearing in another newspaper called Yaqui.

Compass has consistently been characterized by the same type of political content described earlier: anti-establishment and anti-Mexican American leadership. Compass, unlike El Sol, appears to be aimed not at the middle class professional or the average middle class Mexican American, but the grass roots people in the barrios: the low income group and the more militant Mexican American youth. Compass embraces the concept of Raza Unida and frequently signs its editorials by that name (Raza Unida, Arriba la Raza Unida, Viva la Raza Unida).¹¹

Although only thirteen symbols were analyzed for this particular study, there were not the only symbols found in the three types of content analyzed. A greater number of symbols

¹¹See Chapter Two, 37-38.

was found, but these thirteen reflected enough political difference to point out the fragmentation in the Mexican American community. Other salient characteristics of Compass will be described in Chapter Four.

Content Analysis and Communication

Community fragmentation can be analyzed in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most comprehensive would be to undertake a survey of a large sample of community activists and inquire pointedly into their view toward other organizations and certain issues relevant to the Mexican American community. This can be done through the utilization of various field research techniques. Less comprehensive studies have indicated such fragmentation.¹² It is the contention of this paper that a valid and reliable analysis of the Mexican American community can be accomplished through an examination of relevant political symbols found in two community newspapers; furthermore, if fragmentation does exist, it can be specifically pinpointed in various organizations or individuals by analyzing their orientation toward certain institutions and organizations. The fact that the organizational and leadership patterns in the community are in a period of transition should offer the opportunity to develop generalizations about the nature of organizational activity and leadership patterns in the community. This can be done through the technique of content analysis.

¹²Preliminary data from Goodman, Project Houston.

There are many definitions of content analysis. Robert North and associates define it as "a term used to describe a wide variety of research techniques, all of which are used for systematically collecting, analyzing, and making inferences from messages."¹³ Berelson defines content analysis as as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication,"¹⁴ and Lasswell defines it as "a technique which aims at optimum objectivity, precision, and generality in the analysis of symbolic behavior."¹⁵ The above definitions point to three criteria which must be observed in content analysis: objectivity on the part of the researcher, systematic analysis, and quantification of data.

Obviously, there are various procedures that can be employed in content analysis so long as they adhere to the three principles of content analysis. The specific technique employed here is symbol analysis, which is the analysis of selected symbols as perceived by the community newspapers. It is the purpose of the symbols analyst to detect or describe some attitude or attitudes; he must select those symbols that describe

¹³Robert C. North, et al., Content Analysis: A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis (Northwestern University, 1963) 50.

¹⁴Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communications Research, (Illinois, 1952), 18.

¹⁵Harold Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, and Ithiel de Sola Pool, The Comparative Study of Symbols: An Introduction (Stanford, 1952), 32-33.

those attitudes and look for them in content.¹⁶ However, mere description will not suffice. The trend in content analysis is toward hypothesis testing, and this study will follow that trend.¹⁷

The format of the two newspapers precluded using some type of space measurement such as inches of column type. Furthermore, prior studies have indicated that a symbol analysis would result in a higher degree of reliability than would some other type of recording unit, particularly in a comparative study such as this.¹⁸

Communication Functions and Key Symbols

Communication performs three major functions in any group: (1) surveillance of the environment, (2) concerting of response to environment, (3) transmitting the social inheritance from one generation to another.¹⁹ The two community newspapers examined perform, to some extent, the above functions; consequently, they were selected as the communication media which could test our hypothesis. Newspapers have an explicit point of view, particularly in political matters, regardless of how "independent" or objective they claim to be. By analyzing

¹⁶Richard W. Budd, Robert K. Thorp, and Lewis Donohew, Content Analysis of Communication (New York, 1967), 64.

¹⁷Ibid., 5.

¹⁸Harold Lasswell, Nathan Leites and Associates, The Language of Politics (Massachusetts, 1965), 113-126.

¹⁹Lasswell, Pool, and Lerner, op.cit., 18.

the political matter in them, we can describe the frequency with which political symbols are emphasized. In such an analysis two important concepts need to be explained: symbols and key symbols.

Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool explain the concept of symbols in this manner:

What most students who speak of "symbols" (as a technical term for words) have in common, however, is an interest in a flow of words as an expression of attitudes. Words are symbols because they stand for (symbolize) the attitudes of those who use them, as distinguished, for example, from signs, which are external to their user.... Symbols, thus conceived, serve as his operational "indices" of attitudes.²⁰

Key symbols, on the other hand, are not only focal points for the crystallization of sentiment, but they can be broken down into three categories:

1. those referring to persons and groups (symbols of identification),
2. those referring to preferences and volitions (symbols of demand), and
3. those referring to the assumption of fact (symbols of expectations).²¹

However, there are certain procedures that must be followed in doing a symbol analysis of any content. One must select the symbol list and define each symbol explicitly; the recording unit and the specified content must be selected; one must check for reliability and consistency; and finally, one must

²⁰Ibid., 29.

²¹Ibid., 17.

collect and process the data.²² In this study, then, certain key symbols will be analyzed in terms of frequency and direction. The symbols used in this analysis are listed and explicitly defined in Appendix B. A description of the recording unit, scope of the study, and sample selected is included in the following chapter. Reliability was established by submitting samples of newspaper content to two individuals who are knowledgeable about Mexican American affairs and possess a good command of the Spanish language.²³

Chapter Four will deal with the specific analysis of these key symbols as viewed by the community press, El Sol and Compass.

