

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS  
IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

by

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I wish to dedicate this dissertation to Martha, Edwin, and Laura Leigh. I now understand why scholarship requires a patient family.

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## INTRODUCTION

The political setting to which individuals react includes much more of society than the social groupings to which they belong. Those who would study the political setting and the political role of ethnic groups have a responsibility to place their work in a broader setting. Two ways of locating this study seem to be particularly important. First, the political role of an ethnic group can be seen within the context of a larger political system. Second, the data collected in studying the impact of political role upon the political setting lie within a particular historical framework. These two characteristics manifest themselves in the cultural background, the socio-economic conditions, leadership and groups, voting patterns, and access to government of the ethnic group. The unifying analytical concept is political role.

Political role is a basic unit for the study of political behavior. The concept of role refers to expectations about how a political actor behaves in particular situations.<sup>1</sup> Heinz Eulau argues that the most suitable concept for analyzing a relationship between at least two political actors is role. Furthermore, utilization of role

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 11.

is suitable for determining the political relevance of the behavior under analysis.<sup>2</sup> The concept of role has assumed a key position in the fields of sociology, social psychology, and cultural anthropology.<sup>3</sup> Students of the social sciences frequently make use of it as a central term in conceptual schemes for the analysis of the structure and functioning of social systems and for the explanation of individual behavior.<sup>4</sup>

Political role can be used as a conceptual tool on three levels of analysis. These three levels of the analysis of political role are the cultural, the social, and the personal. On the cultural level, analysis of political role calls attention to the norms, traditions, rights and duties that relate to the behavioral pattern of the political actor. On the social level, analysis of political role is related to inquiry into the interaction, connection or bond that produces a relationship between one political

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<sup>2</sup>Heinz Eulau, The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics (New York: Random House, Inc., 1963), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Neal Gross, Ward Mason, and Alexander McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>See for example: Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951); Theodore Newcomb, Social Psychology (New York: The Dryden Press, 1951); George P. Murdock, "Sociology and Anthropology," in John Gillin (ed.), For a Science of Social Man (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1954), pp. 14-31; and Bruce J. Biddle and Edwin J. Thomas (eds.), Role Theory: Concepts and Research (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966).

actor and another political actor. On the personal level, analysis of political role is directed to the definitions of the role held by the actors in the behavioral pattern.<sup>5</sup>

Analysis of political role shows the interdependence of people in their political activity. Lester Milbrath contends that political action is directly related to the political setting. In this regard, the political behavior of an actor is defined, channeled, and confined by the environment of the actor.<sup>6</sup> Utilization of the concepts of political role and political setting is, therefore, consistent with the analytic objectives of political science.

This study of the political role of Mexican-Americans arises from a long interest in the politics of south Texas. The author has observed the nature of politics in south Texas and the salient role of Mexican-Americans therein. This role is significantly bound up in the long cultural heritage of the region; it is openly represented in cultural conflict; moreover, it has changed the political setting.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the impact of the political role of Mexican-Americans upon

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<sup>5</sup>Eulau, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

<sup>6</sup>Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965), pp. 6-7.

the political setting in San Antonio, Texas. The study shows the relation between the political role and the political setting of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. San Antonio is utilized because it is the major metropolitan area of south Texas and because approximately fifty per cent of the population of the city is Mexican-American.

### Significance of the Study

San Antonio, Texas has the largest urban concentration of Mexican-Americans in the United States. Consequently, Mexican-Americans represent a significant factor in the political setting of San Antonio, south Texas, and the state of Texas. The study of the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio offers a major insight into the character of ethnic politics and the impact of the activity of an ethnic group upon the political setting.

In most cities and large towns in the United States there are "foreign districts" known as Little Italy, Little Bohemia, Polack Town, or by some other designation. In San Antonio there is Mexican Town. According to Warner and Srole, these terms refer to concentrations of ethnic groups in particular sections of a community. These cultural minorities have modified the form of American society and have changed the social, economic, and political history of the United States.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, The Social System of American Ethnic Groups (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 1.

Milton Gordon defines ethnic group as a segment of the population contained within the national boundaries of the United States set off by one of two concepts. First, an ethnic group can refer to a group considered foreign by the dominant group in an area. Second, the term ethnic group can refer to any individual who considers himself a member of a group of foreign culture. However, ethnics may be either of foreign or native birth. The ethnic group bears a special relationship to the social structure of a modern complex society which distinguishes such groups from other categories of groups. Within the ethnic group there develops a network of organizations and relations which permits and encourages the members to remain within the confines of the group for all of their primary relationships and for some of their secondary relationships throughout all the stages of the life cycle.<sup>8</sup>

Ethnic groups offer a major instrument for the study of political role and how that role is related to the larger cultural and social relationships of the group. This study emphasizes the cultural variety within American life by recognizing ethnic groups as instruments for political analysis. Utilization of ethnic groups enables examination of the modifications in the political setting brought about by the political role of the groups.

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<sup>8</sup>Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 27-34.

Mexican-Americans in San Antonio constitute a clearly delineated ethnic group. According to a criterion established by Lyle Saunders, the Mexican-Americans are defined as that group who think of themselves in terms of "we" in response to the labels, Mexican-American, Mexican, Spanish-speaking people, Mexicanos, Latin-Americans, and similar terms. They are thought of by Anglo-Americans in terms of "they" in response to the same identifying symbols. The term Anglo-American used in this study is defined by Saunders as the numerically dominant English-speaking population of Texas.<sup>9</sup> Strictly speaking, the Mexican-Americans did not immigrate from Spain and Mexico; they were very much a part of the landscape when the Anglo-Americans came to the southwestern United States. Basically, the difficulty in nomenclature arises from the fact that the Mexican-American people represent a fusion of Indian, Spanish, and Mexican heritages, both racially and culturally, in every possible combination and mixture.<sup>10</sup>

In Texas, Mexican-Americans are more numerous in the extreme southern and western sections of the state than in the eastern, northern, and northwestern sections. In 1960, there were sixty-seven counties in Texas with more

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<sup>9</sup>Lyle Saunders, The Spanish Speaking Population of Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1949), p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Carey McWilliams, North from Mexico (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1948), p. 7.

than 2,500 Mexican-Americans. Bexar County (San Antonio) had the largest number (257,000) followed by El Paso County (136,993) and Hidalgo County in the lower Rio Grande Valley (129,092). The Mexican-Americans in 1960 outnumbered the total non-white population of the state by over 200,000. Furthermore, their numbers are growing at a much faster rate than is the state's total population. During the decade of the 1950's, Mexican-American population increased by thirty-seven per cent while the total population of Texas was increasing by twenty-four per cent. In 1960, in Texas, there were 1,417,811 Mexican-Americans living in the state.<sup>11</sup>

There are numerous historical and sociological studies of ethnic groups and their cultural development in American society.<sup>12</sup> Several sociological studies have been made concerning Mexican-Americans.<sup>13</sup> The politics of

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<sup>11</sup>U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population: 1960 General Population Characteristics, Texas. Final Report PC (1)-45B, pp. 59-62.

<sup>12</sup>See for example: Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951); R. E. Park and H. A. Miller, Old World Traits Transplanted (New York: Harper and Co., 1921); E. V. Stonequist, The Marginal Men (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937); and Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

<sup>13</sup>See for example: Manuel Gamio, Mexican Immigration to the United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930); Manuel Gamio, The Mexican Immigrant (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); Paul Taylor, An American-

Mexican-Americans is largely unexplored, though central to the political culture of south Texas and San Antonio. Nothing is available on the impact of their political role. This study is significant because it seeks to fill this gap in the scholarly literature.

#### Hypothesis of the Study

The political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has changed the political setting in San Antonio.

#### Method of the Study

That the role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio politics has changed the political setting in San Antonio is shown by the analysis of role on the cultural level, the social level, and the personal level. Analysis of the political role of Mexican-Americans on these three levels defines the political role of Mexican-Americans and shows the impact of the role of the ethnic group upon the political setting in San Antonio. Analysis of the political role of Mexican-Americans on the cultural level requires investigation into the historical background of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio and south Texas. Analysis of the political role of Mexican-Americans on the social level

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Mexican Frontier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934); Pauline Kibbe, Latin-Americans in Texas (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1946); and William Madsen, The Mexican-Americans of South Texas (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

requires a study of the socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans. Finally, analysis of the political role of Mexican-Americans on the personal level calls attention to the development of Mexican-American leaders and political action groups, to the characteristics of Mexican-American voting patterns, and to the access of Mexican-Americans to official and unofficial political organizations.

The organization of each chapter of this study is twofold. The first part of each chapter includes a brief survey of the literature of social and political science as it relates to the subject matter of the chapter. The second part of each chapter is an analysis of the pertinent variable which involves the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.

In order to analyze the political role of Mexican-Americans on the cultural level, Chapter I describes the historical background of Mexican-Americans in south Texas and San Antonio. This historical and cultural analysis includes the early settlement of Texas and the role of Mexicans, the social conflict of the nineteenth century with the arrival of Anglo-Americans, and the cultural problems of the twentieth century.

Chapter II examines the social level of political role through an analysis of the socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. The analysis includes

the socio-economic legacy of Mexican-Americans in relation to Anglo-Americans. Contemporary socio-economic characteristics of Mexican-Americans are significant factors in the political setting of San Antonio. It is essentially the socio-economic conditions that Mexican-Americans seek to change through the utilization of political power. However, cultural conflict with Anglo-Americans is a major obstacle.

Chapter III examines the personal level of political role by a study of the development of Mexican-American leaders and political action groups. Leaders, such as Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena, have emerged; they reflect the changing political setting caused by the political role of Mexican-Americans. The political role of Mexican-Americans on the personal level has also produced organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations.

Chapter IV extends the analysis of political role on the personal level by examining the characteristics of Mexican-American voting patterns. Analysis of presidential, senatorial, and state primary elections provide data on the nature of Mexican-American voting characteristics. These voting patterns reflect the role of the Mexican-American electorate in San Antonio and illustrate how that electorate relates to the political setting.

Chapter V examines the political role of Mexican-Americans on the personal level by investigating Mexican-American access to official and unofficial political organizations in San Antonio. The analysis includes non-partisan organizations, political parties, and official government. The inclusion of Mexican-Americans in political parties as well as in positions of official government helps define their behavioral pattern in the political setting in San Antonio.

Chapter VI concludes the study by comparing the data of this study with the literature of social and political science. The conclusions enable the study to reflect upon the nature of political role in relation to the political setting. Also, the conclusions allow the study to make general observations about the impact of the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio as well as ethnic politics in the United States.

#### Sources of Information for the Study

The politics of ethnic groups and the nature of political roles are analyzed in the literature of political science.<sup>14</sup> This material is related to and compared

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<sup>14</sup>See for example: Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960); Robert Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1951); Michael Parenti, "Ethnic Politics and the Persistence of Ethnic Identification,"

with the Mexican-American political role in San Antonio.

In the winter of 1967 and the spring of 1968, the author interviewed numerous individuals intimate with politics and the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. The interviewees included Mexican-American and Anglo-American political leaders, religious leaders, business and professional leaders, and other political activists. The names of the interviewees are included in the bibliography. The questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

Other sources of information include San Antonio newspapers, other articles and periodicals, and letters from various individuals with a close association with the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. Voting statistics from Bexar County records, census data from the United States Bureau of the Census, and other public documents are utilized in the study. The author was present at various meetings and political rallies at which Mexican-American leaders discussed Mexican-American politics. The author was also present at meetings of the San Antonio Community Relations Commission at which the role of Mexican-Americans in the affairs of San Antonio was the paramount issue.

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American Political Science Review, Vol. 61 (September, 1967), pp. 717-726; Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Raymond Wolfinger, "The Development and Persistence of Ethnic Identification," American Political Science Review, Vol. 59 (December, 1965), pp. 896-908; Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1960); and Milbrath, op. cit.

## CHAPTER I

### POLITICAL ROLE AND THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN SOUTH TEXAS

The convergence of Spanish-speaking and English-speaking people in south Texas has brought two cultures into contact, and insofar as they are different, into conflict. This cultural conflict has an important influence upon political role because political behavior is a product of past experiences and changes at varying times as a result of forces within the political setting. These forces include developments between and within social groups and are related to the cultural level of political role.

#### A Note on Literature for Analyzing Cultural Relations and Political Role

Dan Nimmo and Thomas Unger observe that "human conflict has been assailed as, at best a necessary evil; at worst, incontrovertible evidence of the perversity and raciality of man."<sup>1</sup> In recent years, the role of conflict has become accepted as normal by students of political role and of cultural relations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dan Nimmo and Thomas Unger, American Political Patterns: Conflict and Consensus (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>See for example: Elton B. McNeil (ed.), The

Georg Simmel, in his classic work, argues for the use of conflict as an analytically desirable concept.<sup>3</sup>

Simmel contends that:

At one time it appeared as if there were only two consistent subject matters of the science of man: the individual unit and the unit of individuals (society); any third seemed logically excluded. In this conception, conflict itself--irrespective of its contributions to these immediate social units--found no place for study. A more comprehensive classification of the science of the relations of men should distinguish, it would appear, those relations which constitute a unit, that is, social relations in the strict sense, from those which counteract unity.<sup>4</sup>

Simmel also argues that the individual does not attain the character of his political behavior exclusively by an exhaustive harmonization of his personality according to logical, objective, religious, or ethical norms. On the contrary, contradiction and cultural conflict not only precede the development of a political role but are operative in it at the very moment of its existence.<sup>5</sup>

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Nature of Human Conflict (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965); and Robert Dahl, Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1967).

<sup>3</sup>Georg Simmel, Conflict (Glencoe: The Free Press 1955). This is a translation from the German by Kurt H. Wolff.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 15. Simmel's emphasis upon human nature is supported by Graham Wallas, Human Nature in Politics

Lewis Coser stresses the positive functions of social conflict.<sup>6</sup> Coser says that the distinction between "ourselves, the we-group, or in-group" and everybody else, or the "others-group, or out-group" is established in and through conflict. Coser points out that conflict is not confined to classes, although class conflicts have appeared as the most convenient illustrations to many observers. Nationality and ethnic conflicts, political conflicts, and conflicts between various language groups afford equally relevant examples.<sup>7</sup>

The general value or positive function of social conflict is to be found in what Coser calls "reciprocal repulsions." Conflict sets boundaries between groups within a social system by strengthening group consciousness and awareness of separateness, thus establishing the identity of groups within a system. Such separateness helps maintain a total social system by creating a balance between the various groups in the system.<sup>8</sup>

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(New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1921) and James C. Davies, Human Nature in Politics (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1963).

<sup>6</sup>Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (Glencoe: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1956), p. 35.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

According to Nimmo and Unga, conflict is contagious. Demands are usually met by counter-demands and opposition.<sup>9</sup> Coser argues that it is this contagious character of conflict that produces organized political activity. Before conflict can be turned into political activity, a negatively privileged group must first develop the awareness that it is, indeed, negatively privileged. It must come to believe that it is being denied rights to which it is entitled. It must reject any justification for the existing distribution of rights and privileges.<sup>10</sup>

The cultural background of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio and south Texas is one of conflict with Anglo-American cultural development. This relationship between competing cultures has given the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio its essential character.

#### Early Cultural Settlements in Texas

Prior to 1690, Texas formed a remote and nominal part of the Spanish conquests. From their base in the Indies the Spaniards had explored most of the shoreline of the New World from the southern coast of what became the United States all the way to Cape Horn.<sup>11</sup> Ponce de Leon

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<sup>9</sup>Nimmo and Unga, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>10</sup>Coser, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>11</sup>Bernadine Rice, "San Antonio, Its Early Beginnings

died in Florida in quest of the mythical fountain of youth. Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon searched for treasures in the Carolinas. An expedition led by Panfilo de Navaez explored Florida but upon returning to the location where they had left their ships the expedition discovered the ships missing. They made five boats and set sail from Florida. Part of the expedition was lost at sea but one of the boats, containing Cabeza de Vaca, was shipwrecked on an island near the present location of Galveston, Texas.<sup>12</sup> After innumerable hardships and traveling with Indian tribes, de Vaca made his way across Texas and finally reached Mexico City in 1536.<sup>13</sup>

Between 1528 and 1602, a handful of Spaniards explored the borderlands of New Spain: from Galveston to San Diego; from Sonora to Santa Fe; from the west coast of Mexico to Monterey. Finding only mud villages and uninhabited desert wastes, the Spanish ignored settlement of Texas for over a century.<sup>14</sup>

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and Development Under the Republic," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1941), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Carey McWilliams, North from Mexico (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1949), p. 21.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 24. See also Odie B. Faulk, The Sara of Texas: A Successful Failure (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1965), pp. 73-92.

The French first aroused the attention of the Spanish to its neglected territory. In 1685, the French took possession of Texas in the name of the French king and established a colony on Matagorda Bay. In 1689, an expedition, under Alonzo de Leion, drove out the French; and in 1690 the Spanish made their first permanent settlement in Texas. This settlement set the pattern for Spanish colonization of Texas through the use of missions. The missions offered to settlers the protection of a fort, as well as the benefit of a church and became the nuclei around which gradually grew towns.<sup>15</sup> Although the Spanish founded some twenty-five missions in Texas, their principal and ultimately their only settlements between the Sabine River and the Rio Grande River were San Antonio, Goliad, and Nacogdoches.<sup>16</sup>

Once Spanish settlement began in Texas a type of life developed that had a lasting influence. This type of life was essentially patterned after medieval feudalism. Beginning in 1748, the rancheros of Tamaulipas, the provinces across the Rio Grande from south Texas, had been encouraged to settle along the river in an effort to build a line of defense against the Indians. Most of these

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<sup>15</sup>Arthur Ikin, Texas (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, & Piper, 1841), pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup>George P. Garrison, Texas (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1903), pp. 65-67.

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settlers came from such communities as Guerrero, Camargo, and Miero. Over a period of some years, a few towns began to appear on the Texas side of the river: Dolores in 1761; Rio Grande City in 1757; and Roma in 1767. When Mexico achieved its independence from Spain, in the third decade of the nineteenth century, the government parcelled out most of the land lying between the Rio Grande and the Nueces River in the form of large land grants to favorites of the new regime and the movement of settlers into the region from Mexico became more rapid.<sup>17</sup>

Poorly organized, feebly garrisoned, chronically neglected, the Texas settlements were quickly engulfed in the tide of nineteenth century Anglo-American immigration.<sup>18</sup> In 1821, Anglo-Americans from the United States, under the leadership of Moses Austin, founded a colony which subsequently became prosperous. Numerous other colonies were gradually formed.<sup>19</sup>

Due to the troubled state of affairs which prevailed during the decade of the Texas Republic, most of the Anglo-Americans settled north and east of the Nueces River, and this pattern prevailed for some years after the Texas

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<sup>17</sup>William Kennedy, Texas (Fort Worth: The Molyneaux Craftsman, Inc., 1925), pp. 324-328.

<sup>18</sup>Samuel H. Lowrie, Culture Conflict in Texas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 30.

<sup>19</sup>Ikin, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

Revolution. During the period of the Texas Republic, Mexicans continued to cross the Rio Grande and settle between the Rio Grande and the Nueces because the position of Mexico was that the Nueces was the official boundary between it and Texas.<sup>20</sup>

In Texas the Mexican settlements were directly in the path of Anglo-American immigration. Unlike the rest of the borderlands, Texas was not separated from the centers of Anglo-American population by mountain ranges or deserts. In a series of belts or strips, the rich, alluvial plains stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Plateaus. The rivers that marked these belts could be crossed at all seasons at almost any point without much trouble.<sup>21</sup> Anglo-American settlers moved into Texas primarily from the southern states of the United States.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, between the southerly settlements in Texas and those of Mexico there was a great expanse of semi-arid land which at

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<sup>20</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 84. See also Garrison, op. cit., pp. 262-263.

<sup>21</sup>Andrew Muir, Texas in 1837 (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1958), pp. 117-121. This is a reprint of Muir's observations of Texas at the time of the Republic.

<sup>22</sup>Homer P. Thrall, History of Texas (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson & Co., 1879), p. 765.

that time served as a more or less natural barrier to the enforcement of effective Mexican control.<sup>23</sup>

### Early Cultural Relations in South Texas

San Antonio was the center of Spanish life in south Texas. The city was the official residence of the governor of the province. At this time a way of life developed in south Texas quite similar to that which developed in California.

A patriarchal system was established in which a few large land-owners lived an ideal and lordly existence based on peonage. Vestiges of the system are still found in south Texas. The peon was always in debt; in fact, he usually inherited the debts of his father. Land-owners sold high priced goods to their peons on credit, often refusing them permission to make purchases in the towns. The peon was not permitted to cultivate land on his own, or even to supply his own table needs. His ownership of stock was limited to a few chickens, pigs, and goats. Throughout south Texas, the peons lived in one room thatched-roofed, dirt-floor huts, with an arbor made of dry corn stalks. This ranch life, reminiscent of medieval feudalism, survived

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<sup>23</sup>Nicholas De LaFora, The Frontiers of New Spain (Berkeley: Quivira Society Publications, 1958), pp. 190-194.

well into the twentieth century though not as widespread as in the nineteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

These people of Mexican-Indian background took little part in the Mexican independence movement and had no tradition of self-government. Manhood suffrage was unknown. The lack of democratic traditions, the system of peonage, and the persistence of the patron-peon relation, combined to produce a type of political bossism. The Anglo-American cattle barons assumed the prerogatives of the Spanish landowners in the nineteenth century and were accepted by the peons as protectors.<sup>25</sup>

In 1834, the Anglo-Americans outnumbered the Mexicans in Texas. Most of the Anglo-Americans were concentrated on small farms or towns, while the Mexicans were located on the larger ranches or in the old Spanish towns. There were few chances for Mexican and Anglo acculturation for they saw very little of each other. From the outset, however, what relations there were between the two groups were clouded by fear of war. The Anglo-Americans bore the brunt of Mexico's hostile distrust of the United States and were, in turn, encouraged to take an unfriendly attitude toward the Mexicans

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<sup>24</sup>Paul S. Taylor, An American-Mexican Frontier (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934), pp. 36-37, 155, 325-329. See also McWilliams, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>25</sup>Donald Day, Big Country: Texas (New York: Dwell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947), pp. 87-91; and Taylor, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

whom they regarded as inferior and in the way of manifest destiny.<sup>26</sup> Each group formed a very unfavorable opinion of the other. To the early Anglo-American settlers, the Mexicans were lazy, shiftless, jealous, cowardly, superstitious, backward, and immoral. To the Mexicans, the Anglos were arrogant, overbearing, aggressive, conniving, rude, unreliable, and dishonest.<sup>27</sup>

Under the most favorable circumstances, a reconciliation of the two cultures would have been difficult. The language barrier was a constant source of misunderstanding; neither group could communicate, for all practical purposes, with the other. The Mexicans knew almost nothing of local self-government, while the Anglo-Americans brought to Texas traditions of constitutionalism and limited government as well as ideas of liberty and individual rights. Although tolerant of peonage, the Mexicans strongly opposed slavery. The Anglo-Americans, however, most of whom were from the southern states, were vigorously pro-slavery. There were religious differences as well since the Anglo-Americans were primarily Protestant and the Mexicans were Catholic.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Lowrie, op. cit., pp. 30-31. See also Eugene Barker, Mexico and Texas: 1821-1835 (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1965), pp. 8, 11, 30 and 32.

<sup>27</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-100. See also William R. Hogan,

With the Texas Revolution came the embittering memories, for the Texans, of the slaughter of Anglo-Americans at the Alamo; and, for the Mexicans, of the humiliating rout and defeat at San Jacinto.<sup>29</sup> Prior bitterness was intensified greatly. Towards the Mexicans remaining within the limits of Texas, the feelings of the Anglo-Americans were scarcely better than towards the Indians.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout the decade of the Texas Republic (1836-1846), the shooting war continued in south Texas between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. Murder was matched by murder; raids by Anglo-Americans from Texas were countered by raids from Mexico.<sup>31</sup> Since Texas claimed that the boundary with Mexico was the Rio Grande and Mexico claimed that the boundary rested on the Nueces, the zone between

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The Texas Republic (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), pp. 191-206.

<sup>29</sup>Garrison, op. cit., p. 242. For the position of the Mexicans on this conflict see Carlos E. Castaneda (ed.), The Mexican Side of the Texas Revolution (Dallas: P. L. Turner Co., 1928).

<sup>30</sup>Sister Paul of the Cross McGrath, Political Nativism in Texas: 1825-1860. (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1930), p. 66.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph M. Nance, Attack and Counter-Attack (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1964).

the rivers was the site of constant guerrilla warfare throughout the life of the Republic.<sup>32</sup>

Provoked by the annexation of Texas in 1846, the Mexican-American War represented the culmination of three decades of cultural conflict in Texas. To the Mexicans, every incident was regarded as part of a deliberately planned scheme of conquest. To the Anglo-Americans, the war was inevitable having been caused by the stupidity and backwardness of the Mexican officials.<sup>33</sup> The war added greatly to the heritage of hatred between the United States and Mexico. A large part of the American army was made up of volunteers who committed various acts of violence against Mexican civilians. Their behavior during the war included robbery, rape, and murder of Mexicans.<sup>34</sup>

The year 1844 saw the rise in the United States of a political party known as the American Party which was highly nationalistic and anti-Catholic. Much anti-Catholic feeling found expression during the Mexican-American War. Charges against American desecration of religious places,

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<sup>32</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>33</sup>Barker, op. cit., and Lowrie, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 102. The activities of Texas participants are related in John S. Ford, Rip Ford's Texas (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1963), pp. 59-84. See also William J. Hughes, Rebellious Ranger: Rip Ford and the Old Southwest (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 74-107.

which in Mexico were primarily Catholic, were offered as additional proof of American lack of virtue.<sup>35</sup>

Just as the end of the Texas Revolution did not end hostilities in Texas, so the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo failed to bring peace to the borderlands. The area of south Texas became the home of numerous outlaw bands who attacked and molested all settlers.<sup>36</sup> In the fact of continual fighting and disorder which included filibustering expeditions by Anglo-American adventurers, Indian raids, revolution, war, and constant guerilla fighting, the Mexicans in Texas retreated and their retreat gave rise to the belief that the Anglo-Americans were successfully pursuing a mandate of destiny. It was reported in 1859 that the "white race was exterminating or crushing out the inferior race." An American soldier wrote home that "the Mexicans, like the poor Indian, are doomed to retire before the enterprising Anglo-Americans."<sup>37</sup>

With the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, officially ending the Mexican-American War, all residents in Texas of Mexican ancestry were made United States citizens. The cultural relations between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-

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<sup>35</sup>McGrath, op. cit., pp. 66-67 and 114-116.

<sup>36</sup>Ed Bartholomew, Kill or be Killed (Houston: The Frontier Press, 1953), p. 1ff.

<sup>37</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 105.

Americans, however, did not improve. Bitterness and hatred continued as indicated by the highly significant Cortinas episode.

Juan Cortinas was born near Brownsville, Texas. A man from a prominent and well-to-do family, he was noted for his horsemanship. The Cortinas War, which lasted a decade at the time of the American Civil War, began when a deputy sheriff arrested a Mexican-American who had been a servant of the Cortinas family. Contending that the arrest was merely another example of Anglo-American arrogance, Cortinas shot the deputy and freed the prisoner. Cortinas led raids against the Anglo-Americans in the towns and robbed their shops, stores, and banks in a style similar to a Robin Hood. Throughout the area of south Texas the name of Cortinas was known; he had defeated the Anglo-Americans and the Mexican flag flew in his camp. He was the champion of Mexican-Americans--the man who would right the wrongs of the Mexicans and drive the hated Anglos out of the area. Incensed by these raids, the Anglo-Americans burned the homes of all Mexicans suspected of being implicated or of giving aid to Cortinas and his men. The Anglo-Americans believed that every Mexican-American was in league with Cortinas and would, if given a chance, murder every Anglo inhabitant. When the Cortinas War finally came to an end

in 1883 with the death of Cortinas, the fighting stopped but the cultural consequences and hatreds lived on.<sup>38</sup>

In the period from the close of the American Civil War to 1880, there was nothing resembling law and order in south Texas. Friction between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans was intense and continuous. Neglected during the Civil War, great herds of cattle roamed wild in the brush country and plundering expeditions crossed and re-crossed the Rio Grande as cattle stealing became a thriving business. The number of murders committed by various outlaw bands was never determined. Anglo-Americans reasoned, however, that all Mexicans were guilty whether they were Mexican-Americans or citizens of Mexico. On numerous occasions, American troops were sent on expeditions into Mexico; nor were the Mexicans much more respectful of American sovereignty.<sup>39</sup> Suspicion and hatred was apparent, on both sides, as indicated in a report by General Steele in 1875 in which he reported that "there is a considerable Texas element in the country bordering on the Nueces that thinks the killing of a Mexican no crime," and a collection

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<sup>38</sup>Walter Prescott Webb, The Texas Rangers (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935), pp. 175-193. See Ford, op. cit., pp. 308-309 on the attitude of Anglo-Americans toward Cortinas.

<sup>39</sup>George Durham, Taming the Nueces Strip (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1962). See also Webb, op. cit., pp. 233-391, and Lewis Nordyke, Great Roundup (New York: William Morrow Co., 1955).

of "Mexican thieves and cut-throats who . . . think the killing of a Texan something to be proud of."<sup>40</sup>

### Mexicans in San Antonio in the 19th Century

In the first half of the 19th century, San Antonio was chiefly inhabited by Mexicans. These Mexicans were of two classes: a small group of commercial businessmen and a much larger group of poor and illiterate peasants. The wealthy Mexicans lived in houses built principally in the Spanish or Morisco style. The poor Mexicans occupied numerous huts which were constructed of poles planted perpendicularly in the ground, plastered with mud, and roofed with long leaves from aquatic plants growing along the banks of the San Antonio River. The poorer Mexicans stood out in the population not only because of their sheer numbers but because of their subsistent living conditions.<sup>41</sup>

From the 1840's San Antonio grew rapidly. Mexicans, Indians, Anglo-Americans from the states, other immigrants, adventurers, thieves, horse traders, all moved into San Antonio. Mrs. Sam Maverick, probably the first Anglo-American woman to take up permanent residence in San Antonio, thought that the thieves and wretches who inhabited San

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<sup>40</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>41</sup>Webb, op. cit., p. 83.

Antonio were a serious drawback to the development of the city.<sup>42</sup> From a population of about 3,500 in 1850, San Antonio increased to 10,000 in 1856 and about 15,000 in 1873. One found in the city the strangest mixture of civilizations, white, yellow, red, black, Mexican, Indian, Negro, and all possible combinations of these races and groups. The Germans, the Anglo-Americans, and the Mexican-Americans were fairly equal in numbers. In addition to these groups, there were representatives from many other European nationalities.<sup>43</sup>

During the 1850's and 1860's, San Antonio was a center for freighting by Mexican-Americans in Texas. The Mexican-Americans hauled goods worth thousands of dollars from San Antonio to Chihuahua and other points in Mexico. In 1857, the intense feeling against Mexican-Americans by Anglo-Americans took the form of the so-called Cart War. This war was nothing less than an effort on the part of certain Anglo-American freighters to run the Mexican-American freighters out of business. San Antonio was a center for such battles.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Joseph W. Schmitz, In the Days of the Republic (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1960), p. 6.

<sup>43</sup>Sidney Lanier, Retrospects and Prospects (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 34.

<sup>44</sup>J. Frank Dobie, A Vaquero of the Brush Country (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1929), p. 48.

At this time, San Antonio established four schools which have been described as the first genuinely free school system to be opened in Texas. Many of the large landowners around San Antonio, who virtually constituted a "landed aristocracy," felt that education would ruin the Mexican-Americans who were in conditions of peonage. Consequently, the more influential segment of the economy opposed mass education. This situation has changed very slowly in south Texas and is still encountered in some parts of the area particularly where the education of Mexican-Americans is concerned.<sup>45</sup>

South Texas Politics and  
the Mexican-Americans  
in the 19th Century

The Mexican-Americans of San Antonio and south Texas have, for the major part of the last one hundred years, lived in a type of feudalistic state. Like the medieval peasant, whose conceptions of the distant king and more distant emperor must have been hazy, the Mexican-American knew only his locality. He learned little of, or cared less for, the state of Texas or the federal government of the United States. The only ruler he knew was his local chief. If he were guilty of criminal offenses or became involved in a dispute, the chief knew simple ways to handle

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<sup>45</sup>Day, op. cit., p. 299.

the problem short of the tedious workings of the law, which, indeed, were not much in evidence. The Mexican-American of south Texas, knowing little about the privileges or duties of sharing in the political process, and desiring to accede to the wishes of his chief, allowed his hand to be guided in marking his ballots for presidential, state, and other candidates.<sup>46</sup>

Under the cultural conditions and economic relations that existed, the Mexican-Americans were very susceptible to political bosses. Mexican-Americans were easy prey since most of them were employed by others. In this case, political bosses needed only to control the employer who, in turn, would tell "his Mexicans" how to vote. Under the patron system it was customary for Mexican-Americans working for someone else to go to their employer and ask how to vote. Mexican-Americans were not necessarily forced to vote a particular way but they asked who to vote for as a sign of their loyalty, respect, and degree of faith in their employer or patron. The patron system is still very evident in south Texas, particularly in the rural areas.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>O. Douglas Weeks, "The Texas-Mexican and the Politics of South Texas," American Political Science Review, Vol. 24 (May, 1930), p. 610.

<sup>47</sup>Frank L. Madla, Jr., "The Political Impact of Latin Americans and Negroes in Texas Politics," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1964), p. 66.

One of the earliest Anglo-American patrons in south Texas was Colonel Stephen Powers. Powers was born in Maine and trained in law in New York where he became a friend and supporter of Martin Van Buren. After being in the diplomatic service for a time, he joined the army at the outbreak of the Mexican-American War and went to Texas as the Colonel of a New York Regiment. When the war was over, he stayed in Texas. In writing of Stephen Powers and politics in south Texas, O. Douglas Weeks has observed that:

Here was a place, therefore, which appealed to this disciple of Van Buren, from whom he must have learned something of politics. In fact, politicians in New York had been dealing with an ethnic population since the infancy of Tammany Hall. If the sons of Irish peasants could learn to use the ballot by the short and direct method, why could not these simple and primitive descendants of Mexico? Not that it had to be done in a corrupt way; only occasionally had Tammany Hall itself been corrupt.<sup>48</sup>

Powers assumed the role of friend and protector for the Mexican-American people. As a lawyer he rendered them assistance, particularly when newcomers undertook to occupy their land and take their cattle. Also, as a lawyer, he could ease them into believing that perhaps they never really owned the land or the cattle. On the whole, he seems to have dealt as fairly with both Mexican-American and newcomer as frontier ethics required. He was able gradually to build

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<sup>48</sup>Weeks, op. cit., p. 611.

up a tremendous influence over both Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans in the area of south Texas.<sup>49</sup>

In 1878, four years before his death, Powers made Jim Wells his partner. Wells, whose grandparents came to south Texas in 1823, was educated at the University of Virginia. His sympathies and prejudices were Southern. Jim Wells lived through the Reconstruction period and was a bourbon Democrat of the old school. He proved thoroughly capable of assuming the mantle of Powers, both in the role of lawyer and in that of patron for Mexican-Americans.<sup>50</sup>

Jim Wells was the most powerful political boss in south Texas at the end of the 19th century and that power was based on his control of Mexican-American votes. On one occasion, when speaking of Mexican-Americans, Wells said:

The Mexican people, if you understand them, are the most humble people you ever knew . . . . They are largely like the Indians in that respect. Their friendship is individual. For instance. You have a great many friends among them, and they follow your name and your fortunes; and that is the way it is . . . . I suppose the King Ranch people control over 500 votes and they, the Mexicans, go to Caesar Kleberg, and to Captain King - while he was still living and ask him who they should vote for. The truth is, and very few people who don't live in the country know, that it is the property owners and the intelligent people who in that way do really vote Mexicans,

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 611-612.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

and that is the truth about it, and anyone who has lived there can see the worth of it, if they know it.<sup>51</sup>

San Antonio, the cultural center of south Texas, was dominated by machine politics and political bosses. The first of the bosses to take the city government away from the Mexican politicians was Bryan Callaghan, an Irishman married to a Mexican woman. He took office in 1846. Callaghan's political power rested in his control of Mexican-American votes. He ruled through friendship and love. He always protected his servants, helped them when they were sick, and never let them go hungry. When asked upon one occasion whether or not he was a political boss, he replied in part as follows:

So far as I being boss, if I exercise only influence among these people it is because of the many years I have lived among them that I was their friend and they could trust me. I take no advantage from their ignorance. I buried many a one of them with my money and married many a one of them; it wasn't two or three days before the election, but through the year around, and they have always been true to me; and if it earned me the title of boss, every effort and all my money went for the benefit of the Democratic ticket from President to constable; and if that is what earned it, I am proud of it.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Jovita Gonzales, "Social Life in Cameron, Starr and Zapata Counties," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1930), p. 85.

