The Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Coalitional Representation of Latinxs in the U.S. House of Representatives

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

AVRAM EUGENE MUNOZ

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

KATHRYN PEARSON

AUGUST 2019

Acknowledgments

The process of planning, researching, and writing this dissertation has taken longer than I thought it would when I started graduate school in 2013. Through the years, though, I have received an immense amount of support from many people that has helped me see this project through to the end.

First and foremost, I must thank the Department of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. Not only did they admit me to their graduate program, the Department also provided support at all stages of the project. This support made it possible for me to make multiple trips to Washington, D.C. to conduct my archival research and interviews with CHC members and staffers, as well as carry out research on the other components of the dissertation and write everything up.

I spent about two months reading through the archived documents of the CHC at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. This was both a long time to spend in the reading room, but also nowhere near enough time to delve into the history of the CHC. The archivists helped me figure out which specific records of the CHC's I might look into, even when sometimes they had to inform me that the records were unavailable because they contained sensitive information.

I am also thankful to the CHC members and congressional staffers who agreed to be interviewed for this project. They did not have to agree to talk with me when I showed up unannounced at their offices in the House office buildings, or when I emailed them out of the blue with a list of questions asking if they would be available to speak with me. I am also extremely thankful that the members of the CHC chose to deposit their records at the National Archives in the mid-1990s when the future of the organization was uncertain—had they not made this decision, it is unlikely the project would have survived in its current form.

I cannot state enough how thankful I am to my advisor, Kathryn Pearson, for all she has done for me in the last six years. Before taking her graduate seminar on Congress I did not think I was going to write a dissertation focusing on institutions in any sense; I stumbled upon the CHC while conducting the research for that term paper, and I haven't looked back. She has provided constructive and insightful feedback on the multitude of drafts for each chapter, pushing me to be as precise as possible in my discussion of the CHC and its role in Congress while also allowing me the freedom to explore different ways to think and write about representation in Congress even when this lead to me taking longer than I wanted to move forward with various stages of the project. I could not have asked for a better advisor throughout this process.

Liz Beaumont, Michael Minta, Joe Soss, and Jane Sumner provided critical insights and feedback throughout this project, whether about the theoretical framing or the gritty details of my statistical models in the empirical chapters. It is because of their support in introducing me to a variety of ways of thinking about and doing political

science that I even felt comfortable using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and they have all helped me find a balance between the two that, I think, makes this project stronger than had I only used a qualitative or quantitative approach.

I also cannot state enough how grateful I am for my fellow graduate students at the University of Minnesota. Whether it was commiserating over our reading load during coursework, asking tough questions during colloquia, or swapping drafts of dissertation chapters to read and give feedback, we have helped each other grow as scholars and figure out how to present our ideas in ways that are accessible across the subfields of political science. I would not trade the friendships I have made in these six years for anything.

As always, my parents, brother, and sister have been nothing but supportive from the moment I moved to Minneapolis. This, even if it meant I was shut up in my room reading and writing (or doing my political theory preliminary exam) when I was supposed to be visiting for the holidays.

Most important of all, I have to thank Laura. At this point I've been in graduate school for about half the time that we have been together, and through it all she has always been supportive. Sometimes that meant reading a draft of a paper or a chapter or making sure I remembered to eat in the middle of marathon writing sessions, but other times it meant telling me to shut my laptop and binge a show on Netflix with her. Our conservation about what it meant to each of us to be Latino/a when we were watching *Selena* has stuck with me, and influenced a lot of my thinking when writing about identity. I would not be where or who I am today without her. Even when she was pregnant with Nico and I was finishing writing my dissertation, she made sure to remind me to breathe and to appreciate things like sleep (which, thanks to Nico, I no longer get on a regular basis). The following pages reflect her support just as much as they do my own work.

To Laura and Nico.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

1| Coalitional Representation in the House of Representatives

> There is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort, is vested in the entire aggregate of the community, every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general.
>
> –John Stuart Mill (1991, 64)

> Oppression consists in systematic institutional processes which prevent some people from learning and using satisfying and expansive skills in socially recognized settings, or institutionalized social processes which inhibit people's ability to play and communicate with others or to express their feelings and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen.
>
> –Iris Marion Young (1990, 38)

Writing in in 1861, John Stuart Mill attempted to articulate a reason for why a representative form of government was, in fact, the ideal form of government for any society to have. One of Mill's most important arguments for this form of government derived from the belief that the community, or the governed population, provides the basis for all governmental power and authority. Consequently, it only makes sense that every citizen ought to be able to participate in the exercise of this "ultimate sovereignty" in some way. Because Mill perceives true democracy, wherein all people are able to speak and participate directly in political decision making processes, as a logistical impossibility, he settles on representative government as the ideal, assuming that elected representatives will take actions that promote the general good of the community rather than their own selfish interests.

In practice, though, representative government in the U.S. does not approach the ideal form articulated by Mill. Various social groups, often defined on the basis of racial

identity are systematically excluded from political institutions to varying degrees and are unable to participate in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty held by the people. According to political theorist Iris Marion Young, this kind of oppression is especially problematic as it precludes racial groups from voicing their concerns or needs in the legislative forum where such issues may be addressed, especially in the U.S. Congress. Even if people are able to speak out in public about what issues face their group or larger community, such proclamations do not achieve much if they are not heard in the political institutions that are ostensibly designed to carry the words of the people to the ears of politicians and into legislation. Such oppression is especially troubling when considered alongside the original function of Congress as intended by the framers of the Constitution and articulated in Article I. The framers thought of Congress, specifically the House of Representatives, as the branch of government closest to the people and thus the most responsive to their desires and interests. Such a relationship is fostered, they argued, because of the frequency of elections for members of the House and the fact that Representatives are tied to smaller constituencies than Senators or the President. This relationship is also crucial to the framers' goal of preserving liberty for all citizens of the United States. As Madison articulates in Federalist Paper No. 52, because it is vital for liberty that government has a common interest with the people "so it is particularly essential that the [House of Representatives] should have an immediate dependence on, and an intimate sympathy with, the people" (323; see also Federalist Paper No. 57). Thus where Mill sees representative government as offering the perfect opportunity for people to participate in government and influence the deliberations of those in power—essentially fulfilling the mission of the House of Representatives as visualized by

Madison and the other framers—Young points out the sobering reality that some groups do not have the same opportunity to engage in this form of deliberative democracy, raising questions about the responsiveness of representative government to the needs of all citizens.

