

RAMSEY MUÑIZ: A STUDY IN IMAGE BUILDING

THESIS

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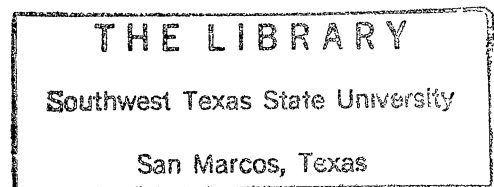
MASTER OF ARTS

by

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(R.L.Mc.)

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In November 1972, the State of Texas experienced a phenomenon of historical significance. La Raza Unida, a political party composed almost exclusively of Mexican Americans, chose Ramsey Muñiz as its candidate for Governor in the 1972 general election. Never in the political history of the state had the Mexican American population united and established an official political party which ran Mexican Americans for state offices.<sup>1</sup> Two Mexican Americans had run for state offices in Texas under the auspices of the Democratic party prior to 1972. Henry B. Gonzales ran as a gubernatorial hopeful in the 1958 primary election, and Lauro Cruz ran for the office of State

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<sup>1</sup>Clifton McClesky and Bruce Merrill, "Mexican American Political Behavior in Texas," Social Science Quarterly 53 (March 1973):797.

Treasurer in 1972.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these two candidates was successful nor were either supported by a unique, Mexican American political party.

Only once had Texas seen a Mexican American hold a major state office. Governor John Connally appointed Roy Barerra Secretary of State for Texas on 7 March 1968. This drew considerable comment precisely because it was an extraordinary thing for a Mexican American to hold any such state office. The past record of Texas state government had indicated an attitude of neglect and indifference toward the Mexican American population as elective office holders.<sup>3</sup> Ramsey Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party hoped to change this attitude toward the Mexican American elective office holder when they fielded fifty-four candidates for state and local offices in 1972. As a direct result of Muñiz's capturing 6 percent of the vote in 1972, Dolph Briscoe was the first Governor in seventy-eight years to be elected with less than a majority of the votes cast.

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<sup>2</sup>Texas Legislative Reference Library, Governor Connally's Official Collection of Press Releases (Austin: Legislative Reference Library, 1975).

<sup>3</sup>McClesky and Merrill, "Behavior," p. 786.

Texas had its first plurality governor and La Raza Unida had made its impact.<sup>4</sup>

This study was prompted by the fact that Ramsey Muñiz and La Raza Unida party had made a definite impact on Texas politics. La Raza Unida Party was the first political party which actually threatened the traditional two party structure in Texas. As the gubernatorial candidate of La Raza Unida, Ramsey Muñiz became the first Mexican American to have his name placed on the November General Election Ballot in the race for Governor of Texas. Because of the nature of the study, a comprehensive approach was executed in development of the following purposes.

#### Purposes of the Study

There were several purposes for this study, the first being a descriptive record of the background and history of La Raza Unida Party in Texas, in order to demonstrate the growth of La Raza Unida and its impact on Texas politics. A necessary second objective was the

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Castro, Chicano Power (New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974), p. 2.

presentation of Ramsey Muñiz's life, education, professional career, and the La Raza Unida platform designed for use in both of his campaigns. The third objective was to analyze Ramsey Muñiz's image as it developed during the 1972 and 1974 gubernatorial campaigns. In an attempt to determine the public image of Ramsey Muñiz, several sources were utilized: (1) election results, (2) news media sources, (3) candidate's verbal responses to public opinion, and (4) general reactions to the candidate's representation of his unique political party.

Although Ramsey Muñiz had been exposed to politics since his adolescent years, as an adult he was a new actor on the Texas political scene. Thus, his public image was examined in three phases: (1) an analysis of Muñiz's image before La Raza Unida's certification for the 1972 November General Election Ballot, (2) an analysis of him as La Raza Unida's candidate for governor after certification was viewed as inevitable, and (3) an analysis of Ramsey Muñiz's image as it changed during preparation for the 1974 campaign.

Research was conducted to isolate and analyze select rhetorical strategies used by Muñiz in both

elections. The major rhetorical strategies were:

(1) representation of the party platform and issues;  
(2) Muñiz's public speeches; (3) group identification;  
(4) use of mass media; (5) negation of attacks from external sources. The final purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies utilized by Ramsey Muñiz to build his political image in both campaigns.

#### Justification of the Study

Recently there has been an expansion of scholarly interest in intercultural communication and in Mexican American affairs. The increased interest has been demonstrated by the growing number of articles and books that have appeared on the academic scene. However, few in-depth studies dealing specifically with the communication aspects of the Chicano movement in Texas were available. Considering that the Mexican American population was the largest minority group in the state (approximately one out of every five Texas residents, or 18.4 percent of all Texans, were found to have Spanish surnames), the

increased interest seemed long overdue.<sup>5</sup> Obviously, this study was concerned with a significant minority grouping and was further justified for its correlating data on the Mexican American impact within the Texas political structure.

In 1971, José Ángel Gutiérrez conducted a survey of elected Mexican American officials in Texas, which included a questionnaire regarding the approximate year that a Mexican American would possibly be elected governor of Texas. He found that:

A very pessimistic and contradictory note was raised regarding the approximate year that a Mexican American would be elected Governor of Texas. An overwhelming number of elected officials figured that such a Governor would be elected by 1980. Yet 24% wrote in "never."<sup>6</sup>

The gubernatorial campaigns of Texas in 1972 and 1974 were the first indications that, given the opportunity, a Mexican American could eventually be elected governor.

Specifically, justification for this study was centered in three areas: (1) the fact that never before

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<sup>5</sup> McClesky and Merrill, "Behavior," p. 786.

<sup>6</sup> José A. Gutiérrez, "El Político: A Survey of Mexican American Elected Officials in Texas," a paper presented to St. Mary's University Government Class 381L, San Antonio, 1971.

in the history of Texas had there been an ethnic minority group which established a legitimate, registered political party,<sup>7</sup> (2) never had a Mexican American had his name placed on the ballot for the Office of Governor in Texas,<sup>8</sup> and (3) no rhetorical analysis of Ramsey Muñiz and his campaign strategies existed. It was contended that a study such as the one undertaken would contribute significant information to the field of intercultural communication and, possibly, generate a basis for future speech communication studies concerning Mexican American residents in Texas. The following section established certain limitations incurred because of the nature of the study.

#### Limitations of the Study

Essentially, it was important to define the key terms as follows:

1. La Raza--"my people," a label which unifies peoples of Spanish origin linguistically and culturally,<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Official Bulletin August 9, 1972--certifying the placing of La Raza Unida Party on the General Election Ballot. (Austin: Sec. of State Office, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Caracol, November 1974.

<sup>9</sup> Armando M. Rodriquez, "Who is La Raza?" in A Documentary History of the Mexican American, ed. Wayne Moquin (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 495.

2. La Raza Unida--"The United People," chosen by the new political party to represent their quest of uniting the Mexican Americans in Texas politically,
3. Chicano--generally accepted as having origin in northern Mexico.<sup>10</sup> "The word [Chicano] has been with us since the time of the conquest of Mexico in the early 1500s," said Dr. Sabine Uribarri, Chairman of the University of New Mexico Department of Modern and Classical Languages. He further explained that because the Spaniards could not pronounce the 'x' sound, their term 'Mexicano' gradually changed into 'Meshicano' and eventually developed into 'Chicano.' The widespread use of the term today came as the Chicanos learned from the struggles of the American Negroes who took a term for which they were most criticized, 'black,' and made it a source of ethnic pride with 'Black is Beautiful!' Though originally used as a derogatory term for young Mexicans, now 'Chicano is Beautiful!'"<sup>11</sup>

The study was further limited by other factors such as (1) no speeches given by Ramsey Muñiz were available in their entirety, (2) an interview with Muñiz could not be secured, (3) a majority of the information used in the study came from current newspaper accounts of the 1972 and 1974 Muñiz campaigns, which were sometimes conflicting and inaccurate and (4) some of the acquired

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<sup>10</sup> Ysidro Ramon Macias, "The Chicano Movement" in A Documentary History of the Mexican American, ed. Wayne Moquin (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 499.

<sup>11</sup> San Antonio Light, 10 September 1974.



information was originally written in Spanish and appeared somewhat diluted after translation into English.

The attempt to describe "a growing image" of a human being produces several challenges which are unique to a study of this nature. Kenneth Boulding expanded the term image when he wrote:

The image of man is rich and complex beyond expression. It is a curious paradox that although this very richness is a result of its symbolic character, symbols and language are incapable of expressing it to the full. There is always something in the image of man, even the most intelligent and sophisticated person "beyond what words can utter."<sup>12</sup>

The conceptualization of the term image itself is complex.

Some studies have found that images can be described thusly:

. . . mental representations that influence how people see political, as well as other, things; they help people in achieving tangible goals, making judgements and expressing themselves. We also know that persons exchange images between each other by using symbols in both interpersonal and mass communication. In communicating images people recreate in their minds the content of the messages of others; sometimes they do this successfully, but often they do so only imperfectly.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Boulding, The Image (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> Dan D. Nimmo, Popular Images of Politics (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 51.

Another problem arises in describing an image as synthesized by the recordings and observations of that particular subject. The study of image became more and more difficult until a delineation was discovered which separated the type of image that would be analyzed.

Daniel Boorstin described it:

An image is a visible public "personality" as distinguished from an inward private "character." "Public" goes with "image" as naturally as with "interest" or "opinion." The overshadowing image we readily admit, covers up whatever may really be there. By our use of the term we imply that something can be done to it; the image can always be more or less successfully synthesized, doctored, repaired, refurbished and improved, quite apart from (though not entirely independent of) the spontaneous original of which the image is a public portrait.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, a person's image can be expected to change at any given time through any given stimulus. The description of Muñiz's image was developed from the public image projected by his past and present experiences. Though the image of Ramsey Muñiz was based largely on the analysis of reported opinions about him, the very nature of the study demanded that this image not be separated

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 187.

entirely from the image of the Chicano movement in Texas in which Muñiz participated. One authority suggested that the image of a movement, such as the Chicano movement in Texas, could actually inhibit or facilitate the synthesis of the image of a leader within the movement as interpolated through the combined group and individual image.<sup>15</sup>

"Status politics is an effort to control the status of a group by acts which function to raise, lower or maintain the social status of the acting group vis-à-vis others in society."<sup>16</sup> The goals of La Raza Unida Party were intricately woven into a fight for equality in political decision making in Texas. Ramsey Muñiz, by virtue of his candidacy, was made responsible for accomplishing the goals of La Raza Unida.

#### Method of Analysis

A candidate's image is said to form as a subtle transaction between the symbols he projects in order to demonstrate his capacity to govern and, at the other end,

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<sup>15</sup>Nimmo, Popular Images, p. 110.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

the images which voters use to evaluate the candidate.<sup>17</sup>

Two major categories have been examined in light of how a voter's impression of a candidate is formulated: first by his political role which includes (1) his record and experience; (2) his qualifications and abilities (whether he is a good leader, knows how to handle people, is a good administrator, is strong, decisive, educated and knowledgeable); (3) his position on issues and policies; (4) his philosophies (as liberal or conservative); and (5) his group associations (with the "common" people, "special interests," "big business," "labor," etc.). The candidate's image is also influenced by three major characteristics seen by the voter through first, his political strength, connections and dynamism; second, what political party he represents; and finally, his political aspirations.<sup>18</sup>

The second influencing factor considered in determining the candidate's image was his political style which included (1) voters' perception of the candidate's

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

personal qualities such as (a) appearance, (b) traits like integrity, impulsiveness, sincerity, maturity, etc., (c) personality and (d) background (age, wealth, education, etc.) and (2) his performance capabilities as a campaigner (as a good or bad speaker, cool or hot television performer, comfortable or ill at ease, formal or casual, etc.)<sup>19</sup> ". . . Popular images of political leaders are an amalgam of both political role and style considerations, and in attempting to 'build' his image no politician can run simply as a . . . popular 'celebrity.'"<sup>20</sup>

The communication of political image is directly associated with all efforts to achieve some social order, for it is through images that people justify any distribution of material goods to satisfy material demands, to legitimize and secure moral and status deference and, finally, to identify those who can solidify the community's membership. Communication of images, although intricate, is a key aspect of politics.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

The second area of concentration in this analysis was directed toward select rhetorical strategies involved in each campaign. These strategies were defined and subdivided as follows:

Two basic categories of rhetorical strategies are (1) Verbal and (2) Non-verbal. These two general areas are defined as: (1) Verbal: Those strategies which exclusively utilize language as the primary vehicle for accomplishing the desired goals of a person, group, or movement, (2) Non-verbal: rhetorical strategies including sit-ins, fasting or any form of promoting the group's goals which does not utilize language as its primary means of accomplishing these goals. The subdivisions unique to both verbal and non-verbal strategies are as follows: (a) Planned strategies: those literally planned or scheduled to occur, (b) Semi-planned strategies: those strategies based upon a high probability that the particular event will generate reaction or responses from a "pool" of probable entities such as the news media or local authorities, (c) Unplanned strategies: those which promote the group's goals without any prior knowledge by the movement or group.<sup>22</sup>

The selected rhetorical strategies involved in the study were taken from recorded excerpts from campaign speeches delivered by Muñiz, La Raza Unida literature, the public media, the established election regulations, and

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<sup>22</sup> A. Gabbard-Alley, "Toward a Working Definition of Rhetorical Strategies," a paper delivered at the National Speech Communication Association Convention, New York, 1973.

interviews with key La Raza Unida Party members and candidates for both the 1972 and 1974 campaigns.

After the specific strategies used by Muñiz were discovered, the correlating appeals were then determined. The appeals to be considered were motivational, factual, and fear appeals. "Motivational appeals are stimuli designed to create a tension, to elicit a feeling or effective response from a receiver. Motivational appeals are directed to the wishes, wants, desires, goals, and needs of the person."<sup>23</sup> Factual appeals are those which deal specifically with known facts about a person or thing, and fear appeals are directed towards the threat of "pending" danger.<sup>24</sup> Muñiz employed all three types of appeals vis-à-vis his rhetorical strategies, in both the 1972 and 1974 campaigns.

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<sup>23</sup> Kenneth E. Anderson, Persuasion Theory and Practice (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1972), p. 32.

<sup>24</sup> Marvin Karlins and Herbert I. Abelson, Persuasion: How Opinions and Attitudes are Changed (New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 35-37.

### Plan of Development

In order to accomplish the study, the following line of analysis was employed. Chapter II presented the necessary historical information concerning the rise of La Raza Unida Party in Texas. This chapter included a discussion of the party in Crystal City where the party founder first chose to run for public office. After successful experimentation at the local level, the party chose to expand statewide. Therefore, the legal procedures for obtaining a place on the state General Election Ballot were also included in Chapter II.

Chapter III presented pertinent biographical material for Ramsey Muñiz, including his personal and political backgrounds. Major details of how Muñiz was chosen as La Raza Unida Party's gubernatorial candidate for 1972 and 1974 elections were also included. Finally, this chapter reviewed the platform used by La Raza Unida Party for the 1972 and 1974 gubernatorial campaigns.

Chapter IV dealt with "image." This discussion described Ramsey Muñiz's public image throughout the 1972 and 1974 campaigns. The chapter included a discussion of



how Muñiz's image changed during the rhetorical situations of 1972 and 1974.

Chapter V examined the six rhetorical strategies employed by Muñiz to build his desired public image. This chapter also included a discussion of the changes in Muñiz's strategies from 1972 to 1974.

Chapter VI contained a summary of the study and an evaluation of the effectiveness of each rhetorical strategy employed by Muñiz to build his public image in both campaigns. Finally, any conclusion concerning overall effectiveness of La Raza Unida and the political future of Ramsey Muñiz was offered.

## CHAPTER II

### LA RAZA UNIDA PARTY IN TEXAS

#### Birth of La Raza Unida Party

The conception of La Raza Unida Party (The United People) occurred in 1967 in El Paso, Texas. Labeled a "gathering of bad Mexican Americans" by some Anglos and Mexican Americans, the conference was held as a direct protest against the Interagency Conference on Mexican American Affairs convened at the same time by the late President Lyndon B. Johnson. Many of the Chicano leaders of Texas and other states had been excluded from President Johnson's conference.<sup>1</sup> It was stated that:

What the cabinet hearings lacked in color and drama, La Raza Unida Conference made up for and surpassed. Two elections were held on Friday and Saturday in the parish gym of Sacred Heart Catholic Church located in "El Secundo," the south El Paso barrio

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<sup>1</sup>Corpus Christi Caller Times, 13 February 1972.

[where] adobe shack and brick tenement conditions rival the worst slums in the nation.<sup>2</sup>

The conference reflected the exciting vitality of a new political party. "In vigorous, resounding speeches, orators expressed frustrations, anger and bitterness; but all of the speakers called for unity." The young Chicanos impatiently demanded their rights as they insisted that veteran Chicano leaders had made little progress in obtaining the rights of the minority Mexican Americans. Phil Castruita of the United Mexican American Students at California State College remarked, "The young Chicanos see this conference as the last chance you older Chicanos have to come through. If nothing comes from this, you'll have to step aside or we'll walk over you." José Ángel Gutiérrez, a youth whose name would echo as the founder of La Raza Unida Party, joined Castruita in challenging the crowds in the barrio gym. "We are going to march, and you can join us. But if you don't, you will be left behind."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Armando Rendon, "La Raza--Today not Mañana," in Mexican Americans in the United States: A Reader, ed. John H. Burma (Los Angeles: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1970), p. 315.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Gutiérrez' fiery rhetoric represented the spirit of the new party. Shouts of "Viva La Raza!", "Power to the People!", "Yo Soy Chicano!", and "Ya Basta!" characterized the Chicanos' pride and determination to become politically and culturally united. In one speech, José Gutiérrez explained what he felt the "Chicano Movement" and La Raza Unida were about:

This movement, this movement is not a political party. It doesn't merely try to get political positions, because we have seen that a lot can be done with politics, but not enough to completely end our problems. . . . We cannot depend solely on the vote. We have to strike; we have to march; we have to fight all for the benefit of our people. Because it concerns the Chicano movement, it means having control of our destiny in our hands . . . when it concerns this movement, it means giving hell to the owners of Del Monte. It means taking all the land from the ranchers in this county; it means bettering ourselves, as Mexicans, as the bronze race throughout the country.<sup>4</sup>

#### La Raza Unida Becomes a Reality

José Ángel Gutiérrez was not a newcomer to the Texas political scene because he had already become a controversial figure earlier in 1967 when he founded the

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<sup>4</sup>Caracol, November 1974.

Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO).<sup>5</sup> In 1962 Gutierrez had graduated from high school in the small south Texas town of Crystal City. He then pursued his education at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas where he received a Master's Degree in Political Science. Gutierrez then began work toward a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Political Science at the University of Texas at Austin, but he did not finish his dissertation. Gutierrez decided to take a job in Crystal City, and once home, he quickly involved himself in the local politics of the small town.<sup>6</sup>

The conditions in Crystal City, the county seat of Zavala County, were economically, socially, and politically poor for the Chicanos in the area. The Bureau of Business Research for the University of Texas set Zavala County population in 1960 at 12,696 with 9,440 of that number possessing Spanish surnames. The increase in Spanish surnames between 1950 and 1960 was 22.8 percent.

