

ADAPTIVE CHANGE IN AN ORGANIZATION:
A CASE STUDY OF
CRISTO REY COMMUNITY CENTER

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

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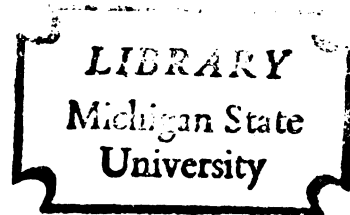
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ABSTRACT

ADAPTIVE CHANGE IN AN ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF CRISTO REY COMMUNITY CENTER

By

Margaret Lois Yoak

This study deals with adaptive change in goal structure (orientation to social service) in Cristo Rey Community Center for the Spanish-speaking in Lansing, Michigan. The framework within which this analysis is made was formulated by Mayer N. Zald, for studying community organization agencies: an agency has a constitution (goals and norms) linked to the constituency and resource base of that agency (groups providing support, and to whom the agency direction is responsible); the agency tries to affect certain target populations, within a complex of external relations with other agencies. This study demonstrates how a change in constitution of an agency (Cristo Rey) may be made in response to changes in attitude of the constituency (the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing) and variation in the resource base (reductions in funding); this will lead to a changed relationship with the target population (the Mexican-American community in Lansing) and other agencies in that city.

Data for this study were gathered through interviews with staff members working at Cristo Rey, agency representatives working there, and as many as possible of the community members who had been associated with the development of the center. In addition, the Cristo Rey Budget Presentation to the Diocese of Lansing, 1973-74, and an agency review made by the Lansing United Community Chest were valuable sources of information.

Cristo Rey is found to have evolved through successive phases from a Catholic parish for the Spanish-speaking, to a community action agency, to a provider of social services for the Mexican-American community, in a process of adaptation to factors in the community and in the Diocesan administration.

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A THESIS

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1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's message to the Congress, and is one of the most important documents in the history of the United States.

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I also owe a great debt of gratitude to the many people in Lansing who gave so generously of their time and effort to make this study possible. Among these are the staff members and agency representatives at Cristo Rey Community Center, and those people active in Lansing's Chicano community, all of whom provided me with the many perspectives on Cristo Rey and the community within which it exists, which I have integrated in this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

ADAPTIVE CHANGE

Introduction

Organizational change is a persistent theme in the literature of the sociology of organizations; over time, an organization or agency may adapt its structure and operations in response to changes in its environment. Such adaptation is often seen as the key to organizational survival. The studies which have been done in this area of organizational change tend to concentrate on one of a range of possible themes, such as bureaucratization, cooptation, or institutionalization, as the adaptive mechanism adopted by a particular agency in a particular situation. Many of these studies are case-studies dealing with an individual type of change. Rather than look at a single dimension of organizational change, as has often been done in the past, this study shall present an analytical framework, and then apply that framework to an individual case of change in an agency to see how well it may apply.

Several basic themes of the literature of organizational change become evident in an examination of that field. The theme of cooptation is clearly expressed by Philip Selznick, in his study of the Tennessee Valley Authority. He describes a process whereby an organization with a dual responsibility for program objectives and citizen participation coopts certain threatening elements of the environment into its structure in order to survive.¹ A different, although related, theme may be seen

¹Philip Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots, A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

in Mayer N. Zald's study of the "political economy of the YMCA,"² which analyzes the problem of a service-oriented organization which must choose whether and how to adapt to such broad social forces as urbanization, industrialization, and a growing population.

The theme of bureaucratization within a growing organization may be found in Paul M. Harrison's study of the American Baptist Church, in which bureaucratic development was antithetical to the original goals of the organization.³ The related problem of institutionalization is expressed in Joseph R. Gusfield's work on the Women's Christian Temperance Union, as it encountered obstacles in its social environment.⁴

The study I shall present here does not correspond completely to any one of these major themes, although it may involve several of these adaptive mechanisms. I will concentrate, rather, on the relations among various component factors of change process in a particular agency context. One common factor in all the above-mentioned studies is the use of the case study, which is also the approach I shall use here.

The case study to be presented here has a dual significance: first, as a study in organizational change, it provides new insight into the relations of forces which bring about organizational adaptation to the environment. Second, in analyzing an institution serving a minority population in the United States, this thesis is part of a growing body of literature dealing with the rise of an impoverished cultural and racial minority to take its place on the social and political scene. The impact

²Mayer N. Zald, Organizational Change: The Political Economy of the YMCA (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).

³Paul M. Harrison, Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition: A Social Case Study of the American Baptist Convention (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

⁴Joseph R. Gusfield, "Social Structure and Moral Reform: A Study of the Women's Christian Temperance Union," American Journal of Sociology, 61 (1955), pp. 221-232.

of adaptive change in an institution such as Cristo Rey has more than internal import for the agency; the minority community which is represented and served by the center is deeply implicated in the adaptive process and the resulting agency orientation to community service.

The Problem

The study to be presented here deals with adaptive change in goal structure (orientation to social service) on the part of a community center which serves a minority population in an urban setting. To facilitate this analysis of an agency, I shall rely upon a framework presented by Mayer N. Zald in his work on organizational structure and change. Zald presents four concepts basic to analysis of a community organization agency:

- (1) Organizations have constitutions, that is, they have basic zones of activity, goals, and norms of procedure and relationships that are more or less institutionalized in the organization and that are changed only with great effort and cost.
- (2) Constitutions are linked to the constituency and resource base of the organization. The constituency is not the clientele; rather the term refers to the groups and individuals who control the organization and to whom the agency executive or executive core is most immediately responsible
- (3) agencies wish to affect target populations, organizations, or decision centers.
- (4) Finally, agencies exist among a welter of other agencies; they have foreign or external relations that can facilitate, impede, or be neutral to the accomplishment of their goals. (5)

In his article, Zald develops an analytical framework and poses some theoretical questions dealing with the relations of component parts to one another, but it remains to apply these questions systematically in a case situation to test their theoretical validity.

⁵Mayer N. Zald, "Organizations as Politics: An Analysis of Community Organization Agencies," in Fred M. Cox, et al. eds., Strategies of Community Organization: A Book of Readings (Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock, Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. 92.

Using this conceptual formulation, I may proceed to make a statement about a pattern of organizational change: change in constitution may be made due to alterations in the attitude of the constituency and variation of the resource base; this will lead to a change in the effect of the organization on the target population with which it deals. When an organization is dependent on the support of its constituency for survival, especially financial support, this dependence restricts the autonomy of the agency. The condition of restricted autonomy may be complicated if financial support is divided among various sources with different goals and expectations, especially if some of these funding sources are cooperating agencies in the community (i.e., constituency relations are also in part external relations within the organizational framework). Such restrictions (be these implicit or explicit) as may be placed upon the agency by sources of support affect the nature of agency relations with the target population, by reducing the range of choices as to the type of activities in which the agency may engage itself, and the kind of alliances it will form in the community to further its own ends.

The community agency to be examined in this study is the Cristo Rey Community Center for the Spanish-speaking, located in the city of Lansing, Michigan. The constituency of the center is primarily the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lansing; since 1968, however, Diocesan funding of the center has been cut back, forcing Cristo Rey to seek additional financial support from United Community Chest of Lansing, and to rent out office space to social service agencies who function through the center. The target population of Cristo Rey is the Mexican-American population of Lansing; although there are members of other Spanish-speaking peoples living in Lansing, the vast majority of the center's target group is of

Mexican descent.⁶ The history and composition of this target population will be discussed at greater length in Chapter II.

Since the inception of Cristo Rey, first as a Spanish-speaking parish in the 1950's, then as a social service center in the 1960's, the orientation of this agency to its role in the community has undergone two radical transformations; first, in response to the perceived social needs of the target population, and later, in response to demands of the constituent group and changes in the resource base. These changes in the constitution of the community center have had a far-reaching effect on the relations of this agency with the community in which it exists, and have deeply influenced the role it plays in the lives of the target population. This thesis shall analyze these constitutional changes in terms of the nature and composition of the target population, the nature of the resource base, and the constitutional development of the center up to the time of this study.

Research Methods

The present study of Cristo Rey was undertaken as a result of my volunteer work in an agency which then operated out of Cristo Rey, a summer's employment as a staff member of that agency (United Migrants for Opportunity, Inc.), and my growing interest in the emergence of the Mexican-American people as a racial and cultural minority struggling for recognition within the American system. In this age of migration into Northern urban centers, Lansing, Michigan, has the potential for becoming

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a new focus of Chicano political recognition. It is my feeling in studying Cristo Rey that the analysis of the institutions of this nascent social-political grouping can provide greater insight into the entrance of a political "out-group" onto the American scene, as well as contributing to the study of organizational structure and change in a more general sense.

The research methods used in gathering material for this study were primarily those of the loosely-structured interview approach. All staff members involved in service programs, and the agency representatives working out of the center on a part-time or full-time basis were asked (1) to describe their role and function in the services provided by Cristo Rey and (2) their perceptions of the role of Cristo Rey in the community it serves. Fourteen staff and agency representatives were formally interviewed in this way. Ten members of the Lansing community who were involved (past and present) in the center's development were interviewed as to their perceptions of the function served by Cristo Rey, and whether they had perceived changes in this function over time. Due to limitations of time and the dispersal of people who had formerly been closely involved in Cristo Rey, it was not possible to contact all the people who had been influential in the development of the center, or who were active in Chicano affairs in Lansing. An attempt was made, however, to interview as many key figures in the history of the center as could be contacted. Interviews ranged from fifteen minutes to two hours in length.