The critical question to ask, then, is to what extent does our current iteration of representative government work for the interests of all people, especially those who belong to racial minority groups? Many scholars have attempted to answer this question, though there is not yet a concrete answer. What does come through in these studies, though, is evidence of the relative unresponsiveness of government to the interests and concerns of racial minority groups. In part, this lack of responsiveness has been tied directly to how many members of racial minority groups actually get the opportunity to serve as representatives within Congress. Because the number of racial minority representatives does not correspond to these groups' share of the American population, it is difficult for these legislators to take effective action to realize the interests of the groups through legislation.

We might further clarify the question above, then, to ask: To what extent does having legislators of racial minority groups in Congress bolster the representation of those groups' interests in the legislative process? That is, does an increase in the descriptive representation of a given racial group translate into the substantive representation of that group's interests in Congress? These are the questions that I attempt to answer in this dissertation, focusing on the political representation of Latinxs in the United States. However, the focus of my study differs from previous analyses of Latinx representation in Congress in a critical way. Where previous studies of the link

between descriptive and substantive representation have focused on the dyadic relationship between a representative and their constituency—whether defined as a congressional district or a state—I focus on Latinx representation as a coalitional endeavor. That is, I focus on Latinx representation as a relationship not just between constituents and individual members of Congress; rather, I focus on Latinx representation as a relationship between Latinx constituents and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), a coalition comprised of Latinx members of Congress who work to represent all Latinxs as a national constituency that transcends the boundaries of congressional districts. Scholarly accounts that focus on individual members of Congress have not found strong evidence either for or against the argument that descriptive representation translates to meaningful substantive representation, owing in part to the strong effects of partisanship and ideology on individual legislators at any given point in time. Focusing on representation in Congress as a coalitional practice, I argue, shifts our focus away from how each legislator represents their constituents—within their district or otherwise—and to an analysis of how members of Congress who are members of the same racial group work collaboratively to identify and realize the interests of that group. Such a shift is necessary because of the significant diversity that exists within the Latinx community, and assessing the extent to which this diversity is represented in Congress requires a discussion of how Latinx legislators themselves grapple with this diversity as they work together on the basis of their shared racial identity. Coalitional representation also calls for an expansion of how we measure representation in Congress—rather than focusing only on the passage of legislation, we must treat representation as multifaceted and comprised of a wide range of activities that this coalition of Latinx legislators in the

CHC undertake in order to boost the voice of the Latinx community within American political institutions.

In the rest of this chapter, I develop in greater detail my theory of coalitional representation, its relationship to scholarship on political representation, and its potential benefits for the representation of the Latinx community. I then discuss my methods for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) as the coalitional representative for the Latinx community in the U.S. Congress. I conclude with a brief roadmap of the ensuing chapters, which detail my exploration of how the CHC engages in coalitional representation for the Latinx community. While the CHC and coalitional representation appear to have limited success according to standard measures of legislative effectiveness, i.e. passing legislation, I demonstrate the unique benefits conferred upon the Latinx community by the CHC. These include a deep awareness of the diversity of the Latinx community and the incorporation of this awareness into legislative agendas and behaviors, as well as several other actions undertaken by the CHC that constitute representation insofar as they help make present the voice of the Latinx community within political institutions without needing to fight the rising tide of partisan polarization in Congress.

Coalitional Representation and the CHC

Early debates on the nature of political representation are animated by a disagreement on the nature of the relationship between representatives and their constituents. Edmund Burke articulated two distinct relationships—the trustee relationship and the delegate relationship. In the former, constituents elect their

representatives, but the representatives do not have to adhere to the specific desires of these constituents when making decisions about policy and governance. Representatives are entrusted with the power to govern, and to make decisions that the representatives deem to be in the interests of their constituents and the nation. In the delegate relationship, representatives are more accountable for their actions to the constituents who elected them to office in the first place, and representatives ought not make decisions that contradict the desires of their constituents or the general population.

This latter position gained in prominence with John Stuart Mill's defense of representative government as the most ideal form of government. For Mill, one of the defining characteristics of a representative form of government is that "the whole people, or some numerous portion of them, exercise, through deputies periodically elected by themselves, the ultimate controlling power…They must be masters, whenever they please, of all the operations of government" (1991, 97). That is, the elected representatives who serve in government are not to be treated as trustees, acting in whatever way they deem to be in the interest of the general public. Rather, it is most important that the general public be able to hold representatives accountable through regular elections, given that any legitimate form of government must derive its ultimate sovereignty from the people who are governed. Thus, representatives serve at the will of the represented, and take actions that promote the "general good of the community" (131).

If we were to continue to follow Mill's view, then we would be left to assume that members of Congress, in order to be described as good representatives, must be constantly attentive to the interests and desires of their constituents and realizing those

preferences through legislative action, lest they get removed from office in the next election. However, members of Congress are faced with another dilemma given their status as national lawmakers: ought they prioritize the interests of their own constituents or the interests of the nation? We know that the answer to this question is extremely complicated, as incumbent reelection rates remain extremely high even though members of Congress often prioritize personal ambition or national interests at the expense of the interests of their constituents. Such a question only gains in importance and impact when considered in the specific context of racial minority groups in the United States, who are perennially under-represented in Congress relative to their share of the national population. If members of Congress are considered good representatives by virtue of advocating for the general good of the community, then how can any representative or group of representatives be considered normatively good when they often ignore the preferences of various minority groups that comprise the community?

