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Building Trust and Communication: Overcoming Barriers to Political Incorporation Among Hartford's Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant Population

Olivia Painchaud
olivia.painchaud@trincoll.edu

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Building Trust and Communication: Overcoming Barriers to Political Incorporation Among

Hartford's Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant Population

By

Olivia M. Painchaud

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

How are Hartford's Hispanic immigrants and migrants participating politically? What inhibits or promotes their political incorporation? Close to half of Hartford's total population identifies as Hispanic, with a portion of those individuals being immigrants or migrants to the city. As a community with a significant presence in Hartford, the political incorporation of Hispanic immigrants and migrants is necessary to ensure the adequate representation of all Hartford residents. This thesis investigates the extent of institutional support for Hispanic immigrant and migrant political incorporation in Hartford. Following an analysis of Hispanic political incorporation in Hartford's history, the project involved two phases. Phase one employed interviews to evaluate the perceptions of civic and government institutions, while phase two surveyed Hispanic immigrants and migrants about reported barriers to engagement. Responses from Hispanic residents and Hartford leaders find that financial strain and scarce methods of communication negatively impact Hispanic immigrant and migrant political incorporation. The Hispanic community additionally identified significant distrust and a lack of confidence in civic institutional efforts to mobilize and advocate for their community as further obstacles to political incorporation. A final barrier acknowledged by the Hispanic community specifies the confusion on political topics and how to participate politically. The concluding chapter of this thesis outlines policy recommendations to address the acknowledged barriers and improve access to political engagement opportunities.

Introduction

How can local government ensure the representation of every community located in the city? To what extent does political engagement influence the decisions made by city leaders? Political incorporation and representation are important components to the United States political system and allow for the voices of residents to be heard. But do all individuals have access to the kind of political incorporation that generates government action to protect their interests? Immigrants and migrants that have resettled in the United States have unique challenges that they face throughout the period of their incorporation. These immigrant and migrant-specific concerns significantly influence their ability to settle comfortably and completely in their new society. In 2020-21, during a time of political unrest and significant party polarization, incorporation into the political system in the United States is integral for the protection of immigrants and migrants residing in this country. Political incorporation is a term used to describe the political action and engagement of individuals resettling in a new country. This process includes, but is not limited to voting habits, participation in demonstrations, working for or supporting a political campaign, advocating for marginalized communities, joining a politically active organization, and keeping updated on policy and public affairs. Community context and the extent to which immigrants and migrants feel comfortable and supported in their efforts to participate in political action are important aspects to consider when evaluating political incorporation. National, state, and local policies influence whether and how immigrants are represented, in terms of addressing the issues and concerns that face these communities. In this thesis, I will analyze how civic and governmental institutions in Hartford, CT contribute to Hispanic immigrant and migrant political incorporation in the city. I will then provide policy recommendations on how to increase the

political incorporation of Hispanic immigrants and migrants based on the results of two phases of data collection.

With a foreign-born population of 22%, and a Hispanic population that comprises 45% of the total city population (All United States Data, 2018), Hartford offers a valuable site to examine contemporary Hispanic immigrant and migrant political incorporation. Within the Hispanic community residing in the city are Hispanic migrants, including Puerto Rican migrants who are born U.S. citizens; and Hispanic immigrants, who resettle in Hartford from other countries. The term "im/migrant" encompasses Hartford residents who immigrated from a different country, as well as those who migrated from Puerto Rico. This thesis uses the term Hispanic when referring to individuals living in Hartford that self-identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x/e.

<u>Argument preview</u>

In Hartford, what promotes and inhibits Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation? Leaders of Hartford's Hispanic-serving institutions say that lacking the basic needs, financial strain, and ineffective methods of communication inhibit greater political incorporation of this population. Hispanic residents agree that financial instability and communication are negatively affecting their participation, but they also say that distrust, confusion on participation, and the lack of political education are additional barriers. Although leaders of Hispanic-serving institutions acknowledge various barriers to participation, some suggest that Hispanic im/migrants are responsible for their own mobilization. Hispanic im/migrants, on the other hand, want to participate, but lack information or knowledge on how to do so. The final chapter of this

thesis outlines policy recommendations to address the commonly acknowledged barriers and to promote greater opportunities for Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation.

Review of the Literature

Immigrant and Migrant Incorporation and its Increasing Relevance

The concept of im/migrant incorporation has been researched extensively due to its influence upon immigration policy, the attitudes of native-born Americans, and the motivation for further immigration to the United States. As a topic that is highly politicized, the definition and overall understanding of incorporation have evolved over time. Incorporation today is largely understood to be a dynamic experience that occurs at the ethnic group and individual level for im/migrants (Alba & Nee, 2003; Chirkov, 2009). Analyzing incorporation experiences from both perspectives allows for the inclusion of cultural and ethnic behaviors that result from broad changes at the group level, while observing the unique behavioral changes and personal stressors of individuals throughout incorporation (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 2005; Chirkov, 2009; Joppke, 2013; Wong, 2013).

However, examining incorporation solely from the im/migrant individual and group perspectives fails to account for the influence that im/migrants have upon the host culture (Alba & Nee, 2003). The old canonical understanding of incorporation has significant negative connotations that resemble the notion of "Americanization" and complete conformity to American culture (Alba & Nee, 2003; Brubaker, 2001, pp. 533). Conversely, today there is strong consensus among scholars regarding the evolution of the term incorporation. The definition now resembles a multidimensional experience that transforms both the im/migrant and the host society. Mainstream culture changes as new cultures are introduced, but the extent of the

influences that im/migrant groups have upon the mainstream culture rely on the context of mainstream society's reception of their presence (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 2005; Waters & Pineau, 2015). If the host society is welcoming and inclusive, the im/migrants' influence and the manner in which the mainstream culture changes will be positive and accepted by the society (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 2005; Chirkov, 2009; DeSipio, 2001; Williamson, 2018). In turn, the mobilization of these populations will increase along with city efforts to improve access to political opportunities. Restrictive policies and attitudes toward im/migrants are followed by exclusive societies that do not react well to change caused by immigration (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 2005; Chirkov, 2009; DeSipio, 2001; Williamson, 2018). Therefore, the culture into which im/migrants settle is an essential factor in their ability to integrate successfully.

Historical and political context influences the manner in which im/migrants are framed, how the public reacts to increasing foreign-born presence, and how government and civic institutions mobilize im/migrant communities (Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 2005; Waters & Pineau, 2015; Williamson, 2018). The context of the environment that im/migrants incorporate into is a reoccurring theme throughout this thesis. Environments supportive of multiculturalism generate greater efforts to broaden access to engagement on behalf of the incorporating population. Social, economic, and political incorporation are the three most significant forms of incorporation that measure an im/migrant's level of resettlement in their new society. A focus on political incorporation, the type of incorporation that often follows social and economic incorporation, can speak to the individual's connection to their new region that encourages action to improve the new society. Efforts to advance representation and advocacy for their community through participation in the new society demonstrate successful political incorporation of im/migrants.

Immigrant and Migrant Political Incorporation and Influencing Factors

Im/migrant political incorporation is subjected to the influence of sociodemographic and sociocultural factors, as well as economic obstacles. The political incorporation of im/migrants into American society involves their action and participation in political activism on behalf of their views and ideologies. Hochschild et. al (2013), in the book *Outsiders No More? Models of Political Incorporation,* define political incorporation as "having the capacity for sustained claims making about the allocation of symbolic or material public goods" within a federal, state, or local government (Hochschild et al., 2013, pp. 16). The ability to demand recognition, representation, and resources from government institutions through various forms of demonstration is a process that all im/migrants, regardless of legal status, can take part in. There are four main categories of the experience that influence the ease of political incorporation into American society (Joppke, 2013; Mondak et al., 2010; Wong, 2013). Individual traits, cultural group behaviors and experiences, the environment into which the individual is incorporating, and finally, the interaction between these three spheres create specific political behaviors of im/migrants (Mondak et al., 2010).

Individual Traits

Individual traits refer to the characteristics and experiences of the singular im/migrant that helps to shape their political incorporation. These factors are not necessarily those experienced by the entirety of im/migrant groups coming from similar backgrounds or cultures, but rather the personal history of an individual that influences how they incorporate. Important to consider is how im/migrant incorporation is defined in literature to reflect this individual experience. The general classification of "immigrant" is an inadequate categorization due to the

manner in which individual traits differ from the im/migrant groups' traits (Joppke, 2013; Wong, 2013). Furthermore, the term "immigrant" connotes the definition of someone from a different country first and foremost. Im/migrant status can constantly change throughout the incorporation experience and this term presents an obvious inability to accurately encompass personal identity, cultural significance, and previous political socialization experienced before resettling (Joppke, 2013; Wong, 2013). The conversation of incorporation into political society should not focus solely on nativity, but rather on distinct individual features that accurately describe how individuality influences political incorporation (Joppke, 2013; Wong, 2013). Personal traits that can shape political behavior are educational background, English competency, length of time in the new society, and previous political socialization (Alba & Nee, 2003; Morawska, 2013; Tran, 2017; Waters & Pineau, 2015; Wong, 2013).

Educational attainment speaks to the im/migrant's ability to find work, understand political and economic trends, and locate the resources that aid im/migrants in the incorporation process. Among ethnic, racial, cultural, and geographic identities, the educational background of im/migrants varies extensively and, therefore, is a factor that contributes to one's political incorporation without reflecting a group incorporation experience. English competency is an additional resource of the individual that influences the ease in which im/migrants can incorporate into society. Difficulty in accessing resources, understanding policies, and pursuing engagement in the political system without English fluency can prevent substantial incorporation in the United States. Without English fluency, im/migrants will continue to face challenges in accessing documents, learning laws and policies, and overcoming obstacles to incorporation. Therefore, the extent to which im/migrants are able to understand, read, write, and speak English greatly influences the degree to which they can incorporate into their societies.

Additionally, length of time spent in the United States influences the comfort that im/migrants experience in their society's political system, their English proficiency, and their ability to become a naturalized citizen (Waters & Pineau, 2015). The time it takes an im/migrant to politically incorporate is greatly affected by length of residency in the United States. More time spent in the country allows for im/migrants to make strong ties with the community and to learn the political culture of their new region. Therefore, time spent in the United States impacts the previous two components to individual incorporation due to the fact that educational attainment and English proficiency tend to grow as length of residency increases (Waters & Pineau, 2015).

Previous political socialization before arriving in the United States can also frame motivation and competency to participate politically in the new society. A preceding political climate in which participation was threatened will inhibit incentives to engage politically in the new society (Tran, 2017). An influential component to previous political socialization is the age at which an im/migrant arrives in their host country. This factor can help explain the level of ease or difficulty experienced when incorporating politically due to the different levels of socialization with political systems the im/migrant has endured (Tran, 2017). An im/migrant's age contributes to how they learn the inner-workings of the United States political system, and specifically whether they had to re-learn an entirely new process (Tran, 2017). Maturing within the political system of the United States does not require the im/migrant to re-learn a new political system (Tran, 2017). Therefore, im/migrants who settled in the United States as children (before the age of twelve) have the highest political participation as opposed to older generations migrating to the United States who are working to replace previous political experiences with a new system (Tran, 2017). The political incorporation process is largely an individualized

experience that is shaped by the im/migrant's background. However, the individual incorporation perspective does not account for how im/migrant groups as entities become involved within a society.

Group

Viewing political incorporation at a group level presents similar factors as the individual level analysis. However, it is important to observe how im/migrant groups, who are defined by dynamics that reach beyond their nativity, interact with their political community. The group variables relevant to political incorporation are transnational ties, racialization of group position, United States foreign policy, group size, group history, and the perception of the group in social and political contexts (Alba & Nee, 2003; Williamson, 2018; Wong, 2013). Without a group perspective on the topic of incorporation into political life, the analysis loses the influence of group discrimination, cultural context, and the general background of groups based on their ethnic/racial, cultural, religious, and geographic identification. These factors present integral information regarding the political behavior of groups and their socialization with the United States political system. Additionally, the political incorporation of im/migrants from the group perspective highlights the importance of group advocacy and community organization. Ethnic groups that share similar experiences, identities, and resources can mobilize themselves toward greater political action (Joppke, 2013). Group membership is essential when analyzing how ethnic groups can obtain greater representation to influence local policy through community-based and im/migrant-organized groups.

Environment

Although individual and group traits are inherently important in building political behaviors, the context in which those behaviors exist is essential when analyzing the political incorporation of im/migrants (Mondak et al., 2010). The stressors that influence the ability to comfortably incorporate politically into a host society are different for each individual and ethnic group. These challenges to political incorporation depend heavily on the political environment, national and local rhetoric surrounding im/migrants and im/migration, and the existence of other ethnic groups (DeSipio, 2001; Williamson, 2018). Environmental factors that influence political incorporation of im/migrants are the society's reception of this population, the existence of im/migrant-serving institutions, and the social and political framing of im/migrants on a national, state, and local scale (McDermott, 2013; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a; Tran, 2017; Williamson, 2018). The degree to which the host society is welcoming or restrictive upon reception of im/migrants will determine whether or not im/migrants feel appreciated, recognized, and welcomed. In societies where attitudes toward im/migrants are clearly negative and exclusionary, im/migrants will not be motivated to participate or involve themselves politically (Williamson, 2018).

The social context of im/migrant reception is reflected in the presence of civic institutions and community-based organizations that advocate for and support this population. Civic institutions play an integral role in the mobilization of im/migrants in terms of their political participation. These institutions are the existing systems located in cities that provide funding, support, and opportunities for coalition building among community-based organizations. Political behaviors form in part from the interactions that im/migrants have with government and civic institutions, and their relationship to community-organized groups (McDermott, 2013).

Grassroots groups that are connected to the Hispanic im/migrant community and respect the community culture are the most conducive to encouraging political incorporation (McDermott, 2013; Tran, 2017). When im/migrant communities are prominent within a city, political power, government resources, and the willingness to mobilize the population follow (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Multicultural cities that have a large number of residents are in better positions to provide im/migrants with increased opportunities and access to services that aid in the incorporation process (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008b). Therefore, the community and ethnic organizations that develop around ethnic communities, with the support of civic institutions, derive the most mobilization and political participation of im/migrants (Tran, 2017).

The Political Incorporation Model

Interactions between the individual, group, and the surrounding environment constitute the fourth category outlined. The manner in which these three sections of the im/migrant experience interact when incorporating politically create specific political behaviors. A political incorporation model that respects group difference, while accounting for the individual and mainstream experience during the political incorporation process is essential for multicultural communities (Joppke, 2013; Morawska, 2013). I advance the model of political incorporation which includes the group experience trajectory as the third avenue because it recognizes specific cultural, linguistic, and geographical traits that affect society's perceptions of group identity not accounted for when modeling the incorporation of the general im/migrant (Joppke, 2013; Williamson, 2018). In cities like Hartford where significant diversity in culture, background, language, and geography are celebrated, a political incorporation model that accounts for these

three categories and provides a space for their interaction to create political behaviors can encourage greater engagement of im/migrants.

The literature on the topic of political incorporation suggests that incorporation happens through a variety of paths in which multiple factors affect the extent of participation. Individual traits, group characteristics, and the environment into which im/migrants are incorporating develop the incorporation method practiced by cities. Hartford, the case study for this thesis, maintains a substantial presence of Hispanic residents. With a city population of which almost half is comprised of Hispanic individuals, an evaluation of the political incorporation of this community is important to ensure the voices of Hartford residents are accounted for. An evaluation of past community-based organizations in Hartford, the perceptions of civic and government institutions with respect to Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation, and the Hispanic-reported barriers to participation will inform recommendations on improving the political participation of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford.

Methods

Goal of the Research

This research investigates the extent to which government and city institutions support the political incorporation of Hartford's Hispanic im/migrant population and their perceptions on current levels of and barriers to participation. I will evaluate the efforts of government and civic institutions in Hartford to mobilize Hispanic im/migrants toward greater political action. I will then compare this information with data collected from the Hispanic community regarding their perceptions of available opportunities for political incorporation and engagement. Both phases of research generate an understanding of the current political incorporation of Hartford's Hispanic

community. The conclusion of this research paper highlights the most important findings and outlines policy proposals to ensure that Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford are receiving adequate opportunities for political participation.

Data collection occurred in two phases, which will be described in greater detail in Chapters two and three. Phase one consisted of interviews that I conducted with eight representatives from government and civic institutions in Hartford. The interview responses were coded with a qualitative codebook designed upon completion of the last interview. The second phase of data collection included a survey that was distributed to the Hispanic community in Hartford. The survey was developed in the context of the interviews from phase one. Important themes identified by the eight Hartford leaders were incorporated into the survey to determine whether the institutional representatives and the Hispanic community agree on opportunities for political action in Hartford. To supplement the findings from the original survey, I also analyze a previous survey that is representative of the Hartford population. The second survey evaluated is the DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey from 2015 and 2018.

Constraints

The current COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to research. Specifically, in phases one and two of data collection, new technologies and varied recruitment methods were necessary. The distribution of the survey from phase two was most significantly affected by the constraints of the pandemic. I advertised the survey through social media, community-based organizations, posters and flyers displayed in frequented locations, and I canvassed in local laundromats and at the VITA Tax Clinic located outside of Trinfo Café. Despite these efforts, responses for the original Phase Two Survey were low. Consequently, the

responses collected in the Phase Two Survey are supplemented with results from the DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey from 2015 and 2018.

Outline of Thesis by Chapter

Drawing on these two phases of data collection, the thesis proceeds with a historical analysis of Hispanic im/migrant political presence in Hartford, an evaluation of their current political presence from the perspective of city leaders, and an examination of Hispanic residents' views. These analyses contribute to the policy recommendations in the conclusion.