²²Lasswell and Leites, op.cit., 113-114.

²³See Appendix B.

CHAPTER FOUR

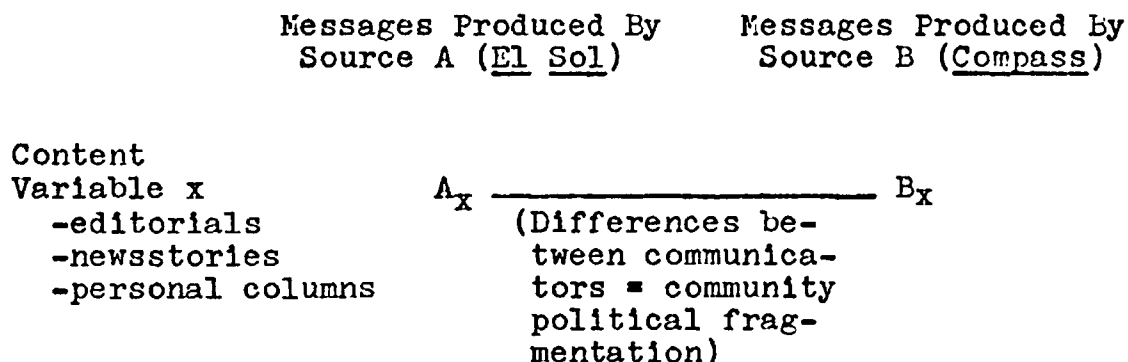
A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY FRAGMENTATION: EL SOL AND COMPASS

The organizational analysis of the three leading Mexican American organizations in Houston has pointed out that some degree of conflict is prevalent in the community. However, that conflict has not been clearly defined. A content, or symbols analysis, of the two community newspapers described in Chapter Three, El Sol and Compass, should produce specific instances of community fragmentation. These findings will then be compared with the aggregate data on organizations. A combination of these two sources, then, should lead to some generalizations about the nature of Mexican American political patterns in the community.

Holsti has suggested three ways of describing messages produced by content analysis.¹ The second of these three approaches describes the attributes of messages by comparing the messages of two different sources. The two communicators used here are the two community newspapers most relevant to the organizations described and the issues which presently confront the Mexican American community in Houston.

¹Holsti, op.cit., 28-31.

The hypothesis being tested in this case study is that the content of the two community newspapers should reflect some type of political fragmentation found in the local Mexican American community. The above hypothesis was tested by utilizing approach two, that is, by comparing the messages produced by two different sources. The messages were taken from the editorials, newsstories, and personal columns of two community newspapers, El Sol and Compass. Thirteen categories were set up and analyzed in terms of frequency and direction. Inferences about the sources taken from the above categories were then formulated from the statistical analysis. Schematically, this approach can be represented as follows:²



The differences between communicator A_x and communicator B_x did produce divergent content attributes in several categories which reflected fragmentation in the Mexican American community. However, before any inferences about political fragmentation in this particular community are made, it should again be pointed out that a restricted, rather than a compre-

²Ibid., 30.

hensive, analysis of the two communicators was conducted. The analysis was restricted in time period, scope, and content.

The type of content analysis used here is similar to the one used by Maxwell T. Brooks in The Negro Press Re-examined, in which he utilizes a symbols analysis of the Negro press to prove his hypothesis that the Negro press basically supports the tenets of American liberal democracy. The basic methodology was devised by Harold Lasswell and Associates.

A total of thirteen politically relevant symbols were selected for the analysis of the two community newspapers. It was assumed that such an analysis would produce differing views toward selected symbols. These symbols were selected for several reasons:

1. it was assumed that these symbols would draw the most reaction from the newspapers, and that this difference in reaction would reflect the actual fragmentation of the Mexican American community;
2. the frequency with which each symbol appeared was also taken into consideration. The higher the frequency of the symbol, the higher the probability of more accurate inferences from the analysis as reflected in the favorable, unfavorable, neutral responses to each symbol.³

No attempt was made to include a thorough analysis of the newspapers. A restricted analysis was thought to be more appropriate than an inclusive analysis. Only content which could produce some meaningful insight into the hypothesis was included. This content includes editorials, news columns, and

³See Appendix B for Coding Procedures and Explanation of Symbols.

personal columns. The scope of the content was further restricted to include content which dealt with local and state matters only. This was the only content strictly quantified. However, a content assessment of both newspapers is included in the descriptions of the community newspapers.

Each symbol under consideration was scored in one of three ways: favorable, unfavorable, neutral. The context unit used is the sentence, while the recording unit is the symbol. The symbol is the smallest unit that is used in content analysis, and it usually is the most reliable. The context unit is the largest body of content that may be searched to characterize a recording unit. An unweighted symbol list is employed, that is, the symbol is given the unit weight of one each time it appears in a sentence within a given article. Although the weighted symbol list and the use of the article as the recording unit would have been more appropriate for El Sol, the numerous, and often lengthy and confusing, articles that appeared in Compass required that each symbol be scored each time it appeared in context. For the sake of uniformity in technique, the unweighted symbol list was employed.