Other data used in this research came principally from the Cristo Rey budget proposals, an analysis made of the center by Lansing United Community Chest, and a study of Lansing's migrant and ex-migrant population made by a team from Michigan State University. The material presented here is mainly of a qualitative rather than a quantitative nature, as

this is an exploratory study, and it would be premature to attempt a strict analysis through close-ended questions without obtaining a more general idea of the situation of the agency from less structural interviews. A criticism might be made that such data are subject to bias due to the opinions of and goals of the persons interviewed; however, in a study of an organization's constitutional goals and attitudes, such biases are the most reliable source of data, and are themselves the information we seek. Considerable care was taken in interpreting these interviews to cross-reference statements with published material, known history, and statements of other interview subjects. It is hoped that in this way I have as much as possible eliminated potential sources of error or misinterpretation of opinion and events in the development of the Cristo Rey Community Center.

CHAPTER II

THE TARGET POPULATION

In order to understand the constitution of the Cristo Rey Community Center, it is necessary first to examine the target population which is the reason for the center's existence. As an agency serving the Spanish-speaking population of Lansing, Cristo Rey is principally concerned with the Mexican-American (or Chicano: in this thesis the terms will be used interchangeably) people of that city. Only through a clear understanding of the nature and needs of this client population can the role of Cristo Rey be analyzed. In this way, the changes in its constitutional orientation toward serving the needs of the population may be perceived, and we may judge the effect these changes have had on the center's relationship to the community.

Lansing, Michigan's Mexican-American population may be divided, for purposes of analysis, into two groups; the Michigan-born and the newly settled immigrant or ex-migrant; both these groups originated from migratory movements related to the poverty of conditions for these people in the American Southwest. Today's Michigan-born population is descended in large part from the Mexican-Americans who began migrating North from Mexico and Texas in the late 1930's, and then more rapidly during World War II as the U.S. became more involved in the war effort, due to labor shortages in Michigan factories. Plants in the North lowered the testing standards for employment in order to obtain needed manpower in a time of crisis, and Mexican-American people who had been seasonally employed,

either on farms in the Southwest or in the migrant stream, came to settle in the Michigan area because it promised steady employment. The Michigan-born youth of the 1970's is now the third generation of descent from these early industrial migrants. The Chicanos born in Michigan, however, comprise but a small proportion of the state's entire Spanish-speaking population, due to the high migration rates of recent years.

The greatest portion of the Mexican-American population in Lansing is a result of more recent migration and settlement: "A local survey indicates that 43% of Lansing's Mexican-Americans come here from Texas and 28% from other states while only 17% were born and raised in Lansing!"¹ The present group of settlers in Michigan are people leaving the agricultural migrant "stream" to establish a permanent home in this state. Until recently, before mechanization of agriculture became so widespread, it was quite profitable for a Mexican-American family to make the long trek from the Southwest (usually Texas) to the Midwest for a season of comparatively steady work in the harvest, and then to return to their home at the end of the growing season. This migratory tradition, however, is rapidly becoming a thing of the past, as agriculture comes to depend increasingly more on corporate business and mechanical efficiency, and as the migrants find themselves working at a declining real wage. As of the 1960 Census, almost eighty percent of the "Spanish-surname" population in the United States (including Cuban, Puerto Rican, and other nationalities, but still predominantly Mexican-American) was living in urban areas.²

¹United Community Chest, Cristo Rey Community Center: An Agency Review (unpublished staff report, Lansing, Michigan, 1971), p. 4. This statement is a result of a "spot survey" made at Cristo Rey in 1969, and may be biased, since the more recent migrants and immigrants might be expected to use such services more than would a long-time resident. However, it is known that the influx of recently settling migrants is great here.

²M. Barrera, C. Muñoz, and C. Ornelas, "The Barrio as an Internal Colony," in Harlan Hahn, ed., People and Politics in Urban Society, V. 6 Urban Affairs Annual Review, (Beverly Hills; Sage Pub., 1972), p. 466.

According to a survey done in 1969, about seventy-five percent of the Mexican-American population in Michigan is living in cities of at least 100,000 population.³ Thus, the Chicano population is becoming urbanized to roughly the same extent as the majority Anglo group,⁴ although this urbanization, at least in Michigan, has occurred at a significantly later date, within the last twenty to thirty years. The Mexican-Americans are in many ways still a rural people in a process of urbanization. As of 1971:

. . . it [was] estimated that there are approximately 15,000 Spanish-speaking people in Lansing; . . . it is estimated that the current rate of in-migration of Mexican-Americans is between 150 and 300 families a year, or about 1,000 persons. (5)

The majority of those settling in Lansing have previously been part of the agricultural migrant labor force. The typical social and family organization associated with Mexican-Americans, who have until recently been an essentially rural people, has evolved as a result of the rural migrant's life-style and occupation. (Although the permanent residence of the Chicano migrant in the Southwest may be in an urban area, his agricultural occupation has established his identity and culture as that of a rural dweller.) As has generally been true of people in rural settings, Chicanos have a tradition of an extended family structure and a large number of children. This is due mainly to the nature of the agricultural occupation; the work-force value of a large number of children overrides the increased consumption of goods; even a small child can produce more than she or he will eat. In a recent survey done among Michigan migrants:

³Harvey M. Choldin and Grafton D. Trout, Mexican Americans in Transition: Migration and Employment (East Lansing, Mi.; Dept. of Sociology, Rural Manpower Center, Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University, 1969), p. 35.

⁴Barrera, Muñoz and Ornelas, op. cit., p. 466.

⁵United Community Chest, op. cit., p. 3.

. . . . over half of the Mexican-American respondents had four or more children working with them in the fields. It was not uncommon to find three generations from one family working on the same farm. (6)

The extended family system operates such that work crews are often composed of people who are all related to one another, directed by a patriarchal crew leader who arranges for jobs and transportation. Many migrants, especially the women, may have had little contact with the non-Spanish-speaking sectors of urban life, because the men, especially the crew leaders, have handled the business of negotiating with the world outside the migrant camp and the field. Migratory labor is, by necessity, seasonal and highly variable. The wages are very low compared to average American standards of living, since there is no federal protection of the laborer and the minimum wage law does not apply. If the weather is bad, there is generally little or no work. Housing (usually supplied by the grower) is a great problem; it is not unusual to find a family of eight sleeping, eating and living in a small one-room cabin, with no heat, no running water (except at a central spigot for all families), and lighted by a single light bulb in the ceiling. The children often leave school in Texas early to come North, and return late for school openings. Often the family will continue to move during the school year, forcing children in and out of classes, and causing them to fall one or more grades behind.

Aspirations of Mexican-American migrants are consistent with an American standard of living in which they have been unable to participate. According to the Michigan migrant study:

Four attributes appear to be of central concern to Mexican-American heads of households if they are to achieve a "good life." These are: Housing: to have adequate comfortable living quarters, or to own their own home (mentioned by 36%). Education: particularly for their children (mentioned by 34%).

⁶Choldin and Trout, op. cit., p. 224.

Job or Career: to continue working steadily, to have a trade or to have their own business (mentioned by 34%).

Health and a Long Life: both for self and family (mentioned by 32%)⁷

It is evident that these aspirations are not very well fulfilled by life in the migrant stream.

The primary motivation for settlement in Michigan has always been the attraction of greater employment opportunities. People assume that there are more and better jobs at higher pay in the cities, as undoubtedly is true. What they do not realize is that there is more competition for these jobs, need for a higher educational level, and a vastly increased cost of living which accompanies urban life.

Thus there remain serious problems for Chicano families in the urbanization process, and especially for those with a large family. The foremost of these is the shortage of money during the resettlement process. Many families are literally penniless upon arrival in a city, especially after covering their debts in the migrant camps, since many of them must live on a subsistence budget while there. Even if the head of the household is lucky enough to locate a job immediately upon arriving in the city, and if the family is able to find adequate shelter without paying exorbitant rents and placing a large damage deposit for a dwelling (some families overcome this problem by moving in with friends and relatives, creating serious problems of overcrowding in the household), there remain difficulties in income and cost of living.

A well-known characteristic of migrant families is that of their working together . . . The wife and older children contribute to the total family income in the field . . . The multiple-earner character of the Mexican-American family tends to break down during resettlement and despite the often much higher earnings of the male head, the total family income may decline . . . At the same time the needs of the family [clothing, higher costs of housing] are greatly increased. (8)

⁷Ibid., p. 291.

⁸Ibid., p. 310.

To complicate the problems of finances, there are many social adjustments that the Chicano family must make as a result of their move. Housing and transportation for the migrant often have hitherto been supplied by the crew leader and/or grower for whom they have worked, and employment has generally been pre-arranged. Budgeting very little money in a comparatively restricted environment, practically on a subsistence level, has become the pattern of life for these people. Because of legislative pressures, there are now special opportunities for aid available to migrants and their families, but when the ex-migrant settles in the city, there is no longer anyone offering him welfare services, and he is no longer eligible for special consideration nor for many types of aid in solving his problems.