Chapter One: Understanding Political Incorporation in the Hartford Context

Chapter one evaluates the history of Hispanic community-based organizations in Hartford and the manner in which these grassroots groups and im/migrant communities have built a political presence. This chapter concludes that Hartford has a long history of Hispanic mobilization and has made clear progress toward substantial inclusion with greater translation services and various im/migrant-serving efforts. Nonetheless, research also shows that many community-based organizations in Hartford fail to sustain their services over extended periods of time. The analysis of im/migrant-serving and community-based organizations in Hartford's past suggests the existence of barriers in the city that prevent the ability to develop a long-term political presence. Community organizations that maintain their services and continuously advocate for im/migrant communities help to strengthen the ethnic group's political presence. As a result, improved access to political opportunities follow. A history of failing community-based organizations demonstrates obstacles in building a political presence of the Hispanic im/migrant community that evokes political opportunities.

Chapter Two: Hartford Elite Understandings of Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant Political Incorporation

Chapter two focuses on leaders' perceptions of Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation. Leaders were questioned on the visibility of community-based organizations, on obstacles to improving political incorporation of the Hispanic community, and on the changes that should happen in the city of Hartford to improve access to political engagement. Analysis of the interview responses demonstrates that Hartford institutions recognize the barriers preventing successful political action in Hartford, as well as some ways of mobilizing this community. However, the representatives did not reach a consensus with regard to necessary change in Hartford. Therefore, the perceived political presence of this population does not inspire city action to implement improved political opportunities.

Chapter Three: Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant Views on Political Incorporation in Hartford

Chapter three evaluates the second phase of data collection, in which Hispanic residents of Hartford responded to surveys regarding their political incorporation, perceptions of government representation and effectiveness, and levels of trust in the city. Surveys results support the conclusions of Hartford elites regarding various barriers to political incorporation. However, the Hispanic community's responses define barriers not addressed in the elite interviews. In addition to challenges of financial instability and ineffective communication, Hispanics in Hartford highlighted their distrust in the community, in government responsiveness, and in civic institutions. Furthermore, the Hispanic population acknowledged the barrier of confusion on political topics and the lack of awareness on how to become involved. Chapter

three presents these additional barriers and the changes desired by the Hispanic population to improve the lives and representation of their community in Hartford.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The conclusion to this thesis briefly restates the findings and provides policy recommendations that are supported by the analyses conducted in the first three chapters. Three recommendations address the barriers described by the Hartford leaders and those acknowledged by the Hispanic residents. In order to improve Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation, Hartford's local institutions should: 1) make greater efforts to fulfill the basic needs of this community to enable political engagement to be prioritized, 2) improve upon the methods of communication with Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford through cooperation with community-based organizations and the creation of a political news coverage task force, and finally, 3) provide a guide for community-based organizations on how to maintain political presence.

Chapter One: Analyzing Political Presence: Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant

Residents of Hartford, CT

Hartford's Hispanic population is extensive and encompasses individuals with varying legal statuses and backgrounds of immigration. The Hispanic community has grown over time in Hartford and has transitioned along with the city through various phases of development. In order to assess the current political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants, it is important to understand the history of im/migration to Hartford throughout the evolution of the city. This chapter evaluates Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation and investigates the various Hartford-based, Hispanic community-led organizations that, historically, were significant advocacy groups. Among the organizations researched in this chapter, the community-based organizations in Hartford that failed to survive over long periods of time were found to have built an insufficient political presence. As a result of inadequate recognition and support from the city government, these grassroots groups lost influence and power in the city.

Political presence refers to the extent to which governments are aware of im/migrant residents and the existing community-based organizations that serve these populations (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008) define the term in three ways with respect to ethnic communities and organizations: 1) im/migrant visibility to government officials, 2) their degree of legitimacy in the political sphere, and 3) their level of representation through membership in government (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). These three factors determine an ethnic community's political presence and shape how im/migrant populations are able to mobilize, organize, and participate politically. Political incorporation and participation follow greater levels of im/migrant and organizational political presence due to the fact that the city is more aware of the needs of im/migrants and their political agendas (Graauw,

2008; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). An ethnic community's political presence affects the manner in which organizations designed to serve these populations receive support, representation, and funding from government (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). The heightened visibility of im/migrant communities and the recognition of specific needs for these communities can lead into political advocacy and opportunities for political action.

The extensive diversity that is found within Hartford likely ensures the visibility of Hispanic im/migrants to government officials. Hartford's Hispanic population makes up 45% of the total population, with 35% of the Hispanic community being of Puerto Rican decent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Close to half of the Hartford population identifies as Hispanic and as a result, the visibility of Hispanics in Hartford is not questioned. Nonetheless, political presence does not refer exclusively to the visibility of these communities. Legitimacy and representation through membership in government systems are essential factors in elevating the political presence of ethnic communities and, therefore, in increasing opportunities for political incorporation (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). The Hispanic im/migrant community in Hartford needs legitimate political power and representation in government to reach a sufficient foundation of political presence that expands access to political action. Due to the fact that grassroots groups and community-based organizations help to develop and strengthen the political presence of im/migrant communities, the life-cycles of these organizations is necessary to include. An analysis of past Hispanic im/migrant-organized groups in Hartford demonstrates how community-based organizations in the city experience declining influence, from which barriers to building a substantial political presence follow.

Hartford, CT

The History of Hispanic Immigration and Migration in Hartford, CT

Hartford has been through a number of transitions, changes, and phases that have shaped Hispanic im/migration and im/migrants' incorporation. From its origin in 1635 to the present, the demographics of Hartford have shifted greatly and continue to reflect a city filled with diversity (Walsh, 2013). Walsh (2013) provides a timeline of five phases that accurately describe the manner in which Hartford has changed in terms of population and economic growth. The five phases of Hartford are: the colonial era, the mercantile center, the rise of manufacturing, the powerhouse of industry, and the troubled metropolis (Walsh, 2013). The first three phases of Hartford organized the city into one prepared and suited for population growth. The agricultural industry on which Hartford survived for the first three stages transitioned into an industrial era of machinery and metalworking innovations (Walsh, 2013). The early mobilization of the city that led to the successful industrialization formed an economy and city mindset that encouraged growth in all forms.

By the mid-1900s wealthy whites began to leave the urban cities for the suburbs, a phenomenon known as "white flight." The effect of the white flight that occurred between 1950 and 1970 resulted in a drastic change in the demographic composition of Hartford and created space for communities of color to develop (Walsh, 2013). In addition to the rise of industry and innovation in skilled manufacturing was the region's newfound progress in cultivating tobacco. The tobacco industry in Greater Hartford opened windows for Puerto Rican migrants and Caribbean immigrants to travel to the United States to find work. Thus, Puerto Rican migrants were able to obtain access to the mainland through their citizenship status and came together in waves (Sacks, 2003). In the late 20th century, Hartford's Hispanic population steadily increased

with immigration from the Caribbean region to fulfill the labor needs of the tabaco industry at its highest demand (Walsh, 2013).

Despite the city's earlier successes in industrialization, by the end of the 20th century immigration and poverty in Hartford increased as economic opportunities decreased for communities of color (Walsh, 2013). Many residents of Hartford, most notably African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other immigrants of color, were struck with poverty. Communities suffering from a diminished quality of life created ethnic neighborhoods, community organizations, and an increased sense of advocacy to survive the conditions of the end of the 20th century.

The fifth phase of Hartford, the troubled metropolis according to Walsh, includes life in Hartford from 1970 to the present. Walsh explains this phase as one where the city is overcome by poverty and deindustrialization. Hartford today has a population comprised largely of African-Americans and Hispanics (Walsh, 2013). As Hispanic and African American communities brought forth new demographics and diversity to the city, Hartford began to shift its focus to align more with the needs of these populations. With significant progress in political representation, most notably the election of Hartford's first Black mayor, Thirman Milner, in 1981, and the first Latino mayor, Eddie Perez, in 2001, diversity and inclusion in the city heightened (Sacks, 2003; Simmons, 2013).

Immigrant and Migrant Organizing in Hartford

Hartford in the late 20th century experienced greater levels of organizing on behalf of the Hispanic population. Community-based organizations and grassroots groups established throughout the city with the intention to advocate for Hispanics in Hartford. The importance of

assisting these organizations with adequate support and the ability to realize long-term influence in the political arena is exemplified in the loss of two of Hartford's early efforts to mobilize and encourage Hispanic im/migrant political participation. Hartford's im/migrant communities, neighborhoods, and advocacy groups organized and developed platforms to access greater representation in the city. Action of this kind was a significant step forward in the political presence of the Hispanic community in Hartford. However, some of these community groups failed to endure over a long period of time. The mobilization on behalf of the Hispanic community improved with demands of greater justice and political presence, but it is important to analyze these community-based organizations within the context of their life cycles. Organizations that maintain the political presence built through action and engagement in the city are the most effective in mobilizing political participation of Hispanic communities in Hartford for extended periods of time. Vecinos Unidos (United Neighbors) and the Puerto Rican Political Action Committee (PRPAC), discussed by Cruz (1998) and Radcliffe et al (1995), are two Hispanic-led organizations that were developed in Hartford which did not survive into today.

A long list of community organized groups in Hartford were founded in the 1970's and 1980's, including but not limited to Hartford Areas Rally Together (HART), Asylum Hill Organizing Project (AHOP), and Organized North-Easterners/Clay Hill and North End (ONE/CHANE) (Simmons, 2013). These three community-based organizations were the most prominent neighborhood-founded groups that advocated for and represented the various factions into which Hartford was split. HART, first organized in 1975, is still functioning today and promotes community organizing through neighborhood cooperation (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). HART oversaw the formation of Vecinos Unidos in 1976 (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). Vecinos Unidos is an important example of community organizing on behalf of Puerto Rican and Spanish

speaking residents. The organization fought against exclusion and built a platform for Hispanic individuals in Hartford to have a voice in matters concerning their neighborhoods (Radcliffe & et al, 1995).

Due to the fact that government and community meetings in the 1970's were not translated nor bilingual, Spanish speaking individuals living in Hartford neighborhoods did not feel welcomed nor included (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). Vecinos Unidos was an effort to open participation to all individuals in the area for advocacy opportunities, specifically regarding housing conditions (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). Casa Nueva (New Houses) apartment construction was a plan proposed by Vecinos Unidos (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). The plan allowed for apartment repairs in Hispanic neighborhoods while continuing to house the individuals living in the apartments being repaired (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). This was one of the first notable actions taken by Hispanic community organizers and presented an example of the manner in which community organizing can be successful. Vecinos Unidos went on to advocate and promote further incorporation of Hispanic individuals in Hartford until the late 1980's (Radcliffe & et al, 1995). Although still functioning today in name, awareness of the organization is extremely low and fails to obtain the necessary resources or community involvement to be effective. Vecinos Unidos presents one of the failures in the longevity of Hispanic-based community organizing in Hartford.

Hartford's Puerto Rican community sparked interest and political action within the city through the creation of the PRPAC in the early 1980's (Cruz, 1998; Simmons, 2013). PRPAC was a committee that intended to represent Puerto Rican voices in city politics and was the most successful Puerto Rican political group of its time (Cruz, 1998). Although no longer a prominent organization in the city, it served as a model for future community organizing that focused on

ethnicity, identity, and their relation to power politics (Cruz, 1998). PRPAC failed to survive due to a lack of successful policy making and political cooperation (Cruz, 1998). The short-term political presence of PRPAC resulted in a shortage of city action to encourage the continuation of Hispanic im/migrant representation in city politics. PRPAC and Vecinos Unidos exemplify the dangers of reduced political presence and the damage that can follow when organizations do not maintain government visibility and legitimacy.

Various organizations in Hartford's history outlived Vecinos Unidos and PRPAC. La Casa de Puerto Rico (The House of Puerto Rico) was founded in Hartford in 1979 and has served as an organization that advocates and fights for the interests of Hartford's Puerto Rican communities (Backstrand & Schensul, 1982). La Casa de Puerto Rico is still standing in Hartford and serving the Puerto Rican population. An additional institution that is still functioning today is the Hispanic Health Council of Hartford. In 1978, the Hispanic Health Council similarly saw a need to improve the health of Hispanics in Hartford and, therefore, organized as an institution to provide aid and resources to the community (Backstrand & Schensul, 1982). As organizations that have persisted over extended periods of time, one must question what was different in their formation and why their political presence has sustained.

The act of bringing together Hispanics and organizing with the intent to fight for better protections reflects the Hispanic community's drive to be politically active. Action does not have to be restricted to voting and campaigning. The Hispanic population in Hartford learned early on that influence and change can occur when communities mobilize and advocate through avenues outside of direct voting. However, when this determination and commitment is supplemented with longevity, the mobilization in the political sphere can continue to influence the community long-term. Improved political presence that is built on the action and advocacy from grassroots

groups and the Hispanic im/migrant community will allow for Hispanic im/migrants to have

greater access to political influence consistently for long periods of time.

Hartford's Hispanic Neighborhoods in 2020

Hartford in 2020 is home to a vast number of nationalities, races, and im/migrants from

countries and regions all over the world. The demographic make-up of Hartford in 2000 through

2020 shows an upward trend in the proportion of resident Hispanic/Latinos of 4.6 percentage

points and a slight decrease of 1.3 percentage points in the number of non-Hispanic

Black/African Americans living in the city (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In alignment with the

patterns of white flight in Hartford and other major urban cities, the presence of non-Hispanic

whites also decreased by 2.4 percentage points (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Despite a general

population decrease in the last ten years, the Hispanic population in Hartford is continuing to

grow. Figure 1.1 presents a visual of Hartford's demographic changes from 1990 to the present.

Data to construct this graph was collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. The demographic

information for the years 2019, 2014, and 2010 are from the American Community Survey 5-

Year Estimates, while data for 2000 and 1990 are from the U.S. Decennial Census.
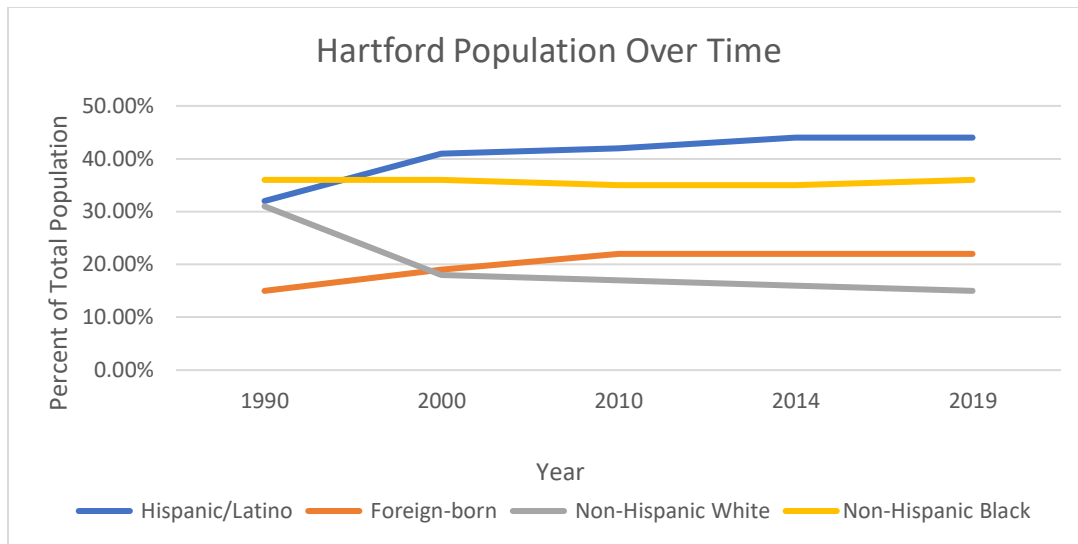
Figure 1.1 Hartford Population Over Time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018)

Hartford today has a foreign-born population of 22%, with 36% coming from Hispanic-identifying and Spanish speaking countries (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The Puerto Rican community, although different in terms of legal status from other Hispanic immigrants, accounts for 35% of the total Hispanic population in Hartford (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Although Puerto Ricans make up the largest percentage of Hispanic individuals living in Hartford, the city also has Hispanic im/migrant populations from Mexico (2%), the Dominican Republic (3%), Central America (1%), and South America (3%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). These demographics highlight why Hispanic im/migrant participation in the city is essential to ensure all populations, cultures, and ideas are respected and protected (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

Hartford has nine neighborhoods in which at least half of the census tracts of the neighborhoods contain 50% or more residents who identify as Hispanic: Clay-Arsenal, Parkville, Frog Hollow, South Green, Sheldon-Charter Oak, Behind the Rocks, Barry Square, South West, and South End (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Figure 1.2 depicts the seventeen neighborhoods in Hartford (City of Hartford, 2013). Stars have been added to this map to represent the

predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods. Figure 1.3 represents the density of Hispanic individuals in each neighborhood. The light-colored sections of the city are the census tracts where less than 50% of the population identifies as Hispanic, while the darker parts of the city are those census tracts with 50% or more Hispanic residents. Both maps affirm the categorization of nine Hispanic neighborhoods in Hartford due to the fact that the shaded map, which presents where the Hispanic population is most dense, aligns with the map depicting the neighborhoods. Although Hispanics reside in other tracts and neighborhoods throughout the city, there are nine neighborhoods that are dominated by the Hispanic population. Therefore, these neighborhoods can be considered the ethnic enclaves with the potential to mobilize, advocate, and provide a sense of community to Hispanic im/migrants. It is within these communities that ethnic organizations and community coalitions are most likely to form to advance Hispanic im/migrant interests in the city and to improve upon the community's political presence.