The sample selected was the time period between February, 1968, and January, 1969. This one year sample was selected for several reasons:

1. this was not a trend analysis;
2. only the files for the year 1968 were found to be intact for El Sol and Compass; Latin Observer, another community newspaper, did not have complete files for any one year, and therefore, it could not be analyzed;

3. 1968 was an election year, and therefore, community fragmentation or unity was likely to be more conspicuous at this particular time period.

Although Compass is a monthly newspaper and El Sol is published weekly, all issues for the year 1968 were included from both Compass and El Sol. Compass, although published monthly, still produced more politically relevant symbols than El Sol. In addition, most of the editorials, news columns, and personal columns in both newspapers concerned themselves with basically the same issues.

Analysis

Both Compass and El Sol, taken together, showed a higher proportion of unfavorable comment on the thirteen categories analyzed (See Table 4). However, it is grossly misleading to draw any inferences from these findings as the two newspapers did differ significantly in their views toward several symbols of identification. Table 4 simply represents the total number of symbols counted in the editorials, newsstories, and personal columns of both newspapers and the direction of each.

Table 5 represents the distribution and direction of symbols by newspaper. The only directional similarity which was found in both newspapers was in the "favorable" column, where El Sol had 32% of the content analyzed as favorable, while Compass had 28%. However, the difference is found in the "unfavorable" and "neutral" categories. In the "neutral" category, El Sol classified 52% of the content analyzed, while

TABLE 4

TOTAL NUMBER OF SYMBOLS AND DIRECTION OF EACH:
EL SOL AND COMPASS

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Favorable	265	29.0
Unfavorable	364	40.0
Neutral	<u>282</u>	<u>31.0</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>911</u>	<u>100.0</u>

TABLE 5

TOTAL DISTRIBUTION OF SYMBOLS BY NEWSPAPERS AND DIRECTION:
EL SOL AND COMPASS

	Favorable		Unfavorable		Neutral		Total
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	
<u>El Sol</u>	124	32.0	62	16.0	201	52.0	387
<u>Compass</u>	141	18.0	302	57.0	81	15.0	524

Note: The chi square test of significance rejected the null hypothesis, that community fragmentation did not exist in the community. The level of significance was held at .05 with two degrees of freedom. The same level of significance was used throughout this chapter.

Compass had only 15% of its content classified as neutral. Compass classified 57% of its content as unfavorable, while El Sol had only 16% classified as unfavorable. This might suggest that Compass is more of a protest newspaper; it is more likely to express an opinion on issues and symbols of identification than is El Sol, which represents more of a moderate stand on such issues and symbols.

It should not be implied that one newspaper is politically conservative while the other is politically liberal. Both newspapers are liberal in most political matters when placed in the broader spectrum of American political ideology. But if a political continuum for the Mexican American community in Houston was constructed, Compass would be placed further to the left while El Sol would be slightly to the left of center.

Table 6 represents the total distribution of symbols in both Compass and El Sol by categories. The difference between the two newspapers can be more readily assessed when they are separated and each category is analyzed comparatively.

Table 7 reflects the difference between the newspapers; in some categories, this difference correlates somewhat to the fragmentation found in the Mexican American community.

Compass is overwhelmingly more critical of the current Mexican American leadership (70% unfavorable) than El Sol (00.0%). El Sol is much more suave in criticizing leaders and leadership than is Compass. Sol generally criticizes Mexican Americans, while Compass frequently calls for the ouster of individual leaders by name. El Sol regards LULAC

TABLE 6
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION OF SYMBOLS BY CATEGORIES: EL SOL AND COMPASS

Symbol	Total	Favorable (n)	Favorable (%)	Unfavorable (n)	Unfavorable (%)	Neutral (n)	Neutral (%)
01 M.A. Leadership	196	45	22.9	91	46.4	60	30.6
02 M.A. Organizations	53	22	41.5	19	35.8	12	22.6
03 PASO	69	13	18.8	18	26.1	38	55.1
04 LULAC	50	24	48.0	10	20.0	16	32.0
05 UOIC	9	02		0		07	
06 HCCAA	137	04	2.9	94	68.8	39	28.3
07 RAZA UNIDA	49	30	61.2	01	2.0	18	36.8
08 CITY OFFICIALS	96	06	06.3	52	54.2	38	39.6
09 STATE OFFICIALS	127	14	11.0	77	60.6	36	28.4
10 STATE GOP	32	17	53.1	01	3.1	14	43.7
11 UNITY	25	25	100.0	00	00.0	00	00.0
12 VOTING	51	46	90.2	01	2.0	44	7.8
13 ACTIVISM	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>00.0</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>00.0</u>
<u>1-13 TOTALS</u>	<u>911</u>	<u>265</u>	<u>29.0</u>	<u>364</u>	<u>40.0</u>	<u>282</u>	<u>31.0</u>

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY AND DIRECTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SYMBOLS BY CATEGORIES: EL SOL AND COMPASS
(01) (02)