Now the Chicano must find his own housing (and with a large family this can be extraordinarily difficult in a city); he must learn to judge his expenses against his income in a new environment where credit is easy and he has more money, but living costs are much higher. If he does not speak fluent English, he will encounter people unable to comprehend his broken speech; a situation which can be extremely stressful, especially in emergencies or in a job interview. Even if his language is no barrier, his color may be. There is a certain degree of discrimination against Mexican-Americans in Northern cities, as is becoming increasingly evident as this minority population grows, and gains a sense of group solidarity.

The nature of urban work also presents an adjustment that must be made by the agricultural migrants. In contrast to the high aspirations for good pay and easy work with which they arrive in the big city, ex-migrants often find that a job in a factory or foundry (for these are the most common types of employment for the Mexican-Americans in Lansing) is:

. . . dirty, cold, noisy, too far from home or demanding of excessive hours; . . . too heavy or monotonous; . . . low job security and layoffs; . . . pay disappointingly low or expected fringe benefits lacking; . . . unfavorable social relations . . . , including discrimination in the assignment of work. (9)

Employers may tend to consider Mexican-Americans irresponsible, likely to be consistently late for work (although they may simply not have adequate transportation), or lazy if they do not care to work the overtime often demanded of those in a factory. It is seldom understood that these working conditions are radically different from any the ex-migrant has previously experienced.

In many ways, then, the urbanization of these rural people creates distinct problems for them in their environment. The size of the family and the customary extended family from which the urban nuclear unit is now often estranged; the use of an often-unfamiliar language in a system where there is an increased heterogeneity of contacts which must be made for survival; the lack of experience with bureaucratic contacts; the financial difficulties involved in budgeting a relatively larger, but substantially less sufficient, income; and the nature of work in an urban setting: all these problems must be encountered and resolved before the family can function well in an urban environment.

In addition to the various adjustment problems, Mexican-Americans have the dual handicap of low educational level and low income to combat in the city.

Of Mexican-Americans in the U.S.⁹ 25 to 35 years of age, 40% have completed high school (i.e., 60% drop out along the way), and only 8% have completed even one year of college. Less than 12% of those 35 or older have completed high school. In Lansing, Mexican-Americans have by far the highest educational drop-out rate of any group, much of it at the grade school level.

More than 18% of all Mexican-American families in the U.S. earned less than \$3,000 in 1969 (in contrast with a 10% U.S. average),

⁹ Ibid., p. 245.

31% earned less than \$4,000. The median family income for all Mexican-Americans in the U.S. was \$5,488; only \$4,276 for heads-of-family 18 to 24 years of age and only \$4,860 for those families headed by someone 45 to 64 years of age. Of the major minority groups in this country, only the American Indian fares less well than the Mexican-American. (10)

The Mexican-American population in Michigan, as elsewhere, is also extremely young:

Sixty-seven percent of the Mexican-Americans are under age 25 as compared with 46 percent of the Michigan population as a whole in 1960. This extreme youth results in a heavy burden of dependency on the working members of the population who must produce income to provide for the children. (11)

Thus it may be seen that the problems of all urban Chicanos are twofold. First, as a rural people coming into an unaccustomed environment and coping with changes in their needs and sources of sustenance, there is a great adjustment to be made in personal and social relations. Second, as a poor minority population in an urban environment, they find themselves maintained in a position of poverty by their lack of skills and education in a social system which allows for little upward mobility.

The division of Lansing's Mexican-American population into two groups (the Michigan-born and the recent in-migrant) is important in examining the development of Cristo Rey. Both these groups had originally been employed in the agricultural migrant stream, and so share a certain common experience. They are divided, however, on the basis of their length of residence in the urban North. The long-time Lansing residents have established themselves and their families in the city; they have jobs, reputations, and a certain level of security and permanence in the area. These people tend to be, in large part, supportive of the status quo in the Chicano community; and these are the people who

¹⁰ United Community Chest, op. cit., p. 4.

¹¹ Choldin and Trout, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

have experience and a voice in Chicano affairs. In many ways, it is this group that has determined the nature of the relationship between the Chicano and Anglo groups in Lansing.

The newcomers to the Lansing area are more likely to be social and political activists. They have often participated in the Chicano political movement in the Southwest, and believe that Mexican-Americans can be mobilized for political action, since they have seen this done in Texas, New Mexico, or Southern California. It has been said that the newcomer has less to lose, is poorer, and so is willing to risk more in action than is the long-time resident. The new arrival also has a different conception of the nature of the Mexican-American people than does his older counterpart, and so acts on different principles.

This division, although it is neither absolute nor widely recognized in some circles in Lansing, does have a direct influence on the decisions that are made in the Chicano community. On some issues the Mexican-Americans form two distinctly competing groups, although these will often join forces and find a compromise solution when the leaders feel the community is threatened. The importance of these divisions in the community will become more evident as I discuss the constitutional development and the goals of the Cristo Rey Community Center.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE IN AN AGENCY CONSTITUTION

Due to this influx of formerly rural dwellers into an alien environment, the social institutions of the city of Lansing have needed to make certain adjustments in the type and style of services offered; one outgrowth of this institutional adjustment process has been the creation of Cristo Rey Community Center for the Spanish-speaking. Since its founding in the mid-1950's, Cristo Rey has undergone certain developmental changes in response to community needs and administrative pressures, which have had far-reaching consequences for the very nature of its constitution as an agency of service to the people.

It is my intent in this section to document these vital changes and their causes, and to examine the different approaches to serving a minority population that resulted from each adaptive change.

Cristo Rey parish grew out of the involvement of the Catholic Church in migrant worker problems and services in the mid-1950's; since a high proportion of the Mexican-American population is Catholic, such involvement was a natural response to the needs of these people. The Diocese of Lansing provided clothing, food and recreation, and brought in priests from Mexico to administer spiritual services to the migrants, many of whom spoke little English. From 1957 to 1961 St. Mary's Parish, serving largely a Spanish-speaking population, began programs of youth clubs, social group organization, and personal assistance to the poor. Then in

1961, a priest active in migrant aid work was assigned as pastor to the parish, and they obtained better facilities in the building of the former Main Street Methodist Church. During this period, priests from Mexico and seminarians from Cuba and South America worked in the parish, bringing new ideas from developments in their own native lands where the Church was becoming increasingly involved in programs of social development of the poor. The pastor began to see the need for a more organized approach to social services through the church, and he began to build up a staff of people who were interested in formulating such a program. Through lengthy discussion as to the best approach toward serving community needs, the staff decided upon a "Community Center" approach, to be designed as a multi-service center. The Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing at this time was highly in favor of the programs serving the Mexican-American population, and was willing to support funding proposals for the development of such a program. A Social Director for the center was hired, and the pastor became Spiritual Director of the programs, with a close cooperation and coordination of these two aspects of service. Until their move to the new Cristo Rey center in 1967, a "parish" identity was more or less maintained, but the emphasis was increasingly placed on social service activities.

This first period in Cristo Rey's existence marked the first adaptive change in the organization, as it became a wing of the Catholic Church intent upon serving a select disadvantaged population. St. Mary's was not originally designed as a Spanish-speaking parish, but the concentration of Mexican-Americans in the area served by the parish produced a trend which resulted in the specialization of services to fit the needs of the congregation. There was a great deal of voluntary activity in all

religious groupings in Lansing, aimed toward giving aid, donating old clothing, and ministering to the spiritual needs of the migrant population; as a result of the particular leadership of this Catholic parish, a decision was made actively to serve the material as well as the spiritual needs of the congregation on a full-time basis. It was during this initial time period that Cristo Rey emerged as a parish of the Spanish-speaking, for the Spanish-speaking; whereas before it had concentrated simply on a geographical congregation, now the concentration was on this specific racial and cultural grouping, city-wide.

The development of Cristo Rey as a social-service center came in response to the perceived social and material needs of the population. The congregation became a real "target population" in terms of social and religious activities, and these activities were planned, not simply following a typical Diocesan pattern, but with the characteristics and needs of that population in view.

in 1966, when the Main Street church gave way to freeway construction, the Diocese was convinced to build a Social Service center (Cristo Rey) rather than a church to replace the former edifice. From this time forward Cristo Rey did not function primarily as a church, but as a community center. Many interested community members, both Chicano and Anglo, were involved cooperatively in the construction of the new center, which was completed in 1967. After moving into the center, there came a new development in the thinking of the staff, as they became aware of the housing crisis in relocation caused by the freeway construction (I-496) in Lansing. Work was begun within the center to set up a Housing Commission in the city to care for those persons displaced by the project. This interest marked the change from a service orientation of the center,

to the function as a change agent in the community. Soon the Cristo Rey staff were working for legislative action to improve conditions in migrant labor camps, and lobbying for national legislation for relocation of persons displaced by public construction. A special consultant who was working with Saul Alinsky in Chicago was brought in to conduct a community organizing workshop, and more efforts were made to involve the people of the community and to bring in new ideas. The center's interests gradually were broadened to aim their change efforts to include the poor and minorities in general, not just the Spanish-speaking.