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<sup>5</sup>San Antonio Light, 10 October 1971.

<sup>6</sup>San Antonio Express, 11 July 1971.

The average annual income of a Mexican American family in the county was estimated at \$1,754.<sup>7</sup> Crystal City Independent School District figures for 17 March 1971 showed 2,750 Mexican American students, 250 Anglo students and 9 black students.<sup>8</sup> As for the geographic appearance of the town, one newspaper reported:

Surrounded by scrub and farm land, . . . the low squat buildings, the polite little business district split by the railroad tracks running down the main street, the Del Monte plant outside of town, the run-down shacks of migrant workers, give no sense of political portent.<sup>9</sup>

The quiet little town exploded, politically speaking, in 1966 when José Ángel Gutiérrez encouraged approximately 1,000 Mexican American students to boycott the schools in Crystal City.<sup>10</sup> Records show that:

. . . the Chicano students rallied around demands calling for bilingual education; participation in federal programs, such as a lunch program; better physical plant conditions; scholarships; the right to bring whatever literature they wanted to into

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<sup>7</sup> Antonio Camejo, "Texas Chicanos Forge Own Political Power," in Introduction to Chicano Studies: A Reader, edited by Isauro Duran and Russell Bernard (New York: Macmillan Co., 1973), p. 553.

<sup>8</sup> San Antonio Express, 11 July 1971.

<sup>9</sup> San Angelo Standard Times, 16 June 1974.

<sup>10</sup> Dallas News, 8 June 1972.

the schools; and an end to racist practices in selection of cheerleaders.

The walkout resulted in one of the best organized and most successful school boycotts in Texas. Approximately 1,700 of 2,300 students in grades one through twelve walked out, virtually closing all the schools in town.<sup>11</sup> With the success of the mass boycott, Gutiérrez had established La Raza Unida as a viable political idea in Crystal City.

Observers have noted that José Ángel Gutiérrez followed the teachings of such men as Saul Alinsky. The actions against Crystal City public school policies seemed to stem directly from Alinsky's theory that equality can exist only when both sides have power. Gutiérrez was determined to equalize the power among Mexican Americans in his own town where Anglo power structures had existed since the community's establishment. He recognized that Mexican Americans were highly concentrated in the populations of south Texas counties. This led Gutiérrez to set forth La Raza Unida's initial goal as the acquisition of power. Gutiérrez decided to lead Chicanos to the control

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<sup>11</sup>Camejo, in Introduction to Chicano Studies, p. 554.

of their own political, economical and social environment in the twenty counties of south Texas in which the Mexican Americans constituted a majority of the population.<sup>12</sup>

La Raza Unida was envisioned by many as an ethnic institution that would break the cycle of Chicano repression, not merely by achieving power in order to enter the mainstream of American society; but instead, by supplying the means to safeguard the Chicanos' bicultural and bilingual uniqueness. With the creation of La Raza Unida, the Chicano impetus toward greater self-determination rose to a new intensity. Acting on the goal set for La Raza Unida's progress, José Gutiérrez and two other Chicanos ran as La Raza Unida candidates in the school board election in Crystal City held in April 1970. They won with a tremendous majority. For the first time in the history of the school district, a Mexican American majority sat on the school board. The first act of the new board was to elect José Ángel Gutiérrez as president.<sup>13</sup> José

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<sup>12</sup> Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera, The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans (New York: Hill and Wray, 1972), p. 276.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 276-77.



Gutiérrez had left the veteran Chicano leaders behind and had begun his own campaign for the rights of Chicanos.

La Raza Unida Impact on Crystal City

Since the spring of 1970, La Raza Unida had gradually ousted Anglos from the school board, the city hall and the county courthouse. Today this is the only place in the U. S. where the brown power movement is in control of all branches of local government.<sup>14</sup>

City Manager Francisco Rodriquez, Crystal City native and member of La Raza Unida, maintained that since La Raza Unida had become powerful in the town, "We're bringing more money into the town."<sup>15</sup> The record was quite impressive for the adolescent political party. Rodriquez indicated that the boost to the local economy included a new health clinic, 124 public housing units, school improvements, and expansion of water and sewer services to accommodate new industry that the community was hoping to attract.

The attitude of La Raza Unida toward its opponents was embodied in a statement by Rodriquez: "We're going to develop the city with or without your help." The help

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<sup>14</sup>Wall Street Journal, 5 September 1975.

<sup>15</sup>Dallas News, 8 June 1972.

La Raza Unida sought was federal aid. Many of the Crystal City improvement programs were founded after acquiring federal funds. In 1971, three million dollars in urban renewal money were received with an additional five million dollars scheduled for receipt over a five year period beginning with 1972. Also received were \$2.4 million of federal money for the establishment of the public housing units and \$2.25 million over a three year period for the health clinic and county-city health programs.<sup>16</sup>

The Crystal City Independent School District received much of the impact of the new political power in the town. Since La Raza Unida had become operable, an old \$178,000 bilingual-bicultural program--one of the key demands of the 1969 boycotters--was expanded to a \$250,000 program for the development of a secondary school curriculum relevant to the needs of the Mexican American students. Altogether, some \$20 million of federal funds were received throughout the city, county, school district, and urban renewal authority.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Wall Street Journal, 5 September 1975.

However, even with vast community progress, a majority of the Anglo population and some of the Mexican Americans resented the newly established political party and its representative officials. Mexican American and Anglo families alike began to withdraw their children from the Crystal City public schools. Some business people began to commute to nearby towns for work, while many of the Crystal City business owners closed their shops completely and left town. This exodus from Crystal City was only the beginning of negative responses to La Raza Unida Party.

#### La Raza Unida Encounters Numerous Problems

Once the new members of the school board, those representing La Raza Unida and the Chicano community, had taken office, it was reported that "dozens of Anglos and Mexican American families are leaving this south Texas town so their children won't have to spend another year in schools controlled by the militant La Raza Unida party." Wayne Hamilton, thirty-eight, one of the remaining two Anglos on the seven-man school board stated, "It's not too much to say that Crystal City is falling

apart . . . in a town like this, you can take the city and you can take the county, whatever they do. But when the schools go to hell, that's chaos." President of the school board, José Gutiérrez, responded to both the criticism and mass exodus by saying, "The fact that the Anglos are leaving isn't an indication that the community is falling apart; the racists are just leaving." According to school superintendent Ángel Noe Gonzales, also a La Raza Unida member, 144 Anglo pupils and 34 Mexican American pupils sought transfers in the summer of 1971 to schools in nearby Uvalde, Carrizo Springs, Batesville, and La Pyror.<sup>18</sup>

Not only were the students and their families leaving the small south Texas town, supposedly because of La Raza Unida's control of the school board, but teachers in the district were leaving too. Superintendent Gonzales said there was a 50 percent faculty turn-over, and recruiting was made even harder because the Texas Classroom Teachers Association had imposed sanctions on the district. The TCTA reportedly found "deplorable teaching

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<sup>18</sup>Del Rio News Herald, 23 August 1971.

conditions" in Crystal City. An investigation team from TCTA's professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission had probed published reports that some twenty-three teachers within the system--all with Hispanic surnames--were not being rehired for the 1971-72 school year.<sup>19</sup> The sanctions included notifying the state and national accrediting agencies of unsatisfactory conditions for both teachers and students. In addition, Crystal City district was censured by means of articles in the TCTA News, special study reports, newspapers, and other means of mass communication.<sup>20</sup>

Superintendent Gonzales denounced the TCTA sanctions and in conjunction with the school district itself, filed suit against TCTA seeking \$350,000 in damages.<sup>21</sup> The suit contended that if the sanctions were allowed to remain in full force, the district would not be able to fully and adequately carry through its regular school year because of the inability to contract with teachers and

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<sup>19</sup> Austin American-Statesman, 26 August 1971.

<sup>20</sup> San Antonio Express, 2 April 1971.

<sup>21</sup> Austin American-Statesman, 26 August 1971.

administrators.<sup>22</sup> Later in the summer of 1971, Superintendent Gonzales stated that despite the TCTA sanctions, the Crystal City School District had hired 90 of the people it needed and claimed that there would be a certified teacher in every classroom. Furthermore, he stated that eighty-five of the school district's personnel were Mexican Americans and forty-seven were Anglos. Of the sixty Anglo teachers in the district in 1970, only fifteen remained to teach in 1971.

Wayne Hamilton, previously cited, stated, "There is an undeniable omnipresence of political activity and pressure in our schools."<sup>23</sup> Hamilton charged the school administration with having Spanish classes translate materials about the Communist overthrow of the Chilean government and with allowing numerous underground newspapers, books, and other lewd materials to be distributed in the schools. A display of clenched fists by the Crystal City Band, employed while marching at football games, prompted State Senator Wayne Connally to state in a speech given

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<sup>22</sup> San Antonio Express, 6 June 1971.

<sup>23</sup> Austin American-Statesman, 26 August 1971.

10 September 1971 in San Antonio, Texas, that the clenched fists exhibited by Crystal City students were a "universal symbol of Communism, and the Federal Government is sending federal funds into Crystal City to support teachings of Anti-Americanism." Gonzales responded that, "It (the clenched fist sign) is a sign of victory, or success, used by many of our athletes in this nation."<sup>24</sup> The turmoil in Crystal City was further renounced by Representative O. C. Fisher of San Angelo when he called for an investigation of the Office of Economic Opportunity because it awarded a \$502,413 grant to Crystal City School District. In his words, "others well acquainted with the political situation at Crystal City question the competence of local officials to spend this vast outpouring of money."<sup>25</sup>

The alarm spread throughout the school district. Parents and teachers alike became extremely concerned about the quality of education that would be given to students of the Crystal City Independent School District. As a result of the disturbing situation in the public

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<sup>24</sup> San Antonio Light, 10 October 1971.

<sup>25</sup> San Antonio Express, 2 September 1971.

schools, a private school was established in Crystal City. The Crystal City Community School opened in September 1971 including grades one through eight. It was open to all races and religions. The facilities of the Crystal City Methodist Church were used to house the new school and this caused two church members, Dr. and Mrs. Robert A. Stauber, to make the following protest. In a letter to Reverend Wayne Murphy, the Staubers contended that the school's participants in the newly established community school were desecrating God's church. Reverend Wayne Murphy replied to the Staubers' letter as follows:

The educational level in the public schools appears to be at "a very low level," and numerous teachers, parents, and students state that it is virtually impossible to get an adequate education in the public schools.

The system has advertised at Texas A & M, at Berkeley, Calif., and in "The Militant" for teachers stating that a degree is not necessary.

President of the school board is Guti  rrez, a leader of La Raza Unida, who with his party has been repeatedly accused of Communist ties.

"The Plum-Plum Pickers," primarily political, but also pornographic in featuring a graphic description of the human sex act on page 23, is placed on the junior high and high school library shelves.



Incidents of communist indoctrination in the Crystal City schools "have been reported and documented."<sup>26</sup>

Dr. and Mrs. Stauber countered:

Mexican American students, for the very first time for many of them, are coming "alive" to educational possibilities and extra curricular involvement.

Anglos are making things as difficult as possible for the Mexican Americans in control of the schools by refusing to pay school taxes.

The present administration did not place the ads for teachers in the publications mentioned by Rev. Murphy, and if such ads were placed, it might be interesting to know who did place them and why.

John Birch pamphlets "are a dime a dozen" around Crystal City.

The Staubers asked for documentation of the charges of communistic indoctrination in the schools.

"Could at least part of the problem with page 23 of The Plum Plum Pickers be that the woman is Anglo while the man is Chicano?"

The Staubers agreed with Rev. Murphy that "there appears to be a general attitude of hostility and racial hatred in our public school system," but added that the racism had existed for the entire life of the town. "Now that the Mexican American is definitely in control, it (the racial hatred) is coming out in the open," the Staubers declared.

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<sup>26</sup> San Antonio Express, 11 July 1971.

They closed by asking, "Would it not be more accurate and candid to say that the the thing that is really disturbing you is the fact that, for the first time, the majority is ruling?"<sup>27</sup>

The school system of Crystal City was not the only institution in town to face major upsets as city officials reacted to new developments brought about by the newly installed power system of La Raza Unida. The County Attorney for Zavala County, Curtis Jackson, responded to the victory of José Gutiérrez and his companions by filing a \$1.2 million lawsuit against the new school board president, four other individuals and various "allegedly charitable foundations" for libel. It was Jackson's contention that "racism of the co-conspiracy against him will normally deprive him of ever holding public office in the state of Texas hereafter." In another area of city administration, the entire Urban Renewal staff resigned. Director of the staff, Sam Anderson, accepted the resignation of his ten employees, submitted his own and explained, "It seems that I no longer enjoy the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

confidence of the Board of Commissioners which is imperative to an operation of this kind." Anderson's Project Coordinator, W. C. Davidson, submitted his letter of resignation noting that without Anderson as the top administrator in the department:

I can no longer assure these lenders that the loans they make are the quality for the protection of their shareholders. I feel that without this assurance, the lenders will not be as receptive to loans as they have been in the past.<sup>28</sup>

The situation in Crystal City was anything but stable. La Raza Unida Party's engulfing of the economic, political, and social scene in the town was not totally accepted by all of the Mexican Americans in the community. "If you are La Raza Unida, you are in like Flynn!" stated Manuel Garza, an appliance repairman. Unsuccessful as an independent candidate against La Raza Unida's City Council candidates in the spring of 1973, Garza became the target of a boycott until the hot summer months when air conditioners broke down. "Come and cry on my shoulder," teased Garza.<sup>29</sup> Another unsuccessful independent candidate, Ted

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Houston Chronicle, 30 September 1973.

Munoz, stated "They (La Raza Unida) created as much hatred against the Mexican Americans as against the Anglos. It is not a racial problem, it is a political problem."<sup>30</sup> Several local businessmen of both ethnic groups felt that La Raza Unida's tax policies and radical rhetoric were aggravating the economic problems of the city. Since the take-over in 1970, city taxes had risen 57 percent and school taxes had gone up 72 percent.<sup>31</sup> Reverse discrimination was echoed by Anglos who claimed to be finding that their taxes rose disproportionately to those of the Chicano community.<sup>32</sup>

#### A Quiet Aftermath in Crystal City

Nineteen hundred and seventy-five revealed Crystal City, Texas, in a relatively peaceful environment. The founder of La Raza Unida Party of Texas, José Ángel Gutiérrez, had been appointed County Judge of Zavala County as of January 1, 1975. Once a struggling graduate student, Gutiérrez was rather handsomely established as a

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<sup>30</sup> Austin American-Statesman, 26 August 1971.

<sup>31</sup> Wall Street Journal, 5 September 1975.

<sup>32</sup> San Angelo Standard Times, 16 June 1974.

major citizen in the small town. His family's income totaled approximately \$47,000 per year, or roughly eleven times the average family income of \$3,984 of other Mexican American families in the county. Various sources contributed to the Gutiérrez income level. As Director of a Carnegie Foundation program for training Chicanos in areas of school administration, Gutiérrez received some \$11,000 annually. As Falstaff Beer distributor for the area, he earned another \$15,000 each year. Finally, as a guest lecturer and occasional instructor in Political Science for south Texas junior colleges, Gutiérrez was paid about \$5,000. Gutiérrez's wife, Luz Gutiérrez, was employed as Acting Director of the Crystal City-Zavala County Health Clinic earlier mentioned and earned some \$16,000 annually for her services.<sup>33</sup>

José Ángel Gutiérrez, still only thirty years old, was never apologetic when challenged about his newly acquired wealth and status:

Sure, my income is right up there with the gringos; but it comes from sources they can't touch. If it didn't, how long do you think I'd be able to go on with my (political) work? I think I can articulate

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<sup>33</sup> Wall Street Journal, 5 September 1975.

very well the frustrations and the aspirations of our Chicano community and as long as I can do that, it doesn't make any difference whether I'm a millionaire or making only a dollar a year.<sup>34</sup>

Gutiérrez's attitude of personal and political arrogance was directly illustrative of the changes that had taken place in Crystal City over a period of only a few years. Two revolutions, politically speaking, had occurred. As one observer stated: "To the Chicano, it is a heady feeling of power; to the white, a frightening sense of impotence."<sup>35</sup>

#### La Raza Unida Goes Statewide

The tremendous success of La Raza Unida at the local level in Crystal City ignited the spark which led La Raza Unida to bid for statewide acceptance. José Gutiérrez was optimistic about the long struggle to get the party's candidates on the ballot for the general election to be held 7 November 1972:

There is no doubt in my mind that we will make it. But it is so tedious; there are so many details. We have to follow the letter of the law, and if the people get right down to it, they can always find enough

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> San Angelo Standard Times, 16 June 1974.

technicalities to take you off the ballot. It is always a problem.<sup>36</sup>

The regulations that had to be met could not be overemphasized; they were extremely detailed, and many internal deadlines had to be faced.

Two meetings were held during the summer of 1971 to contend with the decisions necessary for moving the party into a broader phase of influence. Although several of the organizers of La Raza Unida Party had never been involved in politics, they became quickly committed to the establishing of an alternative to the deep-seated two party system in Texas. All undertook to learn the fine details of the Texas Election Code. Because of this dedication, La Raza Unida Party was successful in meeting the requirements at each stage of development. The Texas Election Code, Article 13.46 stated that:

The state committee of a political party which is not required by law to make nominations by primary election, shall decide and, by resolution, declare whether the party nominations will be made by conventions or by primary elections, and shall certify their

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<sup>36</sup>Houston Chronicle, 21 January 1972.

decisions to the Secretary of State not later than twelve months before the general election.<sup>37</sup>

To secure a place on the general ballot by November 1972, the leaders of La Raza Unida had to file a list of temporary State Executive Committee members with the Secretary of State in Austin. La Raza Unida party precinct and county conventions were held October 13 and 15, 1971 respectively. Though some counties held over 200 precincts, only four precinct conventions were held in any single county. Procedures followed were:

. . . to post notice of the hours and places of holding the convention on a bulletin board at the county courthouse and to file a copy thereof in the office of the county clerk at least ten days prior to the precinct conventions. (Article 13.45a)

. . . to conduct the necessary business of the conventions: make a list of all qualified members of the party present, . . . elect from among those present a chairman, . . . elect delegates to the county convention. (Article 13.34c)

. . . to keep a record of all its proceedings, . . . which shall be signed officially, sealed up and safely transmitted in person or by registered mail to the chairman, . . . within three days after the precinct convention to the county clerk of the county, who shall affix his mark thereto and who

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<sup>37</sup>Olivia Evey Chapa, "Texas Raza Unida Party," Graduate paper presented to the Antioch School of Education, Juarez-Lincoln Center, Austin, Texas 15 December 1972.



shall promptly deliver the original copy of such return to the chairman of the county executive committee. . . . (Article 13.34c)<sup>38</sup>

After all the preliminaries were accomplished, the first La Raza Unida Party State Convention was held:

On October 30, 1971 approximately 500 people attended the first La Raza Unida Party State Convention held in San Antonio, Texas. The efforts to comply with the laws to be represented by delegates to this convention were fulfilled by only nine counties (Zavala, Hidalgo, Harris, Bexar, McLennan, Tarrant, and Victoria). However the attendance reflected that people from twenty-six counties were present and interested in Raza Unida Party.<sup>39</sup>

Deciding whether to hold the party activities to a local level or to go into a full statewide expansion program was the first order of business of the convention. Views varied widely. José Gutiérrez was at first, hesitant about going into a statewide organization because of the money and manpower that would be required to succeed.<sup>40</sup> The expansionists were largely urbanites led by Mario Compean who realized that the 1972 general elections would result in higher numbers of registered voters on the state

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> San Antonio Express, 31 October 1971.

lists. Because the petition lists had to contain enough names to equal at least 2 percent of the total number of votes cast in the "last general election," Compean and his group were unwilling to let another election lengthen those voter lists, thus increasing the number of names La Raza Unida would have to collect in the petition drives. With these arguments in mind, delegates voted with a split of 21 to 15 in favor of going statewide. A second vote carried the decision unanimously.