Symbol		Total	Favorable (n) (%)	Unfavorable (n) (%)	Neutral (n) (%)
01	M.A. Leadership				
	01	67	31 46.3	00 00.0	36 53.8
	02	129	14 10.9	91 70.5	24 18.6
02	M.A. Organizations				
	01	30	14 46.7	10 33.3	06 20.0
	02	23	08 34.8	09 39.1	06 26.1
03	PASO				
	01	39	06 15.4	01 02.6	32 82.1
	02	30	07 23.3	17 56.7	06 20.1
04	LULAC				
	01	34	22 64.7	02 05.9	10 29.5
	02	16	02 12.5	08 50.0	06 37.5
05	UOIC				
	01	04	01	00	03
	02	05	01	00	04
06	HCCAA				
	01	43	02 4.6	10 23.3	31 72.1
	02	94	02 2.1	84 89.4	08 08.5
07	RAZA UNIDA				
	01	13	02 15.4	00 00.0	11 84.6
	02	36	28 77.7	01 02.8	07 19.4

Table 7, Continued

FREQUENCY AND DIRECTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SYMBOLS BY CATEGORIES: EL SOL AND COMPASS
(01) (02)

Symbol	Total	Favorable		Unfavorable		Neutral	
		(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
08 CITY OFFICIALS							
01	51	06	11.8	09	17.6	36	70.6
02	45	00	00.0	43	95.6	02	04.4
09 STATE OFFICIALS							
01	69	13	18.8	29	42.0	27	39.1
02	58	01	1.7	48	82.6	09	15.5
10 STATE GOP							
01	14	07	50.0	00	00.0	07	50.0
02	18	10	55.5	01	05.5	07	38.9
11 UNITY							
01	01	01					
02	24	24	100.0				
12 VOTING							
01	22	19	86.4	01	4.5	02	9.1
02	29	27	93.1	00	00.0	02	6.9
13 ACTIVISM							
01							
02	17	17	100.0				

Note: Again the chi square test of significance was employed for categories 01, 02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, and 10. Only categories 02 and 10 were not significant to the .05 level with 2df.

in a favorable fashion (64.7% favorable; 29.5% neutral), while remaining mainly neutral in its stance toward PASO (82.1% neutral). On the other hand, Compass regards both LULAC and PASO in an unfavorable manner, with PASO being viewed slightly more unfavorable than LULAC (LULAC--50% unfavorable, 32.4% neutral; PASO--56.7% unfavorable, 20.1% neutral). See Table 7 for complete distributions.

A note should be made here of the unfavorable comment toward PASO by Compass. Compass is not so much critical of PASO as an organization; indeed, most of the favorable comment toward PASO is directed at the organization itself rather than its leaders. Compass, as does part of the Mexican American community, views PASO leadership with dismay, if not with outright hostility.⁴

UOIC is not given sufficient mention in either newspaper to enable making any kind of valid inferences. UOIC is a relatively new organization, and, therefore, it has not been as widely known as PASO or LULAC. It, however, seems that UOIC will continue to grow and make itself felt in the broader community in the future.

Compass is highly critical of the Harris County Community Action Association (HCCAA), charging that it is a Negro dominated agency, both in executive staffing and program direction (89.4% unfavorable). Although El Sol criticizes HCCAA somewhat, most of its opinion toward HCCAA is neutral (72.1%).

⁴See discussion of PASO, Chapter Two, 33-34.

Raza Unida is an ambiguous term applied to the fermenting Mexican American movement.⁵ Compass generally regards it as favorable (77.7%), while El Sol does not mention it frequently, and when it does, it does so in a neutral manner (84.6%). In a recent personal column, El Sol pointed out that caution should be exercised when dealing with such vague terms. Such a term, the column said, could have dysfunctional aspects.⁶ It appears that the current youth movement is adhering to this nationalistic philosophy more so than the older generation of Mexican Americans.

El Sol generally views city officials in a neutral manner (70.6%), but it occasionally criticizes the City Council or the Mayor for failing to act on some issue or program beneficial to the Mexican American community (e.g., housing code). Compass, on the other hand, is vehemently critical of city officials, especially Mayor Louie Welch, who is the major target (95.6% unfavorable). El Sol voices its most unfavorable views on state officials, especially the conservative faction of the Texas Democratic Party (42.0%), although it attempts to give credit where credit is due, such as in the appointment of a Mexican American Secretary of State by Governor Connally, which Compass labelled "tokenism." Compass makes it explicitly known where it stands in its outlook toward state officials:

⁵See discussion of UOIC, Chapter Two, 37-39.

⁶El Sol, March 28, 1969.

82.6% unfavorable. On the other hand, both Compass and El Sol view the new state Republican Party anything but unfavorably (El Sol, 50% favorable, 50% neutral; Compass, 55.5% favorable, 38.9% neutral). This perhaps suggests that the Mexican American, regardless of his internal differences, is ready to switch over to whatever party responds to its needs.

The last three categories--voting, activism, and unity among the Mexican Americans--are all given favorable comment by a wide percentage. Activism, especially civic and political activism, is encouraged by both newspapers. The favorable response given to voting indicates that both newspapers are committed to the American ideal that revolution through the ballot box is preferable to violent revolution. Non-violent civil rights tactics are emphasized. Voting is viewed as a responsibility which should be exercised periodically since it is a potent weapon which the Mexican American can use to his advantage in fighting the problems which beset him.

It is interesting to note that a direct correlation was found among the categories with the highest frequencies in both newspapers. Reaction toward Mexican American leadership, the poverty program, city officials, and state officials by far received the highest frequency in both newspapers, although a perfect relationship in direction was not apparent. This indicates, however, that the community responded to more or less the same symbols, thus giving the analyst some stable bases of comparison.

