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Que Se Sepa: Perspectives from the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Hartford

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Que Se Sepa: Perspectives from the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Hartford

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Spring 2013

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Thank you to all of the wonderful people I have met this spring and during my time at Trinity. I give special thanks to mi madrina, Maria Garay, for being the best godmother of all times. I also give special thanks to my mother, Therese A. Murphy, for keeping me grounded for these past four years. I dedicate my project to my friends, but most importantly my mommy and my G-ma.

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Motivation

When I went abroad to Buenos Aires, Argentina my junior year, I wrote an extended research project about Conflict Resolution Mechanism of el Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), an intergovernmental organization founded on a free market agreement between countries in South America. I wanted to prove that the upsurge in regional organizations in Latin America was the region's way of finally realizing Simon Bolivar's dream of regional unity. Once finished with the study, I gave it to everyone to read: my professors, my host mother, my mom. Their comments were all the same. "Very good Christina, but why did you choose a topic that is so boring" or "Oh okay . . . but what does that have to do with anything?" In many ways they were right. Although MERCOSUR's Conflict Resolution Mechanism would have provided for an interesting lecture among International Relations scholars, beyond that what impact could my research have, especially in regards to everyday people like my mother or my host mom? In the beginning I wanted to continue developing my idea of the 21st Century Sueño Bolivariano, but each time I continued to think back on the experience I had with the MERCOSUR project. This was my last year at Trinity College. I wanted to leave behind something that was personally meaningful. Something that my mom would not say was boring. Something that would let my friends and family know that I have been thinking of them, and how grateful I am to have their support.

Que Se Sepa was the most exhausting, emotionally trying, yet satisfying project I have yet to do as an academic. This project has come from my heart and that it represents (or at least attempts to represent) an honest effort to give more inclusive meaning to my academic work. In class we often have discussions about the conditions and experiences of individuals. However in our discussions we often have no choice but to rely on secondary information. Although I understand that the purpose of a scholar's work is to impart some sort of truth, throughout my learning of human experiences I cannot help but to wonder about the actual personal sentiments of the individuals in question.

Although I am not a filmmaker, I wanted to do a documentary because I felt that it would give agency back to individuals by allowing them to directly communicate their experiences to an audience. Through this project I hope to generate communication and discussion between communities and individuals, and to promote the idea that the study of individuals cannot solely be done by a researcher on a subject, but also through mutual conversation between communities.

Introduction

Joseph Fitzpatrick states that an individual's or group's societal structure is central to identity. He mentions that ethnic identity within itself is based on: historical traditions, a person's relationship with historical traditions, a person's background, educational/occupational levels, political activity, and social life. Once an identity is formed, individuals can develop their own values, patterns of relationships, and institutions.¹ To be Puerto Rican here in the city of Hartford is a specific identity. In my project I explore the many perspectives related to such identity. *Que Se Sepa* in English roughly means "so that you know." The title comes directly from a song (which I play during the introduction of the film) by Roberto Roena. In the song, Roena informs the listener about where he is from and about his identity as a Puerto Rican and an artist. Like Roena, I wanted people to become acquainted with some of the experiences of Puerto Ricans living in Hartford. By focusing on these six themes – language, religion, race, politics, food, and music/arts – I intend to illustrate how these individuals relate to Hartford and Puerto Rico, and how their relationship shapes their identity. *Que Se Sepa*, both the documentary and the written essay, attempts to showcase a diverse range of perspectives in regards to the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Hartford, Connecticut.

Throughout this essay I refer to Puerto Rican individuals living and working in Hartford as a community, however I also use the term diaspora, therefore it is important that I establish a clear definition of both diaspora and community. There are multiple definitions of diaspora. Some scholars chose to restrict the study of Diaspora to focus on the dispersal aspect, while others are inclined to classify different types of diasporas. Clifford defines Diaspora as "displaced peoples who feel a connection with a prior home. He argues that the sense of connection must be strong enough to resist

¹ Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, *Puerto Rican Americans: The Meaning of Migration to the Mainland*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 39.

erasure through the normalizing processes of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing.”² Although I agree that many Puerto Ricans living in the diaspora feel a strong connection to the Island, because they have easy access to Puerto Rico, I am hesitant to label them as displaced people. In addition, as you will see in the essay, many of individuals I have interviewed view Hartford as their home, therefore they cannot be considered displaced if they are already home. (For the purpose of this project I will organize my discussion of Hartford’s Puerto Rican Diaspora using Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley’s definition.) Patterson and Kelley state that Diaspora is “the dispersal from a homeland, the making of a memory of that homeland, marginalization in the new location, a commitment to the maintenance/restoration of the homeland, and desire for return and a continuing relationship and identity with the homeland that shapes the consciousness and solidarity of the group.”³ I have specifically chosen this definition because it highlights individual and group relationships with both the ancestral homeland and the host land. As you will see later on, this strict relationship is problematic in terms of accurately portraying the experiences of many individuals within Hartford’s Puerto Rican community. However the definition is useful in terms of beginning to contemplate and ask questions about the actual experiences of many Puerto Ricans living in the Disapora.

Similar to diaspora, community also has multiple definitions. For this essay I will define community as a group of individuals that is bounded by a specific locality, and is “marked by historical continuity and shared traditions.”⁴ Although many of the interviewees live outside the city limits of Hartford, all of them have a close connection with the city. For those that currently do not live in Hartford, they have either grown up in Hartford and have fond memories of the city, or they currently

² James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 255.

³ Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 15.

⁴ Raymond Plant, “Community: Concept, Conception, and Ideology,” *Politics & Society* 8, no.79 (1978): 82.

work in Hartford and interact with the city community on a frequent basis. All of the interviewees identify as Puerto Rican, and in some form participate in Puerto Rican cultural traditions.

I had set out to defy generalizations made about the Hartford community by demonstrating that no two experiences are alike, but that, on a community and human level, there is commonality between the interviewees presented and the viewers watching. I remember that on the very first day as a freshman at Trinity College two Campus Safety officers held a dorm meeting and explicitly told myself and the other freshman that the community surrounding Trinity was not only unsafe, but that the individuals within this community were dangerous. I felt hurt not only because I knew that the school I was attending was unofficially promoting a misrepresentation of an entire community of people, but also because I knew that the only thing separating me from this “dangerous other” was my sometime unapparent affiliation with the school as a student, and that at any moment I could be mistaken as a criminal and a nuisance just as easily as many of youth in the neighborhood.

Overall, the goal of *Que Se Sepa* was to generate conversation, not only with the existing scholarship which centers on the Puerto Rican Diaspora in the United States, but also among individuals inside and outside the Puerto Rican Diaspora, especially within the Hartford and Greater-Hartford community. I am not sure if I have achieved these goals, however, I can say that as a result of this project, I have acquired a deep appreciation for the city of Hartford and the people who live and have lived in it.

The majority of my project is informed by interviews I collected during the spring 2013 semester. My interviews were based on a combination of the Modified Life History and Controlled Survey method. During each interview I asked interviewees a series of lead questions (some prewritten and some unplanned) in order to direct them to speak about their personal experiences as they relate to the six themes: race, politics, religion, language, food, and music/arts. Only one or two interviewees had

access to my list of questions. However none of the interviewees knew which questions I was going to use during the actual interview. I would also often bring a list of questions that were specific to the person being interviewed, which they were unaware of.

For this project I have interviewed eighteen individuals and two families: eight women, 16 men, 10 first generation, 9 second generation and 4 third generation (Father Diaz of St. Peter's church is Colombian). Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances and time constraints not all of the interviews are featured in the film. However within this written essay some of the interviews not featured in the film will be referenced. The interviewees that participated in my project are friends, community leaders, business owners, academics, artists, mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons. Some of the individuals I contacted are personal friends, and others I became acquainted with through word of mouth. The interviewees featured in this project, although all Puerto Rican, come from diverse backgrounds, and each has an experience unique to them. The ages of my interviewees range from 2 to 61. Some are first generation Puerto Ricans, and have moved to Hartford as adults or as young children. Some are native to the United States, and have had the childhood experience of moving back and forth to Puerto Rico. Still others are second and third generation Puerto Ricans with few experiences going to Puerto Rico. Some of the interviewees live here in the city of Hartford, while others live in Hartford's suburbs, but all have a strong relationship to Hartford. For some, Hartford was the first city they arrived to from Puerto Rico. For others, Hartford is the where they come to work, to connect with friends and family, or to express their Puerto Rican heritage. This essay seeks to question the homeland/host land dichotomy within diaspora theory, and proposes the concept of dual homelands. Overall, *Que Se Sepa* is an effort to allow these individuals to tell their unique stories.

Literature Review

One of the ways in which the established literatures has been helpful is that it provides the historical foundation necessary for understanding the formation of the Puerto Rican Diaspora in the United States. In *The Puerto Rican Diaspora* Carmen, Teresa Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández go into great detail about the context in which Puerto Ricans arrived in the mainland. Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández start with the end of the Spanish-Cuban-American War (1898) as the catalyst which develops the subsequent US-Puerto Rico relationship. After the war, despite promises of independence, the United States signs the Treaty of Paris in 1898 and acquires Puerto Rico as a part of its territory. Once the United States incorporates the Island, Puerto Rico becomes what the authors call a “monoculture colony”: a territory that exports one crop for only the satellite market. Under this economic system, conditions in Puerto Rico worsened and by the time US Congress grants citizenship to all Puerto Ricans through the 1917 Jones Act, conditions were ripe for migration out of the Island. Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández argue that it is not because of overpopulation that Puerto Rico faces economic woes, but because of direct US economic and political intervention. Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández explain that, with the ease of citizenship, Puerto Ricans become the preferred source of low-wage labor in the mainland, especially in the Northeast.⁵ Migration to the mainland becomes streamlined when policymakers in Puerto Rico and US employers devise contract labor programs. Joseph Fitzpatrick further adds that cheap commercial air travel between the Island and the mainland makes it more economical for Puerto Ricans to migrate.⁶ The historical and economic context of Puerto Rican migration into the mainland is helpful in terms of understanding *Independista* movements among individuals within Hartford’s Puerto Rican Diaspora.