Then the delegates elected a State Executive Committee containing representation from all areas of the state:

. . . elected were Mario Compean from San Antonio, . . . State Chairman; Efrain Fernandez from Pharr, . . . State Vice-Chairman; Alberto H. Luera from San Antonio, . . . State Secretary; Roberto Villarreal from Rivera, . . . State Committeeman; Alma Canales from Austin, . . . State Committeewoman; and Joe Canales from Fort Worth, . . . State Treasurer.<sup>41</sup>

#### The First Candidate for Governor

The major offices to be filled by the general elections was the second major topic given attention by the 36 delegates at the first State Convention for the La

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<sup>41</sup>Chapa, "T.R.U.P.", p. 4.

Raza Unida Party. Suggested at first were names to be possible candidates for governor of Texas and for Texas Senator to the U.S. Congress. Those first proposed were:

State Senator Joseph Bernal from San Antonio, Bexar County Commissioner Albert Peña, Roman Catholic Bishop Patrick Flores, State Representative Carlos Truan from Corpus Christi, Dr. Hector Garcia from Corpus Christi, State Representative Barbara Jordan and Mrs. P. T. Bonner.<sup>42</sup>

The name which was actually submitted as La Raza Unida nominee for Governor of Texas, that of Ramsey Muñiz, was not among the first considered. Muñiz later remarked:

We wrote all the so-called Mexican American leaders asking them to become Raza Unida Party candidates. They all wrote back politely, oh, very politely, and they all refused. So then we started asking individuals who were qualified. It must have been a week or two later that they finally got around to me. I was probably about number 31 on the steering committee's list. I accepted immediately; it was something that had to be done.

Reactions among Muñiz's personal friends were equal to the comments of other members of the party and the community in which he moved in general. As he remarked, "All the others just kept looking at the impossible aspects of it

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<sup>42</sup> San Antonio Express, 31 October 1971.

and saying that there are the Democrats and the Republicans and how can you possibly do it?"<sup>43</sup>

Ramsey Muñiz may have been only a candidate by chance, but he did have the type of dedication and determination necessary to carry through the "impossible" campaign. It soon became apparent that Muñiz also had the personal charisma that a leader needed as well as a strong drive for success:

An almost quixotic mood pervades the small headquarters of La Raza Unida's chosen Machiavellian Prince of Chicano politics. . . . the staff of Chicano volunteers goes about its work with exuberance. They are young and short on know-how in the political system, but their talk is heady and contagious. Even when they speak of their dreams and aspiration, they talk in terms of "when Ramsey takes office . . ." or "When Ramsey becomes governor . . ." Bold, brash and bearing a charisma rare among his countrymen, Muñiz has emerged over La Raza Unida's volatile leaders of the past as the party's gubernatorial candidate.<sup>44</sup>

Though fate may have had a hand in the choice, La Raza Unida Party had chosen a viable candidate for the state's highest office. Even so, the hard struggle to secure a place on the November ballot continued.

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<sup>43</sup>Texas Observer, 21 August 1972.

<sup>44</sup>Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

Preparation for the General Election:  
The Petition Drive

The closest thing to "impossible" that faced the new party was making absolutely sure that all the laws had been followed and all the red-tape and paperwork had been done that was required by the State Election Code to insure a place on the General Election Ballot for November. After the state convention had been held and nominees had been selected, Article 13.45 of the Texas Election Code stipulated that:

. . . in order to have the names of its (any new party) nominees printed on the general election ballot, there must be filed with the Secretary of State, within 20 days after the date for holding the party's state convention the list of all participants in the precinct conventions, . . . there must be filed with the precinct's lists, a petition requesting the names of the party's nominees be printed on the general election ballot, signed by a sufficient number of additional voters to make a combined total of at least one percent of the total votes cast for governor at the last general election.<sup>45</sup>

The details to be gathered were most tedious; law required that the necessary petitions include the name, address and voter registration number of each person signing. Each person who signed the petition had to attest

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<sup>45</sup>Chapa, "T.R.U.P.", pp. 5-6.

before a notary public that he/she had not voted in any political primary election or participated in any other party's convention for that elections' preparation. The petition drive could be arranged, but could not be actually started until after the date set for the primary elections scheduled before the general election. That left La Raza Unida volunteers the task of gathering a minimum of 22,365 legitimate and approvable signatures in only forty-five days. The intensive circulation of petitions was scheduled for May 6 through June 30, 1972.<sup>46</sup>

With the structuring of an in-power, already established political party, these tasks would have been relatively easy to complete. La Raza Unida was new, in many areas reasonably well structured, but not functioning smoothly in other parts of the state. The saving part of La Raza Unida's structure lay in the small organizational units with which La Raza Unida Party had begun. These county, city-county, and precinct permanent units had been strengthened by the conventions in the fall of 1971. The party again held local conventions throughout

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

the state on January 22 and 23, 1972 (precinct and county conventions, respectively). After these meetings, the list of party members was significantly lengthened. Observers agreed that the party was approaching maturity. April 1972 found forty-seven counties actively operating in the developmental processes.<sup>47</sup>

Volunteers were needed to accomplish the gathering of the names and many party leaders had reservations that the goal would be reached. As Executive Committee Chairman Mario Compean explained:

The building of volunteer organizers also seems to be a critical task at present. What we are doing right now, aside from building an organizational set-up, is planning a series of seminars to train people in gathering petitions, organizing a kit to outline the correct procedures. We have to make sure that every organization knows how to go about it. There is simply no precedent for it.<sup>48</sup>

The truth of Compean's statement about there being no precedent for establishing an official third political party was the main crux of La Raza Unida's drive. Compean was optimistic that all 22,365 signatures would be obtained and predicted, "Raza Unida opponents will try to

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<sup>47</sup> Houston Chronicle, 21 January 1972.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

block the party by other means. We're prepared to go to court or do whatever is necessary to get on the ballot."<sup>49</sup>

Research was begun to discover which areas would yield the most signatures for the petition. Based on the information, a quota was assigned to each county which had to be met in order to assure that the total number of eligible signatures would be attained. Urban area organizers were assigned greater goal numbers than rural organizers. Dense Chicano population areas were assigned higher numbers and the local units of La Raza Unida which had been operating longest were also given higher goal numbers. The subsequent hard work by dedicated petition volunteers going door-to-door, attending all community meetings, milling in crowds and generally just being where the people were, proved successful and by 30 June 1972 the party members had collected, by due process of law, some 22,788 signatures. They had collected 423 signatures more than originally hoped for.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Houston Chronicle, 2 October 1972.

<sup>50</sup>Chapa, "T.R.U.P.", p. 7.



La Raza Unida was working with approximately 1,357,000 Mexican American voters in the state.<sup>51</sup> Nearly five hundred volunteers made up the team of petition organizers.<sup>52</sup> With fewer than fifty days allowed them, success in reaching this most difficult goal was accomplished.

Another deadline to be met was the submission of the names of party candidates which were to be printed on the November General Election Ballot no later than 6:00 P.M. on the first Monday in February. La Raza Unida Party filed the candidates' list for both state and local offices on 7 February 1972:

. . . one federal and six statewide candidates filed to appear on the ballot on November 7, 1972 under the name of La Raza Unida Party. In addition, one state senator, eleven state representatives and four state board of education candidates filed to appear on the ballot . . . in their respective districts. On the same date, as required by law, candidates for such offices as sheriff, county commissioner, county tax assessor-collector, etc. in eight counties (Bexar, Brown, Hidalgo, La Salle, Tarrant, Victoria and Zavala) filed to be on the ballot under the name of La Raza Unida Party. . . .<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Houston Post, 13 February 1972.

<sup>52</sup>Corpus Christi Caller Times, 1 July 1972.

<sup>53</sup>Chapa, "T.R.U.P.", p. 9.

By 6 May 1972 another round of precinct conventions was held following the same procedures as before. A second state convention was held in San Antonio on 10 June 1972. By this time, Bob Bullock, Secretary of State, had been given the petition lists to verify and by 9 August 1972 final certification was completed.<sup>54</sup> At this point in party development, La Raza Unida Party was assured a place for all nominees on the ballot for the state's general election scheduled for 7 November 1972. However, both party volunteers and candidates were to discover that the real work of the campaigning had just begun. Two more months of difficult tasks lay ahead.

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<sup>54</sup>San Antonio Express, 9 August 1972.

### CHAPTER III

#### LA RAZA UNIDA'S CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR AND THE PARTY PLATFORM

##### Ramsey Muñiz: Candidate

##### Youth and Education

Ramsey Muñiz was born into poverty in December 1943.<sup>1</sup> His father, Rudy Muñiz, was a Texas farm laborer who later became a mechanic in Corpus Christi, Texas.<sup>2</sup> Rudy Muñiz had found it necessary to drop out of school after the fifth grade; his wife, Hilda, had completed the sixth grade.<sup>3</sup>

Some commentators have attributed Muñiz's occasional matter-of-fact bitterness shown as an adult to his childhood experiences in the barrio, ". . . the product

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<sup>1</sup>Dallas Times Herald, 16 April 1972.

<sup>2</sup>Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

<sup>3</sup>Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

of growing up poor in a slum environment, but somehow surviving the hardships, as if destiny had tapped him to endure the humiliation and pain for a future mission."<sup>4</sup> Muñiz's early life was stereotypic of many Mexican Americans living in south Texas barrios. Muñiz encountered the same educational barriers as did many south Texas barrio children upon entering public schools.

Muñiz was not exposed to English until he entered the first grade in Corpus Christi, Texas because only Spanish was spoken in his home.<sup>5</sup> The young Muñiz found the new language difficult to learn, but he soon realized that he had a speech impediment which contributed to his learning problem.<sup>6</sup> Though he was described as a shy, reserved youngster who rarely participated in class discussions, Muñiz remembered that he was actually afraid to join class discussions because he knew he had a pronounced stutter that was ignored by his teachers for several

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Houston Chronicle, 11 March 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Tony Castro, Chicano Power (New York: Saturday Review Press, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974), p. 34.

years.<sup>7</sup> He once remarked:

None of my teachers would believe that I had a speech problem; they thought I was just a dumb Mexican who couldn't speak English. It wasn't until the 7th grade that I had a teacher who was understanding enough to know I had a problem.<sup>8</sup>

It was at this time that young Muñiz was assigned to a special education class taught by Mrs. Ray Nichols who worked with him for five years to correct the impediment. Fortunately, during junior high school, Muñiz's hidden potential in another field was also recognized. Coach Refugio Garza began training Muñiz for what became an outstanding public school career in athletics.

Football became an art with young Muñiz. During his years at Miller High School, Corpus Christi, Texas he was elected captain of the football team which won the 1970 State AAAA Championship. Another athletic coach, Pete Ragus, took an active interest in Muñiz and gave him strong encouragement to continue his academic endeavors as well as his athletic efforts. Muñiz commented during an interview:

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<sup>7</sup> Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

I was fortunate. He [Pete Ragus] took a personal interest in me--well, he did in all the boys, but I felt like he was instrumental in my life. I had been expelled from junior high school for the rest of the year. . . . I remember that Coach Ragus took me aside and told me that the team he was gonna [sic] build . . . at Miller . . . [had] no room on it for people like me, people who wouldn't study and behave right. He told me that I had to make up my mind right then. And I did. He was very fair and had high principles.<sup>9</sup>

Coach Ragus responded to interviewers from the Texas Observer staff about Muñiz's team involvements with strong admiration saying:

[Ramsey was] . . . an outstanding young man in every respect. He had dedication, desire and willingness to work, both academically and athletically. He responded above and beyond the call of duty. Continually he was an inspiration to the team and coaches. He overcame hardships. No matter what we asked him to do, he'd do more. He had the determination and the will and the endurance. He wasn't an outstanding athlete naturally; he didn't have the speed and the size, but he worked, he worked so hard training, lifting weights, he became outstanding. Academically, he worked just as diligently. He was one of the captains of the team the year we won the state championship. In 1960 we won the state championship and Ramsey was one of the leaders. I just can't find enough adjectives for him. He was a real privilege to work with. There is nothing I can say to tell you how much he did--in every field. He would have been successful anywhere, no matter who had him.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

The high school athletic record which he achieved gave Muñiz the chance to continue his education when he was granted a complete four year scholarship to Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

The only real stimulus for young Muñiz's attending Baylor University was the insistence of a fellow high school football teammate who planned to go to Baylor, and he convinced Muñiz to accept the scholarship.<sup>11</sup> When Muñiz described his classes and the demands made on him, he admitted, "I'm not a quitter. When I got to Baylor, I had \$6.00 in my pocket. It was the first time I had left Corpus Christi alone in my life. I felt like quitting several times, but I didn't." The change in environment from home to Waco was perhaps the largest encountered by Muñiz as he left the barrio. University recollections began immediately for him as he told an interviewer:

When I got to Baylor, it was the first time I recall I slept in a bed. There were five of us brothers, my mother and my father. We were very poor. Tortillas, beans, papas, was what we ate every day. At Baylor you got to eat steaks every day, the proper food for athletes.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

<sup>12</sup>Houston Chronicle, 11 March 1973.

Despite several operations for knee injuries incurred while playing for Baylor, he lettered for three seasons on the varsity team.<sup>13</sup>

Problems from home soon added to Muñiz's troubles.

He was still a freshman when:

. . . they finally called me home. My mother had not wanted to tell me, she wanted me to continue my education. So I didn't know it was that serious until I got home. She didn't have adequate medical care that she needed. When I got home, I tried to get her admitted to a hospital and didn't have enough money. They finally let her into a ward . . . it was just too late. If it had been now, something could have been done. I don't think they had programs then for poor people. This was in '63 we're talking about and the OEO didn't come in until '64. . . . We never talked about welfare in our home. My father sold everything to provide for her care. He sold everything we had. He sold the house, the car, everything. When she died, we had nothing.<sup>14</sup>

Hilda Muñiz died of cancer, without medical care until the last two weeks of her life.<sup>15</sup>

Muñiz returned to Baylor and resumed his role on the football team and in his classes. In 1966 he received a Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education and History. At

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<sup>13</sup> Castro, Chicano Power, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

<sup>15</sup> Dallas News, 12 March 1972.



this time in his life, Muñiz decided to go to law school at Baylor.<sup>16</sup> This was a transitional period during which he began to turn from athletic interests to politics. With the end of his university football days, he realized that many doors once open to him were then closed. He entered Law School and found "a coolness and insensitivity" he had not known before:

When other students talked to me, I wanted to talk about the law and politics. They wanted to talk about the Mexican food and Mexican whorehouses in the border towns. I never felt I was accepted for anything other than a Mexican.<sup>17</sup>

#### Political Involvement and Professional Background

The cool reception which Muñiz met in law school only served to sharpen his awareness of the problems encountered by the Mexican American, the Chicano, in Texas. It was at Baylor that Muñiz first became interested in the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and La Raza Unida political Party. He realized that a political break away from the Democratic Party would be necessary

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<sup>16</sup>Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

<sup>17</sup>Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

"to show the clout of the Chicano."<sup>18</sup> After joining La Raza Unida in Waco, Muñiz became the voluntary north Texas organizer when he graduated from Baylor Law School.<sup>19</sup> As before, Ramsey Muñiz gave more than was asked of him, and his growth in political scenes followed hard and diligent work as had his athletic abilities.

Both of Muñiz's parents played an important role in the formation of his political attitudes by introducing him to several friends who were well known Mexican American leaders at the time.<sup>20</sup> Arturo Campos, Muñiz's uncle and a member of the Corpus Christi Steelworkers Union, and Dr. Hector Garcia helped to expose Muñiz to politics at an early age. They had sent the boy door to door soliciting support for Chicano politicians in Corpus Christi.<sup>21</sup> Dr. Garcia had become very well known among Mexican American communities in Texas during the years Muñiz was at Baylor. One observer wrote of Dr. Garcia:

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

<sup>20</sup> Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

<sup>21</sup> Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia was founder of the American G.I. Forum and was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson to several successive positions, among them Alternate Delegate to the United Nations with the rank of Ambassador (1967) and Member of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO (1968). On November 7, 1968 he was sworn in as a Commissioner of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. It is doubtful that any member of the Mexican American community ever received more honors and awards than Hector Garcia.<sup>22</sup>

It was Campos and Garcia who called Muñiz back from the university to enlist his help in accomplishing their political plans, such as campaigning for Frances Farenthold.<sup>23</sup> Ironically, Muñiz found himself bidding for the same Chicano vote as Mrs. Farenthold when he entered the 1972 gubernatorial race as was reported:

Muñiz sharply criticized both Mrs. Farenthold and Lt. Governor Ben Barnes, both Democratic gubernatorial candidates, for trying to attract the Mexican American vote when they had done nothing for the Chicano in the past.<sup>24</sup>

Being involved in the political activities of Campos and Garcia was the real reason that Muñiz stayed interested in politics.

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<sup>22</sup> Feliciano Rivera, A Mexican American Source Book with Study Guide (Menlo Park: Educational Consulting Associates, 1970), p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

<sup>24</sup> Dallas News, 17 April 1972.

Muñiz's first employment after Law School was in the Model Cities Program in Waco. He worked with Waco's Chicano youth by helping to organize a cohesive group. It was the same group that gave him a stronghold in those communities during his own campaigns.<sup>25</sup> True to the pattern he had exhibited during high school, Muñiz left the Model Cities Program after only one and one-half years with a seat on ten different civic boards--an impressive record of saturation into community affairs.<sup>26</sup>

In 1971 Muñiz, his wife, Albina, and their daughter moved to San Antonio to concentrate on his first gubernatorial campaign. Albina Muñiz began studying toward a Master's Degree in Education at Our Lady of the Lake College and continued her efforts in assisting Muñiz's campaign.<sup>27</sup> Muñiz left Waco's Model Cities Program after making a firm decision:

Recently I filed as a gubernatorial candidate under the auspices of the latent, but emerging La Raza Unida Party. It is my belief that this is a very worthwhile and energetic organization and that it will

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<sup>25</sup> Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

<sup>26</sup> San Antonio Express, 27 February 1972.

<sup>27</sup> Dallas News, 13 October 1972.

have a tremendous impact in helping to bring about needed changes and making our state government more responsive to the needs of all the people.<sup>28</sup>

Ramsey Muñiz filed as a candidate for the office of Governor of Texas in February 1972. He knew and explained at that time that his work in the Model Cities Program was strongly instrumental in building his abilities to hold the office:

I believe that my employment with Model Cities has been most beneficial and productive in terms of giving me a measure of expertise in the area of State and Federal programs, the mechanics of their operation and the methods of proper and efficient administration.<sup>29</sup>

Muñiz's home environment, and his educational and professional occupation made him an exceptional choice of La Raza Unida party. In choosing Muñiz for their gubernatorial candidate La Raza Unida party found that his qualifications and experiences would be a tremendous asset to the party. It became Muñiz's responsibility to promote the ideals of La Raza Unida. Muñiz would be the strongest candidate the party had and the only one who could entertain the media long enough to publicize the

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<sup>28</sup> San Antonio Express, 27 February 1972.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

party's platform. The following seventy-two point platform represented the basic structural changes Ramsey Muñiz would attempt to initiate if elected Governor of Texas.