The preceding tables representing the newspaper content of the two selected Mexican American community newspapers reflect the heterogeneity of opinion toward selected political symbols which affect the political environment of the Mexican American in Houston. Chapter Five will summarize the findings derived from this analysis and then formulate some general directions and patterns which might play an important role in the politics of the urban Mexican American.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The twofold approach to the problem of community fragmentation has brought into sharp focus several salient characteristics of the Mexican American community in Houston, Texas. The general analysis of the three most active organizations in the community has suggested that there exist differences in the role that each organization plays and also in the goal orientations of each group. Furthermore, inter- and intra-organizational patterns and relationships have indicated the difficulty encountered by the Mexican American organizations in trying to work together effectively, although unity, at least superficially, appears to be one of the major considerations of the various organizations operating in the community.

The second approach utilized, a case study of two Spanish-English community newspapers found in the community, corresponds meaningfully to the nature of organizational activity described above. However, the symbols analysis is much more specific as the direction and intensity of the attitudes held by the various organizations toward each other and toward other symbols of identification operating in the community at large. It should be pointed out that this case study describes only some aspects of community fragmentation. Although

the two community newspapers are not totally indicative of the viewpoint of the community as a whole, both newspapers, nevertheless, articulate political attitudes, opinions, and values which are prevalent in the political arena of the Mexican American in Houston.

Thus, the messages produced by the two newspapers analyzed in the case study show a positive correlation to the data being used as a standard from which to compare--the organizational analysis.¹ The assumption held that political fragmentation existed in the community was obviously upheld by the organizational analysis, but the symbols analysis went further in that it defined specifically some aspects of the nature and orientation of community fragmentation. The analysis of these two sources, then, revealed that political cleavage in the community seemed to revolve around several major political symbols and issues.

There are certainly differences toward the function and conduct of current Mexican American leadership and organizations. The operation of the local war on poverty agency, the Harris County Community Action Association, has produced diverse reactions from the Mexican American community. One segment of the community has worked and cooperated with HCCAA, generally viewing it in a favorable light. Another segment of the community is highly critical of the community action

¹See Chapter One, Note on Methodology, 15-16.

program as such, arguing that it is not operating in the best interests of the community at large, especially the Mexican American community. This segment is generally characterized by the views expressed in Compass, generally a viewpoint that is vociferously opposed to the orientation of the program and the execution of its policies.

There are also differences in attitude toward the actions and activities of city and state policy makers. Again, this difference in opinion can be delineated in certain groups and organizations operating in the community. Groups and organizations generally critical of the poverty program policies are also the most persistent critics, not only of city and state officials, but of current Mexican American leadership as well. One aspect that succinctly brings out conflict in the community is the use of the term Raza Unida. Those who embrace this concept are characterized by a more nationalistic orientation and tend to be more active, if not militant, in areas concerning civil rights and education. Those who oppose the concept feel that the use of the term is a step backward in the assimilation of the Mexican American in the context of the broader community.

The impression must not be given that only conflict exists in the community. There were, indeed, several areas of agreement among all segments of the community. These revolved around symbols which were very general and non-controversial in nature. These included: (1) an emphasis on unity among

Mexican Americans in the community; (2) an emphasis on political activism; (3) an emphasis on exercising the power of the vote.

It seems, then, that the broader Mexican American community can be characterized by three major currents of thought. Although there is, indeed, some similarity in the direction of this thought, as was pointed out by the preceding analysis, there is more diversity prevalent here. Perhaps by looking at the organizational patterns and activities of the three Mexican American organizations analyzed, the nature of this diversity can be pinpointed further.

PASO, for example, firmly believes that the most effective way to deal with the problems of the Mexican American is through political action. This implies the election of persons sympathetic to their plight to positions at the policy-making level, especially at the state level. PASO, both in practice and theory, also believes that a coalition with other groups in the community is of prime importance in getting their candidate(s) elected. Although sympathetic to the Raza Unida movement, PASO tries to work within the system, and with other groups in the community, such as the Harris County Democrats and Negro organizations.

LULAC, bound by its own constitution, is a non-political organization. LULAC takes the position that politics is not in the realm of its activities, at least not as an organization. In addition to serving a social function, LULAC is very much civic-minded. Educational projects, employment training and

placement, fighting discrimination through the courts, and other such activities occupy much of LULAC's attention. Many of its activities correspond closely to the activities of middle class Anglo organizations. LULAC works closely with local officials, cooperating with them in areas of common concern. LULAC, too, is somewhat sympathetic to the appeals of nationalism, but it is more oriented toward integrating the Mexican American into the community.

UOIC, an incorporated non-profit community action association, is the newest of the three organizations analyzed. It deals with many of the same activities which LULAC undertakes, except for social activities. UOIC represents a different blend of Mexican American activism. It is an articulate and extremely outspoken group, especially in areas of local concern, such as education and the poverty program. The organization, like Compass, attacks quite strongly the Harris County Community Action Association and the actions of city and state officials. UOIC also embraces quite emphatically the nationalistic philosophy of the Raza Unida movement, perhaps with the hope of mobilizing the generally apathetic poor Mexican American into at least a show of unity. UOIC membership is mostly professional, like some young LULAC councils, but it mainly appeals to the unrepresented Mexican American found in the barrios.