⁵ Carmen Teresa Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005 13.

⁶ Whalen, 14.

Unlike many of the authors within the established literature, Ruth Glasser focuses specifically on the Diaspora in Connecticut. Although Puerto Ricans, especially wealthy merchants, have been living in Connecticut since the 19th century, the majority of Puerto Ricans did not begin to arrive until after World War II.⁷ During this period migrants came to work on farms and factories. In terms of agriculture most arrived via contracts formed between the Puerto Rican Department of Labor, or other state or federal agencies, and employers. Many agricultural workers were hired to harvest tobacco in the Connecticut River Valley. In 1955, Hartford establishes the Migration Division of the Puerto Rican Department of Labor in order to supervise agricultural contracts in the area. Many plantation laborers had come from Comerio, Caguas, and Cayey, east-central towns in Puerto Rico where tobacco was one of the principal crops.⁸ Glasser points out that not only did job scouts go to Puerto Rican towns, but Puerto Ricans who had settled earlier also networked with friends and relatives allowing for them to migrate to Connecticut.⁹ Puerto Ricans arriving in Connecticut, especially in Hartford, also worked in manufacturing industries. Similar to Glasser, Edna Acosta-Belen and Carlos Santiago, co-authors of *Puerto Ricans in the United States*, state that the Puerto Rican population, specifically in the city of Hartford, did not begin to grow until the 1950s where the city served as a receiver of migrants coming from New York City. The two authors point out that the Puerto Rican population did not really start to mushroom until the 1980s when other Connecticut residents started to experience slow population growth.¹⁰ Like Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández, the historical information provided by Glasser, Acosta-Belen, and Santiago is helpful in understanding the formation of the Puerto Rican Diaspora in Hartford; their analysis begins in the 1950s and ends in the early 1990s. Although they mostly focus on the experiences of first generation

⁷ Fitzpatrick, 174-175.

⁸ Ruth Glasser, "From 'Rich Port' to Bridgeport: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut," in *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Carmen Teresa Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005 181.

⁹ Glasser, 184.

¹⁰ Edna Acosta-Belen and Carlos Enrique Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2006 99.

Puerto Ricans, texts become excellent sources in terms of having a reference point for generational comparisons especially given the number of second and third generation Puerto Ricans who have participated in my project.

As mentioned above many scholars have focused on the socio-economic status of Puerto Ricans in the Diaspora. These scholars suggest that unlike previous immigrants, Puerto Ricans have largely been unable to progress socially and economically. Eva E. Sandis, in her essay “Characteristics of Puerto Rican Migrants,” argues that despite often being more educated than the Island population, the educational attainment level of migrants was usually lower than that of the mainland population. Without higher education and difficulty with the English language many migrants were relegated to low wage jobs. Faced with these circumstances, Sandis explains that many Puerto Ricans faced downward mobility.¹¹ Francesco Cordasco and Rocco Galatioto point out that despite leaving Puerto Rico for economic reasons, many migrants arrived to the mainland during the period of deindustrialization in which urban centers were characterized with an atmosphere of deterioration, shifting populations, and cultural isolation.¹² Vilma Ortiz is one of the few authors that have attempted to revise traditional notions regarding the socio-economic status of Puerto Ricans in the mainland. Ortiz highlights that migrants of the 1970s and 1980s arrived to the mainland with better education than migrants of the 1950s. Although Puerto Rican migrants still have a higher concentration in blue collar jobs in comparison to the mainland population, overall Puerto Rican migrants are shifting toward skilled and professional labor markets.¹³

¹¹ Eva E. Sandis, “Characteristic of Puerto Rican Migrants,” In *Puerto Rican Experience*, ed. Francesco Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni, Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973 144.

¹² Francesco Cordasco and Rocco Galatioto, “Ethnic Displacement in the Interstitial Community: The East Harlem,” in *Puerto Rican Experience*. ed. Francesco Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973 217.

¹³ Vilma Ortiz, “Changes in the Characteristics of Puerto Rican Migrants from 1955 to 1980,” *International Migration Review* 20, no.3 (1986): 612.

In review of the literature established about the Puerto Rican Diaspora one finds that the bulk of the information centers on the experiences of Puerto Ricans living in New York City, specifically those residing in Spanish Harlem (El Barrio or East Harlem), but sometimes also the Bronx and Brooklyn. Authors tend to group other Puerto Rican populations into one category which limits the amount of detail one can uncover about the Hartford experience. One also finds that much of the literature dedicated to the Puerto Rican Diaspora is also dated; some of the latest works have been published in the early 1990s. Due to the time in which these works were written, in their assessment of the Diaspora, authors limit their analysis to the perspectives of first and second generation Puerto Ricans which leaves the reader to infer not only about modern day experiences, but also about the specific experiences of third generation Puerto Ricans. Another major limitation within the literature is that scholars have overwhelmingly focused on the experience of lower-middle class, and often undereducated, Puerto Ricans. Although many Puerto Ricans are still working class, a significant number of Puerto Ricans have moved up the social ladder and have become professionals. In fact many have begun to establish a sizeable population within suburban neighborhoods. The city of Hartford is well known for its level of poverty. A disproportionate number of Hartford's lower middle class is Puerto Rican; over 40 % of Latinos in Hartford live below the poverty line.¹⁴ For this project I made a conscious decision to not specifically focus on the community's economic setbacks. I personally feel that concentrating on these setbacks does not give agency to the members of the Puerto Rican community. I am also emotionally and intellectually unequipped to analyze this aspect of the Puerto Rican experience in Hartford.

¹⁴ "Hartford, Connecticut (CT) Poverty Rate Data – Information about poor and low income residents," *City-Data.com*, 2011, <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Hartford-Connecticut.html>

Arrival to Hartford/La llegada

As mentioned earlier, Glasser states that Puerto Ricans have been living in Connecticut since the 19th century.¹⁵ Primarily concentrated in the Bridgeport and New Haven area, the early Puerto Rican population consisted of wealthy merchants and planters. At the time, ships apparently ferried the wealthy of both nations between Northeastern towns such as Bridgeport and New Haven, and Puerto Rican towns like Mayaguez, Ponce, and Guayanilla.¹⁶ Despite their deep connection to the Northeastern economy, these Puerto Ricans were a minority in Connecticut. On December 10, 1898 the United States acquired Puerto Rico from Spain, and in 1917 Congress passed the Jones Act which gave all Puerto Ricans on the Island US citizenship.¹⁷ With US citizenship, American firms found it more cost effective to recruit workers from Puerto Rico and bring them to work in the Northeast. Beginning in the 1930s, Connecticut businesses brought Puerto Ricans to work in their factories and farms. It was not until after World War II that Puerto Ricans began to arrive in large numbers.¹⁸

In response to Puerto Rico's economic and "population" problem, the United States initiated Operation Bootstrap in 1948. Part of the plan was to bring industry to Puerto Rico. The principal consequence of Operation Bootstrap was that thousands of Puerto Ricans from the Island would be hired to work on the mainland as cheap labor. As stated earlier, in 1955 the Puerto Rican Department of Labor had established a Migration Division in the city of Hartford to streamline and supervise contracts made between the Puerto Rican Department of Labor, the United States Department of Agriculture, and

¹⁵ Ruth Glasser, "From 'Rich Port' to Bridgeport: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut," in *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Carmen Teresa Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005, 175.

¹⁶ Ob. Cit, 176.

¹⁷ *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Carmen Teresa Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005, 6, 13.

¹⁸ Glasser, "From 'Rich Port' to Bridgeport," 177.

individual Connecticut farms.¹⁹ Although U.S. firms recruited Puerto Ricans from throughout the island, Connecticut had a large concentration of Puerto Ricans from Comerio, Caguas, and Cayey, rural towns in East-Central Puerto Rico.²⁰ Once Puerto Ricans arrived in Connecticut, the majority of them worked the tobacco fields in the Connecticut River Valley area. Many also worked in the cities under manufacturing industries.²¹ Many of the Puerto Ricans who arrived did not know English, and would often sign labor contracts unaware of the adverse living and working conditions.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the United States moved away from wartime production and moved toward technologically advanced production and service sectors. Industrial factories began close and the agricultural industry mechanized. By 1964 there were 6,068 farms in Connecticut. By 1979 the number was reduced to 3,000. With the power of mechanized tools and artificial pesticides and fertilizers, the agricultural sector in the Northeast no longer needed manual laborers. Due to increased efficiency, many planters also began to sell their farms to realtors building houses for the surging post-war population. Without jobs Puerto Ricans began to move to urban centers to look for employment. In Hartford specifically, many Puerto Ricans worked for service sector and light manufacturing companies such as Royal Typewriter and the Hilton Hotel.²² From the 1950s until the present day, Puerto Ricans from the Island and surrounding U.S. cities would arrive in Hartford.

After the first big wave of migration to Hartford, Puerto Ricans first settled in the Clay Hill area. Due to construction of railroad lines and highways in the 1960s and 1970s, the community was pushed out to the South Green area. In 1973 Hartford's Redevelopment Agency relocated many Puerto Ricans to Frog Hollow, which as of today has one of Hartford's largest concentrations of Puerto Ricans.²³ Once

¹⁹ Ob. Cit, 178.

²⁰ Ob, cit, 181.

²¹ Ob, cit, 181, 184.

²² Ruth Glasser, *Aqui Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut*, 1992, 35.