This interest of Cristo Rey in social change issues was part of what has since been seen as an impulse within the Catholic Church to join in the Civil Rights movements of the 1960's, in the ranks of fighters in the War on Poverty.¹ There was a great concern with the issues of racial discrimination and poverty in this era, and the churches, especially the younger clergy, experienced a sense of guilt and frustration in the light of newly publicized social conditions. The Church has a history of missionary activities in urban areas, and at this time there was a desire to enter a leadership role in social movements, and to broaden the influence of the Church in the lives of people in the inner city and in poverty conditions everywhere. Churches in Chicago and other parts of the nation, as did Cristo Rey, found technical assistance for their social activism in Saul Alinsky's "Industrial Areas Foundation," which was a highly controversial organization involved in social change for the poor.

A study of Mexican-Americans in Lansing around that time in the center's history has stated:

¹Thomas D. Sherrard and Richard C. Murray, "The Church and Neighborhood Community Organization," in Hans B.C. Spiegel, ed., Citizen Participation in Urban Development, Vol. I, Concepts and Issues (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), pp. 184-205.

. . . . the Community Center . . . [was] cited as valuable in that they have money and full-time staff members, and can work consistently in helping Mexican-Americans. It was explained that the function of the community center is threefold. First, it deals in direct service, which involves administering to immediate needs. Second, it works in community development, getting area residents involved in the process of change. Third, it has a social action function, which includes the organization of marches and other demonstrations with hopes of bringing about change. (2)

And, as the present administration of Cristo Rey has expressed this purpose, "The leadership of this period believed that the purpose of Cristo Rey should be to help organize the poor of the Lansing community in community action efforts on their own behalf."³ When the Spiritual Director left the community center in 1968 (for personal reasons), the total thrust of the center was primarily for social change, and secondarily for social service, but without duplicating the efforts of other agencies. One of the primary functions of the center at this time was to make other agencies perform more effectively to fulfill community needs, especially the needs of minority groups.

Throughout the existence of Cristo Rey up to 1968, support of the center by the Diocese of Lansing was apparently never a major problem. The yearly budget at that time averaged around \$100,000, and the new Cristo Rey center had just been constructed on Ballard Street on Lansing's North Side, in the area where the Mexican-American population was concentrated. During this time, there had been a change in the Diocesan administration; the new Bishop continued to fund Cristo Rey as before until 1969. In 1966, an advisory committee consisting of influential Chicano and Anglo community people, had been chosen by the directors of the center, in order to gain a wider community involvement in Cristo Rey's activities, and

²Choldin and Trout, op. cit., pp. 359-360.

³Cristo Rey Community Center, 1973-74 Budget Presentation to Diocese of Lansing Finance Committee, (Lansing, Mi., 1973), (Xerox copy), p.14.

to foster greater support for the center in the Lansing area and within the Diocese. This was felt to be a step toward greater community control of the center, through the election of a board composed of community members, although the original choices were not democratically elected. In any case, the constituency of the center apparently supported Cristo Rey in its orientation to service and social change, although this situation was soon to undergo a radical alteration.

After the departure of both Spiritual and Social Directors in 1968, a Chicano who had been active in Cristo Rey was chosen by the Diocese as temporary Social Director, and a priest who had originally worked in St. Mary's parish returned as Spiritual Director. The temporary director attempted to continue the programs and directions that had been in effect at the center, making Cristo Rey a "development" agency, which would act as an advocate for the cause of the poor, following up on social service cases, creating agencies to fill community needs, and initiating new legislation. He intended to create a small expert staff who would run the center with the help of widespread volunteer workers and community members who would work at a low salary as "para-professional" staff. The community members who were involved in the center's activities were divided on which direction Cristo Rey should take, and so the Social Director left, feeling that his programs did not receive the support they needed in order to succeed.

A member of the Mexican-American community who had served on the advisory board under the former administration was hired by the Diocese to be Social Director of Cristo Rey in the summer of 1969. The funding of the center was cut drastically during this time, from a yearly allotment of \$100,000 to half that amount. It was explained that the Catholic

Church in general has had to cut back on social expenditures in recent years, due to the failure of the program for Federal aid to parochial schools, the falling number of clergy and nuns available as teachers, and the general inflationary condition of the economy and shortage of funding. The Diocese simply told Cristo Rey that they would have to find money elsewhere, as there would be increasing cut-backs over the years, and suggested that they apply to the United Community Chest for support.

The nature of Cristo Rey as a community center changed radically with the institution of the new administration; one such change was the more complete severance of the social and spiritual functions, though these were to remain housed in the same structure of the center. As the Cristo Rey staff itself has analyzed this change:

When the present administration took over in summer and early fall of 1969, because of budget cuts and changes in personnel, a major question had yet to be faced. Should Cristo Rey continue to pursue the same philosophy and purpose it had under past leadership? We answered that negatively.

In slightly over three years since then, we have transformed Cristo Rey from a community action agency into a center whose primary purpose is to provide a vehicle by which the social services offered in the Lansing community can be brought to bear on the problems of the low income Spanish-speaking.

Our objective is to provide the Spanish-speaking community with as many social services as they would have available if they had no language, cultural or special material problems . . . by bringing into Cristo Rey those local service agencies whose programs are vital to our community and who are willing to place Spanish-speaking personnel in our Center . . . The present philosophy of Cristo Rey is to work entirely within the local institutional framework. (4)

Thus the Cristo Rey Community Center today acts as a "supermarket of social services" designed to make the obtaining of needed services easier for people who are unwilling or afraid to go to public agencies; Cristo Rey provides a place where they can feel at home, and where they

⁴Ibid., pp. 14-15.

know they will encounter no language barrier or misunderstanding of their needs and their situation.

Funding has been a persistent problem for Cristo Rey since 1969, when the original funding was cut to half the original amount. In 1971-72, the Diocese funded the center for \$53,001, but in 1972-73 the allocation was cut to \$45,000, with future reductions in sight. This loss of funds has been combatted in various ways, including the rental of office space to social service agencies who were to place representatives in the center (income from that source was \$5,804.57 in 1971-72).⁵ Also, for 1972-73, assistance was requested and granted from the United Community Chest, in the amount of \$20,000. (The Spiritual Director of the center is mainly supported by income from Church activities; his "compensation and expenses are more than covered by individual offerings;"⁶ freeing all other resources to be applied to development of the social program and activities.)

Thus the present constitution of Cristo Rey may best be characterized as an adaptation to changes in the resource base, amount of support, and the attitude of the constituency (the Diocese of Lansing) toward the center's social activities. In response to funding cutbacks by the Diocese, the new administration of the center saw the necessity for a dual change in the constitution: a reversal of the "change agent" role to become part of an institutional social services network; and a diversification of the resource base to seek financial support from multiple sources, office rental and United Community Chest, as well as continuing Diocesan allocations. The organizational goals of the center are now

⁵Ibid., p. 30.

⁶United Community Chest, op. cit., p. 2.

twofold, though interrelated: first, the provision to a disadvantaged minority group of services that might not otherwise be accessible to them; and second, the acculturation of this group, through services and activities, into mainstream American life.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION

The cumulative effect of the changes and adaptations in the constitution of the Cristo Rey Community Center has resulted in an organizational structure which is still responsible to and answerable to the Diocese of Lansing, as well as to other sources of funding in the community. The range of services offered by the center is dependent upon a variety of agencies whose attempt to serve the Mexican-American population is carried out through representatives housed in the center. In this section, therefore, I shall present a descriptive analysis of the organizational structure and the services presently offered through and by Cristo Rey, with an attempt to estimate the number of people these services are reaching. Through this analysis, it will be possible to perceive the cycle of change undergone by this agency, and to assess the differential impact of Cristo Rey upon the community which it serves.

Organizational Structure

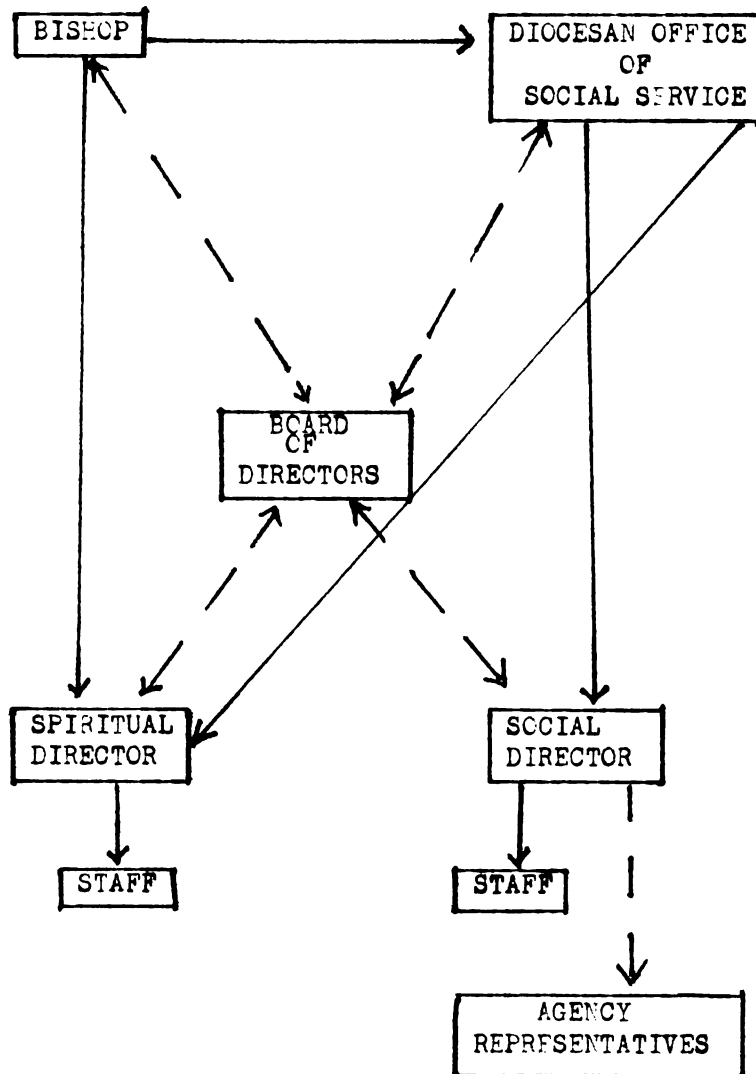
The organizational body of Cristo Rey consists of a dual leadership, in the Spiritual and Social Directors; an elected Board of Directors which serves as an advisory body; a regular center staff; and representatives of the various agencies housed in the center. The flow of responsibility, advisory capacity and authority is schematically described in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF
CRISTO REY COMMUNITY CENTER