### The Party Platform

#### A Political Action Program for the 1970s

A platform committee had been selected during the first La Raza Unida State convention held 30 October 1971. Although the party had not yet decided on their candidate for governor, they were sure of the ideals and goals they wished to see in their gubernatorial candidate's campaign platform. It was the platform committee's responsibility to organize the seventy-two resolutions passed at the convention into a working platform for the party. This committee satisfied a specific requirement of the Texas Election Code for establishing the party on a state-wide basis. Members of the committee were:

Joe Castillo, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas  
Evey Chapa, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas  
Johnny Grez, Waco, McLennan County, Texas  
John W. Hart, McAllen, Hidalgo County, Texas  
Lupe Huerta, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas  
Adolfo Lopez, Austin, Travis County, Texas

Billy Torres, San Angelo, Tom Greene County, Texas  
Roberto Villarreal, Rivera, Kleberg County, Texas<sup>30</sup>

The platform committee members were to discover all available materials which would document many of the claims of injustices which minorities especially the Mexican American, had suffered in Texas politics. The seventy-two resolutions incorporated these and many other issues pertinent in the state political scene.

The synthesis of all records and materials evolved into a printed platform upon which the future state campaigns would be based. From November 1971 until March 1972, the committee met in several places across the state where information was exchanged and recorded from individuals who had been assigned a specific research area. This strenuous task resulted in a collection of policy statements made by La Raza Unida on "major areas which affect the lives of the people, politics, economics, education, and justice." The document was submitted to other party members with an accompanying statement by the committee:

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<sup>30</sup> Texas Raza Unida Party: A Political Action Program for the 70s. Platform Document produced by the Platform Committee of La Raza Unida Party, 1971.

Those who understand the full meaning of this document cannot deny that the course of history will be affected by the ideas contained herein. For the first time, a political party will exist which was started by Chicanos for Chicanos. The momentum that Raza Unida Party has started will continue however, not only for Chicanos but for all who see the need for the people to once again have control of the government so that the voice of the people will be heard.<sup>31</sup>

With a determined spirit of victory and unquestionable pride, the basic purpose of La Raza Unida Party was described in the Preamble to the document issued by the platform committee:

La Raza, recognizing the need to replace the existing system with a humanistic alternative which shall maintain equal representation of all people;

and, recognizing the need to create a government which serves the needs of individual communities, yet is beneficial to the general populace;

and, recognizing the need to create a political movement dedicated to ending the causes of poverty, misery, and injustice so that the future generations can live a life free from exploitation;

and, recognizing the need to abolish racist practices within the existing social, educational, economic, and political system so that physical and cultural genocidal practices against minorities will be discontinued;

Therefore resolves, to these ends, because we are the people who have been made aware of the needs of the many through our suffering, who have learned the significance of carnalismo, the strength of la familia and the importance of people working together; and recognizing the natural right of all peoples to

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 2.



preserve their self-identity and to formulate their own destiny,

To establish Raza Unida Party, with courage and love in our hearts, a firm committment to mankind, and with peace in our minds.<sup>32</sup>

#### La Raza Unida Addresses the Issues

The platform committee continued its research while other members of the party organized the petition drive. Together the members of La Raza Unida were well on their way to establishing a statewide political party. The primary and strongest issue-area researched by the platform committee was education. The committee discovered a 1971 report by the United States Commission on Civil Rights which indicated that a forty-seven percent drop-out rate from public schools existed among Mexican American students in the state of Texas. The committee recognized that, "Education is a major means of transferring the customs, history, and traditions of a society." As spokesmen for the party, they labeled a first goal of La Raza Unida efforts to be educational-cultural coexistence stating that, ". . . otherwise, cultural genocide

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

will continue to run rampant."<sup>33</sup> Recognizing the drop-out rate for young Chicanos, and the lack of cultural preservation concerns in the Texas public school system the committee resolved:

1. That the educational process of Texas include multilingual and multicultural programs at all levels, pre-school through college;
2. That the schools be districted in such a way as to provide a broad socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural spectrum of students; and
3. That all levels of school personnel, including administration, be proportionately representative of the people of the community in which the school is located.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the programs which La Raza Unida felt needed to be implemented into Texas schools, they found a lack of equal funding available to Texas school districts. The disparities of revenues for school from district to district were many and La Raza Unida resolved:

1. That all funds be distributed equally to all students on the same per student basis so as to abide by the dictate of the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution;
2. That educational funding be centrally coordinated through the Texas State Office of Education;
3. That all school districts improve facilities, salaries and teacher-student ratios to equal the best schools in Texas and therefore;

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

4. That schools with poorer facilities, salaries, and/or teacher-student ratios be given first priority in funding, so that within five years they may be on equal par with newer and/or more adequately equipped and funded schools.<sup>35</sup>

Strong concern was also directed to the parent-school-community involvement programs that were necessary to insure that community control via the voice of the parent body could then have direct input to the schools. The party took the stand that "through parent-school-community involvement program(s) and subsequent community control, education can be made relevant and stimulating." The resolution declared:

1. That the school boards be representative of the racial, ethnic and socio-economic composition of the community;
2. That local schools have the option of choosing their own textbooks and the State Textbook Review Committee be representative of the racial and ethnic composition of the student population;
3. That individual parents, rather than school boards or school personnel, determine dress and hair regulations for their own children within reason;
4. That the policies of the schools, including disciplinary action, not deny the civil and political rights of the students.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Sweeping reforms in the Texas educational system were requested by the statement of La Raza Unida "to provide better education for all students." Implementation of the changes could be accomplished by increasing the access to education in the state at all levels. La Raza Unida's platform resolved: That free early childhood education be provided by the state. The committee also wanted to insure that the state institutions for higher learning have an enrollment which was proportional to the minority population of the state, and that there be student representation on all Boards of Regents of the state's universities and colleges.<sup>37</sup>

The following recommendations were made by the committee in reference to the Texas secondary schools: (1) that school administrative personnel must have a degree in education and where applicable some exposure to ethnic studies, (2) that minority counselors be proportionate to the minority student enrollment, and (3) that schools having a majority Chicano student population

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

require their administrative staff to have a conversational knowledge of Spanish.<sup>38</sup>

The platform committee also stressed that all public schools adopt the concept of learning as a shared experience and implement "schools without walls." The committee called for abolishment of the standardized test until they were proven culturally sound, and that the grading systems be replaced by guided individualized instruction. Another recommendation made by the committee was that textbooks relevant to minority experiences be written and used in the Texas public schools, and that history classes include oral traditions, songs, legends, and folklore of the state. The committee felt that any school having a five percent or more drop-out rate should be subject to review. Finally, they felt that private Chicano and black schools should be granted state financial aid.<sup>39</sup>

The second issue that La Raza Unida platform committee members considered followed the previous

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

resolutions closely. La Raza Unida determined that the inequality in school financing levels from district to district came from a problem of "money and value-orientation" and advised:

1. Make the method of financing public education a function of the wealth of the entire state rather than the relative wealth of districts or economic classes. The property tax must be abolished. The natural resources of the State of Texas must be claimed by the people of Texas; then, corporations wishing to utilize or exploit a public resource would be required to obtain a lease and deposit a portion of their earnings into a State Education Fund.
2. Increase the level of spending for education to upgrade the entire educational system to one of excellence;
3. Establish a separate fund, maintained by a portion of the revenues from a state income tax, to support additional educational programs for low-income and minority groups.<sup>40</sup>

After completing their research concerning education, the platform committee turned to politics. La Raza Unida felt that a fully operating third party which represented the people with a different view than those usually in power was the only way that "the people of Texas can change Texas politics for the better." Following the goals and philosophies of the founders of the party, acknowledging that "meaningful government cannot exist

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

without the full voice of all the people of Texas," six resolutions were suggested:

1. The local governments conduct full voter education programs so that those who have heretofore been excluded from political participation because of lack of knowledge will have an opportunity to have a voice in their government;
2. All citizens from ages 18 and over be allowed the right to vote in all elections and to run for all municipal, county and state offices;
3. Foreigners who have resided in the State of Texas for more than five years and who are over the age of 18 be allowed the right to vote;
4. All ex-convicts who are free from parole and probation be allowed the right to vote;
5. All filing fees for political office be abolished;
6. And, that local statutes be enacted which state that all locally elected officials or representatives must hold meetings at a time and place which working people can attend.<sup>41</sup>

Economics, or the way of distributing scarce resources to satisfy demand, was the third study area considered. La Raza Unida Party recognized that economic development, change, and planned progress, were "at the heart of the social and human problems confronting minority peoples." Basic changes in the tax breaks for the more wealthy citizen were suggested, in order to decrease a majority of the tax burden from the middle income brackets. La Raza Unida Party wanted to insure that monopolies

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

and trust organizations were discontinued. They also felt that a type of revenue sharing between State and Federal sectors of government would enhance cooperative community ventures.<sup>42</sup>

Minority groups in Texas have often accused the State Law Enforcement Officers of discriminatory actions toward the minorities in the state. Insufficient grounds for arrest, harassment, disproportionate penalties levied, and failure of officials to impose equitable bail bonds were a mere handful of usual complaints. The La Raza Unida leaders maintained that all citizens were entitled to full protection under the law and stipulated:

1. That civilian review boards corresponding to each law enforcement agency be formed to receive and act upon complaints of malpractice, and these review boards are to be representative of the community in which the law enforcement agency serves;
2. And, that the Texas Rangers be abolished since this agency has cultivated, over the decades, an image unworthy of a law enforcement agency.<sup>43</sup>

Research gathered in the area of the Texas judicial system strengthened the possible analysis made by the committee members. The party contention that the Chicano

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 18.



community had been underrepresented in the jury system in Texas due to various factors was based on the opinion that such a continuing discrimination against selection and approval of minority jurors was unconstitutional.

Therefore La Raza Unida party platform insisted:

1. That civil and criminal juries (both grand and petit) reflect the community's composition--racially, ethnically, and socio-economically;
2. That citizens previously disqualified from jury duty for inability to read and write English be included on juries if they can speak and understand English.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, the party platform proposed two plans of action that would help alleviate the problem of insensitivity on the part of state administration of justice toward the needs of minorities:

1. That equal minority representation be implemented throughout the judicial system,
2. And, that funds be made available or sought out by the State for programs designed to help law schools recruit and train minority law students.<sup>45</sup>

The punitive requirements of the Texas prison system were seen as saddling society with a great waste of money and energy under the existing penal code. The policies of La

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

Raza Unida maintained that "cruel and unusual punishment serves no rehabilitative purpose." The platform statement said:

1. That capital punishment (should) be abolished;
2. And, that massive prison reform (should) be implemented.<sup>46</sup>

In developing the party's position on relevant issues, a unique area of concern was incorporated into La Raza Unida's official stand--the position of the Chicana, La Mujer [the woman], and her role in La Raza Unida. The plight of La Raza Unida Party was compared with the recent women's movement across the U.S.:

The cry of Raza Unida Party has been the same one heard in the women's movement: equal rights, equal education and economic opportunities, equal political participation, and respect of the individual's rights to control his own future without legal obstruction.

At a seemingly appropriate time as discussion of equalization of women's status from second class to first class citizenship continued, La Raza Unida called for any and all persons to join their campaign:

To be suppressed is not a novelty to those who are organizing the Party throughout the State, therefore,

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

all people are encouraged and urged to participate in all stages of development of Raza Unida Party.<sup>47</sup>

The consideration of the party members then proceeded from the woman as an individual to the family unit. Total family involvement was seen as "the basic foundation of Raza Unida Party--men, women, and youth working together for a common cause."<sup>48</sup> Yet, because some within the family unit, namely the women, were suppressed under present social systems, the platform resolved that:

1. The amendment to the U.S. Constitution providing equal protection under the law for women be endorsed and supported;
2. All laws which maintain a double standard such as the "protective legislation" be repealed or amended to give women equality;
3. All resolutions referring to equal rights or a group representation included in the Raza Unida Party Platform apply to women whether they be working mother, career woman, or housewives;
4. And, that the participation of women, to include the decisionmaking positions of Raza Unida Party, be actively continued through political education and recruitment of women.<sup>49</sup>

La Raza Unida's comments of policy on immigration indicated a unique problem encountered by the Mexican

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

American in Texas. Texas faces the problem of containing the flow of Mexican Nationalists into the state for employment purposes. The border of Texas spans such a tremendous amount of territory that it is impossible for the Texas Border Patrol to control the influx of Mexican citizens into the state. As a result there exists an entire labor force, commonly known as "wetbacks," which work on the farms and ranches of the state for extremely cheap wages. Many Mexican Americans of Texas then must compete for jobs with the Mexican nationals. Obviously, the owners of the farms and ranches in some areas of the state would rather pay low wages and hire aliens than abide by the wage standard law of the state. Therefore, the Mexican American laborer is often forced to migrate out of Texas to states where there are jobs available. Immigration is a dual problem for Texas and Mexico. Seeking solution to the situation, La Raza Unida proposed:

1. Foreigners who have resided in the State of Texas for more than five years and are over the age of 18 should be permitted to vote;
2. All social services should be extended to include foreigners with five years' residence;
3. A bill with the following sections:
  - a. Any employer, or his agent, who had illegal aliens in his employ and who, because of concerted activities by his employees for their mutual aid

or protection, threatens to have them deported for those activities is guilty of a felony. Upon conviction, said employer . . . is automatically liable for the equivalent of six months of wages to any former employee who was deported as a result of the employer's . . . actions. Also, all police agencies who have facilities for temporary housing of illegal aliens shall, prior to turning the illegal alien to the custody of immigration authorities, provide him with a form which will advise him of this law and the method of collecting any monies that he may have coming and the method of collection. (This information is to be given to the illegal alien in . . . Spanish.)

b. Any employer . . . who terminates or lays off employees and then hires illegal aliens at a wage lower than the prevailing or previous wage scale is guilty of a felony;

c. Any employer, who during any labor dispute knowingly or unknowingly hires or keeps on his payroll illegal aliens as strikebreakers is guilty of a felony;

d. Any union official who deliberately uses or allows to be used illegal aliens within the local in such a way as to violate the constitution, by-laws or contract of the union is guilty of a felony.<sup>50</sup>

With respect to minority community members who served in the Armed Forces of the country, La Raza Unida advocated draft education and options of community service as useful devices. Specifically the resolution called for draft education services beginning in the Junior High School level and that the information be available in

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

Spanish. The resolution also called for standardization of the guidelines and decisions made by the draft boards. Finally, La Raza Unida Party suggested that the term "service" be expanded to include community service as well as military service.<sup>51</sup>

In a carefully drawn, comprehensive statement about the involvement of the U.S. into the national affairs of other countries, La Raza Unida declared:

Recognizing the bond of suffering and the consequent common struggle that unites all oppressed peoples throughout the world, and recognizing the need for a more just redistribution of the wealth, . . . the following (are) indications of solidarity with all those people opposing the class and power elites:

1. That the U.S. no longer provide military or economic intervention in the national schemes of other countries, since the intervention is used by those who rule to suppress their own people and by demagogues to suppress neighboring peoples;
2. That U.S. forces in Europe be cut by 2/3 (66%) since the outbreak of a conventional war on that continent is extremely unlikely;
3. That the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) discontinue activities in other nations which aid the U.S. businessman and corporations in maintaining puppet governments, since such efforts are always at the expense of the working people;
4. That a systematic withdrawal of all U.S. forces from all of Indochina be initiated immediately, thereby allowing the peoples of that area self-determination;

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

5. That the U.S. recognize and support the efforts of the new State of Bangladesh as a necessary means of providing for self-determination, thereby guaranteeing progress, freedom and safety of the people of what was formerly East Pakistan;

6. That the U.S. remove embargoes and economic sanctions on Cuba and any other country, thus recognizing the right of each nation to choose its own form of government.<sup>52</sup>

Texas is a state rich in natural resources and La Raza Unida made its policy statement on redistribution of these resources:

Private ownership of our State's resources should be ended and the ownership and control of them returned to the rightful owners--the citizens of Texas. Under this system, our citizens will be insured of the safety and preservation of our State resources as well as deriving the benefits from their use.<sup>53</sup>

The platform committee of La Raza Unida worked very hard and their extensive and exhaustive research gave the new political organization a definite public opinion on many, many issues. Transportation problems were recognized as one of the key issues of personal day to day lives. The stand taken was:

. . . as part of the goal of providing free and adequate transportation to all . . .

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

1. Governmental resources (should) be committed to instituting inter-city and intra-city mass transit systems as a step toward easing the problems of traffic congestion, pollution, fatalities, and urban growth patterns; and
2. As an immediate action, that state standards regulating auto safety and pollution controls be raised with the expense incurred in meeting the new standards placed on the automobile manufactures.<sup>54</sup>

The last three areas which were researched and on which statements were given were health, welfare, and housing needs. Because La Raza Unida represented people of a generally poor economic bracket, all of these were considered urgently needed changes by the party members. To "correct injustices" and "to bring the State to the realization that assuring good health of each of its citizens benefits the Society as a whole," La Raza Unida Party affirmed:

1. A comprehensive, federally-funded National Health Insurance program be instituted;
2. State government expand its scope of public health services to include training of paramedical personnel to relieve the shortage in medical manpower, sponsor construction of community health centers and encourage the decentralization of county health agencies and increase the number and enrollment of state supported medical schools and training facilities.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 29.



As the present system of health care was seen as inadequate to the present needs of the state's citizens, so the present welfare system was described as "degrading and inefficient." Human beings were not considered in a positive, progressive, and rehabilitating manner by the "petty, cruel, moralistic" values of the welfare system now operating so far as La Raza Unida could determine. These interpretations of information gathered led the party to state:

1. Install the cash assistance grant program in Texas;
2. Remove the present legislative ceiling on welfare expenditures;
3. But most important of all, Raza Unida Party resolves to bring about a new attitude toward the poor. Instead of blaming the victim for his poverty, the State will aid him to overcome poverty; instead of subjecting the poor person to a system designed to keep him poor, the State will work to give him an even start in life.<sup>56</sup>

Conditions in the Mexican American communities in most south Texas cities were not equal to even the lower middle-class communities of Anglos in the same cities. La Raza Unida leaders realized that problems in housing led to other social ills in a revolving manner. The party

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

felt that "community control of housing" would produce an environment in which the goal of "a suitable home" for the majority of the citizens could be achieved. The platform stated:

1. That political power must be gained by the majority of the community. The power of the bankers, land developers, and politicians must be broken. Also, the community political power must extend to the appointment of managers and members of boards and commissions;
2. Community participation mechanisms must be installed in every redevelopment project and lending institution to provide input into redevelopment and lending policies from the persons that are immediately affected;
3. That rent control statutes be passed that will protect tenants and redefine the legal relationship between landlord and tenant to provide relief for tenants who are cheated or defrauded by their landlords;
4. Government must actively support community or neighborhood cooperative housing construction and rehabilitation programs.<sup>57</sup>

The seventy-two resolutions passed by La Raza Unida at the 1971 state convention attempted a comprehensive approach to the issues which would most concern the Texas voter in 1972. The platform which was produced from these resolutions became the goals that La Raza Unida's candidates would strive to accomplish for the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

party. Perhaps the one candidate who was called upon to give the most in terms of determination, energy, and skill to promote La Raza Unida's ideology and to reach the party's goals was their young nominee for governor, Ramsey Muñiz.