Hanna Pitkin's (1967) evaluation of the concept of representation, both in general and in the political context, helps answer this question to some extent. In the general sense, Pitkin defines representation as "the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (8). To represent a person in government, then, is simply to introduce them to government and its institutions in some way. This does not necessarily have to be physical—representation for Pitkin can occur simply by making a person's viewpoint present in government. This leads into Pitkin's conceptualization of political representation, which is different from her general treatment of representation in that political representation necessitates a specific kind of "acting for" constituents on behalf of the representative. Representatives not only make

the views of the represented known in government, they also act for those views and attempt to see them realized through governmental action or policy. Going further, Pitkin argues that a key element of the relationship between the representative and the represented is a sense of accountability, according to which the represented can hold the representative to account when the latter takes actions counter to the views of the former. Thus, Pitkin's conceptualization of political representation comes across as very similar to that offered by Mill. Both argue that representation requires representatives be accountable to the represented, and that the role of representatives is to be a delegate rather than a trustee—they are expected to work for the interests of the people regardless of constituents' identities, racial or otherwise.

Pitkin goes further than Mill, though, in her identification of different types of representation. Foremost among these are descriptive and substantive representation. Descriptive representation, for Pitkin, is "the making present of something absent by resemblance or reflection, as in a mirror or art" (11). As it applies to congressional representation, this is often taken to mean that a descriptive representative closely resembles or looks like the people they are representing. Thus, a descriptive representative of a woman would also be a woman, and a descriptive representative of someone from the middle class would also be someone from the middle class. More often than not, descriptive representation is discussed in terms of racial or ethnic identity, forming the basis of the argument that in order for racial minority groups to be adequately represented in Congress, their level of descriptive representation must match their proportion of the general population. That is, the number of people of a given racial group serving in Congress should roughly approximate the percentage they comprise of

the general population of the U.S. This does not, however, guarantee that the substantive interests of the group will be accurately represented in Congress. According to Pitkin, descriptive representation is problematic in that it does not engender the "acting for" that she considers to be central to the practice of political representation; as she puts it, "in the political realm it has no room for the creative activities of a representative legislature, the forging of consensus, the formulating of policy, the activity we roughly designate by 'governing'" (90). Descriptive representation, then, is not so indistinguishable from symbolic representation insofar as in both cases there is no acting for the represented, as the core motivation for both of these forms of representation "is in no sense a matter of agency" (111).

Substantive representation—wherein representatives act for the interests of constituents regardless of descriptive characteristics and perceived similarities between the representative and their constituents—is thus a preferable form of representation for Pitkin. To represent someone on a substantive level is not only to make their views present in the institution of Congress, it is also primarily a matter of agency and acting for those interests. It is not merely assumed that the representative holds the same views as the constituent based on a shared identity or experience—the representative actively pursues the realization of these views through legislation. Substantive representation is thus much closer to Pitkin's ideal form of political representation, and ought to be preferred to representation that is only descriptive, and thus merely symbolic, in nature.

Operating under such theories of representation, we would expect that members of Congress are able to represent the views of their constituents simply by virtue of sharing ideological predilections or party identification with their constituents. Party

identification and ideological leanings, one could argue, are clear indicators of constituents' substantive preferences and thus provide clear cues to legislators as to which bills to support or oppose. As such, we focus on the relationship between an individual member of Congress and their direct relationship to their constituents. Logically, then, we would expect that if a member of the House of Representatives wins the election in their district, then they have been judged the representative most beneficial to the substantive representation of the interests of a majority of people in that district.

This is not always the case though – we are often confronted with members of Congress who only represent some of the constituents in their district or state, rather than all of them. In some cases this is affected by how often individuals contact the offices of the legislator, or in other cases by how often individuals donate money to legislators (Miler 2010). In other instances, this representational disparity can be explained by the lack of members of Congress who share life experiences with their constituents that make the legislator more aware of the unique perspectives of members of various subconstituencies living in their district or state. For some, this is referred to as a sense of linked fate across all members of a particular group, wherein members view their own prospects as inextricably linked to the prospects of the group (Dawson 1994). Others characterize this as a sense of shared group consciousness, where group members have a shared sense of what matters and what ought to be done to benefit the group (Conover 1984). In either instance, the notion that members of a particular social group—whether defined by race or some other characteristic—share political experiences and desire the same things from a representative government speak to the benefits of descriptive representation, despite Pitkin's argument to the contrary. The benefit of descriptive

representation is derived from having more members of a certain group in government, in large part because group members are more likely to share and understand the experiences that shape the collective preferences of the group (Mansbridge 1999). A non-member does not have the same experiences that are associated with being a member of the group, and so is not capable of fully representing the interests of the group. Thus, descriptive representation has more than a symbolic effect on representation—because of the sense of linked fate or shared group consciousness, descriptive representation directly translates to the "acting for" that Pitkin considers as central to political representation.

Descriptive representation for Mansbridge, then, better fulfills what she describes as the deliberative function of representative democracy. In terms of deliberation, representative democracy ought to include representatives who can speak for groups when that group's perspective is relevant to the issue at hand. This is contrasted to the aggregative function of representative democracy, which in times of political conflict aims to "represent the interests of every group whose interests conflict with those of others, in proportion to the numbers of that group in the population" (Mansbridge 1999, 634). That is, when there is a conflict over an issue the groups that are in conflict are represented proportionally, though not necessarily by a descriptive representative as "normative democratic theory demands only that power be exercised *on behalf of* particular interest bearers…not that this power be exercised by any particular mechanism" (635, emphasis added). Descriptive representation, Mansbridge concludes, is more focused on realizing the deliberative function of representative democracy—the goal is to ensure that underrepresented groups have a voice in conversations and decisions that are likely to affect their lives. What is important to note is that this is not

necessarily achieved when an underrepresented group has one representative elected to Congress—these groups themselves are internally diverse and have heterogeneous preferences and ideals. Thus, it is not enough to simply have one minority representative; rather, "a variety of representatives is usually needed to represent the heterogeneous, varied inflections and internal oppositions that together constitute the complex and internally contested perspectives, opinions, and interests characteristic of any group" (Mansbridge 1999, 636; see also Dovi 2002).

This, in turn, gives way to Mansbridge's later theorization of surrogate representation (2003), a type of representation characterized by political representatives acting for members of the same social group even when they have no formal electoral relationship, i.e. the constituents live in another state or congressional district. Surrogate representation certainly helps with regard to realizing the deliberative function of representative democracy; however, Mansbridge argues that surrogacy is easily corrupted and turned away from both the deliberative and the aggregative when surrogacy is anchored by monetary contributions by constituents outside the district to a member of Congress. The idea of surrogate representation has subsequently received much attention through scholarly works that attempt to determine the extent to which increased descriptive, surrogate representation of racial minority groups translates to the substantive representation of those groups' interests, especially when considered alongside concerns about the role of money in politics, and the possibility that district constituents have less influence on representatives than external, money-contributing individuals or groups.