<sup>52</sup>Weeks, op. cit., p. 614.

In 1885, Callaghan's son, "King Bryan" Callaghan II, became mayor and held the office periodically until his death in 1912.<sup>53</sup> After the poll tax was instituted as a prerequisite for voting, Callaghan's political supporters simply paid the poll tax for Mexican-Americans who in turn were told how to vote.<sup>54</sup> The attitude of Mexican-Americans toward voting was described in the following manner by Kathleen Gonzales:

The real home-seeker, which is the . . . very poor Mexican, cares very little for this country's government. He never becomes interested in politics unless it promises him a position. If by becoming a citizen, paying his poll tax, and gambling on election day as to the party which will win, he may obtain a city position as street cleaner or laborer, he does so, but not willingly. The Mexican laborer is an instrument in the hands of the political machinery of this city, and he holds his position as long as the party he voted for is in power. As soon as a new party is installed, he loses his position; but he soon changes and becomes in favor of the party in office, and thus secures his old place. If asked about the stand the party in power takes about certain important questions, he is unable to give an answer because he does not know; neither does he make it his business to find out. He is easily won over

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<sup>53</sup>Audrey Granneberg, "Maury Maverick's San Antonio," Survey Graphic, Vol. 28 (July, 1939), p. 421.

<sup>54</sup>Edwin L. Dickens, "The Poll Tax in Texas," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Texas University of Arts and Industries, Kingsville, Texas, 1963), p. 76.

by a good speaker; not by what is said so much, but by the admiration a Mexican has for a good orator.<sup>55</sup>

Cultural Developments of Mexican-Americans  
in South Texas from  
1900 to 1950

Cultural conflict intensified in south Texas with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in the first decade of the 20th century. Bloody incidents and violence were the order of the day.<sup>56</sup> No one knew how many Anglo-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Mexican civilians were killed along the border in these years. The estimate, according to Walter Prescott Webb, ranged from 500 to 5000. Incidents of all kinds, with which the record is full, served to keep alive and worsen the old antagonisms.<sup>57</sup>

During the Mexican Revolution and the confusion of World War I, from Brownsville to Calexico, raiders crossed and recrossed the border exploiting the chaos and hatreds on both sides of the line. On March 9, 1916, Pancho Villa spread terror up and down the border with his raid on Columbus, New Mexico. Before much time had

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<sup>55</sup>Kathleen M. Gonzales, "The Mexican Family in San Antonio," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1928), p. 22.

<sup>56</sup>Dobie, op. cit., pp. 43-68. See also Tracy H. Lewis, Along the Rio Grande (New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1916), pp. 177-178.

<sup>57</sup>Webb, op. cit., pp. 477-478.

passed, the Pershing expedition was deep in Mexican territory. Over two thousand postcards a day were sold in El Paso depicting cruelty of Mexicans while American troops marched through the streets singing:

It's a long way to capture Villa;  
It's a long way to go;  
It's a long way across the border  
Where the dirty greasers grow.<sup>58</sup>

During this bloody period, hundreds of civilians were killed. Anglo-Americans were killed by vengeful Villistas, at times for no other reason than that they were "gringos." Mexican-Americans were killed in Texas chiefly because they were "greasers."<sup>59</sup>

In an article in World's Work, George Marvin reported that:

The killing of Mexicans . . . along the border in these last four years is almost incredible. . . . Some Rangers have degenerated into common man-killers. There is no penalty for killing, for no jury along the border would ever convict a white man for shooting a Mexican . . . Reading over Secret Service records makes you feel as though there was an open game season on Mexicans along the border.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 190. This song was sung to the tune of the popular ballad "Tipperary." Although it may appear somewhat spurious, the Lewis' observations of 1916 and 1917 do indicate the character of cultural conflict between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans.

<sup>59</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>60</sup>George Marvin, "The Quick and the Dead on the Border," World's Work, Vol. 33 (January, 1917), p. 295.

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Some Texas Rangers reported that "we met two Mexicans on the road but did not have time to bury them." The Rangers were described as ". . . the most coldblooded bunch of persons in the world . . . they have no regard for human life whatever."<sup>61</sup>

Venustiano Carranza, President of Mexico, in a well-documented report, charged that 114 Mexican-Americans were murdered in south Texas. A number of American officials acknowledged the accuracy of the charge.<sup>62</sup> In an editorial on November 18, 1922 The New York Times said that "the killing of Mexicans without provocation is so common as to pass almost unnoticed."<sup>63</sup>

Spearheaded by the completion of the rail lines, the westward movement of cotton, the spread of "winter garden" fruit and vegetable production, and the rapid economic expansion of south Texas after 1910, an enormous demand for unskilled labor developed. It so happened that the expansion of cotton into south Texas coincided with

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See also George Marvin, "Bandits and the Borderland," World's Work, Vol. 32 (October, 1916), pp. 656-663.

<sup>61</sup>Lewis, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

<sup>62</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 112. See also "Mexican Rights in the United States," Nation, Vol. 115 (July 12, 1922), pp. 51-53.

<sup>63</sup>See The New York Times, November 18, 1922, quoted in McWilliams, op. cit., p. 113.

the social revolution in Mexico. The dislocations of the Mexican Revolution forced thousands of Mexican citizens to move across the Rio Grande. From 70,981 in 1900, the number of persons of Mexican ancestry in Texas shot up to 683,681 by 1930.<sup>64</sup>

The southern plantation met fourteenth-century feudalism in south Texas, and from this meeting came the large-scale cotton and vegetable farming of the area. Based on the use of migratory Mexican labor and poor Mexican-Americans, the economy of south Texas grew rapidly. Educated to peonage in Mexico, with large families to help him, with little knowledge of the language or the intricacies of figures, the Mexican laborer, and his Mexican-American counterpart, fitted right into the serfdom of south Texas agriculture. There was an attitude expressed by south Texas farmers and ranchers which summed up the dominant feelings of Anglo-Americans toward persons of Mexican background when they would say, "don't hire a white man, too damn stubborn. Give me a Mex. If he don't do what I tell him, I'll knock his damn block off."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>65</sup>Day, op. cit., pp. 155-156. See also Ralph W. Steen, Twentieth Century Texas (Austin: The Steck Co., 1942), pp. 54-55 and Frank Goodwyn, Lone-Star Land (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 72-76.

By 1940, nearly 400,000 workers of Mexican ancestry labored in the fields of south Texas. During the harvest season, thousands of Mexican citizens came across the Rio Grande, with or without the approval of the two governments. If a worker could not get a passport, he simply went to an unguarded part of the river and swam over. Those who got in this way came to be known as "wetbacks." Many of them never returned to Mexico.<sup>66</sup>

Pauline Kibbe paints a picture of a typical occurrence in the life of migratory Mexican and Mexican-American laborers in observing that:

On one Sunday afternoon in October, 496 migratory labor trucks were counted on the streets of . . . a city of between 40,000 and 50,000. Each truck carries an average of fifteen migrants, of all ages, which means an estimated total of 7440 migrants who had come to spend the week-end, seek new employment, purchase their groceries, and other supplies, find a little recreation, etc. Suppose each of the 496 trucks spent an average of \$25. That is a total of \$12,400 income to the business places of all kinds for one weekend. Yet no provisions whatever had been made for taking care of this influx of people which occurs regularly every fall. There is no place provided where they may park their trucks, take a bath, change their clothes, even go to the toilet.<sup>67</sup>

World War II brought with it new employment opportunities for Mexican-Americans and Mexican nationals who

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<sup>66</sup>Day, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup>Pauline Kibbe, Latin-Americans in Texas (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1946), p. 177.

did not return to their homeland. In every phase of the war, including the military plants and the training schools as well as the armed services, opportunities opened up for thousands of Mexican-Americans to learn new skills, to acquire new experiences, and to come in contact with entirely new currents of thought and opinion. In more than one community, joint service in various civilian defense agencies had a marked tendency to break down barriers which had so long separated the Mexican-American from the rest of the population. Out of this wartime experience came a new pride in citizenship and a growing resentment of cultural differences manifested in forms of discrimination.<sup>68</sup> San Antonio became the center for such developments.

At the end of World War II a series of incidents occurred in south Texas which indicated that although the violence of the 19th and early 20th centuries may have ended, the old prejudices and hatreds remained. A south Texas town refused to bury one of its war heroes because his name, Felix Longoria, revealed Mexican ancestry. Longoria had been killed in a battle with the Japanese after volunteering for a Philippine patrol. His body was shipped back to his wife in Texas, but the local undertaker feared that the "whites" would object to his being

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<sup>68</sup>Steen, op. cit., pp. 302-308, and Goodwyn, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

honored with funeral services in his chapel and burial in the community cemetery. Although a great deal of publicity resulted because of this incident, the Anglo-Americans in the community still refused burial and Longoria's body was interred by the United States in Arlington National Cemetery.<sup>69</sup> Another illustration of a similar attitude is the story of Sergeant Jose Mendoza Lopez, a winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor. He was denied service in a restaurant in a south Texas town because the restaurant owner would not serve Mexicans. Sergeant Lopez had just returned from a highly publicized "good will" tour of Mexico which had been arranged by the United States Army. Lopez protested with a vehemence that came as quite a surprise to the Anglo-American residents of the community.<sup>70</sup> Noting the reluctance of Anglo-Americans in south Texas to abandon their traditions of cultural prejudice, Carey McWilliams declared that Texans were not the political partners of the Fuhrer of Germany but they were the slaves to the same prejudices and superstitions.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Goodwyn, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>70</sup>McWilliams, op. cit., p. 261. See McWilliams' account of similar incidents, pp. 262-265.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 270-271.

George I. Sanchez has systematically investigated many phases of the cultural background of Mexican-Americans in south Texas.<sup>72</sup> Sanchez has called attention to the patterns of discrimination in employment, in schools, and in civic life throughout Texas. For example, in the course of a hike, a scoutmaster and his troop of Boy Scouts, all in uniform were ordered out of a public park because they were "Mexicans." Texas churches posted signs reading "For Colored and Mexicans" and refused Mexican-Americans permission to attend the "white churches" on Sunday.<sup>73</sup>

Sanchez has also pointed out that:

In many cemeteries, whether owned by county authorities, by private individuals or corporations, or by religious organizations . . . the bodies of 'Mexicans' are denied the right of burial. In those cemeteries where such bodies are received they are assigned to a separate plot of land, far enough from the plot destined for the 'whites' so as to be sure that the bodies of the 'whites' will not be contaminated by the presence of the bodies of the Mexicans.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>George I. Sanchez, Forgotten People (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940). See also Lyle Saunders, The Spanish Speaking Population of Texas (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1949), and Kibbe, op. cit., and Taylor, op. cit.

<sup>73</sup>George I. Sanchez, "Pachucos in the Making," Common Ground, Vol. 4 (Autumn, 1943), pp. 13-20.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

Another example of the cultural conflict represented in social discrimination encountered by Mexican-Americans when dealing with Anglo-Americans was that of public restrooms. In south Texas county courthouses, it has not been unusual to find signs posted which designated the toilets' use by "whites" only and Mexicans were told to keep out.<sup>75</sup>

Through the first half of the 20th century in south Texas, there were segregated public school facilities for Anglo-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Negroes. Mexican-American youth were segregated until the junior high school grades. By that time, the Mexican-American children were usually far behind the Anglo-American children in educational preparation. Mexican-American girls usually dropped out of school by the beginning of the high school years. Most Mexican-American boys dropped out of the public schools during the high school years prior to graduation. The language barrier, insufficient preparation in the lower grades, economic problems, and social discrimination combined to force Mexican-American youth out of school.

There was segregation in movie theaters. Certain sections of the local movie house were designated for Mexican-Americans and other sections for Anglo-Americans. Negroes were usually restricted to sitting in the balcony

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

of the theater. Hence, cultural conflict permeated all social relations including business, education, and recreation.

Mexican-Americans and South Texas  
Politics from 1900 to 1950

Several large and small political machines were built on the Mexican-American vote in south Texas counties prior to World War II. These machines were confined mainly to the personal holdings of from twenty-five to 1000 votes of small-time bosses based in the counties of south Texas. These political organizers relied on the traditional techniques of ward heelers in dealing with immigrant groups everywhere: counsel in solving personal problems, aid in times of economic distress, patronage, assistance before governing authorities. The individual Mexican-American usually became qualified to vote at the behest of his boss or chief, who may have paid the poll tax and who often held the tax receipt until election day to insure discipline and orderly procedure. Economic dependency often made the control easier and in south Texas politics Anglo-American employers have traditionally "voted" their "Mexicans." The boss could be seen delivering a basket of food at Thanksgiving, packages of candy at Christmas, or helping sick Mexican-Americans secure a room at the local hospital, if there was one. The boss usually paid the doctor's bill.

These acts were not done simply for political purposes; if these acts had not been performed by the boss, they would not have been done at all. Usually the boss would repay his costs by deducting the money from the income of "his Mexicans" if the Mexican-American worked for him.<sup>76</sup>

To a large extent, south Texas politics has necessarily been a matter of negotiation with major and petty political bosses. There was, and still is, emphasis on the trade, the swap out, the quid pro quo. The politician who attempted to appeal over the heads of the local bosses, to go directly to the people, encountered a remarkable degree of personal attachment and loyalty to the boss by "his" Mexican-Americans.<sup>77</sup>

Writing in 1946, Edgar Greer Shelton said it was common knowledge that a political machine existed in San Antonio and Bexar County. The Kilday brothers, Owen, who was Bexar County Sheriff, and Paul, who was United States Congressman, controlled a large section of the San Antonio electorate. This control was most extensive among the Negro and Mexican-American voters of the city.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Dickens, op. cit., pp. 74-85.

<sup>77</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 273.

<sup>78</sup>Edgar Greer Shelton, "Political Conditions Among Texas Mexicans Along the Rio Grande," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1946), p. 92.

The political machine of the Kilday brothers was a gigantic organization based on the priests of the Catholic churches, other Catholic agencies, the American Legion, and the Mexican vote. The Mexican vote was the primary resource of the machine since it provided the political wherewithal by which the Kilday brothers maintained their political power.<sup>79</sup>

The Kilday machine was similar to an army organization. There was a marked pyramidal system like the line organization of the military. When an election came around, the top man gave the orders and they were transmitted on down to the bottom of the pyramid to the voters. Each man in the pyramid was given the job of seeing certain people. At the base of the pyramid were the voters who supplied the necessary votes to keep the politicians in power.<sup>80</sup>

Herschel Bernard, a close observer of San Antonio politics, described a typical election day in the Mexican-American section of the city during the tenure of Sheriff Kilday. He said that:

Sheriff Kilday could put fifty pistols on the west side on the day of the election and fear did the rest. When you have a

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 93-94.

sheriff's deputy at every polling place wearing his pistol, Mexican-Americans voted 'right.'<sup>81</sup>

There have been political factors influencing the behavior of Mexican-Americans other than the patron or boss. In south Texas these factors have been, and still are, prime forces supplementing the traditions and practices of Anglo-American paternalism.

The attitude of many Mexican-Americans toward the poll tax was a major governing factor in south Texas politics. Many Mexican-Americans could not comprehend paying \$1.75 for the right to vote several months later. The economic impact of the poll tax was a critical factor in Mexican-American participation: there simply were many Mexican-Americans who could not afford to pay the tax. Another factor influencing the position of Mexican-Americans in south Texas politics has been, and remains, the residency law whereby a citizen must have lived in the county six months before being eligible to vote. Mexican-American migration from job to job, as they followed the different crops that required harvesting, caused disfranchisement of prospective voters. The customs of Mexican-Americans have played an important role in the politics of the group. For example, Mexican-Americans have long felt that a woman's place was in the home; consequently, most, if not all,

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<sup>81</sup>Interview with Herschel Bernard in San Antonio, Texas, December 29, 1967.

Mexican-American women were not encouraged to participate in politics. This traditional reservation on political participation is still an obstacle in the path of Mexican-American leaders who do not wish to offend the customs of their people.<sup>82</sup>

### Summary

The cultural background of Mexican-Americans in south Texas and San Antonio is a long one. The heritage of Mexican-Americans stretches back as far as the Spanish, and conceivably even farther back to the Indians. The cultural background of south Texas is one filled with incidents of cultural conflict between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans. To the dominant group in south Texas, the Anglo-Americans, the Mexican-Americans were the intruders. Anglo-Americans have for generations looked upon the Mexican-Americans as non-essential things or persons that exist only at the suffrance of the superior race. The notion that Mexican-Americans count for nothing dies very slowly in south Texas.

There is a strong element of racism in the relations between the Anglo-Americans and the Mexican-Americans. The Anglos have traditionally looked upon the Mexicans as non-white and essentially inferior.

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<sup>82</sup>Madla, op. cit., p. 71.

The Mexican-Americans in south Texas and San Antonio have been managed politically in the same way as national minority groups in major urban centers of the northeastern United States. For the most part, the Mexican-Americans remained unacculturated and unassimilated into the culture of Anglo-American south Texas. Many of the Mexican-Americans did not speak English, had little education, and had only the most remote conception of Anglo-Saxon governmental institutions. They have been the subject of coercive influences which are usually brought to bear on depressed groups because of their low economic status.

There has been remarkably little independent political action by Mexican-Americans in south Texas. This is explainable not alone by political indifference but also by voting requirements. Though disfranchisement measures have not been directed specifically at Mexican-Americans, their effective enfranchisement has usually been brought about by individuals primarily interested in utilizing their votes. In most areas throughout south Texas, unsponsored individual Mexican-Americans met a barrier at the ballot box similar in character to that which discouraged Negro voting in most of the southern United States. Political machines and political bosses based upon a system of Anglo-American paternalism has been the primary political heritage of Mexican-Americans in south Texas and San Antonio.

## CHAPTER II

### POLITICAL ROLE AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN SAN ANTONIO

On the social level, analysis of political role defines the relationship or interaction between actors in a political setting. Socio-economic conditions may provide a basis for defining such a social relationship. Indeed, Robert Lane suggests that the economic interpretation of politics includes the desire of man to satisfy his needs for economic and social well-being through political channels. The utilization of political channels to improve socio-economic conditions is a product of political activity.<sup>1</sup> The nature of socio-economic conditions, therefore, relates directly to the social level of political role and the political setting. In order to relate socio-economic conditions to political role and political setting, there is a need to review the literature of political science.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press, 1959) pp. 101-108.

A Note on Literature for Analyzing  
Socio-Economic Conditions  
and Political Role

Robert Dahl indicates that there are three stages through which an ethnic group passes in using political channels to improve socio-economic conditions. These stages are as follows:

First stage: Members of an ethnic group in this first stage of political role are almost exclusively proletarian. They work with their hands, for wages, in shops and factories. They are low in socio-economic status, income, and influence. For leadership, they depend upon influential politicians from previously assimilated ethnic groups. In this first stage, the group ordinarily has a high degree of political homogeneity. Ethnic similarity is associated with similarity in political attitudes. The member of the group may be a resident of a ghetto, a member of a family with low and uncertain income, a victim of unemployment, a person of little social prestige, or an object of discrimination by middle-class citizens of Anglo-Saxon stock.

Second stage: In the second stage of political role, the group has become more heterogeneous. There is socio-economic diversity; the group is no longer proletarian. An increasing and significant proportion of the group have white-collar jobs and other social characteristics of the middle-class. Some gain considerable

political influence from higher status, income, and self-confidence. They challenge and overthrow the incumbent leaders on whom they previously were dependent. Although the political homogeneity of the group declines in the second stage, the group retains a high sensitivity to their ethnic origins. Consequently, an ethnic candidate can still activate strong sentiments of ethnic support in all strata of his ethnic group.

Third stage: In the third stage of political role, the group has become highly heterogeneous. Large segments are assimilated into the middle-class strata: they have middle-class jobs, live in middle-class neighborhoods and look to others of the middle-class for friends, associates, and marriage partners. In this third stage of development, ethnic politics is often embarrassing or meaningless. Political attitudes and interests have become a function of socio-economic factors identified with the middle-class rather than old ethnic ties.<sup>2</sup>

Oscar Handlin, in his major contribution to the study of ethnic groups, has pointed out that, "the end of politics is the exercise of power through the state--in which are embodied all the socially recognized instruments of control and coercion."<sup>3</sup> Ethnic groups have not become

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 34-35.

<sup>3</sup>Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little,

politically active immediately upon immigration to the United States. Political activity developed when socio-economic needs led the ethnic group to the ballot box.<sup>4</sup>

With the recognition of their socio-economic needs, ethnic groups have become more active politically. However, one of the major obstacles in the path of the political articulation of ethnic groups has been their socio-economic conditions.

Seymour M. Lipset has argued, with regard to socio-economic conditions and political role, that political participation is restricted for those persons in a position of low socio-economic status. Lipset observes that:

The low participation of the very poor . . . is partly attributable to their struggle for existence which leaves no energy for 'investment' in political activity, the results of which are in any case dubious. Lower-class individuals have fewer friends and a narrower geographic range of social contacts than those of higher strata; they read few books . . . which would contribute to a deeper involvement . . . low status appears to isolate people from involvement in the larger culture, and restricts their attention to the more trivial aspects of life.<sup>5</sup>

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Brown and Co., 1951), p. 201. See also Oscar Handlin, Immigration as a Factor in American History (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 201-206.

<sup>5</sup>Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1960), pp. 205-206.

In addition to the manner in which low socio-economic status serves to restrict the political role of poor people, there is a peculiar problem confronting the women of low socio-economic groups. Lipset notes that:

The position of the married woman illustrates the problem of available time or dispensability as a detriment of political activity. The sheer demands on a housewife and mother mean that she has little opportunity or need to gain politically relevant experiences . . . . Women who are freed from some of the burden of the housewife should come closer to approximating the political role of men.<sup>6</sup>

Middle-class and upper-class American women have fewer children and more labor saving devices than do the women of low socio-economic families. These socio-economic factors, as well as general conditions, have a direct correlation with the political role of Mexican-Americans. It is a maxim of political science that the higher the socio-economic status, the more active the political role.<sup>7</sup>

Mexican-American Socio-Economic  
Conditions in San Antonio  
Before World War II

Mexican-Americans in San Antonio in the years preceding World War II were in a severely depressed socio-

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid. See also Lane, op. cit., pp. 243-251 on social patterns and participation.

<sup>7</sup>Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960), pp. 354-356. See also Lester

economic condition. The Mexican-Americans were of very low socio-economic status.

According to statistics compiled in 1929 by the Municipal School Authority of San Antonio, fifty-six per cent of the children enrolled in the primary schools bore Mexican names, twenty-two per cent in the junior high schools, and only nine per cent in the senior high schools.<sup>8</sup> Max Handman reported that of the Mexican-American population of 101,709 about 90,000 were in the peon class. He wrote that this was "a name which was often used to describe the manner of living of the Mexicans as well as to excuse the failure of the community to supply them with better living conditions." Handman also reported that "there was an utter indifference on the part of the city of San Antonio to the presence of this large group of Mexican-Americans."<sup>9</sup>

A high death rate and a high illiteracy rate were socio-economic characteristics of Mexican-Americans in the 1920's and the 1930's. The illiteracy among Mexican-Americans was higher than that of Negroes. Illiteracy

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Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1965), pp. 110-141.

<sup>8</sup>Max S. Handman, "San Antonio," Survey, Vol. 66 (May 1, 1931), pp. 163-166.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

among the other non-English speaking stock taken as a whole was much less.<sup>10</sup> Table 1 illustrates these socio-economic conditions.

In the 1930's San Antonio's "Mexican Town" was described by Ralph Maitland as one of the most extensive slum areas anywhere in the United States.<sup>11</sup> The Mexican-American death rate per 10,000 deaths was high enough to give to San Antonio the distinction of being the second ranking city in death rates among the five largest cities in Texas.<sup>12</sup> Table 2 presents this data.

Nearly all of the Mexican-Americans were poverty stricken and a majority of the 20,000 families were dependent upon private charity and what aid they could secure from state and local government. In 1940, in San Antonio, there were fifty-four public and thirty-eight private social agencies. Some of the agencies were directly concerned with Mexican-Americans such as the Guadalupe Community Center, St. Anthony's Home for Mexican-American working girls, Casa Regina, Latin-American Recreation

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<sup>10</sup>H. T. Manuel, "The Mexican Population of Texas," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 15 (June, 1934), p. 48.

<sup>11</sup>Ralph Maitland, "San Antonio, The Shame of Texas," Forum and Century, Vol. 102 (August, 1939), p. 53.

<sup>12</sup>Manuel, op. cit., p. 48. The five largest cities in Texas in 1930 were Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, and El Paso.

TABLE 1  
ILLITERACY AND DEATH RATES IN  
TEXAS COUNTIES 1930

	Per cent illiteracy <sup>a</sup>	Deaths per 10,000
1. Counties with large Mexican (but not Negro) population.	15.5	98
2. Counties with large Negro (but not Mexican) population.	6.7	86
3. Counties with large Negro and Mexican population.	11.5	99
4. Counties with few Negro and Mexican population.	1.7	58.5
5. German and Czech counties.	6.7	89
6. State average.	6.8	96

<sup>a</sup>Illiteracy was defined by the United States census as based upon census taker's record of whether a person 10 years of age or older "can read or write in any language."

SOURCE: H. T. Manuel, "The Mexican Population of Texas," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 15 (June, 1934), p. 48.

TABLE 2  
DEATH RATES IN THE FIVE LARGEST  
CITIES OF TEXAS IN 1930

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City	Deaths per 10,000
El Paso	171
San Antonio	146
Houston	107
Dallas	107
Fort Worth	104

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SOURCE: H. T. Manuel, "The Mexican Population of Texas,"  
Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 15  
(June, 1934), p. 48.

Center, and the Mexican Christian Institute. However, most of the agencies were not designed for any one ethnic group. The public agencies included numerous programs directed at disadvantaged residents of San Antonio. There was the Bexar County Child Support Department, a United States and a Texas indigent childrens program, a Bexar County Public Health Department, a City-County Welfare Agency, Works Project Administration District Office, the San Antonio City Housing Authority, and numerous others.<sup>13</sup>

Housing in "Mexican Town" was very poor. Floorless shacks, renting at \$2 to \$8 per month, were crowded together on nearly every lot. The houses were generally without plumbing, sewage connections or electric lights. Open shallow water wells were situated only a few feet from unsanitary outdoor toilets. Streets and sidewalks were unpaved and became mudholes in rainy weather.<sup>14</sup>

Employment opportunities and conditions were bad. The plight of the pecan shellers of San Antonio was typical of the working conditions for persons of Mexican background. Pecan shelling was the industry in San Antonio during the 1930's employing the most Mexican-American

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<sup>13</sup>San Antonio Public Service Co., An Economic and Industrial Survey of San Antonio, September, 1942, pp. 306-311.

<sup>14</sup>Audrey Granneberg, "Maury Maverick's San Antonio," Survey Graphic, Vol. 28 (July, 1939), p. 423.

laborers. Under the system utilized, several thousand workers were employed at various times of the year. An average pecan sheller could earn about five cents an hour or \$2.50 a week.<sup>15</sup> H. A. Shapiro concluded that:

The living conditions were beyond belief. The only vital substances that ever thrived in the area were the germs of tuberculosis and infant diarrhea. Thousands of human beings living in decrepit wooden shacks or in crowded corrals, shelled pecans in a race with starvation. In these homes, which lacked toilets and running water lived fully two-thirds of San Antonio's residents of Mexican ancestry.<sup>16</sup>

The attitude of the city at large towards the Mexican-Americans was a mixture of indifference and resentment. Audrey Granneberg reported that a commonly offered solution to the problem was, "they ought to be sent back to Mexico where they came from."<sup>17</sup>

Pauline Kibbe observed the socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio in the 1940's and concluded that there had been little change and, perhaps, it was worse than previous times. The usual pattern

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<sup>15</sup>Seldon C. Menefee and Orin Cassmore, Pecan-Shellers of San Antonio, WPA, Division of Research, 1940, n. p.

<sup>16</sup>H. A. Shapiro, "Pecan Shellers of San Antonio, Texas," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 32 (March, 1952), pp. 230-231.

<sup>17</sup>Granneberg, op. cit., p. 424.

was for the Mexican-Americans to live, primarily, in one section of town, partly because they wanted to be close to one another; partly because their language made it more convenient for them to live among those who spoke the same tongue; but often because they were not permitted to rent or own property anywhere except in the "Mexican Town," regardless of their social, educational, or economic status. There simply was no other place to live.<sup>18</sup>

Mexican-American Socio-Economic  
Conditions in San Antonio  
During the 1940's

During World War II, San Antonio had the questionable distinction of having the highest tuberculosis death rate of any large city in the United States. The highest rate of death from the disease was among the Mexican-Americans. The Texas State Department of Health in 1944 indicated a tuberculosis death rate among Anglo-Americans of 31 per 100,000 population; among Negroes, of 95 per 100,000; and among Mexican-Americans, of 209 per 100,000. In other words, the Mexican-American death rate was about seven times that of the Anglo-Americans in Texas. San Antonio, with an estimated population of 107,000 Mexican-Americans in 1944, listed the following number of deaths from tuberculosis per 100,000: 45.6 among Anglo-Americans, 88 among

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<sup>18</sup>Pauline Kibbe, Latin-Americans in Texas (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1946), pp. 123-124.

Negroes, and 143 among Mexican-Americans.<sup>19</sup>

The cause of the high incidence of tuberculosis among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio was explained by Dr. David M. Gould as follows:

The most obvious reason why one Latin American out of twenty was found to have tuberculosis is poverty. These people have been exploited as a source of cheap labor; they harvest the crops, shell the pecans, wash the clothes, and dig the ditches. For this they receive barely enough to keep body and soul together . . . The natural corollaries of such conditions are cheap, congested, ramshackle houses, narrow, unpaved streets, few toilets, few water faucets, and a minimum of electricity. Diets are monotonous, high in starch, low in protein, and lacking in milk, meat, fruits, and vegetables. Under such conditions education is cursory . . . All these factors mean a low standard of living which undermines resistance and makes the Latin American an easy mark for the tubercle bacillus. A vicious circle is established when the tuberculosis Latin American becomes poorer and sicker, spreading bacteria to his crowded family and numerous contacts, and pyramiding the poverty and disease among his people.<sup>20</sup>

Infant and maternal mortality rates in San Antonio during World War II further indicate the severity of the socio-economic problems faced by Mexican-Americans. Table 3 shows that the number of births among Mexican-Americans

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<sup>19</sup>Like A Sore Thumb (San Antonio: Bexar County Tuberculosis Association, 1945), n. p.

<sup>20</sup>Public Health Reports, Vol. IX, No. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Federal Security Agency, United States Public Health Service, U. S. Printing Office, 1945), p. 123.

TABLE 3  
 INFANT MORTALITY IN SAN ANTONIO  
 SELECTED YEARS

	Live Births		Infant Deaths	
	Anglo	Mexican	Anglo	Mexican
1940	3,140	3,415	144	525
1941	3,789	3,937	138	375
1942	4,580	4,264	160	361
1943	5,294	4,977	179	511
1944	<u>4,789</u>	<u>4,843</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>523</u>
Totals	21,556	21,436	781	2,295

SOURCE: Pauline Kibbe, Latin Americans in Texas  
 (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico  
 Press, 1946), p. 131.

and Anglo-Americans during the five year period 1940-1944 were about equally divided. The number of infant deaths were far from equally divided. The high infant death rate among the Mexican-Americans was attributed primarily to diarrhea and enteritis.<sup>21</sup> Table 4 shows that there was an even greater disparity between the ethnic groups in the number of mothers who died in giving birth to these children.

There was a vicious cycle repressing the Mexican-Americans. For the most part, they or their parents had been the victims of socio-economic discrimination and exploitation at the hands of their employers. The result was that all members of a household who could work had to work a full day in order to obtain the bare necessities of life for the family. When the families are so poor that even the children must work, it becomes impossible to secure the minimum of education for the children. A man without an education had no other choice than to become a common laborer just like his parents. Upon becoming a common laborer, the worker received very poor wages which forced him to put his own children to work. The cycle was completed and continued from generation to generation.

If a person is a common laborer with very low income, he is badly housed, has a poor diet, and is easy

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<sup>21</sup>Kibbe, op. cit., p. 131.

TABLE 4  
 MATERNAL DEATHS IN SAN ANTONIO  
 SELECTED YEARS

	Maternal Deaths	
	Anglo	Mexican
1942	5	29
1943	6	25
1944	<u>3</u>	<u>23</u>
Totals	14	77

SOURCE: Pauline Kibbe, Latin Americans in Texas  
 (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press,  
 1946), p. 131

prey for disease. He is without water or sewer facilities. He is forced to live "across the tracks" or "on the other side of the river," where the neighborhoods are generally without playgrounds or public facilities, poorly lighted or with no lights at all; he is subjected to unsympathetic law enforcement officials; and, worst of all, he is faced with inadequate school buildings and insufficiently trained teachers. This vicious cycle was primarily the result of widespread socio-economic discrimination practiced by Anglo-Americans due to their deep-seated prejudices against Mexican-Americans.<sup>22</sup>

The wages which were paid to Mexican-Americans and the opportunities offered for employment were, in the final analysis, plain and simple exploitation according to Carlos Castaneda, a University of Texas History Professor.<sup>23</sup> This economic discrimination was based on the assumption that the Mexican-American was inferior to the Anglo-American in ability and physical endurance. Yet, according to Castaneda, the Mexican-American was employed in skilled jobs, which he performed well, at common labor wages.

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<sup>22</sup>From the statement by Reverend John J. Birch, Executive Secretary of the Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking, San Antonio, Texas. Statement made in a public hearing before the President's Committee on Civil Rights, May 14, 1947, Washington, D. C. in Alonso Perales (ed.), Are We Good Neighbors? (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1948), pp. 53-54.

<sup>23</sup>Carlos Castaneda, "Statement on Discrimination Against Mexican-Americans in Employment," in Ibid., p. 61.

Also, the Mexican-American was employed in the hardest and filthiest type of work in industry and in agriculture in spite of the allegation that he was too weak to do a good day's work. The Mexican-American was, therefore, paid an inferior wage for hard work that no one else would do for that or any other wage.<sup>24</sup>

The pattern of socio-economic discrimination in San Antonio in the 1940's can be shown by several illustrations. On February 21, 1945, the newspaper, La Prensa in San Antonio printed an article from a Mexican newspaper. The newspaperman, Montiel Olvera, was described as one of Mexico's outstanding columnists. Olvera wrote:

We do not understand how it is possible for such cordial friendship to exist from country to country, nor for our contribution to the war effort to be over-estimated at the same time our fellow-citizens in certain sections of the North American Union are segregated as though they were afflicted with leprosy. We do not understand the attitude of those who deny to the good neighbor admission to a restaurant, a theater, or a church, after said neighbor has offered his blood in the fields of battle against nazism and nipponism. We do know that on the part of the American Government there is the most cordial attitude toward our Government and our people, on the other hand there is the different, diametrically opposed and positively adverse attitude of the private citizens of that Republic.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>La Prensa, February 21, 1945. See also H. C. Woodbridge, "Mexico and U. S. Racism," Commonweal, Vol. 42 (June 22, 1945), pp. 234-237.

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During World War II the War Housing Center in San Antonio was responsible for securing housing for workers in the military departments and at the military bases. The Director of the Center had 306 listings of apartments for rent but he said that he had been requested by the owners not to rent any of them to Mexican-Americans or Negroes. The Mexican-Americans and the Negroes were supplying thousands of workers for the local military fields and camps at the time.<sup>26</sup>

Perfecto Solis was a native of Laredo, Texas, a veteran of World War II, in which he was severely wounded. He married an Anglo-American girl from New Jersey whom he met during the war when she was a registered nurse. Returning to Texas after the war, they moved to San Antonio where they attempted to purchase a home under a veterans' program. When the dealer learned that Solis was Mexican-American, the dealer refused to sell the house because of restrictive clauses against the purchase of such real estate by Mexican-Americans. Mrs. Solis expressed an inability to understand such restrictive clauses against Mexican-Americans in general and veterans in particular. Mr. Solis said, however, such behavior was quite common in San Antonio.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Perales, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-140.