²³ Glasser, *Aqui Me Quedo*, 58. (For map of city of Hartford with neighborhood divisions http://www.hartfordinfo.org/Snapshots/neighborhood_data.asp?pRegion=Hartford%20Neighborhoods)

the Puerto Rican population in Hartford expanded, a few Puerto Ricans opened their own businesses which would cater specifically to the Puerto Rican community.²⁴ William Mercado and the Rodriguez family were one of the first to establish restaurants serving traditional Puerto Rican food in Hartford.²⁵ Such as the case with Julian Vargas and Maria Sanchez, ownership of community businesses would often convert into political clout within the city. By the end of the 1970s Puerto Ricans had established strong and visible social and political networks, some achieving office positions in Hartford City Government.

Jorge Duany describes the Puerto Rican experience as that of circulatory migration. As opposed to staying in the United States, or even staying in Puerto Rico, many, but not all, Puerto Ricans migrate back and forth between the Island and the mainland. Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández contend that the Jones Act was a means of stripping Puerto Ricans of their natural citizenship which rendered them foreigners in their homeland. However Duany argues that mobility of Puerto Ricans erodes a definition of citizenship and nationality that is grounded in place of birth and/or residence, and in effect creates an experience in which the individual has two homelands.²⁶ Many of the interviews stated that often travel back and forth from Puerto Rico to the United States. In Carol Correa's case, she and her parents moved back and forth constantly. Her father worked in the tobacco fields so during the harvesting season she would live in Hartford, but once that season was over her family would return to Puerto Rico.²⁷

This was not the typical experience of those interviewed. Most of the interviewees like Eddie Perez and Luis Rodriguez remember going back to Puerto Rico for vacation and not necessarily to live there.²⁸ As first and second generation Puerto Ricans they had a deep connection with the Island; they knew the area where their parents grew up, and they had frequent interactions with extended family

²⁴ Glasser, "From 'Rich Port' to Bridgeport," 187

²⁵ Luis Rodriguez, interview by Christina Williams, January 14, 2013; William Mercado, interview by Christina Williams, January 14, 2013

²⁶ Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move :Identities on the Island & in the United States*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002, 52.

²⁷ Carol Correa de Best and her family, interview by Christina Williams, March 9, 2013.

²⁸ Eddie Perez, interview by Christina Williams, February 13, 2013; Luis Rodriguez.

members. Younger second generation interviewees and third generation interviewees tended not to have visited Puerto Rico frequently. Many have gone to Puerto Rico, but they expressed that they often did not feel a connection to the Island in terms of being familiar with the towns and growing up with extended family members. Although Puerto Rican individuals will always have an ancestral connection to the Island, it would seem that as later generations spend most of their lifetime on the mainland, the homeland connection with the Island becomes less concrete and grounded in actual experiences.

Pete Hamell explains that the dream of many Puerto Rican migrants was “to come to New York, make money, learn a trade and go home to Puerto Rico.”²⁹ In our interview, Joan stated that in the beginning it was true that many Puerto Ricans who had migrated to the mainland in the 50s and 60s dreamed of retiring and returning to Puerto Rico. For them, living in the United States was a necessity not a way of life. Joan believes that this not the case today, even among first generation Puerto Ricans like herself. Unemployment and crime rates are unfairly high on the Island. Therefore it is better for Puerto Ricans, especially those without an advance degree, to stay on the mainland.³⁰

Many of the interviewees have expressed that Hartford is almost like a suburb of San Juan, which corroborates the notion of two homelands existing simultaneously. According to Eddie Perez (former Mayor of Hartford), so much of the Puerto Rican culture can be found within the city that one does not miss the Island too badly.³¹ In addition, many of the interviewees have established friends and families here in Hartford, so it is difficult not to think of the city as home.

²⁹ Pete Hamell, “Coming of Age in Nueva York” in *Puerto Rican Experience*. ed. Francesco Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni, Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973 200.

³⁰ Joan Cruz, interview by Christina Williams, February 1st 2013.

³¹ Eddie Perez.

Food/La comida

According to Patterson and Kelley making a memory of the homeland is an important aspect of a diaspora identity.³² Sidney W. Mintz and Christine M. Du Bois contend that food is one of the essential elements that create identity.³³ They argue that food serves to both solidify and differentiate groups. According to the two authors, food gives a people its context through its geographic or historical specificity, and when food imagery is involved in music, literature, and/or art the idea of an ethnic or national food solidifies and reinforces the concept of group identity.³⁴ Food has certainly been a significant part of the Hartford experience. Although the documentary centers on Criollísimo Restaurant (which is actually located in New Britain) and Sol de Borinquén Bakery, the city of Hartford has a number of restaurants that serve traditional Puerto Rican food. In fact, el Comerio and Aquí Me Quedo are one of Hartford's oldest Puerto Rican owned restaurants.³⁵

There was once a time when Puerto Ricans could not make their traditional foods in their homes. The only access to much needed ingredients was through New York City or the Island itself. Julian Vargas, who arrived to Hartford in the 1950s, opened the city's first bodega that imported traditional foods from New York.³⁶ As the Puerto Rican community expanded other Puerto Ricans followed Vargas's success and opened their own bodegas. Today the majority of Hartford's bodegas are not owned by Puerto Ricans, however traditional ingredients (plantains, mangos, quenepas, etc.) and Spanish/Latin American food brands (Goya, La Fe, Bimbo, etc.) are found throughout the city from the street bodega to the neighborhood Wal-mart.

³² Patterson and Kelley, 15.

³³ Sidney W. Mintz and Christine M. Du Bois, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31 (2002) 99

³⁴ Ob. Cit., 109.

³⁵ Both owners graciously participated in the project however due to technical difficulty with the original video recording they could not be featured in the film.

³⁶ Glasser, *Aquí Me Quedo*, 41.

Many Puerto Ricans, like Thomas, Kelvin, and Hector, cook the traditional foods within their homes on a regular basis.³⁷ However some of dishes are too time-consuming or expensive to make in the home and therefore are preferably eaten at a restaurant. Luis Rodriguez, owner of el Comerio, recalls the women in his family gathering for the holidays to make pasteles is a time consuming dish. In order to make pastels one has to mash several plantains into dough and stuff it with meat, beans, and/or vegetables. Luis's restaurant is able to provide Hartford families with this dish year round for, unlike his aunts who had to use their hands, he has machine that can easily form the dough needed to make hundreds of pasteles.³⁸

All four food establishments (Criollísimo, Sol de Borinquén, el Comerio, and Aquí Me Quedo) receive customers of all ages. Some of their clients are native Puerto Ricans who appreciate the restaurants because it reminds them of deeply held memories of the Island.³⁹ Food also has a special significance for second and third generation Puerto Ricans who may have grown up mainly in Hartford. Due to the citywide availability of traditional Puerto Rican dishes, second and third generations are also able to associate with Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican culture. They may not have such extensive memories as their first generation relatives, but through food they can participate in at least one aspect of their parent's culture and form their identities around their experiences with food. For Hartford native Luis Delgado, grandson of William Mercado, although he has spent the majority of his life in the United States, food is an integral part of this personal identity because he grew up around his grandfather's restaurant and has extensive knowledge of how to prepare traditional Puerto Rican dishes such as arroz con gandules or pollo asado.⁴⁰ Glaisma states that many third and fourth generation

³⁷ Thomas Arroyo, interview by Christina Williams, February 1st, 2013; Kelvin Roldan, interview by Christina Williams February 15th, 2013; Hector B., interview by Christina Williams, March 6th, 2013.

³⁸ Luis Rodriguez.

³⁹ Idem

⁴⁰ Luis Delgado, interview by Christina Williams January 15th, 2013.

Puerto Ricans identify themselves as Latinos, and participate in mainstream culture.⁴¹ For these individuals, food works to reground them in Puerto Rican culture, specifically when they feel the need to express their specific Puerto Rican identities.

⁴¹ Glaisma Perez-Silva, interview by Christina Williams, March 18th, 2013.

Religion/La religión

In her essay “Religion and Identity” Pamela Ebstyn King states that ideology is essential to identity formation.⁴² She says that religion helps to provide the context which allows maturing individuals to give meaning and order to their world. Without a solid and systematic perception of the world, individuals would have difficulty forming their own personal identity. Fitzpatrick argues that the religious background of the island is ambiguous. Although the majority are Christians, Puerto Ricans subscribe to a number of denominations, thus Fitzpatrick believes that Puerto Ricans lack a strong religious identification which could serve as a foundation for their solidarity.⁴³ Puerto Rico, a former Spanish colony, is predominately Roman Catholic, however since its incorporation into the United States as a commonwealth, a number of Protestant churches, the most prevalent of which being Pentecostal, has flourished on the Island.⁴⁴

Due to time constraints and the inability to represent important religious institutions within the Hartford community a section on religion is not included in the documentary. Despite its absence in the film, I did however ask interviewees questions about religion and their religiosity. It is true that a wide array of religions are practiced in Puerto Rico, and that Puerto Ricans on the mainland subscribe to a number of religious practices. In Hartford, the majority of Puerto Ricans are Catholic. However, similar to the Island, it is common for individuals to subscribe to different denominations. Kelvin Roldan (former State Representative) and Luis Delgado (grandson of William Mercado) both remember their mothers

⁴² Pamela Ebstyn King, “Religion and Identity: The Role of Ideological, Social, and Spiritual Contexts,” *Applied Developmental Science* 7, no. 3 (2003) 197.

⁴³ Fitzpatrick, 50.