DIOCESE OF
LANSING:

CRISTO REY
COMMUNITY CENTER:



The Spiritual Director is directly responsible to the Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing in Church-related matters; his responsibilities include the administration of sacraments and other parish duties, such as visits to the ill in hospitals and at home, for the Spanish-speaking community. There is a nun who works with the priest in spiritual matters, as well as directing some social programs; she teaches catechism and oversees instruction for First Communion and Confirmation. Where spiritual and social programs overlap, the Spiritual Director is also responsible to the Diocesan Director of Social Service.

The Director of Social Service (Social Director) of Cristo Rey coordinates the social services programs of the center, and is responsible directly to the Diocesan Director of Social Service.

The Board of Directors of Cristo Rey has the responsibility of advising, promoting and assisting the two directors of the center, especially in the area of social service. The Board is primarily an elected body, composed of fifteen voting members; the Social Director sits on the Board, but does not vote. This Board of Directors is not, as might be expected, an all-Chicano body; rather, it is composed of influential Chicanos and Anglos from the Lansing community. Their interests in Cristo Rey range from religious social-service to advancement of the Mexican-American people. Of the fifteen members, the Bishop may appoint five, and the rest are elected through the Cristo Rey Bulletin by the members of the Community Center (parishoners, and people who have joined through donations of fifty cents or more). Terms of service on the Board are either one or two years, with elections timed so that there is never a complete turnover in the membership. The Board of Directors has five standing committees, in charge of the various functions of this body;

these are: Program Development and Evaluation; Budget Supervisory; Public Information and Relations; Youth Program; and Community Activities.¹ Also, Ad Hoc committees are formed periodically as the need arises for special investigations or projects. As one board member has expressed the role of this body, the members come from a variety of backgrounds and have various interests and reasons for participation; as a rule, their role in the center is not an active one, but rather they are available in case they are needed.

The Cristo Rey staff consists of six people who have various responsibilities in the administration of the center. They are:

- (1) Religious and Community Worker, in charge of Emergency Food and Clothing Program.
- (2) Administrative Secretary, in charge of Visas and Immigration Aid
- (3) Secretary, in charge of Credit Union and Social Programs
- (4) Community Aide, in charge of Translation, Transportation and Drivers License Assistance programs.
- (5) Receptionist
- (6) Maintenance

There is a great deal of coordination among the various activities of the staff, especially when there are special projects being planned, and the level of cooperation is very high.

The final component of the Cristo Rey organizational structure is made up of the representatives of the various agencies which operate out of the center, on a full-time or part-time basis. In a chain of command, these representatives are to a large degree autonomous of the center, being responsible to their respective agencies, who generally rent the office space they occupy in Cristo Rey. These representatives will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, along with a presentation of the various service programs run by staff members of the center.

¹United Community Chest, op. cit., p. 12.

The nature of the service orientation of Cristo Rey is partially determined by its dual role in the community; the role of a church (a parish for the Spanish-speaking), and the role of a social service center. Cristo Rey was among the first churches in this country to respond to the special needs of the Spanish-speaking peoples in the United States. Many Mexican-Americans have felt let down by the Catholic church, and there has been a rise in the numbers of people who have left the traditional religion of the Spanish-speaking peoples and turned to Protestant sects as more able to meet their spiritual and cultural needs. There is a long history of segregation of churches in the Southwest, and a paternal attitude is displayed toward non-whites, including the Chicanos. In Michigan, Mexican-Americans did not fit the predominantly Irish and German priests' stereotype of what a Catholic should be, although it has been said that twenty-five percent of all Catholics in the world are Spanish-speaking. The Church is now attempting to respond in a more fitting manner to this minority in the United States, although progress is being made very slowly.

Cristo Rey had existed solely as a parish until 1965, and due to changes in the nature of its activities since that time, there has apparently been some confusion and misunderstanding on the part of persons in the Diocesan administration, as to Cristo Rey's status as a social service center, and no longer as a parish only. It is not clear how this relates the center to the Church as a whole. Its function as a parish for the Spanish-speaking is important to this community; according to the Spiritual Director, ninety percent of the Mexican-American population is of the Catholic faith. Mass on Sunday at the center was originally held entirely in Spanish, until the youth of the parish objected. Young people

raised in Michigan do not generally understand the Spanish used in church services, as they have learned the vernacular only in home and street settings, and so do not feel comfortable with the church service in Spanish. Now two Masses are offered on Sunday mornings: one in English, and one in Spanish, but the music is still sung in Spanish. People, especially those of the older generation, appreciate having a church of their own where the old traditions are respected; "a place where they can come light a candle."

There are some objections, which have existed since the time that Cristo Rey was constructed as a social service center, to this combination of church and community center. This is true especially of the older people, many of whom say they would prefer to have a traditional type of parish church rather than the bustling institution that exists now. One person working in the center quoted people as saying, "A church should be a church, not a supermarket!" (a reference to the "supermarket of social services" concept). Apparently there are some people also in the Diocesan administration who feel that the spiritual and social functions of Cristo Rey should be more sharply separated and independently defined. Upon observation, however, it does seem that these two functions occupy separate spheres of action in the community, although they are housed in close proximity in the same physical edifice. Perhaps the question for the Diocese is more accurately one of support: whether the Church should minister to the needs of the whole person, or only to the needs of the soul.

The "supermarket of social services" function of Cristo Rey is for the most part provided by the various agencies housed in the center. They, along with the Cristo Rey staff, serve the goal of bringing the services in Lansing to a location where people can obtain them without

confronting a large public agency. Here I have presented a brief overview of each of the major agencies represented in the center as of Spring 1973; some of the services offered in the center may have been omitted from this listing through oversight, and information on some was not complete or readily available, but most of the vital services to the Spanish-speaking people through the Cristo Rey Community Center are included in this analysis.

Services Offered

Big Brothers of Lansing (Chicano Big Brothers)

This agency provides volunteer Spanish-speaking (Mexican-American) Big Brothers for fatherless Spanish-speaking boys between the ages of eight and seventeen. The Little Brothers, in order to be eligible for this program, must be recipients of "Aid to Families with Dependent Children;" that is, their family income must be below the poverty level. Big and Little Brothers are matched through a screening process on the basis of personality and interest, and take part in planned and free-time activities together. The purpose of such a program is to transmit the Mexican-American culture, language, and pride in tradition, which are necessary to a youngster's identity development.

There are not many volunteer Big Brothers who take the initiative in offering their services to the program, so the Cristo Rey representative spends much of his time in outreach work in the community. Big Brothers of Lansing rents half an office in Cristo Rey for the representative, who says Cristo Rey is a good location for this service, as it is in the center of action, the center of the community itself. There were thirty-two active cases in the program at the time of this study.

Emergency Food and Clothing

A member of the Cristo Rey staff is in charge of this program. She serves as a liaison for people in dealing with the welfare bureaucracy (Department of Social Services), as well as dispensing clothing and food to needy families. Food is given in the form of "food vouchers" which may be redeemed in a grocery store, or as canned food directly from the Cristo Rey storeroom. Baby formula is also donated by companies to be dispensed to those in need, and there are shoes donated by the "Old Newsboys" society. Many people in the community give things they want to donate to the poor to this staff member, who then distributes them according to need. She estimates that approximately forty-five to fifty families a month are given help with food in some form, as well as dispensing ten or more cases of baby formula each month. The most beneficial aspect of this program, according to the person who runs it, is that people are helped without her having to account for them; there are no forms to fill out, no eligibility requirements except need. Out of loans for food, it is estimated that about one-half are eventually paid back.

Food Stamps

This is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture, which is administered locally through the Ingham County Department of Social Services. In order to receive the stamps, people must be certified by the Department of Social Services at their office on the outskirts of Lansing. Cristo Rey is now the only Food Stamp distribution center in Lansing (local banks used to perform this function, but stopped when it was found to carry a high risk and take much time and effort away from regular business). This location at Cristo Rey on the North side of Lansing causes some difficulty for residents of other parts of

the city, due to the inadequacy of public transportation in that section of town. The facilities are good for a Food Stamp office at Cristo Rey, with enough personnel to handle the flow of traffic, and adequate security measures. It is reported that people are satisfied with the service, since there are no long waiting lines as there were at the banks.