Upon his return to San Antonio after service during World War II, Leopoldo C. Mancilla applied for a veteran's loan to purchase a home in a housing addition listed "Homes for Veterans Only." When he visited the real-estate dealer and showed the dealer his loan certificate and his Army discharge papers, Mancilla was not able to purchase a house because the housing addition was not open to Mexican-Americans.<sup>28</sup>

Walter A. Gipprich, who was from Maryland, met and married Esther Leyva during the war. The couple had two children. In July, 1947, Gipprich rented an apartment at a time when his wife was in the hospital. He had no difficulty renting the apartment along with his two children; however, upon the return from the hospital of his wife, the landlady informed them they would have to move out. Since Mrs. Gipprich was Mexican-American, neighbors complained of "Mexicans" living in the apartment house. The Gipprich family moved out "in the best interest of all concerned," said Gipprich.<sup>29</sup>

Discrimination with regard to housing was but one problem depicting the socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans, although it distinctively showed the nature of Anglo-American feelings. Refusals to serve Mexican-Americans at restaurants, barbershops, theaters, swimming

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 144-145.

pools, and other public places were quite common in the days of World War II and immediately thereafter. The socio-economic status of Mexican-Americans was quite low and discrimination practiced by Anglo-Americans rather widespread.<sup>30</sup>

Mexican-American Socio-Economic  
Conditions in San Antonio  
Since World War II

World War II was an economic stimulus immediately for San Antonio but not for the city's Mexican-Americans. The city was engulfed in a massive military build-up that hired many of the unemployed. Most of the job opportunities required education, skill, or previous experience. The spending by the military poured millions of dollars into the local economy in construction and purchasing. Military and civilian payrolls represented substantial economic gain for San Antonio businessmen and skilled workers.<sup>31</sup>

With rapid economic growth in San Antonio, thousands of Mexican-Americans moved into the city from south

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-213. See also Sister Mary John Murray, A Socio-Cultural Study of 118 Mexican Families Living in a Low Rent Public Housing Project In San Antonio, Texas (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954) for an in-depth study of Mexican-American socio-economic conditions in San Antonio at the end of World War II.

<sup>31</sup> Eugene Rodriguez, Jr., "Henry B. Gonzalez: A Political Profile," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1965), p. 26.

Texas. Some Mexican-Americans already living in San Antonio did receive employment opportunities from the military build-up. Large numbers of Mexican-Americans, lacking educational qualifications, skills, and training, received very little help in rising above their socio-economic problems. With the large influx of Mexican-Americans from south Texas, Mexican-American socio-economic conditions remained depressed. In 1950, those areas that contained the great majority of Mexican-Americans provided most of the city's deaths from tuberculosis and infant diarrhea. Those areas of San Antonio in which Mexican-Americans lived were the least socio-economically advantaged in the city.<sup>32</sup>

#### Living Area

San Antonio may be divided into quadrants. The overwhelming majority of Mexican-Americans live in that section of San Antonio known as the "WEST SIDE." The east side of San Antonio is essentially Negro. The south side of the city is where a major portion of lower-and-middle-class Anglo-Americans reside. The north side is the "silk stocking" area of San Antonio composed primarily of upper-middle-class and upper-class Anglo-Americans. Consequently, it is not unusual to hear people in San Antonio

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.

refer to the west side when speaking of Mexican-Americans. It constitutes an ethnic colony in San Antonio. Figure 1 shows the census tracts of San Antonio in which the major portion of Mexican-American population resides.

### Education

Education is one of the most, if not the most perplexing socio-economic problem for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. United States Congressman Henry Gonzalez has written that:

Educators especially must be aware of the problems facing the Spanish-surnamed. For it is the schools which are the first front in the war on poverty . . . In the case of the Spanish-surnamed, the schools have been failing. Instead of leaving school well-equipped to face life, the Spanish-surnamed have been leaving school in droves because it offers nothing to meet their needs . . .<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Bill Crane, Professor of Government at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, emphatically states that the typical Mexican-American in San Antonio occupies a very low position in terms of education. Crane's personal observation is that the San Antonio Mexican-American has approximately one-half the quality of educational opportunity as compared with the typical Anglo-American. Anglo-American students come from school districts in which

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<sup>33</sup>Henry Gonzalez, "Hope and Promise: Americans of Spanish Surname," The Federationist, Vol. 74 (June, 1967), p. 16.

This map is part of the report U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts, Zonal Report PHC(A)-3A.

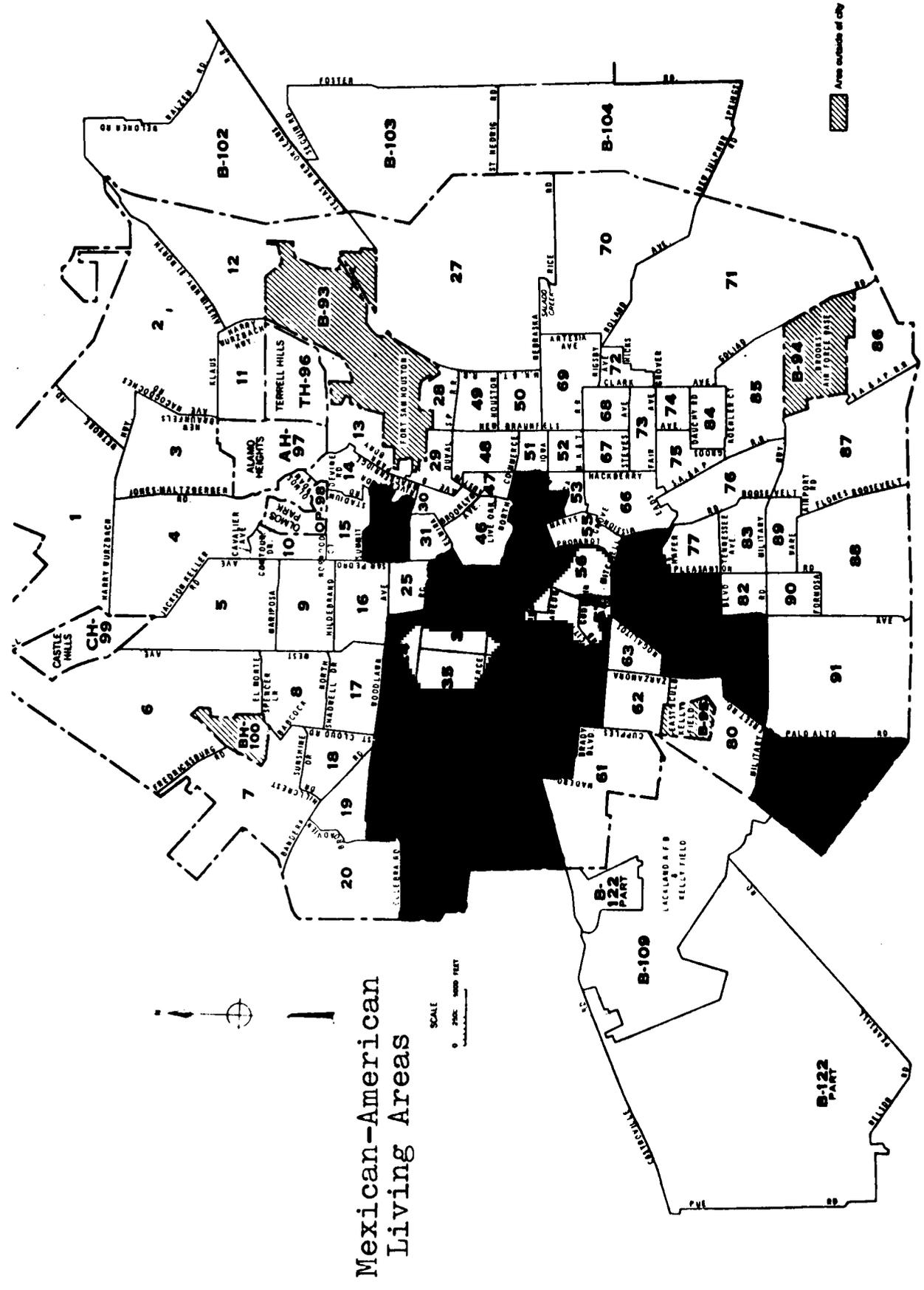


FIGURE 1 THE "WEST SIDE" OF SAN ANTONIO

three to four times as much money has been spent on their education as compared with the funds available for the school districts in which Mexican-Americans predominate. This gross disparity manifests itself in the quality and quantity of teachers, curriculum, and facilities.<sup>34</sup>

Father Henry Casso, Vicar of Urban Ministry for the Arch-diocese in San Antonio, declares that the greatest hope for socio-economic progress for Mexican-Americans is in the field of education. The background of many Mexican-Americans is one in which they cannot speak English, they have no marketable skill, and they have no tradition of education. Their school drop-out rate is high. The solution to the problem is reform in the curriculum to allow for bicultural or bilingual education. Father Casso points out that approximately one-half of the population of San Antonio has a native language which is not English. Father Casso suggests that if a child's native language is Spanish then Spanish should be used to educate the child. Such a program will eliminate a situation which has held back Mexican-American youth in the first grade as long as three years. It also contributes substantially to the problem of the fifteen or sixteen year olds in the 5th or 6th grades which leads to the "drop-out" or "kick-out" problem. In order to achieve the concept of bicultural or

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<sup>34</sup>Letter from Bill Crane to the author, December 11, 1967.

bilingual education, Father Casso argues, Texas is going to have to change a law which prohibits the speaking of Spanish in the public schools. Because of the necessity of such a change, Father Casso declares that the political role of Mexican-Americans must become more active.<sup>35</sup>

Sister Mary John Murray, in her study of the socio-cultural characteristics of Mexican-American families in San Antonio, observed that:

The greatest handicap to the educational achievement of the Mexican-American child is a lack of facility in the English language. At school everything is taught through the medium of English and outside school the child speaks only Spanish. This lack of knowledge of English impedes his progress in school and in many cases leads to discouragement and early withdrawal from school.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, the language barrier is a major problem for Mexican-Americans. Father Casso's bicultural or bilingual program may be the solution but political action will have to be utilized to bring about the desired changes.

In San Antonio in 1960 there were 101,175 Mexican-Americans twenty-five years of age or older. For this group the average median school years completed was 5.8 years. Table 5 illustrates the educational characteristics

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<sup>35</sup>Interview with Father Henry Casso, Vicar of Urban Ministry for the Arch-diocese in San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 30, 1967.

<sup>36</sup>Murray, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

TABLE 5

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION OF  
MEXICAN-AMERICAN DESCENT 25 YEARS AND  
OLDER IN SAN ANTONIO IN 1960

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No school years completed:	18,630	18.5%
Elementary: 1 to 4 years:	25,723	25.5
5 to 7 years:	24,239	24.0
8 years:	8,720	8.6
High School: 1 to 3 years:	10,449	10.4
4 years:	9,017	8.7
College: 1 to 3 years:	2,975	2.9
4 years or more:	1,422	1.4
Median school years completed:	5.8 years	

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SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of  
Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts.  
Final Report PHC (1)-134 (Washington, D. C.:  
U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

of San Antonio Mexican-Americans twenty-five years of age and older in 1960.

Henry Gonzalez, United States Congressman from San Antonio, says that:

The American of Mexican descent in terms of number of years completed in school ranks as low as, or below, any other ethnic group. The person of Mexican descent has completed nine years of schooling in California, Colorado, and New Mexico, eight years in Arizona, and less than seven years in Texas. These figures and their relation to the ability of the group to find adequate employment speak for themselves.<sup>37</sup>

### Employment Patterns

In San Antonio in 1960 the unemployment rate for Mexican-American workers was higher than that of non-white workers: 7.8 per cent for Mexican-Americans to 6.2 per cent for non-white workers. Table 6 shows the unemployment characteristics of the five largest cities of Texas in 1960.

In 1966, the U. S. Department of Labor made a study of employment patterns among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. In the core area of the city where 114,889 people live, 84 per cent are Mexican-American. The unemployment rate is eight per cent, or twice the national average. The subemployment rate, which takes account of all the "negative employment factors" in a measurement of serious job problems, is a startling 47.4 per cent. With

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<sup>37</sup>Letter from Henry Gonzalez to the author, November 24, 1967.

TABLE 6

UNEMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION  
IN THE 5 LARGEST CITIES OF TEXAS IN 1960

City	% of civilian Labor force	% Non- White	% Mexican- American
Houston	4.3	7.2	5.9
Dallas	3.3	6.1	5.6
San Antonio	5.3	6.2	7.8
Fort Worth	3.9	6.8	5.5
El Paso	6.3	4.8	9.9

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts. Final Report PHC (1)-34, 43, 50, 63, and 134 (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

so large a percentage of the entire working age population in the area presenting employment problems of one kind or another, several general characteristics of this population group are directly relevant to the problem.<sup>38</sup> The Department of Labor survey showed that:

1. 44.5 per cent of those working full-time in the area were earning less than \$60 per week. The comparable figure for the United States as a whole is 15.4 per cent.
2. Median family income is \$2,876 per year, which compares with a national figure of \$6,300.
3. The unemployment rate for teenagers is 24.6 per cent.
4. 70 per cent did not graduate from high school; 48 per cent did not go beyond the eighth grade; and 6.5 per cent had not gone to school at all.
5. 29 per cent of all family units were headed by a woman, the national average is 21 per cent.
6. 25.4 per cent of the 29,000 families included six or more members, the national average is 11 per cent.

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<sup>38</sup>"Sub-employment in the Slums of San Antonio," A Survey by the U. S. Department of Labor, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1967. The index of sub-employment includes: (1) those unemployed in the sense that they are actively looking for work and unable to find it; (2) those working part-time when they are trying to get full-time work; (3) those heads of households under 65 who earn less than \$60 per week working full time; (4) those men in the 20-64 age group who should have been working but who were not and were not looking for work; and (5) a conservative, and carefully considered estimate of the male "undercount" group who were statistically expected but "unfound."

7. 47.3 per cent of the group are 20 to 62 years of age. 39 per cent are 16 to 19 years of age which is a significant concentration of youngsters in the group.<sup>39</sup>

In discussing the meaning of unemployment figures, Henry Gonzalez says that:

The unemployment figures are, of course, deeply significant. They represent more than just numbers of persons without jobs. They represent in addition heads of families without money coming in to try to obtain food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities. They represent substantial hunger, hardship, and deprivation. They represent despair and hopelessness. Especially in urban areas, underemployment, rather than unemployment is the more critical problem. Workers with low skills get low pay. But these are symptoms of the problems of why men cannot find jobs. What are these root causes? This is the sickness that experts must prove and that governments must solve if we are to wipe out poverty in the southwest.<sup>40</sup>

George Eichler, President of the San Antonio AFL-CIO Council, has described the current working conditions of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. He says that:

The general working conditions and wages for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio are very poor. The reasons for this are primarily education, living environment, lack of job

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Letter from Henry Gonzalez to the author, November 24, 1967. See also "Occupational Change Among Spanish Americans," Document B-1061 (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University, 1966).

opportunities because San Antonio is basically a service type economy having no large industries, and an over abundance of low skilled or unskilled workers.<sup>41</sup>

Hence, for the mass of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio educational problems abound and employment conditions are poor. However, for some Mexican-Americans socio-economic conditions are better than the 1930's or the 1940's. Middle-class Mexican-Americans now send their children to college to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists, and businessmen. Their daughters find jobs as secretaries and clerks. These Mexican-Americans received veteran's benefits from World War II to secure educational training which enabled them to improve their socio-economic conditions. Table 7 illustrates the increased number of Mexican-American doctors in San Antonio over the past twenty years, a number which is almost four times what it was in 1946. The use of midwives has declined which is indicated by the fact that in 1946 there were 44 midwives listed and today there are 24. The fact that 24 midwives practice in San Antonio is indicative of the socio-economic conditions of many Mexican-Americans who cannot afford the services of a doctor. Table 8 shows that socio-economic conditions are better for some Mexican-Americans today than at the end of World War II

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<sup>41</sup>Letter from George Eichler to the author, November 20, 1967.

TABLE 7

MEXICAN-AMERICAN DOCTORS AND MIDWIVES  
IN SAN ANTONIO: SELECTED YEARS

Year	Doctors	Midwives
1946	26	44
1948	32	47
1950	34	46
1952	31	44
1954	35	38
1956	38	35
1958	41	38
1960	56	34
1962	61	33
1964	69	30
1966	75	27
1968	83	24

SOURCE: Listings in the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Directory, San Antonio, Texas, Selected years.

TABLE 8

SPANISH LANGUAGE MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION  
IN SAN ANTONIO: SELECTED YEARS

Year	Radio	Television
1948	1*	0
1952	2	0
1956	3	1
1960	3	1
1964	3	1
1968	4	1

\* bilingual station: English and Spanish.

SOURCE: Listings in the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company Directory, San Antonio, Texas, Selected years.

because of the increased media of communication that deal strictly with a Spanish-speaking clientele. Thus, by the late 1960's some Mexican-Americans are better off in San Antonio than earlier but there is still a large reservoir of Mexican-Americans whose socio-economic conditions are very bad and their status quite low.

### Socio-economic Ambiguity

It is somewhat ambiguous to argue that socio-economic conditions for some Mexican-Americans are very bad, while at the same time to argue that such conditions have improved for some Mexican-Americans. The explanation lies in the failures of the socio-economic programs of the 1930's, World War II, and "La Raza."

There was a multiplicity of socio-economic programs of both private and public nature active in San Antonio prior to World War II. Today, thirty years later, there is still immense poverty among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.

Dr. Vera Burke, Director of Social Services for the Bexar County Hospital District, lists four reasons for the failure of socio-economic programs of the 1930's.<sup>42</sup> These

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<sup>42</sup>Interview with Dr. Vera Burke, Director of Social Services for the Bexar County Hospital District, in San Antonio, Texas, April 10, 1968. See also Michael Harrington, The Other America (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1963), pp. 1-18.

include:

1. Agencies have not directed themselves to the causes of poverty. They have attempted to handle the effects of poverty and are much like a "bandaide" rather than attacking the causes of poverty.
2. There is a Protestant-Catholic-Puritan ethic which says to those in poverty "help yourself by work" which is unrealistic. There are not enough jobs available to those in poverty that pay a sufficient income for living expenses.
3. There is a vicious cycle of poverty which is not understood or comprehended by the more affluent sector of society. Many people refuse to look at poverty problems because such a sight is not pleasant -- so, they wear blinders like a race-horse. There is poverty from generations back and youth drop-out of school to get a job and help out at home. Not having an education they cannot secure skilled jobs and are themselves in poverty conditions.
4. Migrant labor, poor diet, poor nutrition, and language problems all compound the poverty condition.

According to Father Henry Casso, if a Mexican-American did succeed in pulling himself up by his "boots-traps" through help or encouragement from operating socio-economic programs, there has always been another Mexican-American waiting in line to take his place. The rural Mexican-American comes to San Antonio in search of a job but he has three main handicaps: he speaks only Spanish; he has no significant education; and he has no

real skill. Most of these rural Mexican-Americans worked on a farm or ranch in south Texas and in San Antonio there is no demand for such labor. Father Casso suggests that the whole area of rural Mexican-American life needs thorough examination.<sup>43</sup>

In 1964, the Economic Opportunities Act was implemented to combat poverty. The war on poverty consists of a bundle of different programs, each aimed at a specific poverty-creating condition or at a special clientele group. The main thrust is to provide educational and job opportunities for the young and includes Operation Head-start, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Job Corps. The program also includes a variety of attempts at solving adult problems through such ideas as the Community Action Programs. However, these programs have not solved the pressing socio-economic problems of the Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. Indeed, many of these programs have within them the seeds of such extensive change that they have been embroiled in local politics to the degree that they have been ineffective.<sup>44</sup>

World War II and the veterans' benefits derived therefrom provided a basis for education in law, medicine,

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<sup>43</sup>Casso, op. cit.

<sup>44</sup>Bill Crane, "San Antonio: Pluralistic City and Monolithic Government," in Leonard Goodall (ed.), Urban Politics in the Southwest (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1967), pp. 131-132.

and engineering. From this development came the stimulus for a growing Mexican-American middle class. Sons and daughters have followed their fathers and slowly increased Mexican-American economic progress. These Mexican-Americans have taken the lead in arousing Mexican-American political participation because the most extensive political awakening of Mexican-American in San Antonio dates from about 1947.<sup>45</sup> Poverty, illiteracy, and their socio-economic counterparts are still problems for many Mexican-Americans. Political action by the Mexican-American middle class in San Antonio is designed to change these conditions.

One of the major obstacles in the path of middle-class Mexican-Americans to activate their less fortunate Mexican-American brothers is "La Raza." "La Raza" is a term used to define all Mexican-Americans who live according to the customs and traditions which have been honored by Mexican-Americans for generations. According to Sister Frances Jerome Woods, "La Raza" includes the heritage, language, religion, folkways, and mores of Mexican-Americans.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Interview with Albert Pena, Bexar County Commissioner, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

<sup>46</sup>Sister Frances Jerome Woods, Mexican Ethnic Leadership in San Antonio (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), p. 56.

Literally, "La Raza" means The Race. The more conservative Mexican-Americans think of themselves as both citizens of the United States and as members of "La Raza." The term refers to all Mexican-Americans who are united by cultural and spiritual bonds derived from God. Acceptance and appreciation of things as they are constitute primary values of "La Raza." Because God, rather than man, is viewed as controlling events, the Mexican-American who lives by "La Raza" often lacks the future orientation of more progressive Mexican-Americans who plan ahead.<sup>47</sup>

In San Antonio the traditional working class of Mexican-Americans constitutes the majority of persons in conditions of socio-economic deprivation. These Mexican-Americans particularly support "La Raza" and believe in hard work, no motivation toward change or progress, and a strong desire to stay out of trouble.<sup>48</sup> Peter Torres, a San Antonio city councilman and representative of the more liberal progressive Mexican-American point of view, argues that it is good to remember one's heritage but that it should not hinder socio-economic progress for the betterment of the group. Torres considers "La Raza" as a

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<sup>47</sup>William Madsen, The Mexican-Americans of South Texas (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 15-17.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Gilbert Murillo, Social Worker in San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

continuation of Mexican nationalism and believes it should be repudiated or reduced in order for Mexican-Americans to "take their rightful places in American society."<sup>49</sup>

### Summary

San Antonio has been a relatively large and well known center of commerce and trade for over two centuries; its metropolitan culture is the most diverse in Texas. It has a great variety of racial tints, economic interests, and political ideas. San Antonio's racial and ethnic groups have had many years to get themselves woven into the fabric of the community. The diversity of backgrounds, interests, and viewpoints has made San Antonio the scene of many bitter battles, whose scars remain apparent, and where conflict still prevails.

By 1947 "the Mexican problem" in San Antonio had not changed extensively from previous years. There was a new public housing authority but it left much to be desired. World War II brought economic growth to the city but the poorer Mexican-Americans did not receive any of the economic blessings. Some Mexican-Americans have been able to make socio-economic progress for themselves and their families by means of educational benefits received from their military service. However, by 1968, the socio-

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<sup>49</sup>Interview with Peter Torres, San Antonio City Councilman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

economic conditions for most Mexican-Americans are still depressed.

The Mexican-Americans constitute the largest single ethnic group in the city of San Antonio. Most Mexican-Americans live in the ethnic colony of west side San Antonio. The educational level of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio is far below that of the rest of the city. Income is low and unemployment is high. The housing for Mexican-Americans contains units described as deteriorating and dilapidated to a greater degree than any other group of persons residing in the city. Consequently, the general socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans today are not significantly different from an earlier time. On any scale of socio-economic variables, the Mexican-Americans of San Antonio are found at the bottom of the ladder. Most of the individuals of Mexican-American background are in a situation of economic depression and social deprivation. The cycle of sickness, unemployment, poor living conditions, more sickness, and more unemployment is still very much a fact of life for many Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. Today's requirements of education and marketable skills take a high toll in unemployment or low-paying jobs. A highly urbanized and industrialized economy puts many jobs out of the reach of Mexican-Americans who lack education and training to secure the jobs. Hence, most

Mexican-Americans are still found primarily doing manual labor and the lowest paying jobs are filled by them in San Antonio. The consequences of subsistence working conditions compound problems of housing, diet, education, and health.

There is a major tendency for Mexican-Americans to be in the lower levels of socio-economic status in San Antonio. Consequently, their political role has been limited by socio-economic problems. If the political role of Mexican-Americans in changing the political setting in San Antonio is to resemble the political development of other ethnic groups in American society, then the realization of the socio-economic problems precedes political action. Mexican-American leadership and groups in San Antonio have come to the realization of the socio-economic problems that beset Mexican-Americans and are designed to instigate political action.

## CHAPTER III

### POLITICAL ROLE AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AND GROUPS IN SAN ANTONIO

In the analysis of political role on the personal level, leadership and groups are major variables. There is a direct relation between leadership, groups, and political role in affecting the nature of the political setting. Leadership requires the realization of group objectives. Group objectives may be no less than reforming the political setting itself. If ethnic groups, as political actors, are to utilize their political roles to change the political settings to correspond with their demands, leadership and organization are essential components in the political behavior of the ethnic groups. To facilitate analysis of Mexican-American leadership and groups in San Antonio, a definition of leadership and groups is needed and their relation to political behavior should be noted.

#### A Note on Literature for Analyzing Leadership, Groups, and Political Role

The traditional approach to the study of political leadership has often been a normative one.<sup>1</sup> Political

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<sup>1</sup>Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behavior

philosophers have dealt with the question of who should lead and what qualities the leader ought to bring with him to his office. In the last three decades, social scientists essentially have emphasized an analytical approach to leadership rather than normative. This study is, consequently, interested in how leaders have developed and how these leaders perform the function of leadership.

Leadership is a process or function.<sup>2</sup> It requires a group with a common goal and a differentiation in the tasks performed by the group members such that one or more members may direct and control others in the pursuit of the goal. The major point of emphasis is that leadership is not a trait possessed by an individual but a group process related to the functioning of the group. When group activity involves thinking rather than instinct or impulse, concerted action becomes impossible without some central control.<sup>3</sup>

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup>This definition was formulated by Paul Pigors over thirty years ago and stands today as the essential definition of leadership. See Paul Pigors, Leadership or Domination (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935), p. 6. See also Verba, op. cit.; Franklyn S. Haiman, Group Leadership (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960); Bernard M. Bass, Leadership, Psychology and Organizational Behavior (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1960); Emory S. Bogardus, Leaders and Leadership (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1935).

<sup>3</sup>Pigors, op. cit., pp. 6-8.

The leader is an individual whose rationalizations, judgments, and feelings are accepted by the group as bases of belief and action.<sup>4</sup> This is a reciprocal definition. It assumes that the leader acts as a stimulus to group action, and also that the group accepts the rationalizations, judgments, and feelings of the leader as its own. The implication here is that these very rationalizations, judgments, and feelings of the leader may have been stimulated by the group. The leader is stimulus, but he is also response. This reciprocal relation between leader and follower is inherent in leadership.<sup>5</sup>

The presence of a "common cause" is basic for leadership. Leadership is always in some sphere of interest toward some objective goal seen by leader and follower. Not only is there always a goal which lies outside both leader and follower, but this objective can never be wholly separated from the present. No matter how distant the goal, a person cannot get there unless he studies the immediate conditions which are bound up with it. Thus, leadership always has specific reference to the actual situation.<sup>6</sup>

Organization is the second stage of leadership. Machinery has to be set in motion by which to administer

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

the group's purpose and safeguard its interest because the chief social values cherished by individuals in modern society are realized through groups.<sup>7</sup> Angus Campbell and his associates point out that the concept of a group's influencing a set of members poses some difficult logical problems. The group is, after all, no more than a set of individuals who are its members. If we say that a group (a set of members) influences its members, it appears that we are using circular logic. However, groups have influence because we tend to think of them as wholes, and come to respond positively or negatively to them in that form. In this sense, even people who are not members of a group may be influenced by the position that a group takes in politics.<sup>8</sup>

Arthur Bentley in 1908 advanced the thesis that the group is the basic political form.<sup>9</sup> According to Bentley, men come together because of a common activity and, in turn, are thrown into competition with the activity of other men. This activity produces a mass of purposeful

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960), pp. 295-296.

<sup>9</sup>Arthur Bentley, The Process of Government (Bloomington: Principia Press, 1949), p. 211. See also Robert Golembiewski, "The Group Basis of Politics: Notes on Analysis and Development," American Political Science Review, Vol. 54 (December, 1960), pp. 38-51.

action or a group. Through groups, individuals are able to achieve political, economic, and social satisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

According to Earl Latham, organized groups are structures of power designed to dominate, neutralize, or conciliate that part of their environment that presses in upon them most closely. In this process there is an observable balance of influence in favor of organized groups, and in favor of the best and most efficiently organized in their dealings with the less efficiently organized. Organization represents concentrated power, and concentrated power can exercise a predominant influence when it encounters power which is widespread and not concentrated.<sup>11</sup>

David Truman defines a group as an association of individuals with one or more shared attitudes which makes certain claims upon other groups in society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes. These are shared attitudes toward what is needed or wanted in a given situation, observable as demands or claims upon other groups in the society.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Bentley, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup>Earl Latham, The Group Basis of Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), pp. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup>David Truman, The Governmental Process (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 33-34. Other studies which emphasize the group-nature of politics include: Pendleton

In analyzing the impact of political role upon the political setting, the literature of political science presents certain conclusions regarding the nature of leadership and groups. Some conclusions are that:

1. There is an integral relationship between leaders and followers that manifests itself in the nature of groups.
2. Groups are basic political forms created from common causes, common activity, or shared attitudes of members.
3. Groups are political forms utilized in changing the political environment or setting of the group.
4. The development of groups and the rise of leaders are a measure of the changing political setting.

Mexican-American Leadership in San Antonio:  
General Observations

In 1949, Sister Frances J. Woods, in her analysis of Mexican-American leadership in San Antonio, observed that for years attempts were unsuccessful by various Mexican-American politicians to provide effective leadership.<sup>13</sup> The attitude of one Mexican-American leader was

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Herring, Group Representation Before Congress (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1929), and The Politics of Democracy (New York: W. W. Norton, Inc., 1940); V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1942).

<sup>13</sup>Sister Frances J. Woods, Mexican Ethnic Leadership in San Antonio, Texas (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), p. 98.

expressed to Woods in the following manner:

How far can a Mexican get in politics? I ran for the school board. What did I get? The gate! There are seven members on the board. What harm would be done in having one Mexican member? There is no pay. I am capable, well educated, and a veteran of World War I. If I can't get on the school board, what chance would I have in the city hall?<sup>14</sup>

In the development of the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, leadership has been an essential problem. There has been jealousy and dissension among Mexican-American leaders contributing to problems of communication and understanding with Anglo-Americans. Ethnic conflict, intra-group conflict, and lack of communication lead to misunderstanding which severely weakens Mexican-American leadership. One respondent interviewed for this study said:

There is a difficulty of communication existing between Mexican-American leaders who are thought to be radical or too militant by many Anglo-Americans, particularly Anglo-Americans in county and city government. As a result, you have a situation in which the power structure of San Antonio may not really understand the social and economic problems of the Mexican-Americans.<sup>15</sup>

There is conflict between Anglo-American leaders and Mexican-Americans. This conflict was noted by Woods

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with Jack Lee, Assistant to the Bexar County Democratic Party Chairman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

in her discussion with an Anglo-American. The Anglo-American said:

There aren't any Mexican leaders. Mexicans expect the Anglo to 'shell out' for them all the time. They are better off here than they were in Mexico. Why don't their leaders do something? When Mexicans get a little money, they move out of the group instead of helping the others.<sup>16</sup>

Woods indicated that the prevalent attitude among Anglo-Americans at the end of World War II regarding Mexican-Americans was that San Antonio could not support a large Mexican population. A common opinion was, "Why don't the Mexicans make an effort to help themselves? What the Mexicans need is leadership."<sup>17</sup>

One of the major obstacles in the development of an effective Mexican-American leadership has been the element of "escape." Whenever a Mexican-American businessman did find himself economically well-off or secure there was a tendency to move out of the Mexican-American community into a more prosperous neighborhood leaving behind all of the economic pressures found among the less successful Mexican-Americans.<sup>18</sup> Woods quoted one Mexican-American businessman to the effect that "the majority of people of

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<sup>16</sup>Woods, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Interview with Peter Torres, San Antonio City Councilman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

Mexican origin who are in a position to lead are averse to politics." He added, "If more businessmen and intellectuals took part, I would take part also."<sup>19</sup>

In the spring elections of 1948, political history was made in San Antonio when Mexican-Americans and Negro voters combined and by joint effort put representatives of both groups on two school boards. The Mexican-Americans were credited with "considerable political sagacity."<sup>20</sup> The San Antonio Light noted that this political success was "the first time the west side stuck together on a Latin candidate," and it was predicted that the political strength of Mexican-Americans "will emerge into the light of day" and should not be taken for granted by Anglo-American politicians.<sup>21</sup>

Maury Maverick, Jr., whose family has been extensively involved in San Antonio politics for over one hundred years, declares that leadership of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has changed over the past twenty years. In the past, Mexican-Americans were manipulated by Anglo-American politicians "such as the Kilday brothers during the 1940's." However, Maverick argues that, "this situa-

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<sup>19</sup>Woods, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup>San Antonio Light, April 4, 1948.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

tion has changed with the rise of Mexican-American leaders who have broken through Anglo-American domination and control." Maverick further points out that:

You now find organized Mexican-American political action designed to benefit themselves and not just Anglo-American politicians. Until the early 1950's there was little hope for the Mexican-Americans of San Antonio but then along came Henry B. Gonzalez and he showed the way. Henry B. Gonzalez has been the greatest thing to happen to the Mexican-American.<sup>22</sup>

#### Henry B. Gonzalez

The explanation of the spectacular rise of Henry Gonzalez through San Antonio politics is recounted here in detail because: (1) his entrance into politics was perfectly synchronized with the coming of age of the Mexican-Americans, (2) he was an almost perfect embodiment of that awakening, (3) his career has shown the change in political setting in San Antonio, and (4) the careers of other Mexican-American leaders have been similar to that of Gonzalez.

Henry B. Gonzalez is a first generation American of Mexican ancestry.<sup>23</sup> His parents fled Mexico during the

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<sup>22</sup>Interview with Maury Maverick, Jr., in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

<sup>23</sup>The author is indebted to Eugene Rodriguez, Jr. and Dr. Bill Crane of St. Mary's University for the major portion of this material on Henry Gonzalez. See Eugene Rodriguez, Jr., "Henry B. Gonzalez: A Political Profile," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1965).

revolutionary uprisings of 1910 moving to San Antonio in 1911. Henry Gonzalez, who was born May 3, 1916, studied pre-engineering at San Antonio College and went on to receive a law degree from St. Mary's University in 1940. Shortly after Pearl Harbor he served as a civilian cable and radio censor under military and naval intelligence. In 1943, he accepted a position as assistant juvenile probation officer in San Antonio where he worked closely with juveniles and addressed civic groups about juvenile problems in the city. After a period of duty where he was the first Mexican-American and the youngest chief juvenile probation officer in San Antonio's history, Gonzalez resigned because of a disagreement with a judge in the juvenile court. His record prompted the San Antonio Council of Parents and Teachers to officially express regret over his resignation and praise his work.<sup>24</sup>

In the years that followed, Gonzalez' political interests developed rapidly. He participated in the activities of numerous Mexican-American improvement organizations. In 1947, a group of Mexican-American businessmen formed the Pan American Progressive Association (PAPA) and hired Gonzalez as executive-secretary. He was active in assisting people who were in need of better living conditions. He was responsible for one of the major

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<sup>24</sup>Ronnie Dugger, "Henry Gonzalez, His Life and Times," The Texas Observer, June 13, 1958.

breakthroughs for Mexican-Americans against discrimination. This action occurred when he initiated PAPA's interest in the Puente case, which involved the right of Mexican-Americans to buy property in restricted areas.<sup>25</sup> While this case was still in the courts, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled against restrictive covenants in the decision of Shelley v Kraemer.<sup>26</sup> Judge S. G. Taylor of the Forty-fifth District Court of Texas (Bexar County) ruled in Puente's behalf. On appeal, Judge Taylor's decision was upheld which made a significant breakthrough toward changes in the political setting of Mexican-Americans.<sup>27</sup>

Gonzalez operated a Spanish-English translation service, wrote articles for bicultural publications, became Educational Director for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and taught the members English and citizenship, and he also taught mathematics at Sidney Lanier High School in the Veterans' Training Program. He became active in religious and civic affairs, serving as a scoutmaster,

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<sup>25</sup>Clifton v Puente 218 SW 2d 272 (1948)

<sup>26</sup>Shelley v Kraemer 334 U. S. 1 (1948)

<sup>27</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

as President of the San Fernando Holy Name Society, and as President of the Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking.<sup>28</sup>

In 1950, it was generally believed that a candidate of Mexican descent could not win a county-wide election in Bexar County. Henry Gonzalez was more optimistic and decided to run for the Democratic nomination for state representative. His announcement attracted little attention because it was believed he would not attract many voters. Actually, Gonzalez' announcement marked the beginning of one of the most remarkable and colorful political careers in San Antonio's history. He was unsuccessful in 1950, but he initiated a process that led to eventual political triumph for himself and others of his ethnic background.<sup>29</sup>

San Antonio operated under a 1914 charter until 1951 at which time a council-manager charter was approved. Under the 1914 charter the city had a mayor and four commissioners who doubled as the city council and as the heads of the five administrative departments. Each council member participated in appropriating money then, as department head, proceeded to spend it. This system attracted political interests to such an extent that the whole system

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 48. See Dugger, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-53.