Muñiz was responsible for developing party positions on many more issues as well as establishing the viable aspects of issues covered at the first state convention. The man who represented La Raza Unida twice in gubernatorial campaigns of Texas was equally determined to find solutions to the problems faced by Texas Chicanos that were politically feasible, and politically solvent. In order to accomplish the goals of La Raza Unida party, Muñiz had to build an image which could be easily perceived by Texas voters as one which was politically viable. If Muñiz could project an image which was politically viable, then perhaps the party he represented in 1972 and 1974 would also seem politically viable. It can be assumed that this was one of Muñiz's goals as he began his image building process.

## CHAPTER IV

### RAMSEY MUÑIZ: HIS IMAGE BUILDING PROCESS

. . . [the] Mexican American youth of today maintains ties with the ethnic community through the "best of both worlds" acculturation process, he is not yet committed to radical politics because they have nothing to offer him at the present. If, however, he perceives that he has reached the upper level of success that can be brought about by hard work and educational pursuits, and if this upper level is below the high goals he has set for himself, he may become the leader of mass political efforts in order to attempt to raise the opportunity ceiling of the entire Mexican American community.<sup>1</sup>

Ramsey Muñiz seemed to be the man who could confirm this type of prediction. He was young, educated, and felt compelled to work for the betterment of the Mexican American community as a whole. Muñiz was as different from the traditional Mexican American political leader as was the party he represented from the traditional political parties in Texas.

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<sup>1</sup>Dan Hillard, "The Evolution of Mexican American Political Leadership: A Prediction Based on Structural Considerations," a paper presented to the University of Texas at Austin Sociology Class, Spring 1971.

While a student of Political Science, José Ángel Gutiérrez conducted a survey which generated several general characteristics concerning the "traditional" Mexican American leader:

. . . the elected [Mexican American] official [in Texas] classified himself as a Mexican American (62% surveyed). . . . The Mexican American politico is a Democrat. He believes in the Democratic Party and labels himself a moderate. . . . They do not believe the age requirement for public office should be lowered to accommodate the new 18, 19 and 20 year old voters.<sup>2</sup>

Muñiz was different in all aspects from the traditional Mexican American leader. He called himself a Chicano; he labeled himself a liberal; he voiced impatience with the Democratic Party in Texas; and he felt the acquisition of votes from the eighteen, nineteen, and twenty year old voters of the state was vital to the prosperity of his campaign. Muñiz possessed many of the qualities necessary to meet the goals of the party he represented. Muñiz's image would reflect the hopes and fears of the maturing La Raza Unida Party during the tedious struggle for legitimacy.

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<sup>2</sup> José A. Gutiérrez, "El Politico: A Survey of Mexican American Elected Officials in Texas," a paper presented for St. Mary's University Government Class 381L, San Antonio, 1971.

Ramsey Muñiz's Image Before Certification  
of La Raza Unida Party on the November  
General Election Ballot

Political Style

Even though Muñiz had been involved in politics at an early age, he had never before been chosen as a political leader. He was a novice and had to cultivate a political style which in turn would capture the desired image he wished to project as La Raza Unida Party candidate for governor. Two factors which determined the candidate's political style were (1) voters' perception of the candidate's personal qualities which included (a) appearance, (b) traits such as integrity, impulsiveness, sincerity, maturity, etc., (c) personality, and (d) background (age, wealth, education, etc.) and (2) his performance capabilities as a campaigner (as a good or bad speaker, cool or hot television performer, comfortable or ill at ease, formal or informal, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Dan D. Nimmo, Popular Images of Politics (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 125.

### Personal Qualities

Ramsey Muñiz possessed personal qualities which were exceptionally good for a political candidate. First, his personal appearance was one which quickly captured an individual's attention. His personal appearance made him the type of man one could pick out of a crowd:

. . . He was not like any other Chicano in major league American politics. Muñiz was all at once pugnacious, fearless, compassionate, strong, antic, and driving. He was extraordinarily handsome, bronze complexion, longish sideburns, and straight, silky-looking brown hair with one feature that was strikingly unchicano--captivating hazel eyes . . . and the charisma that led a New York Times writer to describe him as a Chicano Robert Redford.<sup>4</sup>

Muñiz's physical attributes had certain qualities which were as appealing as was his personality. In an interview with Armando Gutiérrez, La Raza Unida candidate for state representative in 1974, the general attitude of trust and likeability toward Muñiz was voiced. When questioned about his feelings toward Muñiz, Gutiérrez responded by stating that Muñiz was a "really nice guy," intelligent, and warm.<sup>5</sup> Secretary of La Raza Unida's

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Castro, Chicano Power (New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Armando Gutiérrez, interview at the University of Texas at Austin, Department of Government, Spring 1975.

first state convention, Evey Chapa, commented about Muñiz reiterating Gutiérrez's description that Muñiz was "a really nice guy," well liked by most everyone who knew him.<sup>6</sup>

Carlos Guerra, Muñiz's campaign manager in 1974, reported the ability of Muñiz to empathize with whatever audience he was addressing:

I had the opportunity to see Ramsey speak before a Black organization [Mount Zion Baptist Convention] of 80 churches. He spoke fifteen minutes. After he spoke, I talked with some of the people and throughout his presentation, Ramsey had established an incredible rapport with them. Not because he is a chameleon, but because he has acquainted himself with their problems. He knows them. Immediately it was obvious this relationship was based on respect. Many of them were very astonished.<sup>7</sup>

In a brief meeting with Ramsey Muñiz before he spoke to approximately two hundred people at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, the researcher found that Muñiz was quite pleasant and talkative.

Muñiz's appearance, traits, and personality were all favorable assets in consideration of his political

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<sup>6</sup>Olivia E. Chapa, interview at Chicana Research Center, Austin, Texas, Spring, 1975.

<sup>7</sup>Caracol, Fall, 1974.



style, but none of these qualities could supercede the importance of his background in formulating his image. As illustrated in Chapter III of this study, Muñiz's home environment as a child was one of deprivation; yet, he became a well educated young man. This enabled him to possess two unique images; and, in turn, allowed him to speak with authority when he addressed issues on which either the middle class or the poor Chicano could closely identify. A close friend and political colleague of Ramsey Muñiz, Armando Cavada, spoke of this dual image:

Chicanos, poor and middle class, look at Ramsey from two different perspectives. The poor Chicanos look at him as a struggling individual, somebody that through hard work has finally escaped la miseria. The middle class looks at him as one of theirs, as a lawyer who is a member of their social class. That's why I think that both groups like Ramsey-- he can give two different images, both true, to both social classes. In Kingsville, Robstown, Cotulla, everywhere he goes, he's liked. He talks their language. English or Spanish. That's why people like him.<sup>8</sup>

#### Performance Capabilities

Unfortunately, only excerpts of speeches which Muñiz made on his campaign tours through the state were

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

available for analysis. Ramsey Muñiz made only one television presentation in 1972 when he appeared on the Austin, Texas version of "Meet the Press" known as "The Capitol Eye." Again, no record of the interview was available for review. Therefore, Muñiz's ability as a television performer could not be studied.

In consideration of Ramsey Muñiz's delivery while performing before large audiences, he seemed relaxed and confident. Although he looked worn from the pressures of the campaign, he was cheerful and alert. At Southwest Texas State University, Muñiz spoke approximately twenty minutes and offered to stay longer for a brief question and answer period after the speech. During the speech Muñiz seemed to have control of his audience. There was little trace of the speech impediment he had experienced as a child. Muñiz did not use prepared notes or a pre-written speech.

Because of the extemporaneous nature of his talk, Muñiz seemed somewhat disorganized in terms of content, and skipped from one subject to another and back again. Reflecting his newness as a politician and public speaker, his speech seemed somewhat unpolished and choppy. He was

humorous at times, but strong and determined when he spoke of his role as the La Raza Unida gubernatorial candidate.<sup>9</sup> He mixed Spanish and English terms whenever applicable. In one account of his performance ability, it was said, "When Muñiz speaks, . . . the enthusiastic response . . . makes it clear that he is the most popular Chicano leader in Texas."<sup>10</sup> The same article went on to say:

. . . to understand some of Ramsey Muñiz's appeal, listen to him addressing a political rally in Austin last August:

[Muñiz explained,] "The Office of Economic Opportunity spent one whole year surveying the state of Texas to find out how poor we are. Hell, we already know we're poor. We know we're tired of being poor and uneducated and ignored. I mean, we are tired, man, and we are going to do something about it ourselves because nobody else is going to do it for us. You know what they did with that fine, fancy, one-year study that tells how poor we are? They gave it to Preston Smith [the lame-duck governor of Texas, who says he agrees with George Wallace on many issues]. They might as well give it to Mickey Mouse."<sup>11</sup>

In an interview by the Texas Observer, Muñiz's bitterness came through when he said, "There are Democrats

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<sup>9</sup> Conversation with Ramsey Muñiz and Speech delivered by Ramsey Muñiz, Southwest Texas University, San Marcos, Spring, 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Tony Castro, "Viva, Ramsey Muñiz!," Saturday Review, November 4, 1972, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

for Nixon. Now all of a sudden, they expect us to be so goddamn pure. We're not asking them to join La Raza Unida. We're asking them to support me against two ultra-conservative candidates."<sup>12</sup> Bold, brash, and bitter at times, Ramsey Muñiz was well on his way to molding a certain political style applicable to the needs of the complete image he wished to produce. Overall, Ramsey Muñiz possessed personal qualities which were exceptionally appealing for a political candidate. He was physically attractive and maintained a well-groomed appearance. Muñiz presented himself to those who listened as a sincere and mature candidate who could responsibly represent the disillusioned people of Texas. His background afforded Muñiz the "best of both worlds," as he reflected, a dual image which linked both the lower and middle class Mexican American citizens of the State. Although he was somewhat disorganized as a speaker, Muñiz's conversational speaking approach to large numbers of people made him an interesting and enjoyable speaker. His political style and performance capabilities were certainly positive attributes

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<sup>12</sup>Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

which would help him assume a positive political role in representing La Raza Unida Party.

Ramsey Muñiz's Image After La Raza Unida  
Was Assured a Place on the November  
General Election Ballot

Political Role 1972

Before La Raza Unida Party was actually certified on the November 1972 General Election Ballot, Muñiz, still a little unsure of the political role he would play in 1972, at first claimed to be a "liberal Democrat." In February of 1972, two major newspapers reported that:

Muñiz still considers himself a liberal Democrat and indicated that Raza Unida may back some Democratic candidates in a general election, but he feels that most Mexican Americans elected so far on the Democratic platform have failed to fulfill the needs of the people.<sup>13</sup>

It was not until La Raza Unida Party was guaranteed a spot on the November General Election Ballot, that Muñiz's political role assumed a clearer profile. The mass communication media were virtually unresponsive to Muñiz until certification of La Raza Unida Party was inevitable. As the news media became interested in Ramsey

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<sup>13</sup>Houston Chronicle, 11 February 1972.

Muñiz, his political role was overtly revealed to Texas voters. A voter's impression of a candidate's image is also formulated by his political role which includes (1) his record and experience, (2) his qualifications and abilities (whether he is a good leader; knows how to handle people; is a good administrator; is strong, decisive, educated and knowledgeable), (3) his position of issues and policies, (4) his philosophy (as liberal or conservative), and (5) his group associations (with the "common people," "special interests," "big business," "labor," etc.). The candidate's image is also influenced by what the voters see in the man as a "party politician" through his political strength, connections, dynamism, what political party he represents, and his political aspirations.<sup>14</sup>

The role that Ramsey Muñiz chose for himself in politics was a difficult one. Other than his job as Assistant Director of the Waco Model Cities Program, his educational background and some exposure to politics as a youngster, Ramsey Muñiz had no real experience in electoral politics. Instead, Muñiz pledged himself to hard

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<sup>14</sup>Nimmo, Popular Images, p. 125.

campaigning which was illustrative of a man determined to do his best in all political endeavors. Muñiz saw his candidacy as more than just a building block for the party's future. He traveled alone most of the time, paying for the gasoline or air fare with contributions from the crowds that turned out to hear him.<sup>15</sup> Muñiz relied on his campaign abilities rather than his past political qualifications.

In consideration of Muñiz's position on issues and policies, and his political philosophy, the major issue of his campaign centered around the political, social, and economic injustices suffered by the minorities in Texas. Muñiz contended that these inequities directly resulted from a lack of concern from the Democratic and Republican parties which had traditionally governed Texas. He pugnaciously developed policy issues to continually denounce the two traditional parties. Overall, it seemed that Muñiz's campaign was a single issue campaign. He attempted to entice the liberal voter by labeling himself as the only liberal candidate in the race when he said:

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<sup>15</sup> Tony Castro, "Viva, Ramsey Muñiz!," Saturday Review, November 4, 1972, p. 16.

For the first time in the history of Texas politics, a liberal like myself will be on the gubernatorial ballot. The Republicans get their cake in the primary [by crossing over into the Democratic primary] and then at the general election, they eat it. Now the liberals have an alternative. They don't have to vote for Henry Grover. They don't have to vote for Dolph Briscoe. They can vote for me.<sup>16</sup>

Reviewing Muñiz's group associations showed that he directed all efforts toward the special interest category. "Special interest group" during the campaign of 1972 was defined as Chicano, black, and disillusioned white liberals. Muñiz isolated himself from practically any other group identification in the campaign. Muñiz as an isolationist actually accomplished the desired image that La Raza Unida Party attempted to build, that is, to mandate exactly for whom the party was established. His political strength came from the local Raza Unida chapter organizers who, although unorganized and politically naive, seemed almost disciple-like in their dedication to Muñiz. Ramsey Muñiz had, somehow, created a large number of supporters, some of whom did not support the party he represented, La Raza Unida. Perhaps it was his personal charisma or his determination to fight for the rights of

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<sup>16</sup> Corpus Christi Caller Times, 1 July 1972.



minorities in Texas--whatever the rationale, Ramsey Muñiz was surrounded by people willing to support him in all of his political endeavors.

Muñiz's political role became more lucid as the elections grew nearer and La Raza Unida was placed on the ballot. He stressed identification with those voters who had been disillusioned by the existing power structure in the state. As Muñiz stated:

We are talking to the people and the people hear what they don't have. They know they have holes in their streets and their shoes and their housing is sub-standard and they're hungry and uneducated and unemployed. . . . How was this created and who created it? The Republicans and the Democrats! And how can we change it? Not with the Republican and the Democrats! I've got nothing to lose and I'll change it if it takes from now until I die! Ya Basta!<sup>17</sup>

Muñiz's confidence grew during the last few months of the campaign, as demonstrated when he told one press conference in El Paso, Texas that, "We're going to be close to one million votes."<sup>18</sup> He expected the votes from the people he identified with. In October 1972 he made a campaign swing up to Oregon and out to California

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<sup>17</sup> Texas Observer, 28 August 1972.

<sup>18</sup> Dallas News, 29 October 1972.

to talk with Texas migrant workers. He wanted them to know who he was before they came home. Labor Day weekend of 1972 found Muñiz addressing some two thousand Mexican Americans who were on strike against the Farah Manufacturing Company in El Paso. At a benefit dance, Muñiz stressed his role and that of La Raza Unida Party in Texas:

What we're saying, brothers, is that we're going to make a significant political impact, and we will become the balance of power in Texas and the Southwest. We don't care what the political pros say, because something needs to be done now. When you're hungry and when you're suffering, you need to get together real fast. And we don't care if you're brown, black or white. . . . Today politicians are calling for law and order. They saying they're worried about crime in the streets. Well, brothers, the real crime is being inflicted on browns, blacks, and working whites. The real crime is in the White House and in the State Capitol of Texas.<sup>19</sup>

Muñiz continued to project the image of a coalition candidate for the black, brown, and disillusioned whites of the state. He claimed, "We are growing at a tremendous pace, and we are going to get the Mexican American vote and the black vote and much of the white liberal vote."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Tony Castro, Chicano Power, p. 180.

<sup>20</sup> Fort Worth Star Telegram, 14 April 1972.

Ramsey Muñiz was eventually endorsed by Dr. Ralph Abernathy, President of the Southern Christian Conference, who said, "He's not black; but he's almost black, he's brown."<sup>21</sup> Finally, three days before the election of 1972, Muñiz, with a sense of accomplishment that he had reached the people who could put him into office, stated:

I'm convinced that the Chicano political clout will be felt this year and for years to come. . . . My people have problems that have been multiplied for years because they have been left out of the political system. We're changing that. But how many whites, blacks and others have found they they too have no voice in the political system? We're campaigning for Chicano rights, which essentially are civil rights, human rights and people's rights. My people are Chicanos in flesh. But the whites, blacks, and others who have been oppressed or left out are Chicanos with us in spirit.<sup>22</sup>

Muñiz concentrated his political role in three areas: (1) his liberal political philosophy, (2) his group association--both middle and low income Mexican Americans, blacks, and liberal whites, and (3) his political party, La Raza Unida. He was successful in projecting a public image which the people he aimed his campaign at could readily identify. Yet in the 1972 gubernatorial

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<sup>21</sup> Castro, Chicano Power, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Tony Castro, "Viva, Ramsey Muñiz!," Saturday Review, November 4, 1972, p. 21.

race, it was apparent that Ramsey Muñiz was not successful in capturing the vote of those at whom he had purposely directed his campaign. As a result, a concentrated effort on the part of both Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party was made to change dramatically the image of Ramsey Muñiz from the minority crusader to a more realistic image as a man (and party) offering a legitimate alternative to all voters who sought an alternative in the state of Texas.

Ramsey Muñiz had started development of his political role soon after Raza Unida's assurance of a place on the November General Election Ballot, but his political style remained constant. His personal qualities--appearance, traits, personality and background--did not change after certification. His performance capabilities as a campaigner remained fairly constant until the preparation began for the 1974 campaign. At the onset of the 1974 campaign, Muñiz had had two years of campaigning experience which helped increase his confidence, and the result was a smoother performance before large audiences. Even though Muñiz's style remained fairly constant, the 1974 campaign year found his overall image involved in a

tremendous metamorphosis which was attempted with the same strong determination demonstrated in 1972.