However, as with the early theories of representation, studies of this nature are still lacking in a key regard—determining the efficacy of descriptive or surrogate representation is done at the individual level of each member of Congress, rather than at the group level. Analyses focus on whether being a member of a given racial group makes a legislator more or less likely to engage in some kind of legislative behavior, ranging from roll call votes (Hero and Tolbert 1995) to committee oversight activity (Minta 2011) to staff hiring practices (Wilson 2017). What is not discussed much is the extent to which collective action taken by all legislators who belong to that racial minority group might also boost the link between this descriptive form of representation and the substantive representation of the racial minority group's interests.

In response to this lack of discussion of representation as a group exercise, I offer up a theory of what I call coalitional representation. Coalitional representation refers to the collaborative efforts of a group of legislators to uncover, expose, and realize through the legislative process the interests of their constituency. This constituency is not necessarily defined by geographic boundaries as is the case with congressional districts—the members of the coalition set the terms for what it means to be represented by the coalition, resulting in constituencies that are widely dispersed throughout the United States and might be better thought of as national constituencies. Membership in the coalition is often based on some shared identity, with the main purpose of the coalition being to represent all constituents who also share that identity.

What I describe as coalitional representation, though, must be considered distinct from surrogate representation (Mansbridge 2003). According to Mansbridge, surrogate representation describes the relationship between representatives of a particular group

and constituents who are not represented by those legislators in a formal electoral sense, but who nevertheless benefit from the efforts of that legislator. That is, a Latinx member of Congress might be a surrogate representative for Latinxs living outside their own congressional district or state by virtue of that legislator focusing on issues that affect the Latinx population as a whole. Attempts to measure the effectiveness of surrogate representation for Latinxs, though, limit surrogate representation to the dyadic relationship between constituents and individual members. There is also evidence that the level of acculturation, sense of linked fate, and experiences of individual discrimination among Latinxs affect their view of how desirable surrogate representation is (Schildkraut 2016; Wallace 2014a). What distinguishes my account from these is my treatment of coalitional representation as primarily a dyadic relationship between Latinx constituents and the coalitional representative—i.e. the Congressional Hispanic Caucus—*as a group*.

Founded in 1976, the CHC has provided a way for Latinx representatives to work together on issues that are of primary concern to the Latinx population, even when those issues may not matter as much to the individual congressional districts represented by each of the Caucus members. Given that the Caucus's membership is comprised entirely of Latinx members of Congress from a variety of backgrounds, national origins, and experiences, the Caucus provides the best way to test this theorization of representation as a coalitional practice. My theorization of coalitional representation expects that while individual members may not always act in line with Latinx interests, especially on highly partisan or publicly salient roll call votes, members are much more likely to prioritize Latinx interests when acting explicitly as members of the Hispanic Caucus. What is more, the Hispanic Caucus provides an environment in which Latinx legislators can work

closely together and across party lines in order to craft legislative options that best serve Latinx interests across the U.S.

The question here is thus not about how desirable Latinx constituents judge being represented by other individual Latinxs (Schildkraut 2016).[1] Rather, I focus on the question of how the Hispanic Caucus defines the terms of the coalition—who can be a member of the CHC, who is part of the Latinx community the group represents, what issues matter to that community—in the face of significant diversity within the Latinx community, and how effective the CHC then is at advocating for the community through the legislative process. Even if more acculturated Latinxs or Latinxs with a lower sense of linked fate might look unfavorably upon surrogate representation, such evaluations do not preclude the possibility of good coalitional representation taking place via the CHC.

While measuring the effectiveness of a coalitional entity in representation certainly requires looking at the actions of individual members of Congress, focusing on individual members and individual-level characteristics does not tell us how members of Congress *work together* with other members, or how legislators who belong to the same racial group perceive their position and responsibilities vis-à-vis members of the same racial group in the general population. That is, the relationship between representative and represented in coalitional representation ought to be measured at the elite level in order to truly gauge the effectiveness of coalitional representation. Where constituents may see surrogate representation as tied to a specific Latinx representative,

[1] Schildkraut measures the desirability of surrogate representation among Latinxs by asking Latinx constituents how they feel about having individual Latinxs serving in Congress. Schildkraut's conceptualization of surrogate representation and the relationship it entails between representative and represented thus operates at a different level than coalitional representation.

representatives may see themselves as acting as part of a larger collective that works for the Latinx constituency regardless of Latinx constituent attitudes about representation. In this sense, coalitional representation pushes back against the possibility of corruption raised by Mansbridge and helps fulfill the deliberative function of democracy, as members of the representative coalition focus on the needs and wants of the coalition's constituents as a whole and provide an active voice for them within political institutions.

Much research on Latinx representation in Congress focuses on whether individual Latinx members of Congress are good substantive representatives of Latinx interests when compared to other, non-Latinx members of Congress. The evidence on this score, though, is inconclusive. In some cases, it appears that Latinx representatives are not any better than other members of Congress who share the partisan or ideological preferences of the Latinx population, especially when looking at roll call votes (Hero and Tolbert 1995; Rouse 2013; Wallace 2014b). Other evidence supports the idea that having Latinxs in Congress substantially adds to the substantive representation of Latinx interests, largely relying on other forms of legislative behavior that are both less public and less likely to be controlled by party loyalty than roll call votes, such as bill sponsorship, committee oversight activity, and other committee activities (Minta 2011; Rouse 2013).

Missing from these studies though is a consideration of the coalitional efforts undertaken by the CHC as it attempts to act in the interests of all Latinxs living in the U.S. The CHC also complicates Mansbridge's treatment of surrogate representation—nearly every CHC member represents a majority-Latinx districts and consequently the group represents a significant proportion of Latinx community simply through its

members representing their districts. While the CHC's members act as surrogates for Latinxs living in districts represented by non-Latinxs, it is hard to say that CHC members are distracted from the needs of their constituents when they are focusing acting as part of the CHC—to do so is also to focus on a majority of CHC members' own district-based constituencies.