Figure 1.2 Map of Hartford Neighborhoods (City of Hartford, 2013).
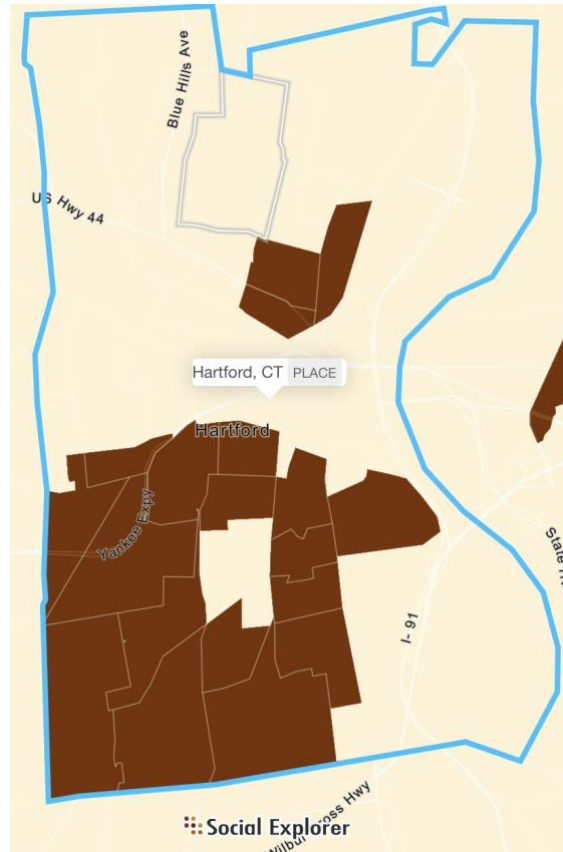
Figure 1.3 Density of Hispanic Neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

City Responses to the Political Presence of the Hispanic Community

Given the clear visibility of Hispanic populations and their majority status in more than half of the city's neighborhoods, how is the city of Hartford responding to Hispanic im/migrants today? As a sanctuary city that has committed to protecting its im/migrants from federal interference through local law enforcement, Hartford has put forth efforts to defend the interests of all city residents. An important example of advocacy by the city to increase im/migrant's connection to social, economic, and political life in Hartford was the implementation of the Municipal Identification Card Program in 2017. This program provided I.D.'s for Hartford

residents, regardless of legal status, that would allow the I.D. holders to access city resources and live without fear of revealing sensitive information (Vella, 2017). In addition to city-wide programs, local commissions, such as the Commission for Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (CRIA), center their focus upon im/migrants and refugees and similarly work to improve the livelihood and access to city resources for this population. CRIA emphasized the support provided to im/migrants through the Municipal Identification Card Program and celebrated the city's dedication to protecting its im/migrant population. CRIA is a government-sponsored commission specific to Hartford and creates an avenue for im/migrants in the city to interject their opinions and advocate for increased rights and support. CRIA, which was founded in 2013, publicized a report in 2019 with recommendations to further help Hartford become a city that welcomes im/migrants (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). The recommendations include greater language inclusion, improved cooperation among civic institutions, engagement between ethnic communities, greater access to community resources, and a commitment to future reports on the progress of Hartford's transition into a more inclusive city (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). CRIA's report highlights the progress to be made in addressing the needs of the city's im/migrant population and identifies how the political presence of these communities may not yet stimulate the necessary responses from government.

The CRIA Bi-Annual Report identifies the factors that contribute to an im/migrant's ability to incorporate into their new city. English language proficiency, social bonding, and civic engagement are three of the ten main categories (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). The report includes a non-representative survey of fifty immigrants and refugees (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). Among this sample, 63% desire more

education and training in the English language (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). Language proficiency is essential when communicating socially, looking for work, and participating in civic and political life. A strong understanding of English is seen as a necessary and important foundation that is integral in the incorporation experience of all im/migrants (Waters & Pineau, 2015). However, translation services are only one of many amenities that aid in the comfortable resettlement and incorporation of foreign-born residents in Hartford. Institutions that support integration into the language, culture, and economy of Hartford advance the political presence of Hispanic im/migrants by assisting them in becoming central components to Hartford's population. Maintaining influence and longevity of im/migrant-serving community organizations in civil society will allow for continued progress in political presence and for greater political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants.

An aspect of the CRIA Report that highlights the need for greater political incorporation is the section titled "Fear, Security, Well-Being, Civic Engagement" in which the Commission describes the services available and the manners in which they are inadequate for im/migrants searching for aid. Discrimination in translation services in the city was reported by the sample in addition to a limited sense of voice (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). Although Hartford is more prepared for im/migrants that speak Spanish due to the large Hispanic presence in the city, residents of all languages, cultures, and ethnicities experience similar distance in representation and inadequacy of services. Ultimately, the CRIA Report advises "investments in human capital" and increased assess to opportunities (Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, 2019). To do so, cooperation and a commitment to bridging the gap in equality is required by both government and civic institutions within civil society. This recommendation is essential for the successful mobilization of the Hispanic im/migrant

community in Hartford. The cooperation of im/migrant-serving community-based organizations with other institutions in civil society will help this community in Hartford retain political presence and, therefore, visibility, recognition, and representation in government. Through continued community organizing and advocacy in civil society, Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford can retain the legitimacy necessary for long-term survival of these integral community-based organizations.

The relationships built through community organizing and inter-institutional coordination tend to mobilize and bring together native-born and foreign-born residents in Hartford to encourage participation. Advocacy for greater depth and meaningful political incorporation occurs through a multitude of responses. In Hartford, civil society projects ideals of supporting im/migrants through improving services and recognizing the struggles that are endured throughout the process of incorporation. Active im/migrant-serving community-based organizations promote the visibility and recognition of the Hispanic im/migrant experience and define these populations as central groups to be represented. In Hartford's history, the Hispanic-serving institutions that have failed to maintain longevity and mobilize on a consistent basis accumulated low levels of political presence and could no longer sustain their organization. Hartford, as a prominent city and state capitol, has a presence of commissions and committees with missions of attending to im/migrant needs. Although these organizations exist, it is important to evaluate whether they are successful in improving political opportunities for Hispanic im/migrants. For this population's political presence to be considered substantial, it must evoke city responses that increase representation and access to political action. Chapter two will answer this question more directly. Chapter two will evaluate the actions of eight government and civic institutions in their efforts to increase the political incorporation of

Hispanic im/migrants. In effect, leaders' perceptions of the political presence of Hispanic im/migrants and the manners in which their current presence accurately conveys the issues and concerns of this population is further analyzed.

Chapter 2: Hartford Leaders' Understandings of Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant Political Incorporation

Political participation can allow the voices of marginalized communities to be heard and valued when city leaders are making policy decisions. Chapter one highlights how, in order to achieve political incorporation, the "political presence" of im/migrant communities must be recognized by current leaders. Political presence is measured by three factors: visibility, legitimacy, and membership in government systems (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Visibility refers to the degree to which issues and concerns facing im/migrant communities are acknowledged by members of government (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Legitimacy directly relates to a reputation in the city that is valid and respected by public officials, while membership in government is counted through direct representation of im/migrants within government positions (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Political presence plays an integral role in prompting city action to advance political incorporation opportunities for im/migrants. It is important to question the scope of visibility, legitimacy, and membership that Hispanic im/migrants have developed in Hartford when evaluating their political incorporation. Furthermore, leaders' perceptions of this political presence and whether it incites action to address the concerns of this community is integral to the study of Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation.

This chapter examines the extent to which Hartford leaders recognize the political presence of Hispanic im/migrants in a manner that spurs city leaders to respond. By investigating leaders' perspectives on political incorporation, this chapter will define how government, civic, and grassroots leaders in civil society encourage the political participation of Hartford's Hispanic im/migrant community. These three sectors influence an im/migrant's incorporation experience.

As concluded in the first chapter of this thesis, the sustainability of community-based organizations in providing services for Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford is low and negatively impacts the ability to build a long-term political presence. Hartford leaders, in their evaluations of Hispanic im/migrant political engagement, additionally indicate their perceived political presence of Hispanic im/migrants and Hispanic community-based organizations. To understand leaders' views, I conducted eight interviews with government, civic, and community representatives. Interviews discussed the extent of support offered to Hispanic im/migrants, obstacles that prevent political incorporation, and opinions on current action happening in Hartford to advance political incorporation. Analysis of the responses collected in the interviews built a foundational understanding of how Hartford institutions are mobilizing this community to become politically active based on the accumulated political presence of the Hispanic im/migrant population.

For the purposes of this research, community-based organizations are defined as the groups formed and led by im/migrant communities in Hartford, while civic institutions are those that provide support and coordinate with community-based groups for successful action. The manner in which the presence of im/migrants is framed within civil society influences how the government approaches the encouragement and support of their political incorporation (Williamson, 2018). City leaders is a term used to define the representatives of government and civil society institutions that play the largest role in framing im/migrant incorporation (Williamson, 2018). As a result, city leaders promote inclusivity or call for restrictive and exclusionary policies based on the political presence of im/migrants in the city (Williamson, 2018). Government awareness of im/migrant communities throughout their resettlement

experience and political incorporation processes is influenced by these narrative frames advanced by city leaders.

Civil Society and Local Government Influence on Immigrant and Migrant Incorporation

Civil society encompasses the community-based, im/migrant-organized groups and civic institutions that support and advocate for im/migrants. It is within civil society that im/migrants who cannot, or chose not to, pursue integration from a naturalization standpoint are able to incorporate into their new society (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Community-based organizations and civic institutions play an essential role in welcoming the im/migrant residents and in creating an environment in which im/migrants are able to mobilize together. Im/migrants are inherent contributors to community-based organizations that serve these residents in a new city and provide a direct line to the concerns and interests of this population (de Graauw, 2008; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). As a result, existing grassroots organizations that target their services toward im/migrant populations are fundamental in cultivating political action. Furthermore, the civic institutions of civil society that fund, support, and bring awareness to the community-based organizations additionally generate greater political presence. Community organizing, described by Fisher and DeFilippis (2015), focuses on "transformational, radical, social action, political activist, and political practice," and provides im/migrants with the platform to become active within their society (Fisher & DeFilippis, 2015, pp. 364). Im/migrant community organizing results in ethnic groups that have developed in response to similar challenges experienced throughout incorporation. By creating a place for im/migrants to come together and to advocate for their individual and group interests, community organizing builds upon political presence while providing the services necessary to mobilize and unite these

populations. Community-based advocacy in cooperation with civic institutional support strengthens the visibility and legitimacy of the group's political presence.

Representation within government fulfills the third component of political presence and demonstrates the role that government institutions play in advancing political opportunities for im/migrants (Andersen, 2008; Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Scholarship strongly suggests that cooperation between political powers and civil society leads to increased mobilization and political presence of im/migrant community needs. Therefore, city leaders from civil society and from the government have the ability to work together and further the political participation opportunities through greater visibility, legitimacy, and representation of these populations (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Communities and organizations that retain greater political presence are likely to receive increased support and resource allocation from the government and civic institutions. Government attention directed toward im/migrant populations based on the perceived political presence creates a political context of mobilization and encouragement of im/migrant political incorporation.

In order to evaluate political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford, an analysis of these civic and government institutions in the city is necessary. Interviews with city leaders from civic institutions and the local government in Hartford demonstrated differing views and inconsistent assessments of the political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrant residents in Hartford, but several themes emerged. First and foremost, Hartford leaders argue that Hispanic im/migrants do not participate because they lack the basic resources that would allow them to focus on civic and political participation. Additionally, the leaders report that communicating with this population is challenging, despite a consensus that the most effective method of mobilization is working with grassroots organizations and leaders. When asked what changes

were necessary to encourage political incorporation, the leaders lacked agreement on key steps,
often placing the responsibility for mobilization and maintaining political presence on the
community-based organizations themselves. Based on the interviews, it is evident that the
perceived political presence of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford does not inspire action on
behalf of the government and civic institutions to remove the defined barriers to political
incorporation.

Methods

Goal of the Interviews

Between the months of January and February of 2021, I conducted eight interviews with
city leaders from government and civil society via Zoom. Representatives spoke to the actions
that their institutions are taking to improve access to political participation and the challenges
they recognize in the city. Each interview began with a brief description of the research and a
definition of the term "political incorporation." Defining political incorporation was important,
as this research is not confined solely to voting and voter habits. Any form of political action that
allows the Hispanic im/migrant population to voice concerns or advocate for their community is
defined as political incorporation. Participation in this sense can include protesting, working on a
campaign, joining a politically active organization, participating in civic and political
conversations, and supporting their community, among other actions. The process of obtaining
consent for the interview followed the description of political incorporation. Each representative
was read the consent information and proceeded with the interview understanding its voluntary
nature. In line with the consent form, I will name the institutions, but not the individuals who I
interviewed.

Interview Methods

       To identify interview participants, I consulted with knowledgeable faculty, staff, and community partners to develop a list of institutions that have built a reputation of advocating for and serving the public. Table 2.1 details which institutions were interviewed, and their sector.

Institution Name	Sector	Interview #
The Hartford Public Library	Public	1
Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity (CWCSEO)	Public	2
City Council	Public	3
Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (CRIA)	Public	4
Community Member	Grassroots Leader	5
Trinfo Café	Non-Profit	6
Hispanic Health Council	Non-Profit	7
Hispanic Federation	Non-Profit	8

Table 2.1 Sector of Institutions

       The eight interviews are comprised of: 4 public sector representatives, 3 non-profit representatives, and 1 grassroots/community leader. The eight interviews include six Hispanic and two non-Hispanic white individuals, with a gender distribution of three males and five females. Due to time constraints and difficulty with recruitment as a result of the current pandemic, the interview sample has a high presence of government representatives and a lower presence of grassroots and community leaders. Although greater insight from on-the-ground

activists is preferable, this sample was effective in defining how the city, from a government and civic perspective, assists im/migrants in becoming politically active in Hartford.

The eight interviews began with the representatives' description of their institution's mission and ended with changes that should occur in the city of Hartford. Although not every institution serves Hispanic residents exclusively, each institution named this population as one of the communities it served. Subsequent questions in the interview guide related to action taken by the institution to mobilize or increase political participation of the target population, obstacles both the institution faces and those that im/migrants face, methods of feedback and communication with the target population, and desired changes in the city of Hartford. For the institutions to which political presence would be a relevant and understood concept, the representatives were questioned on how community-based groups can maintain their political presence to local government. Each interview was conducted via Zoom and was video-recorded for transcription purposes. The transcriptions were created through an online program, and each transcript that was produced was edited to ensure no changes or errors were made. Upon completion of the transcript, all video-recordings were deleted. Transcripts were used to develop the codebook upon which analysis of the interviews was founded.

Developing the Qualitative Codebook

To identify themes across the eight interviews, each transcript was reviewed to determine patterns of opinions, actions, and future goals. Using these themes, I developed a codebook to track the presence of common features that influence political incorporation. The codebook was split into seven sections encompassing the reoccurring themes. The seven sections, each with additional sub-themes, are 1) Greatest Needs, 2) Actions to Address Political Incorporation, 3)

Institutional Obstacles, 4) Im/migrant Obstacles, 5) Systems of Feedback and Communication, 6) Desired Changes in the City, and 7) Maintaining Political Presence. Sub-themes mentioned during the conversation were marked as present in the interview, allowing me to identify the patterns that stood out among institutional representatives of multiple sectors in the community.

Constraints

The current COVID-19 Pandemic presented challenges that were difficult to overcome in terms of data collection. A greater number of interviews with grassroots organizations and community leaders would have been preferred. Four of the eight interviews were with representatives from institutions that work within the top-to-bottom approach. These institutions help to support and fund the community-based organizations that are on-the-ground and closest to the Hispanic population in Hartford. The information obtained through these interviews is valuable when evaluating political presence and how community organizing can succeed when improving access to political participation. Nonetheless, for Hispanic im/migrants to have direct access to opportunities for political action, the presence of organizations that are im/migrant-organized or community-based is essential. A greater representation of these community-based organizations would have strengthened the conclusions of the data analysis for the eight interviews. However, it is important to note that the sample of leaders representatives in Hartford did range from government, to civic, to community-led, and as a result, provides a strong array of perspectives with regard to political incorporation.

Data Analysis

Factors that were coded five or more times among the eight interviews were considered

to be significant components to political incorporation for Hispanic im/migrants. A frequency of

five or more is measured as a factor of political incorporation that civic, government, and

community representatives in civil society agree is important and relevant. Among the eight

interviews, consensus was reached in five sub-themes. Figure 2.1 displays the sub-themes with

frequencies of five or more. A green line marks the frequency of five that was needed for a

theme to reach consensus among the eight leaders. These five play a substantial role in

institutional efforts to improve access and opportunities for political action in Hartford. It is

important to note that of these five, two are current actions practiced by the civic institutions, two

are methods of communication, and one is an obstacle preventing political engagement of

Hispanic im/migrants. No consensus was reached among the representatives with respect to

institutional obstacles, desired changes, and manners of maintaining political presence.
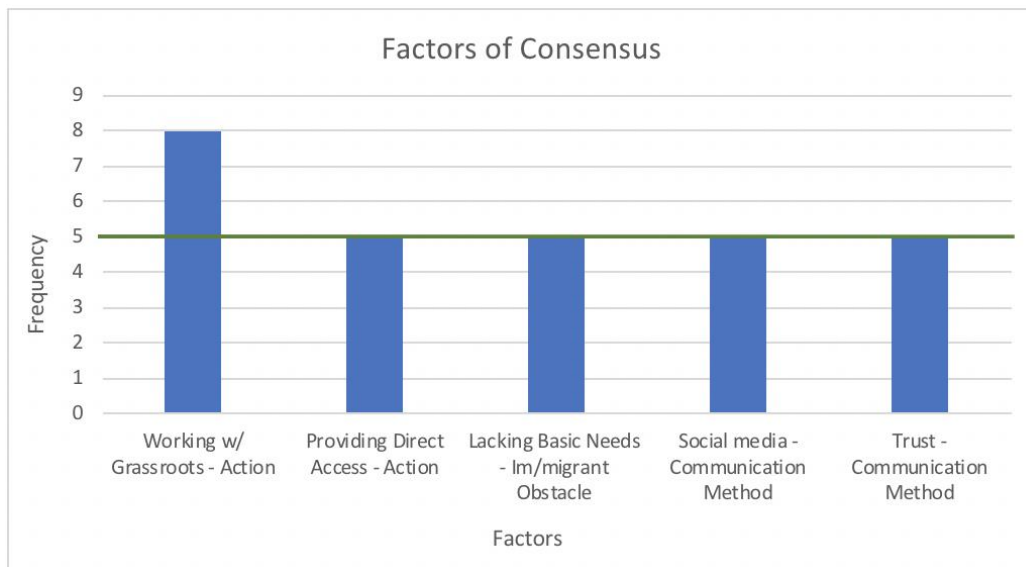
Figure 2.1 Factors of Consensus

The challenge of placing political incorporation as a priority before obtaining adequate levels of basic resources was identified by five of the eight city leaders. Furthermore, for those Hispanic im/migrants who are ready to be politically active, the representatives agree that communicating effectively is an obstacle when mobilizing this community. However, despite the obstacle of communication, five representatives cited social media as a useful method, and all eight representatives highlighted working with and through grassroots leaders as an effective way to advance political incorporation. The action of providing direct access to im/migrants that reached a consensus among the Hartford leaders aligns with the action of working through grassroots and community leaders to mobilize for greater political engagement. Cooperation with on-the-ground activists inherently allows for access to conversations that affect the communities that they represent. Additionally, building trusted relationships with these community-based leaders was recognized by five of the eight representatives as essential when communicating with Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford.