Ramsey Muñiz's Image for the 1974  
Gubernatorial Campaign

Two days after the 7 November 1972 General Election, La Raza Unida Party campaign headquarters appointed a Raza Unida Party Election Analysis Team, which consisted of Evey Chapa, Carlos Reyes, and Mario Longoria.<sup>23</sup> The team sought to discover voting patterns which had been formulated during the 1972 election. They employed all necessary information on voter returns which was available from the Secretary of State's Office in Austin, Texas. The team discovered several general voting patterns: first, Raza Unida Party had the greatest success in areas where the party structure existed and/or where party organizers existed, second, counties which had hosted the party's statewide candidates obtained better results, and third, counties with a higher percentage of Chicanos in the population voted less for La Raza Unida

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<sup>23</sup>Olivia E. Chapa, "Evaluating Voter Education Through Political Participation: Texas 1972," Graduate paper presented to the Antioch School of Education, Juarez-Lincoln Center, Austin, 15 December 1972.

than did the counties with a lower percentage of Chicano residents. The team conjectured that this particular pattern arose in those areas in which the Chicanos were in the minority and responded strongly to the theme of discrimination and suppression of minorities which Muñiz had utilized in the campaign. A fourth pattern was found in a comparison of census tract data on economic status and voting results. The largest source of votes for La Raza Unida came from middle-class Chicanos. The poor Chicano, for whom the campaign had been geared, voted Democratic.<sup>24</sup> The concensus was that Muñiz's 1972 defeat could be attributed to trends revealed in the election results. Therefore, a tremendous effort to change the image of La Raza Unida Party and Ramsey Muñiz in preparation for the 1974 campaign was begun.

#### Political Style 1974

Ramsey Muñiz's political style remained relatively unchanged in 1974. In reference to his background and political personality, Muñiz was older. Although not a professional politician by any means, he was no longer

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-10.

naive about the political processes of the state. He had learned quickly to use whatever experience he gained from the mistakes made in 1972 as one friend commented:

At first, I would have said Muñiz is shallow. I don't mean in intelligence or such, he is very bright. But shallow on the issues, which I understand because it took me so long to learn about Texas politics. But I talked to Ramsey two months ago and I talked to him a week ago and the difference is amazing, how much he has learned. He is coming out of the cocoon of chicano politics and into the real world, into Texas politics. He is getting away from the kamikaze Chicano group in La Raza, but he must deal with them at the same time that he is extending himself to other groups.<sup>25</sup>

Extending, broadening, widening, expanding, and any other adjective to illustrate an attempt to loosen the monolithic approach of Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party toward the Texas voter were the terms used to describe the goals of renewing the image of La Raza Unida Party and Ramsey Muñiz for 1974.

In reference to his performance capabilities, Muñiz became somewhat more conservative in his attacks on his opponents and their political parties. Perhaps this more subtle appeal was a sign of Muñiz's political maturation and his striving for a more organized approach toward

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<sup>25</sup> Texas Observer, 25 August 1972.

Texas politics in 1974. It was Muñiz's political role which demonstrated the dramatic changes in his projected image of 1974.

#### Political Role 1974

Two days after the November General Election in 1972 Muñiz had already begun to change his image. In 1972 Muñiz had felt that the Democratic and Republican parties had neglected the minorities of the state; but in 1974, Ramsey Muñiz was headed toward a different image when he said, "I am going to be Briscoe's devil's advocate for the next two years. I'm going to pull out his platform and see that he carries it out. . . . We're going to test him out every day and be like a Common Cause lobby group."<sup>26</sup>

The 1974 campaign was not the single issue program that Muñiz had offered in 1972. Muñiz considered more relevant issues to be those concerning all the people of Texas as shown by his statement in mid-1974:

We want a new Texas . . . We believe that Briscoe did not keep his promises. We are going to campaign asking for the elimination of the sales tax

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<sup>26</sup> Dallas News, 9 November 1972.



to replace it with a tax on corporate profits. We are going to ask for quality education based on every child's needs and for revamping the education financing system. . . . Another thing we are going to point out during the campaign, . . . is the need to bring more industry into the state. We feel the state government can coordinate its efforts with private business, right here in the state, to provide new sources of employment . . . We are going to talk about issues that affect all of the people of the state of Texas.<sup>27</sup>

Muñiz had proven his abilities as a leader by the 1972 campaign. He used his qualifications and abilities to stress La Raza Unida's position on relevant issues as the 1972 and 1974 party platform dictated. His philosophy did not change, he still considered himself a liberal candidate. A marked difference in Muñiz's image between 1972 and 1974 was seen in the area of group associations.

In 1972, Muñiz had stressed that he was the only candidate for whom Chicanos, blacks, and liberal whites could morally vote; in 1974 he completely forfeited this specific calling card and substituted an enlarged image. Muñiz made it clear early in the 1974 campaign that he and La Raza Unida Party were for anyone tired of traditional Texas politics:

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<sup>27</sup> Dallas News, 5 July 1974.

We have not changed the philosophy of the party and we have not changed our principles as a political party. What we are doing is broadening our scope because we know we cannot win the election even if every Mexican American voted in the state. We are appealing to all Texans, just like any other political organization. There is no reason why we cannot form a party for all the people.<sup>28</sup>

Carlos Puentes, Tarrant County La Raza Unida Party organizer, echoed Muñoz's commitment to party openness when he said, "We're trying to dilute the image that it's (La Raza Unida Party) solely a Chicano party, especially in the north Texas area."<sup>29</sup>

Responding to the old image of La Raza Unida Party, Ramsey Muñoz said, "When we talk about Raza Unida, we are talking about people together. . . . We are not and have never been a party that practices racism in reverse as some people, even Mexican Americans, thought."<sup>30</sup> Later he caught some Texans off guard as he began his new image with, "I don't believe that Texans are so prejudiced that they can't vote for a Chicano. All I ask is that they judge me on the issues." He listed some of the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Fort Worth Star Telegram, 28 April 1974.

<sup>30</sup> Fort Worth Star Telegram, 19 May 1974.

issues as the energy crisis, a regressive tax policy, and the direction of government and ethics.<sup>31</sup> Ramsey Muñiz told one group of La Raza Unida Party organizers that, "1974 will be our biggest year. We are the only party that belongs to the people. We are going to build the greatest movement of people in Texas history."<sup>32</sup>

The campaign brochures even had a different image in 1974. Instead of "La Raza Unida Party" on the printed hand-outs, as in 1972, the new brochures merely read "People Together."<sup>33</sup> Again, not only were most ethnic symbols eliminated from the La Raza Unida Party image, but so was the limited ethnic ideology. As one commentator remarked in 1974, "Gone to a large extent is the political naiveté about the election, about ideological purity and most importantly, about Chicano nationalism."<sup>34</sup>

The arrival of Muñiz's 1974 campaign manager, Carlos Guerra, brought a tremendous influence on the

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<sup>31</sup>Houston Post, 19 January 1974.

<sup>32</sup>San Antonio Express, 30 December 1973.

<sup>33</sup>Houston Post, 16 June 1974.

<sup>34</sup>Houston Post, 3 May 1974.

formulation of La Raza Unida and, therefore, the candidate's image. Muñiz had not had a campaign manager in 1972. Perhaps the most articulate of the Chicano movement leaders, Guerra had been described as a romantic revolutionary. Guerra served on the board of the prestigious Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards, but had made his reputation as the most successful fund raiser for the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and more recently, for the Texas Institute for Educational Development. It was Guerra who mildly edged Muñiz's campaign away from strong La Raza Unida identification, doing perhaps nothing more than what an astute Republican candidate would do in gently disassociating himself from former President Nixon.<sup>35</sup>

Guerra strove for party sophistication and explained:

Our big problem right now is lack of political experience. . . . Let's face it, our people are political neophytes who have this hang-up about ideological purity. That doesn't work in this game. Tu tienes que enmugalar las manos un poco. (You have to dirty your hands some.)<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

In a step-by-step process dictated to campaign organizers, Guerra compiled The Ramsey Muñiz Campaign Manual--1974.

Its primary purpose was to educate the local workers concerning ways to organize support for Muñiz. Guerra's strategy in writing the manual was an attempt to quadruple the number of votes received in 1972. He suggested three goals for organizers to meet:

. . . make personal contact with as many voters as possible, . . . keep from arousing the other side so they will not vote against us, and seek votes from wherever they can be found, starting first with the voters most likely to vote for Muñiz and going progressively to the voters that are going to be harder to get.<sup>37</sup>

Actually, Carlos Guerra's basic suggestion could be compared to a local "Tupperware Party." The campaign manual was the first real set of guidelines that the local Raza Unida organizers had available to demonstrate the "Do's and Don't's" of basic campaigning strategy. Overall, Guerra's contribution to the Muñiz campaign was systematic organization.

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<sup>37</sup> Carlos Guerra, The Ramsey Muñiz Campaign Manual--1974 (Corpus Christi: Mirabal Printing Co., 1974), p. 3.

New faces, new strategies, new responsibilities forwarded a new image for Ramsey Muñiz in 1974. The budding Raza Unida Party was maturing along with their candidate for governor. An all-encompassing effort to win offices on the state and local levels was initiated by La Raza Unida Party in 1974 to no avail. Muñiz suffered his second defeat in the race for Governor of Texas in 1974.

The party and Muñiz employed a more systematic approach to image building in 1974. Muñiz's political style became truly sophisticated in his attempt to gain voters. His political role in 1974 advocated expansion of his image to incorporate the broadening of philosophy which was the candidate's goal. Muñiz still ran as a liberal candidate, but changed his previous narrow category of liberal group association to a much broader image which encompassed any Texas voters seeking a change from the traditional Texas government. For all of the attempts to change his image, Muñiz received only 93,295 votes while Granberry of the Republican Party received 514,725

votes and Briscoe of the Democratic Party received  
1,016,334 votes in 1974.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Returns from a General Election, Held 5 November  
1974, for Governor--returns printed by the Secretary of  
State's Office, January 1975.

## CHAPTER V

### RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

Traditionally, in attempting an evaluation of the rhetorical strategies employed by a group, person or movement, studies have relied on an "established methodology" suggested by persons recognized as authorities in the study of rhetoric or persuasion. "However, today's critic, it is commonly acknowledged, faces a much more difficult task in the attempt to evaluate the rhetoric, or persuasion, involved in current social movements."<sup>1</sup> Once the necessary historical and background information which relates directly to the situation under study has been gathered, discussion of the principal persons or leaders in the movement is the next concern.<sup>2</sup> After

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<sup>1</sup>A. Gabbard-Alley, "Toward a Working Definition of Rhetorical Strategies," a paper delivered at the National Speech Communication Association Convention, New York, 1973.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 5.



becoming aware of the background of the leaders of the movement, one must determine the various rhetorical strategies which the leader employed in the attempt to obtain the goals of the group or movement.

The selected rhetorical strategies analyzed in this study were derived from (1) recorded excerpts from campaign speeches made by Muñiz, (2) La Raza Unida Party literature, (3) the media sources, (4) the Texas Election Code regulations, and (5) interviews with key La Raza Unida Party members and candidates for both the 1972 and 1974 campaigns.

As established in Chapter II of this study, La Raza Unida Party had one major goal established by the 1971 state convention held in San Antonio--to get La Raza Unida Party on the General Election Ballot in November 1972. Two secondary, interdependent goals of the party emerged soon after the party became confident that they would secure a place on the ballot--to win elective offices in the state government and/or to make a political impact on the state's politics by becoming a balance of new power.

Muñiz had to acquire two percent of the total votes cast in the previous General Election in order to secure a permanent place on the state ballot for La Raza Unida Party. His responsibilities as the party candidate could not be understated. Discussion of Muñiz's rhetorical strategies employed to promote his image were considered in two phases: first, the strategies used in 1972 and secondly, the 1974 equivalent strategies as they changed to promote a new image. The specific strategies used by Muñiz were labeled with the specific appeal employed to promote his strategies. The appeals to be considered were motivational, factual, and fear appeals.

Ramsey Muñiz's strongest appeal to win voter support in 1972 was a motivational appeal.

Motivational appeals are stimuli designed to create a tension, to elicit a feeling or effective response from a receiver. Motivational appeals are directed to the wishes, wants, desires, goals, and needs of the person.<sup>3</sup>

Muñiz employed six rhetorical strategies to promote his image in the 1972 and 1974 gubernatorial campaigns. The six rhetorical strategies employed by Muñiz were as

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth E. Anderson, Persuasion Theory and Practice (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1972), p. 34.

follows: (1) Representing the party platform and issues; (2) Public speeches; (3) Group identification; (4) Attacks on opponents; (5) Using public media; and (6) Negating attacks from external sources. Discussion of the above six rhetorical strategies included the labeling of those strategies which were planned, unplanned and semi-planned.

#### Representing the Party Platform and Issues

As standard bearer for La Raza Unida Party, Muñoz was held responsible for advertising and promoting the party's platform and issues. In 1972 several factors hindered Muñoz from actually presenting the platform and issues of the party. In order to accomplish the goals of La Raza Unida, he had to prove first, that La Raza Unida Party was a viable political party; second, that La Raza Unida could represent many disillusioned Texas voters if the party could get on the ballot in November; and third, that he was indeed a serious contender in the race for governor of Texas.

In 1972 Ramsey Muñoz spent a majority of his campaigning time trying to "sell" La Raza Unida Party to the

voters in the state of Texas. Muñiz's 1972 campaign could be compared to that of promoting a new food product. The promoters of a new food product talk about how the product tastes and about the ingredients, but not about the nutritional value in most cases. Muñiz concentrated on how well La Raza Unida could represent the disillusioned voters of Texas and the almost exclusive Mexican American membership of the party, but he spent little time on the party's platform or issues.

In 1972 Muñiz centered his campaign around one basic issue--that La Raza Unida Party offered an alternative to the traditional Democratic and Republican parties in Texas. Rarely did Muñiz deal with any of the seventy-two resolutions developed in the party platform. The only issue he actually discussed was the problem of illegal aliens from Mexico securing the farm and ranch jobs along the border of Texas. He only incorporated this particular issue when attacking his opponent Dolph Briscoe, who owned a ranch in Uvalde, Texas.

In 1972 Muñiz presented himself as basically an ethnic candidate, promoting the image of the candidate for ethnic minorities in the state. In 1974 Muñiz

attempted to follow more of an issue-oriented campaign. As Muñiz himself admitted, "When I speak to a predominantly Mexican American audience, I don't ask the people to vote for me because I'm a Mexican American. I ask them to vote for me on how I stand on the issues."<sup>4</sup> Yet, in reality, he seemed to give only token attention to the issues of the campaign by merely listing several changes La Raza Unida Party and he would make if he were elected governor. The basic motivation behind this particular approach was a direct result of the 1972 campaign. Again in 1974 Muñiz spent most of his campaign time attempting to enlarge his image, but not by sticking to the issues of the platform. Instead he reduced his ethnic identity approach and emphasized the alternative candidate appeal. Although he stated that he was concerned about the issues in 1974, he continued to expand his image without actually discussing the campaign topics.

#### Muñiz's Use of Public Speeches

Because Ramsey Muñiz relied basically on "nickel" and dime" contributions for his campaign, the only

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<sup>4</sup>Fort Worth Star Telegram, 28 April 1974.

economical means he had to advertise his candidacy was through public speaking engagements. He traveled around the state giving speeches wherever he could. It was the responsibility of local La Raza Unida organizers to set up engagements; therefore, Muñiz spoke in varying surroundings:

Often campaigning alone, Muñiz took his bid throughout Texas claiming to have gone into small towns in south Texas never visited by a politician. His rallies often became Mexican fiestas with tacos and tamales sold to raise money. . . . He made a personal appeal to the leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. . . . In [El Paso] at a benefit dance, Muñiz gave an extemporaneous talk. . . .<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the occasion or the event, in a high school gym or convention auditorium, when the opportunity arose, Muñiz was there to take advantage of the public speaking situation.

La Raza Unida Party and Ramsey Muñiz had very few printed materials which could easily be distributed throughout the state. Instead, Muñiz concentrated on speeches as his main source of projection of his image. Muñiz was very effective in utilizing the public speaking

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<sup>5</sup>Tony Castro, Chicano Power (New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974), pp. 34-35, 93, 179.

strategy. As the only real tool Muñiz could afford financially, public speeches seemed to be most effectively employed. The following rhetorical strategies all depended heavily on the strategy of speech making.

### Group Identification

#### Muñiz's Appeals to Mexican Americans

Ramsey Muñiz's third rhetorical strategy was the use of group identification. By virtue of his background, Muñiz acquired three unplanned rhetorical strategies. He was born a Chicano. He grew up speaking Spanish. He grew up bilingual in a barrio. These variables of his background granted him identification with the poor, blue collar worker in the barrios of Texas. Other semi-planned rhetorical strategies gave him an automatic identification with the middle-class Mexican American in Texas. This identification was insured by his educational and professional experiences. Finally, Muñiz labeled himself a liberal candidate for governor which allowed him to identify with voters in the state who considered themselves liberal political voters.

Muñiz employed the motivational appeal approach toward two different types of Mexican American voters; the middle class Mexican American voter and the lower class rural or blue collar Mexican American voter. Most of the Mexican Americans had traditionally voted for the Democratic ticket in Texas elections.

Ramsey Muñiz, as La Raza Unida's gubernatorial candidate, had as his first priority, the acquisition of votes for his campaign to insure the two percent of the vote goal needed to establish a permanent place on the state ballot. In 1972 Muñiz directed most of his energies toward attracting the Mexican American vote. "In 1972 there was an estimated 1,357,000 eligible Mexican American voters."<sup>6</sup> The number cited did not include the newly registered voters in the Mexican American community who had registered as a result of the intense La Raza Unida petition drive. In one of the first newspaper accounts of the new political party and its candidate for governor, Muñiz had the opportunity to cite his impressive professional and educational achievements. Then he challenged

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<sup>6</sup>Houston Chronicle, 21 January 1972.



the two other gubernatorial candidates to match his educational record.<sup>7</sup> The challenge helped to identify Muñiz with the more educated middle class Mexican American. He also attempted to assure the more affluent Mexican Americans that La Raza Unida was not limited to militant Chicanos. Muñiz strengthened his appeal to the middle class voters of his community when he repeated: "The thing we don't want to do is alienate any Mexican Americans. If we were to be militant, if we were to go around calling the Anglos 'gringos,' we'd be hurting more than helping ourselves."<sup>8</sup>

After the first La Raza Unida Party national convention which was held in El Paso in September 1972, Muñiz employed still another approach to attract the middle class Mexican American vote. With the national convention behind him, he firmly declared that La Raza Unida was the only viable means by which the Mexican Americans of Texas could participate in the political processes of the state:

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<sup>7</sup> San Antonio Light, 27 February 1972.

<sup>8</sup> Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

We can talk about Americanism and democracy, we can read about it and we can write about it; but until we practice it, we can't say that we've enjoyed its fruits. Our people have never before been involved in a direct electoral process. . . . What we have done in the last four days [the El Paso national convention], indicates that the stereotypes of us by the Democrats and Republicans . . . that we are too emotional to get involved in politics, isn't true<sup>9</sup>

Muñiz used this type of language to make the middle class Mexican Americans aware of the need to be more instrumental in their own state's governmental processes. In using this type of appeal, Muñiz hoped to convince the middle class that La Raza Unida Party was the mechanism which would insure them total representation in the Texas government.

In still another attempt to "make the party more palatable to Mexican American moderates and conservatives who had previously been labeled 'Tio Tacos'--Chicano 'Uncle Toms'--by the movement,"<sup>10</sup> Muñiz took a firm stand against the white liberal politician in a party appeal: "Liberals haven't been that much more helpful to the Mexican American. . . . When we say we've got to teach the

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<sup>9</sup> Houston Chronicle, 5 September 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

Anglo politicians, a lesson, we mean all their politicians."<sup>11</sup> This illustrated another facet of the motivational appeal. In other words, Muñiz spoke of himself and the party as one entity. With the party emphasis, Muñiz attempted to make the middle class Mexican American feel like all Mexican Americans of Texas were truly united toward accomplishing the same political goals.