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was brought under criticism. Consequently, a charter revision movement developed. The council-manager system was approved in a referendum in October, 1951. The new council-manager charter provided for a nine-member council elected at large. The city manager was made the chief executive and administrative officer of the city with powers of appointment and removal over all persons in the administrative offices.<sup>30</sup>

The city government elected in 1951 was described as a "businessmen's government" devoted to running the city like a "business ought to be run."<sup>31</sup> The new city council annexed some eighty miles of fringe territory for, what they called, city growth and added city revenues. They charged that tax rates had been juggled for various areas of the city in line with political interests.<sup>32</sup> The annexed area included wealthy oilmen who did not want to be included in the city limits. In 1953, this group helped finance a campaign that defeated the "businessmen's government." The newly elected city council promptly voted to de-annex the annexed area.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Edward G. Conroy, "Council-Manager Charter," American City, Vol. 66 (December, 1951), p. 99.

<sup>31</sup>"Businessmen Take Over San Antonio," Business Week, No. 1167 (January 12, 1952), pp. 104-105.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>"Unwanted Civic Baby," Business Week, No. 1288 (May 8, 1954), p. 178.

The city election of 1953 was probably the most expensive municipal election in San Antonio's history. A slate of candidates calling themselves "The San Antonians" opposed the Citizens Committee who had brought about the charter revision of 1951. Henry Gonzalez was one of the nine San Antonians and became "titular head of the west side campaign." Of the nine candidates on the ticket, he was the only Mexican-American. The Citizens Committee had two Mexican-Americans: incumbent Ruben Lozano and Gonzalez' opponent, George de la Garza. Gonzalez won his election by a substantial majority, soundly defeating de la Garza on the west side.<sup>34</sup>

The San Antonians were successful in defeating all candidates of the Citizens Committee. For his contribution to the success of their election, the new San Antonio city council designated Henry Gonzalez as mayor pro-tempore. He now had a forum from which to present his views, and the opportunity to represent the "common citizen" in the manner he believed proper.<sup>35</sup>

Two weeks after taking office, Gonzalez attracted banner headlines by opposing a proposition by the mayor and city manager to "burn communist-tinged" books in the

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<sup>34</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 58-61. See also the San Antonio Light, April 8 and 10, 1953.

<sup>35</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

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public library.<sup>36</sup> Mayor A. C. White had suggested that city library books by "known communists" be censored. This set off a storm of controversy as local newspapers, liberal ministers, the local League of Women Voters and other groups defended the public library and a free press. On the side of censorship were certain San Antonio housewives calling themselves the Minute Women who, among other things, had crosschecked the card catalogue of library book authors. The Minute Women prepared a "REAd READING" list of some 115 authors and 500 books associated with "un-American" activities. Public attention became so intense that Mayor White and a majority of the council made new appointments to the City Library Board. The new board directed library staff to leave off purchase of those books likely to provoke objection by right-wing council members. In the months that followed the Library Board loaded book and periodical lists with ultra-conservative titles, screened books, and gave favored displays to the right-wing materials.<sup>37</sup>

In the latter half of their two year term the San Antonians became more and more involved in bitter controversy. City managers were hired and fired, and other key

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<sup>36</sup>Maury Maverick, Sr., "Branding of the Books," Commonweal, Vol. 58 (July 11, 1953), p. 11.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

city employees resigned or were dismissed. Gonzalez' behavior did not endear him to his fellow councilmen: he exposed a minimum-standards housing ordinance as discrimination against the poor, he opposed a phone rate increase proposal, and he opposed council action in the library dispute. He was recognized as a liberal member of the council. A recall movement was initiated against six of the nine councilmen but Gonzalez was not considered for recall. When five of the six councilmen mentioned on recall petitions resigned before recall occurred, the San Antonians' influence was significantly reduced. A few months later a new slate of candidates calling themselves the Good Government League (GGL) was organized and successfully elected. Although not a member of the GGL, Henry Gonzalez was unopposed by their forces. He sought and won reelection as an independent.<sup>38</sup>

Throughout his years on the city council Gonzalez spoke for desegregation in general and specifically against city segregation of public facilities. In 1956, he offered ordinances desegregating all city facilities and the council passed them. He worked well with the city council and when he decided to run for the Texas Senate his fellow councilmen expressed many public tributes.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 66-69. See also the San Antonio News, August 10, 1956.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-72. See also the San Antonio

In his campaign for election to the Texas Senate, Henry Gonzalez faced several obstacles. For almost two decades Bexar County's legislative delegation had been dominated by representatives of the conservative tradition and the incumbent candidates for reelection usually had little difficulty raising campaign funds when challenged by liberal candidates. In 1952, the county voted for Republican Dwight Eisenhower and most forecasters predicted a similar outcome in 1956. Henry Gonzalez had one additional handicap -- he was a Mexican-American.<sup>40</sup>

The District Clerk estimated that of the 140,000 eligible voters in Bexar County in 1956, 100,500 were Anglo-American, while only 29,000 were Mexican-American and 10,500 were Negro. However, Gonzalez was a solid favorite on the west side. Voter interest in the Mexican-American section was intensified by an extensive campaign by attorney Albert Pena, Jr., for county commissioner of precinct one. The Pena campaign organization covered every section of the precinct in behalf of both himself and Gonzalez.<sup>41</sup>

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Light, May 3, 1956.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-75. See also the San Antonio Light, May 20, 1956.

Gonzalez defeated his opponent, conservative incumbent O. E. Lattimer, by only 282 votes in the Democratic primary. Large majorities expected by Lattimer did not materialize. Gonzalez was able to win as much as 40 per cent of the votes in several north side precincts which, when added to an over-whelming vote on the west side and east side of the city, proved sufficient to win the primary. The victory was called a "staggering upset against long odds," and was credited in part to Gonzalez' "personality and relentless drive."<sup>42</sup>

The general election in 1956 between Gonzalez and Republican Jesse Oppenheimer proved to be bitter and sensational. Gonzalez charged that the interests that backed his primary opponent were supporting his Republican opponent. Oppenheimer accused Gonzalez of being a "leftist," "left-winger," and a "creeping socialist." He warned of the dangers of electing a liberal such as Gonzalez. In answer, Gonzalez gave his own definition of liberal when he said, "I mean by liberal, a man who believes in living and let live, in toleration, a person not dogmatic. If that's what liberal means, I'm proud to be called one."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 75. See also the San Antonio News, July 30, 1956.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 76. See also the San Antonio Light, October 19, 1956.

In the presidential election of 1956, Eisenhower carried Bexar County by a margin greater than in 1952. Gonzalez defeated Oppenheimer by approximately 13,000 votes and ran only 6,000 behind Eisenhower. On the west side, Gonzalez' margin of victory was almost 10,000 where he ran more than 2,000 ahead of Adlai Stevenson. The key to Gonzalez' victory is dramatized by these figures since his margin on the west side provided him almost all of his margin of victory as he was able to neutralize his opponent in the other areas of the county.<sup>44</sup>

There is little doubt that many Bexar County residents were surprised when Gonzalez was elected senator. In one instance, Gonzalez overheard a woman lawyer assure a friend, "I'm not going to have that Mexican represent me in Austin." She was surprised to hear him answer, "Relax lady, you have him." There was disbelief in some quarters that a "Mexican" was now their state senator. This attitude was reflected in the state capitol itself as some senators and other state officials referred to Gonzalez as "that Mexican."<sup>45</sup>

In his first session as a state senator, Henry Gonzalez participated in a filibuster against legislation

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 77. See also the San Antonio Light, November 7, 1956.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

which attempted to circumvent the United States Supreme Court's decision in Brown v Board of Education.<sup>46</sup> Several bills, ten in number, ranging from one that called for local option elections determining school board policy on integration to one that denied public employment to members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were designed to reject the Court's decision. Along with Senator Abraham Kazen of Laredo, Gonzalez conducted a successful filibuster lasting thirty-six hours. Almost every major newspaper in Texas reported the filibuster in front page headlines. National news magazines and news commentators reported the developments.<sup>47</sup>

Eugene Rodriguez reports that, in the course of the filibuster, Gonzalez argued that:

It may be some can chloroform their conscience. But if we fear long enough, we hate, and if we hate, we fight. The assault on the inward dignity of man which our society protects, has been made. And this . . . is an assault on the very idea of America, which began as a new land of hope . . . For whom does the bell toll? You, the white man, think it tolls for the Negro. I say, the bell tolls for you. It is ringing for all of us.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>347 U. S. 483 (1954)

<sup>47</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 80-81. See also the San Antonio News, May 3, 1957; and "Texas: For Whom the Bells Toll," Time, Vol. 69 (May 13, 1957).

<sup>48</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

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The stand by Gonzalez on segregation lifted him into a position of state-wide prominence. He received the state NAACP "Citizenship Award" and was named the outstanding Latin American Citizen of the Year by the Alba Club at the University of Texas. He accepted speaking engagements all over the state and became the acknowledged symbolic leader of Texas' combined Mexican-American and Negro minorities of two and one half million. Newspapers throughout the state referred to him as "liberal Senator Gonzalez."<sup>49</sup>

The 1960 primaries were charged with anticipation of the presidential election. Lyndon Johnson was going to bid for the Democratic nomination and his campaign took first place in political discussion in Texas. In San Antonio a factional split in the Democratic Party between liberals and conservatives led to a bitter primary battle. For four years groups identified with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party had been building up their forces and in 1960 a loose coalition of labor, minority groups, independent liberals, and others organized for a major effort in the primaries against the Bexar County legislative delegation composed mainly of conservative representatives. The coalition supported Gonzalez and he made no

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-83. See also Ronnie Dugger, "Filibusters and Majority Rule," The Progressive, Vol. 21 (August, 1957), p. 21.

effort to disassociate himself from them.<sup>50</sup>

The first primary in 1960 resulted in a run-off between Gonzalez and State Representative R. L. Strickland for the office of state senator. In the run-off Bexar County conservatives conducted a well financed campaign against Gonzalez. The west side and the east side of San Antonio were forfeited to Gonzalez as major emphasis was placed on the north side and the south side of the city. Gonzalez was charged with union ties and full page advertisements in San Antonio newspapers warned voters, "Don't let Hoffa and Gonzalez Ruin Our State." On the other hand, Gonzalez campaigned against "special interests" that, he said controlled Strickland.<sup>51</sup> Strickland's campaign was unsuccessful as Gonzalez won renomination.

Henry Gonzalez had to face Ike Kampmann, a local attorney, in the 1960 general election. Kampmann was well known in the Republican Party of Texas. Gonzalez did not devote as much attention to his own campaign as he did to John Kennedy's. He campaigned in eleven states for Kennedy and the Democratic ticket and was national co-chairman of the Viva Kennedy Clubs. Viva Kennedy Clubs were set up to make special appeals to the Mexican-Americans

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>51</sup>San Antonio News, June 1, 1960.

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the eventual statewide winner. As a result, Gonzalez' local political strength was firmly established.<sup>54</sup> The San Antonio Light reported that, "once again they (Bexar County voters) made it clear that State Senator Henry Gonzalez commands the largest and most loyal personal following of any local politician."<sup>55</sup>

Two months after the special election for the office of United States Senator won by Republican John Tower, President Kennedy announced the appointment of United States Congressman Paul Kilday of San Antonio to the United States Court of Military Appeals. Henry Gonzalez became the logical Democratic candidate to replace Kilday.<sup>56</sup>

The special election in November, 1961 held in San Antonio for United States Congressman took place in a highly charged political atmosphere. Except for the election of one Republican, Congressman Bruce Alger of Dallas, Texas remained Democratic in Congress throughout the Eisenhower presidency. In 1952 and again in 1956, a majority of Texas voters marked their ballots for Eisenhower for President. At the same time, other than the Dallas area, a majority of Texas voters elected all Democrats to

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>San Antonio Light, April 5, 1961.

<sup>56</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., p. 96.

the United States Congress. However, by 1961 the Republican Party in Texas was becoming more successful. In 1960, even with Lyndon Johnson on the ticket, John Kennedy barely carried Texas by 50,000 votes. Also, the victory of John Tower was the first time a Republican had been elected United States Senator from Texas in over one hundred years.<sup>57</sup>

In this atmosphere, the resignation of Paul Kilday from Congress offered San Antonio Republicans an opportunity to add to their recent party success. John Goode, Jr., was selected as the Republican nominee and the Democrats nominated Henry Gonzalez. They were the only candidates in the special election. Dwight Eisenhower, who had rarely campaigned for congressional Republicans, spent three days campaigning in San Antonio for Goode. President Kennedy, Vice-president Johnson, and Texas Governor Price Daniel extended their support to Gonzalez.<sup>58</sup>

Extensive organizational efforts were made by both parties. Election results show that the campaign stimulated more interest than any other special election in the history of San Antonio. Over 90,000 votes were cast.

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<sup>57</sup>Wilbourn E. Benton, Texas Its Government and Politics (2d. ed.; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 4.

<sup>58</sup>Rodriguez, op. cit., pp. 115-116. See also the San Antonio Light, November 5, 1961.

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Every precinct of the city produced a turnout of at least sixty per cent of its eligible voters. On the west side, seventy-five per cent of the voters turned out and gave Gonzalez a margin of 12,000 votes. Goode's stronghold in the "silk stocking" areas of the north side produced six to one majorities for him. Goode's victory margins were no match for the twelve to one margins on the west side and the nine to one margins on the east side given to Gonzalez. Final results showed that Gonzalez won by more than 10,000 votes.<sup>59</sup>

Henry Gonzalez was unopposed in 1962 in the Democratic primary and the general election. He did not have difficulty in winning re-election to Congress in 1964 and 1966. His Republican opponent in 1964 was John O'Connell, a lawyer who had been in San Antonio for ten years. The campaign was not as tense and emotional as some of Gonzalez' previous campaigns. Gonzalez won the highest number of votes he had received in San Antonio to that date. He defeated O'Connell 100,000 to 50,000. Gonzalez carried 136 of the county's 171 precincts; thirty-six of them by margins in excess of ninety per cent; seventy-four by margins of seventy per cent or more of the votes. Gonzalez lost sixteen precincts with thirty per cent of the votes. The most revealing figures in the election

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

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were the results of eighteen north side precincts considered Republican strongholds. In these precincts, Gonzalez received only thirty-one per cent of the vote against John Goode in 1961; in 1964 against O'Connell Gonzalez received forty-five per cent of the votes.<sup>60</sup>

The effect of Henry Gonzalez on San Antonio and Bexar County politics has been remarkable. More than any one man he revolutionized politics in San Antonio. As the first major Mexican-American candidate for the Texas Legislature, he surprised political observers by almost winning in 1950. A year after Gonzalez' near victory in 1950, a Mexican-American was elected to the city council of San Antonio. Two years later, Henry Gonzalez was elected to the council and since then there has been at least one Mexican-American on the city council.

Henry Gonzalez became the voice of the Mexican-Americans of Texas. He assured them that "my own career is an illustration that the walls of prejudice can crumble," because, "you will be heard when you have something to offer."<sup>61</sup> In San Antonio, as well as other areas of south Texas, Mexican-Americans listened and have followed the

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 149-151. For 1968 election results see footnote 52 on page 204.

<sup>61</sup>Ronnie Dugger, "Henry Gonzalez: His Life and Times," The Texas Observer, June 13, 1958.

example of Henry Gonzalez. These leaders' careers have been very similar to his.

Albert Pena, Jr.

Albert Pena, Jr., along with Henry Gonzalez, is given more credit than any other Mexican-American for providing the leadership necessary for the rise of independent Mexican-American political power in San Antonio. As one long time participant in Mexican-American affairs put it:

Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena helped break the control of Anglo-Americans over Mexican-Americans. There is no longer political manipulation of Mexican-Americans by Anglo-Americans simply because Gonzalez and Pena showed Mexican-Americans how to participate in politics.<sup>62</sup>

The consensus of opinion among Mexican-American political activists in San Antonio is expressed by the following statement by State Representative Jake Johnson. Johnson stated:

It is true that the changes which have taken place in San Antonio were slow in coming. Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena knocked down many doors. Anglo political bosses used to control the west side but no longer.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Interview with M. C. Gonzalez, Assistant District Attorney for Bexar County, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

<sup>63</sup>Interview with Jake Johnson, State Representative from San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

Although Henry Gonzalez has received more national publicity than Albert Pena, Pena has proven particularly valuable to the development of the Mexican-American political role. One of the primary reasons for the destruction of Anglo-American bossism on the west side of San Antonio was that Albert Pena did not "sell out" to the Anglo-American interests that had dominated Mexican-American politics. Pena followed an independent course.<sup>64</sup>

The political career of Albert Pena began in the early years of the 1950's. He was instrumental in poll tax drives, in encouraging Mexican-American organizations, in increased Mexican-American voting, and in stressing greater Mexican-American political participation. In 1956, when Henry Gonzalez ran for state senator, Albert Pena campaigned for and won the office of Bexar County Commissioner. His precinct, precinct one, is essentially the southwestern quadrant of Bexar County and contains the greatest number of Mexican-Americans in the county. Pena was re-elected in 1960, 1964, and is seeking his fourth term in 1968.<sup>65</sup>

Albert Pena is a liberal Democrat who has held the office of President of the Political Association of

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<sup>64</sup>Interview with John Alaniz, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

<sup>65</sup>Interview with Albert Pena, Bexar County Commissioner, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO), a statewide Mexican-American political action group. He was one of the founders of the Bexar County Liberal Coalition which was composed of Mexican-Americans, Negroes, labor union members, and Anglo-American sympathizers. He was chairman of the Coalition and its chief spokesman and strategist from 1956 through 1964 when the Coalition's factionalization over local issues caused it to disband.<sup>66</sup>

Among San Antonio politicians, Albert Pena is known as the "ultimate in the organizational politician." He collects election results, statistics, and voting patterns so he will know how various precincts have voted in preceding elections. Pena is a real believer in organization; he believes that organization is the only way he can fight politically against money which his supporters lack. Pena depends upon several hundred volunteers who have nothing to give to him but their time, energy, and vote. In return, Pena expresses their interests and needs from his forum as county commissioner.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Bill Crane, "San Antonio: Pluralistic City and Monolithic Government," in Leonard Goodall (ed.), Urban Politics in the Southwest (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1967), pp. 138-139.

<sup>67</sup>Interview with Bill Crane, Professor of Government at St. Mary's University, in San Antonio, Texas, November 24, 1967.

The nature of the political organization utilized by Albert Pena is one based upon a block worker campaign. This is an effort directed at every block on every street in the precinct. At least every house on the block should be contacted. If the election is a particularly big one, then the contact should be made at the beginning of the campaign and again just before the election. Pena and his staff keep a card file to identify qualified voters and their stand on issues and candidates. If the voter is identified as favorable to Albert Pena and the interests he represents, then the voter is not contacted again. If the voter is against Pena or is undecided, attempts are made to contact the voter again at a later date. Statistics kept by Pena and his staff cause them to believe that their organizational efforts and the block worker campaign can change the results of an election by at least seven to ten per cent in Bexar County's precinct one. In real terms this is a change of from fourteen to twenty per cent of the vote.<sup>68</sup>

Albert Pena is thought of by his friends and supporters as a courageous, down to earth, hard-nosed politician who has won many tough political battles. His success represents the goals of Mexican-Americans on the west side

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<sup>68</sup>Interview with staff assistant for Albert Pena, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

and their desire for a better life which they intend to have by means of political action for themselves and their children. On the other hand, Pena is particularly disliked and singled out for criticism by those who disagree with him. Outside Bexar County precinct one and among the more successful socio-economic interests of San Antonio, Albert Pena is persona non grata. One of his staff assistants told the author, "If a man is judged by the company he keeps then it also follows that he should be admired for the enemies he makes."<sup>69</sup> This is the nature of Albert Pena's leadership; he is admired by his supporters and damned by his opponents.

#### John Alaniz

John Alaniz represents some of the most recent developments in Mexican-American leadership. He is younger and more aggressive than either Gonzalez or Pena. John Alaniz was born in the deep south Texas community of Mercedes in 1929. He attended grammar and high school in San Antonio. From 1950 to 1953 he followed a pre-law program at San Antonio College and Texas A&M University. Alaniz transferred to St. Mary's University Law School in San Antonio and received his law degree in 1957. After three years of law practice he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives and served three terms. In 1966,

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

he ran for Bexar County Commissioner for precinct two losing a very close election by 300 votes. In 1967, he was appointed by United States Senator Ralph Yarborough as Special Representative to Senator Yarborough for Mexican-American affairs. In this latest capacity he remains in San Antonio where he is very active in Mexican-American politics.<sup>70</sup>

John Alaniz is a member of the American Bar Association and the State of Texas Bar Association. He is a member of the Texas Trial Lawyers' Association. Alaniz also serves on the advisory committee of the Ford Foundation Mexican-American Study Project at the University of California at Los Angeles. He is a member of several Mexican-American groups which include the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Political Association of Spanish-speaking Organizations, and the Federation for the Advancement of the Mexican-American. In 1968, Alaniz was appointed national legal adviser for the League of United Latin American Citizens.<sup>71</sup>

For John Alaniz the political stimulation and advancement of Mexican-Americans is a most important goal. He has experienced the socio-economic problems of most

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<sup>70</sup>Letter from John Alaniz to the author, January 27, 1968.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

Mexican-Americans and he is committed to political action to change such socio-economic conditions. He is convinced that political action to increase the power of Mexican-Americans is the means to secure the necessary reforms. John Alaniz declares that Mexican-Americans have been and still are exploited by the "power establishment" of San Antonio in order to maintain their dominant socio-economic position. The "power establishment" is represented by the Good Government League that controls the city government and similar interests in Bexar County government. It is mainly through politics that such exploitation as job discrimination, wage discrimination, education restrictions, and living conditions can be reformed. John Alaniz declares that his role in politics is devoted to reforms.<sup>72</sup>

Peter Torres, Jr.

Peter Torres, Jr., is another young leader of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. After serving in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, he started college immediately upon discharge in 1954. He received a B. A. degree in government with honors at St. Mary's University in San Antonio. He taught high school history and government in San Antonio while attending law school at night. Torres is a practicing lawyer and member of the San Antonio

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<sup>72</sup>Interview with John Alaniz, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

Bar Association, State of Texas Bar Association, San Antonio Trial Lawyers' Association, and the Texas Trial Lawyers' Association. He is a member of the Methodist Church, the local Board of the San Antonio Civil Liberties Union, and formerly was on the State Board of the Texas Civil Liberties Union.<sup>73</sup>

In the city elections of 1967, Torres ran for city councilman as an independent and defeated a candidate sponsored by the Good Government League. As a new member of the San Antonio City Council, and as a leader of Mexican-Americans, Peter Torres has a particularly difficult job. How can he represent the great needs of his fellow Mexican-Americans to the larger community of San Antonio while serving the larger community of San Antonio as one of its city councilmen?<sup>74</sup>

The political platform of Peter Torres emphasizes his desire to work with all groups in San Antonio and not just one group. Torres contends that the factions within local government in San Antonio must be better assimilated if the problems of the people and the community are to be attacked and solved. He points out that he wants to be

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<sup>73</sup>Letter from Peter Torres to the author, February 22, 1968.

<sup>74</sup>Interview with Peter Torres, San Antonio City Councilman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

recognized as a San Antonio leader and not just a west side spokesman for Mexican-Americans.<sup>75</sup>

Torres declares that he wants to see more community unity or community assimilation and to achieve this integration he argues that all Mexican-Americans must work for community progress. The Mexican-American must educate himself for economic betterment but in order to do that he must be able to secure the necessary education. Peter Torres sees educational opportunity as the most important need for Mexican-Americans. He says, "Mexican-Americans should be proud of their traditions and 'la raza,' but they should not emphasize their traditions that lead to community weakness and dissension."<sup>76</sup>

To the author, Peter Torres declared:

I love San Antonio. It is my city and I think it can be a thriving community. Once it was the largest city in Texas. Today, there are those who are content to make it a sleepy Mexican border town. San Antonio has problems. The conclusion is inescapable in a community where a large segment of the population has a median income of twenty-seven dollars a week. San Antonio has received funds from the federal government as a Demonstration City. In our application we explained the plight of our people. We, in effect, admitted that we are a disaster area and that we need help. But, the program is not a cure-all. Solutions to our community problems will have to come from within -- there must be a desire on

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

the part of the entire community, its people and its leadership, to resolve the problems with which we are faced. Our city government should be concerned with the many problems faced by our people and should be seeking genuine solutions, perhaps independently of the available federal programs. If we lack genuine desire to help ourselves, the federal assistance will add nothing.<sup>77</sup>

Peter Torres is a supporter of liberal Democrats and is an advocate of the Liberal Coalition which has been successful in Bexar County politics. However, he points out a problem that plagues liberals in San Antonio. He says that:

Some leaders in the Liberal Coalition are at times too dogmatic. They have too often failed to study and document proposals and consequently appear as radicals or irresponsible individuals. Liberals, to be successful, must, above all things, be accurate with their information, proposals, and programs.<sup>78</sup>

Pursuing this philosophy has brought Peter Torres into continual conflict with his fellow city councilmen who are supporters of the Good Government League. To them he is the radical, the very label he wishes to avoid. However, to Mexican-Americans, Peter Torres represents the hopes and aspirations of those who desire something other than the traditions of the west side.

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

Joe Bernal

Joe Bernal was born in San Antonio in 1927. He attended local public schools graduating from Sidney Lanier High School in 1944. Immediately following his high school graduation Bernal attended Texas Technological College and New Mexico State University under the Army Specialized Training Reserve Program. In 1945, he entered the U. S. Army Infantry. After the war, he was transferred to the Air Force from which he was honorably discharged in 1946. Returning to San Antonio, Bernal continued his college education at Trinity University receiving his B. A. degree in 1950. Joe Bernal served as a public school teacher until 1964 when he was elected to the Texas House of Representatives. In 1966, he was elected to the Senate of Texas.<sup>79</sup>

Joe Bernal has been active in various teacher's organizations and civic groups. He is a member of the San Antonio Teachers' Council, member of the Texas State Teachers Association, and a member of the Texas Classroom Teachers Association. He is a life member of the National Education Association. Joe Bernal has participated in the United Fund, Boy Scouts, and Pan American Optimist organizations. In 1961, he went to Chile as a Red Cross Volunteer Teacher on a high school student exchange. He

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<sup>79</sup>Letter from Joe Bernal to the author, February 22, 1968.

is also active in various Mexican-American groups such as G. I. Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens.<sup>80</sup>

The political career of Joe Bernal began while he was a student at Trinity University. He participated in several student organizations active in San Antonio and Texas politics. In 1964, he was elected to represent Bexar County in the Texas House of Representatives. In the 1965 legislative session, he voted consistently for proposals favorable to liberal Democrats. In 1966, he was encouraged to seek election to the Texas Senate.<sup>81</sup>

The senatorial campaign of 1966 in San Antonio resulted in a strange combination of conservatives supporting the liberal candidate, and liberals supporting a conservative candidate. Joe Bernal was encouraged to seek election to the Texas Senate by leaders of the Good Government League. The GGL gave its endorsement and support to Bernal. To oppose Joe Bernal and, thus, to oppose the GGL, liberal Democrats and Mexican-American leaders supported David Carter, a conservative Democrat. Although Joe Bernal and other Mexican-American leaders were in agreement on programs and proposals for Mexican-American needs, personality conflicts developed that caused some

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

Mexican-American leaders to oppose Bernal. Joe Bernal, however, won the office of state senator by 8,000 votes. Attempts are being made to unify the leadership of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio to avoid such similar developments. Joe Bernal is one of those who favors unity among Mexican-Americans and is working to that end.<sup>82</sup>

#### The League of United Latin-American Citizens

One of the first concrete expressions of a changing political role for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio took the form of an organization known as the Order Sons of America which was founded in 1921. The constitution of this organization restricted its membership exclusively to citizens of the United States, native or naturalized, of Mexican or Spanish ancestry. The central purpose of the organization was to use social, economic, and political action to promote the rights and privileges of American citizens. Politically, the Order Sons of America took no partisan stand, but confined itself to training its members for citizenship.<sup>83</sup>

M. C. Gonzalez, currently an assistant district attorney in Bexar County, participated in the founding of

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Interview with M. C. Gonzalez, Assistant District Attorney for Bexar County, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

the Order. According to Gonzalez, Mexican-American veterans, returning from World War I, were the inspiration in the creation of the Order Sons of America. These veterans came back to San Antonio after the war and were confronted with socio-economic problems which had plagued Mexican-Americans for decades. Since these veterans had fought in a war "to make the world safe for democracy," they began a fight to improve the conditions of Mexican-Americans.<sup>84</sup>

By 1925, other Mexican-American groups had been created in south Texas. These groups included the Order Sons of Texas, the Order Knights of America, and the Citizens League. All of these organizations were devoted to improving the socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans. In an attempt to unite all of these groups, a meeting was called in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1929. Out of this meeting came the League of United Latin-American Citizens or LULAC. By 1935, there were LULAC chapters from Texas to California and by the 1960's, LULAC was a national organization.<sup>85</sup>

The basic goals of LULAC were underscored in the early days of the organization. The position of LULAC remains essentially the same today. The members of LULAC

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

want to:

Eliminate as much as possible race prejudice on both sides of the dividing line and to gain for the Mexican-American equality before the law, equal facilities for education and other forms of improvement, and a reasonable share of political representation in the affairs of the community, state, and nation.<sup>86</sup>

Education for effective citizenship is what LULAC demands. M. C. Gonzalez stresses the point that LULAC supports education, rather than political agitation, as the avenue to progress. He declares that LULAC is not a political action organization but is devoted to Mexican-American progress through education and legal action in the courts. Every year LULAC chapters award scholarships to young Mexican-Americans to enable them to attend college. Also, LULAC is devoted to American nationalism and does not encourage Mexican-American separatism as suggested by the concept of "la raza." On the contrary, LULAC works towards Mexican-American acculturation into the American society.<sup>87</sup>

Mexican-American acculturation has increased in San Antonio because of the activities of LULAC. The highlight of the LULAC year in San Antonio is the annual LULAC

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<sup>86</sup>O. Douglas Weeks, "The League of United Latin-American Citizens: A Texas-Mexican Civic Organization," The Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 10 (December, 1929), p. 259.

<sup>87</sup>Gonzalez, op. cit.

festival at which the "LULAC of the Year" is announced. The proceeds from the festival go to the LULAC scholarship fund. LULAC's activities promoting Mexican-American acculturation can be shown by the evolution of the annual LULAC festival. The evolution of this event is very significant because of four reasons: (1) it displays the decline of Mexican nationalism among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, (2) it shows an increase in Mexican-American identification with the society of the United States, (3) it represents the educational value of organized ethnic group activity, and (4) it shows that the activities of organized groups are indicative of a changing political setting. The annual LULAC festival has evolved from the traditional Mexican national holiday of Cinco de Mayo. A detailed analysis of periodic Cinco de Mayo celebrations shows the evolution of the LULAC festival.

Cinco de Mayo (May 5) is a Mexican national holiday which celebrates the victory of the Mexican national army over a French army of the Emperor Maximilian. Although the actual end of the Maximilian regime in Mexico did not come until 1867, the first Mexican victory was on May 5, 1862. Adherents of Mexican nationalism brought the celebration to Texas with them in the years after 1910.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>San Antonio Express, May 2, 1948.

In 1948, Cinco de Mayo was celebrated in San Antonio with four days of celebrations held in two city parks. These celebrations were under the joint sponsorship of the Mexican Committee for Civic and Cultural Action and the Consulate General of Mexico. A carnival spirit prevailed with games and musical events presented three of the four nights. A homes and gardens beautification contest was sponsored by the Mexican Consulate General. A queen was selected on the night of May 5 to reign over a fair patterned after a country fair in Mexico. The celebration came to an end with special services given to the Mexican victory in 1862.<sup>89</sup>

In 1952, Cinco de Mayo was celebrated with three days of celebration. A fiesta or fair was held with sixteen queen candidates presented. A dance was held for the benefit of the LULAC scholarship fund to help Mexican-American youth meet college expenses. The queen was selected and a grand ball held on May 4th with emphasis placed upon LULAC activities in promoting Mexican-American acculturation.<sup>90</sup>

In 1956, Cinco de Mayo was celebrated with two days of activities. The various activities, which centered

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<sup>89</sup>San Antonio Express, May 2-5, 1948. See also the San Antonio Light, May 5, 1948.

<sup>90</sup>San Antonio Express, May 2-4, 1952. See also the San Antonio Light, May 3 and 4, 1952.

around the selection of a king and queen for a grand ball, emphasized the program of LULAC. Proceeds from the grand ball went into the LULAC scholarship fund.<sup>91</sup>

In 1960, no mention was given to Cinco de Mayo in the San Antonio newspapers or their Spanish language news sections. By 1960, the former Cinco de Mayo celebration had become referred to as the "annual LULAC festival." The program followed a format of king and queen selections with presentation at a grand ball proceeds from which went into the LULAC scholarship fund. The LULAC scholarship fund was given prominent news coverage in the Spanish language sections of the San Antonio newspapers.<sup>92</sup>

In 1964, the Spanish language sections of the San Antonio newspapers made reference to Cinco de Mayo only on May 5. The celebration had, by 1964, clearly become a fund raising event of LULAC. The highlight of the celebration was the selection of the "LULAC of the Year." No mention of the original reason for Cinco de Mayo was included in the news coverage of the LULAC festival. No aspect of Mexican nationalism was prominent in the activities.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>San Antonio Express, May 4 and 5, 1956. See also the San Antonio Light, May 5, 1956.

<sup>92</sup>San Antonio Express, May 3, 1960. See also the San Antonio Light, May 4, 1960.

<sup>93</sup>San Antonio Express, May 5, 1964.

From 1948 through 1964 there was a clear trend away from Mexican nationalism toward American acculturation in the May 5 festival. Mexican nationalism is no longer significant in the celebration. The May 5 event has become the highlight of the LULAC program in San Antonio as the major source for the organization's scholarship fund. That scholarship fund is devoted to the continued acculturation of Mexican-Americans.