⁴⁴ Brenda Torres, interview by Christina Williams, March 11th 2013.

never forcing them to practice a specific religion and being open to attending different churches regardless of their denominations.⁴⁵

Despite the diversity of religious practices within the religious community, in many instances Hartford's Puerto Rican population has shown a strong sense of solidarity. Previously, Sacred Heart Parish was a Catholic church with a primarily German congregation. When Puerto Rican Catholics first arrived to Hartford, they faced discrimination from a number of area churches. Sacred Heart Parish was one of the few churches that opened its door to Puerto Ricans. However, even within Sacred Heart, for a while, Puerto Ricans could only conduct services in the basement of the church. In 1959 Maria Sanchez, Olga Mele, Nilda Ortiz, and the rest of the congregation decided to remove Father Otto and replace him with Father Andrew Cooney and create a bilingual church.⁴⁶ Although the church never took a formal political stance, Sacred Heart, along with other churches such as St. Peter's and St. Patrick/St. Anthony, was heavily involved in the early development of the Puerto Rican community in Hartford, and many leaders have come from its congregation including former Mayor Eddie Perez.⁴⁷ In this case religion seems to have helped shape the Puerto Rican community in Hartford. It simultaneously keeps the community grounded in traditional religious traditions while helping community achieve successes within their new homeland.

Today there are a number of churches with bilingual services that cater to the Hispanic community in Hartford. In terms of its Latino population, the city of Hartford is no longer predominately Puerto Rican. Dominicans, Peruvians, Mexicans, Colombians and Brazilians have arrived to the city in large numbers. Congregations that were once overwhelmingly Puerto Rican are becoming more mixed

⁴⁵ Kelvin Roldan; Luis Delgado.

⁴⁶ Robert E. Pawlowski, "La Casa, Su Gente: The Development of Hartford's Puerto Rican Community," A Publication of La Casa de Puerto Rico, Inc.

⁴⁷ Idem; Eddie Perez.

and are incorporating the cultures of other Spanish-speaking countries.⁴⁸ Although these churches do not have the organizational clout it once had, neighborhood churches are still heavily involved in the community. The Catholic Charities organization, which sponsors a number of youth, family and senior citizen programs, has a tremendous presence in Hartford's Latino community.

⁴⁸ Father Diaz from St. Peter's Church, interview by Christina Williams, February 4th, 2013.

Music and Arts/La música y los artes

In their essay “Transnational Migration Studies,” Peggy Levitt and Nadya Jaworsky argue that music and art enable migrants to “express, create, remember, and recreate” individual and collective identity. Through these tools of cultural empowerment migrants are able to maintain connections with their home country. Music and art also gives diasporas a cultural place and space within their host societies.⁴⁹ College professor and poet Glaisma Perez-Silva says that she uses her poetry to assert her Afro-Puerto Rican identity. As a Black woman she is often mistaken for an African-American or a person from the English-speaking Caribbean. For Glaisma, her language and Puerto Rican accent allows her to claim her identity here in the mainland. Her poetry gives her further agency by allowing her to artistically express her experiences.⁵⁰

In terms of music, one can hear a range of Latin genres on the streets of Hartford. However, the songs often heard present day are Salsa, Bachata, or Reggaetón, songs that some, especially the older generation, do not consider to be a part of Puerto Rican culture. Overall, not even the Latin genres dominate the Hartford streets. On Park Street one is more likely to hear Hip-Hop and R&B which has dominated the attentions of young people across nationalities. In my personal opinion, Hip-Hop, R&B, and House music have allowed young people to assert their identity as a new multi-cultural generation; a generation that is distinct from that of their parents. Many of the individuals I interviewed (both young and old) lament the proliferation of “American” culture among young Puerto Ricans. Others recognized that Puerto Ricans have participated in Hip-Hop and House music since its inception of those genres, and that the genres incorporate elements from the overarching African Diaspora found both in the

⁴⁹ Peggy Levitt and Nadya Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33, (2007)140.

⁵⁰ Glaisma Perez-Silva.

United States and in Puerto Rico.⁵¹ Perhaps 30 years ago more traditional genres could be heard in Hartford. However even local artist Andres Chaparro remembers growing up listening to mainstream music.⁵² Like many second and third generation Puerto Ricans living in Hartford, Andres mainly had the opportunity to listen to traditional Puerto Rican genres living with his parents or during family celebrations.

Co-founder of Guakia Cultural Center, Ray Gonzalez, says that when he first arrived to Hartford there were only a handful of Puerto Ricans who knew how to play traditional Puerto Rican genres. After leaving to go back to study music at the Conservatory of Music in Puerto Rico, Ray returned to Hartford with the mission to fortify Puerto Rican music and art within the Hartford community. He and his wife Marcelina Sierra opened Guakia in 1983, and since then have been providing classes in music, plastic arts, and theater to members of the Hartford community young and old, Puerto Rican and non-Puerto Rican. He says that the young people who attend his classes have often never heard of the traditional Puerto Rican genres such as Bomba and Plena. Once younger generations have the opportunity to practice and learn about their cultural roots they often grow to love their traditional music. In fact in 1994 Ray created a Salsa band with young students from Guakia, and from then on the band has traveled throughout Connecticut and the Northeast and even to Puerto Rico. Some of Guakia's first students have gone on to become professional artists, and thus a new generation of artist continuing Puerto Rican traditions in the Diaspora.⁵³ Although later generations seem to be more interested in mainland art forms, community members are still active in keeping musical and artistic traditions alive within Hartford which will help younger generations maintain connections with their ancestral homeland while remaining active within the culture of their new homeland.

⁵¹ Carol Correa de Best and family.

⁵² Andres Chaparro, interview by Christina Williams, February 6th, 2013.

⁵³ Ray Gonzalez, interview by Christina Williams, February 27th, 2013.

Politics/La política

Migrants often engage in political practices in order to bridge politics in their home countries with those of their host country. Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen breaks transnational politics into two categories: broad (occasional participation) and core (regular activities that are integral to the community).⁵⁴ From the interviews I have gathered it seems that the Puerto Rican community in Hartford mainly engages in broad transnational politics. Both Joan Cruz and Julia Rivera state that through access to the local newspaper or satellite television channels, Puerto Ricans, especially the first generation, are able to follow current events on the Island.⁵⁵ Although they cannot vote for Island officials while on the mainland, some still follow local initiatives and trends such as crime and unemployment rates. However the day-to-day politics on the Island is usually not the main concern of most Puerto Ricans. Although there is correspondence between Hartford's municipal government and the Island local government, these initiatives do not receive much press.

In regards to Island politics many Puerto Ricans in the community do discuss the issue of Puerto Rico's national status. In 1983 Victor Manuel Gerena robbed the West Hartford Wells Fargo bank of \$7,000,000. Later it was revealed that Gerena was affiliated with pro-independence group Los Macheteros which had branches in Puerto Rico and throughout the mainland.⁵⁶ Gerena has yet to be found and remains on the F.B.I.'s most wanted list. Los Macheteros were not the only pro-independence party in the Greater Hartford area. Under Wilfred Matos, the Young Lords Party also had an independista agenda. The Young Lords Organization originated in Chicago under the leadership of Jose

⁵⁴ Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen, "The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices." *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003), 761.

⁵⁵ Joan Cruz, interview by Christina Williams, February 1st, 2013; Julia Rivera, interview by Christina Williams, February 17th, 2013.

⁵⁶ Ronald Fernandez, *Los Macheteros: the Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence*, New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987.

Cha-Cha Jimenez however became more politically oriented under its New York branch which split from the Chicago branch in 1970 and renamed itself the Young Lords Party (later on the group would again rename itself Puerto Rican Revolutionary Worker's Organization).⁵⁷ Inspired by Marxism and the efforts of Pedro Albizu Campos among others the Young Lords heavily campaigned for Diaspora involvement in Island politics, however in the case of the Hartford community many Puerto Ricans, at least on the surface, were more interested in gaining concessions within the municipal government.

Although I have yet to encounter any individuals in the community who are pro-statehood or blatantly pro-independence, I am sure that Puerto Ricans in Hartford are equally as split about the issue as the Puerto Ricans living on the Island. There are some individuals such as Joan Cruz who see the benefit in the Island's current status as a Commonwealth. She recalls that unlike other Latinos in the community, Puerto Ricans do not have to secure a visa to travel to and from Puerto Rico, and that the crossing of borders is relatively fluid. She also takes great pride in her ability to vote in US elections.⁵⁸ (On the Island Puerto Ricans can only vote in the Presidential Primaries however once in the mainland they have all of the voting rights of an American citizen.) Glaisma Perez-Silva critically states that US citizenship has sometimes been a mark that has divided Puerto Ricans from other Latinos in the mainland for Latinos claim that Puerto Ricans have not experienced some of the struggles Latino immigrants have had to face.⁵⁹ Fitzpatrick highlights that conditions on the mainland were harsh and often alien in comparison to those on the island. On the mainland family structures were reconfigured and sometimes weakened. Children who were not comfortable in the English language struggled in school. Fitzpatrick argues that as they acculturated to their environment some would pick up unsavory American habits and attitudes.⁶⁰ Men often had a more difficult time finding work in comparison to their

⁵⁷ *The Young Lords: A Reader*, ed. Darrel Enck-Wanzer New York: New York University Press, 2010.

⁵⁸ Joan Cruz.