The location of the Food Stamp office has also been beneficial to Cristo Rey, since it attracts a large number of people who may then take advantage of other services at the center. A family may purchase Food Stamps once a month, and must come to the office to do so. The approximate number of yearly service contacts made by the Food Stamp office in Cristo Rey is 84,000 people.²

Immigration Service

This service, provided by the Executive Secretary of Cristo Rey, helps expedite the processing of papers for visas and permanent residence forms, and aids and advises applicants as to the necessary documents and procedures. There were no figures obtained on the number of people reached by this service, which is vital to those people who immigrate to Lansing directly from Mexico, or who have entered the country without papers and want to establish a legal residence here. This service is also used more extensively in the summer, when migrant workers come to Lansing and many decide to settle in this area permanently.

Urban Four-H (Ingham County and MSU Cooperative Extension)

This agency is concerned with developing youth programs for urban youngsters. There are presently over 250 young people enrolled in the program's various projects, which include Recreation, Arts and Crafts, Self-Defense, and Mexican Pastry Baking. The Four-H program is open to

²Cristo Rey Community Center, op. cit., p. 19.

youths of any race and background, but places an emphasis on the Spanish-speaking, and is concerned especially with those of high-school age. Attempts are made to involve parents in the program, and there is leadership training both for youths and for their parents, through special program activities. One of the main goals of this program is to give youngsters a wide exposure to the community, to the facilities of the nearby Michigan State University, and to experiences new to them, such as gardening their own plot of land at the university.

Cristo Rey seems well suited to this activity, as it attracts people of all backgrounds. The facilities for the program are good (a large hall, activities room, and kitchen). Cristo Rey, as a well-known agency, provides the Four-H office with more exposure to more people, and facilitates approach to and contacts with the community.

Child Health and Immunization Clinics (Ingham County Health
Department)

Through this clinic, a walk-in immunization service is offered one afternoon a month, free to all county residents; and well-baby care and check-ups are held two afternoons a month, free to Michigan residents, by appointment. For the child care, there is a month to month-and-a-half waiting list for appointments; about twenty to thirty cases are seen in one afternoon. The Health Department, in its office on the outskirts of Lansing, began a program of daily walk-in immunization clinics four mornings a week in late 1972, and since that time attendance at the Cristo Rey clinics (as at other outlying clinics) has dropped off sharply. According to figures provided by the public health nurse working in the Cristo Rey program, attendance at the community center's clinics, which had averaged over one hundred persons a month and sometimes went as high as three hundred, dropped off to figures well under fifty persons a month.

These clinics do not provide any emergency service or treatment of acute illness, but must refer people needing such services to local doctors or hospitals. Nurses involved in the program report that there is a language barrier, as well as a poverty barrier, to health care for the Mexican-American community. The Cristo Rey clinic is intended to overcome that barrier, although most of the nurses and doctors serving in this clinic are not bi-lingual; if translation is needed, a Cristo Rey staff member may be called in to aid the doctor. Cristo Rey does not have optimum facilities for medical care, as the conditions are crowded, there is much traffic, little privacy, and heavy use of the clinic area by other activities. The deepest need in the Spanish-speaking community is said to be outreach efforts for medical care, to contact those poor people who need care, but who will not or can not attend clinics at the center or elsewhere.

English Language Classes (Lansing School District)

These classes are funded by the Adult Basic Education Program of the school district. The class usually consists of ten to twelve students and sessions are held every morning at the center. Students progress at their own speed, so that people enter and leave the program at irregular intervals. The classes are planned to teach written and spoken English to non-English speakers, most of whom are literate in their own language. No figures were obtained on the number of people who benefit from this service, or the level of competence they attain.

Re-Entry Program (Lansing School District)

This program serves youths who have left junior high or high school and want to continue their education, but do not learn well in the standard classroom setting. The emphasis here is upon informal,

individual, and self-instruction, with learning achievement measured on a contract basis; about one-third of these students are working toward high school credit, one-third toward a high school equivalency diploma, and one-third use the classroom as a drop-in center. There are many projects undertaken by these classes, including weekly live radio programs, a food cooperative, dark-room work, ceramics and silk-screening. The goal is to develop the young person's outside and group interests, and to teach co-operation and unselfishness. For the first two and one-half years of its three-year existence, the program was predominantly Chicano, but now there are black youths also participating in classes and activities. The re-entry class varies in size, but usually involves about twenty young people in its programs.

Legal Advice

Through this service, volunteer lawyers consult and advise poor people on legal problems, by appointments made through the Cristo Rey receptionist. No information was obtained as to the level of activity of this service, nor the number of people taking advantage of it.

Martin de Porres Credit Union

The credit union was founded with the purpose of lending money to people who could not otherwise get credit through conventional sources. It was originally formulated in the center's program to be a way of preserving people's dignity when they needed money, as a give-away program could not; one of the goals of this program is to help poor people learn to manage money. The Credit Union, founded before 1968, functioned well for several years, until in 1971 it fell ninety percent in arrears due to loans not being paid back. (As one staff member commented, "If you serve high-risk people, you lose money; if you don't, you lose credibility.")

The Banking Commission froze the Credit Union, allowing no transactions to take place, until in February 1973 funds were gathered to re-open this service. Now, apparently, it is not serving high-risk people; if a person's loan is not approved, he is sent for credit counseling and given advice on money management; the Credit Union, according to one source, is now serving those who could qualify for bank loans, but are unwilling to go to the bank. According to the staff member in charge of the program, the Martin de Porres Credit Union presently has 693 members; 334 of these hold shares in the union, with a high diversity in membership, both racially and economically.

Mental Health Counseling

This service offers counseling on personal and family problems, by appointment at Cristo Rey. It mainly acts as a referral service, referring people to Community Mental Health Services or local hospitals for treatment. There were at one time two representatives of this agency in Cristo Rey, but one was removed since it was found that there was not sufficient demand for their services to occupy them both. The counselor who no longer works there now spends three hours a week in consultation for Cristo Rey staff members, teaching them to help people who come to the center. Most of the work of the Mental Health counselor assigned in Cristo Rey centers around referrals and other activities, including helping people to apply for social services and obtain drivers licenses, and providing transportation, legal aid advice, and interpretation. Due to the amount of traffic and the lack of privacy in the center, the agency location is not a good one for counseling; the worker there feels that some mental health counseling is needed by this target group, but Cristo Rey is not really the place for it. Also, according to this worker, there

is a cultural barrier encountered in mental health counseling with Mexican-Americans, as they do not understand the concept of seeking advice for psychological adjustment to social problems. Due to this barrier, this service is not as widely utilized as some of the more concrete social services at Cristo Rey.

Michigan Employment Security Commission

This agency representative in Cristo Rey supplies job information and handles references and counseling for unemployed persons. There has been a MESC office in the center since 1971, which has recently cut back from full-time to three half-days a week, because the use of the service did not warrant a full-time representative there; it was mentioned that this service might be further reduced in the near future. Most of the applicants from the area served by Cristo Rey are classified as "disadvantaged" according to income; many lack necessary skills, knowledge of English, education, and most are not highly motivated, according to the agency representative. Some of these are referred to the main office for special counseling. The agency representative expressed the belief that the main problem lies in people's unwillingness to work; we might interpret that as a result of the difficulty experienced by the Mexican-American in adjusting to an urban employment situation.

The average number of people served is four or five people a day, and somewhat more than that number in the summer due to migrant activity. The main value in the Cristo Rey office lies in solving the transportation problem for people who cannot get out to the main office. As the representative said, however, people would need transportation to get to a job once one was located for them in any case. We might conclude from that, that the MESC office in Cristo Rey is of dubious real value to people seriously interested in its services.

Social Security

A representative of this service is present in Cristo Rey one afternoon a week to take applications, explain benefits and help solve problems, offering full services at the center. This worker was also involved in other work; outreach, translation, and general aid to people; as well as performing her Social Security functions, and going to migrant camps in the summer to explain Social Security benefits to people. It was found that after people learned that the representative could be contacted regularly at the Social Security office, they would go there instead of coming to Cristo Rey, or use the telephone, as they gained confidence in their ability to communicate with the worker. The main function of the Cristo Rey office seems to have been to acquaint people with the fact that Social Security services were available to them, there and elsewhere; in that sense, this service acts as an agent of acculturation into the system.

Transportation - Interpretation - Drivers Licenses

This direct service is performed by a staff member at Cristo Rey, who is overworked in the position and lacks time to aid all the people who need assistance, although he is helped by other representatives and staff members in this function. This Community Aide is available for almost any need that is not filled by some other service in the center.

Vocational Rehabilitation

There is a contact person available for counseling on vocational rehabilitation services, by appointment through the Cristo Rey receptionist, as the need arises.

Volunteer Action

Two agencies cooperate with Cristo Rey in offering volunteers to perform various community services. The Michigan State University Office

of Volunteer Programs provides volunteer student manpower for income tax assistance, tutors for the Re-Entry classes, assistance in Four-H activities, aids to Senior Citizens, and other special programs. The Michigan State University School of Social Work provides Master's Degree candidates to assist in various aspects of Cristo Rey programs, social work services, and development of community programs.