LULAC's emphasis upon education has not satisfied some Mexican-Americans who believe that much more needs to be done for the members of the ethnic group. LULAC has been successful in paving the way for other Mexican-American groups. LULAC leadership is composed, for the most part, of older generation Mexican-Americans who were bold and imaginative for their day. Other Mexican-American groups, organized since World War II, are more aggressive. The younger and more contemporary Mexican-Americans are more impatient with Texas traditions and practices than the older generation of Mexican-Americans. These younger Mexican-Americans, those who have come on the scene in San Antonio over the last ten to fifteen years, find PASO more action oriented. The "new breed" of Mexican-American is more anxious to move ahead by changing the status quo.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Interview with Maury Maverick, Jr., in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

The Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations

The 1960 presidential campaign introduced a new and broader focal point for Mexican-American politics. The era of Henry Gonzalez' rise to political prominence marked the 1950's for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. The Viva Kennedy Clubs initiated a new phase of Mexican-American politics. Mexican-American leaders in San Antonio contend that it was the Viva Kennedy Clubs, with Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena at the head, which saved Texas for John Kennedy in the very close election of 1960. After the presidential election, a way was found to keep up the momentum of Mexican-American politics. Delegates representing the Viva Kennedy Clubs from all over the state of Texas met in Victoria, Texas and initiated the movement that produced the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASO). President Kennedy gave PASO a tremendous initial boost because he was recognized as an "amigo muy bueno," (a very good friend).<sup>95</sup>

The purpose and aims of PASO are broad and extensive. PASO seeks to unite into one state non-partisan organization all persons regardless of race, color or creed desiring to solve those problems peculiar to citizens

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<sup>95</sup>Frank L. Madla, Jr., "The Political Impact of Latin Americans and Negroes in Texas Politics," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1964), p. 16.

of Spanish speaking descent. Through political action PASO seeks to attain the rights of full citizenship for all Americans as guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States. PASO's program calls for united political activity for the economic, educational, cultural, and civic betterment of Mexican-Americans. To accomplish these objectives it is necessary to encourage increased political participation, to provide a means of communication between members in all counties and communities to better coordinate the efforts of the group, to institute a program of political education amongst members of the Spanish speaking community to better enable them to vote and qualify for political office, and to promote the election and appointment to local, state, and national office, persons sympathetic to the aims of the group. Also, PASO seeks to establish constructive relationships for local and national cooperation with other groups and organizations having similar aims.<sup>96</sup>

In a conversation with Albert Pena, 1967 state chairman of PASO, the explanation was received as to why there is a PASO and why PASO works with Mexican-Americans in San Antonio and south Texas to increase political action. In Texas there are over two million Mexican-Americans who,

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<sup>96</sup>Constitution of the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations, Article I.

for the most part, are below average in health, education, housing, and income. This segment of the population has been referred to as the "sleeping giant" because it has the potential to elect legislators who would sympathize with its problems. PASO is conceived of as a means for channeling the thoughts and aspirations of these forgotten Americans to the legislators and news media.<sup>97</sup>

The loyalty of Mexican-American people has been demonstrated time and again in war and peace. Yet, when it comes to such matters as wages or decent streets, playgrounds, education, and opportunity following in the wake of these things, the Mexican-American is the "forgotten man." The very public officials who owe their elections to Mexican-Americans often completely forget election promises and shut their eyes to their responsibilities. This is the reason for PASO: to seek out the candidates for public office at all levels and support those who will give the Mexican-American a chance to be a good American. The Mexican-American asks not for charity or abundant welfare. He asks only for a chance to help himself. He asks for a chance for better pay and better education and decent medical care which are three major stepping stones to a better life. Therefore, PASO tends to support candidates who support Medicare, federal aid to education, and strong

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<sup>97</sup>Albert Pena, op. cit.

labor laws. This is because PASO is not so worried about federal or union control but rather PASO is concerned with Mexican-Americans who need a chance to live.<sup>98</sup> With this in mind, Albert Pena declared that:

Our future is to play the role of the conscience of the liberal movement, the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party; and address ourselves to the task of eliminating the evils of discrimination, segregation in job opportunities, education and housing. It is in our hands to change the political complexion of the state of Texas not solely for the benefit of PASO, but for the benefit of all Texans.<sup>99</sup>

#### Additional Mexican-American Groups in San Antonio

There are additional Mexican-American groups active in San Antonio. A relatively new organization in San Antonio is the Federation for the Advancement of the Mexican American (FAMA). FAMA was organized in 1967 with one basic purpose: to promote and develop programs fostering economic, educational, cultural, spiritual, civic, and social betterment of the Mexican-American community. FAMA seeks to promote the image of the Mexican-American as a patriotic, first-class American citizen. The organization is a federation which desires to unite in one forum all individuals,

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Albert Pena, 1967 Program for the State Convention of the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations, n. p.

organizations, and leaders in San Antonio working for Mexican-Americans. The hope is to bring various Mexican-American groups into an effective and positive relationship with other groups involved in the areas of concern. The organization has an executive director and office in San Antonio.<sup>100</sup>

Also in San Antonio there is a Mexican-American organization composed mainly of college age youths. The organization is the Mexican-American Youth Organization (MAYO). It is a militant group small in number with approximately thirty members. There are incredible problems among the poor of the Mexican-American community in San Antonio. This condition leads to militancy on the part of some, especially the young, Mexican-Americans. Gilbert Murillo, a social worker among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, says that because MAYO is militant the members start out with efforts that seem to never win or get anywhere. Frustration grows with each defeat and irrationality increases. Some of the Mexican-American youth are so filled with bitterness and hatred for Anglo-Americans that they readily support and rally around the concept of "Brown Power." MAYO is patterned after the militant Negro group called the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee

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<sup>100</sup> Brochure of the Federation for the Advancement of the Mexican American, 1967, n. p.

or SNCC which emphasizes Afro-American heritage and history. MAYO emphasizes "la raza" as a rallying cry. "La raza" is a basis for MAYO to appeal to other militant Mexican-American youth who are willing to unite against the "gringo" who has enslaved the "Mexicano." It is an appeal to Mexican nationalism. Unless conditions improve, Murillo declares that violence is quite possible in sections of San Antonio's west side.<sup>101</sup>

In January, 1968 approximately 1,500 delegates from the southwestern United States representing Mexican-American groups and aspirations met in San Antonio to proclaim "La Raza Unida" (the united race). It was a Mexican-American unity conference and it represents the most recent and progressive step in Mexican-American social and political action.<sup>102</sup>

Leaders of the conference declared that La Raza Unida is a constructive effort by an ethnic group which does not owe anyone an apology for its origin and which is as proud of its heritage as it is of being a full-fledged American. The consensus of feeling at the conference was that the most important achievement was pulling together Mexican-Americans of different groups from all across the

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<sup>101</sup>Interview with Gilbert Murillo, San Antonio social worker, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

<sup>102</sup>Letter from Joe Bernal to the author, January 31, 1968.

southwestern United States. San Antonio Mexican-American leaders declared it was the best thing to happen to their community. They were pleased that it happened in San Antonio because it signifies again that for most Mexican-Americans in Texas as well as the southwestern United States, San Antonio stands out as a base for direction and guidance.<sup>103</sup>

The greatest concern felt at the La Raza Unida was that for political activity. The most urgent need that was before the conference was the recognition by Mexican-Americans of the use of the power of the vote in all elections. The conference declared that there was no more effective way to let the power of the Mexican-Americans be felt than through the exercise of the political process by voting. Political success can only be secured through unity of purpose and La Raza Unida is believed to be the key to such purpose.<sup>104</sup>

The consensus of opinion among Mexican-Americans at the La Raza Unida conference was one of optimism. John Alaniz of San Antonio declared:

It's a dream that has come true to many of us, and it is only regrettable that so

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

many other Mexican-Americans who had the same dream didn't live to see it materialized.<sup>105</sup>

It remains to be seen how successful La Raza Unida will be. One thing is apparent, however, Mexican-Americans are on the move in Texas. Leaders and groups have developed and represent changes that have occurred in the political setting. The Mexican-Americans have become more active in their political role; the sleeping giant is being aroused.

#### Summary

In San Antonio there has developed a new generation of Mexican-American leaders and groups. Traditional spokesmen of Mexican-Americans have been replaced by new leaders who draw their power from the local Mexican-American community rather than from Anglo-American politicians.

Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena are given more credit than any other Mexican-Americans for the development and stimulation of independent Mexican-American political behavior in San Antonio. Gonzalez has become prominent on a national scale as Congressman from San Antonio. Pena, as Bexar County Commissioner, gives voice to the deepest

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<sup>105</sup>San Antonio Sun, January 11, 1968. The San Antonio Sun is a supplement to the San Antonio News devoted to news of Mexican-American interest.

despairs and highest hopes of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, south Texas, and elsewhere. Additional Mexican-American leaders have developed in San Antonio and they represent the increased political activity of the ethnic group. John Alaniz, Peter Torres, and Joe Bernal have come to occupy important positions between the Mexican-American community and the larger community of San Antonio. These leaders indicate the political awakening of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio since World War II.

The most outstanding illustration of original Mexican-American groups is the League of Latin-American Citizens. LULAC's purpose is to give voice to the aspirations and needs of Mexican-Americans. Although the LULAC organization was not originally intended to be a political group, its attempts to make Mexican-Americans aware of their rights have had political repercussions.

In San Antonio, particularly after World War II, Mexican-American military veterans became active in advancing the political role of the ethnic group. Through benefits received from their military service, many of the Mexican-Americans finished high school, learned trades, completed college, and entered professions. In becoming politically active these Mexican-Americans have demanded more in return for their votes than preceding generations of Mexican-Americans.

Since 1961, Mexican-Americans in San Antonio have used the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations as a stimulant for political activity. PASO is a political action organization designed to serve as a means for united Mexican-American politics. It is the most aggressive of the Mexican-American groups in San Antonio in terms of supporting candidates and electioneering.

Other groups, such as the Federation for the Advancement of the Mexican-American, the Mexican American Youth Organization, and La Raza Unida, illustrate the political developments taking place within the Mexican-American community in San Antonio. These developments have implications beyond San Antonio because of the city's cultural association with south Texas.

The general development and activity of leaders and groups is highly related to participation in politics. The development of new leaders and the emergence of various organizations are products of the political activity of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. With the increase in independent Mexican-American leadership and groups, there has developed a corresponding increase in Mexican-American participation in other aspects of Mexican-American politics. These aspects include voting, participation in elections, involvement in political parties, and inclusion in official positions of government.

## CHAPTER IV

### POLITICAL ROLE AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN VOTING PATTERNS IN SAN ANTONIO

In the analysis of political role on the personal level, voting patterns demonstrate the definitions of the role held by the political actor in the behavioral pattern. Angus Campbell and his associates declare, "in the contemporary world the activity of voting is rivaled only by the market as a means of reaching collective decisions from individual choices."<sup>1</sup> In an examination of the political role of an ethnic group in relation to the political setting, voting patterns are of paramount importance. It is voting patterns that can portray the political orientation of the group within the context of the larger political setting. It is voting patterns that indicate the preferences of leaders and groups as to who shall control political power in the political setting. It would be difficult to overstate the significance of voting patterns in describing the characteristics of the ethnic group in its relation to the political setting.

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<sup>1</sup>Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), p. 3.

Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio are significant because the voting behavior of the ethnic group is a primary means whereby the group can change the political setting. Also, Mexican-American voting patterns indicate the characteristics of ethnic politics in San Antonio. The literature of political science provides a framework for description of voting patterns and enables the examination to focus upon the characteristics of ethnic politics by comparison with Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio.

A Note on Literature for Analyzing  
Ethnic Groups, Voting Patterns,  
and Political Role

There are several reasons for ethnic group interest in politics which have led to various voting patterns.

These reasons include the following:

1. Persons of ethnic background are interested in politics for the same reasons as the rest of the population; they have occupational interests which may be affected by governmental economic policy, they are subject to local and national taxation, they have personal preferences among candidates and political parties.<sup>2</sup>

2. There is ethnic rivalry or conflict which takes several forms. Irish have increased their political activity to keep control from the invading Italians; Jews in Boston supported the Republican Party because the Irish controlled the Democratic

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1959), p. 236.

organizations; Yankee Protestants attempted to secure Italian support for the Republican Party in New York against the Irish Democrats.<sup>3</sup>

3. National policy dealing with immigration has been a matter of considerable concern for ethnic groups. Desiring increased immigration by fellow ethnics, American ethnic groups have been active in the past regarding quotas and regulations on immigration.<sup>4</sup>

4. The interest which members of various ethnic groups take in foreign policy also leads these groups into the political arena. As ethnic groups become more politically active, gradually "in the party platforms appeared planks that espoused the immigrant causes: Irish independence, Italian nationalism, Zionism."<sup>5</sup>

5. The relationship between political strength and distribution of rewards becomes important if the ethnic group lives in physically segregated areas, for then street-paving, sewage disposal, street lighting, school facilities, and other governmental services become ethnically related matters.<sup>6</sup>

In his study of ethnic voting patterns, Robert Dahl has observed that ". . . in spite of growing assimilation, ethnic factors continued to make themselves felt with astonishing tenacity."<sup>7</sup> Raymond Wolfinger has

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<sup>3</sup>William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 196; Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951), p. 216.

<sup>4</sup>Lane, op. cit., pp. 13-14 and 237.

<sup>5</sup>Handlin, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>6</sup>Lane, op. cit., p. 259.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 59.

demonstrated that ethnic voting patterns persist into the second and third generations and proposed that, melting pot or not, ethnic voting may be with us for a long time to come.<sup>8</sup>

Michael Parenti suggests that part of the explanation for ethnic voting patterns beyond the second and third generations is to be found in the distinction between assimilation and acculturation. Acculturation refers to the system of beliefs, values, norms, practices, symbols, and ideas (science, art, artifacts, language, law and learning included). Assimilation refers to the system of interrelations and associations among individuals and groups. Thus a church, family, club, informal friendship group, or formal organization composed of individuals interacting in some kind of context involving roles and statuses are elements of assimilation. The beliefs, symbols, and practices mediated and adhered to by members of the church, family, club, or group are elements of acculturation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Raymond E. Wolfinger, "The Development and Persistence of Ethnic Voting," American Political Science Review, Vol. 59 (December, 1965), pp. 896-908.

<sup>9</sup>Michael Parenti, "Ethnic Politics and Ethnic Identification," American Political Science Review, Vol. 61 (September, 1967), p. 718. See also Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1951).

Therefore, when we speak of the melting pot we are more accurate in terms of acculturation than in terms of assimilation. For ethnic social sub-systems may persist or evolve new structures independent of the host society despite cultural transitions in the direction of the mainstream culture. In the face of widespread acculturation, the ethnic group still maintains a social sub-structure encompassing primary and secondary group relations composed of essentially one's fellow ethnics.<sup>10</sup>

Numerous writers have observed the influence of ethnic cultural variations on political life, causing one to conclude that not only is there slim evidence to show that assimilation is taking place, but there is even some question as to whether acculturation is anywhere complete. There are several explanations for the persistence of individual ethnic identity. First, even if the available range of social exposure brings a man into more frequent contact with out-group members, early in-group experiences, family name, and filial attachments may implant in him a natural awareness of, and perhaps a pride in, his ethnic origins. Furthermore, the acculturated ethnic may be no

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid. See also Arnold W. Green, "A Re-examination of the Marginal Man Concept," Social Forces, Vol. 26 (1947), pp. 167-171; Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 34; and Erich Rosenthal, "Acculturation without Assimilation," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 66 (November, 1966), pp. 275-288.

more acceptable to the native group than the unacculturated. Few things so effectively assure the persistence of in-group awareness as out-group rejection, and much of the ethnic cradle-to-grave social structure, often considered "clannish," is really defensive.<sup>11</sup>

Selected Mexican-American Voting  
Precincts in San Antonio

In order to analyze Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio, seven voting precincts were selected. The primary reason for selecting these particular seven precincts was because their locations have not changed in twenty years. Since 1948, these seven precincts have remained within the same boundaries and the same numbers. It is necessary to recognize these precinct characteristics in showing Mexican-American voting patterns over the previous two decades. Additional precincts that could have been utilized have a major handicap: their precinct lines have not remained stable over the last twenty years and in some cases their numbers have been changed. Consequently, to produce as accurate an analysis as possible, the study utilized seven precincts whose locations have remained constant.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 722. See also Wesley and Beverly AllinSmith, "Religious Affiliation and Politico-Economic Attitudes," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 12 (1948), pp. 377-389; and Lawrence Fuchs, The Political Behavior of the American Jews (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956).

The seven precincts chosen represent a cross section of the precincts on the west side of San Antonio. All of the precincts contained a substantial majority of Mexican-American residents. Some of the precincts contained Anglo-American as well as Negro voters. One of the precincts contained Negro residents in excess of ten per cent with two precincts exceeding twenty per cent. Median income per family ranged from over \$4,000 to less than \$2,000 annually. While the educational average was low for all precincts, there was distribution in median years completed in school ranging from less than four years to more than eight years. Table 9 lists the characteristics of the population in the seven selected precincts. Although the data is based upon 1960 census reports, there has not been a substantial change in the socio-economic character of the precincts since 1960.

Figure 2 indicates the location of the seven precincts and shows that their distribution extends from the core of San Antonio westward to the city limits. Precinct 12 corresponds with census tract 44; precinct 16 corresponds with census tract 59; precinct 21 corresponds with census tract 34; precinct 22 corresponds with census tract 35; precinct 23 corresponds with census tracts 22 and 36; precinct 24 corresponds with census tracts 39 and 40; and precinct 25 corresponds with census tract 38.

Precinct 12, with 94 per cent Mexican-Americans in 1960, had the lowest median family income and least number of school years completed of any of the precincts studied. Precinct 16, containing 86 per cent Mexican-American population, had the highest median family income; it is also the precinct with the highest percentage of Anglo-Americans of any of the seven precincts. Of the seven precincts used in the study, three contained Mexican-Americans in excess of 90 per cent. These three (12, 23, and 24) had the lowest median school years completed of the seven precincts. In all of the precincts, the greater the percentage of Mexican-Americans, the lower the median number of school years completed. In those precincts with the smallest percentage of Mexican-Americans, the median family income and the median number of school years completed was the highest of the seven precincts. The exception was precinct 16 which contained the greatest concentration of Anglo-Americans. These population characteristics are shown in Tables 9 and 10.

Under these circumstances there are certain observations that are pertinent to the voting patterns of Mexican-Americans. Mexican-Americans occupy a position of low socio-economic status because of low education, low status occupations, low incomes, and an ethnic minority position. These factors become collectively important in

TABLE 9

CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION IN SELECTED VOTING  
PRECINCTS IN SAN ANTONIO IN 1960

Voting Precinct	Total	Anglo	Mexican	Negro	Other	Median Family Income	Median School Years Completed
12	7,406	435	6,956	14	1	\$1,720	3.9
16	10,223	1,469	8,729	1	24	4,190	6.9
21	12,294	1,058	9,716	1,495	25	3,267	6.4
22	14,193	1,493	8,909	3,740	51	3,450	7.5
23	8,460	630	7,721	94	15	3,414	5.5
24	12,583	945	11,591	35	12	3,290	4.4
25	8,927	1,528	5,528	2,077	20	3,831	8.0

Source: Census data is from U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts. Final Reports PHC (1)-134 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962). Voting precinct correlation with census tracts is based on data secured from the Office of the Bexar County Clerk, San Antonio, Texas.



TABLE 10  
 MEXICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION IN 1960 IN  
 SELECTED PRECINCTS OF SAN ANTONIO

Precinct	Mexican-Americans	% of Total
12	6,956	94
16	8,726	86
21	9,716	79 <sup>a</sup>
22	8,909	63 <sup>b</sup>
23	7,721	90
24	11,591	92
25	5,528	62 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>13% Negro.

<sup>b</sup>26% Negro.

<sup>c</sup>22% Negro.

SOURCE: Raw data is from U. S. Bureau of the Census. U. S. Census of Population and Housing: 1960. Census Tracts. Final Report (1)-134 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962). Voting precinct correlation is from data received from the office of the Bexar County Clerk, San Antonio, Texas.

analyzing and describing the voting patterns of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.<sup>12</sup>

Analysis of voting statistics in the selected Mexican-American precincts provides the basis for determining voting patterns. Utilization of registration figures and voting turnout indicate the extent of participation by Mexican-Americans. Description of a series of presidential and senatorial elections as well as a series of senatorial and gubernatorial primaries enables us to determine the ideological and partisan nature of Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio.

Mexican-American Registration and Voting  
Turnout in Selected Precincts  
in San Antonio 1948-1966

The voter registration of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has increased since 1948. The registration has doubled in the last twenty years. In the seven precincts representative of Mexican-Americans chosen for this study, registration was 7,019 in 1948. In 1968 total registration for the seven precincts was 13,431. Table 11 portrays these registration features.

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<sup>12</sup>On the impact of socio-economic conditions and voter participation see Lane, op. cit., pp. 220-221; Campbell, et. al., op. cit., pp. 404-408; Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co, 1965), pp. 120-131; and Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1960), pp. 188-190.

TABLE 11  
MEXICAN-AMERICAN REGISTRATION IN SAN ANTONIO  
IN SELECTED PRECINCTS 1948-1968

Year	Total Registered
1948	7,019
1952	8,649
1956	9,623
1960	8,712
1964	9,805
1966	16,520
1968	13,431

SOURCE: Office of the Bexar County Clerk, San Antonio,  
Texas.

In 1966, Mexican-American voter registration increased phenomenally. Whereas the registration for 1964 totalled 9,805, in 1966 the total registered was 16,520. The main explanation for this large increase in the course of two years was the demise of the poll tax as a registration requirement. Since 1902, the poll tax served as the means of voter registration in Texas. It was long criticized as a deterrent for voter registration for persons of low socio-economic status.<sup>13</sup> In 1966, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled the poll tax unconstitutional as a prerequisite for voting in state elections.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, special provisions were made in Texas for a two week voter registration period during which persons could register who had not registered during the regular registration period. A massive voter registration drive occurred in San Antonio and thousands of persons were registered who had never before registered to vote. In the enthusiasm to register as many people as possible in the two week special registration period, several persons of Mexican background were registered who were not United States citizens. Charges and countercharges of fraud and political

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<sup>13</sup>Edwin L. Dickens, "The Poll Tax in Texas," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Texas University of Arts and Industries, Kingsville, Texas, 1963).

<sup>14</sup>Harper v Virginia Board of Elections 383 U.S. 663 (1966).

manipulation were made between Anglo-American politicians and Mexican-American politicians. After an official investigation it was discovered that four aliens had been mistakenly registered by enthusiastic workers. However, in 1968 several of the leaders of the voter registration drive of 1966 refused to participate in encouraging Mexican-Americans to register to vote and, consequently, voter registration declined to less than that of 1966. The reason given for lack of participation by those persons who had led the voter registration drive of 1966 was disgust with politics and politicians after the publicity and arguments arising out of the 1966 registrations.<sup>15</sup> In the final analysis, however, there has been a steady increase in the number of Mexican-Americans registered to vote in San Antonio.

Mexican-American voting turnout has steadily increased in San Antonio since 1948. Whereas the seven precincts chosen for this study had a turnout of 3,914 in 1948, in 1964 the number was two and one-half times as great with a turnout of 8,540. These figures correspond to voting turnout in presidential elections as indicated by Table 12.

Not only has there been a tendency toward increased voter turnout, but the percentage of turnout has increased.

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<sup>15</sup>Interview with Bill Crane, Professor of Government, St. Mary's University, in San Antonio, Texas, April 11, 1968.

TABLE 12  
MEXICAN-AMERICAN VOTING IN SAN ANTONIO  
SELECTED PRECINCTS IN PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTIONS 1948-1964

Year	Votes	Per cent
1948	3,914	55.7
1952	6,621	76.5
1956	6,612	68.7
1960	7,308	83.9
1964	8,540	87.1

SOURCE: Office of the Bexar County Clerk, San Antonio, Texas.

By comparing the number voting with the number registered, we note a movement toward increased voter turnout percentage. An increase from 55.7 per cent turnout in 1948 to 87.1 per cent turnout in 1964 indicates a significant change in participation by Mexican-Americans registered to vote in San Antonio. In the last two presidential elections, Mexican-American voters in San Antonio have turned out to vote over 80 per cent of the time. These percentages are well above the national average even in presidential elections. When one considers the evidence that Mexican-Americans, as an ethnic group, have a voter turnout in excess of 80 per cent, this is a remarkable statistic. Numerous studies have indicated that minority groups and low-status persons have low voter participation.<sup>16</sup> Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, once they are registered to vote, tend to vote at a higher rate than the general American population. Herein lies the most significant evidence of the political awakening of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio since World War II.

Not only have Mexican-Americans in San Antonio increased their voter registration and percentage of voting, their increased political articulation has an ideological and partisan character. Mexican-Americans in San Antonio

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<sup>16</sup>Milbrath, op. cit., pp. 110-141. See Milbrath for a series of references on political participation and socio-economic status.

tend to vote for those candidates with whom they have greater ideological and partisan identification.

Mexican-American Voting in  
Presidential Elections  
1948-1964

In 1948, a dramatic conflict within the Democratic Party reflected a division between the conservative and liberal factions that had been emerging over a series of elections. Three main issues that identified conservative Democrats in Texas concerned the nomination of a senatorial candidate, the instruction of presidential electors, and the control of the party machinery. Conservative Democrats in Texas in 1948 supported Coke Stevenson for the senatorial nomination, a slate of unpledged presidential electors, and anyone who would oppose Harry Truman. Liberal Democrats were that faction of the Democratic Party who were Roosevelt-Truman men and they supported Lyndon Johnson for the senatorial nomination. With regard to presidential electors, liberal Democrats wanted a slate of electors pledged to the re-election of Truman.<sup>17</sup>

In San Antonio the major newspapers came out in editorials supporting the Republican Party and its nominee,

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<sup>17</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), pp. 255-258. See also Alexander Heard, A Two-Party South? (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1952), pp. 253-261; and Seth S. McKay, Texas and the Fair Deal (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1954), pp. 246-251 and 271-275.

Thomas Dewey, the Governor of New York. The San Antonio Light explained the issues by declaring that:

The nation needs an administration that will foster free enterprise, that will provide equal justice between labor and management in industrial issues, and that will pursue a constructive program of more business in government and less government in business. The Truman administration is incapable of that service, for it is wedded to socialism and labor demagoguery. The Truman administration advocates socialized medicine and federalized education. The policy-makers are themselves socialists, inimical to the American way. The nation needs an administration that will purge native Communists out of government. The Truman administration cannot do this because the New Deal has been infested by Communists since its earliest phases. The American people must elect Dewey and Warren.<sup>18</sup>

The voters in San Antonio did not heed the advice of the newspapers and voted instead for the Democrats. Harry Truman carried Bexar County 35,970 to Dewey's 26,202. The Republican vote was concentrated in the northern precincts of the city which were primarily Republican. The vote went overwhelmingly for Truman among Negro and Mexican-American voters. Truman carried the Mexican-American precincts by margins of from five to one to upwards of ten to one. The Democrat received 78.8% of the votes cast. Table 13 lists these voting patterns for selected Mexican-American precincts.

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<sup>18</sup>San Antonio Light, November 1, 1948.

TABLE 13

VOTING IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS  
SELECTED PRECINCTS  
IN SAN ANTONIO  
1948-1964

Precincts	#12	#16	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	Voters Registered	% Voting
<b>Candidates:</b>									
<b>1948:</b>									
Truman	592	315	750	587	378	438	39	7,019	55.7
Dewey	66	134	110	105	169	90	13		78.8
Wallace	5	0	7	3	3	5	0		17.8
Thurmond	3	16	19	19	28	17	3		.6
									2.8
<b>1952:</b>									
Stevenson	598	571	1033	963	803	827	247	8,649	76.5
Eisenhower	110	352	244	219	349	254	51		76.2
									23.8
<b>1956:</b>									
Stevenson	389	812	786	746	767	733	538	9,623	68.7
Eisenhower	90	399	296	282	346	270	158		72.1
									27.9
<b>1960:</b>									
Kennedy	463	745	1031	1076	1199	666	1325	8,712	83.9
Nixon	33	128	115	120	224	58	125		89.0
									11.0
<b>1964:</b>									
Johnson	577	935	1220	1294	1545	1026	1520	9,805	87.1
Goldwater	12	70	70	59	112	28	72		95.1
									4.9

SOURCE: Bexar County records of Special and General Elections. San Antonio, Texas.

In 1952, voters in Texas were concerned about the attitude of the two presidential candidates toward the tidelands issue. Eisenhower had said that he supported the Texas position; he said he felt that federal ownership of land was calculated to bring about steady progress toward centralized ownership and control which he bitterly opposed. Adlai Stevenson was approached by Governor Allan Shivers for a statement; the Democratic nominee replied with support for a recent Supreme Court decision denying state control of the tidelands.<sup>19</sup> Shivers thereupon announced that he could not support Stevenson in the presidential election. Governor Shivers declared that he would recommend voting a "split ticket;" Texans should choose Eisenhower for President, then switch to the Democratic column for the party's nominees. Shivers headed a group called "Democrats for Eisenhower" and frequently referred to the 1952 election as a "year of decision." Texans widely believed the charge made in the Dallas News that the major issue was "Texas' historical right to its own lands." To the astonishment of all observers, there were more than two million votes cast in the general election of 1952; the figures represented more than a 72 per cent increase over the highest total ever compiled in a general

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<sup>19</sup>U. S. v Texas 339 U. S. 707 (1950).

election in Texas. Eisenhower received the vote of 1,102,878 Texans; Stevenson received 970,128.<sup>20</sup>

Eisenhower carried Bexar County with 65,391 to 50,260 for Stevenson. However, Stevenson won all of the Mexican-American precincts by receiving 76.2% of the votes cast. Precinct 21 gave Stevenson a four to one majority with 1,033 votes to Eisenhower's 244. Precinct 25 gave Stevenson a five to one majority with 247 votes to 51. Although Eisenhower was winning the county and the state plus fashioning one of the largest popular victories in the nation's history, Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio were voting for Adlai Stevenson. See Table 13 for Mexican-American voting patterns in 1952.

The Eisenhower administration proved very popular in Texas. The new president asked Congress to pass a special law giving Texas the right to its tidelands, and this was done. Partly as a result of this act Eisenhower again carried Texas in 1956. Primarily because of Eisenhower's popularity and opposition to Adlai Stevenson, Texans gave Eisenhower 1,080,619 votes to Stevenson's 859,958.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>McKay, op. cit., pp. 356-376, 406-418, and 423-424. See also O. Douglas Weeks, Texas Presidential Politics in 1952 (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1953).

<sup>21</sup>O. Douglas Weeks, Texas One-Party Politics in 1956 (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1957), pp. 15-50.

In Bexar County the Eisenhower vote was practically identical to that of four years earlier. Eisenhower did receive more votes in the county in 1956 than in 1952; 65,901 to 65,391. Stevenson lost votes between 1952 and 1956; 50,260 to 46,790. The Mexican-American precincts gave a majority of their votes to Adlai Stevenson. The Democratic nominee won 72.1% of the votes cast in the election. Although the percentage for Stevenson was not as high as that of 1952, the former governor of Illinois did carry the Mexican-American precincts from two to one to three to one. Table 13 indicates these voting patterns for Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio.

The presidential election of 1960 attracted a record turnout of over 69 million voters in the United States. The vote in Texas was also the largest recorded in the state's history. John Kennedy, the Democratic nominee, received 1,167,932 votes to Richard Nixon's 1,121,699. Thus, Kennedy received 46,233 votes more than Nixon in Texas.<sup>22</sup>

In Bexar County the vote went to Kennedy by a margin of 75,300 to 63,931. A majority of 11,369 votes for Kennedy was based largely on the substantial returns he received in the Mexican-American precincts. In the Mexican-

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<sup>22</sup>O. Douglas Weeks, Texas in the 1960 Presidential Election (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1961), pp. 63-78.

American precincts support for Kennedy was simply overwhelming as he won 89% of the votes. The "Viva Kennedy" clubs had operated successfully throughout the campaign and produced ten to one majorities for John Kennedy. Although Nixon was very popular in the high socio-economic precincts of San Antonio, Kennedy's margins were staggering in the Mexican-American and Negro precincts. Nixon's popularity was based upon his identification with the Eisenhower presidency under whom he was vice-president. John Kennedy's liberal support for civil rights, his Catholic religion, and his Democratic partisanship combined to produce a heavy turnout in the low socio-economic precincts of San Antonio. In the middle-class Anglo-Saxon precincts of south side San Antonio, Kennedy and Nixon were fairly even in voter support. Kennedy's personality coupled with Mexican-American political organizations active on the west side of San Antonio produced a tremendous surge of votes for the Democratic nominee. See Table 13 for the results of voting in Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio in 1960.

The presidential election of 1964 was the most devastating landslide since 1936. All of the states in the United States, except five in the deep South and Arizona, went for Lyndon Johnson, the Democratic candidate. In Texas all 254 counties went Democratic except

sixteen diehard Republican counties. These counties, mostly rural and in the western areas of the state, cast majorities for Barry Goldwater. It is significant that three of the four largest counties in Texas -- Harris (Houston), Dallas (Dallas), and Tarrant (Fort Worth) -- which had gone Republican in 1960 gave Lyndon Johnson sizable majorities in 1964.<sup>23</sup>

In Bexar County Johnson defeated Goldwater two to one. Johnson received 108,658 votes to Goldwater's 53,469. Goldwater received his greatest support from the north side of San Antonio which has traditionally given Republican presidential candidates a base of support in San Antonio. Goldwater's opposition to expanded federal welfare activities, to civil rights legislation, and to internationalism provided an appeal to conservative San Antonio voters. The support for Lyndon Johnson and the Democratic Party in the Mexican-American and Negro precincts was overwhelming. Johnson received margins in excess of twenty to one and he won 95% of the votes cast. In the seven precincts included in this study as indicative of Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio, Johnson received over 1,000 votes in five of the precincts and over 900 in another. Barry Goldwater received 112

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<sup>23</sup>0. Douglas Weeks, Texas in 1964: A One Party State Again? (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 29-30.

votes in precinct 23 and less than 72 votes in the other precincts. Goldwater received 12 votes to Johnson's 577 in precinct 12. Precinct 23, which gave Goldwater his largest vote in the selected precincts, has one of the highest percentages of Anglo-American populations of the precincts studied. Table 13 indicates these voting patterns for Mexican-American precincts on the west side of San Antonio in 1964.

In presidential elections in San Antonio, the Mexican-Americans over the past twenty years have consistently supported the Democratic Party. In recent elections Mexican-Americans in San Antonio have overwhelmingly rejected conservative Republicans. These voting patterns are evident particularly after 1964 and the most recent organizational activities among Mexican-Americans.\*

To further analyze the voting patterns of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, state wide elections, such as those for senatorial and gubernatorial candidates, must be considered. These elections show the partisan and ideological character of the Mexican-American electorate in San Antonio.

#### Mexican-American Voting in United States Senatorial Elections

Elections in Texas for the office of United States

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\*See footnote 52 on page 204 for 1968 election results.

Senator have generally been decided in the primary of the Democratic Party. Since the Republican Party, until recently, has not been strong enough to contest senatorial elections, nomination in the Democratic primary has been tantamount to election.

In 1961, a series of events culminated in the election of a Republican candidate for the office of United States Senator. A special election was held in Texas in 1961 to fill the vacancy created by Lyndon Johnson's election as Vice-president of the United States. In a run-off with interim appointee, William Blakley, Republican John Tower became the first Republican senator from Texas in ninety years. John Tower's victory came with a voter turnout in Texas of only one-third that of the 1960 presidential election. The Republican victory occurred after the first election in which five major Democratic candidates severely weakened party unity through factional disputes. Had the parties nominated candidates in the usual manner, and had the respective winners of their party nominations been identified by party affiliation on the special election ballot, it is unlikely that Republican Tower would have been elected.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>James R. Soukup, Clifton McCleskey, and Harry Holloway, Party and Factional Division in Texas (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 26.

In the 1961 special election won by John Tower, Democrat William Blakley carried the Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio. Blakley received 88.5 per cent of the votes cast in Mexican-American precincts. Although the margins of triumph for Blakley were large among the San Antonio Mexican-Americans, they were not nearly as large as those margins given John Kennedy in 1960 or those given to Henry Gonzalez in the special congressional election held later in 1961. The fact that Anglo-Americans did not substantially support Blakley contributed to the Tower victory in Bexar County. John Tower carried Bexar County 27,161 to 22,821. The off-year election served to limit traditional Democratic voter turnout. Blakley was identified as a conservative and some Mexican-American leaders did not work for his election. A 5,000 vote margin for Tower could have been erased in the Mexican-American precincts had Blakley not been identified as a conservative Democrat.<sup>25</sup> What Mexican-American turnout there was, strongly supported the Democrat Blakley. These voting patterns among San Antonio Mexican-Americans are shown by Table 14.

In 1964, the senatorial election between liberal Democrat Ralph Yarborough, and his Republican opponent, George Bush, was much closer in Texas than the presidential

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 13, 129, and 151.

TABLE 14  
 VOTING IN U.S. SENATORIAL ELECTIONS  
 SELECTED PRECINCTS IN SAN ANTONIO  
 1961-1966

Precincts	#12	#16	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	Votes	%
Candidates:									
1961:									
Blakley	167	306	370	332	289	217	352	2033	88.5
Tower	22	35	44	37	67	22	37	264	11.5
1964:									
Yarborough	555	885	1155	1256	1459	983	1491	7784	93.8
Bush	19	90	77	74	146	27	86	519	6.2
1966:									
Carr	193	493	789	705	716	614	617	4127	74.2
Tower	37	209	212	189	393	208	189	1437	25.8

SOURCE: Bexar County Records of Special and General Elections. San Antonio, Texas.

election of that year. The incumbent, Yarborough, received 1,463,958 votes and the Republican, Bush, received 1,134,337 votes. Yarborough's victory margin was 329,621 votes. Of the 254 Texas counties, Yarborough carried 222 and Bush 32; yet the margin of the Yarborough victory was close in many of the counties won by him.<sup>26</sup>

In Bexar County, Yarborough received a larger percentage of the vote than in any other major metropolitan county in the state. He received three votes for every two given to Bush and carried the county 95,051 to 64,532. Yarborough received 13,000 fewer votes in Bexar County than did Lyndon Johnson. George Bush won 11,000 more votes in Bexar County than did Barry Goldwater. In the Mexican-American precincts the Yarborough margins were as high as those for Lyndon Johnson, as Yarborough won 93.8 per cent of the votes. Although Bush ran ahead of Goldwater in Bexar County, in the Mexican-American precincts the liberal Democratic Yarborough won substantial majorities. Yarborough's support for civil rights, medical care for the aged, and other liberal proposals paid high dividends from Mexican-American voters.

It is instructive to compare the support given Ralph Yarborough in the Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio in 1964 with the William Blakley vote in the same

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<sup>26</sup>Weeks, Texas in 1964, op. cit., p. 31.

precincts in 1961. Mexican-American voter turnout was much higher in the presidential election year. One must consider this factor in making a comparison between the support given to Yarborough and the support given to Blakley by Mexican-American voters in San Antonio. Ralph Yarborough did have a record of support for liberal programs designed to help the socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans. William Blakley had no such record. Consequently, there was a tendency among Mexican-American voters in San Antonio to support the liberal Democrat to a greater degree than the conservative Democrat. Table 14 indicates these voting patterns of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.