Where the leaders did not reach a consensus points to important disconnects when evaluating how Hartford institutions aid in political incorporation. A glaring theme in which no consensus was reached is the category of necessary changes to be implemented in Hartford that would promote greater political incorporation. The eight representatives did not agree on what action is needed to better the opportunities that are available for Hispanic im/migrants. Moreover, the recommendations provided by the city leaders with respect to maintaining political presence advised the community-based organizations to take on the responsibility of being visible, legitimate, and involved in government positions.

Lacking Basic Needs

Basic needs and the importance of maintaining sufficient levels of everyday resources was a common factor included throughout a majority of the interviews. Basic needs are an important first step in an im/migrant's incorporation process, and one that often comes before political incorporation. The representative from The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity (CWCSEO) explained the importance of acquiring basic needs before taking part in political engagement by questioning, "how could we as a society expect this population to get more active civically or politically when they're considering your most basic needs, which is work[ing] and get[ting] food for their families?" (Interview #2). How can im/migrant residents place political action as a priority if they are focusing on surviving? For political incorporation to be an option for the Hispanic im/migrant community in Hartford, they must feel comfortable in their social and economic incorporation first.

A sub-theme in the category of greatest needs included the notion that im/migrants are working exceedingly hard to the extent that they do not have sufficient time to take part in political action. When describing the challenge of basic needs and their importance in order for political incorporation to be an available option, representatives identified financial responsibilities as one of those basic needs. Therefore, the priority of financial stability, which often requires more than one job, is a related obstacle that challenges access to opportunities for political action. As was noted by the CWCSEO representative, im/migrants who are still focusing on the earlier stages of financial and social incorporation do not immediately place political incorporation as a priority. Political participation depends on the im/migrants' comfort in the city and their ability to focus on engagement. An insufficient level of basic needs is an important obstacle to recognize. Of all of the obstacles identified by the eight city leaders,

including the obstacles facing institutions and those directly affecting im/migrants, lacking basic needs was the single obstacle that received a frequency of five. Therefore, local leaders believe that lacking basic needs and the inability to place political incorporation as a first priority substantially prevents high levels of political action and engagement.

Challenge of Communication

Finding successful methods of communication was found to be an additional challenge that government and civic institutions in Hartford experience when serving the Hispanic im/migrant community and encouraging their political action. Due to differing legal statuses and various neighborhoods of residence, reaching each subset is difficult and requires multiple different approaches to communication. Communication as an obstacle received a frequency of four responses. Although not considered a consensus among the city leaders, a frequency of four is nonetheless notable and important when analyzing the extent to which institutions are successfully mobilizing this population.

Three additional obstacles that similarly work together to broaden and strengthen barriers that make political action unattainable for Hispanic im/migrants were noted by Hartford leaders. Limited access to, or the complete exclusion from, political conversations regarding the Hispanic community in Hartford and the language barrier for im/migrants who do not speak English are inherently related. Access to the conversations hosted by government or influential civic institutions was described as restricted or not an option for Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford. Conversations at the level where policy can be deliberated are occurring in English and not Spanish. The representative from the Hartford Public Library noted:

> I know that [for] the Hispanic immigrant and migrant population in Hartford, a lot of folks feel
> really left out of and… neglected from any kind of policy or political process in Hartford itself. And

I think the language barrier has a lot to do with that. You know, if you show up to a city hall meeting or like commission meetings, it's not always bilingual (Interview #1).

She goes on to clarify that with the current pandemic and an increase in virtual capabilities, translation services for local government meetings have improved. The barrier, however, persists. This barrier prevents the Hispanic im/migrant population in Hartford from having a voice in the decisions made regarding issues that affect their community. Although Hartford is largely a bilingual city, English to Spanish translation does not consistently exist at the level where policy decisions are happening. These are the conversations in which Hispanic im/migrants want to be included and where their voices need to be heard the most. Obstacles to communication include these challenges furthered by the language barrier.

In addition to the question of the biggest obstacles facing institutions that prevent adequate mobilization, all eight representatives were asked to define what methods of communication they perceive as most useful for their institution. Five responded that the most useful manner of communicating with Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford is through building trustworthy relationships with grassroots groups and community leaders. Trust is an essential component to mobilizing and encouraging im/migrant communities, especially those facing negative national rhetoric and differing legal statuses. Community-based organizations cultivate trusted reputations within im/migrant populations due to the fact that these groups are often im/migrant-organized or led directly by members of the community. The CRIA representative emphasized that if im/migrant communities hear something from people they trust such as, "their community leaders or faith based leaders, it's probably going to have more of an impact on getting them to respond in a particular way" (Interview #4). Therefore, institutions with top-to-bottom approaches, like those interviewed for this chapter, can benefit significantly in their outreach to the Hispanic-im/migrant community when they create meaningful relationships with

on-the-ground organizations and leaders. Rapport between Hartford government and civic institutions and the grassroots organizations in the city can help to construct institutional reputations that are necessary when gaining the confidence of the Hispanic im/migrant community.

It is important to note that Hartford government and civic institutions can further benefit from developing and maintaining their own positive reputation of reliability. The representative from the Hartford Public library highlighted the role that reputation and trust plays in creating relationships with grassroots groups and with the Hispanic community itself. She stated, "We reach a lot of constituents that way because we recognize that a lot of why the library is successful is because the library has a good reputation in the city for residents and that we are a trusted institution" (Interview #1). The Hartford Public Library representative recognized that the attention directed to establishing authentic ties with community-based organizations and the devotion to forming a safe and dependable reputation in the city has been essential in the positive communication the library has developed with the Hispanic community.

Working with Grassroots and Community-based Organizations

A relevant component to the communication method that focuses on trusted relationships is the notion of working with grassroots and community-based organizations to mobilize im/migrants in Hartford. All eight Hartford leaders noted that cooperating with community-based organizations and leaders is an important and successful action they are taking to improve political incorporation of the Hispanic im/migrant community. This can include im/migrant membership in the civic institution, providing direct access to conversations regarding the issues affecting the community, and using community leaders as a bridge between Hartford institutions

and the Hispanic population. The City Council representative emphasized the importance of sustaining relationships with grassroots groups and creating space for their inclusion. She stated, "There has to be collaboration at every municipal level with groups that are…in Connecticut. I think it's important for elected officials to constantly be in communication and reaching out" (Interview #3). Going further, this representative noted that the Democratic party in City Council is not making the effort to coordinate with community-based organizations or build the necessary trusted relationships.

Maintaining a positive and genuine reputation in the city is an integral component for Hartford institutions when cooperating with grassroots groups. Trusted relationships that are built between Hartford institutions and community-based organizations, as well as between Hartford institutions and the Hispanic community, was one of the two communication methods that reached a consensus among the eight interviewed leaders. In order to build a reputation that is respected by this community, institutions can work toward constructing mutually beneficial relationships with community-based organizations that promote greater mobilization. As these relationships grow, action to improve political opportunities will be communicated properly and will include the voices and opinions of the target population.

Chapter one outlined the history of community organizing in Hartford from a political presence perspective. In defining the importance of having institutions that directly include and serve Hispanic im/migrants when advancing political incorporation, it was concluded that grassroots groups are most successful when their political presence sustains adequate support and funding from government. Government officials are more aware and receptive to the needs of im/migrants with increased political presence, which is furthered through cooperation between these two groups. Working with and through grassroots organizations is so widely practiced

because the relationships that are built between community leaders and institutions promote direct access to advocacy and action on behalf of the community. It is evident that Hartford institutions have extreme consensus on one method of effectively reaching and supporting the community, and that is through the trusted influence of on-the-ground organizations and leaders.

What Changes Do We Make?

All eight city leaders were asked what changes the city of Hartford should implement in order to expand political opportunities and access to political incorporation. Nine total changes were identified, and there was no level of consensus for any factor. Earlier analysis of the challenges to the mobilization of Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation presented two major themes. The representatives recognize two obstacles that are preventing successful mobilization of Hispanic im/migrants, but with regard to improvements in the city to address these obstacles, institutions do not have a consensus.

Although no changes that were identified in the interviews received a frequency of five or more, two changes did come close with four responses each. Improving communication and providing better funding for im/migrant-serving organizations are two changes that four Hartford leaders believe are needed. However, based on analysis of the methods of communication occurring in Hartford, it is evident that government and civic institutions which direct their services to Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford agree on only one effective means of consistent communication with this community. Generating trusted relationships is an important aspect to communicating with this community in Hartford. Nonetheless, an absence of other methods is significant when analyzing the mobilization offered by institutions. Furthermore, the broad category of improving communication with no specific methods listed suggests that Hartford

leaders do not know what changes in communication would cultivate improved access to political participation.

Additionally, working with grassroots and community organized leaders was identified as the most significant action happening in the city to address political incorporation, but only three Hartford representatives listed more community organizing and investing in grassroots groups as a change to implement. Again, we see the identification of issues in the city, but little to no consensus on what steps would improve Hispanic im/migrant access to political incorporation.

Responsibility of Maintaining Political Presence on Community Based Organizations and Immigrants and Migrants

It is important to evaluate the lack of viability and drop in membership of community-based organizations that was identified by two representatives when analyzing political presence. The representative from the CWCSEO stated that "there was a real sort of community with tons of community agencies that were popping up in Connecticut to serve the Latino community, but after the Great Recession, now…[they] are not as active anymore" when describing the failure of community-based organizations to maintain their services over an extended period of time (Interview #2). The representative from CRIA additionally mentioned the trouble of sustaining membership and influence in Hartford. Chapter one of this research paper investigates various community-based organizations in Hartford that have failed to remain viable and the resulting effect on sustaining political presence. When community-based organizations do not successfully build a political presence through advocacy and engagement, the political opportunities afforded to the im/migrant population they support decrease. In contrast, organizations that maintain visibility and support from government systems, while building legitimacy and membership in

government, can have greater success in providing long-term services (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). For Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford, it is important for the community-based and grassroots groups that direct their services to this population to develop a political presence that encourages improved access to and inclusion in political engagement.

Six representatives were asked how community-based organizations can maintain their political presence in Hartford. Four placed the burden of sustaining political presence on the community-based organizations themselves. A representative from City Council stated, "They can't wait…they just need to get in there and just do it and apply pressure" (Interview #3). The Hartford community member similarly noted that grassroots groups should continue to organize and build networks in the city in order to maintain their visibility. These comments imply that maintaining political presence is the responsibility of the community itself, rather than a duty of government to ensure all voices are heard and represented. Therefore, if Hartford leaders view political presence as a responsibility of the organizations that serve Hispanic im/migrants, explicit recommendations on how to maintain that presence would improve the representation of this community.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the perspectives of Hartford institutions with respect to the political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants in the city. The interviews defined what obstacles prevent successful action in addition to beneficial methods of mobilization happening in Hartford. Analysis of the interview responses indicates that the government and civic institutions perceive Hispanic im/migrant political presence in a manner that allows for recognition of the barriers to political engagement. The obstacles of insufficient basic needs and inconsistent

communication methods are known to be challenges that negatively impact access to political action. Hartford leaders additionally agree on the method of working with community-based organizations and leaders as an effective manner of mobilizing im/migrants, and the importance of communicating through trusted community members. However, the current political presence of the Hispanic im/migrant community is not yet strong enough to incite city action to remove these barriers of insufficient basic needs and inadequate methods of communication. Therefore, it is evident that government and civic leaders' perceptions of the political presence of Hispanic im/migrants falls short of evoking city-wide changes to expand access to political opportunities and engagement. Moreover, four of the six institutional representatives that were specifically asked how political presence can be maintained placed this burden on the community-based organizations themselves. The eight interviews clarified that there is no consensus on how political presence can be sustained, apart from the notion that the responsibility does not fall on the city.

Chapter three will examine the Hispanic population's views on their political participation through an analysis of two surveys. By specifically addressing the attitudes and experiences of this community throughout their efforts to become politically engaged, this research ensures that both the city and the Hispanic community's assessments on political opportunities in Hartford are included. Chapter three will reveal barriers to political action experienced by the Hispanic community and the desired changes to improve representation and political opportunities.

Chapter Three: Hispanic Immigrant and Migrant Views on Political Incorporation in Hartford

Chapter one of this thesis investigated Hartford's history of Hispanic im/migrant community organizing and the accompanying political presence that Hispanic im/migrants accumulated as their population grew. This historical analysis presented a pattern in Hartford: prominent im/migrant community organizations have not sustained over time. Consequently, the city still has not addressed some of the barriers to building and maintaining a political presence that cultivates political incorporation. Chapter two identified the current extent of political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford from the perspective of Hartford representatives. Interviews with Hartford leaders from the government, civic, and grassroots sectors identified various obstacles to political engagement, in addition to successful methods of incorporation. However, it is evident that the current level of political presence for the Hispanic im/migrant community that is perceived by government and civic institutions does not consistently incite action to address the defined barriers. Although consensus was reached with respect to the importance of trustworthy relationships between institutions and community-based leaders, this cooperation between the actors in civil society has yet to result in adequate responses to Hispanic im/migrants' challenges.

This chapter investigates how the leaders' perspectives relate to Hispanic residents' views on political incorporation in the city. Two surveys of the Hartford population are analyzed to better understand the political engagement of the Hispanic community. Although data specific to the rates of political incorporation are not included in this chapter, the barriers that negatively impact political participation are explored. Due to surveying constraints, the information collected in these two surveys is not exclusive to the Hispanic im/migrant community. Although

a portion of the sample is represented by im/migrants that self-identify as Hispanic, the following evaluation refers to Hartford's Hispanic community in general.

In line with the conclusions made by Hartford leaders, the results of both surveys identify financial constraints as a prominent issue which affects Hispanic residents' ability to prioritize political incorporation. Additionally, leaders' concerns of ineffective communication are reinforced by the population's negative perception of the civic institutions designed to mobilize Hispanics in the city. Survey results suggest that the civic institutions in civil society are not actively developing the necessary reputations to generate trust in their efforts to advocate for Hispanic residents. Therefore, the communication between civic institutions and the Hispanic community does not build faith in the institutions' support and mobilization of Hispanics. Both surveys depict Hartford as a place in which Hispanic residents do not trust the city to represent them and effectively address the concerns that Hispanics encounter.

Research from phase two further found that Hispanics in Hartford do not trust the members of the greater Hartford community. Social trust is an essential component to civic and political engagement, as these two aspects of community life are significantly related. Lacking trust in one's community can result in decreased motivation for political engagement when the social connection to the community fails to encourage reciprocity between neighbors (R. Putnam, 2000). Not identified in the representative interviews is the extreme desire of this population to be politically engaged and advocate for their community. Phase two demonstrates an overwhelming consensus that the Hispanic community wants to become politically incorporated to a greater extent. However, the two surveys highlight the confusion on how to participate as one of the greatest barriers to political engagement.

Methods

Goal of the Survey

The purpose of this second phase of research is to understand political incorporation in Hartford from the perspective of Hispanics living in the city. Political incorporation depends on the accessibility and awareness of political opportunities that exist in Hartford. This access is significantly influenced by government perception of the barriers to incorporation that prevent substantial participation in the city. The term "political presence" is important when evaluating political incorporation, as the political presence of a community defines government perception of the visibility, the legitimacy, and the capacity for the population to maintain membership in government (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Chapter two emphasized how a strong political presence can convey to local government the challenges and obstacles preventing political engagement. In order to accurately evaluate the political engagement of Hispanics, their input on the barriers to participation which reduce the ability to build a political presence through continuous action is essential.

Two surveys are analyzed to highlight this population's perspective on the access they are afforded with respect to political engagement. I developed the first survey for the Hispanic community in Hartford based on the information collected in the interviews with Hartford leaders from Phase one. Due to low responses associated with the current pandemic, it was important to supplement this information with an additional survey. The DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey from 2015 and 2018 with a specific focus on the city of Hartford are included in the analysis. Both surveys address different manners of political and civic engagement, attitudes toward local government, and feelings of contentment in respondents' current situation.

Survey Methods

Phase Two Survey

The phase two survey was created in response to the representative interviews. Survey questions were intended to reflect those integral components to political incorporation that were defined by the institutional representatives. The survey was offered in both the English and Spanish languages to ensure that the target population had the opportunity to share their experiences in the language most comfortable to them. Additionally, the survey was approved by the Trinity College IRB and included an introductory statement and a consent form. The introduction briefly described the topic of the survey and asked Hispanic im/migrants to complete the questions. The Phase Two Survey was divided into four sections: 1) Experience in Hartford, 2) Civic and Political Engagement, 3) Knowledge of and Views on Hartford Organizations, and 4) Demographics. The first three sections included questions to gauge familiarity with the city of Hartford, levels of attachment to the city and community, types of action currently happening, and perceptions of local organizations. The demographic section focused on race/ethnicity, financial stability, education, and political viewpoint.