Muñiz sought the blue collar Mexican American vote by emphasizing his group identity. This motivational tactic helped him relate directly with those Mexican Americans who had grown up in poverty. At the same time the tactic stifled the emotions of those who felt that nothing good ever came from a barrio. Muñiz's identification with the blue collar Mexican American enabled him to concentrate on one of the problems facing the farm laborers of Texas with an intensive factual appeal. In Uvalde, Texas, he pointed out that in 1970 the Texas Legislative Council had reported the State of Texas was one

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

of the biggest discriminators in employment.<sup>12</sup> Later, in a speech to about one hundred people in a Houston barrio, Muñiz geared his language to be even stronger to that community: "As much as any man, 'la vaca' [referring to Briscoe] has exploited our people and our brothers from Mexico. . . . La Vaca uses cheap Mexican labor so he won't have to pay Chicanos decent wages."<sup>13</sup>

Muñiz's group association appeal was one of his strongest rhetorical devices used in 1972. The concept he continually expounded was that together the Mexican Americans of the state could fight the "evil" forces of the Democratic and Republican parties. This "us" or "together" concept was strengthened with another form of motivational appeal. Muñiz chose to use what could be labeled a nationalistic approach, one which involved an appeal to the self-respect and pride of all Mexican Americans, "When you have something called pride, nobody but nobody controls your mind. Nobody but nobody controls your heart. Nobody but nobody controls what you do."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Dallas News, 23 August 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Dallas News, 3 November 1972.

<sup>14</sup> San Antonio Light, 8 November 1972.

Muñiz's last appeal to the Mexican American community was as a brother, "If it comes down to voting for two Anglos and a Chicano . . . then, the Chicanos will vote by their skin."<sup>15</sup>

In a combined effort to attract both the middle class and blue collar Mexican American vote, Muñiz became philosophical rather than political, yet he blamed a lack of Chicano pride on the established two party system of Texas. Muñiz stated that the Republicans and Democrats had controlled Chicanos for years by telling them how to vote. He said, "We are still an enslaved people. Our bodies are free, but the chains are on our minds. You can improve us, but to the present system, you're still just a good Meskin [sic]." Name calling was a familiar practice encountered by Mexican Americans in Texas. Muñiz understood what it meant to be discriminated against because of the color of his skin. He used the word "Meskin" purposely to stimulate the Mexican American community of Texas into realizing that they had been discriminated against by the Anglos who for generations had controlled

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<sup>15</sup>Dallas News, 12 March 1972.

the state government. With the strong spirit shown throughout the 1972 campaign, Ramsey Muñiz continued, "Well, I'll tell you, if they want me to be a good Meskin [sic], I'm going to be a darn good one and show them I'm better than they are."<sup>16</sup>

In 1974 Ramsey Muñiz employed a more specialized motivational approach in appealing to the Mexican American population. The division of appeals between the middle class Mexican American and the blue collar Mexican American shown in 1972 became less apparent. Basically, two rhetorical strategies were utilized to gain the support of the Texas Mexican Americans. First, Muñiz claimed that the Mexican Americans in Texas had been used by the liberal politicians of the state and second, he promised that, as the name of the new political party suggested, he would stand as the voice of a people united and that together the people would decide how much political impact La Raza Unida Party would have on Texas in 1974.

In his address at the 1974 La Raza Unida state convention, Ramsey Muñiz declared that La Raza Unida

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<sup>16</sup> Dallas News, 31 October 1972.

Party was proving to the liberals that they (the Mexican Americans) could never be used again because the Chicano would speak for himself. He continued his attack by vowing: ". . . Raza Unida members will not go back to your crooked poker game called the Democratic Party. If liberals are so concerned about us, let them follow our leadership."<sup>17</sup> When questioned by reporters about the motivation behind the efforts of La Raza Unida to provide the Chicano population with political autonomy from traditional parties, Muñiz replied, "To show that we can cry for ourselves, we can speak for ourselves."<sup>18</sup> Muñiz and La Raza Unida were determined to accomplish their goals through the democratic process of the state:

Mexican Americans in this state have traditionally been denied the fruits of this land and after many of these native Americans became disillusioned with the political system, they did what their Anglo teachers told them to do during their earliest days in school. They did it the 'democratic' way.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Houston Chronicle, 22 September 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Dallas Times Herald, 6 October 1974.

<sup>19</sup> San Angelo Standard Times, 15 January 1974.

### Muñiz's Identification with the Liberal Voter

Perhaps some of Muñiz's bitterness against the liberals during the 1974 campaign was due to the fact that he did not attract as much of the white liberal vote as had been expected in 1972. In 1972 Muñiz had aimed his vote gathering plea at the liberals in several areas. First in a factual appeal, he asserted that La Raza Unida Party's Platform was the same as Frances Farenthold's.<sup>20</sup> Another example of reaching the liberal audience was seen in his speech to a group of Trinity University students when he was questioned on his stand of legalizing marijuana, "We should reduce the penalty from a felony to a misdemeanor or less . . ."<sup>21</sup> Muñiz then provided the liberal voter with semantically flexible terms which could easily please them, "We are not segregating ourselves, we are not racists . . . , we are concerned with humanity."<sup>22</sup>

Although Muñiz was new to campaigning and political tactics, the following appeared numerous times in

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<sup>20</sup> Dallas News, 3 October 1972.

<sup>21</sup> San Antonio Express, 12 October 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Austin American-Statesman, 5 November 1972.



his speeches during the 1972 campaign and could be labeled a "threat" tactic or fear appeal. Specifically trying to influence the liberal Democrat, Muñiz claimed, "The impact we are making throughout the state indicates that if I do not become governor, the press shouldn't be shocked if Henry Grover wins." Referring to the liberal Democrat, Muñiz said, "People get excited and tell me you're going to put Grover into Office." Continuing this statement, he declared: "I don't care. . . . Briscoe and Grover are the same except that one wears glasses and the other doesn't. We are offering white liberals, Mexican Americans, and blacks an alternative to two very conservative candidates."<sup>23</sup>

Although an image of a liberal candidate was attempted by Muñiz in 1972, he sought to widen the scope of La Raza Unida Party and of his candidacy in the campaign of 1974. The basic motivational appeal to the liberals of 1974 was to show La Raza Unida as a party for any person who was disillusioned by the two party system in the state. During a speech at a fund raising affair in

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<sup>23</sup> San Antonio Express, 16 September 1972.

Houston, Muñiz made his commitment to the liberals who, perhaps, felt excluded from participation in La Raza Unida Party in 1972: "We don't care if you're black. We don't care if you're Anglo. Hell, we don't even care if you're Mexican American. I'm telling you we all have common interests. We all want the same things. . . ." <sup>24</sup>

A broader image of La Raza Unida and Muñiz seemed to emerge out of his appeal to those 1974 voters who considered themselves liberal. Muñiz increasingly declared La Raza Unida an alternative to the deep-seated two party system. Simultaneously, he firmly committed La Raza Unida to a democratic method of solving the problems of all minorities and disillusioned members of the majority.

#### Muñiz's Identification with the Black Minority

A part of Ramsey Muñiz's appeal to the liberal voter was unconsciously subdivided into a specific approach to the black population. In references to minorities in general, Muñiz claimed that the Republicans and Democrats merely gave lip service to representing the

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<sup>24</sup> Houston Post, 19 January 1974.

minorities in Texas. A specific reference to the Republican Party in Texas made by Muñiz was:

They kept talking about representation, but there was only one Texas Republican delegate who was Mexican American and no black delegates. . . . As we've said so many times, what they're really talking about is tokenism.<sup>25</sup>

It was at this time that Muñiz first recognized that a black-brown coalition would help get him elected. In August 1972, one of his visits to Houston was to speak with two black leaders, State Representative Curtis Graves and legislative candidate Micky Leland. The opportunity to confer with the two men never materialized. Although Muñiz never got to speak with Graves or Leland, in an unplanned strategy, Dr. Ralph Abernathy, leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) held in August of 1972, endorsed Muñiz as the gubernatorial candidate choice for the SCLC.<sup>26</sup> Muñiz was later endorsed by Mrs. Coretta S. King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Houston Post, 24 August 1972.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Corpus Christi Caller Times, 9 November 1972.

No sign of a structured coalition between black and brown leaders ever materialized in the 1972 campaign. In 1974 stronger hints of a black-brown coalition developed when the La Raza Unida Party 1974 convention had as one of their main speakers, poet and black nationalist Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones). Imamu Amiri Baraka was at that time secretary-general of the National Black Political Assembly. He remarked to the three hundred delegates attending the convention that, "Blacks and Browns must unite against American capitalism and imperialism."<sup>28</sup> At that time, Muñoz urged openness with blacks by La Raza Unida members, but concluded that no black-brown coalition could exist until there was first a cohesive brown-brown coalition. In 1974 it seemed that Muñoz shied away from being recognized as a candidate endorsed by the black population, where it had been welcomed in 1972. Later Muñoz said a black-brown coalition had not materialized in the past and was not going to in the future. Contradictory to Muñoz's earlier rhetoric that La Raza Unida was a party for anyone, he emphasized in 1974 that

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<sup>28</sup> Houston Chronicle, 23 September 1974.

the basic principle of La Raza Unida Party was still to help the Mexican American citizen of Texas.<sup>29</sup>

#### Muñiz Attacks Opponents

Ramsey Muñiz's naiveté as a politician was seen most clearly in his approach to his opponents in the 1972 campaign. His opponents at this time were Dolph Briscoe (Democrat) and Henry Grover (Republican). Briscoe was the winner in the Democratic primary run-off election against Francis Farenthold which had been held 3 June 1972. Muñiz also attacked Farenthold in an attempt to capture the votes which would have gone to her if she had become the Democratic candidate for governor. Both Briscoe and Grover were considered conservative to moderate candidates. Therefore, Muñiz sought the votes of those Democrats who would have supported Farenthold: "If I can pick up just half of Sissy's [Francis Farenthold] June 3 run-off support, . . . I can squeeze in. . . . And Briscoe is not going to get much liberal support with me in the race. So we pull a squeeze play on him."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Dallas News, 22 September 1974.

<sup>30</sup>Dallas Times Herald, 13 June 1972.

Whenever questioned about his opponents who were contending for the Office of Governor, he always replied with derogatory criticism. Muñiz used a combined rhetorical strategy of attacking his opponents and getting the attention of the media. In April of 1972 Muñiz achieved the media's attention by launching a character attack on Frances Farenthold. He called for a state investigation of state nepotism, sharply criticising Farenthold for attempting to attract the Mexican American vote when she had done nothing for the Chicano in the past. Stated in the form of a rhetorical question, Muñiz stated: "I want Frances Farenthold to tell why she didn't push to have Mexican Americans and blacks hired to work in the Legislature instead of her daughters?"<sup>31</sup>

In 1972 Muñiz repeatedly stated that the only difference between Henry Grover and Dolph Briscoe was that one wore glasses, but in the last few months of the campaign, he directed most of his attacks toward Briscoe. Speaking to students at Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio, October 29, 1972, he remarked:

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<sup>31</sup>Dallas News, 17 April 1972.

Mr. Briscoe is not a people's choice, you never see him among the people. The only time you see him is on paid political announcements. . . . It would be a nightmare for two years if Briscoe were to become governor of Texas. . . . which he's not, because I am.<sup>32</sup>

Muñiz continued his attacks on Briscoe mixing factual and motivational appeals. This tactic has been labeled the emotional-rational appeal which functions as a stimulus to ". . . arouse and appeal initially to the same kinds emotions and motivations as was the exclusively emotional one, and then to appeal to the intellect and critical faculties of the [voter]."<sup>33</sup> Muñiz asserted that Briscoe was a tax dodger when he said:

We already knew that Briscoe was a tax dodger who had to be taken to court to pay his school taxes in Uvalde, but now we are finding out that he is bordering on corruption by making deals with the fat cats in Miami Beach. While Dolph Briscoe is wheeling and dealing with corrupt politicians in Miami Beach, the working man and the poor people of Texas remain in the doghouse. [Briscoe] would sell his soul to the highest bidder to win the governorship in the general election.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Dallas News, 29 October 1972.

<sup>33</sup> Marvin Karins and Herbert I. Abelson, Persuasion: How Opinions and Attitudes are Changed, 2nd Edition (New York: Springer Publ., Co., Inc., 1970), p. 36.

<sup>34</sup> San Antonio Light, 11 July 1972.

In a campaign swing through the lower Rio Grande Valley, San Angelo, San Antonio, and El Paso, Muñiz repeatedly accused Briscoe of permitting discrimination against Mexican Americans in his own home town, Uvalde, Texas. Referring to the Uvalde School District, Muñiz said:

Chicano students in Uvalde are dropping out at the rate of 85 percent. And when you ask la vaca about improving our education, he talks to us about vocational education. Our educational problem (in Uvalde) is the direct result of ineffective leadership on the part of la vaca and surely this is not the type of leadership that the people of Texas want in our state government.<sup>35</sup>

In another attempt to damage Briscoe's image, Muñiz charged that Briscoe was responsible for destruction of a bridge on a farm-to-market road leading to his (Briscoe's) ranch in Uvalde. Muñiz claimed that the bridge had been dynamited to keep visitors from checking on whether or not Briscoe actually employed illegal Mexican laborers on his ranch.<sup>36</sup>

In the last two days before the November 1972 general elections, Muñiz released a piece of information

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<sup>35</sup> Dallas News, 29 October 1972.

<sup>36</sup> Dallas News, 5 November 1972.



which captured the attention of the media. After calling a press conference, he announced that Briscoe had undergone electric shock therapy for severe depression twice during the past eighteen months. The statement drew considerable comment from voters and candidates alike.

Briscoe denied the charge and Grover issued a statement which labeled Muñiz's charge a "very vicious act" that he, personally, would not have made public even if it were possibly true.<sup>37</sup>

In 1972 Muñiz spent a large amount of time and effort trying to damage the character of his opponents. This particular strategy out of necessity left him little time to speak out on the actual issues related to the gubernatorial race.

In 1974 Muñiz, with two more years' experience in politics behind him, attempted to stick to the issues rather than make personal attacks on his opponents. In the second race, Muñiz found himself pitted against incumbent candidate, Dolph Briscoe, and the Republican candidate, Jim Granberry. Obviously he realized that

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

attacking his opponents was not the most persuasive way to enhance his own image. As one commentator had stated in reference to the old claim about Briscoe's shock therapy:

Muñiz, it turned out, wound up getting hurt because the charge disappointed some of the followers of his quixotic campaign. Grover condemned Muñiz's charge making himself appear to be above such tactics and his own personal integrity suggested that he would not have taken part in a deal with La Raza Unida.<sup>38</sup>

Muñiz must have received strong negative feedback from his unsubstantiated charges against his opponents because little reference (pro or con) relating to the character of his opponents was found in the 1974 campaign records.

#### Muñiz's Use of Public Media

Ramsey Muñiz realized early in the 1972 campaign the value of public exposure by the media for both the party and his own gubernatorial campaign. Perhaps the realization of the media's effectiveness was prompted by Muñiz being excluded from a Dallas television station presentation of both Briscoe and Grover in April 1972. Muñiz criticized the station KERA for not extending him

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<sup>38</sup> Castro, Chicano Power, pp. 205-206.

an invitation to be interviewed by the station's political analyst.<sup>39</sup> A station spokesman said that the FCC regulation calling for "equal time" did not apply to candidates not on the general ballot.

The media started to take notice and to report more frequently La Raza Unida Party activities after the place on the general election ballot was assured by the Secretary of State. The press only mentioned La Raza Unida Party as a unique, third party, which would have little effect on the November elections. It was not until the reporters around the state recognized that Muñiz's gubernatorial race would decide the future status of La Raza Unida Party that they actually started attending Muñiz's campaign. Muñiz had difficulty broadcasting his campaign in the early months of the 1972 campaign; he was able to secure some attention later in the year when he challenged Briscoe to a public debate on the issues.<sup>40</sup>

A few weeks after Muñiz challenged Briscoe to a debate, in a semi-planned rhetorical strategy, Muñiz and

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<sup>39</sup> Dallas News, 27 April 1972.

<sup>40</sup> Houston Chronicle, 17 October 1972.

Grover met briefly on the campus of the University of Texas at El Paso where Muñiz challenged Grover to a public debate.<sup>41</sup> Muñiz's encounter with Grover was one of the few unplanned strategies which Muñiz used to great advantage. Challenging Grover to a public debate, Muñiz got the attention of the news media. It must be assumed that Muñiz accomplished more than mere attention at that time, because Grover cancelled his scheduled speaking engagement at the University of Texas at El Paso. It can be assumed that Grover was unprepared to meet Muñiz in public and the possibility of appearing with Muñiz was an incident that Grover chose to avoid.<sup>42</sup>

After Ramsey Muñiz's political debut in 1972, the media realized that both Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party were, indeed, worthy of public exposure. The 1974 campaign started with a state convention held in Houston which received statewide media coverage. The party used this unplanned strategy to impress upon the people of the state that La Raza Unida was an official political party

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<sup>41</sup>Dallas News, 5 November 1972.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

and that the party represented a distinct alternative to the voters in 1974. Although Muñiz did not receive much more attention for his campaign in 1974, he did receive more attention from reporters immediately after his defeat in 1972. Muñiz correctly predicted the trend of the news media when he said, "Failure is not in our vocabulary, . . . the news media is now going to say Raza Unida party failed and waste ink now on us that they wouldn't use during the campaign."<sup>43</sup>

Negation of Attacks from  
External Sources

Ramsey Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party remained politically active all during 1973 as indicated by the changes in 1972 and 1974's campaign strategies already mentioned in this study. The first significant event of the year found Muñiz facing a court injunction to prevent him from "holding himself out as an attorney at law."<sup>44</sup> In a petition filed in the 166th District Court by the grievance committee of the State Bar of Texas, Muñiz was

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<sup>43</sup> Dallas News, 9 November 1972.

<sup>44</sup> Houston Chronicle, 4 March 1973.

accused of misleading the general public into believing that he was a licensed attorney and possessed all the requisite qualifications that the designation implied.<sup>45</sup> Muñiz denied the allegations of misleading the public, but did admit that he had not yet passed the state bar examination prior to the injunction.

Another significant event involving La Raza Unida Party and Muñiz was action taken by the state legislature. Under previous law, any party obtaining two percent of the vote for governor in the general election was entitled to state financing of that party's primaries. However, in 1973, the law was changed to read twenty percent of the votes obtained to qualify for state funds for the primary election.<sup>46</sup> Therefore Muñiz was placed virtually in the same position of responsibility in 1974 as he had been in 1972. It was up to one man to secure twenty percent of the vote in order to insure that La Raza Unida's primaries would be funded by the state in 1978. In response to the increased requirement, Muñiz stated:

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Dallas News, 31 January 1976.