⁵⁹ Glaisma Perez-Silva

⁶⁰ Fitzpatrick, 217.

female counterparts which complicated gender and familial relationships, especially if the family depended on the state welfare system.⁶¹ In our interview, Glaisma further explained that the welfare system was created to cater to single mothers however many Puerto Ricans families consisted of both mother and father. In order to have much needed access to welfare, many Puerto Rican mothers had to deny that their husbands or their children's fathers lived with them which created rifts in the community. On one hand, Puerto Rican women felt empowered, while on the other hand, men felt disenfranchised and limited. Despite these setbacks, Glaisma also contends that U.S. citizenship has been a blessing as many Puerto Ricans have used their status to give recognition to issues specific to the Latino community ,especially in regards to recent Latino immigrants.⁶²

Although I cannot determine if Jose "Chewy" Gonzalez is independista or pro-Commonwealth, I am aware that he is anti-statehood. Like many Puerto Ricans, Jose takes great pride in the fact that the Island has been able to maintain its culture, which gives Puerto Ricans in the Diaspora a concrete cultural and ancestral reference. He believes that if Puerto Rico were to become the 51st state, the island would have to give up its language and flag which are in every way part of the foundation of Puerto Rican identity.⁶³

With the opportunity to vote in both national and local elections in Connecticut, many Puerto Ricans are highly involved in Hartford politics. As of today there are a number of Puerto Ricans who hold or have held a public office in Hartford or in the surrounding suburbs of Hartford. The current Mayor of Hartford, Pedro Segarra, is of Puerto Rican descent. For this project I have interviewed a number of politicians, former politicians, and community activists: Eddie Perez, Luis Cabán, Kelvin Roldan, and Jason Rojas; all of them represent the great achievements of Puerto Ricans here in Hartford.

⁶¹ Fitzpatrick, 215.

⁶² Glaisma Perez-Silva.

⁶³ Jose Gonzalez, interview by Christina Williams, January 21st, 2013.

Ostergaard-Nielsen contends that migrant communities often use the institutions of their host countries to promote political efforts in their homelands.⁶⁴ However the political mobilization of Hartford's Puerto Rican Diaspora has been entirely different. Through the efforts of the community's most active leaders such as Julian Vargas, Juan Figueroa, Antonio Soto, Jose La Luz, and Mildred Torres to only name a few, the Latino community as a united community has gained considerable political clout in Hartford. However their power has not been used to push local agendas in their home countries (or for some the countries of their ancestors), but rather it has mostly acted as a vehicle to address critical community needs and participate in local politics as engaged citizens of Hartford.⁶⁵

The Puerto Rican community's most well recognized political figure is Maria Clemencia Colón Sanchez who migrated to Hartford from Comerio, Puerto Rico in 1954. Originally a worker in Connecticut's tobacco fields, Maria was able to save money to open a newsstand on Albany Avenue in Clay Hill which she subsequently used to help mobilize Hartford's Puerto Rican community.⁶⁶ Until her passing in 1989, Maria Sanchez was heavily involved in community activism and Hartford politics. In response to civil unrest and blatant level of discrimination faced by the Puerto Rican community in the 1960s, Maria C. Sanchez organized a number of community-based organizations that would not only address specific issues the community faced, but would also promote pride in the community's Puerto Rican heritage. In 1964 Maria was one of the principal leaders to create the Puerto Rican Parade organization which originally started as a community beauty pageant, but quickly converted into an annual celebration of Puerto Rican culture.⁶⁷ In 1971 Maria worked with University of Hartford professor Perry Alan Zirkel to create the Teacher Corps which sought to hire bilingual teachers to assist the youth

⁶⁴ Ostergaard-Nielsen, 762.

⁶⁵ José E. Cruz, "A Decade of Change: Puerto Rican Politics in Hartford, Connecticut, 1969-1979," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, no. 3 (1997) 74.

⁶⁶ "Maria C. Sanchez," Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, <http://cwhf.org/inductees/politics-government-law/maria-c-sanchez>; Pawlowski.

⁶⁷ Glasser, "From 'Rich Port' to Bridgeport," 189.

residing in Hartford who spoke Spanish as their primary language, and a year later with Edna Negrón Rosario, she opened La Escuelita which became Connecticut's first bilingual school. The following year in 1973, with her seat on Hartford's Board of Education, Maria C. Sanchez became the first Puerto Rican elected to public office in Hartford.⁶⁸ During the years Maria would go on to found and co-found a number of other organizations such as La Casa de Puerto Rico, the Society of Legal Services, the Spanish American Merchants Association, and the Community Renewal Team. In 1988 Sanchez would finally become an elected member of the Connecticut General Assembly, and had since then left a legacy of political engagement that had opened doors for and inspired a number of young upcoming politicians such as former Mayor Eddie Perez who remembered Maria from her newsstand.⁶⁹ The endeavors of Maria Sanchez and other political leaders like her show the community's effort to establish itself in its new home.

⁶⁸ "Maria Sanchez, State Representative and Community Advocate," Connecticut History <http://connecticuthistory.org/maria-sanchez-state-representative-and-community-advocate/>

⁶⁹ Idem

Language/La lengua

As a former colony of Spain, the official language of Puerto Rico is Spanish. Similar to any other newly arrived group to the United States, a number of Puerto Ricans who arrived in the first migration wave after World War II had limited formal education, and knew little to no English. Trinity alumni, Jasmin Agosto, recalls her mother saying that when she first moved to New York at age 18 she had to learn English quickly.⁷⁰ When Puerto Ricans first arrived, the municipal government, although eager to use the migrants as a labor force, did not create bilingual programs to help arrivals and their children learn English. Eddie Perez remembers a fire that occurred during his youth that killed a young boy because the neighbors in the area could not communicate with the firemen.⁷¹ It was not until efforts were made by Maria Sanchez, Perry Alan Zirkel, Edna Negron Rosario, and Hernan La Fontaine (to name a few) that Hartford began to initiate bilingual programs. However as Glaisma Perez-Silva recalls a significant number of Hartford residents resented (and in some cases continue to resent) bilingual education.⁷² In fact, in 1976, Maria Sanchez was called to defend bilingual education in the Ramos v. Gaines lawsuit against the Hartford Board of Education. In 1978 bilingual education was officially instituted into Hartford's public schools. Carlos Ortiz remembers attending Hartford's bilingual classes. He says that at the time it would often be a little frustrating because his homework would be in English yet the lectures were in Spanish which did not necessarily result in an ability to completely understand English.⁷³ Furthermore, despite the city's efforts to bring teachers from Puerto Rico, a few of the teachers at the schools mainly spoke Spanish as a second language and could not always understand their students.

⁷⁰ Jasmin Agosto, interview by Christina Williams, January 16th, 2013.

⁷¹ Eddie Perez.

⁷² Glaisma Perez-Silva.

⁷³ Carlos Ortiz, interview by Christina Williams, January 18th, 2013.

Although Puerto Ricans continue to arrive to Hartford from the Island, Hartford's population is increasingly comprised of second and third generation Puerto Ricans who are fluent in English. A number of second and third generation Puerto Ricans speak both English and Spanish fluently. Second generation individuals like Carol Correa de Best (Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs at Trinity College) have had consistent interaction with the Island and the mainland as children, and have grown up to be bilingual speakers.⁷⁴ However many, especially third generation Puerto Ricans, have not had a consistent experience with Puerto Rico. Across the board parents have admitted to not speaking enough Spanish to their children in order for them to be fully confident in the language. Julia, Jasmin, and Kyra (alumni and students at Trinity College) all confess to struggling with the language although many of their family members are native Spanish speakers. Although Hartford has a large Latino population, English is still the dominant language which makes it difficult for young people to engage in their parents' or grandparents' native language.

Duany states that one of the ways in which Puerto Ricans maintain connections with both the Island and the mainland is through their status as bilingual speakers. Their use of Spanish helps to keep them connected to the Island, while their knowledge of English ensures that they will have less difficulty finding work in the United States and integrating with mainland society.⁷⁵ This notion might be true for individuals like Carol however for those that struggle with the Spanish language, establishing a connection with the Island is difficult. Julia Rivera recalls sitting at her aunt's house feeling ambivalent about the conversation around her. She felt as though she should have been connected to her family members, but at the time she did not speak Spanish and could not understand her surroundings.⁷⁶ In some cases there has been tension between native Puerto Ricans and Nuyoricans (individuals of Puerto

⁷⁴ Carol Correa de Best.

⁷⁵ Jorge Duany, "Mobile Livelihoods: The Sociocultural Practices of Circular Migrants Between Puerto Rico and the United States," *International Migration Review* 36, no.2 (2002): 360.

⁷⁶ Julia Rivera.

Rican descent born in the United States) on the mainland. Nuyoricans often claim a Puerto Rican identity however native Puerto Ricans occasionally accuse Nuyoricans of not being “true” Puerto Ricans. Their perception is that Nuyoricans either speak only English or Spanglish at best.⁷⁷ For instance when Jose “Chewy” Gonzalez (owner of Razor Sharp 2) visited Puerto Rico with his wife who is also Puerto Rican, a native refused to recognize his wife as a Puerto Rican for that fact that she did not speak Spanish fluently.⁷⁸ Due to US hegemony, but also due to Puerto Ricans constantly returning from the mainland, the number of English speakers on the Island is increasing which is helping to change native perceptions about Nuyoricans. In fact both Luis Rodriguez and Ray Gonzalez remember that after cultural exchanges, native Puerto Ricans were often surprised by how well Hartford Puerto Ricans have preserved the Island culture.⁷⁹ As more Puerto Ricans learn English as their first language, the ability to speak Spanish is slowly becoming less of a marker of Puerto Rican identity. It seems that there are other factors that are central to identity.

⁷⁷ Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, “Implicit Social Knowledge, Cultural Capital, and “Authenticity” among Puerto Ricans in Chicago,” *Latin American Perspectives* 31, no. 5 (2004): 35.

⁷⁸ Jose Gonzalez.

⁷⁹ Luis Rodriguez. Ray Gonzalez.