Shifting the discussion of Latinx representation away from the traditional dyadic relationship of representative-constituent also affects how we think about Latinx members of Congress vis-à-vis existing theories about the organization and function of Congress as a whole. The presence of a coalitional Latinx representative such as the CHC that is ostensibly bipartisan and prioritizes Latinx interests above all else raises the important question of how Latinx representatives respond to the increasing partisan polarization and party competition in Congress (Lee 2009). As political parties in Congress act as cartels with positive and negative agenda power (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Cox and McCubbins 2007) and party leaders' power has increased since the CHC's founding (Rohde 1991; Pearson 2015), do Latinx representatives give in to pressure from party leadership when doing so would jeopardize Latinx interests? Similarly, does the CHC fall victim to informational control utilized by party leadership to control the voting behavior of rank and file members (Curry 2015)? If the CHC provides its members with information about how legislation affects the Latinx population, then they are able to make more informed decisions about legislation than party leaders would prefer, raising the possibility of Latinx representatives acting as a minority faction within Congress.

Thinking of representation as a coalitional practice, though, is not without its own problems. One of the largest issues this raises concerns the nature of Latinx identity. To

treat representation as a coalitional endeavor undertaken by Latinxs in Congress assumes that all Latinxs in the US have the same interests and preferences, in large part defined by their shared Latinx identity. However, Latinx identity is not homogeneous—differences exist based on national origin and generational status, among other factors. How, then, does a coalitional entity such as the CHC navigate the potential tensions that might arise from different subgroups of Latinxs holding different viewpoints on certain issues, e.g. Cubans differing from Mexican Americans or Puerto Ricans on Cuba-specific issues, or Puerto Ricans differing from others on questions of Puerto Rico's status as a territory of the United States? Is it possible for the Caucus to adequately represent all Latinxs if it relies on the assumption that Latinx identity is panethnic in nature? This question, I argue, is just as important as the question of whether Latinx members are better representatives of Latinx interests than non-Latinx legislators, as the very idea of "Latinx interests" is potentially problematic if derived from a panethnic approach that effaces the nuances of Latinx identity. Consequently, it is also necessary to identify the process through which the Hispanic Caucus recognizes or constructs Latinx interests, and how those choices reflect upon the representativeness of the Caucus.

How do Latinx members of Congress engage in coalitional action in order to represent the substantive interests of the Latinx population? Are Latinx representatives effective when they engage in collective efforts on behalf of Latinx interests? Do collective efforts at Latinx representation insulate Latinx representatives from the perpetual party pressures present in Congress? These questions have not been asked, and the answers can provide important insight into the discussion of whether having more Latinxs in Congress is beneficial for the substantive realization of Latinx interests in

Congress. Perhaps more importantly, the answers to these questions offer an answer to a question that has been asked for decades: is the underrepresentation of racial minorities, in this case Latinxs, a significant problem for Congress and representative democracy?

What is being asked here is not simply if congressional representation is truly democratic. It is also a question of "how to make genuinely inclusive a concept whose binding force is itself premised on various forms of exclusion" (Balfour 2011, 98). American representative democracy, according to some critics, is formed on the basis of exclusion and the extension of democratic rights to a select few, most typically white males. While this in and of itself is a democratic injustice, it is not resolved by simply affording rights to members of minority social groups. Even when minority social groups are given the right to vote, taken by many to be the hallmark of American democracy, the provision of this right does not address the exclusionary and discriminatory nature of American politics and society. Insofar as the right to vote confers upon people the standing of citizens, such a notion of citizenship is still "derived primarily from its denial to slaves, to some white men, and to all women" (Shklar 1991, 16). Even when racial minorities are given the right to vote and to be represented in political institutions such as Congress, this standing does not insulate them from the exclusion and discrimination that are inherent to this particular notion of being a good citizen. Thus, while racial minorities can vote, this does not guarantee that their voices are represented equally within American politics.

Such a democratic injustice is exacerbated when minority social groups experience the kind of oppression in American political institutions described by Iris Marion Young at the beginning of this chapter. That is, it is a democratic injustice that

minority social groups do not receive the same amount of representation in representative political institutions even when they ostensibly have the same rights as other members of society. Latinxs, and other racial minority groups, experience a specific kind of oppression within Congress when they do not have the same institutional voice or presence as other groups. The question of whether descriptive representation is desirable or not thus takes on a different valence—the question is not simply one of how best to achieve the substantive representation of Latinx interests, but also a question about how best to redress a systemic form of oppression that disadvantages Latinxs within a political institution and form of government created on the theoretical foundations of equal deliberation and participation for all citizens. Even when Latinxs are present in Congress in larger numbers, their voices are not necessarily heard because of the racing and gendering of the institution (Hawkesworth 2003) or because legislators only choose to see those constituents who donate money or call legislators' offices constantly (Miler 2010).

This exploration of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus does not provide a perfect solution to this democratic injustice. However, if it is demonstrable that the Hispanic Caucus effectively engages in the coalitional representation of Latinx interests, then it might be possible to claim that at least some kind of equality is being realized in our deliberative democracy insofar as the Hispanic Caucus provides a collective voice for the broader Latinx population, as

> Equality refers not primarily to the distribution of social goods, though distributions are certainly entailed by social equality. It refers primarily to the full participation and inclusion of everyone in a society's major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices. (Young 1990, 173)

Achieving justice and equality when a group is underrepresented in Congress necessitates a remedy that not only increases the number of Latinxs in Congress, but that also ensures that they will not simply be present as tokens devoid of real power. If members of the Hispanic Caucus are able to and do use their position to actively work for Latinx interests, then perhaps the situation is not so bleak.

Why the CHC?