The forty-three survey respondents of the original Phase Two Survey ranged across different demographics, with an emphasis on Hispanics and Latinos living in Hartford. Self-identified Hispanics or Latinos comprised 90% of the survey respondents. A third of respondents (33%) self-identified as Hispanic and as im/migrants having moved to Hartford from a different country or from Puerto Rico. The twenty-three respondents who moved to Hartford from a different place in the mainland United States cannot be immediately counted in the im/migrant category. Neither can the information provided confirm their im/migrant status before moving to Hartford from a different region in the mainland. The history of individuals who im/migrated

from a location outside of the mainland United States before coming to Hartford is unknown. For

purposes of data analysis, this research identifies the sample to contain 33% Hispanic

im/migrants, not including any im/migrants who came to a different location in the United States

before moving to Hartford. The demographics for the Phase Two Survey is intentionally over-

representative of the Hispanic population residing in the city. Hartford has a Hispanic population

of 45%, and the total Hispanic sample for the survey of 90% is significantly higher than

Hartford's demographics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Furthermore, the data over-represents

Hartford Hispanics with a four year college degree and under-represents Hartford Hispanics who

graduated from college (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Table 3.1 presents this data visually.

Demographics	%
Gender	
Male	54
Female	46
Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino	90
White	15
Black	10
Caribbean or West Indian	3
Education Level	
Eighth Grade or lower	3
Some High School	13
High School Graduate	24
Some College	34
4 Year College Degree	16
Graduate or Professional Degree	11
Political Viewpoint	
Very Liberal	14
Liberal	24
Moderate	30
Conservative	24
Very Conservative	0
Not Sure	8

Table 3.1 Phase Two Survey Demographics (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

Constraints

        Phase Two survey distribution proved to be difficult. Beginning in early March and

ending mid-April, the survey received forty-three responses. Various challenges arose, but the

current pandemic played a large role. In order to reach as many individuals in the Hispanic

im/migrant community of Hartford, I developed a flyer that contained information for the survey

and a QR code for easy access. This flyer was printed and delivered to important city institutions

that provide services to the Hispanic population. Flyers were provided to the Hartford Public

Library, Trinfo Café, the local YMCA, multiple laundromats, and the VITA Tax clinic.

Additionally, I reached out to thirty community leaders and community-based organizations

requesting their help to distribute the flyer. A Facebook page was created and dedicated to

survey distribution, on which the flyer and recruitment messages were posted. All information

that was distributed for survey participant recruitment was delivered in both English and

Spanish. Despite concerted effort, by the end of March, it was clear that the survey was not

accumulating sufficient responses. Given the small sample size and the opt-in nature of

participation, the Phase Two survey cannot be considered representative of the entire Hispanic

community. Therefore, the DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey supplements the

information obtained.

DataHaven Survey

        The second source of data, the 2015 and 2018 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey,

is representative of Hartford Hispanic residents' civic engagement and views on political

representation. DataHaven partnered with the Siena College Research Institute to conduct

interviews across the state of Connecticut to better understand how Connecticut cities address the

needs of their residents. The 2015 Community Wellbeing Survey interviewed 16,820

Connecticut residents in Spanish and English, including 750 in Hartford, and 285 Hispanic

Hartford residents (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016). The 2018 Community

Wellbeing Survey interviewed a total of 16,043 Connecticut residents, including 832 from

Hartford, and 158 Hispanic Hartford residents (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute,

2019). The Community Wellbeing Survey collected a random sample of Connecticut residents to

complete their interviews over the phone (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016,

2019). The randomly selected sample is weighted for age, gender, race, and geography to

provide a sample that is representative of the geographic regions in Connecticut, including the

city of Hartford (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016, 2019). The Community

Wellbeing Survey covers civic health and political awareness to a broad extent. Tables 3.2 and

3.3 display the demographic range of the survey respondents from Hartford. For the 2015

Survey, the racial composition in Hartford includes 29% white, 41% Black, and 38% Hispanic

respondents (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016). The racial composition for

2018 is comprised of 23% white, 35% Black, and 19% Hispanic respondents (DataHaven &

Siena College Research Institute, 2019). The 2018 survey does underrepresent Hispanic

residents, raising some concerns about generalizability. Although the Community Wellbeing

Survey did not include a measure of im/migrant status, the information collected provides

important insight and largely representative data on the Hispanic community in Hartford.

Demographics	%
Gender	
Male	48
Female	53
Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino	38
White	29
Black	41
Other	23
Education Level	
Less Than High School	14
High School or GED	28
Some College or Associate's Degree	35
Bachelor Degree or Higher	21
Sample Size	
Total	100
Hartford	5
Hispanic in Hartford	38

Table 3.2 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey Hartford, CT Crosstabs 2015

Demographics	%
Gender	
Male	47
Female	53
Race/Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino	19
White	23
Black	35
Other	19
Education Level	
High School or Less	39
Some College or Associate's Degree	30
Bachelor Degree or Higher	29
Sample Size	
Total	100
Hartford	5
Hispanic in Hartford	19

Table 3.3 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey Hartford, CT Crosstabs 2018

Data Analysis

Hartford leaders argue that Hispanic im/migrants' political participation is limited by economic hardships and inadequate communication between city institutions and this population. To enhance participation, leaders called for building trusting relationships between city institutions and grassroots leaders. Findings from a representative survey from the years of 2015 and 2018, and a smaller survey conducted this year similarly suggest that the financial instability of Hispanics in Hartford inhibits political participation. In addition, the surveys indicate low levels of trust among Hispanics. Moreover, respondents emphasized their frustration and skepticism of civic institutions that serve this population; a problem perpetuated by unsuccessful communication between the groups. Despite having clear views on the changes that are needed in the city, Hispanics in Hartford are unsure of how to advocate for change or how to become involved in Hartford politically. The current levels of political incorporation can be attributed to the lack of understanding on how to participate, rather than the lack of desire to be politically engaged. The results from the two surveys highlight the barriers faced by the Hispanic population in their efforts to participate politically, as well as the importance of greater efforts to support, mobilize, and represent the voices of this community by government and civic institutions. Before turning to these findings, I analyze what the two surveys suggest about current levels of Hispanic political participation in Hartford.

Levels of Participation

While the exact level of political incorporation of Hispanics in Hartford remains unknown, literature on the subject suggests that, nation-wide, Hispanic political participation is lower than other citizens' (Andersen, 2008; Hochschild et al., 2013; Ramakrishnan &

Bloemraad, 2008a; Waters & Pineau, 2015). The Community Wellbeing survey supports this notion in the context of volunteering and neighborhood engagement. In terms of action in the form of neighborhood organizing and improvement, DataHaven reports that 59% of Hispanics surveyed in 2018 said they "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that people in the neighborhood are working toward improving the residential area (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). When this data is compared to the white and Black respondents from the survey, we see that Hispanics' perceptions of others' actions to improve the community are lower than the perceptions of whites (67%) and Blacks (60%) (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Similarly, with respect to levels of volunteering for or through an organization in Hartford only 30% of the Hispanic sample from 2015 responded that they have particiapted in this action (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016). Similarly, self-reporting of civic engagement through volunteer work displays lower levels of participation among the Hispanic population surveyed, as 40% of the white sample and 39% of the Black sample answered "yes" to volunteering in the last 12 months (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016). It is important to question why Hispanics percieve lower levels of community engagement in their neighborhoods than white or Black residents. The manner in which which Hispanic residents of Hartford identify with their community or neighborhood and their motivation to contribute to its success can impact both neighborhood perception and personal involvement.

Although not a representative sample of Hispanics in Hartford, the Phase Two Survey can provide important insight on the political action of Hispanics in the city that similarly dennotes lower levels of participation. Repondents were asked to choose from a list of nine actions all that they have personally participated in within the last twelve months. The nine

actions were: 1) contacted public officials, 2) worked on or for a campaign, 3) been a part of a neighborhood association, 4) attended a public demonstration/protest, 5) posted about politics on social media, 6) participated in political conversations with family and friends, 7) voted, 8) been a member of an organization that took a political stance, 9) donated money to a political organization or campaign. Table 3.5 displays these answers. The largest percentage chose only one action in the last year. Four or more actions reecieved a frequency of 27%, which is notable when analyzing the political incorporation of this population, but remains low with respect to political engagement. The Phase Two Survey suggests that Hispanic political action tends to happen at an individual level, rather than through a formal group process. The actions from which respondents were asked to choose from listed various engagement that were framed as individually motivated. The list denotes personal choice in political participation. Although some of the listed actions included group conversations or group membership, the question focused on the personal decision to join and represent a political stance, rather than focusing on previously politicized groups.

Table 3.6 presents answers with respect to joining a previously politicized organization or group. The question asked respondents to state whether they had joined a political party, political organization, or any other type of organization such as labor unions, student organizations, or paramilitary organizations. Table 3.6 refers largely to action that is group motivated. Labor unions, student organizations, or political parties project a group mentality that relies on cooperation and affiliation of a specific political stance. Respondents were asked to answer this question based on their membership before coming to Hartford and later answered this question regarding their participation in a politicized group while living in Hartford. More than half of the respondents self-reported having never joined one of these organizations before coming to

Hartford, or while living in Hartford, and very few respondents are very active organizational

participants. Although not representative, the Phase Two Survey suggests that Hispanics in

Hartford are more likely to participate politically in an individualized manner, such as writing to

an official, donating to a campaign, or talking about politics with friends and family, rather than

joining a group that is outwardly political.

Political Action in the Last 12 Mon.	#	%
One Action	12	32
Two Actions	8	22
Three Actions	7	19
Four or more Actions	10	27

Table 3.5 Political Action in the Last 12 Months (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

Before Hartford	#	%	In Hartford	#	%
A Member but Not Active	9	24	A Member but Not Active	10	24
Somewhat Active	6	16	Somewhat Active	8	20
Very Active	2	5	Very Active	2	5
Never Joined	20	54	Never Joined	21	51

Table 3.6 Membership in a Political Group (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

Issues Facing the Hispanic Community

The interviews with Hartford leaders from Chapter two identified the importance of access to basic needs in addition to the development of trust between city actors and the community when mobilizing the Hispanic population in Hartford. Specifically, the city leaders identified that a lack of financial stability is an obstacle to political incorporation for Hispanic im/migrants. Do Hispanic residents agree that lacking financial security obstructs political incorporation?

First, the surveys concur that financial insecurity is a prevalent issue among Hartford Hispanic residents. Fifty-five percent of the Hispanic residents of Hartford that were surveyed in 2018 reported they were "just getting by" or "finding it difficult/very difficult" financially at the time of the survey, compared to 58% of Black residents and 32% of white residents (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Figure 3.1 presents these numbers. This data suggests that financial stability has not yet been reached by a majority of the Hispanic population living in Hartford. DataHaven links financial instability to lower political and civic involvement in their survey analysis: "rates of volunteering, voting, and using cultural resources were lower for individuals with lower incomes and levels of educational attainment, indicating that structural inequalities may create obstacles to actively participating in public life" (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019, pp. 99). Therefore, when an individual's financial situation is low, political engagement can be negatively affected, as leaders suggested in Chapter 2.

In the original Phase Two survey, poverty similarly was tied for first as the most important issue currently facing the Hispanic population, alongside the COVID-19 pandemic. For each problem, 72% of the responses were dispersed throughout "the most important" and "important" choices. Closely following these issues were discrimination (69%), unemployment

(67%), and the lack of educational opportunities (67%). Lacking political representation was also cited as an important issue by 64% of Hispanic residents, tied with the problems of drugs/crime and food scarcity. Figure 3.2 presents this data graphically. Hartford leaders argued that inadequate levels of basic needs and financial constraints negatively affect political engagement on behalf of Hartford's Hispanic community. The Phase Two Survey confirms that Hispanic residents agree on the prevalence of poverty and the lack of political representation as major issues, though the survey cannot conclusively demonstrate a link between residents' financial insecurity and lower political engagement.

Nonetheless, it is notable that nearly two-thirds of respondents recognize political representation of the Hispanic community as a significant problem. This finding suggests that political incorporation is a priority, but not the highest one for this population, given more immediate needs related to the pandemic and financial security. However, the prioritization of financial security over political engagement does not mean that residents are not interested in improved representation. One respondent noted:

> "Estamos perdiendo nuestra esencia de Latinos al no escribir ni hablar en español propiamente. Hablan mucho de representación hispana pero los mismos líderes no hablan bien ni escriben bien el español" (We are losing our essence as Latinos by not writing nor speaking in Spanish properly. They speak a lot of Hispanic representation, but the same leaders don't speak Spanish well nor write Spanish well).

The quote highlights the frustration of this community with the insufficient efforts on behalf of Hartford leaders to represent Hispanic and Latino values. Disapproval and a desire for change is evident among Hispanic respondents in the Phase Two Survey.
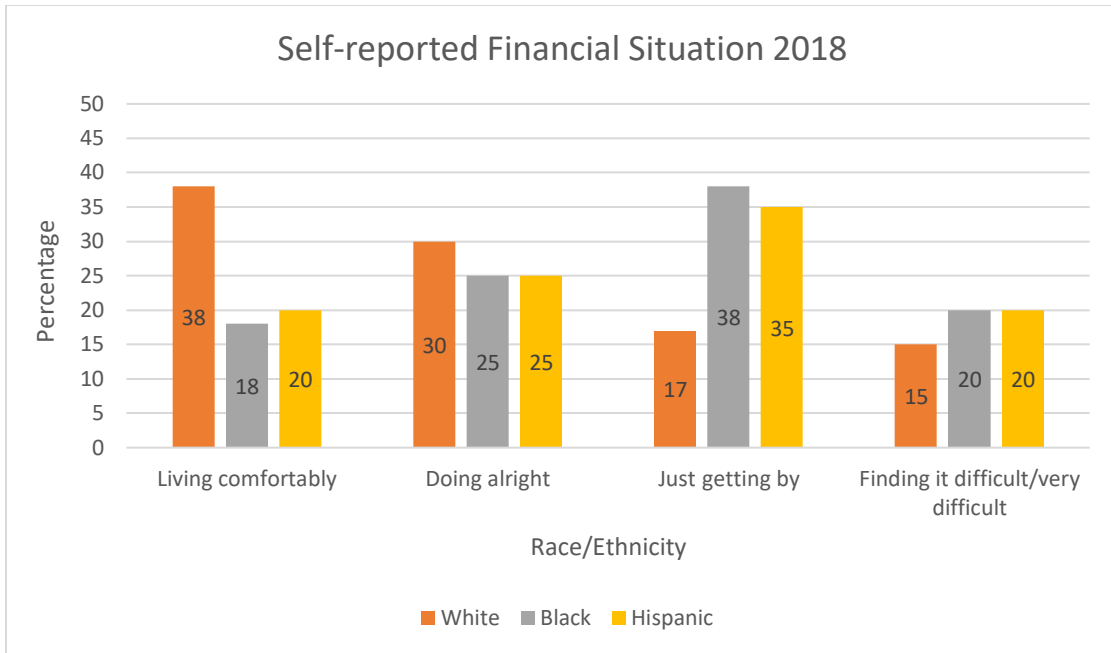
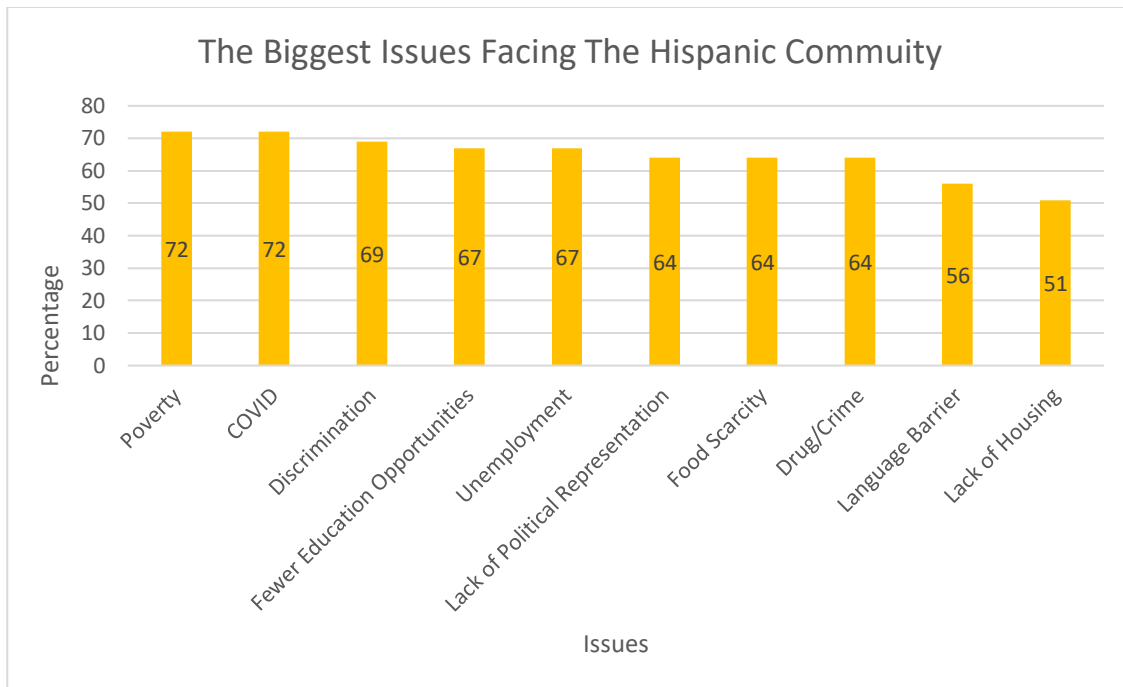Figure 3.1 Financial Situation (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019)

Figure 3.2 Biggest Issues (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

Perception of the City and Levels of Trust

Hartford leaders interviewed in phase one of research for this thesis identified the importance of building trust with the Hispanic community when working to mobilize and encourage political participation in Hartford. The leaders recognized the role that trusted relationships play in communicating with Hispanics in Hartford, distributing information on political opportunities, and building connections with the community that cultivate motivation for political action. Trust, especially social trust between neighbors and community members, is a powerful indicator of civic and political behavior (R. Putnam, 2000). Analysis of the Community Wellbeing Survey and the original Phase Two Survey suggests that trust in the community and confidence in the responsiveness of local government is lacking in Hartford. As a result, the weak social connectedness of Hispanics to their city and their unfavorably perceived influence on government decisions shapes their political incorporation. Although Hartford leaders recognize the importance of trust and stability in the relationships that the Hispanic community has with government and civil society, these interviews did not reveal an understanding of the extent to which distrust is affecting the Hispanic population in Hartford.