The Social Director of the center has hopes that Cristo Rey will soon be able to expand both its physical plant and its range of services at some time in the near future. As of the time of this study, funding had been requested from the Diocesan Service Appeal in the amount of \$60,000 for physical and program expansion. Physical expansion will begin by purchasing a group of houses bordering on Cristo Rey property to provide further office space and room for activities. The Director would also like to see services begin in the area of a nutrition program for Senior Citizens; a Day-Care center in Cristo Rey to be funded through Revenue-Sharing receipts; a dental clinic for both preventive and remedial care; and a family health clinic to supplement the present programs of immunization and well-baby clinics presently offered in the center.

The Cristo Rey Social Director has stated the purpose of the center as follows:

. . . . Cristo Rey as an organization is the glue that pulls into a coherent pattern the fabric of services being delivered at Cristo Rey. Cristo Rey personnel are responsible for the design of the specific mix of other agency programs available at Cristo Rey. This is based on an assessment of the priorities and needs of the Spanish-speaking community. Then when other agencies' programs do not cover a problem, Cristo Rey personnel simply go ahead and fill the void Our most important day to day function lies in channeling the people with problems to the agencies Cristo Rey personnel sit down with that individual or family needing help, diagnose the problem, and decide which agencies and programs are

necessary to solve the problems involved it is the only way to work successfully with low income people. (3)

Most of the staff and agency representatives interviewed as to their feelings about the role they and Cristo Rey were playing in the process of meeting the needs of the Mexican-American community, responded in very positive terms. There is definitely a need for services among this minority population, and Cristo Rey integrates the efforts of a variety of different service agencies, bringing the services closer to the community which depends on them. This center, by mediating between the bureaucracy and the low-income person, also serves as a force of acculturation by easing the initial bureaucratic contacts these people must make in order to survive in urban society.

³Ibid., p. 20.

CHAPTER V

THE ADAPTIVE CHANGE PROCESS IN CRISTO REY

Thus far, I have dealt with the first component of the theoretical pattern of agency change: change in constitution may be made due to alterations in attitude of the constituency and variation of the resource base. The original constituency of Cristo Rey Community Center (that is, the administration of the Diocese of Lansing which supported the center's early undertakings) allowed Cristo Rey's constitution to develop in response to the perceived needs of its target population. That development led the center from the functions of a traditional religious parish, to become an agency of personal social service (in migrant aid and other service activities), to an action role in community organization and change-oriented action. There is evidence that this development was not whole-heartedly favored by the entire target community or by the Diocesan constituency. One observation on the changed nature of the center since 1969 and the advent of the new administration, was that people had been losing confidence in the former directorship's conceptions of what the center should be, and that his belief that Mexican-Americans should run their own programs was alienating people and losing the backing of former advocates who were service-oriented, rather than change-oriented. A deep division of popular sentiment is evident in the difficulty faced by the temporary Social Director in 1968; he attempted to steer Cristo Rey along its former course of social action, and found

that the necessary support for his program was not present within the staff of the center or interested persons in the community.

It seems appropriate at this time to interject a brief word about the process by which agency leadership is chosen. The Social Director who is the chief executive of service affairs in the community center is chosen by and responsible to the Office of Social Service on the Diocesan level (see Figure 1). This fact is indicative of the profound effect that Diocesan attitude must have on the constitution of Cristo Rey, since the Diocese appoints the person responsible for all major policy decisions (under advisement of the Board of Directors). As one author has stated in analyzing agency processes, at the time of selecting a new director, "an organization may choose to reexamine goals and directions and attempt to link this reexamination to the selection of its new chief officer."¹ In the case of Cristo Rey in 1969, there remains some doubt as to whether the Diocesan authorities chose the new Social Director because a need was seen for constitutional change; or whether the director, after being chosen, later decided to conform to constituency desires or exigencies for a change in service orientation. Undoubtedly, some confluence of the two effects exists here, and it would be difficult to distinguish which had the greatest impact on agency change. However, it is known that there was at least one other applicant who had been closely associated with the former administration, and whose conception of Cristo Rey's function was greatly directed toward change activities; he was not chosen for the position. The political implications of choice of leadership do not lend themselves to ready analysis, and therefore I will leave this matter in a speculative stage.

¹Zald, Organizational Change. . . , op. cit., p. 181.

With the advent of this new administration in 1969, accompanied by a drastic budget cut, the second major change in Cristo Rey's development took place, this being a radical reversal of former policies. As the present Social Director once stated, Cristo Rey is still an agent of change, but now confines itself to working entirely "through the channels." There is no longer active sponsorship of legislative action, nor organization of mass demonstrations; the center's activities are now confined to the provision of institutional services in a more accessible manner, to people whom these services might not otherwise reach.

Despite the now diversified base of financial support, the directorship of Cristo Rey is still directly responsible to the Diocesan office as well as having to meet the requirements of agencies acting through the center and of the Community Chest, each of which supplies partial funding. Because all of this support is vital to the continued operation of the center, many parties have potential influence upon any given agency decision, and sit in judgment upon Cristo Rey activities. The Social Director thus must consider the many effects of any action he or the staff takes, for the existence of the organization is to varying degrees dependent upon the will of the various "masters." In this way, adaptation to a social, political and economic environment for Cristo Rey is not only a long-range historical phenomenon; so dependent is the agency upon an unpredictable constituency that survival is at stake in the most routine day-to-day decisions.

The present constitution of Cristo Rey has certain implications for the impact of the center upon its target population, the Mexican-American community. In the following chapter, I will discuss two aspects of these implications: (1) the problem of survival and the importance of

Cristo Rey for the Mexican-American community in Lansing; and (2) the changed nature of those community needs now served by the center due to the problems of ensuring continued survival. It will be seen in this analysis that Cristo Rey has abandoned its former role of bringing about long-range change in the fate of the Mexican-American people in Lansing, and is now meeting the immediate needs of individuals in the community rather than those of the community as a whole.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION

Despite the constitutional changes through which Cristo Rey has gone, it is widely felt that the center's program is accomplishing much of value in the needy Mexican-American community. As one source has stated, the Chicanos in Lansing have full confidence that they can go to Cristo Rey for help with any problem they might have, and will at least receive some positive response and aid. The center also acts as an agent of transition and acculturation into American society for those people who have problems in adjusting to the urban environment and the social service bureaucracy. Some of the services offered by Cristo Rey staff, especially the personal assistance that is not readily available elsewhere in the community (translation, transportation, direct donations and loans of food, clothing and money) make Cristo Rey a highly valuable institution for those who are on the brink of destitution.

In view of the community need they are filling, a prime value for the Cristo Rey administration is survival of the institution; and there have been occasions when the continued existence of the agency has been in question. The adaptation of the constitution of Cristo Rey to changes in the supporting environment has surely enhanced the probability of the center's survival, although often at great cost in changes in the existing orientations for programs and services to the community.

Contrary to former practices of the center, Cristo Rey now typically assumes a rather conservative (status quo-maintenance) orientation

toward social action and change. Several staff members, when interviewed, expressed a belief in the innate conservatism of the Mexican-American community in Lansing, which they feel has made an a-political stance on the part of the center necessary to its acceptance in the community. The non-political nature of the population is usually attributed to the cultural values of the people, which include a strong family orientation and little interest in a larger community. The stated purpose of the center is to serve all sectors of the Chicano population, not alienating anyone, whatever their social or political leanings. In this aspect of operation, the present administration perceives the target population very differently than did the former director.

Another factor influencing the center's conservative stance is its strong church affiliation; the more change-oriented community members feel that this religious link inhibits Cristo Rey's social leadership function within the community, since it is felt that the Catholic Church does not really want to get involved in the promotion of change or social activism. Cristo Rey is dependent to some extent also upon the income and support from social service agencies represented in the center; the nature of the services offered is based upon the participation of these agencies, and their financial contributions in rental income are important to the center. Thus, Cristo Rey also must be to a certain degree responsible and responsive to these institutional agencies. One community observer, when interviewed about the apparent conservatism of the center, mentioned that the administration of Cristo Rey had once displayed posters supporting the Chicano lettuce boycott, and a representative of another agency working in Cristo Rey had insisted that they be removed, against the Director's wishes, on the grounds that such posters were

"political." This responsibility, being answerable for all actions and decisions to other agencies, is an adaptation which reduces Cristo Rey's autonomy in return for a certain level of financial security.

One of the criticisms that was voiced both by staff members and others in the community was Cristo Rey's administration's apparent unwillingness to press for more funding from the Diocese or from other programs or projects in the city and state which might have available funds. As a legitimate organization with institutional support, it is argued, Cristo Rey should be able to take advantage of that legitimacy to obtain needed resources for the important programs it sponsors; the administration appears in the public eye to be unwilling to risk favor with its constituency by asking for more adequate support. One observer expressed the opinion that the Board of Directors seemed to consider their Diocesan support as a favor, and would not press for more money; perhaps the real problem (in the light of the evidence) is that the Diocese itself considers its support of Cristo Rey as a favor. At any rate, the center has been slow to solicit alternative sources of support, although the allocation of Community Chest funds to their program may be a sign of a permanent and expanding change in the resource base of Cristo Rey.