Focusing on the role of congressional caucuses in the House offers a unique opening to investigate the representation of minority racial groups, especially in the context of collective representation. Congressional caucuses are "voluntary associations of members of Congress, without recognition or line item appropriations, which seek to have a role in the policy process" (Hammond et al. 1985, 583). While the legal status of caucuses in Congress changed in the mid-1990s, at their core they remain the same—they are legislative service organizations which members of Congress join in order to signal their concern for a particular issue or constituency. There is a variety of caucus types in Congress, though Hammond (1998) simplifies the list to six primary types: party caucuses, personal-interest caucuses, national constituency caucuses, regional caucuses, state/district caucuses, and industry caucuses. Membership in these different types of caucuses can be sought for different reasons, but each of these reasons is tied to the demonstrated benefits of caucus membership. Traditionally, the benefits of caucus membership are viewed in terms of how such membership can complement other aspects of the congressional context. Caucuses are a critical source of information-gathering for

members of Congress, especially as caucuses provide information in a way that "augment[s] the institutional structure of Congress" by "acting as informational counterparts to committees" (Ainsworth and Akins 1997, 408; see also Stevens, Jr., et al. 1981). While committees provide members with information and allow specialization among members of Congress, caucuses can provide their members with more specific information about how certain constituencies feel about certain issues, rather than focusing on policy minutiae.

Caucuses provide signaling benefits to their members. Caucuses allow members to send a signal to their constituents that they care about the issue or group represented by the caucus in question. This is especially true in districts where constituent interests are more heterogeneous and a representative is forced to signal to a wider variety of groups that s/he is paying attention (Miler 2011). Caucus membership, then, seems to facilitate legislators' attempts to at the very least be good symbolic representatives for a variety of constituents. By joining any one of the different types of caucuses, members can position themselves as symbolic representatives for partisans, a particular region of the country, certain national constituencies, or members of a specific industry. Caucus membership is not limited to only this symbolic effect though—caucuses also aid the efforts of representatives through substantive activism. Aside from providing information that complements the committee system, caucuses can also provide leadership opportunities for members who do not enjoy such chances in the broader Congress, or who are disadvantaged in this regard by the seniority system. As such, members are able to use caucuses as "new platforms for advocacy and responsiveness beyond the controls of their party or committees" (Caldwell 1989, 638).

Out of all the different types of caucuses that exist in Congress, national constituency caucuses most often provide all of these different benefits of caucuses. At their core, national constituency caucuses are defined as such by the desire of members to signal a commitment to "representing national, regional, or local constituency interests" (Hammond et al. 1985, 587). Elsewhere, national constituency caucuses are defined by the fact that members "perceive themselves as representing groups nationwide, outside as well as within their congressional districts or states" (Hammond 1991, 279), especially when it comes to racial groups. Thus, members of national constituency caucuses signal their commitment to members of that national constituency beyond the boundaries of their congressional districts, obtain information on all issues that are of concern to the national constituency, and provide a space for members to work together on realizing the interests of the national constituency through congressional activities. It is important to note that in previous studies of caucuses there is no stipulation that membership in a national constituency caucus requires that a representative also be a member of that national constituency. In practice, though, typically only members of the national constituency are allowed to be full members of a national constituency caucus who can participate in meetings and agenda-setting for the group, evidenced by the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. The Latinx identity requirement for full membership was even written into the CHC's bylaws,[2] though no such requirement was imposed on those legislators wishing to be associate members.

[2] Bylaws of the CHC as amended October 9, 1984. Records of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 2, Folder 5. National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

Multiple studies demonstrate that members of the Congressional Black Caucus, perhaps the most notable of the national constituency caucuses, exhibit a high degree of vote cohesion, especially in areas that seem to align closely with black public opinion (Gile and Jones 1995; Pinney and Serra 2002; King, Jr. 2011), demonstrating the effect of caucus membership on the substantive representation of black interests. Because the Black Caucus is a national constituency caucus, its members think about policies in terms of their effects on the entire black population living in the U.S. rather than the effect policies would have on each member's own district. The Black Caucus does not, however, totally overcome some of the other factors that often affect the individual power of members of Congress, including seniority (Levy and Stoudinger 1976) and whether the presidency is controlled by the Democratic Party (Pinney and Serra 1999). Thus, in the case of the Black Caucus, there is some evidence for the power of collective representation, albeit an attenuated power that is subject to the ever-present influence of partisanship.

The CHC fulfills a similar role for Latinxs in Congress as the CBC does for African Americans. That is, the Hispanic Caucus attempts to focus on issues that are relevant to Latinxs throughout the United States and to provide resources for Latinx legislators to utilize in order to realize these Latinx interests through their own legislative actions. The Hispanic Caucus does receive mention in some of the works focused on the Black Caucus, though, it does not receive its own analysis—at least in some cases, it is assumed that the two caucuses are similar enough because they are both national constituency caucuses for minority racial groups that both tend to be liberal and Democratic.

An important difference between the CBC and the CHC is that Latinxs occupy a unique position within American society and its racial hierarchy. Latinxs as a group have been at times included in the racial majority but at other times excluded, providing an experience for Latinxs of different generations that is not always defined by discrimination and oppression. While African Americans have a shared history of oppression through slavery, Jim Crow, and continued anti-black violence, Latinxs have sometimes enjoyed—and in fact fought for—the right to be considered part of the white majority (Hattam 2007). This desire to assimilate has even caused tensions between Latinxs born in the US and Latinx immigrants, as the former view the latter as threatening to their chances to become accepted as white and thus as Americans (Gutiérrez 1995). Such a dynamic is only further entrenched through racial systems and structures designed to pit racial minorities against each other, playing off each group's belief that it is competing with other racial minority groups for valuable resources that are only available to those closer to the top of the racial hierarchy (Hero 1992; Kim 2000). While older Latinxs might continue to buy into the assimilationist ideal and the belief that Latinxs are white and have only experienced discrimination because they did not assimilate quickly enough, younger Latinxs tend to view their political and social standing as similar to that of Black people and other racial minorities. The experiences among Latinxs are thus more heterogeneous and not as easily represented by a collective entity such as the CHC—where the CBC is able to draw on the common experience of discrimination and oppression, as well as the history of the Civil Rights era, the CHC has no such unifying moment to draw on in order to coalesce all Latinxs and their interests.