City Trust and Appreciation

To measure community trust and perceptions of the city, DataHaven asked residents about satisfaction with their city, police approval, feeling safe to walk at night, trusting neighbors, having positive role models, and levels of social support (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Community trust in Hartford falls below the levels of trust in other Greater Hartford cities for the first five measures. Hartford had the second lowest rating just under East Hartford for the measure of social support (DataHaven & Siena College Research

Institute, 2019). These results indicate that Hartford residents do not feel as stable or safe in their community as the residents of other Greater Hartford cities. Lacking meaningful social support, safety, and trust can decrease residents' feelings of connectedness and attachment to their city (R. Putnam, 2000). As a result, there is less motivation to engage locally or to demand city action (R. Putnam, 2000). Low levels of trust and lack of safety may contribute to decreased political incorporation in Hartford.

A factor that contributes to an individual's community attachment is their satisfaction with the city as a whole. A comparison between white, Black, and Hispanic respondents in 2018 indicates that Hispanics in Hartford have a slightly greater approval of the city (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Figure 3.3 displays satisfaction with Hartford by race/ethnicity. Despite a higher satisfaction with Hartford, Hispanics in the city were less satisfied with their personal lives than the white or Black residents surveyed in 2018 (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Figure 3.4 shows satisfaction with personal life by race/ethnicity.
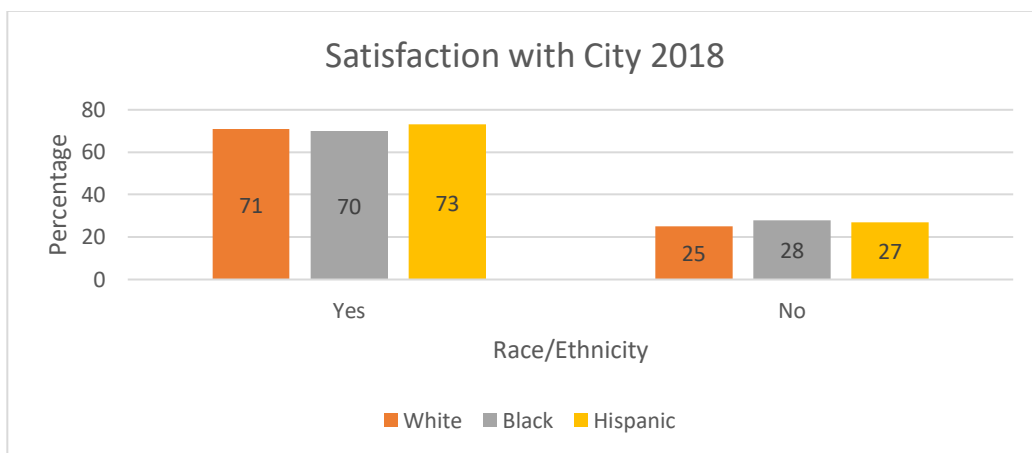
Figure 3.3 Satisfaction with the City (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019)
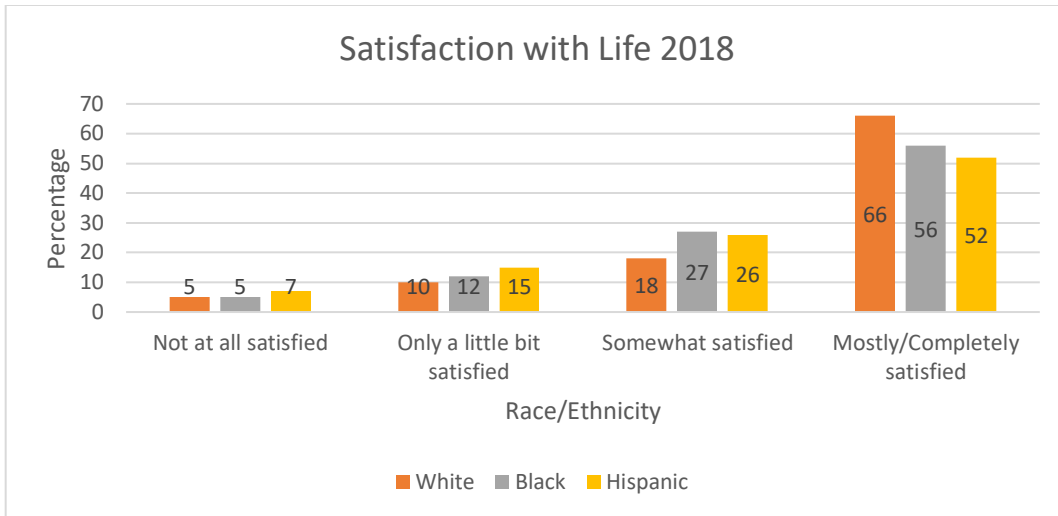
Figure 3.4 Satisfaction with Life (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019)

Both surveys present high levels of trust among friends and family, however, with respect to community trust and appreciation Hartford Hispanics decrease significantly in their self-reported figures. The original Phase Two Survey found that 49% "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that they have enough people to count on, while 80% of the sample report being content in their relationships with friends and family. These results are supported by the findings in the DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey for community trust and appreciation. The vast majority of Hispanics (89%) responded to the Community Wellbeing Survey that they are comfortable in their relationships with relatives and friends and believe that they have enough people they can rely on (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016). Responses from the white and Black population are similar with 90% and 87% respectively (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2016).

Nonetheless, in terms of non-relatives or friends, the survey results present lower levels of comfort in the Hartford community for Hispanic and Black respondents compared to the white

respondents. Only 54% of Hispanics and 56% of Blacks that were surveyed in 2018 "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that they can trust people in their neighborhood (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Sixty-six percent of the white sample responded to neighborhood trust with "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Compared with the statistic that identifies 89% of Hispanics having enough relatives or friends to count on, the low levels of trust in neighbors suggests that outside of personal social connections, Hartford is not adequately cultivating connections among its Hispanic residents (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). These results demonstrate distrust among Hispanics in Hartford with their city and communities. Distrust of neighbors and unsubstantial connections to the city relate to the conclusions of Hartford leaders with respect to the gravity of building relationships with the Hispanic community to mobilize and motivate a desire to participate. Due to the fact that low levels of affiliation with a community from lack of trust can negatively affect the desire to engage politically, Hartford Hispanics may not be developing community attachments that encourage their political action (R. Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, inadequate methods of communication to relay decreased attachment, trust, and motivation to participate greatly inhibits the ability of government officials to recognize these barriers to participation.

Government Trust and Effectiveness

The original Phase Two Survey and the Community Wellbeing Survey identify a lack of trust in local government to represent and effectively respond to their community needs. Hispanic responses to the Community Wellbeing Survey from 2018 measures that 56% say local government has a "fair" or "poor" response to the needs of residents in Hartford compared to the

reports from the Black sample (64%) and the white sample (60%) (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Furthermore, 58% of Hispanics surveyed in 2018 say that they have "a little influence" or "no influence at all" on local government decision making, with the Black respondents measuring at 67% and white at 59% (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). Figures 3.5 and 3.6 present this information visually. Both figures demonstrate residents' perceptions of ineffective government responses and civillian influence upon local government decisions. For all three groups, the majority of survey respondents do not believe that local government in Hartford is producing the necessary responses to community concerns. Focusing on the Hispanic population, the data provides evidence that the local Hartford government has not yet developed a trusted reputation in their efforts to support and represent the Hispanic community. There is a clear dissatisfaction in representation and effectiveness on behalf of the Hispanic population living in Hartford that is not being communicated to local government in a manner that evokes substantial change to remove this barrier.
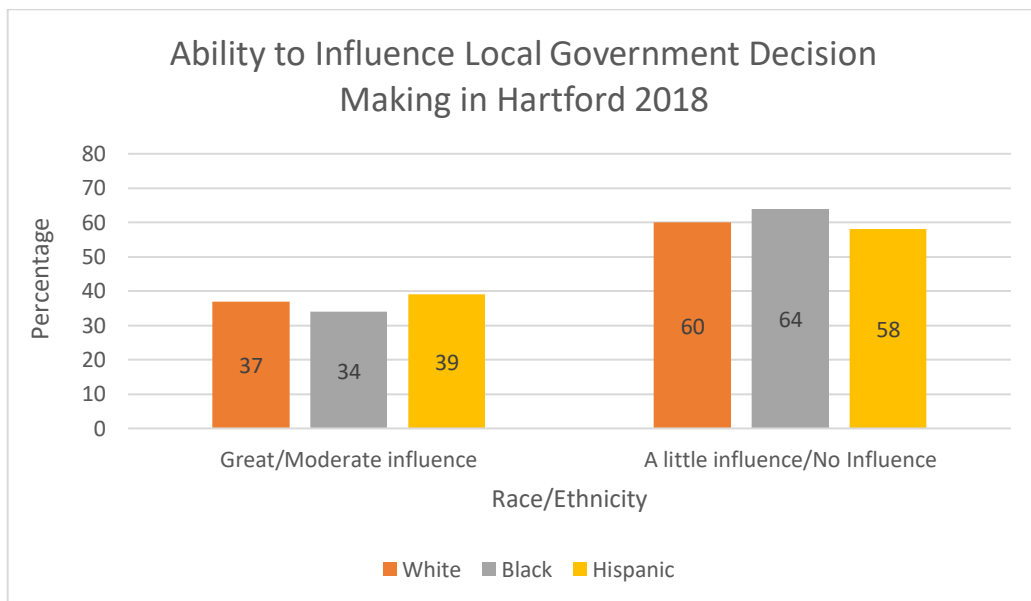
Figure 3.5 Ability to Influence Local Government Decision Making
(DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019)
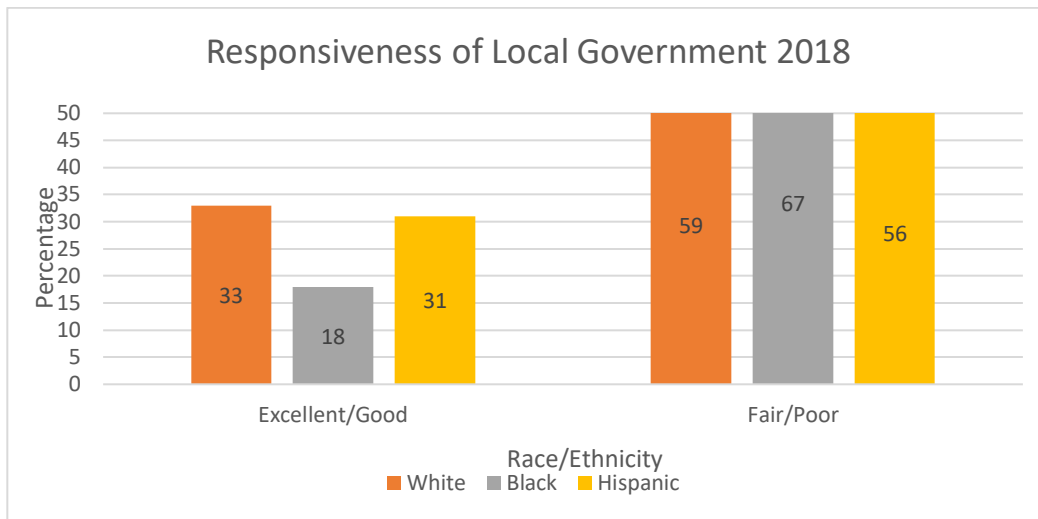
Figure 3.6 Responsiveness of Local Government (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019)

Relevant to the topic of government responsiveness are two comments from the Phase Two Survey that emphasize this population's perception of how local government listens to, and how they approach, Hispanic-specific problems. One respondent wrote that the "lack of change in policies that have been spoken for years" is one of the barriers that greatly affects the Hispanic community's ability to be politically active. The second stated their lack of faith in politicians and government and, as a result, distrust in political action. These two responses are notable, as they demonstrate local government's inability to win the trust and confidence of the Hispanic population through past actions. Perceptions of government responsiveness were directly measured in the Phase Two Survey. The two questions of how effective local government is in addressing issues facing Hispanic and Latinos, and a separate question that asked about local government effectiveness in addressing their personal needs, measures responsiveness. Overwhelmingly for both questions, the highest percentage of respondents chose "somewhat effective" with "not at all effective" being the second highest. The Hartford residents that were

surveyed in the Phase Two Survey align with the perceptions of the Hispanic respondents from the Community Wellbeing survey. Hispanics in Hartford do not perceive the local government as effective in creating or changing policy that accounts for the concerns of their community. Figures 3.8 and 3.9 present the Phase Two Survey Responses visually.
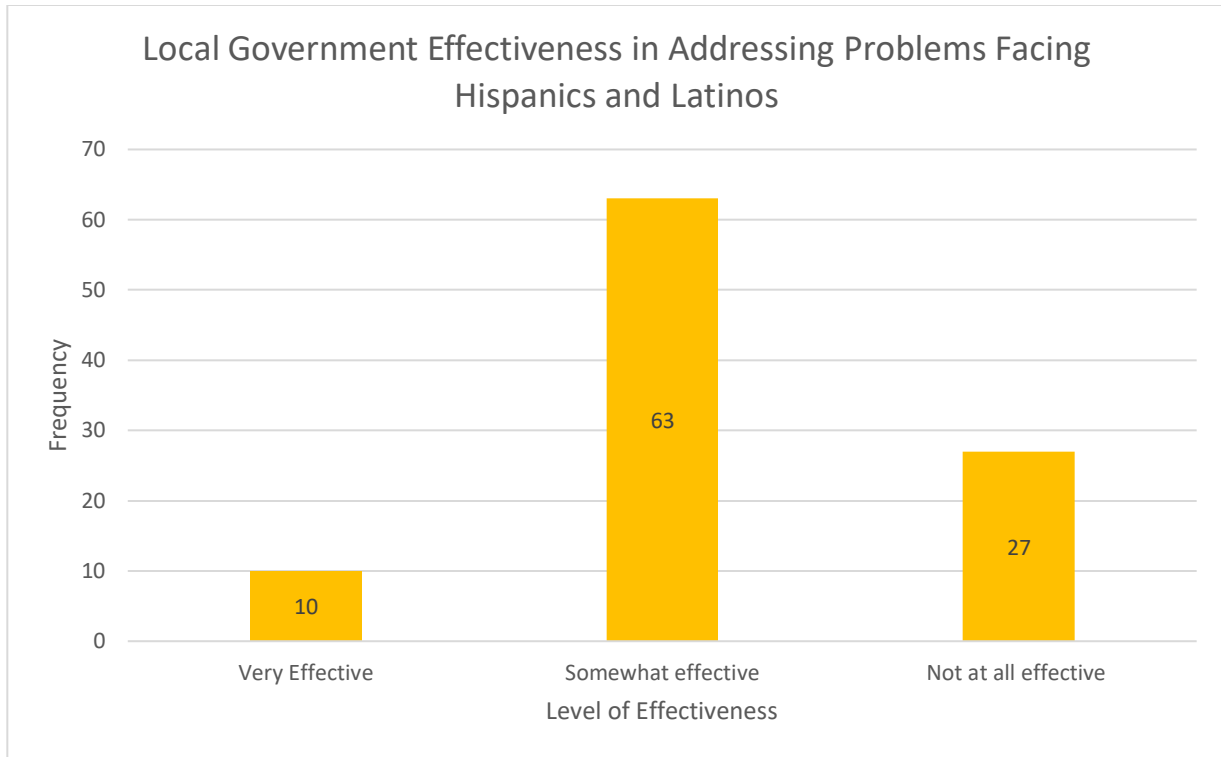
3.8 Effectiveness of Local Government in Addressing Issues Facing Hispanics/Latinos (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

Effectiveness of Local Government in Addressing Issues Facing you Personally

Very Effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective at all
17	48	36
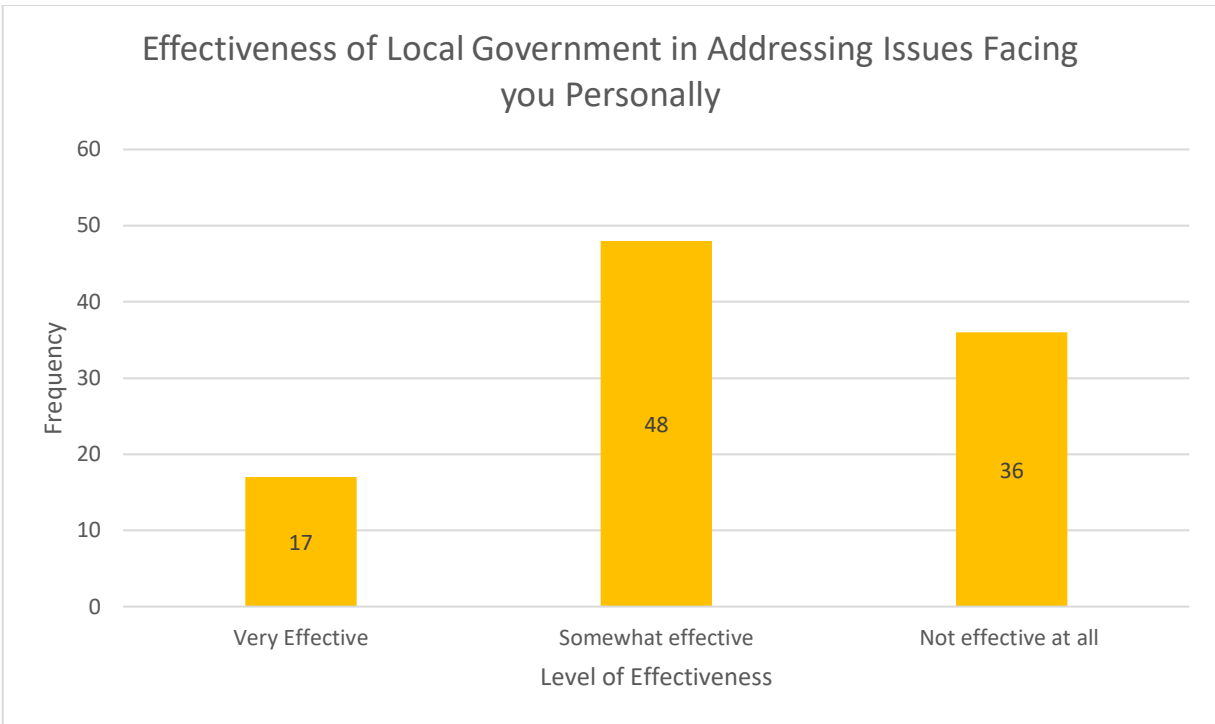
3.9 Effectiveness of Local Government in Addressing Issues Facing you Personally (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

The interviews with Hartford leaders highlighted the extreme lack of consensus with respect to the necessary changes to be implemented in the city that would improve the political incorporation of Hispanics in Hartford. As representatives of government and civic institutions, a clear failure to collectively name policy changes or institutional action is prominent. The original Phase Two Survey specifically addressed this question to the survey respondents. With respect to how local government can improve the political representation of Hispanics and Latinos in the city, the respondents provided detailed answers. Desired changes include "cultural authorities and programs" to promote individual and economic development, the revival of neighborhood activism, giving residents a voice in the decisions made affecting their community, and following through with promised action. There was no shortage of additional opinions and recommendations provided by the survey respondents. Hispanic residents of Hartford know what

they want to see happen in Hartford, but they feel that they have very little influence to make those changes happen. Important to include is the sentiment of one of Hartford's Hispanic residents who is asking the city to invest in their Hispanic leaders:

> Buscar mujeres líderes Hispanas que hablan español y que entiendan la cultura. Hay muchas mujeres trabajando en la política que son multicultural y bilingües y hace su labor sin tanta propaganda, ni fotos, ni llamanda la atención (Look for Hispanic female leaders that speak Spanish and that understand the culture. There are many women working in politics who are multicultural and bilingual who work without propaganda, pictures, or any recognition).