Race/La raza

Various scholars within the study of Puerto Rican culture and the Diaspora contend that race on the Island is largely determined by the individual's social status. Authors such as Acosta-Belén, Santiago, and Fitzpatrick state that salient physical features like skin color and hair texture factor into Puerto Ricans' perceptions on race. Respectability and family lineage are greater indicators of race on the Island.⁸⁰ Fitzpatrick specifically cites the Island's history of interracial marriage and sexual relations as factors contributing to fluid notions of race among native Puerto Ricans.⁸¹ Duany, however, contends that these perceptions of race have been constructed by an elite group who successfully created a national Puerto Rican culture which homogenizes the Island's diverse cultural makeup.⁸² Carol Correa de Best agrees that in Puerto Rico race is largely determined by social status, however she does clarify that color based discrimination is a part of the Island's historical legacy, which challenges the notions brought up by Acosta-Belén and Santiago who claim that racism is a consequence of circular migration between the Island and the mainland.⁸³ Luis Delgado also corroborates that many of the darker skinned Puerto Ricans live in a specific part of the Island separate from the lighter skinned Puerto Ricans. He, however, believes that racial discrimination is largely confined among Puerto Ricans in their senior years.⁸⁴ In fact, many Puerto Ricans like Kelvin Roldan have said that on the Island they have rarely witnessed that type of discrimination and that those concepts are largely carried by older generations if at all.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos E. Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, 15

⁸¹ Fitzpatrick, 105.

⁸² Duany, 20

⁸³ Acosta-Belén and Santiago, 17; Carol Correa de Best.

⁸⁴ Luis Delgado.

⁸⁵ Kelvin Roldan.

In her essay *From Trigueñita to Afro-Puerto Rican* Maritza Quiñones Rivera reveals that Afro-Puerto Ricans constantly must negotiate with their personal identification as Blacks and as Puerto Ricans.⁸⁶ Although Afro-Puerto Ricans are often portrayed as drug dealers, prostitutes, and domestic servants in the Island media, at least in Puerto Rico there is a national culture that connects all Puerto Ricans regardless of color. Once Afro-Puerto Ricans come to the United States, however, many must again struggle with their identity. As mentioned above, during our interview Glaisma Perez-Silva mentioned often being mistaken for an African-American or West Indian woman, and that often her Puerto Rican accent would act as sole evidence to her Puerto Rican identity.⁸⁷ In another instance American-born Jose “Chewy” Gonzalez remembers growing up in the late 1960s and 1970s and experiencing racial segregation first hand.⁸⁸ Although he self-identifies as Puerto Rican, he also feels a deep connection with the African Americans in his community. This experience of mistaken identity can be frustrating for some Puerto Ricans not only because of the obvious cultural differences between the many ethnic backgrounds of Black people, but also because in the United States African Americans often are specifically perceived negatively for a number of reasons.⁸⁹ For darker Puerto Ricans, the salient connection they have with their African ancestors helps them to connect with Americans from the African Diaspora.

Race in general on the mainland is confusing. For Jasmin Agosto she mentions being confused by strict racial identities outlined in U.S. documents and applications. She recognizes that as a Puerto Rican racially she is Black, White, Indigenous, and Latino although race is ultimately an artificial method of human categorization.⁹⁰ For Luis Delgado, having grown up in both a Puerto Rican family but also a Latino community, he identifies himself as Latino which allows him closer association with other Latino

⁸⁶ Maritza Quiñones Rivera, “From Trigueñita to Afro-Puerto Rican: Intersections of the Racialized, Gendered, and Sexualized Body in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Mainland.” *Meridians* 7, no.1 (2006):163.

⁸⁷ Glaisma Perez-Silva.

⁸⁸ Jose Gonzalez.

⁸⁹ Ob. cit, 173.

⁹⁰ Jasmin Agosto.

youth in his community.⁹¹ On the other hand, Kelvin Roldan, who is only a few years older than both Jasmin and Luis, but was born in Puerto Rico self-identifies strictly as Puerto Rican, but also extends this identification to whoever self-identifies as Puerto Rican regardless their race or generation.⁹² Similar to perceptions on the Island, identity is not contingent on race. Nonetheless, also similar to experiences on the Island, Afro-Puerto Ricans have to negotiate and redefine their personal identity in order to find a space within their new home.

⁹¹ Luis Delgado.

⁹² Kelvin Roldan.

Conclusion

The presence of Puerto Ricans in the city of Hartford is heavily felt. According to the 2010 US National Census a little over seven percent of people living in Connecticut identify themselves as Puerto Ricans. Hartford has the largest per capita population of Puerto Ricans in the mainland.⁹³ Each year only a small percentage of Puerto Ricans arrive from the Island or other cities in the United States. The demographic makeup of Hartford is changing. On my visit to Maria C. Colon Sanchez Elementary School, the principal Mrs. Myrella Lara expressed to me that none of the restaurants inside of El Mercado, a Hispanic foods mega market on Park Street, are Puerto Rican owned, and that the majority of her students, although mostly Spanish-speakers, in fact were not all Puerto Rican. The population of other Latino groups such as Mexicans, Peruvians, and Dominicans is growing in Hartford, and in some ways is beginning to dominate the once 90% Puerto Rican areas. In fact, many Puerto Ricans are moving out of Hartford into other areas such as East Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, New Britain, and Manchester. Some are moving out due to economic success while others have found more affordable housing and more jobs in Hartford's suburbs.

Despite the shift outside of the city, and the great emotional attachment most have with the Island, many Puerto Ricans consider Hartford to be their home. A strict homeland/host land dichotomy fails to define the experience of many Puerto Ricans, especially of those living in Hartford. This dichotomy over generalizes the experience of first generation Puerto Ricans, and it excludes the experiences of second and third generation Puerto Ricans. Most of the individuals I interviewed, regardless of generation, consider both the Island and the mainland to be home, which somewhat negates the idea of an alienating host land. Looking back at the Patterson and Kelley definition of diaspora, one can see that Puerto Ricans here in Hartford are by no means marginalized, or at least not

⁹³ John Dankosky and Luis Figueroa, "Puerto Rican Influence in Connecticut," Connecticut Public Radio aired January 2nd, 2008.

completely. Many are active community members who have agency over their own personal lives and that of their community.

Hartford, at first glance, does not seem like it has a lot to offer. Many of the city's jobs have relocated outside the city, and poverty is visible on the streets. This is Hartford on the surface; or rather a surface version of Hartford that only focuses on the city's setbacks. Marvin Gaye says "come talk to me so you can see what's going on." I think it is important to talk to and get to know community members in order to see the multiple sides of Hartford and its Puerto Rican community. This is precisely the objective of Que Se Sepa. I wanted to give members of the Puerto Rican community a chance to tell their story, but in the process I have been taken on a journey, and now I have acquired a more enriched perspective of Hartford.

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Appendix

Participants

Jasmin Agosto (Local Artist and Trinity College Alumni)

Hector B. (Hispanic Senior Center Member)

Luis Cabán (Former Executive Director of Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance)

Andres Chaparro (Local Artist and Hartford's department of Marketing, Events & Cultural Affairs Analyst)

Carol Correa de Best (Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs at Trinity College)

Joan Cruz (Director of Special Projects at the Hispanic Health Council)

Luis Delgado (William's Grandson)

Father Diaz (St. Peter's Church)

Jose "Chewy" Gonzalez (Owner of Razor Sharp 2)

Ray Gonzalez (Local Musician and Co-founder of Guakia Cultural Center)

Kia (Carol's Daughter)

Kyra Malave (Carol's Daughter)

Mickey (Carol's Daughter)

William Mercado (Owner of Aqui Me Quedo)

Carlos Ortiz (Co-Owner of Sol de Borinquén Bakery)

Eddie Perez (Former Mayor of Hartford)

Glaisma Perez-Silva (Professor at Capital Community College and Local Poet)

Julia Rivera (Trinity College Student)

Michael Rivera (Owner of Hip-Hop Barbers)

Luis Rodríguez (Owner of el Comerio)

Jason Rojas (State Representative and SINA Director of Community Relations at Trinity College)

Kelvin Roldan (Former State Representative and Current Hartford Public Schools Chief Institutional Advancement Officer)

Thomas Arroyo (Hispanic Health Council Group Facilitator)

Brenda Torres (Owner of Criollisimo)

Interview Questions

Opening Questions

- Can you tell us your name?
- Where do you live?
 - City
 - Neighborhood
- How old are you?
- What is your occupation?
- What is your ethnicity?
 - (If Hispanic/Latino) Can you specify?
- Where were you born?
 - Can you describe the place you were born?
 - Demographics?
 - Was it a Puerto Rican neighborhood?
 - Did you live among a lot of family members?
 - (If not from the US) Why did you decide to move to the United States?
 - What was your last memory of Puerto Rico?
 - Can you describe what was going on in Puerto Rico when you left?
 - (If not from Hartford) When did you come to Hartford?
 - How long have you been living in Hartford?
 - Why did you come to Hartford?
 - Did someone come with you to Hartford?
 - Do you ever visit?
 - (If yes) When was the last time you visited?
- Can you describe your family?
 - Where are your parents from?
 - What state?
 - Have you ever visited their hometown?
 - (If yes) When was the last time you visited?
 - Can you describe your parent's hometown?
 - What are the people like?
 - The Whether?
 - The atmosphere?
 - Do you have family in Puerto Rico?
 - In the United States?
 - Where do they live?
 - Do you visit them?

- Do you speak to them?
 - Do they visit you?
- Have you ever been to Puerto Rico in general?
 - Do you feel homesick? Do you miss your hometown?
 - If you moved from Hartford do you think that you would miss it?
 - Why or why not?
- Would you want to live in Puerto Rico after living in the United States?
- Do think of Puerto Rico as home?
- What are the differences between living in Hartford and living in Puerto Rico?
 - Living in other parts of the United States?
 - New York?
 - Chicago?
 - Miami?