A senatorial election of particular significance was that of 1966 when Republican John Tower sought re-election. Waggoner Carr, identified with the conservative faction of the Democratic Party in Texas, opposed Tower. Carr was a former Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives as well as a two term Attorney General of Texas.<sup>27</sup> Tower won the election in what was a major triumph for the Republican Party in Texas. Tower received 842,501 votes

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<sup>27</sup>On the factional aspects of the Democratic Party in Texas see Soukup, McCleskey, and Holloway, op. cit.; Clifton McCleskey, The Government and Politics of Texas (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 80-126; and Wilbourn E. Benton, Texas Its Government and Politics (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 120-128.

to 643,855 for Carr. The incumbent Republican carried all of the major metropolitan counties of Texas including Bexar County. Of the 254 counties in Texas, Carr carried 105. However, the overwhelming majority of these counties were small rural counties that did not produce substantial numbers of votes.<sup>28</sup>

In Bexar County the Republican candidate scored an impressive victory. Tower received 59,170 votes to Carr's 44,176.<sup>29</sup> Although Carr carried all of the Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio, his margins of success were so low that he could not offset the large majorities given to Tower on the north side of the city. Carr received 74.2 per cent of the Mexican-American votes and the Republican won 25.8 per cent of the votes. Table 14 shows that Mexican-American voters in San Antonio did not give Waggoner Carr the degree of support given by them to Ralph Yarborough in 1964. When we consider that Mexican-American registration in San Antonio reached an all time high in 1966, the lack of support given to the conservative Democrat represented a major loss to the conservative faction of the Democratic Party. Whereas the seven precincts selected for this study produced an 87.1 per cent turnout in 1964, in 1966 these precincts voted only 33.6 per cent.

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<sup>28</sup>Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corp., 1968-1969), pp. 606-609.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 606.

Of the potential 16,520 votes in the seven precincts, Waggoner Carr received only 24.9 per cent. Although Carr defeated Tower in the Mexican-American precincts, Carr's identification with the conservative faction of the Democratic Party restricted his appeal to the Mexican-American voters in San Antonio.

In analyzing Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio we find that Mexican-Americans generally vote Democratic and tend to support liberal Democrats to a greater extent than conservative Democrats. This observation can be further tested by analysis of Democratic Party primaries which show Mexican-American voting patterns within the dominant party in Texas.

Mexican-American Voting in Democratic  
Party Senatorial Primaries  
1948-1964

There were eleven candidates for the Democratic nomination for the office of United States Senator from Texas in 1948. Of the eleven it was generally conceded that the race was mainly between Congressman Lyndon Johnson and ex-Governor Coke Stevenson.<sup>30</sup> There was an indefinite but clear split between liberals and conservatives in the fight to succeed Senator W. Lee O'Daniel. Most observers thought New Dealish Congressman Johnson a bit brash to challenge Coke Stevenson's bid for the United States Senate. The

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<sup>30</sup>McKay, op. cit., pp. 184-218.

ex-Governor had served longer than any other governor. He had been the wartime chief executive and was admired by Democrats of property and affairs who regarded him as safe. Congressman Johnson had received Franklin Roosevelt's support in the special senatorial election of 1941, which Johnson lost to Governor O'Daniel by a small margin. By 1948, Johnson had lost much of his crusading spirit which had been identified with a rather vigorous liberalism. He had conformed to the necessities of building a statewide following. Nevertheless, in 1948 Lyndon Johnson was recognized as a long-time supporter of the New-Deal.<sup>31</sup>

The primary was held in July, 1948 and the eleven candidates so divided the vote that no one candidate received a majority of the 1,202,392 votes cast. As was expected, Stevenson and Johnson received sufficient support to bring them into a run-off in August.

In the voting and counting of the ballots in the run-off election, there followed an amazing episode in Texas political history. So close was the election that the final results were not known until the September canvass by the State Democratic Executive Committee. The canvass by the Committee gave Johnson 494,191; Stevenson, 494,104. There was a difference of only 87 votes in a total of almost a million cast. Stevenson forces charged

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<sup>31</sup>Key, op. cit., p. 258.

fraudulent voting in certain south Texas counties. Johnson forces made similar charges regarding certain east Texas counties.<sup>32</sup>

Whether there was fraudulent voting has been debated since that time. What did occur was bloc voting by Mexican-Americans in rural counties of south Texas where the Anglo-American political machines had fallen out with Coke Stevenson and turned against him in the senatorial primary. Particularly in Duval, Jim Wells, and Zapata counties extremely large margins were given to Johnson. Bloc voting by Mexican-Americans according to the wishes of their patron or boss remains evident in these three south Texas counties. Consequently, state wide candidates must make allowance for this characteristic of south Texas if they want the support of literally thousands of votes; votes that can decide elections. Breaking this traditional practice is one of the major goals of Mexican-American leaders and groups who want, instead, Mexican-Americans to vote for Mexican-American interests rather than those of the patron or boss.

In Bexar County in 1948 voters supported Lyndon Johnson in the very close race for the Democratic nomination for United States Senator. Johnson received 15,610 votes to Stevenson's 15,511. In the Mexican-American

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<sup>32</sup>McKay, op. cit., pp. 218-246.

precincts Johnson received a slightly higher margin of victory by winning 60.3 per cent of the votes. Johnson carried all of the Mexican-American precincts because Mexican-American voters identified Johnson with Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. Conservative Democrats in Bexar County were sufficiently influential in the Mexican-American precincts to secure for Stevenson a substantial vote. Also, Stevenson's tenure as Governor of Texas made his name known among Mexican-American voters and this helped his cause.<sup>33</sup> Table 15 shows these voting patterns among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio in 1948.

In 1954, Lyndon Johnson sought re-nomination for United States Senator. His primary opponent was a political unknown whose main campaign issue was that no candidate should be elected without some opposition. The primary was an insignificant contest with Johnson winning easily. In the Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio there was opposition to Johnson because he had become identified with the conservative faction of the Democratic Party. Lyndon Johnson, as a state wide office holder, had moved more closely to the conservatives since 1948 and in so doing had aroused Mexican-American opposition in San Antonio. Johnson's winning percentage in 1954 was 62.8 per cent, only slightly higher than 1948. By 1954, the

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with Maury Maverick, Jr. in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

TABLE 15

VOTING IN DEMOCRATIC SENATORIAL PRIMARIES  
 SELECTED PRECINCTS IN SAN ANTONIO  
 1948-1964

Precincts	#12	#16	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	Votes	%
<b>Candidates:</b>									
1948 2nd:									
Johnson	216	104	257	252	142	133	10	1114	60.3
Stevenson	118	92	156	158	122	83	7	736	39.7
1954:									
Johnson	102	210	246	229	226	189	138	1340	62.8
Dougherty	47	141	110	118	160	158	62	796	37.2
1958:									
Yarborough	187	594	537	402	485	421	326	2952	85.9
Blakley	47	100	84	61	93	53	34	472	14.1
1964:									
Yarborough	172	572	599	646	872	494	786	4141	85.3
McClendon	51	90	124	106	144	66	133	714	14.7

SOURCE: Bexar County records of Democratic Primary Elections. San Antonio, Texas.

activities of Mexican-American leaders and groups were developing a degree of political awareness among Mexican-Americans so that a clear trend toward liberal voting was emerging in Mexican-American precincts. Although conservative Democrats still dominated Bexar County politics, there was change developing within the political setting by which liberal Democrats could exert more influence in Bexar County elections.

In the Democratic senatorial primary of 1958, liberal Democrat Ralph Yarborough was given overwhelming support in the Mexican-American precincts of San Antonio. Yarborough was identified with Adlai Stevenson and liberal Democrats in 1952 but Mexican-Americans did not support Yarborough when he ran against Allan Shivers for the gubernatorial nomination in that year. In 1954, when Yarborough ran against Shivers a second time, Mexican-American voters in San Antonio rallied to his cause. In 1958, in the senatorial primary against William Blakley, Ralph Yarborough received heavy support on the west side of San Antonio and carried Bexar County 35,532 to 25,698.<sup>34</sup> The incumbent United States Senator won 85.9 per cent of the votes.

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<sup>34</sup>Ralph Yarborough was the incumbent since he had been elected in a special election to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Price Daniel. He defeated Blakley, a Dallas millionaire businessman, at that time also. See Ronnie Dugger, "Texas' New Junior Senator," New Republic, Vol. 136 (April 22, 1957), p. 8.

Table 15 indicates these voting patterns in the selected precincts of San Antonio.

In 1964, Yarborough was opposed by Gordon McClendon. The issue of liberalism versus conservatism was a major issue in the primary campaign. McClendon campaigned as a conservative alternative to the liberal Senator Yarborough. Over-centralized government in Washington, liberal give-away programs, and destruction of individualism were assailed by McClendon as products of senators such as Ralph Yarborough. Ralph Yarborough countered with arguments for civil rights legislation, federal programs to combat poverty, and humanitarian treatment of all persons. Yarborough won the nomination by 232,438 votes out of 1,577,584 votes cast in the state. The support given to Yarborough by Mexican-Americans in San Antonio was similar to that of 1958 as he won 85.3 per cent of the votes. The liberal senator carried all Mexican-American precincts by large margins and won Bexar County 50,264 to McClendon's 26,145.<sup>35</sup> Table 15 shows these voting patterns among selected Mexican-American precincts and leads one to emphasize Mexican-American support for liberal Democrats in primaries devoted to the nomination of senatorial candidates.

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<sup>35</sup>For results of state wide as well as county returns from the 1964 primary see Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corp., 1966-1967), pp. 560-566.

Mexican-American Voting in Democratic  
Gubernatorial Primaries  
1950-1964

Another means of analyzing Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio is through results obtained from Democratic gubernatorial primaries. These results reflect upon the nature of the political setting.

Upon the death of Beauford Jester in July 1949, the lieutenant governor, Allan Shivers, succeeded to the governor's office. The new governor had served for ten years in the Texas Senate before becoming lieutenant governor; thus he had considerable experience in the ways of Texas politics.<sup>36</sup>

In the July primary of 1950 Shivers proved himself an able campaigner and won easily over six opponents. His major opponent was Caso March who was identified with the liberal faction of the Democratic Party. March, a law professor at Baylor University, had been a candidate in 1946 and 1948 losing both times to Jester.<sup>37</sup> In 1950, Shivers carried Bexar County six to one with a vote of 36,901 to 6,413 for March. Shivers carried all of the Mexican-American precincts by large margins winning over 80 per cent of the votes. Table 16 indicates the voting

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<sup>36</sup>Seth McKay and Odie Faulk, The Saga of Texas: Texas After Spindletop (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1965), pp. 214-215.

<sup>37</sup>McKay, Texas and the Fair Deal, op. cit., p. 312.

TABLE 16

VOTING IN DEMOCRATIC GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARIES  
 SELECTED PRECINCTS IN SAN ANTONIO  
 1950-1964

Precincts	#12	#16	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	Votes	%
Candidates:									
1950 1st									
Shivers	217	245	386	351	285	220	35	1739	81.1
March	53	72	85	84	82	46	12	434	19.9
1952 1st									
Shivers	116	135	202	146	212	122	54	987	53.8
R. Yarbgh	97	97	213	149	170	119	22	867	46.2
1954 2nd									
Shivers	71	193	135	129	193	229	65	1015	23.2
R. Yarbgh	281	459	643	578	486	618	278	3343	86.7
1952 2nd									
Daniel	111	259	221	176	227	165	105	1264	31.2
R. Yarbgh	242	509	448	429	435	430	291	2784	68.8
1958 1st									
Daniel	39	117	69	58	107	31	31	452	10.3
Gonzalez	297	662	672	636	598	641	394	3900	89.7
1962 2nd									
Connally	237	287	481	486	498	270	558	2817	56.1
D. Yarbgh	116	296	291	308	396	269	426	2202	43.9
1964 Lt. Gov.									
Smith	54	118	108	120	185	76	177	838	19.9
Fuentes	203	529	529	499	705	344	545	3354	80.1

SOURCE: Bexar County Records of Democratic Primary Elections. San Antonio, Texas.

patterns of Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio in the 1950 primary.

The Democratic gubernatorial primary in 1952 is of interest not only because of the contest for governor but for the fight to get the state's electoral votes for President. Texas state races, more than ever before, were tied to national issues and the presidential campaign. In fact, it was difficult to decide where the national campaign ended and the state campaign began. Political observers, the old guard Republicans, the Truman loyal Democrats, and Democrats who supported Dwight Eisenhower agreed that it was very doubtful if there was a dividing line between the two campaigns. The Shivers campaign for re-election was strongly identified with conservative Democrats in Texas, opposition to Truman, and "sins of Trumanism" such as civil rights laws, corruption in Washington, inflation, centralization, bureaucracies, and Communism in "high places." Ralph Yarborough, Austin attorney who opposed Shivers in the Democratic primary, waged a vigorous campaign against the governor and attacked several parts of Shivers' program for Texas. Few people believed that Yarborough had much of a chance against the leader of the conservative faction of the Democratic Party and the Texas anti-Truman forces. Yarborough impressed his public as a young man of capabilities. However, he, like Adlai Stevenson, was so identified with the New Deal

as well as "Trumanism" that it was useless for him to insist that he was not a "hand picked pro-Fair Dealer candidate." Shivers polled 833,861 votes, Yarborough received 488,345 votes.<sup>38</sup>

In San Antonio and Bexar County Shivers received 24,412 votes to 12,538 for Yarborough. This two to one margin for Shivers was reduced when one looked at the Mexican-American precincts. Shivers carried practically all of the Mexican-American precincts but only by slight margins receiving 53.8 per cent of the votes. Although there was general support for Shivers' renomination, Yarborough received strong support in some of the Mexican-American precincts. Mexican-Americans did not follow Shivers' advice and split their ticket and vote for the Republican candidate for president. Mexican-American voters cast their ballots only for Democratic candidates in 1952. Hence, the Mexican-American precincts voted heavily for Stevenson for president but less so for Shivers for governor. A vote of this nature indicates party identification with some ideological considerations. Since Adlai Stevenson was described as too liberal for Allan Shivers, a vote for Shivers could be defined as a

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<sup>38</sup>McKay, Texas and the Fair Deal, op. cit., pp. 377-378. See also McKay and Faulk, op. cit., pp. 214-218; and Fred Gantt, Jr., The Chief Executive in Texas (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 44-45, 207, and 316; D. B. Hardeman, "Shivers of Texas: A Tragedy in Three Parts," Harper's, Vol. 213 (November, 1956), pp. 50-56.

vote against Stevenson. Such was not the case in Mexican-American precincts. Although many Mexican-Americans did vote for Ralph Yarborough against Shivers, Shivers nevertheless carried most of the Mexican-American precincts. During these years the conservative Democrats controlled Bexar County politics to such an extent that they could deliver many Mexican-American votes to state wide candidates. Mexican-American voters gave most of their support to the incumbent conservative governor against the liberal Yarborough and at the same time voted for Adlai Stevenson for president. Party loyalty to the Democratic candidate was sufficiently strong in Mexican-American precincts that their vote went to Stevenson rather than Eisenhower. See Tables 13 and 16 for these voting patterns among San Antonio Mexican-Americans in 1952.

In 1954, Shivers asked the Democratic voters to give him a third term as governor. His chief opponent again was Ralph Yarborough. A large number of candidates in the first primary brought about the necessity of a run-off primary which Shivers won 775,088 to 683,132 for Yarborough. The run-off was cast in terms of conservatism versus liberalism within the Democratic Party.<sup>39</sup>

In San Antonio and Bexar County the political setting had changed in so far as Mexican-Americans were

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<sup>39</sup>McKay and Faulk, op. cit., p. 221.

concerned. Although Shivers again carried the county, his margin over Yarborough was much less than in 1952. Shivers won 38,985 and Yarborough received 31,174 votes. In the Mexican-American precincts Yarborough won a substantial majority of the votes. Yarborough carried practically all of the Mexican-American precincts by handsome margins winning 86.7 per cent of the votes. Mexican-American leaders and group activities delivered the Mexican-American vote to the liberal Democrat. See Table 16 for Mexican-American voting patterns which show the changing political setting from 1952 to 1954.

Shivers' third term was not a happy one because of a scandal in the veterans' land program. Other developments led to a decline in the popularity of the governor.<sup>40</sup> In the Democratic primary of 1956 United States Senator Price Daniel declared that he would seek the gubernatorial nomination. His major opponent was Ralph Yarborough, who was making his third attempt for the governor's office. In all, six candidates entered the first primary and so divided the vote that a run-off was required. In the run-off primary Daniel emerged victorious over Yarborough. Senator Daniel received 698,001 votes to 694,830 for Yarborough. Yarborough received the support of labor groups, regular Democrats who had not bolted the party in

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<sup>40</sup>Hardeman, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

1952 and again in 1956, as well as racial and ethnic minority groups. Price Daniel, a former Attorney General of Texas who had been elected United States Senator in 1952, was supported by conservative Democrats.<sup>41</sup>

In Bexar County Price Daniel was able to maintain the conservative Democratic success experienced by earlier state wide candidates of the conservative faction. Daniel, a supporter of Eisenhower for President, received 38,985 votes to 27,870 for Yarborough. In the Mexican-American precincts Yarborough received extensive support and carried all of the precincts on the west side of San Antonio. Yarborough won 68.8 per cent of the votes. In 1956, the Mexican-Americans not only supported the liberal Yarborough for governor in the Democratic primary but also voted for Adlai Stevenson for president. This voting pattern was different from that of 1952 when Mexican-Americans supported Shivers and indicates a changing political setting in San Antonio because of the political role of Mexican-Americans.

Price Daniel announced in 1958 that he would seek a second term. His most important opponent was State Senator Henry B. Gonzalez from San Antonio. Daniel easily won the primary.<sup>42</sup> Democrats of Texas (DOT), an organization

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<sup>41</sup>McKay and Faulk, op. cit., pp. 221-222.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

of liberal Democrats, supported Gonzalez' opposition to Daniel. From the very beginning there was little chance of success for Gonzalez since he was a Mexican-American, a liberal, a Catholic, and Daniel was running for a traditional second term. Governor Daniel received 60 per cent of the total vote and won without the necessity of a run-off. Gonzalez finished second in the balloting with 19 per cent of the vote, but ran ahead of Daniel in minority group areas of urban centers and won eleven counties. The counties won by Gonzalez were primarily in south Texas where he received a heavy ethnic vote from fellow Mexican-Americans. South Texas political machines did not endorse Gonzalez, yet he carried several counties indicative of a changing political setting in the region.<sup>43</sup>

Henry Gonzalez did not win his home county of Bexar as Price Daniel received 33,939 votes to Gonzalez' 26,029. In the Mexican-American precincts, as should have been expected, Gonzalez won landslide margins by receiving almost ninety per cent of the votes. He was not able to counter Daniel's voting strength in the southern and northern parts of San Antonio. Gonzalez' ethnic identification with Mexican-Americans contributed to his strong support

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<sup>43</sup>Eugene Rodriguez, Jr., "Henry Gonzalez: A Political Profile," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1965), pp. 85-87.

in the west side precincts of San Antonio. The fact that Gonzalez was from San Antonio injected an element of localism into the campaign but that did not help him with Anglo-American voters. The ethnic and ideological differences between Gonzalez and Daniel were the major issues operating against the state senator in his home town.

In 1960, Price Daniel won re-nomination for a third term as Governor of Texas without any effective opposition. In 1962, as usual, the majority party in Texas was split into liberal and conservative factions. John Connally emerged as the winner of the primary after a run-off.

The Democratic primary of 1962 included several major candidates; consequently, a run-off primary resulted. In the run-off, John Connally, protege of Lyndon Johnson, was opposed by liberal attorney Don Yarborough of Houston. Connally, although associated with John Kennedy's New Frontier as Secretary of the Navy, took instead a more conservative position. Don Yarborough was the exponent of the New Frontier. Yarborough keyed his campaign to the need for improvements in the state's social services and economic policies.<sup>44</sup>

In the run-off primary Connally increased his original vote from 431,498 to 565,174, a net gain of only

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<sup>44</sup>McKay and Faulk, op. cit., p. 226; and Moukup, McCleskey, and Holloway, op. cit., pp. 140-145.

133,676. By contrast, Don Yarborough showed a net gain of 220,938, increasing his original total from 317,986 to 538,924. Connally's margin was only 26,250 votes, giving him 51.2 per cent and Yarborough 48.8 per cent of the votes.<sup>45</sup>

In San Antonio and Bexar County John Connally emerged victorious because of a series of campaign maneuvers which denied Don Yarborough the Mexican-American support Yarborough sorely needed. Connally's campaign in San Antonio was waged along a broad political spectrum. He criticized federal aid to education and advocated a ten per cent cut in state spending. Largely, however, he avoided direct stands on most state and national issues and in the run-off refused to participate in a series of television debates proposed by Yarborough. Connally's association with the Kennedy administration was effectively utilized in Negro and Mexican-American precincts. Disturbed by liberal successes in the Democratic Party, a coalition of Lyndon Johnson and Allan Shivers supporters supplied the bulk of Connally's campaign funds in San Antonio.<sup>46</sup> Although the Political Association of Spanish

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<sup>45</sup>Soukup, McCleskey, and Holloway, op. cit., pp. 145-149. See also Gantt, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

<sup>46</sup>Interview with John Alaniz, Mexican-American political leader in San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967. See also Willie Morris, "Texas Politics in Turmoil," Harper's. Vol. 225 (September, 1962),

Speaking Organizations (PASO) endorsed Don Yarborough, the campaign strategy for John Connally paid off as Connally carried the county 41,915 to 23,296. In the Mexican-American precincts, Connally's margin of victory was small but he did secure enough votes to carry the west side precincts by winning 56 per cent of the votes cast in the primary election. See Table 16 for Mexican-American voting patterns in 1962.

In the gubernatorial election of 1962, John Connally was opposed by Republican Jack Cox, a former Democrat and confidant of Allan Shivers. Connally made a determined effort to unite the warring factions of the Democratic Party and did manage to do so. He carried San Antonio and Bexar County by combining conservative Democrats and Mexican-Americans.<sup>47</sup> Connally was successful in putting together a very fragile and uneasy conservative-liberal coalition that secured 60 per cent of the vote in Bexar County. His greatest success was on the west side as Republican Cox received heavy support from north side San Antonio. The election was one of the closest

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pp. 86-86; and Frank Madla, Jr., "The Political Impact of Latin Americans and Negroes in Texas Politics," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1964), pp. 76-77.

<sup>47</sup>Willie Morris, "Texas," Nation, Vol. 195 (October 27, 1962), p. 257.

gubernatorial elections in Texas history as Cox won 45 per cent of the total state wide vote.<sup>48</sup>

By 1964, the "fragile coalition" within the Democratic Party was split and the feuding factions returned to normal. In March, 1964, liberal Democrats met in Houston and formed the "Texas Organization of Liberal Democrats." They supported Lyndon Johnson for president, but some of them were not too enthusiastic. The liberals' greatest enthusiasm was for Senator Ralph Yarborough. At the Houston meeting Ralph Yarborough was endorsed for re-election along with a state wide ticket for the coming primary which included Don Yarborough for governor and Albert Fuentes, Jr. for lieutenant governor. Fuentes, a former official of the Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations, was from San Antonio and had been active in Mexican-American political efforts in the city as well as in south Texas. Fuentes was given much credit for organizational activities among Mexican-Americans.<sup>49</sup>

The 1964 Democratic primary was a landslide for Governor Connally as he carried all but two of the state's 254 counties and won by more than seventy per cent of the vote. Connally, after two years in office, had become one

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<sup>48</sup>Soukup, McCleskey, and Holloway, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

<sup>49</sup>Weeks, Texas in 1964, op. cit., pp. 6-9.

of the most popular of all state wide candidates. Don Yarborough polled only 471,871 votes to Connally's 1,124,609.<sup>50</sup>

Preston Smith, the incumbent lieutenant governor, carried the state by a margin greater than Connally. Smith, identified with the conservative faction of the Democratic Party, received 1,160,218 votes to 304,350 for Albert Fuentes. Smith carried Bexar County 40,927 to 26,559. In the Mexican-American precincts, Fuentes received very large majorities by receiving over 80 per cent of the votes. As a home-town liberal Mexican-American, Fuentes defeated Smith easily in the Mexican-American precincts of San Antonio. Smith received such large majorities in the other Bexar County precincts that Fuentes was easily defeated in the county, although Smith won only 19.9 per cent of the votes in Mexican-American precincts. Ethnic identification was a factor in this primary as Fuentes, being a Mexican-American, received his greatest support from Mexican-American precincts.<sup>51</sup> See Table 16 for Mexican-American voting patterns in the primary for the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor in 1964.

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-14.

<sup>51</sup>See the Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corp., 1966-1967), pp. 563-566 for 1964 primary results.

In 1964, and again in 1966, John Connally was re-elected as Governor of Texas without difficulty. Connally was unopposed in the Democratic primary of 1966. After 1966 Connally had his appointees in every seat on every one of the state's 200 boards and commissions. Connally supporters were in a large majority in the Texas Legislature.

Mexican-American voters in San Antonio supported John Connally for his elections against token Republican opposition. The vote was much heavier for Connally in 1964 than in 1966 as Connally won 96 per cent of the votes in 1964 and almost 85 per cent of the votes in 1966. The heavy turnout associated with the presidential election of 1964 conceivably explains the larger vote for Connally in that year as opposed to 1966. Opposition to a state minimum wage law and lack of acceptable support for Mexican-American demands in the summer of 1966 contributed to Connally's decline in popularity among Mexican-Americans. In the summer of 1966 Connally refused to support a march sponsored by Mexican-Americans in their demand for a state minimum wage law. Leaders of "The March" sought a meeting with the governor in Austin on Labor Day but the governor was not available. In San Antonio, Mexican-American leaders and organizations declared that they would no longer support John Connally as Governor of Texas. In the general election of 1966 Mexican-American precincts in San Antonio

gave most of their votes to Connally; however, their support was substantially lower than that of 1964 as the Republican candidates increased their votes from 4 per cent in 1964 to over 15 per cent in 1966. Table 17 indicates these voting patterns among Mexican-Americans in San Antonio.

Mexican-American voting patterns in 1968 were unchanged from the immediately preceding elections. In the Democratic party primaries in the spring of 1968, Mexican-American leaders and groups endorsed liberal Don Yarborough against several recognized conservative Democrats. In the run-off primary, won by Preston Smith, Mexican-Americans voted overwhelmingly for Don Yarborough.

In the general election of 1968, Mexican-Americans gave most of their votes to the Democratic party. However, PASO endorsed Republican Paul Eggers for governor against Preston Smith in the belief that Eggers was more liberal than Smith. Eggers made a direct appeal for Mexican-American votes and in so doing indicated that the Republican party in Texas is seriously attempting to compete with Democrats. In the presidential election Mexican-Americans voted in very large majorities for Hubert Humphrey against Richard Nixon.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Dr. Bill Crane, Professor of Government at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, in commenting on the 1968 election, observes that Mexican-Americans throughout south Texas overwhelmingly voted for Humphrey. In fact,

TABLE 17  
 VOTING IN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS SELECTED  
 PRECINCTS IN SAN ANTONIO  
 1964-1966

Precincts	#12	#16	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	Votes	%
<b>Candidates:</b>									
1964									
Connally	523	879	1116	1203	1408	934	1425	7488	96.0
Crichton	13	39	43	50	103	23	43	314	4.0
1966									
Connally	181	480	742	712	763	636	638	4152	84.8
Kennerly	25	129	107	96	181	103	104	745	15.2

SOURCE: Bexar County Records of Special and General Elections. San Antonio, Texas.

### Summary

The political participation of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has increased over the last twenty years. Participation in voter registration and voting percentage has increased. Mexican-American organizational efforts have had a primary role to play in bringing about increased political participation.

The real breakthrough for Mexican-Americans came in the period of 1952 through 1956. Albert Pena and Henry Gonzalez provided the impetus for increased participation by their political leadership. Prior to 1952 Mexican-Americans were dominated by Anglo-American political bosses to an extent that enabled the bosses to deliver large numbers of Mexican-American votes. The activities of Mexican-American leaders and groups encouraged independent Mexican-American voting patterns.

In San Antonio the great majority of Mexican-Americans are supporters of the Democratic Party. Over the past twenty years Mexican-American precincts have regularly turned in a majority of their votes for Democratic candidates. Within the Democratic Party, Mexican-Americans have followed a pattern of support for liberal Democrats.

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the percentage of Humphrey support was even slightly larger than that for Kennedy in 1960. The west side support for Henry Gonzalez was even larger than usual. Coordinated efforts by Senator Ralph Yarborough, Congressman Henry Gonzalez, and County Commissioner Albert Pena produced nine out of ten Mexican-American votes for the Democrats. Letter to the author from Dr. Bill Crane, November 26, 1968.

Mexican-Americans tend to support the liberal faction of the Democratic Party because the liberals have proposed programs that coincide more closely with the socio-economic aspirations of the Mexican-American people.

Ethnic voting patterns are apparent among Mexican-Americans. On those occasions when Mexican-Americans have had an opportunity to vote for a member of their ethnic group, they have responded positively. Although there were few Mexican-Americans in the primaries and elections utilized in this study, those candidates were given strong support by their fellow Mexican-Americans.

With the increase in Mexican-American voter registration and voting percentage there has come increased political power for Mexican-Americans. Their voting patterns have provided a means by which political power has been brought to bear on the political parties, issues, and government of San Antonio.

CHAPTER V  
POLITICAL ROLE AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN  
POLITICAL ACCESS IN  
SAN ANTONIO

Analysis of political role on the personal level calls attention to the success of the political actor in gaining access to government. Access is understood to mean actually holding an office or being able to influence an office-holder. Alfred de Grazia contends that for the majority of Americans access to government constitutes holding an office or some representative of the group holding an office.<sup>1</sup> Ethnic groups are vitally concerned with the individuals in official positions of government because those office-holders may or may not identify with the ambitions of the group.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the basic objective of groups in their political activity is to gain access to government.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred de Grazia, Public and Republic (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1959), pp. 101-114. See also Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951), pp. 207-209.

<sup>3</sup>David Truman, The Governmental Process (New York:

In analyzing the personal level of political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, this investigation must consider the factor of access to the offices of government. Gaining access to the offices of government, where earlier access was denied, represents a changing political setting for the political actor. It is useful for this study to emphasize the following mechanisms by which a political actor may secure access to the offices of government: (1) nonpartisan groups; (2) political parties; and (3) political elections and appointments in the official government. The literature of political science provides a basis by which the study can compare political access with Mexican-American politics in San Antonio.

A Note on Literature for Analyzing  
Politics, Political Access,  
and Political Role

A nonpartisan group represents an organization which rejects the idea of a political party. It also rejects the idea of affiliation with a political party and chooses instead to reward its friends and punish its enemies according to the interests of the group.<sup>4</sup> The

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Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951), pp. 264-265. See also V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (Fourth edition; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1958), p. 22; and Dan Nimmo and Thomas D. Unga, American Political Patterns (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), pp. 4-17.

<sup>4</sup>Key, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

rationale for nonpartisan politics, which spread widely during the early decades of the twentieth century to many cities, schools, and other local bodies, was that local affairs should be divorced from national and state politics. It was argued that partisan politics must be "kept out" of school, health departments, and so on. Consequently, nonpartisan elections are provided by law in many American communities. In the overwhelming majority of cities with commission and city-manager forms of government and forty per cent of the mayor-council cities, nonpartisan elections are used for election of councilmen. Many popular officeholders cultivate the image of being above politics and appeal in nonpartisan terms for support of members of all political parties.<sup>5</sup>

Whether partisanship has actually been removed when the nonpartisan ballot has been adopted is the subject of more than one recent study. Charles R. Adrian suggests the following typology for nonpartisanship in actual practice:

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<sup>5</sup>Hugh A. Bone and Austin Ranney, Politics and Voters (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), pp. 106-107.

<sup>6</sup>Charles R. Adrian, "A Typology for NonPartisan Elections," Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 12 (June, 1959), pp. 449-458. See also Eugene C. Lee, The Politics of Nonpartisanship (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960); James O. Wilson, "Politics and Reform in American Cities," in Ivan Hinderaker, (ed.), American Government Annual, 1962-1963 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1962), pp. 37-52; and Robert H. Salisbury and Gordon Black, "Class and Party in Partisan and Nonpartisan Elections," American Political Science Review, Vol. 57 (September, 1963), pp. 584-592.

1. cities in which it is normally impossible for a candidate to win without the support of a major party organization (e.g., Jersey City during the time of the Hague machine, and Chicago).
2. cities where both party and non-party groups compete with slates of candidates on a reasonably equal basis (e.g., Cincinnati, Albuquerque, and Wichita).
3. cities customarily having slates supported by nonparty groups but with little or no participation by party organization (e.g., Kansas City since the fall of Pendergast, Dallas, Fort Worth, Nashville, and many others).
4. cities in which neither party organization nor slates of candidates are important.

Concerning the actual effect of nonpartisanship, two recent case studies indicate that nonpartisan municipal elections do not free the electorate from the pressure of group influence or contribute to "an integrated civic life."<sup>7</sup> The significant thing about nonpartisan elections is that politics is not avoided or eliminated but that, on the contrary, a different form of politics replaces the older partisan style. Nonpartisan government requires politicians because groups are involved in local government. These groups have different ambitions and interests which

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<sup>7</sup>Gerald Pomper, "Ethnic and Group Voting in Nonpartisan Municipal Elections," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 30 (Spring, 1966), pp. 79-97.

produce conflict leading to demands for governmental resolution.<sup>8</sup>

Because political power is not shared equally, social scientists have engaged in debate over the question, "Who governs?" Two approaches to this question are relevant to this study: The first approach is the pluralistic model which is probably the dominant point of view among political scientists today.<sup>9</sup> This approach argues that majority coalitions among groups must be created on each issue. Thus, power in the local community is highly decentralized, fluid, and situational. There is no single elite, but a multicentered system in which the centers exist in a conflict-and-bargaining relation to each other. The second approach with regard to the question of "Who governs?" is the power-elite explanation. According to this approach, power in a local community is not decentralized. The distribution of power is viewed as inherently hierarchical and those at the top of the pyramid make all the key decisions. The elite's resources are overwhelmingly greater than those of low-status people.

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<sup>8</sup>Bone and Ranney, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

<sup>9</sup>The best known and most influential works on this approach are Truman, op. cit.; and Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

Hence, whoever desires access to government must work with and support the power elite.<sup>10</sup>

Political parties represent a second means of access to government. Pendleton Herring wrote three decades ago that the function of American political parties is "to bring the diversity of our society into working harmony."<sup>11</sup> According to Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall, political parties are essentially interested in making nominations and contesting elections "in the hope of eventually gaining and exercising control of the personnel and policies of government."<sup>12</sup> In other words, political parties represent coalitions of groups organized in such a manner as to mobilize support in elections for positions of government. Such mobilization builds community consensus. Political parties seek to control the authoritative policy-making bodies of the community and, in so doing, make governmental decisions in response to the demands and

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<sup>10</sup>The best known and most influential works on this approach are C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); and Flowd Hunter, Community Power Structure (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953). See also, Nelson W. Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

<sup>11</sup>Pendleton Herring, The Politics of Democracy (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1940), p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall, Democracy and the American Party System (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), p. 85.

ambitions of those groups which compose the party.<sup>13</sup> In terms of access to government, Herring concludes that "our party system tries to reconcile conservative elements with the forces making for change."<sup>14</sup> This concept of political party is based on a positive attitude toward the role of compromise and mediation between groups seeking access to government.<sup>15</sup>

Inclusion in the official positions of government is a third means of access to government for a political actor. Although access may take various forms, as this study indicates, Robert Lane contends that securing a position in government is one of the primary reasons for people to enter politics.<sup>16</sup> Irregardless of one's political needs, whether they be economic, social, or psychological, those needs can be served by officials who identify with the interests involved.<sup>17</sup>

Oscar Handlin indicates that with the rapid growth in the number of foreign-born voters, American politicians increasingly were conscious of the necessity of satisfying

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<sup>13</sup>Nimmo and Unga, op. cit., pp. 222-223.

<sup>14</sup>Herring, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>15</sup>Neil A. McDonald, The Study of Political Parties (New York: Random House, Inc., 1955), p. 24.

<sup>16</sup>Lane, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

the needs and interests of naturalized citizens. Succeeding generations of these immigrants encouraged the adjustments. From the start, the children were more intimately involved than their parents. Handlin notes that "the schools had acquainted them with the mechanisms of politics" and had also "imbued them with the conviction that government was susceptible to popular control and capable of serving popular interests."<sup>18</sup>

V. O. Key, Jr. observes that the American political system has absorbed wave after wave of immigration. As each new influx of migrants arrived, peoples of like national origin, language, and culture formed political blocs. These groups were used by politicians and the immigrants and their children, in turn, used politicians as circumstances, immediate self-interest, or a strategy of self-protection dictated.<sup>19</sup> Many youngsters growing up after 1850 in the northern cities of the United States came to understand that as sons of immigrants, without the inherited advantages of capital or family connections, there were few roads to success open to them. In politics, any office was available to him who could command the support of numbers; and in many places, the immigrants who had no

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<sup>18</sup>Handlin, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Key, op. cit., pp. 584-585. See also Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (Third edition; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 85.

other assets had at least the weight of numbers. Ethnic identification between the candidate and his community of foreign-born became a positive aid in his quest for office. With his success the ethnic group secured greater access to government.<sup>20</sup>

There is a long heritage of cultural conflict with regard to Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. The political role of Mexican-Americans is essentially designed to bring about a more desirable political setting for the group. Access to government is highly correlated with a changing political setting. In San Antonio, access to government involves the Good Government League, partisan politics, and positions in local government.