This quote emphasizes the level of discontent that Hispanics in Hartford have for the representation of the community in local government positions. Evidence of the desire to be politically incorporated and participate in Hartford is clear through these survey responses. The political engagement on behalf of the Hispanic community seems to be affected by the confusion on political topics and a lack of awareness on what political opportunities are available in the city, not the result of purposeful inaction.

Perceptions of Civic Institutions in Hartford

As is the case with community trust and the perceptions of government effectiveness, Hartford leaders noted the significance of building institutional reputations that connote progress and advocacy. Phase one highlighted how trusted relationships between the Hispanic community and civic institutions result in the most efficient and effective political incorporation of this population. The original Phase Two Survey confirms how trust can affect political incorporation. In the Phase Two Survey, respondents were asked to define the changes or action that civic institutions can take part in to improve the lives and political representation of Hispanics. Similar to the explicit policy and government changes desired on behalf of this community, the Hispanic residents surveyed in the original Phase Two Survey additionally know what action they want to see from the civic institutions in civil society. The most significant call to action found across a

variety of different survey responses was the request for genuine intervention that is community-led. Working through grassroots and community-based organizations to deliver promised aid can allow institutions that serve Hispanics in the city to build a trustworthy reputation. The focus on community-led cooperation can signal to the Hispanic community genuine interest in advancing the lives of the population. One individual noted that, "Hartford organizations should commit to improve the livelihood of Hispanic/Latinos by consulting genuine resources, not just for statistics." Others called for better educational resources, healthcare, and information on political topics. The Hartford residents that were surveyed have concrete ideas of what they want the city government and civic institutions to implement in Hartford that would improve the political representation, the lives, and the access to political opportunities for the Hispanic community.

Although many of the survey respondents provided constructive comments on how institutions in Hartford can better reach the needs of the Hispanic community, some comments highlighted the extreme disappointment and distrust that the community holds for the civic institutions in the city. The failure of civic institutions to cultivate relationships with their audience has negatively affected the manner in which Hispanics view the institutions designed to support them. Confirming the conclusions of Hartford's leaders, the lack of effective communication between the Hispanic community and civic institutions greatly contributes to their distrust and belief that few institutions in the city are actively advocating for the Hispanic population. The following quote emphasizes the community's skepticism of city efforts to improve the lives of Hispanics based on past actions that failed to adequately support, address, or benefit Hispanics. In response to the question asking which institutions in the city are doing the most to help the Hispanic community, the quote reads, "Ninguna, todas sólo buscan sus propias intereses y pedir fondos de dinero para llenarse los bolsillos" (None, they are only looking for

their own interests and asking for monetary funds to fill their own purses). From the perspectives of Hispanics in Hartford, civic institutions are not successful in advocating for the Hispanic community. A significant lack of trust and low expectations for the institutions in civil society that intend to serve this population is evident. The results confirm the representatives' speculations that inadequate communication among civic institutions and the Hispanic community are contributing to this population's belief that institutions are failing to broaden access to opportunities for political engagement.

This distrust in the efficacy and missions of civil society can explain why Hispanics' interaction with civic institutions is lower than the awareness of their existence in the city. Survey respondents were asked to identify the institutions that they have heard of before in the city, and later were asked to choose among the same list those institutions that they have personally interacted with in some way. The identification of existing institutions was generally higher than the reported use of those institutions. Table 3.4 displays the percent of the sample that reported one or more of the institutions for both questions. Respondents were asked to choose all that applied. In terms of institutions that respondents have heard of, the Hartford Public Library was most significantly identified by 51%, with the Spanish American Merchants Association (SAMA), Trinfo Café, and the Center for Latino Progress each following with 31%. However, with respect to personal interaction with the institutions, 36% of survey respondents identified the Hartford Public Library. SAMA with the second highest frequency (23%), Trinfo Café (21%), and the Center for Latino Progress (10%) exemplify that the actual interaction with institutions decreases at a substantial rate, apart from the slight increase in the use of five institutions.

In addition to inadequate trust and deficient confidence in civic institutions to prioritize the interests of the Hispanic community, the low levels of recognition and use of civic institutions in Hartford speaks to the failing communication between Hispanics and civil society. The institution that received the highest recognition was the Hartford Public Library. However, it was still just slightly over half of the Phase Two Survey population that knew of its support for Hispanic individuals. Hispanic awareness of the institutions in Hartford with missions of advocating for this population is significantly low and can be attributed to inadequate communication on behalf of the civic institutions. With greater distribution of information regarding the services and missions of civic institutions, the Hispanic trust for civic institutions can increase and their reputations in Hartford will better reflect the commitment to supporting and mobilizing the Hispanic community.

Number of Institutions	Heard of		Interacted with	
	#	%	#	%
1	10	26	17	46
2	10	26	9	24
3	7	18	6	16
4	6	15	2	5
5	4	10	3	8
6	2	5	0	0
Total		**100%**		**100%**

Table 3.4 Awareness and Use of Civic Institutions

Confusion on Participation

An additionally important theme that was identified throughout the Phase Two Survey responses was the confusion surrounding political participation opportunities in Hartford. The residents that were surveyed noted their distrust, misunderstandings, and lack of knowledge on how to learn more about political information in the city. The trouble of understanding politics in Hartford and not knowing where one can find the most reliable information presented in a manner that is easy to comprehend severely affects the ability of Hispanics in Hartford to engage politically. When questioned about how Hartford can improve the political representation of Hispanics, one individual stated the city can "increase[e] political awareness by teaching the audience of the current state of politics, and how the voting process will produce change. At times, I don't commit to the political awareness because I'm uncertain where to begin researching." Another noted the importance of city action to spread awareness by asking Hispanic-serving institutions in Hartford to "put more advertisement publicly (like make the community aware of the political topics that are currently going on in public spaces like Walmart, or posting signs around neighborhoods). I lack a clear image of what is going on." Respondents presented the desire to learn more about politics and the opportunities in Hartford that would help make change in the city.

Figure 3.7 displays the responses from the Hartford residents surveyed with regard to the barriers that prevent political incorporation. Respondents were asked to check all that apply. The lack of education on political topics is the most prevalent barrier with a frequency of 60%. The perception that their political participation has no effect and the problem of not understanding how to participate were two other barriers identified at high rates of 40% and 35% respectively. Information collected through this Phase Two Survey suggests that political incorporation for the

Hispanic community in Hartford is restricted by their confusion and being unaware of how to engage politically in the city.

Barriers to Political Action
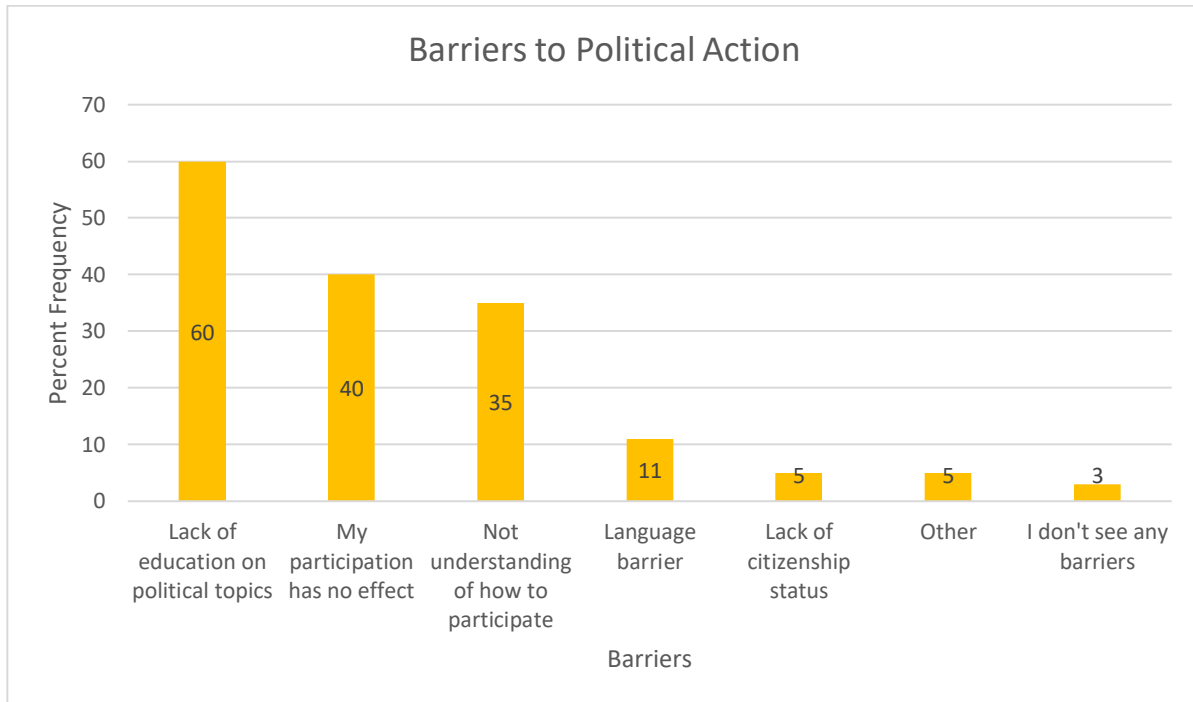
3.10 Barriers to Political Action (Phase Two Survey, 2021)

DataHaven's research supports this result. They find low civic participation in "areas with fewer local news outlets and declining coverage" (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019, pp. 98). Although the city of Hartford has many news outlets, the information is not being relayed to the Hispanic community in a manner that is accessible and easy to understand. Insufficient news coverage that fails to provide the population with political information they can comprehend negatively affects political participation (DataHaven & Siena College Research Institute, 2019). For Hartford's Hispanic population, the challenge of not understanding political news coverage or how to be involved politically can stem from the lack

of education on this topic, the language barrier, and inadequate efforts to make this information accessible. The inferences DataHaven reached with respect to news coverage accessibility and its relationship to political incorporation supports the results found in the Phase Two Survey: the Hispanic population in Hartford does not believe political coverage and information on participation opportunities are reaching their community in a manner that mobilizes greater political engagement. This suggests that the government and civic institutions are unaware of how significantly these problems are affecting the Hispanic community's political incorporation.

Conclusion

Hartford leaders and Hispanic residents of Hartford reached a consensus with respect to two barriers of financial instability and ineffective communication that inhibit political incorporation. Additionally, Hartford leaders concluded that the development of trustworthy relationships with the Hispanic community and grassroots leaders is an important mobilization tactic to improve political engagement. The representative Community Wellbeing Survey and the smaller Phase Two Survey identify the role of trust by highlighting the Hispanic population's extreme distrust in the Hartford community and in the ability of government to effectively address Hispanic needs. This distrust is an added barrier to the political incorporation of Hispanic residents of Hartford. Furthermore, the negative reputations of civic institutions that are perceived by the Hispanic community is an example of the failing communication between these two groups acknowledged by Hartford representatives. Survey respondents clearly stated the changes that they want to see in Hartford to improve the livelihoods and political representation of their community. However, analysis of both surveys suggests that, despite retaining the desired changes, this population does not know how to engage politically. Although Hartford's

Hispanic community can verbalize the changes they want to see in the city, the barriers to incorporation inhibit their ability to demand these changes. In the city of Hartford, both civic institutions and government have important modifications to consider in order to better represent and serve the Hispanic im/migrant community. The last chapter of this thesis will outline various policy recommendations that are supported by these findings.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

This thesis investigated the political incorporation of Hartford's Hispanic im/migrant population. Through an analysis of past im/migrant-organized community-based groups in Hartford, interviews with representatives from government and civic institutions, and two surveys of the Hispanic population in Hartford, this thesis evaluated access to political engagement opportunities for the Hispanic im/migrant community. History demonstrates the importance of building a strong and sustained political presence that ensures opportunities for political incorporation that persist over extended periods of time. This thesis concludes that Hartford leaders recognize some barriers facing the im/migrant community. Both phases of research suggest financial strain as one of the biggest barriers affecting the capacity of Hispanic im/migrants to prioritize political incorporation, among various other basic needs that the Hispanic im/migrant community is lacking. In addition, Hartford leaders and Hispanic residents agree that incorporation is complicated by communication barriers between civic and political institutions and Hispanic im/migrants. Indeed, Hispanic survey respondents presented a clear lack of trust in their community, in the representation provided by their local government, and in the ability of civic institutions to adequately support them. This distrust is perpetuated by the lack of successful communication methods that convey the intentions and positive actions of government and civic institutions.

Given barriers to communication and lack of trust, local officials and Hispanic residents do not agree on solutions to promoting im/migrant political incorporation. Local representatives were unable to reach a consensus on the necessary steps to be implemented. In contrast, the survey respondents had clear and explicit notions of the changes desired in Hartford. However, they lack information on local political issues and how to engage politically. A failure to

understand political involvement can have an extremely negative impact on political incorporation. Although Hartford leaders agree with the Hispanic community that basic needs and communication are two important barriers to political participation, it is noteworthy that the Hispanic population further identified the lack of trust, confusion on participation methods, and diminished political education as additional barriers inhibiting incorporation. The following policy recommendations were developed in the context of the research conducted for this thesis to address these barriers acknowledged by government, civil society, and the Hispanic im/migrant community.

Policy Recommendations

Make Greater Efforts to Provide Basic Essentials

Hartford leaders argued that the failure to satisfy the basic needs of Hispanic im/migrants can lead to their decreased participation in political and civic life, citing the inability to prioritize political engagement over financial and social stability in the city. The Phase Two Survey originally designed for this thesis supports the conclusion of the Hartford representatives with respect to the barrier of insufficient basic needs. Specifically, the Phase Two Survey highlights the desire for greater attention to educational resources and healthcare access while additionally describing poverty and financial strain as the most important challenge facing the Hispanic im/migrant community. A representative survey of the Hartford population further confirms Hartford leaders' assumptions of financial and social obstacles that restrict the ability of this population to prioritize political engagement.

The importance of financial stability and satisfaction with other areas of life, such as health care access and educational attainment, are only three of many basic needs that should be

addressed before political incorporation. An im/migrant's comfort and stability in their new society is essential in their ability to prioritize participating politically. Attachment to the city and affiliation with the community motivates political and civic incorporation to improve community and city life (R. D. Putnam, 1993). Therefore, the local government in Hartford should make greater efforts to fulfill these important basic needs in order to increase feelings of stability in the financial and social lives of Hispanic im/migrants. If Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford are able to maintain sufficient quantities of the basic needs in life, they will be in improved positions to contribute politically to the city of Hartford. Survey results suggest that improvements in economic security and health care are some of the basic needs that this population could benefit from. However, further research is necessary to ensure all areas of the financial and social lives of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford are being met.

Cooperate with Community Leaders and Grassroots to Find Effective Methods of Communication

Results from both phases of research for this thesis identify the communication between government, civic institutions, and the Hispanic im/migrant community as an area in need of improvement. Hartford leaders reached a consensus that communication and mobilization for political incorporation occurs most effectively when enacted through trusted relationships with community leaders and grassroots organizations. Nonetheless, the reputation of local government in Hartford perceived by the Hispanic community that was surveyed connotes a failure to represent and adequately include Hispanic-specific concerns. It is reasonable to conclude that ineffective manners of communicating city efforts to improve access to and broaden awareness of engagement opportunities are contributing to this distrust in government effectiveness.

Unsuccessful communication is inhibiting political participation of Hispanics im/migrants in Hartford by perpetuating distrust in government action. Furthermore, the information on political topics and opportunities for political engagement are not communicated to the Hispanic im/migrant population in a manner that mobilizes action. As a result, in order to improve upon the communication between the Hispanic im/migrant community and the local government, this thesis recommends building trusted relationships with leaders of the Hispanic im/migrant population and developing a task-force designed exclusively for the dissemination of political news.

Improve upon the Trust in Government

Efforts to improve political engagement and expand access to political opportunities in the city must be implemented in a manner that encourages the participation of the Hispanic im/migrant community. To do so, the government and institutional representatives noted that trust is an important factor in creating a reputation that is positively received in this community. These relationships are often organized and strengthened through the cooperation of community leaders and grassroots groups with government institutions. For the local government to be in a better position to represent and address the needs of the Hispanic im/migrant population residing in Hartford, trustworthy bonds must be developed with community-based leaders and organizations.