The discussion of coalitional representation for Latinxs, especially in the context of the Hispanic Caucus, is especially intriguing given recent discussions of coalitional politics among different racial minority groups in Congress. Tyson (2016) discusses the rise of the Tri-Caucus due to a sense of linked political fate across the Congressional Black, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific American Caucuses. Tyson argues that members of the Tri-Caucus are pulled together by their shared experiences of marginalization and exclusion in Congress and American politics broadly speaking, and thus share a sense of a linked political fate that all three racial groups must work to improve. Such a discussion presupposes, though, that such coalitional politics exists within each of the racial groups that comprise the Tri-Caucus in the first place. The Black Caucus had what some scholars refer to as its "collective stage", when the Black Caucus "was depicting itself as a single, unified group representing a political construct called 'the Black community'" (Barnett 1975, 38). Barnett argues that over time the Black Caucus moved on from this collective phase and members began to focus more on their own constituencies and position in Congress. What is unclear for the Hispanic Caucus is whether it has ever had a collective stage similar to that of the Black Caucus, or if it has only ever been in an ethnic stage where members focus on representing their own constituencies first, and Latinx interests second. While there is some evidence to support the idea that Hispanic Caucus members view the Caucus as a coalition among Latinxs (Rodriguez 2002), there is no systematic analysis of the Hispanic Caucus over time that traces the development of this coalitional politics, and how it shapes the Hispanic Caucus's actions.

Such an analysis is especially useful if we take Congress to be an institution wherein it matters just as much *who* members associate with as it does *why* they do so.

There is a social utility to the relationships that legislators forge in Congress, and the creation of these social networks is facilitated by the caucus system (Victor and Ringe 2009). If the caucus system is so important in shaping the social networks of members of Congress, then we are faced with questions about the social network created by a collective representation enterprise such as the Hispanic Caucus. Are Hispanic Caucus members, as Victor and Ringe put it, simply trying to maximize the social utility of their relationships within Congress, or do they participate in the Caucus because of a larger, more sincere desire to represent the interests of Latinxs as a national constituency? There certainly seems to be evidence of the latter when discussing the role of the Hispanic Caucus as a collective force in the immigration reform debates of the mid-2000s (Wilson 2017), but there is no evidence as of yet when discussing the collective efforts of the Hispanic Caucus over time or with regard to the internal diversity of Latinx identity.

Methods

The questions I address here are not easily answered through statistical analyses of empirical data. What can a regression coefficient tell us about the particular way the CHC constructs Latinx identity and sets the boundaries around what it means to be a member of either the group or the Latinx community it represents? However, a quantitative approach does have its merits—talking to CHC members or staffers does not allow for conclusions to be drawn about the causal relationship between the CHC's efforts in Congress and the chances of legislation becoming law.

Because neither a solely qualitative nor quantitative approach can sufficiently address all the questions I raise, I thus rely on a mixed methods approach. Questions

about the history of the CHC, the motivations driving the actions of its members over time, and the CHC's conceptualization of Latinx identity are addressed using an interpretive approach that draws on both archival research and interviews, as well as systematic analysis of several other sources containing information on the CHC. Over the course of several months, I read through the archived records of the CHC, held at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. These records span from 1982 to 1994, when the CHC was forced to reorganize as a congressional member organization (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2), and include several thousand pages worth of meeting minutes, official memorandums, letters sent by the CHC to other legislators and political figures, history files, and administrative files of the Caucus. Initially, I read through the documents to get an idea of what was contained within the archives; after this reading, I coded individual documents based on what information they provided about the CHC—e.g. details of the CHC's legislative agenda, evidence of how the CHC defined Latinx identity, the CHC's position on a specific piece of legislation or executive nomination, etc. I supplemented the material from the archive with materials from other sources that cover the years after the CHC's forced reorganization as a CMO and subsequent decline in record-keeping practices. These sources include the *Congressional Record*, *Congressional Quarterly*, and the press releases of the CHC.

I also conducted 18 interviews with CHC members and congressional staffers who worked for or alongside the CHC in order to provide first-hand accounts of how the CHC operated, and how and why it made specific decisions throughout the years. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours in length, with the average much closer to the 30-minute mark. They were conducted in person in Washington, D.C. or via

telephone. Interview subjects were identified through archival papers, lists of CHC members, and referral from other interviewees. Interviewees' identities are confidential.

The quantitative empirical analyses in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5—concerning the influence of the CHC on the Democratic Caucus and the legislative effectiveness of the CHC, respectively—are informed by the information gathered from the archives and the interviews. The actual data for these analyses, though, is drawn from the Congressional Bills Project. The Project, constructed by Adler and Wilkerson (2012), includes all bills and resolutions introduced in Congress and codes them based on the primary issue area affected by the legislation. I analyzed data on legislation prioritized by the CHC over the last forty years.

Chapter Outline

Given the variety of factors and questions at play in this dissertation, there are many aspects of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus that must be explored. The central goal of this project is to assess the coalitional representation of Latinx interests provided by the CHC. While each of the following chapters looks at a different aspect of the CHC, they all find, to varying degrees, that having the CHC in the House positively contributes to the representation of Latinx interests, even when there are nuances and complexities within the Latinx population that are difficult to grapple with, even among the Latinx political elite.

In Chapter 2, I explore the historical foundations of the Hispanic Caucus. Relying primarily on interpretative analysis of archival documents of the CHC and media accounts of the CHC, I situate the formation of the CHC in the appropriate political

context and climate that its members experienced and observed in the 1970s. From the archives, I draw on the CHC's own documents laying out the history of the Caucus, as well as clippings saved by the CHC from various newspapers chronicling the early years of the CHC. I also systematically analyze accounts of the CHC in national newspapers—including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post*. I then trace the evolution of the CHC over the last forty years, paying attention to how the political environment in which the CHC operates has changed and how the CHC has adapted to those developments, most notably with the shift in CHC membership in the late 1990s from a bipartisan composition to a purely partisan collection of Democratic Latinx representatives. I supplement my interpretive analysis of archival and media accounts with interviews of current and former CHC members and staffers, as well as other congressional staffers who are deeply familiar with the CHC. Through these interviews, I present an insider perspective on how the CHC has evolved and adapted over time in order to maintain its influence in Congress and its ability to work towards its goal of representing Latinxs throughout the US.

