Perspectives on “The Transformation of Hartford through the early 21st Century: Local, Regional and Global Perspectives”

Does Anyone Care about Poverty and Inequality in Hartford?

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February 8, 2008   Trinity College   Hartford, Connecticut
Current conditions in Hartford: High rates of child poverty

- Indicative of great social stress
  - Family Poverty
  - Inadequate access to health care
  - Problems in educational system
  - Problems in labor market
  - Problems from results of welfare reform of 1990s

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<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
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</table>

Other Connections: Towns with Populations Greater than 100,000

- 29 New Haven, CT 32.4%
- 69 Ridgecrest, CA 25.1%
- 80 Watervliet, NY 23.9%
- 205 Stamford, CT 8.9%

Source: KidsCount Census Data
Source: American Community Survey
Regional Inequality & Segregation

Hartford’s population is home to:
- 44% of the African American population in Hartford County
- 49% of the Hispanic/Latino population in Hartford County
- 14% of Hartford County’s population.

Hartford’s poverty rate was 30.6% in 1999 compared to 9.3% in Hartford County.

Source: CERC
Hartford’s Diversity:

Hartford's Racial/Ethnic Composition

- African American: 41%
- Hispanic: 39%
- Other: 16%
- White: 4%

Source: CT State Data Center (Sept. 2007)
Labor Market Inequality

Hartford’s residents have close to twice the unemployment rate of the county and a low share of the area’s labor force.

As of December, 2007, Hartford’s Unemployment Rate was 9.3%

Hartford area employment statistics:

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<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force</td>
<td>48,222</td>
<td>449,501</td>
<td>1,844,244</td>
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<td>Employed</td>
<td>44,044</td>
<td>428,471</td>
<td>1,765,083</td>
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<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4,178</td>
<td>21,030</td>
<td>79,161</td>
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<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td># of Units</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>25,093</td>
<td>103,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>115,574</td>
<td>496,867</td>
<td>1,672,161</td>
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<tr>
<td>'92-'06 Growth AAGR</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mfg Employment</td>
<td>1,469</td>
<td>60,003</td>
<td>193,727</td>
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Source: CERC
Massive Decline in Manufacturing Jobs in Connecticut in Recent Decades Erodes Economic & Social Mobility in Connecticut’s Workforce

Source: Connecticut Voices for Children and EPI Analysis of BLS data.
Wages for those in bottom 20% of hourly wage earners in Connecticut have stagnated or declined, while those in the top 20% have risen much more rapidly over recent decades. The result is high wage inequality in Connecticut. This particularly affects cities like Hartford.
The percentage of workers earning below poverty wages in Connecticut has been growing over the past decade:
A State of Contrasts

- These state-wide trends are most apparent in cities, especially Hartford, with the highest poverty statistics in Connecticut.

- Yet, Connecticut still has high per capita and household income overall despite a poor capitol city:
  - Median Household State Income: $65,859
  - Median Household Hartford Income: $29,150
    - Source: CERC Town Profile 2008 – Hartford
  - Per Capita Income – 1999
    - Hartford: $13,428
    - Connecticut: $28,766
    - Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts
What Contributes to Poverty in Hartford?

- Need to understand sources of migration and immigration to Hartford
  - Who’s arriving?
  - What are conditions in home country or area they are leaving?
  - How did they get here? (resettlement activity, voluntary immigration/migration)
  - What are the language issues? Recently the Hartford School Superintendent told a community meeting that there are 51 language groups in the Hartford Public Schools.
What Contributes to Poverty in Hartford? (continued)

- What are the labor market conditions that exist in Hartford for those in poverty?
  - Where is the growth in the labor market and what are the wages in those sectors?
  - What can be done so that workers in low wage jobs can support families and advance in the workforce?
  - What kinds of education and training programs exist and who are they helping?
  - What is the effect of the policies of public assistance programs since welfare reform of the 1990s?
  - What kinds of job supports do low wage workers need to sustain their families?
  - How do local and state economic development policies help alleviate or exacerbate poverty in Hartford?
What Contributes to Poverty in Hartford? (continued)

- What are the challenges facing the education system in Hartford?
  - How can successful educational strategies be developed in the context of No Child Left Behind and the emphasis on testing?
  - How can resources for education be equitably allocated in the state so that cities receive what they need?
  - How can racial isolation be reduced in the Hartford region?
  - What types of supports help Hartford students succeed in school?
  - What types of higher education opportunities exist for Hartford students, given the rising high costs of college education?
What Contributes to Poverty in Hartford? (continued)

• Other areas of concern:
  - Housing Costs
  - Health Care Access, Affordability & Quality
  - Transportation to & from employment centers for all work schedules
  - Child care access & affordability
  - Incarceration & Re-entry Impacts & Issues
Does anyone outside of Hartford care?
What are the Sources of Social Change in Hartford?

- Importance of Social Movements and Political Developments of recent times
- Need to understand history, impact and current status of community organizing
- How do more recently arrived groups create institutions for their needs?
- Need to have a clear picture of the influence and impact of the corporate sector on local community
What are the Sources of Social Change in Hartford? (continued)

- How does the labor movement and local labor organizing impact the community?
- How has unionization contributed to lifting income of low wage workers?
- What role has labor played in local politics & economic development?
- What types of coalitions and alliance have formed among different organizing groups and networks, including labor, and what impacts have they had?
What are the Sources of Social Change in Hartford? (continued)

- What impact has recent political history had on the city?
  - Level of organization and progress by local groups and communities in Hartford:
    - Rise of African American political leaders & political activities
    - Rise of Puerto Rican & Latino political leaders & political activities
  - Role of political parties & local activity of 3rd parties
  - What kinds of political & legislative accomplishments have been achieved?
What are the Sources of Social Change in Hartford? (continued)

- Who is making decisions about Hartford’s future?
  - Where exactly do key decisions get made?
- What forces are represented in decision making about Hartford?
  - What opportunities exist for popular participation?
  - How open or closed is the process if there is a process?
  - Is there any real planning going on or are decisions made by different sectors on an ad hoc basis?
The Critical Question:

- How can we achieve meaningful social change and reform that lifts the standard of living for the people of Hartford and enables local families and individuals to thrive?