Food

- What are some of your favorite foods?
- Is there a food that you typically eat at home?
- What foods do your parents typically cook?
 - Your grandparents?
- Are there dishes that you eat specifically during the holidays or for special occasions?
 - Christmas
 - Three Kings Day
 - Quincinera?
 - On these occasions where do you eat?
 - Home?
 - Family member's house?
 - Restaurant?
 - What is the atmosphere like?
 - What is your favorite?
 - How would you feel if these dishes were not made during these occasions?
 - Do you know how to make these dishes?
 - Can you tell me how?
 - Where do you get the ingredients?
 - Do you know the ethnicity of the storeowner?
 - Are there a lot of Puerto Rican storeowners?
 - Do you feel that it's hard to get certain ingredients in Hartford?
 - Do you feel that it would be more difficult to eat foods traditional to Puerto Rico if you lived elsewhere in Connecticut?
- Would you say that the food you eat is a big part of your identity?
 - Do you identify more with American food?
 - Puerto Rican food?
 - Other types of food?

Music

- What is your favorite type of music?
 - Your favorite artist?
 - Is there a type of music that you listen to for everyday activities?
 - Parties? Dances? Clubs?
 - Are these the types of music you most identify yourself with?
- What type of music is played at your Parent's house?
- What type of music is played at your Grandparent's house?
- What type of music is played during holidays or during special occasions?
 - Parranda
- What kind of music do you typically hear on the streets of Hartford?
- Are there types of music typical to Puerto Rican culture? (Dance)
 - Do you know anything about . . .
 - Bomba y Plena
 - Salsa
 - Reggaeton
 - What is Dembow?
 - Hip-Hop
 - House Music
 - Dancehall Music
 - Artists
 - How often do they come to Hartford to perform?
 - Beats (What does it sound like?)
 - Can you name a song?
 - Can you describe the relationship (if any) between these genres?
- Do you dance?
 - What style do you dance?
 - Can you demonstrate?
- Are there any dances typical to Puerto Rican culture?
- Are there instruments typical to Puerto Rican music?
 - El Cautro? (Yomo Toro)

Religion

- Are you religious?
 - (If yes) Do you have a religion?
 - Can you describe your religion?
 - What is your place of worship?
 - Can you describe what typically goes on during a prayer or a ceremony?
 - Are there holidays associated with your religion?
 - Do a lot of people in Puerto Rico follow this religion?

Politics

- Do you consider yourself to be political?/ Are you interested in politics?
 - Do you follow politics in Hartford?
 - Puerto Rico?
 - Your home state / the home state of your parents?
- Do you vote?
 - Did you vote during local elections?
 - Is there a political party/ politician that you support?
- Can you describe politics in Hartford?
 - Are there issues important to the Puerto Rican community?
 - Are there issues that you think are particularly important?
- Can you describe politics in Puerto Rico?
 - What are the national parties?
 - Do you support any of these parties?
- Do you have a Puerto Rican flag in your home?
 - Do your family members have a flag?
 - Friends?
 - Why is the flag important to you?
 - What does it represent for you?
- What does the flag signify?
 - What does the star symbolize?
 - The stripes?
- Is Puerto Rican history taught in schools here in Hartford?
 - Do your parents and/or grandparents talk to you about Puerto Rican history at home?
 - Where do you go in Hartford if you want to learn about Puerto Rican history?
 - Do any of the politicians from Puerto Rico come to Hartford?
 - Do any politicians in Hartford go to Puerto Rico?
 - Is there a political relationship between Puerto Rico and Hartford?
 - Government departments?
 - Campaigns?
 - Projects?
- Are there any citywide celebrations of Puerto Rican culture?
 - Have you ever participated in Hartford's Puerto Rican Day Parade?
 - How does Hartford's parade compare with that in New York?
- What do you think about Puerto Rico's vote for statehood?
- Can you speak about politics in Puerto Rico?
 - What are some of the political parties?
 - What were their stances?
 - Do/Would you affiliate with any of these parties?
 - Los Independistas
 - Statehood
 - Free Associated State

- Is what going on in Puerto Rico have any relationship with the community here in Hartford?

Race

- Do you identify with a particular race?
 - Besides Hispanic/Latino do you identify with any other race?
 - Have you ever been mistaken for anything other than Puerto Rican (Hispanic/Latino)?
- Do the members of your family have different physical features?
 - Does your family talk about race at home?
- Are there racial differences within the Puerto Rican community in Hartford?
- How do you perceive race?
 - Is there a difference between Puerto Ricans and White Americans?
 - Black Americans?
 - Born in America
 - Born in the Caribbean
 - Born in Africa
 - Born in other Latin American countries?
 - Asian Americans?
 - Native Americans?
- Do Puerto Ricans look a certain way?
 - How can you tell if someone is Puerto Rican?
 - Before they speak Spanish?
- Is Puerto Rico racially diverse?
- Are there racial differences in Puerto Rico?
 - Is there racial discrimination in Puerto Rico?
 - Is there discrimination in general in Puerto Rico?
 - Are there certain practices associated with certain races in Puerto Rico?
 - Is social class linked with race?
 - Do certain races occupy certain social statuses?
- How is race taught in Puerto Rico?
- Who/What is a jibaro?
- Who/What are Tainos?
- Is music racialized?
- Did your perception of race change when you moved to Hartford?
- When you returned to Puerto Rico did you perceive race differently?
 - Did you have a new view of race?
- How do your parents view race?
 - Grandparents?
- How has the conception of race in Puerto Rico changed?
- Is there a stigmatism against being Black in Hartford?
 - In Puerto Rico?

Preguntas Iniciales

- ¿Cuales su nombre?
- ¿Donde vive?
 - La Ciudad
 - El barrio
- ¿Cuántos años tiene usted?
- ¿Cuál es su ocupación?
- ¿Cuál es su etnicidad?
 - (Si Hispano/Latino) ¿Puede ser precisa?
- ¿De dónde es usted?
 - ¿Puede describirme el lugar donde nació?
 - ¿Lo demográfico?
 - ¿Cuántos personas habían?
 - ¿Cómo eran?
 - (Si era en los Estados Unidos) ¿Era un barrio puertorriqueño?
 - ¿Vivía con muchos miembros de su familia?
- (Si no es de los Estados Unidos) ¿Por qué se mudo a los Estados Unidos?
 - ¿Cuál era su última memoria de Puerto Rico?
 - Describame que estaba pasando cuando se fue de la Isla
 - (Si no es de Hartford) ¿Cuándo venia a Hartford?
 - ¿Cuántos años vivía en Hartford?
 - ¿Por qué venia a Hartford?
 - ¿Qué había en Hartford?
 - ¿Quién estaba acá?
 - ¿Venía con alguien?
- ¿Vista su ciudad natal?
 - (Si) ¿Cuándo era la última vez que visito su ciudad natal?
- Describame su familia ¿Cómo es?
 - ¿Tiene fotos con usted? (Si no pregunta si puedo volver y incorporar las fotos en mi documental)
 - ¿De donde eran sus padres?
 - ¿Cuál estado?
 - ¿Usted fue a su ciudad natal?
 - (si) ¿Cuándo era la última vez que fue?
 - Describame la ciudad natal de sus padres
 - ¿Cómo son las personas?
 - ¿Cómo es el tiempo?
 - ¿El ambiente?
 - ¿Es tranquila, hético, peligroso, seguro?
- ¿Usted tiene familia en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Dónde vivan?
 - ¿Usted los vista?
 - ¿Habla con ellos por teléfono?

- ¿tiene familia en los Estados Unidos?
 - ¿Donde vivan?
 - ¿Usted los visita?
 - ¿Habla con ellos por teléfono?
- ¿Su familia de Puerto Rico visita a Usted?
 - ¿La de los Estados Unidos?
- En general ¿Usted fue a la Isla?
 - ¿Algunas veces extraña la Isla? ¿Extraña su ciudad natal?
 - ¿Cuáles son las cosas que extraña?
- ¿Si se mudara de Hartford la extrañaría?
 - ¿Por qué?
- ¿Después de vivir en los Estados Unidos querría vivir en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Por qué?
- ¿Cree usted que la Isla es su patria?
- ¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre vivir acá en Hartford y vivir en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿las diferencias entre Hartford y las otras partes de los Estados Unidos?
 - Nueva York
 - Chicago
 - Miami

La Comida

- ¿Cuáles son sus comidas favoritas?
- ¿Cuáles son los platos que come usted habitualmente?
- ¿Cuáles son los platos que cocina sus padres?
 - (Si tiene hijos) ¿sus hijos qué comen?
 - ¿Sus abuelos?
- ¿Hay platos que come específicamente para días especiales?
 - La Navidad
 - El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos
 - La Quinciéniera
 - ¿Para esas ocasiones donde come usted?
 - A su casa
 - La casa de un miembro familiar
 - Un restaurante
 - ¿Durante esas ocasiones como es el ambiente?
 - ¿Cuál es su plato favorito?
 - ¿Cómo se sentiría si no se haría esos platos para esas ocasiones?
 - ¿Sabe cómo se hace esos platos?
 - ¿Dónde obtiene los ingredientes?
- ¿Hay muchos mercados puertorriqueños en Hartford?
 - ¿Recuerda usted un tiempo que no había?
- ¿Cree que para hacer ciertos platos es difícil conseguir los ingredientes acá en Hartford?

- ¿Cree que sería más difícil comer la comida tradicional si viviera en otra parte de Connecticut?
 - ¿otra parte de los Estados Unidos?
- ¿Cree que la comida que come es una parte significativa de su identidad?
 - ¿se identifica más con la comida americana?
 - ¿La comida puertorriqueña?
 - ¿Otras comidas?