Although this analysis deals only with these three types of organizations--social, civic, and political--these same

characteristics might apply to other organizations found in the community which fall in the same general category.

Thus, this investigation into the nature of Mexican American political fragmentation, while limited in scope, did produce some findings which can be formulated into generalizations. Furthermore, the particular nature of political fragmentation found in the community revealed that the Mexican American is not a monolithic political man; he is in fact characterized by several political types possessing distinct, but sometimes conflicting, attributes. The particular composition of each type produced disharmony within the group. One aspect of this disharmony led to political fragmentation within the community.

Robert Lane had suggested earlier that there are three types of conflicts that emerge in a group, based on the direction of the identification.² It was also suggested that the conflict in the Mexican American community appeared to be one in which there was disagreement between two alternatives, each of which had partially attractive and partially repellent features.³ The analysis of the two communication sources indicated that there is indeed a conflict among alternatives. By modifying Wirth's original model for minority group investigation, the conflict in the Mexican American community in Houston can be categorized into three distinct types. Wirth

²Lane, op.cit., 187-189.

³Ibid.

had suggested a model for minority group status that consisted of four elements: (1) pluralistic, (2) assimilationist, (3) separationist, (4) militant.⁴ It is felt that the Mexican American in Houston can be placed in categories (2) and (3): the assimilationist and the separationist categories. However, differing degrees of assimilation among Mexican Americans in Houston necessitates the breaking of the assimilationist category into two types: the complete assimilationist and the moderate assimilationist. A typology representing the different types of Mexican Americans can now be constructed. This typology includes three general categories:

Type I: Complete Assimilationist

Type II: Moderate Assimilationist

Type III: Separationist

Each type is characterized by certain identifiable characteristics. Type I, the Complete Assimilationist, feels that assimilation into the mainstream of American life is the only recourse that he can take. He generally views the American way of life as superior to that of his ancestors, or any other group for that matter. Assimilation means success and progress to him. To continue the old way of life, he feels, is to retard assimilation, and thus progress and personal success. For the most part, he is politically inactive in Mexican American organizations, feeling that to segregate himself into ethnic organizations is not the American way. Generally, he

³Wirth, op.cit., 321-326.

belongs to Anglo organizations and to the upper middle class in the community.

Type II, the Moderate Assimilationist, sees something desirable in both the Anglo and the Mexican cultures. The content presented in El Sol is representative of this mode of thinking. Members of LULAC and PASO generally fall into this category. They see participation in politics as fulfilling one of their responsibilities as American citizens, but they also stress their heritage and culture by celebrating Mexican days of independence, such as the sixteenth of September. Activism is encouraged in social, civic, and political affairs. They strive more toward functional assimilation. The moderate assimilationist might belong to either the middle class or the low income group. His political characteristics, however, depend on his class identification; if he comes from the middle class, he is more likely to participate in politics and belong to political organizations, both ethnic and non-ethnic.

From the content presented in Compass, it seems that the concept of Raza Unida does much to foster a degree of separatism in a small segment of the Mexican American community. That is, an emphasis is placed on unity through nationalism. Such Mexican Americans might belong to groups such as UOIC or youth groups which are now in their formative stages. Type III, the Separationist, then, subscribes to a nationalistic philosophy, one which places a premium on being Mexican and an approach which is anti-Anglo and pro-Mexican. Reprints in

Compass repeatedly made reference to this belief. This type of Mexican American stresses some of the Mexican traditional cultural values. Although there are differing varieties of Type II Mexican Americans, the degree of diversity is not nearly as great as those found in Type III. Type III consists of Mexican Americans belonging to the low income group, young militants, some intellectuals, and some immigrants (Mexican nationals) who have recently come into the country. The young militants and the intellectuals, as evidenced by data presented in Compass and recent events in Texas, are obviously the most politically active segments of Type III. The other two segments, the poor Mexican American and the Mexican nationals are, for the most part, generally apathetic toward political affairs.

Recent Developments and Trends: A Concluding Note

This threefold typology characterizes the urban Mexican American. As indicated, there are variations among the three types, but it seems that most Mexican Americans in an urban area can be placed in one of the three broad categories in this analytical framework. In view of the fact that the Mexican American is becoming increasingly an urban population, it is not only desirable, but imperative, that future research delve more deeply into the problems and activities of the urban Mexican American. By combining the results of this analysis with a brief outline of Mexican American political events and related activities during the last decade, perhaps

some indications of what to expect from this minority group in the future can be ascertained.

It should be emphasized that this study was not a trend analysis. However, there were several indicators in the study and elsewhere that suggested some possible emerging trends in the activities of the urban Mexican American. Some of these trends might also apply to the rural Mexican American. A summary of events since the 1960's may serve to reinforce these indications.

The political awareness of the Mexican American was extremely low up until the end of World War Two. However, it was not until the late 1950's and the early 1960's that he became more politically aware and motivated. The candidacy of John F. Kennedy was one of the most important factors in influencing the Mexican American to become politically active. It also led to the development of several political organizations, including PASO.