Trust in government institutions grows when the population feels supported, seen, and heard by the individuals in charge of the decisions that affect their community. Therefore, local government in Hartford should be taking measures to instill trust and develop a positive reputation of government effectiveness. Additionally, informed policy directed towards

improving community relations will incentivize greater political action on behalf of Hispanic im/migrants. For these efforts to be successful, government officials need to cooperate with community leaders and community-based organizations. Although Hartford has noteworthy representation of the Hispanic community within City Council, it is important for im/migrant-organized grassroots groups to work closely with local government to provide important insight on community-level concerns. Directly including the voices and opinions of this population will strengthen trust in government while advising the institution on how to better address the needs of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford. In turn, this successful action will encourage greater involvement of the im/migrant population in political matters and strengthen a positive and trusted government reputation.

Organize a Team Designed to Relay Political Information

The Phase Two survey finds a lack of understanding and insufficient education on political topics among the Hispanic population in Hartford. For Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford to successfully participate in the manner they wish to, it is necessary for the city to provide better access to political information. On the survey, many reported that they do not know where to get political information, while others focused on not understanding the political coverage they are able to access. Local government in Hartford, and the civic institutions that work to improve political access for this population, must implement practices that better reach the Hispanic im/migrant community. A task-force designed specifically for the dissemination of political information in a format that is easy to understand and act on is required. Local or state government can create this task force. By addressing educational barriers, language obstacles, and cultural differences in the dissemination of this information, the available political

opportunities will be communicated in a manner that is conducive to greater participation. This task force should be representative of the diversity in Hartford, including but not limited to the Hispanic im/migrant population residing in the city to ensure that all barriers are accounted for.

A Guide on How to Engage or Participate

Chapter Two of this thesis interviewed Hartford leaders and questioned how community-based organizations and Hispanic im/migrants could best maintain their visibility, legitimacy, and membership in government (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a). Overwhelmingly, the leaders placed this burden on the organizations themselves. However, government aid is often an important factor that contributes to the viability and survival of grassroots groups. Therefore, if the burden of maintaining a political presence resides with the community-based groups and leaders, it is necessary for the local government to specifically address the manners in which organizations can do so. The Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs is in a position to create a guide for community-based organizations and ethnic community groups that defines the required steps an organization must take to ensure a strong political presence. Due to the fact that an established political presence relays to government officials the issues and concerns of the Hispanic im/migrant population, political presence has the ability to evoke needed change or political action to address those challenges. A guide to maintaining political presence that is built upon research of how community-based organizations sustain the three key elements of visibility, legitimacy, and membership in government can help to alleviate short-term grassroots advocacy that doesn't survive (Ramakrishnan & Bloemraad, 2008a).

Directions for Further Research

This thesis investigated the political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants residing in Hartford. An evaluation of leaders' perceptions of this community's participation and an analysis of self-reported engagement on behalf of the Hispanic population concludes that Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford do not yet have a political presence that induces extensive political incorporation. The policy recommendations included in this chapter encourage further research on the most efficient and effective methods of distributing political information in a format that is easily accessible and understandable by all populations. Additionally, more research is necessary with respect to how community-based organizations can increase their political presence to ensure adequate representation of the concerns of different Hartford communities. Although this thesis focused on Hartford's Hispanic im/migrant population, the policy recommendations addressed in this conclusion can help to improve the political incorporation of all ethnicities and races. Research into the specific language and cultural values that differ between Hispanics in the city and various other groups is a necessary component when implementing the political information task-force and designing more effective methods of communication.

Hartford, as a city with a significant Hispanic population and a commitment to multiculturalism, has made important strides in representing and supporting its Hispanic im/migrant community. As a welcoming city that supports and celebrates diversity, Hartford is in a position to successfully and efficiently implement the policy recommendations outlined in this conclusion. Despite the clear progress that can be made with respect to representation, communication, and education on political topics, Hartford has continuously put forth efforts to

improve the opportunities for political action and incorporation as city demographics change over time. With the policy recommendations designed to improve the barriers of basic needs, communication, political awareness, and insufficient political presence, Hartford can incorporate Hispanic im/migrant voices in the important policy decisions regarding their community to accumulate greater levels of political incorporation.

Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Hartford Leaders

Interview Guide:

The guide is sectioned out based on sector. The beginning section of the guide is for civic institutional representatives, while the second part of the guide is for government representatives.

Before Consent form is read: Do I have your permission to record this interview? After the video recording has been transcribed, and all personal identifiable information has been erased in that transcription, I will delete any video recordings that I have.

After the consent form has been read: I would like to confirm with you that you agree to participating in this interview.

Project Definition: This project aims to understand immigrant and migrant-serving institutions in Hartford and the ways in which they support Hispanic immigrant and migrant political incorporation. Immigrants are foreign-born individuals and their children living in Hartford. Hispanic immigrants include people who have come to Hartford with varying levels of legal status that have traveled from Hispanic countries. Migrants refer to the Puerto Rican population that has traveled from the island to the city of Hartford to settle down and build a new life.

First Question to all Interviewees: To begin, I would love to know what sparked your interest in political/immigrant advocacy? How did you get into this kind of work?

Civic

Organization Background:

- What is your organization's mission?

- What is the target population?

    o Among the diverse Hispanic population in Hartford, which groups or national origins do you tend to serve?

- What services does your organization offer?

- How do you reach your target population?

    o Social media

    o Word of mouth

    o Resource directories

Hispanic Population Needs and Priorities

- What do you see as the greatest needs of Hartford's Hispanic im/migrant population today?

Political Incorporation

- Is political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants a priority for your organization?

    o Do you think it is a priority for the Hispanic im/migrants?

- In what ways (if at all) does your organization address the political participation of Hispanic im/migrants in the city?

- o Increasing political presence

- o Mobilizing

- o Providing a space to share concerns

- o Bringing together groups/organizations with similar goals to achieve improved
  political opportunities

- What successes has your organizations or other organizations in Hartford had in
  promoting Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation?

- What obstacles does your organization and other organizations face in providing support
  and encouragement for greater political incorporation?

- What does your organization see as the obstacles that prevent Hispanic im/migrants
  themselves from participating politically?

- Do you receive feedback from the clients you assist? How do you incorporate this
  feedback in your planning and operations?

- Do you partner with any other local organizations in efforts to increase the political
  incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants in Hartford?

- What changes would you like to see in Hartford at a governmental/institutional level with
  respect to the political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants?

Accuracy of Services

- Is your organization happy with its level of outreach? What more could be done to aid in
  supporting the political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants?

- After your organization serves an individual, how do they continue to be politically
  active? Do you have a manner in which you follow up with past clients?

Government

Background:

- What is your position? – Commission, committee, etc.

- What is your mission? Who do you serve?

- Do you receive feedback from the Hispanic im/migrants you assist? How do you adjust policy to reflect this feedback?

  o In your experience, what methods of encouragement or mobilization are most effective?

  o What are the best ways to get Hispanic im/migrants participating politically and to retain political recognition for Hispanic im/migrants and their organizing?

Political Incorporation:

- Is political incorporation a priority?

  o Do you think it is a priority for the Hispanic im/migrants?

- In what ways does local and state government aid in mobilizing or increasing the political participation of Hispanic im/migrants in the city?

- How do you encourage civic institutions in Hartford to support Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation?

  o Partnerships?

  o Funding?

  o Raising awareness?

- Which programs and policies have successfully supported Hispanic im/migrant political incorporation?

- What obstacles does government face in providing support and encouragement for greater political incorporation?

- What does your organization see as the obstacles that prevent Hispanic im/migrants themselves from participating politically?

Accuracy of services:

- Are you happy with CT's/Hartford's level of outreach? What more could be done to aid in supporting the political incorporation of Hispanic im/migrants?

- In what ways do you think the city can improve with regard to encouraging political incorporation of the city's Hispanic im/migrants?
  - Civil society?

Advice to be asked to all Interviewees

- How would you recommend I distribute a survey to best reach the Hispanic im/migrant population living in Hartford?

- Would your organization be willing to call attention to the survey?

- Who else should I speak to?
  - Organizations
  - City actors
  - Government
  - Businesses

Appendix B: Survey Instrument (English Version)

Survey Instrument through Qualtrics

- In what language would you like to take this survey? ¿En qué idioma le gustaría realizar esta encuesta?

  o English

  o Español

<u>Survey Introductory Statement:</u>

A Trinity College student is currently working on a research project concerning political action and political participation. The research is a two-phase design that aims to determine the extent of support and mobilization that is provided to Hispanic immigrants and migrants in Hartford that want to become more politically active. The first phase included interviews with government officials, community leaders, and institutional representatives to determine the support offered to individuals in Hartford. This survey is the second phase and will be asking Hispanic-identifying immigrants and migrants living in the city of Hartford about their political action and their experience with resources located in Hartford. Survey responses collected from Hispanic immigrants and migrants will be anonymous and will define the institutions in Hartford that are most successful in providing services to the Hispanic community. All survey participants will be entered into a raffle to win one of ten $30 Visa gift-cards.

If you are an Hispanic-identifying immigrant or migrant living in Hartford, I value your experiences, concerns, and opinions regarding the support available for political action. Please fill out this anonymous survey to analyze whether the support for political participation of the

Hispanic community is sufficient in Hartford. If you have any questions, you can contact me at Olivia.painchaud@trincoll.edu. Thank you for your time and for completing this survey.

<u>Survey Consent Statement:</u>

Project Description: I understand that this survey is going to ask me about my political habits, membership in community organizations in the city of Hartford, and my experiences with using the resources available in Hartford. I understand that my participation in this survey will enter me into a raffle to win one of ten $30 Visa gift-cards. At the end of the survey, there will be an opportunity to provide an email or phone number which will be the method of contact for those who win the raffle. Winners will be selected randomly.

Confidentiality: I understand that my participation in this survey is voluntary and that my responses will be kept confidential. I understand that my responses will not be shared publicly and will be used to analyze the systems of support available in Hartford for Hispanic immigrants and migrants. If I wish to do so, I can provide an email or phone number at the end of the survey to be entered into a raffle for one of ten $30 Visa gift-cards. If I do provide an email or phone number, I understand that this information will be deleted after notice of winnings have been sent. I understand that answers to the survey questions will not be connected to my email or phone number.

Benefits: The benefits of this survey are that participants have the opportunity to describe the levels of support for political action that exist in the city of Hartford. Survey participants have the opportunity to share their experiences and critique city resources designed for Hispanic immigrants and migrants. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks to participating in this survey, but I understand that I am able to only share aspects of my experiences that I am comfortable sharing.

Voluntary: I am aware that participation in this survey is voluntary. I may skip any questions I do not want to answer or end the survey at any time without any penalty.

Contact Information: If I have any questions regarding this project or wish to have further information, I am free to contact Olivia Painchaud at Olivia.painchaud@trincoll.edu.

<u>Please select from the below responses to confirm or deny your consent to participation in this survey.</u>

> **I agree**
>
> **I do not agree**

<u>Experience in Hartford</u>

- How many years have you lived in Greater Hartford?

    o Less than a year

    o 1-2 years

    o 3-5 years

    o 6-8 years

    o 8-10 years

    o More than 10 years

    o My entire life

- [If they don't say "my entire life"] Did you move to Greater Hartford from …

    o Another place in the mainland US

    o Puerto Rico

    o Another country: (please specify)

- On a scale of the most important problem to no problem, how important are the follow problems that Hispanics/Latinos in Hartford are facing? (in a grid format)

  o Lack of political representation

  o Unemployment/lack of jobs/lack of job training

  o Poverty

  o Covid-19 Pandemic

  o Language barrier

  o Food scarcity

  o Lack of housing

  o Drug abuse/crime rates

  o Prejudice/discrimination

  o Limited educational opportunities

  o Other (please describe)

- How effective is the local government in addressing the problems facing Hispanics/Latinos in Hartford?

  o Very effective

  o Somewhat effective

  o Not effective at all

- How effective is the local government in addressing the problems facing you personally?

  o Very effective

  o Somewhat effective

  o Not effective at all

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

"The people in charge of the local government don't care about people like me."

- o Strongly agree

- o Somewhat agree

- o Neither agree nor disagree

- o Somewhat disagree

- o Strongly disagree

Civic and Political Engagement

- How interested are you in politics and public affairs?

  - o Very interested

  - o Somewhat interested

  - o Not at all interested

- To what extent do you agree with the following statement:

  "My political action has a significant impact on local policies and city resources."

  - o Strongly agree

  - o Somewhat agree

  - o Neither agree nor disagree

  - o Somewhat disagree

  - o Strongly disagree

- For information about public affairs and politics, would you say you rely more heavily on Spanish-language television, radio, and newspapers, or on English-language TV, radio, and newspapers?

  - o English more

- Spanish more

- Both Equally

- How do you get your news on local politics and public affairs?

  - I don't follow local news

  - Newspapers

  - TV

  - Social Media

  - Conversations with friends and family

  - Other: (please specify)

- Before you came to Hartford, how active were you in a political party, political organization, or in any other type of organizations such as labor unions, student organizations, or paramilitary organizations?

  - Never joined

  - Not active at all

  - A member, but not active

  - Somewhat active

  - Very active

- In the Hartford region, how active are you in a political party, political organization, or in any other type of organizations such as labor unions, student organizations, or paramilitary organizations??

  - Never joined

  - Not active at all

  - A member, but not active

- o Somewhat active

- o Very active

- In the last 12 months have you: (Check all that apply)

  - o Contacted public officials

  - o Worked on or for a campaign

  - o Been a part of a neighborhood association

  - o Attended a public demonstration/protest

  - o Posted about politics on social media

  - o Participated in political conversations with family and friends

  - o Voted

  - o Been a member of an organization that took a political stance (Church,

    community group, etc.)

  - o Donated money to a political organization or campaign

  - o Other: (please specify)

- What barriers (if any) make it more difficult to be politically active in Hartford? (Check

  all that apply)

  - o Language barrier

  - o My participation has no effect

  - o Lack of education on political topics

  - o Not understanding of how to participate

  - o Lack of citizenship status

  - o Other (please specify)

  - o I don't see any barriers

Knowledge of and Views on Hartford Organizations

- Which organizations in Hartford are doing the most to help Hispanic/Latino

  communities?

  - Open text box

  - I don't know of any organizations.

- Which of these Hartford organizations have you heard of before? (Check all that apply

  [randomize])

  - Lilly Sin Barreras

  - Hartford Deportation Defense

  - CT Coalition to End Homelessness

  - Make the Road CT

  - The Hispanic Federation

  - The Center for Latino Progress

  - Trinfo Café

  - CT Students for a Dream

  - Community Renewal Team

  - The Spanish American Merchants Association

  - The Hartford Public Library

  - The American Place at the Hartford Public Library

  - Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (CRIA)

  - The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity

- Which of these organizations have you interacted with in some way? (Check all that apply)
  - ○ Lilly Sin Barreras
  - ○ Hartford Deportation Defense
  - ○ CT Coalition to End Homelessness
  - ○ Make the Road CT
  - ○ The Hispanic Federation
  - ○ The Center for Latino Progress
  - ○ Trinfo Café
  - ○ CT Students for a Dream
  - ○ Community Renewal Team
  - ○ The Spanish American Merchants Association
  - ○ The Hartford Public Library
  - ○ The American Place at the Hartford Public Library
  - ○ Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (CRIA)
  - ○ The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity
- What could Hartford organizations do to improve the lives of Hispanics and Latinos?
  - ○ Open response
- What could Hartford organizations do to improve the political representation of Hispanics and Latinos?
  - ○ Open Response

Demographics

- How satisfied are you with your current financial situation?

  - Very satisfied

  - Somewhat satisfied

  - Somewhat dissatisfied

  - Very dissatisfied

- How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

  "I am content with my friendships and relationships"

  - Strongly agree

  - Somewhat agree

  - Neither agree nor disagree

  - Somewhat disagree

  - Strongly disagree

- How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

  "I have enough people I can ask for help when I need it"

  - Strongly agree

  - Somewhat agree

  - Neither agree nor disagree

  - Somewhat disagree

  - Strongly disagree

- What is your gender?

  - Male

  - Female

- o Other (please specify)

- What racial or ethnic group(s) best describe you? (Check all that apply)

    - o White

    - o Black or African American

    - o Hispanic or Latino

    - o Asian or Pacific Islander

    - o Native American or American Indian

    - o Caribbean or West Indian

    - o Other (please specify*)*

- Counting yourself, how many people are currently living in your household?

    - o 1 – Just me

    - o 2

    - o 3

    - o 4

    - o 5

    - o 6

    - o 7 or more

- Which neighborhood do you live in?

    - o Blue Hills

    - o North East

    - o North Meadows

    - o Upper Albany

    - o Clay Arsenal

- o West End

- o Asylum Hill

- o Downtown

- o Parkville

- o Frog Hollow

- o South Green

- o Sheldon Charter Oak

- o Behind the Rocks

- o Barry Square

- o South Meadows

- o South End

- o South West

- o Other: (please specify)

- What would you say is the main reason you came to live in the mainland United States?

  - o Education

  - o Family Reunification

  - o Escape political turmoil

  - o My parents brought me as a child

  - o Improve my economic situation

  - o Other: (please specify)

- Before the Coronavirus pandemic, which of the following best described your employment status?

  - o Full-time

- o Part-time

- o Temporarily laid off

- o Retired

- o Permanently disabled

- o Homemaker

- o Student

- o Other

- What is your highest level of education completed?

  - o None

  - o Eighth grade or below

  - o Some high school

  - o GED

  - o High school graduate

  - o Some college

  - o 4 year college degree

  - o Graduate or professional degree

- In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

  - o Very liberal

  - o Liberal

  - o Moderate

  - o Conservative

  - o Very conservative

  - o Not sure

- To be entered into the raffle for one of ten $30 Visa gift-cards, please enter an email or phone number you would like to be reached at. This information will not be recorded in connection to the survey responses.

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