Mexican-Americans, Political Access  
and the Good Government League

The political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio cannot be divorced from issues of local government. The Good Government League is a nonpartisan organization ) that dominates the city government of San Antonio. Hence, the number one issue in city government for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio is the Good Government League (GGL).<sup>21</sup> In order to relate the political role of Mexican-

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<sup>20</sup>Handlin, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>21</sup>Interview with Albert Pena, Bexar County Commissioner, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

Americans in San Antonio to the GGL, it is necessary to analyze the city government in San Antonio.

San Antonio has the council-manager form of city government. The mayor is elected for a two year term of office. He is elected by the voters simply as one member of the city council and is not designated on the ballot as mayor. The nine member city council chooses one of their number to act as mayor, whose formal duties are principally ceremonial. The mayor has no appointive, legislative, and budgetary powers except as a single member of the council. He presides over the council meetings but does not possess the veto power. He has only indirect relations with the city bureaucracy. In theory, he is a shining example of a weak mayor.<sup>22</sup> In reality, this picture of the weak position of the mayor is not an accurate one because he is the dominant power in the GGL.<sup>23</sup>

The city council of San Antonio is elected at-large by the voters for a two year term of office. The charter calls for nonpartisan elections. As a body, the council sets administrative policy, approves the budget, and appoints the city manager, the city clerk, the Public

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<sup>22</sup>Bill Crane, "San Antonio: Pluralistic City and Monolithic Government," in Leonard E. Goodall (ed.), Urban Politics in the Southwest (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1967), p. 133.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with William Sinkin, Member of the Good Government League, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

Library Board, and municipal judges. The city manager appoints, supervises, and removes the heads of the various city departments.<sup>24</sup>

As is indicated above, the city charter requires nonpartisan elections. In the sense that Republicans and Democrats do not run for the council as such, the intent of the charter is fulfilled. On the other hand, an entire slate of candidates is offered by the private nonpartisan GGL. Since 1953, the GGL has been entirely successful in its efforts to control city hall. Candidates for the city council are carefully screened and "nominated" by the Board of Directors of the GGL. Mexican-American leaders in San Antonio declare that the candidates of the GGL are hand picked by an elite oligarchy which controls the personnel and destinies of the GGL. Only candidates are selected who will follow the lead or agree with the ideology of the GGL Board of Directors.<sup>25</sup> The mayor of San Antonio, a very conservative and wealthy businessman in the city, secures his power not from his official position in the city government but from his position in the GGL.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Crane, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Peter Torres, San Antonio City Councilman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with John Daniels, Bexar County Democratic Party Chairman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

The GGL has a large membership which unites behind the selected candidates. The successful campaign tactic is to field a balanced ticket which reflects the diversified population of San Antonio.<sup>27</sup> The present city council of San Antonio is composed of five Anglo-Americans, three Mexican-Americans, and one Negro. One of the Mexican-Americans, Peter Torres, is not a member of the GGL and is, instead, a severe critic of the League. The other eight councilmen were candidates of the GGL in the last city elections in 1967.<sup>28</sup> The campaign strategy is simple; offer a balanced ethnic or racial ticket, repeat the goals of the organization (that is, a good efficient economical city government), illustrate how the previous administrations fulfilled these goals, and promise more of the same. This campaign strategy has been successful for fifteen years.<sup>29</sup>

Bill Crane, a professional student of politics in San Antonio, suggests several reasons for the uninterrupted success of the GGL. These reasons include its large membership, its support by high socio-economic groups, its cohesion, its plentiful financing, its weak opposition,

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<sup>27</sup>Crane, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>28</sup>Torres, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup>Crane, op. cit.

and its utilization of minority candidates.<sup>30</sup>

The leadership of the GGL is composed of persons of a high socio-economic status. Taking part in the deliberations of the GGL are representatives of the city's leading and most influential law firms, bankers and investors, spokesmen for the cattle and oil interests, real estate developers, merchants, manufacturers, Protestant religious leaders, transportation and communication figures, advertising and public relations personnel, retired military officers, owners of construction and building companies, and leaders of important civic and womens organizations.<sup>31</sup>

Unity is a major strength of the GGL. Deliberations while selecting candidates are closed to the public and the press. A screening committee reports its nominations to the Board of Directors which makes its recommendations to the general membership of the League. Approval automatically follows since all necessary accommodations have been made in the preceding process. Arrangements are made so that only a selected few may make any statements to the communications media. Hence, when a statement is released to the public, it is supported by united sentiment.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 135-137.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

The GGL does not lack for campaign funds. Money is raised and spent for whatever is necessary to conduct a successful campaign. Professional public relations firms are employed and all advertising media are used. Billboards, television, radio and newspaper advertisements are particularly effective. The city is blanketed with attractive and appropriate mail-outs. The prospective voter has ample opportunity to acquire a printed list of the GGL candidates whose continual slogan is "For continued progress, vote GGL." There is little public debate, discussion, or even appearances between candidates. The GGL slate relies on the usual advertising methods and on the organized support of the League membership.<sup>33</sup>

The political efforts of the GGL are continual. The League constantly points to its administrations as the opposite of partisan politics. The public is constantly reminded of past accomplishments, current projects and plans for the future. The very name "Good Government League" is a powerful asset because it is rather difficult for the potential opposition candidate to stand against "good government." The community has come to equate GGL candidates with progress, respectability, stability, and economy. Opponents are automatically branded as being opposed to council-manager government and in favor of a

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

return to the dirty politics of the spoils system. One of the recent city elections saw a GGL candidate carried to victory on the slogan of "Progress, not Politics!" Any potential opposition leader is branded a tool of power hungry political bosses. Public opinion makers throughout San Antonio have enthroned the simple concept that "nice people support the GGL."<sup>34</sup>

Another factor enabling the GGL to remain in office in San Antonio is the weak and divided opposition it generates. There is rarely a time when there is an organized effort to field a complete and unified opposition slate. Usually several of the councilmen places go un-challenged. As elsewhere, politics is an expensive operation. It is estimated that it costs at least \$30,000 for an individual to conduct a respectable campaign in San Antonio. Generally speaking, those who can afford these prices belong to the GGL. Consequently, few attempt it.<sup>35</sup>

The GGL makes a practice of utilizing minority groups to maintain itself in office. It is through this practice that Mexican-Americans gain access to the GGL. Mexican-American leaders contend, however, that those Mexican-Americans who are GGL candidates are essentially "Tio Tomases," or "Uncle Toms" and are not representative

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

of Mexican-American needs.<sup>36</sup> The more progressive Negro leaders have a similar problem. In one recent election, a Negro Baptist minister of liberal inclinations sought election as an independent for the city council. His election would have been a first for San Antonio. He ran an effective and close race but lost. When he tried again the next election, he was confronted with the fact that the GGL had nominated another Negro minister for the same place. The voter could vote the straight GGL ticket and, at the same time, insure proper and necessary "minority representation" on the city council. The independent Negro's primary issue was denied him and he lost the second time by a considerably wider margin.<sup>37</sup>

Mexican-Americans have access to the GGL because the League constantly recruits young, professional types with personal followings on the west side of San Antonio. Regardless of the opposition cry by the Independent Mexican-American leaders that these GGL recruits are not really identified with Mexican-American problems, the fact remains that ethnic identity secures, for the GGL Mexican-

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<sup>36</sup>Interview with John Alaniz, Mexican-American political leader in San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967; and Pena, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup>Crane, op. cit.

American candidates, large numbers of votes.<sup>38</sup> An exception to this general practice occurred in the 1967 city elections when Peter Torres, an independent Mexican-American, waged a successful campaign against the GGL Mexican-American candidate. Torres' election was essentially based on his political strength in the west side precincts of San Antonio where Mexican-Americans rejected the GGL candidate. It is argued by Mexican-American political leaders that the Torres' election is a sign of the growing sophistication of Mexican-Americans in city politics. These leaders believe that the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has grown sufficiently strong and independent of the GGL that the leaders can plan more active opposition to the GGL. They believe the time is at hand when Mexican-Americans can secure access to the city government not through the GGL but through independent Mexican-American political power.<sup>39</sup>

Mexican-Americans, the GGL, and  
Bexar County Politics

If the city government of San Antonio is "as modern as tomorrow," the county governmental structure is the most unreformed level of government in Texas.<sup>40</sup> County

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<sup>38</sup>Torres, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup>Alaniz, op. cit.; Pena, op. cit.; and Torres, op. cit.

<sup>40</sup>Crane, op. cit., p. 138.

government has changed very little in the past century in Texas since it is structurally and functionally frozen into the Constitution of Texas. Practically all county officials are elected by the voters for four year terms. General policy and administrative oversight are the responsibility of the county commissioners court composed of four commissioners representing precincts plus a county judge elected at large. While this body can determine, to a limited degree, what is to be done in county affairs, it is almost powerless to supervise the doing since almost all the routine administrators are popularly elected.<sup>41</sup>

Conflict in local politics in San Antonio is often generated between Bexar County Courthouse and the San Antonio City Hall. Physically separated by only a city block, the courthouse and the city hall in San Antonio have been poles apart in political theory and practice. Except for a joint jail and combined efforts in public health, there is little cooperation between these overlapping governmental units. Furthermore, county elections

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<sup>41</sup>Clifton McCleskey, The Government and Politics of Texas (Second edition; Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1966), pp. 302-314. See also Wilbourn E. Benton, Texas Its Government and Politics (Second edition; Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 360-381. On the nature of the county commissioners court in Texas see J. William Davis, "The Implications of Baker v Carr on the County Commissioners Court in Texas," Baylor Law Review, Vol. 17 (Winter, 1965), pp. 41-48; and W. E. Oden and R. L. Meek, "County Reapportionment: A Rebuttal," Baylor Law Review, Vol. 18 (Spring, 1966), pp. 15-21.

are partisan with the result that political lines are more clearly drawn in county government than in city government. Mexican-Americans have greater access to county government than they do city government because liberal Democrats, who identify with Mexican-American socio-economic problems, have had greater success in county elections.

Prior to the spring primaries in 1966, the Bexar County Commissioners Court was composed of a liberal Democrat serving as county judge; plus one liberal Democrat, one Republican, and two conservative Democrats serving as commissioners.<sup>42</sup>

The liberal Democratic commissioner was Albert Pena who has been, and remains, the most persistent critic of the GGL and its activities in San Antonio. Operating from his base of political power in county precinct one, Commissioner Pena has verbally and by written word denounced the GGL and the city government of San Antonio. Pena has charged that the city government of San Antonio is an ". . . undemocratic, decadent and dangerous . . . political machine where . . . a very, very small group of San Antonians, old families, with wealth and position, sit on top of the structure."<sup>43</sup> In his successful bids for re-election,

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<sup>42</sup>Crane, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 138-139.

Pena has been consistently opposed by the GGL and he has supported independent candidates vying for seats on the city council.<sup>44</sup>

The Bexar County Judge was Charles Grace in 1966. Grace, a liberal Democrat, was a strong opponent of the GGL. Through the support of liberal Democrats, such as Albert Pena, Grace had secured the position as county judge upon the death of a county judge who had been in office for twenty years. The deceased judge was a long-time supporter of conservative Democrats and friendly with the GGL. The leaders of the GGL were not pleased with the selection of Grace as Bexar County Judge.<sup>45</sup>

The mutual enmity between Albert Pena and Charles Grace on the one hand, and the GGL on the other, came to a head in the Democratic primaries. At stake was the administration of literally millions of dollars pouring into the city from recent and increasing federal programs to fight poverty, urban blight, unemployment, and other urban problems. Who would receive the resulting plums of patronage? City bureaucrats? County officials? Or boards jointly functioning? The prospect and impact were staggering. Also at stake was the composition of the Bexar County

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<sup>44</sup>Letter from Albert Pena to the author, March 15, 1968.

<sup>45</sup>Interview with Charles Grace, former Bexar County Judge, in Lubbock, Texas, May 2, 1968.

legislative delegation to Austin. It was liberally oriented; was it to remain so? The state representatives from Bexar County were generally anti-GGL; was this to continue?<sup>46</sup>

A coalition of liberal Democrats (e.g., Mexican-Americans, Negroes, labor leaders, Anglo-American intellectuals, loyal or national Democrats),<sup>47</sup> led by Albert Pena, concentrated on securing the renomination of Grace for county judge. Plans were made to support John Alaniz as a replacement for the conservative Democrat on the commissioners court. The liberal coalition nominated an entire slate of representatives for a county wide assault on conservative Democrats. The GGL, acting through a front organization called the Committee for Community Progress, recruited a candidate for county judge, supported the incumbent conservative county commissioner, and fielded a slate of nominees for state representatives. It was a bitter and expensive campaign which was concentrated primarily on the battle for county judge.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Crane, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup>On the coalitional aspects of the liberal faction of the Democratic Party in Texas see James R. Soukup, Clifton McCleskey, and Harry Holloway, Party and Factional Division in Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 90-139.

<sup>48</sup>Crane, op. cit.

Out of the struggle between the GGL and the liberal Democrats came the "Black Hand" campaign. County Judge Charles Grace, attempting to get federal anti-poverty programs started in San Antonio and Bexar County ran head long into the power structure of the GGL. The GGL, or the Committee for Community Progress, attacked Grace as representing a sinister plot by the Pena-Teamster-Liberal group who, it was asserted, were trying to take over San Antonio and Bexar County for their own selfish ends. Grace was described in television political advertising as an agent of a "black hand" conspiracy attempting to subvert the good government of Bexar County. Extensive public relations were directed at portraying Grace as an agent of the "black hand" who was controlled by labor unions and Albert Pena.<sup>49</sup> Mexican-American leaders, as well as some Anglo-American members of the GGL, declared that the whole campaign was a disgraceful show of public opinion manipulation. The campaign represented the degree to which the GGL would go to "support its friends and punish its enemies."<sup>50</sup> This foray of the nonpartisan GGL into Bexar County politics reduced Mexican-American access to county government with the defeat of Judge Grace. A secondary casualty of the

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<sup>49</sup>Grace, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup>Interview with Pena, in San Antonio, Texas, op. cit. Sinkin, op. cit.

"Black Hand" campaign was John Alaniz. He lost his bid to become a second Mexican-American Bexar County Commissioner. Although Alaniz carried the Mexican-American votes, he was not able to secure enough support from Anglo-Americans since the county precinct in which he was running was composed of a large Anglo vote.<sup>51</sup>

The GGL is a nonpartisan organization; it is not called Democrat or Republican. The GGL might be described in seemingly self-contradictory language as a "nonpartisan party."<sup>52</sup> When political parties do not nominate and back candidates, the illusion is created that no one is influencing elections. This illusion exists in San Antonio city politics. In fact the GGL fills the vacuum. The GGL does not, officially, enter into county politics. Under the guise of the Committee for Community Progress, the GGL was quite prominent in county politics in the primaries of 1966. In city politics, the GGL uses Mexican-American candidates to secure ethnic support for the GGL slate. It is questionable as to how representative are these Mexican-Americans for their fellow ethnics. Mexican-American leaders, independent of the GGL, charge that these "Mexicanos"

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<sup>51</sup>Alaniz, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup>On the concept of a "nonpartisan party" see Fred I. Greenstein, The American Party System and the American People (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 57-58.

are used by the GGL to perpetuate themselves in office. According to this interpretation, the GGL simply continues the practice of Anglo-American domination of Mexican-Americans. Until Mexican-Americans secure election on their own, independent of the GGL, there will be no real access for Mexican-Americans to city hall.<sup>53</sup> Bexar County politics represents a different situation. Since partisan politics is recognized in county government, Mexican-Americans have been more successful in securing access to government. The Mexican-Americans' relation with the Democratic Party provides greater access to county and state government than does the utilization by Mexican-American candidates of the GGL.

Mexican-Americans, Political Access,  
and the Democratic Party  
in San Antonio

The Democratic Party in San Antonio and Bexar County is the dominant political party in the county. Although there has long been a reservoir of Republican support in the county, the Democrats have overwhelmingly dominated partisan elections.

The Democratic Party is a very loose amalgamation of many establishments representing different interests such as labor, business, racial groups, intellectuals,

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<sup>53</sup>Torres, op. cit.

liberals, conservatives, teachers, civil servants, and various disparate groups. According to John Daniels, Democratic County Chairman, one could simplify this factionalism and make a distinction between the "ins" and the "outs." Daniels asserts that there is a difference between groups who are "in" and groups who are on the "outside." Daniel says that:

There is no doubt that a major difference between the two is their idealism. The 'ins' are definitely more conservative and in favor of the status quo than are the 'outs.' The 'ins' have a greater investment in the business and economic interests of the community. The 'outs' are more idealistic in a liberal sense and want to change things. The 'outs' are mainly the minority groups and certain Anglo-American intellectuals who do not have as much invested in the business and economic status quo.<sup>54</sup>

Jack Lee, assistant to the Bexar County Democratic Party Chairman, describes the Democrats in a similar manner. He declares that the Democratic Party is divided into two factions: the liberal Democrats and the conservative Democrats. The liberals, however, are split into two factions also: "establishment" liberals and "militant" liberals. In a state wide campaign, particularly a presidential campaign, liberal Democrats can work together. When one considers city, county, and local politics, the split

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<sup>54</sup>Interview with John Daniels, Bexar County Democratic Party Chairman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

between the liberals becomes evident and is severe. The liberals can unite against conservative Democrats in state races because they see themselves as the "outs" in state government. On the local level, factionalism is very acute.<sup>55</sup>

Don Yarborough, a liberal Democrat from Houston who has been a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor, has campaigned extensively in San Antonio. He contends that the distinction between "establishment" liberals and "militant" (he prefers to call them "true" liberals) liberals is an accurate conclusion. Yarborough declares that the "establishment" liberals support the GGL in local politics whereas the "true" liberals are those Democrats closest to the problems of Mexican-Americans. In comparing the liberal Democrats in San Antonio with those of Fort Worth or Houston, Yarborough suggests that the San Antonio liberals are so involved in city and county politics that they split over local issues. Such a division among liberals is not found in the other major cities of Texas. Yarborough is particularly distressed by liberal factionalism in San Antonio because this in-fighting can and does, hurt liberal Democrats

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<sup>55</sup>Interview with Jack Lee, Assistant to the Bexar County Democratic Party Chairman, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967.

seeking state wide office.<sup>56</sup>

Maury Maverick, Jr., agrees with the explanation offered by Don Yarborough for liberal factionalism in San Antonio. According to Maverick, the GGL is composed of both Democrats and Republicans. The conservative Democrats and the Republicans, however, are the dominant forces in the GGL. There are Democrats in the GGL membership who call themselves liberals and support the state wide candidates of a liberal nature, the national Democratic Party nominees, extended social welfare programs, and other issues identified with liberal Democrats. Other liberal Democrats in San Antonio, who oppose the GGL, are primarily the more liberal ("militant" or "true"), Mexican-Americans and their Anglo-American sympathizers.<sup>57</sup>

Albert Pena, John Alaniz, and Peter Torres are adamantly opposed to the GGL. Consequently, these Mexican-American leaders do not have good relations with other liberal Democrats who are members of and supporters of the GGL. With regard to the Democratic Party in Bexar County Peter Torres says that:

The Party is dead. The Chairman is part of the financial interests which dominate

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<sup>56</sup>Interview with Don Yarborough, a state wide leader of liberal Democrats in Texas, in San Antonio, December 29, 1967.

<sup>57</sup>Interview with Maury Maverick, Jr., in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

San Antonio economic life. He is a lawyer for business interests prominent in the social, economic, and political life of the city. He serves the monied interests of San Antonio and not the Democratic Party. The Democratic Executive Committee does not meet, there is no real precinct organization and, only a chosen few who are allies of the Chairman make decisions. This control of, not politics but, economics and social affairs makes San Antonio 'controlled community.' It is a reason for no Republican Party because the interests that run the Democratic Party and the interests that would run a Republican Party are actually the same. The individuals who control the Democratic Party in San Antonio, the GGL, are actually Democrats in name only.<sup>58</sup>

There are Anglo-American sympathizers with the "true" or "militant" liberal Mexican-Americans. Jake Johnson, a state representative from Bexar County, argues that the real Democrats in the county are the Mexican-American leaders like Albert Pena, John Alaniz, and Peter Torres. The other politicians who call themselves Democrats, according to Johnson, are Democrats in name only because they support the GGL.<sup>59</sup>

The conservative Democrats in San Antonio and Bexar County have been closely identified with the gubernatorial administrations of Beauford Jester, Allan Shivers, Price Daniel, and John Connally. These Bexar County

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<sup>58</sup>Torres, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup>Interview with Jake Johnson, Texas State Representative from San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 27, 1967.

Democrats supported Eisenhower instead of Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and 1956; they were not very receptive to the candidacy of John Kennedy. Their primary distinction from liberal Democrats is that the conservative Democrats do not see government as a resource for progress and instead think of government only in negative terms.<sup>60</sup> The conservative Democrats in San Antonio always support the GGL by giving money and lending influence to the League. In local politics there is a marriage between conservative Democrats and Republicans in the institution of the GGL. This combination of conservative Democrats and Republicans with their common social and economic interests makes them very powerful in local politics through the mechanism of the GGL.<sup>61</sup>

In the final analysis, however, the Democratic Party in San Antonio and Bexar County is generally liberal.<sup>62</sup> If Mexican-Americans and Negro populations vote together and are supported by organized labor and Anglo-American liberals, such a coalition can constitute a majority of votes in any county wide election. A good illustration of the strength of the liberal Democratic

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<sup>60</sup>Daniels, op. cit.

<sup>61</sup>Lee, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup>Daniels, op. cit.; and Pena, op. cit.

coalition is the primary results in 1964 between incumbent United States Senator Ralph Yarborough and conservative Democrat Gordon McClendon. Yarborough carried Bexar County two to one winning 50,264 votes to 26,145 for McClendon.<sup>63</sup>

It is through the liberal faction of the Democratic Party in Bexar County that Mexican-Americans have their greatest access to government because Mexican-American votes comprise the major component of electoral strength for liberal Democratic candidates. In an analysis of Mexican-American voting patterns in San Antonio, this characteristic of the political role of Mexican-Americans was observed. Utilization of their political role in the Democratic Party represents a means of changing the political setting in San Antonio.

Mexican-Americans and the Democratic  
Party Organization in San  
Antonio

The great majority of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio align themselves with the Democratic Party because there is a traditional attachment to the Democrats. Older generation Mexican-Americans, when they consider partisan politics, think essentially of the Democratic Party.

Lalo Solis, who has been active in political campaigns on the west side of San Antonio for over thirty

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<sup>63</sup>Daniels, op. cit.

years, declares that the Mexican-American people have always been Democrats and they will continue to be so in their politics. Solis and his friends, an older generation of Mexican-Americans, remember Franklin D. Roosevelt. From this memory, Solis argues that the Democrats are closer to the poor people and, consequently, the Mexican-Americans are loyal to their friends. For Lalo Solis there is an historical identification with the Democratic Party that also secures support for the party from other Mexican-Americans.<sup>64</sup>

Lalo Solis is an example of those Mexican-Americans who voted for conservative Democrat Waggoner Carr in the general election of 1966. Whereas the younger more liberal Mexican-Americans such as Pena, Alaniz, and Torres led a movement to deny Carr Mexican-American votes as "punishment" for his conservatism, Lalo Solis supported Carr. Solis explained his support for Carr in the following manner:

As it is now, Texas does not have a vote in the United States Senate. Republican Tower kills the vote of Democrat Yarborough. Had Carr been elected, he would have voted with Ralph Yarborough more than the Republican. Carr and Yarborough would have voted together more often than Tower and Yarborough.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Interview with Lalo Solis, an older generation Mexican-American politician in San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 23, 1967.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

Solis puts party loyalty above ideological matters. He has been a life-long Democrat and he will support all Democrats. He explains that:

Some conservative Democrats have supported liberal Democrats. So, liberal Democrats should not help Republicans against a conservative Democrat. Helping a Republican may in time hurt liberals; so liberals should support the Democratic nominee. All Democrats should work and be loyal to the party. Mexican-Americans should support the Democratic Party because the Republicans do not really care for the Mexican. Since most Republicans are Anglo-Americans, a Mexican-American candidate cannot usually win in Republican areas.<sup>66</sup>

Not only is there a traditional attachment to the Democratic Party among Mexican-Americans, there is an issue oriented support as well. As was indicated above, the younger generation of Mexican-Americans, those that have come on the scene in San Antonio since World War II, are more ideologically involved and program oriented than their parents. In considering partisan politics as a means of access to government, this new breed of Mexican-American asks, "Where else can the Mexican-American go other than the Democratic Party?" For them the Republican Party offers no access to government because they believe the Republican Party in Texas does not really care for Mexican-Americans. Mexican-American leaders in San Antonio declare that the Republican Party on the national level, particularly in 1964, indicated no understanding

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

or concern for the problems of Mexican-Americans. Thus, access to government for Mexican-Americans through political parties lies with the organization of the Democratic Party.<sup>67</sup>

Mexican-American access to government through the Democratic Party has increased since 1948. Wherever Mexican-Americans are in the majority in San Antonio, they control the party machinery. Mexican-Americans are precinct chairmen, members of the county committees, and office holders. According to Jack Lee, assistant to the Bexar County Democratic Chairman, Henry Gonzalez is the real leader of the Democratic Party in Bexar County. Gonzalez' political power rests, first of all, on the support of the thousands of Mexican-American voters in the west side precincts. From this base of power, Gonzalez has been able to work with other Democrats to such an extent that Lee seriously doubts that anyone can be elected Democratic Party Chairman without the support of Gonzalez.<sup>68</sup>

In terms of party organization, Mexican-American representation has steadily grown over the past two decades. Table 18 shows the trend toward greater participation by Mexican-Americans in the Democratic Party as precinct chairmen. Although the population of Mexican-

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<sup>67</sup>Pena, op. cit., and Alaniz, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup>Lee, op. cit.

Americans is approximately one-half of the population of Bexar County, Mexican-Americans control only one-fourth the positions of precinct chairmen. Although Mexican-Americans do not control party positions directly correlated with their electoral potential, there has been a marked increase in Mexican-Americans holding party positions.

The most significant factor limiting Mexican-American access to government through the Democratic Party is Mexican-American voter participation. Although Mexican-American voter registration and turnout has increased since World War II, there is a lingering tradition of hesitation and fear. If, and when, this heritage can be broken, Mexican-American leaders are confident of much greater political success.<sup>69</sup>

The tradition of fear and lack of understanding on the part of Mexican-Americans was made quite evident because of a series of events which occurred in 1966. Many relatives of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio were illegal entrants to the United States before and after World War II. Because of these family connections, San Antonio Mexican-Americans have been hesitant about registering to vote and identifying themselves to public officials. It was pointed out to the author, if one's aunt or uncle or

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<sup>69</sup>Pena, op. cit.

TABLE 18  
 MEXICAN-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC  
 PRECINCT CHAIRMEN  
 1948-1968

Year	Mexican- Americans	Total No. Precincts	Per cent
1948	8	121	6.6
1950	11	121	9.0
1952	12	128	9.3
1954	20	139	14.3
1956	20	148	13.5
1960	25	154	16.2
1962	33	169	19.5
1964	36	172	18.6
1966	53	172	20.9
1968	*	205	25.8

\*Mexican-Americans are contesting as precinct chairmen in 66 of 205 precincts. At this writing the Democratic primary has not been held and results are not available.

SOURCE: Bexar County Clerk, San Antonio, Texas.

parents had entered the United States illegally, then you might be fearful of discussing your own citizenship be it naturalized or by birth. Large numbers of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, confronted with this problem, are fearful of answering questions regarding citizenship in the voter registration process.<sup>70</sup>

Herschel Bernard, a San Antonio political activist who is a strong advocate of greater Mexican-American political power, explained to the author the events of 1966. In the spring of the year, after the poll tax was removed as a registration requirement, a period of free voter registration was established. Groups and individuals identified with Mexican-American political interests initiated a drive to get unregistered Mexican-Americans registered to vote. Several thousand Mexican-Americans were registered who had never registered before. Since citizenship is required to register to vote, the registration officials asked questions concerning citizenship and aroused fear and apprehension in the minds of many of the Mexican-Americans. Just a few days before the Democratic primary in May, 1966, several thousand letters were sent to the newly registered voters practically all of whom lived on the west side of San Antonio. These letters explained the penalty for registering to vote while not

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<sup>70</sup>Interview with Herschel Bernard, in San Antonio, Texas, December 29, 1967.

being a citizen of the United States. On the day of the primary, few of the new registrants actually voted. Bernard declared that he saw Mexican-Americans come to the polling place, hesitate, then turn around and leave without voting rather than go into the polling place where the election officials were representatives of government authority. The long traditions of fear associated with the cultural background of Mexican-Americans in south Texas, the distrust of law officials, and the letters, created such a condition in the mind of Mexican-Americans that they simply refused to vote. Bernard argues that the letters which were sent to the newly registered Mexican-Americans were designed to intimidate them so as to keep them from voting. He declares that the letters were part of the "Black Hand" campaign to discredit Judge Charles Grace and limit Mexican-Americans' support for Grace.<sup>71</sup>

Patricia Villareal, a Mexican-American political activist in San Antonio, told the author of the incident regarding the letters in 1966. Miss Villareal said that she had two aunts who registered to vote during the free period of voter registration in 1966. One aunt, a naturalized citizen of one year, lived on the north side of San Antonio. The other aunt, a naturalized citizen of sixteen years, lived on the west side of the city. The

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

aunt which lived on the north side received no letter. The aunt on the west side received a letter in which she was informed of the laws against a person illegally registering to vote in Texas. Miss Villareal believes that Mexican-Americans are subjected to intimidation to prevent them from registering to vote; or, once they have registered, to discourage them from voting.<sup>72</sup>

Whether or not the letters in 1966 were deliberately designed to intimidate the newly registered voters is debatable. Nevertheless, many of the Mexican-Americans who had registered to vote for the first time, did not vote in the Democratic primary of that year. After the free registration period closed there were many charges and countercharges about fraudulent registration. Mexican-Americans had registered in record setting numbers. Anglo-American politicians charged Mexican-American politicians with rigged registration. After bitter accusations, much publicity, and an official investigation it was learned that four of the many thousand newly registered Mexican-Americans were not citizens of the United States. As a result of the publicity and bitterness which occurred because of the investigation, several Mexican-Americans who were significant in the voter registration drive concluded that their efforts were not worth all of their trouble.

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<sup>72</sup>Interview with Patricia Villareal, in San Antonio, Texas, December 30, 1967.

Hence, in 1968 they refused to participate in a registration drive aimed at Mexican-Americans which resulted in a decline in the number of Mexican-Americans registered.<sup>73</sup>

Although Mexican-Americans in San Antonio utilize the Democratic Party as a means of access to government, the ethnic group has not realized its potential. Political participation in the election process has been, and remains, the most difficult political problem confronting Mexican-Americans. Mexican-American leaders in San Antonio and their Anglo-American allies believe that Mexican-Americans are becoming more politically sophisticated. If Mexican-American political participation can be further stimulated, the political power of the ethnic group can become very significant. If Mexican-American political articulation increases, as hoped, their leaders believe liberal Democrats will become more influential in San Antonio and more powerful in Texas Democratic politics.<sup>74</sup>

What of the Republican Party in San Antonio and Bexar County? Do not the Republicans offer access to government for Mexican-Americans?

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<sup>73</sup>Interview with Bill Crane, Professor of Government at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, in San Antonio, Texas, April 11, 1968.

<sup>74</sup>Alaniz, op. cit.; Bernard, op. cit.; See also Joan W. Moore and Ralph Guzman, "New Wind from the Southwest," Nation, Vol. 202 (May 30, 1966), p. 645.

The Republican Party, Mexican-Americans,  
and Political Access  
in San Antonio

There has long been Republican support in Bexar County. The party, however, has not been able to secure a position of power due to the overwhelming influence of the Democrats.

Jim Lunz, Chairman of the Republican Party of Bexar County says, "the local party is in a growing state. Since 1964 we have been rebuilding."<sup>75</sup> L. E. Sheppard, Executive Director of the Republican Party in Bexar County, admits that "our party's main voting strength is still concentrated in the upper and upper-middle income areas which are predominantly Anglo-American of northern Bexar County."<sup>76</sup>

Sheppard indicates that the Bexar County Republicans can be divided into two general groups. The first group wants the party to grow and to win at all levels of government, to help bring about a true two-party system in Texas, and to be a broad based political party. The second group is primarily interested in the election of a Republican as President. This second group is closely allied,

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<sup>75</sup>Letter from Jim Lunz, Chairman of the Republican Party of Bexar County, to the author, April 1, 1968.

<sup>76</sup>Letter from L. E. Sheppard, Executive Director of the Republican Party in Bexar County, to the author, April 8, 1968.

either actually or in a de facto sense, with the conservative wing of the Democratic Party in state and local politics.<sup>77</sup>

In 1964, the Republican Party in Bexar County received less than five per cent of the Mexican-American vote. In 1966, Republican John Tower won twenty-six per cent of the Mexican-American vote. Jim Lunz points out that this phenomenal increase among Mexican-Americans was due, in part, to the liberal Democrat's opposition to John Connally and Waggoner Carr.<sup>78</sup> One of the deliberate features of the John Tower campaign in Bexar County in 1966 was to gain Mexican-American voters and party members. Sheppard believes the effort was immensely successful and concludes that most Bexar County politicians will give the Republican Party about ten per cent of the normal vote of Mexican-Americans.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, the Republican Party now has eight Mexican-American precinct chairmen as compared to 1960 when there were no Mexican-American Republican precinct chairmen.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Lunz, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup>Sheppard, op. cit.

<sup>80</sup>Lunz, op. cit.

Joe Guerra, a Mexican-American Republican in San Antonio, contends that the party is essentially in its infancy. To grow the party must expand beyond the professional clientele it now favors. Guerra declares that the Republicans in San Antonio are primarily people of professional status such as doctors and lawyers. Guerra says, "they must share the party with the average middle-class people and the working class. Until the Republican Party makes this shift in its orientation, it will remain a minority party."<sup>81</sup> According to Guerra, if the Republican Party in San Antonio wants to become fully competitive with the Democrats and receive Mexican-American support, the Republicans must take a more progressive stand on issues of human dignity. The Republicans can continue their conservative stand regarding economic issues and private enterprise; but, and Guerra is very emphatic, Republicans in Texas and San Antonio have got to take a more progressive stand on civil rights and the matters of human dignity. Guerra concludes that the Republicans must become more liberal in order to appeal to Mexican-Americans.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Interview with Joe Guerra, a Mexican-American Republican in San Antonio, in San Antonio, Texas, December 30, 1967.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

Whether the observations of Joe Guerra will be supported by the Republican Party in Bexar County remains to be seen. Liberal Democrats in San Antonio argue that the Republican Party will offer no access to government for Mexican-Americans. The extent to which the Republican Party grows in Bexar County will depend upon how many dissident conservative Democrats re-align with the Republicans. Jake Johnson contends that new recruits to Republican ranks come from conservative Democrats who are reacting to the increasing influence of liberals and Mexican-Americans in the Democratic Party. There is a feeling that racism and prejudice against Mexican-Americans contribute to the re-alignment of some conservative Democrats. Liberal Democrats do not stress the factor of ethnic prejudice because it is their position that disenchantment with the national Democratic Party is the major cause for the re-alignment of conservative Democrats with the Republican Party.<sup>83</sup>

Jim Lunz concedes that it will be "a long road for the Republican Party in Texas to make any great inroads with the Mexican-American or with the Negro."<sup>84</sup> Until the Republican Party makes a concerted effort to secure the

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<sup>83</sup>Johnson, op. cit.; Maverick, Jr., op. cit.; and Bernard, op. cit.

<sup>84</sup>Lunz, op. cit.

support of Mexican-Americans by offering the Mexican-Americans access to government, the Republicans have written off approximately fifty per cent of the population of Bexar County.<sup>85</sup>

The nonpartisan Good Government League represents a limited means of access to government for Mexican-Americans. The Republican Party currently offers little partisan access to government. As indicated, it is the Democratic Party that currently offers the greatest partisan access to government for Mexican-Americans.

Mexican-American Inclusion in the  
Governments of San Antonio  
and Bexar County

Mexican-Americans in San Antonio since 1948 have increasingly sought access to government by election to the officials position of government. Not only have Mexican-Americans been seeking election to the city and county governments, they have been increasingly successful in their election bids. Although Mexican-Americans constitute about fifty per cent of the population of Bexar County, representatives of the ethnic group do not comprise one-half of the officials in local government.