PASO, in turn, played a major role in electing an all Mexican American city council in Crystal City, Texas. Although the councilmen elected were later found to be ill-prepared to run the city properly (given their background), this sudden awareness by Mexican Americans of their political strength proved that it was possible for the "Sleeping Giant" to make itself felt politically. The 1966 Valley farm strike and the subsequent march to Austin to make their grievances known again led many Mexican American organizations to mobilize and throw their support behind this movement. Although the strike has since bogged down, it did serve to foster an antagonism on

the part of Mexican Americans toward the dominant Texas Democratic Party, of which Governor Connally was the main target. This animosity has been increasing since, and it was vividly illustrated at a Conference on Mexican American Affairs held in El Paso in 1967 when Governor Connally, upon being introduced by President Johnson, was loudly booed by a predominantly Mexican American audience. More recently, this antagonism has shifted toward Governor Smith, who has been accused of terminating a VISTA program in Val Verde county without considering both sides of the controversy.

The creation of the War on Poverty and the work of such agencies as VISTA has also had some effect on the poor Mexican American residing in the barrios. The establishment of the Inter-Agency Committee on Mexican American Affairs has done much to focus attention on the problem of the Mexican Americans by the federal government. More recently, the funding of several organizations by the Ford Foundation and other such sources has provided the Mexican American with financial and legal backing which was not available before. The Mexican American Legal Defense Fund established in San Antonio is an example of this type of assistance.

This latter development has encouraged the formation of several youth organizations which, taking their cues from the more militant Negro organizations, have become markedly more militant than previous Mexican American organizations such as LULAC and PASO. These youth organizations have taken the initiative in such areas as civil rights and education. They

have taken an active part in recent Mexican American demonstrations protesting alleged injustices in Del Rio and the lower Rio Grande Valley (Edcouch Elsa and Kingsville). This, then, is the present status of Mexican American political activity. In Houston, UOIC comes closest to enunciating the political orientation of the Mexican American movement found elsewhere in Texas.

It is clear that the Mexican American is on the move throughout the state. Recent events have emphasized the transitional character of Mexican American leadership and organizational patterns. The preceding discussion has brought into focus a pattern of activity on the part of the Mexican Americans which can clearly be labelled trends. Recent events may have already made these trends an actuality. A review of these emerging trends may give us a clue as to the future orientation of the Mexican American population in Houston as well as in the United States.

The Mexican American of the 1970's

The Mexican American of today is characterized by a transitional nature, both in organizational activity and leadership patterns. Long characterized by fragmentation and disunity, it now appears that the Mexican American of the future will be characterized by less conflict and more unity, cooperation, and cohesiveness. One area in which conflict will continue to exist is in the relationship between the younger, and definitely

more militant, Mexican American and the older, more moderate Mexican American who does not agree with the tactics being used by the more militant youth. Conflict might also erupt among the various leaders of the Mexican American youth movement. Overall, however, there are indications that Mexican American organizational activity and leadership patterns will continue to improve. There are various reasons for this optimistic view of the future Mexican American.

It seems that the Mexican American has finally realized that effective organization is essential for effective action. This has led to the feeling that unity among all Mexican Americans is of prime consideration. In addition, the organizational ability of newer Mexican American organizations has improved greatly due to better-trained and better-educated leaders. Leadership has become more articulate and followers have become more devoted to the plight of the Mexican American. Financial assistance, both from private and public sources, is more readily available, and this has contributed to improved leadership and organizational patterns among younger Mexican Americans. The creation of a united front by Mexican American youth organizations throughout Texas and the Southwest has fostered a new awareness among all Mexican Americans.

These youth organizations are abandoning traditional methods of attacking problems and adopting more conventional methods. This had had several effects on older, more traditional organizations. Some organizations have been alienated

by this youth movement, feeling threatened by them and sensing that perhaps they might be superceded by younger, more militant organizations. Other organizations have been forced to take a stand on issues which they had deemed too controversial before, thus forcing these organizations to re-evaluate and perhaps re-orient their goals. It appears, then, that the Mexican American of the future will be characterized by more activism in local affairs, more political participation in state, local, and national affairs, and definitely more militancy, especially on the part of the youth.

A P P E N D I X A

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN

Table 1MEXICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION IN THE
SOUTHWEST AND TEXAS

	<u>Southwest</u>	<u>Texas</u>
1960	3,464,999	1,417,810

Foster Wilson, Demographic Characteristics of Texas White Persons of Spanish Surnames. M.A. Thesis (College Station, 1966), 46.

Table 2EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND INCOME OF SPANISH
SURNAMED MALES IN THE SOUTHWEST, 1960

<u>Residence</u>	<u>Median Schooling</u>	<u>Median Income</u>
All (urban- rural)	8.1	\$ 2,804
Urban	8.4	3,197
Rural - Non-Farm	6.9	1,871
Rural - Farm	4.6	1,531

Walter Fogel, Education and Income in the Southwest,
Mexican American Report No. 1 (Los Angeles, 1967), 4.

Table 3OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS GROUPS
IN THE SOUTHWEST, 1960

Occupational Category	Urban & Rural	Urban		
	Spanish Surname	Spanish Surname	Anglo	Nonwhite
Professional	3.9%	4.6%	15.1%	6.1%
Managers & Proprietors	4.3	4.9	14.7	3.6
Clerical	4.6	5.5	7.8	6.1
Sales	3.4	4.0	9.2	2.3
Craft	15.8	18.2	21.5	10.8
Operative	22.9	25.4	15.8	20.0
Private Household	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9
Service excl. Priv.Hshld.	7.2	8.3	5.4	18.6
Laborer	14.4	15.8	4.4	18.3
Farm Labor	16.0	7.3	0.6	2.1
Farm Managers	2.2	0.6	0.7	1.9
Occupation not Reported	<u>5.1</u>	<u>5.1</u>	<u>4.7</u>	<u>9.3</u>
TOTALS	99.9	99.8	100.0	100.0

Walter Fogel, Mexican Americans in the Southwest Labor Markets, Mexican American Report 10 (UCLA, 1967), 16.