La Música

- ¿Cuál su música preferida?
 - ¿Quién es su músico/cantante favorito?
 - ¿Hay un género que escucha todos los días?
 - ¿Hay géneros que escucha para las fiestas?
 - ¿El disco?
- ¿Cuál es el género con que se identifica más?
- ¿Qué tipo de música se toca en la casa de sus padres?
 - ¿En la casa de sus abuelos?
- ¿Qué tipo de música se toca durante las ocasiones especiales?
 - La Navidad, etc
 - ¿Cuál es una Parranda?
- ¿Qué tipo de música escucha en las calles de Hartford?
- ¿Hay música de es típica a Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Danzas?
- ¿Sabe algo de . . .?
 - Bomba y Plena
 - Salsa
 - Reggaetón
 - ¿Qué es el Dembow?
 - Hip-Hop
 - House Music
 - Dancehall Music
 - ¿Conoce los músicos/cantantes de esos géneros?
 - ¿Van a Hartford a tocar?
 - ¿Cuántas veces?
 - De los géneros que nombre ¿Usted puede explicarme como es el sonido? ¿El ritmo?
 - ¿Puede nombrar una canción?
 - ¿Hay una relación entre algunos de esos géneros?
 - Hip hop y Reggaetón Reggaetón y Dance hall etcétera
- ¿Usted baila?
 - ¿Cuál es su estilo?
 - ¿Puede mostrarme?
- ¿Hay danzas típicas a Puerto Rico?

- ¿Hay instrumentos musicales que son típicamente puertorriqueños?
 - El Cuatro como Yomo Toro

La Religión

- ¿Usted es religioso?
 - ¿practica una religión?
 - ¿Cuál es su lugar de culto?
 - ¿Puede describame que pasa típicamente durante una ceremonia religiosa?
- ¿Hay días asociada con su religión?
- ¿En la Isla se practica mucho esa religión?
- ¿En Hartford se practica mucho esa religión?
 - ¿Hay muchos lugares de culto acá en Hartford donde uno se puede practicar la religión suya?
 - ¿Había un tiempo cuando no había un lugar donde se podía practicar la religión?
 - ¿Cree que acá en Hartford es difícil practicar su religión?
- ¿Cuándo se mudó a Hartford cambió su religión?
 - ¿Cambio algún aspecto de su religión? (La manera que practica la religión)
- ¿Cree que sería más difícil practicar su religión si vivirá en otra parte de Connecticut?
 - ¿Otra parte de los Estados Unidos?
- ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre su religión y otras religiones que hay?
 - ¿La diferencia entre su religión y las otras religiones cristianas?
- ¿Cuál es la religión que practica sus padres?
 - ¿sus hijos?
 - ¿sus abuelos?
- (Si es el mismo) ¿En comparación a ti cuáles son los aspectos de la religión que sus padres hacen de modo distinto?
 - ¿Sus hijos?
 - ¿Sus abuelos?
- ¿Cree que los puertorriqueños acá en Hartford son religiosos?
 - ¿En la Isla son religiosos?
- ¿Cuál religión practica la mayoría de los puertorriqueños acá en Hartford?
- ¿La religión es un parte importante dentro de su identidad?
- ¿Cree que la religión es una parte importante dentro de la cultura puertorriqueña acá en Hartford?

El Idioma

- ¿Cuál idioma usted usa normalmente?
 - ¿En el trabajo?
 - ¿En la escuela?
 - ¿Con sus padres?
 - ¿Con sus hijos?
 - ¿con sus abuelos?

- ¿con sus amigos?
- ¿Cuál es su idioma nativo o sea cual era su primer idioma?
- ¿Cuál idioma usan mayormente los puertorriqueños acá en Hartford?
 - ¿Cuál idioma escucha en su barrio?
- ¿Hay una ruptura entre aquellos que no hablan castellano y aquellos que sí?
 - ¿Cómo se mira a los puertorriqueños que no hablan castellano?
 - ¿Usted tiene una opinión sobre puertorriqueños que no hablan castellano?
- ¿Es el castellano que usted usa distinto a lo que usan sus padres, hijos o abuelos?
 - Su acento
 - Las palabras que usted usa y ellos no
 - La gramática
- ¿Qué es el Spanglish?
 - ¿Usan solamente los neoyorquinos o usan los puertorriqueños en la Isla?
 - ¿Ve el Spanglish en la literatura que usted lee?
 - ¿En la música?
- ¿Cree que el idioma es una parte de su identidad?
- A relación al idioma ¿Cree que hay una diferencia entre los mayores y los jóvenes?
 - ¿Cree que los jóvenes están perdiendo la lengua?
- ¿Cuáles son las maneras que la comunidad está preservando la lengua?
 - ¿la música?
 - ¿las actividades comunitarias?
 - ¿la escuela?

La Política

- ¿Le interesa la política?
 - ¿Sigue la política de Hartford?
 - ¿La de la Isla?
 - ¿Su estado natal o el estado natal de sus padres?
- ¿Usted vota acá en Hartford?
 - ¿Por qué?
 - ¿Votó durante las elecciones locales?
 - ¿Hay un partido que usted apoya?
- ¿Cómo es la política acá en Hartford?
 - ¿Hay asuntos que le importan a la comunidad puertorriqueña?
 - ¿Cuáles son los asuntos que le importan a usted?
- ¿Quiénes son algunos líderes de la comunidad puertorriqueña?
 - ¿Habían muchos líderes en el pasado?
- ¿Cómo es la política en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Cuáles son los partidos?
 - ¿Usted apoya uno de ellos?
 - ¿Algunas veces los políticos de la Isla vienen a Hartford?
 - ¿Los políticos de Hartford van a la Isla para hacer la política?
 - ¿Hay una relación política entre Hartford y Puerto Rico?

- ¿Había?
 - ¿Hay departamentos entre ellos?
 - ¿Campañas?
 - ¿Proyectos?
- ¿Usted tiene una bandera en su casa?
 - ¿Sabe si los miembros de su familia tiene una bandera?
 - ¿sus amigos?
- ¿Por qué la bandera le importa a usted?
 - ¿Qué representa para usted?
- ¿Realmente que significa la bandera?
 - La estrella
 - Las rayas
- ¿Se enseña la historia puertorriqueña acá en Hartford?
 - ¿Sus padres o abuelos le enseñaban la historia puertorriqueña?
 - ¿Enseña a sus hijos la historia puertorriqueña?
 - ¿Dónde se va para aprender la historia puertorriqueña?
- ¿Hay celebraciones puertorriqueñas acá en Hartford?
 - ¿Fue o estaba en el desfile puertorriqueño de Connecticut o de Hartford?
 - ¿Sabe quien empezó el desfile puertorriqueño de Connecticut?
 - ¿Cómo se compara el desfile de Connecticut con el de Nueva York?
 - ¿Hay otros desfiles en Hartford?
- Votaron en Puerto Rico a cambiar el status de la nación. Ahora quiere ser parte de los Estado Unidos
 - ¿Cuál es su opinión?
- La comunidad puertorriqueña era muy politizada en los años sesenta y setenta ¿Cree que la comunidad todavía es politizada?
 - ¿Políticamente cuál es la diferencia entre los jóvenes y los mayores?

Las Relaciones Entre Razas

- ¿Usted se identifica con una raza?
 - A pesar de la raza latina ¿se identifica con otra(s) razas?
 - ¿Afuera de la comunidad (o quizás adentro) se le equivocó para otra raza/etnicidad?
- ¿Todos los miembros de su familia parecen lo mismo?
 - ¿tienen rasgos físicos que son distintos?
 - ¿Adentro de su familia se habla de relaciones entre razas?
 - ¿Sabe si algunos de los miembros familiares tenían problemas por sus rasgos físicos?
- ¿Adentro de la comunidad puertorriqueña en Hartford se distingue las razas?
- ¿Usted cómo percibe las relaciones entre razas?
 - ¿Cree que hay una diferencia entre puertorriqueños y americanos que son blancos?
 - ¿Afro-americanos?

- ¿ellos que nacieron en los Estados Unidos?
 - ¿del Caribe?
 - ¿de África?
 - ¿de América Latina?
 - ¿Americanos asiáticos?
 - ¿los indígenas de los Estados Unidos?
- ¿Los puertorriqueños tienen un aspecto especial?
 - ¿Cómo se sabe si alguien es puertorriqueño?
 - ¿antes que ellos hablan?
- ¿Hay muchas razas en la Isla?
 - ¿Las razas que hay en Puerto Rico son distintos?
 - ¿Hay discriminación en Puerto Rico?
 - De razas. De clase social
 - ¿Hay prácticas asociadas con ciertas razas en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿la clase social que uno tiene es vinculada con su raza allá en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Ciertas razas ocupan ciertas clases sociales en Puerto Rico?
- ¿Cómo enseña las relaciones entre razas allá en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Quién o qué es un jíbaro?
 - ¿Quién o qué es un Taino?
- ¿Cree que la música allá en Puerto Rico es racializada?
 - ¿ciertas razas allá en Puerto Rico escuchan ciertos géneros de música?
- ¿Cree que hay una percepción distinta de relaciones entre razas acá en los Estados Unidos que hay en la Isla?
- ¿Usted cambió su percepción de las relaciones entre razas cuando se mudó a Hartford?
 - ¿Cuándo volvía a la Isla mantenía la percepción que aprendió de los Estados Unidos?
- ¿Cómo sus padres perciben las relaciones entre razas?
 - ¿sus hijos?
- ¿En Puerto Rico cree usted que las percepciones sobre las relaciones entre razas están cambiando o ya se cambió.
- ¿Cree que hay un estigma o una percepción contra los negros en Hartford?
 - ¿Hay un estigma contra los Afro-Puertorriqueños en Puerto Rico?
 - ¿Hay un estigma contra los tainos?