Cristo Rey, due to its agency ties and needs for statistical justification of its role in the community, operates on what has been termed a "head-count" basis (see Table 1); the amount of traffic passing through the various offices and agencies in the center (although those being counted may only be referred to another agency's services) is tabulated and presented as a verification of the center's importance to the community. This method of judging a community center's effectiveness in meeting community needs, although certainly the most forthright method of measurement,

TABLE 1

BUDGETS, MANPOWER AND PERSONS SERVED
IN PROGRAMS OPERATED OUT OF CRISTO REY
BY AGENCIES ASSOCIATED WITH CRISTO REY
1972-73 (a)

	1972-73 Budget	Manpower Full- Time Part- Time Time		Approximate No. of Service Contacts Yearly
MESC Branch Office: Michigan Employment Security Commission	35,000	2	2	7,000
Social Security: HEW	850	-	1	156
Youth Development Corporation	6,864	-	2	-
On The Job Trainings: Vocational Rehabilitation	1,025	-	1	-
Legal Aid: Young Lawyer Association, and State of Michigan	5,200	-	1	416
Vocational Rehabilitation Services: HEW Service for Chicanos in Lansing Community	22,190	-	1	1,040
MSU School of Social Work Graduate Program	12,000	-	10	1,200
Big Brothers Program: Lansing Big Brothers	8,500	1	-	
Northside Athletic and Recreation Center	2,950	3	7	5,000
Community Mental Health: Tri-County Mental Health Association	3,156	-	2	1,480
Food Stamp Program Office: U.S.D.A.	62,000	6	-	84,000
Re-Entry Program: Lansing School District	17,000	2	-	6,650

TABLE 1--Continued

	1972-73 Budget	Manpower Full- Time Part- Time		Approximate No. of Service Contacts Yearly
Driver License Education: (Spanish), Lansing School District	450	-	4	2,520
Adult English Classes: Lansing School District	5,541	1	2	3,800
Well-baby and Immunization Clinic: Ingham County Public Health Service	32,000	-	22	5,900
Cristo Rey Food Co-Op	5,200	-	4	3,900
Michigan Housing Opportunities	9,000	1	-	2,600
Ingham County Co- operative Extension Four-H Service	35,000	2	-	12,000
National Youth Corporation: OEO	3,453	-	2	
MSU Volunteers	5,000	-	4	450
Total	318,979			139,412

^aCristo Rey Community Center, op. cit., p. 19. Figures presented in this table are "estimated for a year on the basis of first six months of fiscal year." The table is one of a series of three tables for fiscal years 1970 through 1973, which are presented as justification for the value of the programs at Cristo Rey. They were made up several months before the time of the present study, and so contain several inaccuracies relative to the data presented here. In the intervening period, both MESC and Mental Health Counseling reduced their manpower in the center; the Northside Athletic and Recreation Center moved to other facilities in the community. No information was available for this study on the Youth Development Corporation or the National Youth Corporation, and it is doubtful whether they actually operate in the center at all, or only cooperate with Cristo Rey in some projects and programs. It is believed that the Michigan Housing Opportunities program had been discontinued before the present study was made.

may be misleading; when a report attests that "the number of contacts was fifty," there is no way of knowing whether that means fifty different people, or the same person fifty times. By far the largest number of people using the Cristo Rey center are those served by the Food Stamp office. This could be considered evidence of the popularity and high degree of value of the community center, until we realize that Cristo Rey has the only Food Stamp distribution center in the City of Lansing; if other such distribution centers are established, then possibly this count will be a somewhat truer evaluation of the value of the center to the people of the area. The head-count method of evaluation, however, is made necessary by the nature of Cristo Rey's dependence on agencies whose orientations to service demand such a justification of the value of the center; in this view, such tactics are only another facet of the adaptive process, as the agency adjusts to the constituency's demands.

The adaptive changes in the constitution of the Cristo Rey Community Center, as well as increasing the likelihood of the center's fiscal survival, have had profound implications for the nature of the services offered by Cristo Rey, and the type of need they are filling in the community. To borrow a terminology coined by Nathan Cohen, the former administration had been concerned with militant goals and needs of a minority group (with bringing about actual radical changes in the working of the social system with respect to that group), whereas the present administration is more concerned with survivalist needs and services;² that is, the center now ministers to the day-to-day subsistence of that large sector of the Chicano population who are concerned with basic life-sustaining necessities.

²Nathan E. Cohen, "The Los Angeles Riot Study," in Nathan E. Cohen, ed., The Los Angeles Riots: A Socio-Psychological Study (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1970), pp. 19-21.

There is a certain level of dissatisfaction, among the more change-oriented members of the Mexican-American community in Lansing, with this level of service on the part of the most prominent institution in that community (Cristo Rey). One community member formerly associated with the development of the center sees the role of Cristo Rey at this time solely as that of a referral agency; the center has ceased to perform any autonomous function, and is now just a conglomeration of different institutional agencies. The agencies represented in the center, according to this source, are not doing any better job of serving the poor due to the influence of Cristo Rey, for the personnel there do not play any advocacy role for the Spanish-speaking. There is no attempt to improve or change the social services being offered, but simply to feed more people through the same bureaucratic channels. Another observer working outside Cristo Rey noted, "The only way to get social services is to be part of the Anglo system and follow Anglo standards; and the only way to meet real needs of the people is to change that system; so that to do anything really constructive, you must divorce yourself from that system."

Perhaps the most telling commentary on the role of Cristo Rey in the Lansing community was one staff member's remark that the center really is filling a need in the area, because people keep coming back year after year with the same needs. (In this author's opinion, one might question whether it would not be more advantageous to the target population that is to be served if the center were to work for more far-reaching changes to solve the problems of the people at their social roots, rather than offering meliorative services which leave people dependent on the community center for sustenance, instead of freeing them from need.)

It may be seen, in conclusion, that adaptive change which an institution makes in response to changes in the environment may have far-reaching consequences on the nature of that organization's role vis-a-vis the population it hopes to affect. This is especially true when the agency feels constrained to adapt in order to retain the resource base which allows it to operate. Cristo Rey has become dependent, not only on the Diocese of Lansing, but also on the other agencies with which it hopes to cooperate in solving the problems of the target group; this dependent relationship has enabled the center to continue in service to the Mexican-American community, but has brought about a radical change in the nature of that service and in the community center's essential autonomy to respond to the target population's needs as the administration may perceive these needs. This paradox of dependence and necessary support is not an easy one to avoid in today's society of complex agency relationships, and it may be seen that the consequences of a dependent relationship necessary to financial support may have much more than a superficial effect on the total constitution of an organization.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The adaptive change undergone by Cristo Rey is not an isolated case among social service agencies; a similar alteration in goals and orientation has been described by Jerome E. Carlin in a discussion of the legal services institution in San Francisco.¹ In the case of the store front lawyers, the central office of the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation was originally staffed by radical lawyers interested in working "toward altering conditions that keep the poor powerless and victims of injustice,"² through class action suits and legislative advocacy. This function of the foundation was gradually superseded by the interests of neighborhood control advocates, who stressed individual remedial services through neighborhood offices. Thus, the most radical thrust of the program was eliminated in favor of "band-aid" services, in much the same manner that the change-agent function of Cristo Rey gave way to programs of institutional social service administration.

It must be noted, however, that the theoretical formula of adaptive change is not entirely adequate to explain the processes at work in the Cristo Rey Community Center and in the Lansing Chicano community. One salient problem is that of the language used in Zeld's original framework. This analytical formulation was designed for application to social

¹Jerome E. Carlin, "Store Front Lawyers in San Francisco," Transaction, 7 (April 1970), pp. 64-74.

²Ibid., p. 66.

welfare situations, and so carries certain overtones of elitist professionalism in the definitions of target population, constitution, and constituency. It may appear, for example, in this analysis that Cristo Rey has formulated its constitution (goals and procedures of service) with only the sources of support (i.e., the constituency) in mind. This is not entirely accurate; nor can the Chicano community be perceived as some sort of passive "target" at whom these services are aimed. The community center is in active communication with various sectors of the Lansing community, both Anglo and Chicano, and attempts to respond to needs and sentiments in that community in a constructive manner.

Neither does the language of adaptation adequately account for the presence of conflict and strain within the Chicano community or within the center's administration itself, although some of these effects have been examined in Chapter VI of this thesis, "Implications of the Present Constitution." Adaptation on the part of Cristo Rey, while enhancing its ability to retain present sources of funding, has also alienated the community center from some of the more radical sectors of the community, who would rather see this prominent institution sponsor programs directed toward social change.

The notion of adaptive change, as I have used it here, is not intended to delineate an inevitable process of change in response to environmental conditions. There are, in fact, agencies in Lansing which have chosen not to adapt in response to financial pressures, and who have survived to carry on some part of the original function of Cristo Rey, the promotion of social change. The administration of Cristo Rey Community Center has chosen to alter its goal orientation in response to financial pressures, and, in my appraisal, has thereby lost a great deal of the

center's real value for the Lansing Chicano community. If it may be assumed that the real needs of the Mexican-American people can only be met through radical changes in the social structure to which they are now subject, then in retreating from a program of involving the Chicano people in an effort to bring about a more equitable distribution of social justice, Cristo Rey has failed to respond to the challenge of poverty and discrimination, and has settled instead for a position of relative security within an institutional structure which perpetuates the dependence of the Mexican-American people. This, indeed, may be seen as the logical end result of an adaptive process which places an agency increasingly more in a position of responsibility to institutions not essentially concerned with the long-range welfare of the Chicano community in Lansing.

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