Table 19 shows that Mexican-Americans have increased their number of candidates as well as elected

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<sup>85</sup> Republican Party relations with Mexican-Americans in Texas are analyzed in Soukup, McCleskey, and Holloway, op. cit., pp. 126-137.

TABLE 19  
 MEXICAN-AMERICANS AND THE SAN ANTONIO  
 CITY COUNCIL

Year	Mexican-American Candidates	Total No. of Candidates	Mexican- Americans Elected
1947	1	28	0
1951 <sup>a</sup>	0	27	0
1951 <sup>b</sup>	4	32	1
1953	4	35	1
1955	5	38	2
1957	4	16	1
1959	11	39	1
1961	9	34	2
1963	6	26	1
1965	7	20	2
1967	11	39	3

<sup>a</sup>Old ward system where term of office was four years.

<sup>b</sup>First city council under new council-manager plan with election at large for two year term of office.

SOURCE: San Antonio City Secretary, San Antonio, Texas.

officials in city government. In 1947, it was rare and extraordinary for Mexican-Americans to seek election to the city council. By 1967, nearly one-third of the thirty-nine candidates for positions on the San Antonio city council were Mexican-Americans. It was not until 1951, when Henry Gonzalez was elected city councilman, that a Mexican-American was successful in securing a seat on the council. In 1967, three Mexican-Americans hold positions on the San Antonio city council. Whereas twenty years ago Mexican-Americans had very little access to the San Antonio city council through inclusion on the council, in 1967 one-third of the council was Mexican-American.

Mexican-Americans are appointed to city boards and commissions to a greater extent today than two decades ago. At the end of World War II it was unheard of to appoint a Mexican-American to any city board or commission. Table 20 shows that Mexican-American participation on city boards and commissions has tended to increase giving Mexican-Americans greater access to the city government than in an earlier day. The appointment of Mexican-Americans to city boards and commissions remains far below the percentage of Mexican-American population in San Antonio. Mexican-American leaders are particularly anxious to have a higher percentage of Mexican-Americans on the city boards and commissions. These Mexican-American leaders

TABLE 20  
SAN ANTONIO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
AND MEXICAN-AMERICANS  
SELECTED YEARS

Year	Total Members	Mexican- Americans	% Mexican- Americans
1955	47	5	10.6
1960	49	10	20.4
1967	91	18	19.7

SOURCE: San Antonio City Secretary, San Antonio, Texas.

argue that their ethnic group should be represented in the appointed positions commensurate with the percentage of Mexican-American population in San Antonio. If the political role of Mexican-Americans grows, with increased participation, the leaders believe Mexican-American appointments will also increase. In so doing, Mexican-Americans will achieve greater access to the city government of San Antonio.<sup>86</sup>

Mexican-Americans have increased their number of candidates as well as elected officials in Bexar County government since 1948. Mexican-Americans have achieved greater access to county government by electing members of the ethnic group to county positions because of their political role in the Democratic Party. There are more elective positions in county government than in city government. Also, patronage is an important factor for Mexican-Americans in gaining access to county government.

The political role of Mexican-Americans in the Democratic Party in Bexar County enables the ethnic group to exert a degree of influence upon county officials. Officials in the county who are elected include the county commissioners, county judge, county sheriff, county attorney, county clerk, county tax assessor-collector, justices of the peace, constables, and others. Most of

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<sup>86</sup>Torres, op. cit.

these officials are elected county wide and depend upon the Democratic Party as their avenue to office. The increased role of Mexican-Americans in the Democratic Party requires these officials to pay attention to the Mexican-American electorate. Some of the county officials are elected from precincts within the county (e.g. county commissioner, justices of the peace, and constables). Mexican-Americans have won control over these county positions where the Mexican-Americans have sufficient voting power.<sup>87</sup>

In 1948, Mexican-Americans secured the election of one of their fellow ethnics to the position of justice of the peace. Since 1948, Mexican-Americans have secured positions as county commissioner, justices of the peace, constables, deputy sheriffs, attorneys in the county attorney's office, and judges of county courts at law. Table 21 shows the trend toward increased participation by Mexican-Americans in the official positions of Bexar County.

Patronage represents a significant factor in Mexican-American involvement in Bexar County government. County government in Texas stands as one of the supreme

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with M. C. Gonzalez, Assistant District Attorney in Bexar County, in San Antonio, Texas, December 28, 1967. On the nature of county government in Texas see Clifton McCleskey, The Government and Politics of Texas, op. cit., 305-310.

TABLE 21  
 MEXICAN-AMERICAN CANDIDATES AND ELECTED  
 OFFICIALS FOR COUNTY OFFICE IN  
 BEXAR COUNTY 1948-1968

Year	Mexican-American Candidates	Mexican-Americans Elected
1948	3	1
1950	2	2
1952	2	1
1954	3	1
1956	5	4
1958	5	2
1960	8	5
1962	7	3
1964	15	6
1966	16	7
1968	17	*

\*At this writing the 1968 elections have not been held.

SOURCE: Bexar County Clerk, San Antonio, Texas.

examples of "spoils politics."<sup>88</sup> As Mexican-Americans have increased their political power through the ballot box in Bexar County, politicians have taken heed and responded accordingly. Whereas few Mexican-Americans staffed county positions twenty years ago, today the Bexar County court house contains large numbers of employed Mexican-Americans. Anglo-Americans, seeking to secure Mexican-American support, have appointed members of the ethnic group to jobs in county government. With the increase in the number of Mexican-American elected officials, more Mexican-Americans have been appointed to jobs in county government. The patronage system in Bexar County government has responded to the political role of Mexican-Americans in much the same manner as local government responded to increased political activity by ethnic groups in northeastern cities in the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>89</sup> Although numerous volumes have been produced criticizing patronage or "spoils politics," for American ethnic groups, the system has represented a major means

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 311-312.

<sup>89</sup>Handlin, op. cit., pp. 201-226. See also Lane, op. cit., pp. 239-240; Lawrence Fuchs, The Political Behavior of American Jews (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956), pp. 44-47; Edward M. Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 144-155; and William Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 210-211.

for inclusion in positions of government. For San Antonio's Mexican-Americans, patronage is an important means of access to Bexar County government.

### Summary

Groups and interests who have reasons for entrance into politics may utilize their political role to gain access to government. Upon securing access to government, groups and interests may bring their influence to bear on the government and accomplish those ends which initiated the group's political activity.

Mexican-Americans in San Antonio have been confronted with at least three possibilities by which the ethnic group could gain access to government. These three possibilities are the Good Government League, political parties, and positions in government.

The nonpartisan GGL provides access to government for those Mexican-Americans who join the organization and support its interests. The GGL since 1953 has dominated the city council of San Antonio because the League represents a coalition of political and socio-economic interests with enough power to generally overwhelm its opposition. Mexican-American leaders, independent of the GGL, believe the League represents a power elite which controls city government for its own benefit. The power elite is composed of leaders of the GGL. Through the GGL this power elite

promotes its own socio-economic interests. According to this interpretation, San Antonio is a controlled city. The city is controlled by high socio-economic interests who depend upon a cheap supply of labor for profit. Politicians (e.g., Albert Pena, Peter Torres, and John Alaniz), declare that any Mexican-American who supports, or is supported by, the GGL is dominated by the socio-economic interests of the GGL leadership. To work with the GGL is to betray the political independence of Mexican-Americans. According to these more outspoken Mexican-American leaders, the GGL is a continuation of the heritage of Anglo-American domination of "Mexicanos." Independent political action by Mexican-Americans is the only way to secure a just place for the ethnic group in San Antonio.

Political parties in Bexar County offer a means of access to government for Mexican-Americans. The Democratic Party, due to traditional allegiance as well as issue orientation, receives the support of most Mexican-Americans. The liberal faction of the Democratic Party in San Antonio is closely identified with Mexican-Americans because liberal Democrats support civil rights legislation, minimum wage guarantees, expanded health services, and other public programs designed to combat poverty. Mexican-American leaders in San Antonio strongly support such programs. The Republican Party in San Antonio does not

currently represent a means of access to government for Mexican-Americans. The Republicans identify with high socio-economic interests in Bexar County who have very little in common with Mexican-Americans.

Mexican-American inclusion in positions of official government has increased in the last twenty years. Individuals such as United States Congressman Henry Gonzalez, Bexar County Commissioner Albert Pena, Texas State Senator Joe Bernal, and San Antonio City Councilman Peter Torres, are indicative of the changing political setting in San Antonio. Mexican-Americans in positions of city and county government are quite common today. M. C. Gonzalez, who has been active in Mexican-American politics since World War I, says "a generation ago such a development was beyond most people's imagination."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Gonzalez, op. cit.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzes the relationship of political role with the political setting. Political role refers to expectations about how a political actor behaves in particular situations.<sup>1</sup> Political setting refers to the environment which defines, channels, and confines the political behavior of an actor living in that setting.<sup>2</sup> In this study, political actor refers to Mexican-Americans; whereas, political setting refers to San Antonio, Texas.

To carry forward the analysis the study formulates a working hypothesis. The hypothesis serves as a beginning point for the analysis, and it serves as a guide for organizing the investigation. The hypothesis which this study utilizes is that the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, Texas has changed the political setting in San Antonio.

The conclusions for this study are set forth in the following manner. First, comparisons are made between the literature of political science and the data produced

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965), pp. 6-7.

by this investigation. Second, conclusions are made as to the relation of the data produced by this study with the hypothesis. Third, observations are made regarding the relationship between political role and political setting.

The Concept of Political Role  
and Mexican-Americans

Heinz Eulau contends that political role operates on three levels: the cultural, the social, and the personal.<sup>3</sup> On the cultural level, political role refers to the norms, traditions, rights, and duties that relate to the behavioral pattern of the political actor. On the social level, political role is related to the interaction, connection, or bond that produces a behavioral pattern between one political actor and another political actor. On the personal level, political role refers to the definitions of the role held by the different actors in the behavioral pattern.<sup>4</sup> Analysis of political role on these three levels is required in order to relate the role to the political setting. In the study of political role and political setting, the identification of the political actor whose role is under analysis is the major point of origin.

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<sup>3</sup>Heinz Eulau, The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics (New York: Random House, Inc., 1963), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

An ethnic group may constitute a political actor.<sup>5</sup> The ethnic group displays uniformities of behavior on a cultural level, on a social level, and on a personal level.<sup>6</sup> Mexican-Americans in San Antonio constitute a clearly distinguished ethnic group.<sup>7</sup> Mexican-Americans, as a group, constitute a political actor and, hence, play a political role.

The political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio on the cultural level is reflected in the historical background of the ethnic group. The historical background of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio indicates the norms, traditions, and cultural relations in the behavioral pattern of Mexican-Americans. The cultural level of the role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio is significantly related to the political role of Anglo-Americans. The norms, traditions, and cultural relations of Mexican-Americans with Anglo-Americans display various forms of cultural conflict.

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<sup>5</sup>On the nature of group and political behavior see David Truman, The Governmental Process (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, The Social System of American Ethnic Groups (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Lyle Saunders, The Spanish Speaking Population of Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1949), p. 9.

The political role of Mexican-Americans on the social level is related to the socio-economic conditions of the ethnic group. The socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans are indicators of the interaction or connection between the major political actors in the political setting of San Antonio. The social interaction, bond, or connection between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans produces a behavioral pattern directly related to the personal level of the political role of Mexican-Americans. The socio-economic conditions of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio are particularly noteworthy when brought into comparison with the socio-economic conditions of Anglo-Americans.

The personal level of the political role of Mexican-Americans represents the most extensive behavior pattern of the group. In comparison with the cultural level and the social level of political role, the personal level of political role involves the more obvious activities of the political actor.<sup>8</sup> On the personal level of political role, the behavior pattern of Mexican-Americans indicates the definitions or attitudes of the ethnic group toward other political actors and toward the political setting. The definitions or attitudes in the behavioral pattern of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio are explicitly

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<sup>8</sup>Eulau, op. cit., pp. 39-46.

indicated by Mexican-American leaders and political action groups, by Mexican-American voting patterns, and by Mexican-American access to the political offices of San Antonio and Bexar County.

The Concept of Political Setting  
and Mexican-Americans

To analyze the impact of political role on the political setting requires an investigation of political action. Lester Milbrath argues that political action requires two decisions by the political actor: one must decide to act or not to act; and one must also decide the direction of the action. Furthermore, decisions about the direction of political action are specific as to the setting in which the decisions are made.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the impact of political role on the political setting depends not only upon a decision to act but also upon the direction of the action in the particular political setting.

In the analysis of political setting by Milbrath, he uses the concept to refer to the environment which confines the political behavior of an actor living in that setting.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, Milbrath uses the concept of political setting to refer to: (1) rules of the game about the conduct of politics; (2) political institutions,

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<sup>9</sup>Milbrath, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

especially the political party system; and (3) the special characteristics of a given campaign.<sup>11</sup> Political settings can be viewed in different ways. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba use political setting to refer to an entire national culture.<sup>12</sup> Settings have one thing in common, however, the concept of status quo. Political actors in their political role can defend or try to change the status quo. Defenders of the status quo are often called conservatives, and those trying to change the status quo are called liberals.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, a political role directed toward change in the political setting away from the status quo would be a liberal political role.

In this study of the relations between the political role of Mexican-Americans and the political setting in San Antonio, political setting involves five factors. These five factors define, channel, and confine the political behavior of Mexican-Americans. These five factors are cultural background, socio-economic conditions, group awareness, voting patterns, and political access. In other words, this study analyzes the expectations about how a political actor behaves in particular situations.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

<sup>13</sup>Milbrath, op. cit., p. 7.

These particular situations operate on cultural, social, and personal levels and operate in a specific political setting. This political setting is represented by cultural background, socio-economic conditions, group consciousness, voting behavior, and access to the offices of government of the political actor living in the setting.

The political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio is directly related to the characteristics of the political setting. As a result, changes in the political role of Mexican-Americans manifest themselves as changes in the political setting. The impact of Mexican-Americans on the political setting is much the same as the impact other American ethnic groups have had on their political settings. As the political role of the Irish, the Italians, the Jews, and the other American ethnic groups changed so did their political settings.<sup>14</sup> The political role of

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<sup>14</sup>See Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1951); Oscar Handlin, Immigration as a Factor in American History (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959); Lawrence Fuchs, The Political Behavior of American Jews (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1956); Edward M. Levine, The Irish and Irish Politicians (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1966); Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Manuel Gamio, Mexican Immigration to the United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930); Manuel Gamio, The Mexican Immigrant (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); Nathan Glazier and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); Warner and Srole, op. cit.; and R. E. Park and H. A. Miller, Old World Traits Transplanted (New York: Harper and Co., 1921).

Mexican-Americans in San Antonio is very similar to the behavioral patterns of other American ethnic groups.

Political Role and the Cultural Background  
of Mexican-Americans in  
South Texas

Analysis of political role on the cultural level calls attention to the customs, traditions, and norms that relate to the behavioral pattern of the political actor.<sup>15</sup> The analysis of the political role of Mexican-Americans on a cultural level leads this investigation to conclude that cultural conflict plays a paramount part in the relationship between political role and political setting.

On the cultural level of the political role of Mexican-Americans in south Texas and San Antonio, there is a long heritage of Anglo-American paternalism. However, the political action of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio is devoted to changing the political setting represented by Anglo-American domination.

Georg Simmel argues that conflict not only precedes the development of political action by an actor but is operative in that political action at the very moment of its existence.<sup>16</sup> The pressure of social and cultural conflict is a primary force behind the behavioral patterns of

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<sup>15</sup>Eulau, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Georg Simmel, Conflict (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1955), pp. 13-20. On conflict as a basic

Mexican-American politics. The long heritage of cultural conflict in south Texas and San Antonio between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans has strengthened group consciousness for both actors. On this basis, Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans represent competing political actors within the political setting of south Texas.

Lewis Coser contends that "reciprocal repulsions" promote group identification and unity.<sup>17</sup> Political activity arises from united group consciousness as demands are made on the political setting to change the distribution of rights and privileges. As a group becomes aware of itself as negatively privileged in the political setting, group unity becomes stronger and political action is encouraged.<sup>18</sup>

The political role of Mexican-Americans has changed the political setting in San Antonio partly because of cultural conflict. Mexican-Americans have not changed the element of cultural conflict within the political setting,

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feature in political behavior see Robert Dahl, Pluralist Democracy in the United States: Conflict and Consent (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1967); Dan Nimmo and Thomas Ungs, American Political Patterns: Conflict and Consensus (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967).

<sup>17</sup>Lewis A. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1956), pp. 34-35.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

but as a political actor there is an increased group consciousness. Mexican-American political activity has responded to cultural conflict in such a manner as to strengthen group awareness of the political setting. Ethnic conflict, arising from the cultural level of the political roles of Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans, has contributed to Mexican-American political action designed to change the political setting of the group. Mexican-Americans, as a political actor, have come to reject the cultural norms, traditions, and practices of Anglo-American paternalism. Mexican-Americans see themselves as negatively privileged in the political setting of San Antonio. This group awareness is itself a manifestation of a changed political setting.

Political Role and the Socio-economic  
Conditions of Mexican-Americans  
in San Antonio

On the social level, analysis of political role is based on an investigation into the relationship, interaction or connection between one political actor and another political actor.<sup>19</sup> Socio-economic conditions may define this social level of political role. Such conditions place the political actors in definite relationships whereby privileges, opportunities, and social benefits are

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<sup>19</sup>Eulau, op. cit.

prescribed. When a political actor is located in a particular socio-economic status, that status helps to explain the political behavior pattern of the actor.<sup>20</sup> As Milbrath indicates, political action may be devoted to change of the status quo or political action may be in defense of the status quo.<sup>21</sup> Anglo-Americans in San Antonio generally favor a defense of the status quo whereas Mexican-Americans desire a change in the status quo. To change the socio-economic status of the political actor requires changing the political setting which confines that political actor.<sup>22</sup>

All indices of socio-economic status show Mexican-Americans in San Antonio to be classified in the lower level of the social order. In terms of death rate, literacy, education, employment, housing, and other socio-economic factors, Mexican-Americans are lower than Anglo-Americans in the social system.

The great majority of Mexican-Americans are located in the first stage of political development described by Robert Dahl.<sup>23</sup> Mexican-Americans in San Antonio are

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<sup>20</sup>Robert Lane, Political Life: Why People Get Involved in Politics (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1959), pp. 101-108.

<sup>21</sup>Milbrath, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup>Lane, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale

essentially proletarian as they work with their hands, for wages, in shops and factories. Ethnic similarity between Mexican-Americans is reflected in a homogeneity of political attitudes. Mexican-Americans are victims of unemployment, they are persons of little social prestige, and they are objects of discrimination by Anglo-Americans. However, the socio-economic advances made by some Mexican-Americans (such as, doctors, teachers, and businessmen), enable them to be classified in the second stage of the Dahl trilogy.<sup>24</sup> It is this group, those in the second stage of political development, who are most involved in the politics of San Antonio. Some of these Mexican-Americans have gained a considerable amount of political power. Very few Mexican-Americans can be located in the third stage of political development advanced by Dahl.<sup>25</sup>

On the social level of political role, socio-economic needs lead a political actor to demand more political power so as to improve the conditions confronting the actor.<sup>26</sup> However, the political actions of the actor

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University Press, 1961), pp. 34-35.

<sup>24</sup>See Ibid. at p. 35 for a description of the second and third stages of political development of an ethnic group.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), pp. 201-206.

are severely limited by the same socio-economic conditions.<sup>27</sup> Socio-economic needs have led some Mexican-Americans to demand more political power for themselves so as to improve opportunities for education and employment. Seymour M. Lipset underscores a major obstacle in this aspect of Mexican-American political action when he notes that political effectiveness is reduced by a low socio-economic status.<sup>28</sup> Robert Lane supports Lipset's argument in observing that groups with low socio-economic status have limited political power.<sup>29</sup> Mexican-American poverty, language, and low social status represent significant obstacles to political action aimed at changing the political setting. Mexican-American politics in San Antonio have overcome some of the socio-economic limitations for the better educated and employed members of the ethnic group. The majority of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, however, remain in socio-economic conditions which represent the major hindrance to more active and independent political behavior. Although some Mexican-Americans are on a plane of socio-economic equality with most Anglo-Americans, the remainder of the Mexican-Americans are in a

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<sup>27</sup>Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1960), pp. 205-206.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Lane, op. cit., pp. 243-251.

low status position. On this social level of political role, Mexican-Americans have had little success in changing the setting which confines most of the members of the ethnic group. This continuation of low socio-economic status for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio represents the most significant failure of the political role of Mexican-Americans.

Political Role and Mexican-American  
Leadership and Groups in  
San Antonio

On the personal level, analysis of political role is directed to the definitions of the role held by the political actors in the behavioral pattern.<sup>30</sup> The attitudes of leaders and groups reflect the definitions of their political role. And as a group, people can be treated analytically as interacting with other groups, even though, in reality, individuals rather than groups are involved in concrete relationships.<sup>31</sup>

Paul Pigors views leadership as a process or function.<sup>32</sup> The leader is an individual whose rationalizations, judgments, and feelings are accepted by other members of

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<sup>30</sup>Eulau, op. cit.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-47.

<sup>32</sup>Paul Pigors, Leadership or Domination (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935), p. 6.

the group as bases of belief and action. Here is a reciprocal process or function since the rationalizations, judgments, and feelings held by a leader have been stimulated by members of the group. Leaders are not only stimuli, but they are also responses to the feelings and aspirations of their group. Pigors, and other writers on the nature of leadership, indicates that this process of reciprocity between leader and follower is the basic characteristic of leadership.<sup>33</sup>

The rationalizations, judgments, and feelings of leaders and groups are the definitions of their political role in the behavioral pattern. Herein is found one aspect of the personal level of political role. In San Antonio there are individuals, such as Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena, whose rationalizations, judgments, and feelings are accepted by other Mexican-Americans as bases of belief and action. The development of Mexican-American leaders, where leadership was previously lacking or non-existent, is a manifestation of a changing political setting. On the personal level of political role, the emergence of leaders and political action groups indicates that the political

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-13. See also Sidney Verba, Small Groups and Political Behavior (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961); Franklyn S. Haiman, Group Leadership (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960); Bernard M. Bass, Leadership, Psychology and Organizational Behavior (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1960); and Emory S. Bogardus, Leaders and Leadership (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1935).

setting has changed from a setting which severely restricted political action to a setting which allows political action.

According to Earl Latham, political action groups are structures of power designed to dominate, neutralize, or conciliate that part of their environment that presses in upon them most closely.<sup>34</sup> Arthur Bentley contends that groups represent a basic political form which seeks for its members political, economic, and social satisfaction.<sup>35</sup> David Truman argues that groups make claims upon other groups in society for the establishment or enhancement of forms of behavior desired by the deprived or demanding group.<sup>36</sup>

Upon the basis of the importance of political action groups, the emergence of Mexican-American groups represents a major development on the personal level of the political role of Mexican-Americans. Prior to World War I, Mexican-American political action groups were simply unknown in south Texas. After World War II, and particularly over the last twenty years, Mexican-American groups have become active in San Antonio as well as south Texas. The emergence of LULAC, G. I. Forum, PASO, FAMA, and LA

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<sup>34</sup>Earl Latham, The Group Basis of Politics (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), pp. 1-2.

<sup>35</sup>Arthur Bentley, The Process of Government (Bloomington: Principia Press, 1949), p. 211.

<sup>36</sup>Truman, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

RAZA UNIDA shows the changing political setting in which Mexican-Americans are located. These Mexican-American groups are basic and fundamental political forms created from common causes and shared ethnic attitudes. Mexican-American political leaders and groups are devoted to and active in changing the political setting of the ethnic group. On the personal level of political role, the emergence of leaders and groups is a measure of the changing political setting.

Political Role and Mexican-American  
Voting Patterns in  
San Antonio

On the personal level of political role, voting patterns indicate definitions of the behavioral relationship that exists for the political actor.<sup>37</sup> In other words, the attitudes of the political actor as displayed by voting represent definitions of the behavioral pattern.

According to Robert Lane, persons of ethnic background are active in politics because they have occupational interests which are affected by what government does or does not do. Ethnic groups are directly interested in the rewards of politics in the form of governmental services designed to solve ethnic problems arising from the

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<sup>37</sup>On the nature of the personal level of political role, see Eulau, op. cit.

political setting of the group.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, Mexican-Americans in San Antonio vote mainly for candidates that support better employment opportunities, school facilities, minimum wage protection, medical care programs, and greater public welfare programs for the benefit of the members of the ethnic group.

Ethnic voting patterns, as an indication of the personal level of political role, allow an investigation to distinguish between acculturation and assimilation.<sup>39</sup> Acculturation refers to the beliefs, values, practices, symbols, and ideas in a behavioral pattern. Assimilation refers to the system of relationships and associations among individuals and groups.<sup>40</sup> Michael Parenti observes that ethnic social substructures may persist or evolve new structures in the direction of the mainstream culture. In the face of widespread acculturation, the ethnic group may still maintain a social sub-structure encompassing

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<sup>38</sup>Lane, op. cit., pp. 236-239. See also William Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); and Handlin, op. cit.

<sup>39</sup>Michael Parenti, "Ethnic Politics and Ethnic Identification," American Political Science Review, Vol. 61 (September, 1967), pp. 717-726. See also Erich Rosenthal, "Acculturation Without Assimilation," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 66 (November, 1966), pp. 275-288.

<sup>40</sup>On this distinction see Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951).

primary and secondary group relations composed of fellow ethnics. The lack of assimilation in the face of extensive acculturation helps explain the persistence of ethnic voting noted by Robert Dahl and Raymond Wolfinger.<sup>42</sup>

On the personal level of political role, Mexican-Americans in San Antonio indicate a greater degree of acculturation than assimilation. Mexican-Americans in San Antonio identify closely with personalities such as Henry Gonzalez and Albert Pena. There is much greater association among fellow Mexican-Americans than between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans. On the other hand, Mexican-Americans display general agreement with the beliefs, values, symbols, and ideas of the American social system. Increased Mexican-American acculturation is indicated by extensive activities by the ethnic group with regard to voter registration and other American political practices. Utilizing the political practices and ideas of American politics, Mexican-Americans tend to discriminate between "friends" and "foes" more so today than in years past. Mexican-American voting patterns display a strong preference for the Democratic party and a general tendency for

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<sup>42</sup>Dahl, op. cit., p. 59, and Raymond Wolfinger, "The Development and Persistence of Ethnic Voting," American Political Science Review, Vol. 59 (December, 1965), pp. 896-908.

liberal Democrats over conservative Democrats. In this respect, the personal level of the political role of Mexican-Americans is related to the political setting which confines the group. As Lester Milbrath points out, a political decision designed to change the status quo would normally be a liberal decision.<sup>43</sup> Mexican-Americans in San Antonio, with their support for liberal Democrats, are a force for change in the status quo.

The voting patterns of Mexican-Americans indicate the definitions of the group with regard to the behavioral pattern which involves the group. These definitions, corresponding to the personal level of political role, indicate a close similarity between the political behavior of Mexican-Americans and other American ethnic groups, a greater degree of acculturation than assimilation, and political action which tends to be liberal rather than conservative. These developments correspond with the findings of Angus Campbell and his associates that show voting as a major means whereby an ethnic group can make changes in the political setting confronting the ethnic group.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Milbrath, op. cit.

<sup>44</sup>Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), pp. 3-7. The literature of American ethnic groups argues this point extensively: see Handlin, op. cit.

Political Role and Mexican-American  
Political Access in San Antonio

As Lester Milbrath indicates, if a political actor makes a decision to change the status quo such a decision represents changing the political setting confining the actor.<sup>45</sup> Robert Lane argues that an ethnic group achieves one of its primary goals for entering politics when the group is able to place fellow ethnics in positions in government.<sup>46</sup> The placing of fellow ethnics in the offices of government is the meaning of access utilized in this study of the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. If an ethnic group achieves access to the offices of government, where access was earlier denied, then such access represents a changing political setting.<sup>47</sup>

On the personal level of political role, the definitions which a political actor gives involving the behavioral pattern can be represented by the avenues of access to government chosen by the actor. In other words, the mechanisms of access open to the actor and successfully utilized by the actor represent another aspect of the personal level of the role of the actor. The mechanisms of access to the offices of government open to a political

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<sup>45</sup>Milbrath, op. cit.

<sup>46</sup>Lane, op. cit., pp. 101-114. See also Handlin, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup>See Truman, op. cit., pp. 264-270.

actor are numerous and may vary with the political setting. This study of the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio emphasizes nonpartisan groups, political parties, and elective or appointive positions in government.

Nonpartisan groups provide access to the offices of government for a political actor.<sup>48</sup> Nonpartisan elections do not free the electorate from the pressure of group influence.<sup>49</sup> In nonpartisan elections politicians are active because groups are involved in local government. These groups as political actors have different ambitions and interests which produce conflict leading to demands for governmental action.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, Mexican-Americans in San Antonio consider the nonpartisan Good Government League to be a "power-elite" which has controlled municipal government in San Antonio since 1953. Although the GGL presents a slate of candidates on which all racial and ethnic groups are represented, Mexican-American leaders in San Antonio charge that minority group candidates are selected for electoral balance and have no power in the policy-making of the GGL. On the

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<sup>48</sup>Hugh A. Bone and Austin Ranney, Politics and Voters (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1963), pp. 106-107.

<sup>49</sup>Gerald Pomper, "Ethnic and Group Voting in Nonpartisan Municipal Elections," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 30 (Spring, 1966), pp. 79-97.

<sup>50</sup>Bone and Ranney, op. cit., pp. 107-108.

personal level of political role, Mexican-Americans in San Antonio define the behavioral pattern in which they are involved as one that does not allow significant access to government through the GGL. Consequently, the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has not changed the political setting of the group with regard to the non-partisan GGL.

Political parties offer a political actor another means of access to the offices of government. Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall contend that political parties are essentially interested in making nominations and contesting elections in the hope of eventually gaining and exercising control of the personnel and policies of government.<sup>51</sup> Political parties seek to control the authoritative policy-making bodies of the community and, in so doing, make governmental decisions in response to the demands and ambitions of those groups who compose the party.<sup>52</sup> Hence, a political actor who chooses to utilize a political party as a mechanism of access to the offices of government must decide what political party or parties to enter, what nominations to seek, and what campaign

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<sup>51</sup>Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall, Democracy and the American Party System (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956), p. 85.

<sup>52</sup>Nimmo and Unga, op. cit., pp. 222-223. See also Pendleton Herring, The Politics of Democracy (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1940), p. 64.

strategies to develop. Political decisions of this nature require the actor to define his role in the behavioral pattern which amounts to the personal level of political role. If the actor is successful in gaining access to the offices of government such access would represent a changing political setting.<sup>53</sup>

Political parties represent the most successful means of access to the offices of government for Mexican-Americans in San Antonio. Mexican-American leaders and groups have stimulated political action particularly through the Democratic party. This political action has enabled Mexican-Americans to win elections and place fellow ethnics in the policy-making bodies of the community. Mexican-American political activity is very similar to that of other American ethnic groups. As Oscar Handlin has observed, for these ethnic groups, any political office was available to him who could command the support of numbers; and in many places, the immigrants who had no other assets had at least the weight of numbers.<sup>54</sup> In San Antonio, as for other ethnic groups, Mexican-American ethnic

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<sup>53</sup>For American ethnic groups, political parties have been singularly important in allowing the groups access to government. See Handlin, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 207-209. See also Dahl, op. cit., pp. 32-51; and Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (Third edition; New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 84-85.

identification between the candidate and his community of Mexican-Americans is a positive aid in the quest for office. Today there are more Mexican-American precinct chairmen, more Mexican-American candidates, and more Mexican-American office-holders coming through the ranks of the Democratic party than at any other time in the history of San Antonio.

A third means of access to the offices of government is actual inclusion in the official positions of government.<sup>55</sup> Actually holding an office of government is peculiarly important for minority groups, involving much more than the mere spoils of office. Each first appointment or election given a member of any ethnic group is a boost in that group's struggle for social acceptance. It means that another barrier to their advance has been lifted, another shut door swung open. Samuel Lubell notes that whenever a member of an ethnic group or minority group is installed in a government job, other members of the group think instinctively, "Maybe there's a place up there for me or my child."<sup>56</sup> Inclusion in the official positions of government enable Mexican-Americans to have greater access to the offices of government beyond political party activity. Whereas twenty years ago few Mexican-Americans

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<sup>55</sup>Lane, op. cit. See also Alfred de Grazia, Public and Republic (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951), p. 3 on the importance of office as representing a group.

<sup>56</sup>Lubell, op. cit., p. 85.

were elected or appointed to governmental offices in San Antonio and Bexar County, by the end of 1968 it is quite common to find members of the ethnic group staffing the offices of government.

Political Role, Political Setting  
and Mexican-Americans  
in San Antonio

This study represents an analysis of political role in relation to political setting. In the process of analyzing political role, this study analyzes cultural, social, and personal aspects of the behavioral pattern. Political setting represents the environment which confines and channels the political behavior of an actor.

On the cultural level, the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has limited impact. Cultural conflict persists between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans. The political actions of Mexican-Americans have stimulated greater group awareness than was the case twenty years ago and to this extent the political setting of the group has changed.

On the social level, the political role of Mexican-Americans has had very restricted impact on the political setting. Most Mexican-Americans remain confined in low socio-economic conditions in comparison with Anglo-Americans. The political actions of Mexican-Americans

have not significantly changed this aspect of the political setting.

On the personal level, the political role of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio has had a striking influence upon the political setting. The emergence of ethnic leaders and political action groups, of more group oriented voting patterns, and of greater access to the offices of government represents significant influence of the ethnic group upon the political setting. It is on the personal level of political role that Mexican-Americans have been most successful in changing the political setting in San Antonio.

In the final analysis, the concept of political role shows that an actor may be implicated in several role networks. The political actor is implicated in cultural, social, and personal levels of behavior. Such a network of behavior expectations reflects the complexity of the social matrix and warns against treating any one level of political role as if it were exclusive.<sup>57</sup> Mexican-Americans, as a political actor, are implicated in a variety of role networks. Such a variety of behavior expectations indicates that one should not expect the political setting to be changed in direct ratio to changes in political role. Instead, a more valid conclusion would

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<sup>57</sup>Eulau, op. cit., p. 41.

indicate that some aspects of a political setting are changed by some aspects of political role while other facets of the political setting are not changed or change very slowly.

## APPENDIX I

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you describe the place of Mexican-Americans in the politics of San Antonio?
2. What do you see as the main political problems facing Mexican-Americans in San Antonio?
3. Why do you think you have been successful or influential with Mexican-Americans in San Antonio?
4. Are Mexican-Americans interested in politics or are they apathetic?
5. How influential is "la raza" in the behavior of Mexican-Americans?
6. How much of a problem for Mexican-American leaders is language?
7. Is Mexican-American political participation generally increasing or not? Why?
8. How would you describe the political participation of Mexican-Americans over the past twenty years?
9. I have been told that up until about 1948 or the early 1950's that Mexican-Americans were fairly well told what to do by Anglo-American politicians. Is that true? Why?
10. How influential are Anglo-American politicians today?
11. How influential are Anglo-Americans in rural south Texas?
12. Does living in a city have any effect on the cultural relations between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans? How does this compare with south Texas?
13. Are Mexican-Americans using political power to change their socio-economic conditions?
14. Since socio-economic conditions are so bad in parts of west-side San Antonio, why have there been no riots as in other big cities?

15. Why do not more Mexican-Americans join labor unions in order to raise their wages?
16. Is there Mexican-American discrimination of other Mexican-Americans?
17. What do you see as the differences between various Mexican-American groups such as LULAC, PASO, G. I. Forum, and La Raza Unida? Are there other groups of importance?
18. Why not have these groups join together rather than be separate?
19. How would you describe the Democratic Party in Bexar County? the Republican Party in Bexar County?
20. Are most Mexican-Americans Democrats or Republicans? Why?
21. Why did John Tower do so well in Mexican-American precincts in 1966?
22. What about Republicans; are they increasing in strength? Why?
23. What role do Mexican-Americans play in the Democratic and Republican Party organizations in Bexar county?
24. Are there Mexican-American precinct chairmen? How influential are they?
25. Once in a while I hear charges of Mexican-American bloc voting. Is this true? Why?
26. If Mexican-Americans bloc vote, is this democratic? What is the difference between bloc voting and manipulated voting?
27. I have been told that as the influence of Mexican-Americans in Democratic Party politics has increased, Anglo-Americans have changed their party alignment over to Republican. Is this true? Why?
28. Do you think racial prejudice has anything to do with party realignment or is it a matter of political and economic issues?

29. Do most Mexican-Americans vote for liberals or conservatives?
30. How would you compare the liberal and conservative Democrats in San Antonio?
31. Why do labor leaders, Negro, Mexican-American, and Anglo-American sympathizers join together against conservative Democrats?
32. What do you see as the future of Mexican-Americans in San Antonio and Texas?

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