Table 4

POPULATION, INCOME LEVEL, AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
OF SPANISH SURNAMED IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

<u>Population</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1965 (est.)</u>
Total Houston	1,243,000	1,486,000
Spanish Surnamed	75,000	106,000
 <u>Median Income</u>	 <u>1964</u>	
Total Houston	\$ 6,700	
Spanish Surnamed	5,350	
Negro	4,400	
 <u>Median Educational Attainment</u>	 <u>1965</u>	
(Persons 25 and older)		
Anglo	12.5	
Negro	9.5	
Spanish-Surnamed	6.2	

Mary Ellen Goodman and Don des Jarlais, The Spanish Surnamed Population of Houston, Project Houston: Report No. 2 (Houston, 1968).

A P P E N D I X B

CODING PROCEDURES AND DEFINITION
OF SYMBOLS

Coding Procedure

Thirteen symbols were selected for this analysis. Each symbol under consideration was scored in one of three ways: favorable, unfavorable, neutral. The context unit used is the sentence, while the recording unit is the symbol. An unweighed symbol listed was employed; that is, the symbol is given the unit weight of one each time it appears in a sentence within a given article, regardless of the direction of the symbol.

Coding procedures here followed the techniques developed by Harold Lasswell and Associates. For examples, refer to the following articles:

Lasswell, Harold, "The Politically Significant Content of the Press: Coding Procedures," Journalism Quarterly, Volume XIX (March, 1942), 12-24.

Davidson, Phillip, "An Analysis of the Soviet Controlled Berlin Press," Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume VII (March, 1947), 40-57.

Definition of Symbols

Mexican American Leaders

Any specific mention of the symbol "leader" referring to Mexican American leaders in general or Mexican American "leadership." Only local leaders were included in this analysis. This is a general reference symbol, occurring frequently in the content of the newspapers, especially in editorials. When the reference is to leaders who belong to an organization and are recognized as officers of the organization or bona fide activists, the symbol will be coded in accordance with the leader's group affiliation. For example, if Roy Elizondo is mentioned (he is State Chairman of PASO), then the symbol will be coded under PASO and not under leaders.

Mexican American Organizations: In General

When no specific mention of a particular organization was made, and only the words "organization" or "organizations" were referred to, it was coded under this category.

Mexican American Organizations: PASO, LULAC, UOIC

When the name of the organization was stated, it was coded under that name. When reference was made to one of its leaders, it was also coded under the name of the

organization. For example, if Roberto Ornelas (National President of LULAC) was mentioned, then the symbol will be coded under LULAC.

Raza Unida

This symbol is separated from Mexican American organizations because it is primarily a movement and not an organization. UOIC seems to be more closely allied with this movement, but the alliance is not clear because other organizations support it too, but in differing degrees. It seems to be more of a nationalistic movement.

Harris County Community Action Association (HCCAA)

This is the name of the local war on poverty agency. Other symbols included in this category are: Poverty Program, OEO, bureaucracy, Francis Williams, and other executive directors or persons affiliated with the program.

City Officials and City Agencies

This category includes Mayor Louie Welch, all members of the City Council and other city officials and agencies; it also includes the School Board, its trustees, the County Court, and its commissioners.

Texas Democratic Party and State Government

This category is synonymous with Texas state officials and politicians who belong to the conservative element of that party. This includes such persons as John Connolly,

Preston Smith, and agencies and organizations within the state government, such as the Texas Rangers and persons associated with it.

Texas Republican Party

This category includes all persons associated with the Texas Republican Party in any capacity. This includes terms such as "GOP," and persons such as John Tower and Paul Eggers.

Unity

There were frequent appeals for unity among the various Mexican American organizations, the community, and its leaders. Words such as "union," "cooperation," and "coordination" were included in this category.

Voting

References to appeals for voting, the value of voting, voter registration, voting intelligently, etc., were classified under this category.

Activism

Both newspapers exhorted the Mexican American community to be active in community affairs. Activism was stressed as a means of integrating into the community as a whole.

Establishing Reliability

Reliability figures were established by giving two coders a sample of newspaper content. Fifty symbols were selected and submitted to two coders familiar with the Spanish language and Mexican American affairs. The percentage of agreement was arrived at by taking the number of items coded the same way by the two coders and dividing by the total number of items in the test. Their results were then compared to those of the investigator.

The average number of symbols which matched those of the investigator was 42.5. This was then divided by the total number of symbols and a reliability figure of 85% was reached.

Although there is no agreement on what reliability should be, the reliability figure here should have approximated 90%. However, it seems that the lengthy and sometimes confusing articles in Compass lowered the figure in this case. Nevertheless, this did not affect the results of the analysis since most of the frequency distributions were overwhelmingly in one direction or the other. (See Chapter Four).

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