I can understand the part about the ballot, . . .  
 [referring to the 2% minimum for a ballot position].  
 I can't understand the 20% for a party primary.  
 Are they trying to eliminate anyone from trying  
 to practice democracy?<sup>47</sup>

Muñiz did not receive the twenty percent of the  
 votes necessary in 1974 to qualify the party for state  
 funding of the 1976 and 1978 primaries, however the law  
 was deemed unconstitutional by the Justice Department in  
 1976 and funding was made available to La Raza Unida Party:

Notification of the Justice Department's decision  
 came from Assistant U.S. Attorney General J. Stanley  
 Pottinger, Chief of the Agency's Civil Rights Divi-  
 sion. Pottinger wrote White that Texas had the op-  
 tion of filing suit seeking to have the department's  
 decision overturned. Pending a court decision, how-  
 ever, the primary law remains 'unenforceable.'<sup>48</sup>

After the election laws were stabilized, La Raza Unida  
 Party was again guaranteed state financing for their  
 primaries.

#### Summary

Muñiz employed three general types of appeals  
 first, the motivational appeal, then the factual appeal,  
 and lastly, the fear appeal. Throughout both campaigns,

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<sup>47</sup> Fort Worth Star Telegram, 7 November 1974.

<sup>48</sup> Austin American-Statesman, 30 January 1976.

he used these appeals in an attempt to reach the party goals which were to get La Raza Unida on the November General Election Ballot, to win elected offices, and to be the balance of new power in the gubernatorial elections of 1972 and 1974. La Raza Unida Party did get on the ballot for the general election and Muñiz's function in accomplishing that cannot be understated.

Muñiz employed six rhetorical strategies during the 1972 and 1974 campaigns. The first strategy of representing the party platform and issues was perhaps his weakest. In 1972 the only real issue discussed by Muñiz was the problem of the immigrant labor force employed in Texas. In 1974 Muñiz gave only token attention to the platform and issues of La Raza Unida Party. His second rhetorical strategy was public speeches. Muñiz used this strategy extremely effectively. He realized that his party could not afford massive soliciting through campaign materials which would advertize his candidacy and La Raza Unida Party over the entire state. Muñiz seemed determined to introduce the party and himself to as many people as he could by making public speeches. Speech making



was effectively employed by Muñiz in developing his other four rhetorical strategies.

Muñiz saw his group identification strategy as one which would obtain the most votes for his candidacy. He felt assured that his background and professional occupation would readily identify him with both the middle class Mexican American and the blue collar Mexican American. The dual image approach was taken by Muñiz in his appeals toward the liberal and black vote of Texas. In 1972 Muñiz declared himself a liberal in an attempt to gain the liberal support in the state. Muñiz employed the same identification approach toward the blacks of the state when he spoke of minority discrimination. In 1974 Muñiz still proclaimed himself a liberal but instead of labeling himself as the only candidate for the liberal or black voters of the state, he attempted to enlarge his image by indicating that he was the candidate for anyone who was disillusioned by the traditional two party system in Texas politics.

The fourth rhetorical strategy used by Muñiz was the use of mass media. The importance of the news media became obvious to Muñiz in 1972 when he realized he was

being excluded by the media. In the last few months of his campaign Muñiz attempted to gain the media's attention in several different ways which did gain him some exposure across the state. Although he did get the attention of the media in 1972, a majority of the reports did not make his candidacy anymore attractive to the Texas voters.

In attacking his opponents in 1972 Muñiz hoped to prove that he was as qualified as his opponents to run for governor of the state. This fifth rhetorical strategy used by Muñiz was not very effective. It only made him appear bitter toward whites and at times as a militant Chicano. The unsubstantiated charges which he made against Farenthold and Briscoe probably damaged his campaign efforts more than enhancing them because he had no real proof of his charges.

In negation of attacks from external sources Muñiz seemed to contain himself well. One can assume that the personal attacks on Muñiz were a direct result of his "success" in 1972. Muñiz told the truth about failure to pass the Texas Bar Exam, which was the most effective approach in contending with that particular situation. The

unusual law change which occurred in 1973 was tremendously discriminatory to any minority group wishing to establish a permanent political party in Texas. The odds that La Raza Unida Party faced in obtaining twenty percent of the Texas votes were extremely low. Considering the nature of the pressure from external forces Muñiz attempted to uphold an image which could withstand any attack. The overall effectiveness and impact of the rhetorical strategies employed by Muñiz in an effort to obtain the goals of La Raza Unida Party and to promote an image of a viable political contender for governor, will be discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

No easy task lay before Ramsey Muñiz in his attempt to build an image. Determination, self pride and an innate capability for leadership motivated the young Chicano to assume an almost impossible task--becoming Governor of Texas. Muñiz attempted to build the image of a viable political candidate and simultaneously, the image of a viable political party:

Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party, Robert La-Follette's Progressive Party and the People's Party of DeWitt Clinton all went the same route, which is to say they disappeared from the political landscape. From its beginning, there was no reason to assume that it would be different for the Raza Unida Party. Now, the 1974 elections have shown that it, too, may have already have seen its best days.<sup>1</sup>

The road that left Muñiz running an unsuccessful third in the 1974 gubernatorial race had not been an easy route. The image building process for Muñiz and La Raza Unida

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<sup>1</sup>Houston Post, 7 November 1974.

Party was a continuous uphill battle which they did not win.

### Muñiz's Image

Ramsey Muñiz's image was considered at three levels of development: first, his image before La Raza Unida Party certification on the November General Election Ballot; second, his image after the party was assured a place on the ballot; and third, his image as he prepared for the 1974 gubernatorial campaign. Muñiz's image was discussed in two areas, first, his political style and second, his political role.

Muñiz had had no experience in electoral politics before his 1972 gubernatorial campaign; therefore, he had to mold a certain political style applicable to the needs of the complete image he wished to produce. Overall, Ramsey Muñiz possessed personal qualities which were exceptionally appealing for a political candidate. He was physically attractive and maintained a well-groomed appearance. Muñiz presented himself as a sincere and mature candidate who could responsibly represent the disillusioned people of Texas. His background afforded Muñiz

the "best of both worlds" as he reflected a dual image which linked both the lower and middle class Mexican American citizens of the state. Muñiz was somewhat disorganized as a speaker, but his conversational speaking approach to a large number of people made him an interesting and enjoyable speaker. Although Muñiz had had no formal speech training previous to his two campaigns he was able to analyze his audiences. Because Muñiz did know his audience, he was then able to gear his approach and language to the specific cultural and social orientation of his audience. This ability of Muñiz's caused him to be very effective in most speaking situations. His political style and performance capabilities were certainly positive attributes which helped Muñiz assume a positive political role in representing La Raza Unida Party.

Muñiz concentrated his political role in three areas: first, his liberal political philosophy; second, his group identification with both middle and low income Mexican Americans, blacks, and liberal whites; and third, his political party, La Raza Unida. Muñiz was successful in projecting a public image which was limited in scope. Muñiz underestimated the number of people who could

readily identify with the image he produced. Muñiz's 1972 campaign had one outstanding theme that the two traditional political parties in the state had practiced discrimination against the Mexican American minority in the state since their existence. The La Raza Unida Party voter analysis team discovered that more votes went to Muñiz in those counties with fewer Chicanos than in the counties with a heavy Chicano population.<sup>2</sup> Muñiz also admitted, "We did not get the vote of the liberal non-Mexican Americans."<sup>3</sup> Therefore it can be assumed that Muñiz was successful in producing an image as an ethnic minority candidate.

The election analysis team of La Raza Unida Party reported other reasons for Muñiz's loss in 1972 as follows:

Many voting irregularities were reported from Raza Unida Party organizers all over the state. Because of the fact that many of them did not know how to deal with these irregularities, no legal action was taken. However, reports came in from all over the state about machines on which the Raza Unida Party lever was stuck or did not work, about Chicanos who

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<sup>2</sup>Olivia E. Chapa, "Evaluating Voter Education Through Political Participation: Texas 1972," Graduate paper presented to the Antioch School of Education, Juarez-Lincoln Center, Austin, December 1972.

<sup>3</sup>Fort Worth Star Telegram, 12 November 1972.

were intimidated into voting a straight Democratic ticket, about Raza Unida Party votes which were counted as Democratic votes, etc. . . .<sup>4</sup>

No single rationale can be labeled as the reason for Muñiz's defeat in 1972. However, La Raza Unida Party did make an impact on Texas politics as can be seen in the composite picture of things. First, Muñiz received 214,072 votes or six percent of the total votes cast for governor in the General Elections in 1972.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, the number is significant for two reasons. In 1970, a loss of 200,000 votes from the Democratic party would have made Paul Eggers, Republican, Governor of Texas by almost 40,000 votes.<sup>6</sup> As a result of Muñiz's polling 6.3 percent of the votes cast for governor in 1972, Dolph Briscoe was the first plurality governor Texas had ever elected. The effectiveness of Ramsey Muñiz in projecting an image of an ethnic candidate did certainly appeal to a significant amount of voters in 1972. The success of La Raza Unida Party and Ramsey Muñiz in 1972 contributed

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<sup>4</sup>Chapa, "E.V.E.T.P.P.", p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Tony Castro, Chicano Power (New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Dallas News, 12 March 1972.



some to his loss in 1974. As former Municipal Judge

Alfred J. Hernandez stated:

If Raza Unida is the party that can really bring Chicanos together, then that's the party we'd have to go with. . . . But you just can't go blind and let the bodies fall where they may. People like former San Antonio Senator Joe Bernal and former State Representative Albert Peña lost partially because of Raza Unida. These are both fine men dedicated to the Mexican American cause in this state. Their loss really hurts.<sup>7</sup>

It could be concluded that many moderate Mexican American voters voted Democratic in 1974 to insure that their favorite Democratic statesman would be elected or re-elected as the case may be. It was apparent that Ramsey Muñiz was not successful in capturing the vote of many of those at whom he had purposely directed his campaign. As a result, a concentrated effort on the part of both Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party was made to change dramatically the image of Muñiz from the minority crusader to a more realistic image as a man (and party) offering a legitimate alternative to all voters who sought an alternative in the State of Texas.

Muñiz started development of his political role soon after Raza Unida's assurance of a place on the

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<sup>7</sup>Houston Chronicle, 14 September 1973.

November 1972 General Election Ballot, but his political style remained constant until the preparation began for the 1974 campaign. At the outset of the 1974 campaign, Muñiz had had two years of campaigning experience which helped increase his confidence and the result was a smoother performance before large audiences. Muñiz's style remained fairly constant in both campaigns. The 1974 campaign year found his overall image involved in a tremendous metamorphosis which was attempted with the same strong determination demonstrated in 1972.

The 1974 campaign was not the single issue program that Muñiz had offered in 1972. In 1972, Muñiz had stressed that he was the only candidate for whom Chicanos, blacks, and liberal whites could morally vote; in 1974 he completely forfeited this specific calling card and substituted an enlarged image. Muñiz made it clear early in the 1974 campaign that he and La Raza Unida were for anyone tired of traditional Texas politics. The party and Muñiz employed a more systematic approach to image building in 1974 than they did in 1972. Muñiz's political style became more sophisticated in his attempt to gain votes. His political role in 1974 advocated expansion of his

image to incorporate the broadening of philosophy which was the candidate's goal. Muñiz still ran as a liberal candidate, but changed his previous narrow category of liberal group association to a much broader image which encompassed any Texas voters seeking a change from traditional Texas government.

Muñiz was successful in formulating an image of an ethnic candidate in 1972. He was also successful in isolating La Raza Unida Party and his candidacy as the only representatives of the Chicano, black, and liberal voter in Texas. As a result he alienated a tremendous number of moderate voters in the state who had come to recognize Muñiz as the Chicano candidate of the Chicano party in 1972. It may be asserted that the majority of the Texas voters felt that Muñiz was not representative of all the people of the state; therefore, he would be responsive only to the needs of a special interest group.

A few days after Muñiz's 1972 defeat, he stated that he had felt like he had won, "I feel as if I had won . . . I became the balance of power between Grover and Briscoe. I determined the governor's race."<sup>8</sup> Muñiz

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<sup>8</sup>Dallas Times Herald, 9 November 1972.

said that: "One of the goals of the 1972 campaign was to awaken the lower economic-social levels of the Mexican American population to the political process, . . . more than a political party, . . . [La Raza Unida] is an effort to change attitudes."<sup>9</sup> In 1973 Muñiz predicted that 1974 would be, "The biggest year, . . . We are the only party that belongs to the people. We are going to build the greatest movement of people in Texas history."<sup>10</sup> Already, Muñiz had begun enlarging the image he had successfully created in 1972. The attempted image change in 1974 was not successful. Texas voters remembered Muñiz as the Chicano candidate from 1972, they did not "see" Muñiz's newly expanded image in 1974.

Muñiz's political style remained fairly constant in 1972 and 1974 which was perhaps one reason the Texas voters did not register an impression of the 1974 expanded image. He was ineffective in promoting a new political style along with his new political role. It may be assumed that Muñiz's expanded image of 1974 alienated many

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<sup>9</sup>Houston Chronicle, 12 November 1972.

<sup>10</sup>San Antonio Express, 30 December 1973.

of the voters who voted for him in 1972 because they believed in an isolationist approach to Texas politics which was no longer the Muñiz image for 1974. Therefore it can be concluded that Muñiz was effective in projecting his desired image of 1972, but was ineffective in projecting his newly expanded image in 1974. It appears that the old saying "first impressions are lasting impressions" was proven true in the case of Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party.

#### Rhetorical Strategies

Muñiz employed six rhetorical strategies during the 1972 and 1974 campaigns. The first strategy of representing the party platform and issues was perhaps his weakest. In 1972 the only real issue discussed by Muñiz was the problem of the immigrant labor force employed in Texas. In 1974 Muñiz gave only token attention to the platform and issues of La Raza Unida Party. His second rhetorical strategy was public speeches. Muñiz used this strategy extremely effectively. He realized that his party could not afford massive soliciting through campaign materials which would advertize his candidacy and La Raza

Unida Party over the entire state. Muñiz seemed determined to introduce the party and himself to as many people as he could by making public speeches. Speech making was effectively employed by Muñiz in developing his other four rhetorical strategies.

Muñiz saw his group identification strategy as one which would obtain the most votes for his candidacy. He felt assured that his background and professional occupation would readily identify him with both the middle class Mexican American and blue collar Mexican American. The dual image approach was taken by Muñiz in his appeals toward the liberal and black vote of Texas. In 1972 Muñiz declared himself a liberal in an attempt to gain the liberal support in the state. Muñiz employed the same identification approach toward the blacks of the state when he spoke of minority discrimination. In 1974 Muñiz still proclaimed himself a liberal but instead of labeling himself as the only candidate for the liberal or black voters of the state, he attempted to enlarge his image by indicating that he was the candidate for anyone who was disillusioned by the traditional two party system in Texas politics.

The fourth rhetorical strategy used by Muñiz was the use of mass media. The importance of the news media became obvious to Muñiz in 1972 when he realized he was being excluded by the media. In the last few months of his campaign Muñiz attempted to gain the media's attention in several different ways which did gain him some exposure across the state. Although he did get the attention of the media in 1972, a majority of the reports did not make his candidacy any more attractive to the Texas voters.

In attacking his opponents in 1972 Muñiz hoped to prove that he was as qualified as his opponents to run for governor. This fifth rhetorical strategy used by Muñiz was not very effective. It only made him appear bitter toward whites and at times as a militant Chicano. The unsubstantiated charges which he made against Farenthold and Briscoe probably damaged his campaign efforts more than enhancing them because he had no real proof for his charges.

In negation of attacks from external sources Muñiz seemed to contain himself well. One can assume that the personal attacks on Muñiz were a direct result of his "success" in 1972. Muñiz told the truth about his failure

to pass the Texas Bar Exam, which was the most effective approach in contending with the particular situation. The unusual law change which occurred in 1973 was tremendously discriminatory to any minority group wishing to establish a permanent political party in Texas. The odds that La Raza Unida Party faced in obtaining twenty percent of the Texas votes were extremely low. Considering the nature of the pressure from external forces, Muñiz attempted to uphold an image which could withstand any attack.

The most effective strategies employed by Muñiz were those in use in 1972. The efforts to widen his image were not effective. Muñiz received fewer votes in 1974 than he had received in 1972. As perhaps a prediction of the 1972 election outcome, Mario Compean stated as an epitaph for La Raza Unida Party, "This revolution is unrealistic and will be for some time to come."<sup>11</sup> Perhaps many of the La Raza Unida members and Muñiz felt that the long hours of work were still worth the effort they put forth in both campaigns for governor, maybe not for

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<sup>11</sup>Fort Worth Star Telegram, 15 October 1975.



present day Chicanos, but for future generations. This thought was voiced clearly in the Master's Thesis of the party founder José Ángel Gutiérrez which said, "The young militants of today will not see the fruits of their efforts. Rather it is the even younger Mexican Americans, those in their early teens and pre-teen years, who will reap the benefits of the movement."<sup>12</sup>

La Raza Unida Party remains a strong political force in Crystal City and surrounding Zavala County, but even there it faces severe opposition. As for Ramsey Muñiz, he predicted that the Mexican American would be a unique specimen in 1976.<sup>13</sup> So far that prediction has yet to become a reality.

#### Overall Evaluation

Considering the challenges which faced Ramsey Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party from the beginning of their campaigns, their accomplishments must be considered tremendous. Although Ramsey Muñiz did not become Governor of Texas, his candidacy became a legacy for future Chicano

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<sup>12</sup>Castro, Chicano Power, p. 182.

<sup>13</sup>Houston Post, 7 November 1974.

leaders in the state. It was Muñiz's candidacy which provided an awareness of Texas politics for many people, for the first time. With the help of Ramsey Muñiz, La Raza Unida Party composed almost entirely of Mexican Americans, united and fulfilled every legal requirement of the Texas Election Code to become and remain an official party in the State of Texas.

Despite the legal and financial obstacles which the Raza Unida Party faced, they managed to stay on the ballot permanently. The odds were against the party especially in 1973 when the governmental establishment of the state passed the law which almost forced the party to retire from Texas politics. The traditional two party system in Texas must have been worried about the propensity of La Raza Unida Party to win votes in the state, otherwise it could be assumed that the requirement for state financed primaries would have remained the same.

Ramsey Muñiz as La Raza Unida's candidate for Governor of Texas did not succeed in accomplishing the platform goals of the party. He did succeed in raising some of the issues which the Texas Legislators will have to contend with now that the Chicanos in the state have

been made aware that there are solutions to the problems facing their everyday lives. This awareness could probably not have come about without Ramsey Muñiz and La Raza Unida Party.

#### Future Implications

Overall, the study discovered the image building processes which Ramsey Muñiz employed during the two gubernatorial races of 1972 and 1974 in Texas. The study opened areas for further considerations of: (1) Mexican American communication relationships to Texas politics in further attempts at political autonomy in the State of Texas; (2) Intercultural studies within the predominantly bilingual areas of South Texas; (3) Possibilities of a black-brown political coalition and their communication strategies; (4) Chicano leaders and their specific cultural qualifications to maintain leadership; (5) Education of minorities to increase political awareness; (6) Third party movements and their communication strategies; (7) Further image building studies of an ethnic candidate based only on political considerations; (8) Attitude studies concerning minority candidates and persuasibility of

majority voters; (9) Credibility studies concerning minority candidates and persuasibility of majority voters; (10) Homophilous leaders in Texas politics versus heterophilous leaders in Texas politics and future studies concerning the national Raza Unida Party in national politics. It was also hoped that this study would be valuable in generation of further research in Speech Communications concerning the overall picture of the Mexican Americans of Texas.

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