Chapter 3 proceeds with my qualitative analysis of the CHC. In this chapter, I answer the critical question of how the CHC defines *Latinidad*—essentially, what it means to be Latinx—and how that particular conceptualization of *Latinidad* shapes the motivations and actions undertaken by the CHC. This question also requires a closer look at the concept of panethnicity—in this context, the belief that all Latinxs have a shared set of experiences and preferences regardless of differences in national origin, generation, and so on—and what role it plays, if any, in the decisionmaking processes of the CHC and its individual members.

To answer both of these questions, I rely again on the CHC's archive and interviews with CHC members and staffers. From the archive, I draw on meeting minutes, official memorandums, and other sources that demonstrate the position of the CHC on what exactly it means to be Latinx and how they shape their policy goals around that conceptualization. This approach is again interpretive, as there are few if any instances where the CHC explicitly addresses the question of what *Latinidad* ought to look like within the CHC. A necessary corollary to this is an examination of some of the legislative priorities the CHC chooses to focus on—does the CHC prioritize issues that matter more to a particular Latinx subgroup, e.g. Mexicans and Mexican Americans, or does the CHC only take a stand on issues that affect all Latinx subgroups? I address this question here through interpretation of meeting minutes and memos sent by CHC members and staffers that discuss position-taking on key issues that sometimes matter to all Latinxs, but other times matter to only one Latinx ethnic group, and what position the CHC chose to take on such an issue, if any.

Through my analyses of the archive and the interviews, I also assess the extent to which the Caucus has treated *Latinidad* in panethnic terms and what effect this has had on the efforts of the Caucus to represent all Latinxs living in the U.S. Based on the archives and the interviews, panethnicity is present only in name and the CHC primarily defines Latinx interests in a way that pays attention to the complexities and nuances of Latinx political preferences when formulating its own panethnic form of *Latinidad.* The decision to rely on panethnicity is largely a strategic one focused on doing whatever is necessary in order to get Latinx interests incorporated into policies (Mora 2014). This is not intended, though, as an attempt to state unequivocally whether panethnicity is good or

bad for Latinx politics—the focus of this chapter is to simply explore whether the particular approach used by the CHC is conducive to the CHC's own stated goal of representing all Latinxs in the U.S.

Chapter 4 begins my empirical analysis of the CHC and its efforts to represent Latinxs in Congress. In order to better understand the efforts of the CHC to represent Latinx interests, it is necessary to first determine exactly what are "Latinx interests." Doing so requires an in depth understanding of the legislative agenda and priorities of the CHC throughout its existence in the House. Thus, in this chapter I conduct a systematic analysis of the CHC's agenda and agenda-setting process from 1976 to 2016, paying particular attention to the issue areas that receive perpetual attention from the CHC and the related bills and resolutions that receive the CHC's attention in everyday House proceedings. The main goal of this chapter is to address the responsiveness of the CHC agenda to the issues of Latinx diversity discussed in Chapter 3, as well as to shed light on what factors make an issue or bill more likely to make it onto the CHC's agenda in a given session of Congress.

The bulk of the chapter is dedicated to the systematic analysis of the CHC's legislative agendas over the last twenty sessions of Congress, from the 94th to the 114th. Using systematic analysis of several sources including the *Congressional Record* and *Congressional Quarterly* I identify the content of the CHC's legislative agendas over time and discuss how these agendas do reflect the diversity within the Latinx community mentioned in Chapter 3. After this systematic analysis of the CHC's legislative agendas, I turn to statistical analysis to determine the influence of the CHC's own internal agenda on the broader legislative agenda of the Democratic Caucus. I estimate the probability of

issues or bills ending up on the House's legislative agenda if they are also included on the CHC's legislative agenda. Controlling for a variety of factors including the party affiliation, ideology, gender, and committee assignments of the primary sponsor of a piece of legislation, I find that the CHC's agenda has little to no influence on the agenda of the Democratic Caucus. Even though the two groups share many of the same political goals, the CHC is still a minority faction within the Democratic Caucus that is hard-pressed to translate its coalitional nature into substantive influence at the agenda-setting stage of the legislative process.

Where the fourth chapter focuses on what issues and bills comprise the legislative agenda of the CHC, the fifth chapter focuses on how successful the CHC is at achieving the goals associated with that agenda, i.e. passing or blocking legislation. In this sense, the fifth chapter deals most explicitly with the question at the core of this dissertation: How effective is the CHC at representing Latinx interests, and what does this say about the nature of political representation of racial minorities in the United States? Relying on a traditional measure of legislative effectiveness—i.e. whether or not legislation passes the House—the CHC does not appear to be terribly effective at representing Latinx interests. When the CHC increases its support for a specific piece of legislation, that legislation is less likely to survive throughout the legislative process, even at times where the Democratic Caucus is in the majority in the House and the CHC ostensibly enjoys the benefits of being a faction within the majority party.

However, I also find evidence that thinking of effective representation solely in terms of passing legislation does not tell the full story of the CHC and coalitional representation. As a coalitional representative, the CHC engages in a variety of other

activities in Congress that are designed to provide a louder voice for the interests of the Latinx community. The CHC influences committee assignments in the House, grooms its members for positions in Democratic leadership, attempts to influence executive appointments, and engages in outreach efforts designed to both inform and persuade other legislators to adopt the CHC's position on key pieces of legislation. Through these actions, the CHC is making present the Latinx community not just in the halls of Congress but also in the executive branch and the federal judiciary, an inarguable boon for the community and awareness of its interests.

The sixth and final chapter summarizes my findings and discusses the broader implications of this study for Latinx representation in Congress. My findings offer insight into the coalitional nature of Latinx representation in Congress and shifts the parameters of this discussion in a way that has not received much scholarly attention. If Latinx representation is better realized through collective efforts on the part of the CHC in terms of defining Latinx interests and drawing attention to them in the House, then we are forced to reconsider how we think of Latinx representation in Congress, as well as the representation of racial minorities and their interests more generally. While the link between descriptive and substantive representation for racial minorities might be seen as strong in only limited instances, the presence of a coalitional representative entity augments the power of those descriptive representatives and provides a more stable, vocal, and effective route to the effective substantive representation of minority interests.

2| Crafting the Coalition: The History of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus

In October 1993, one year after the 1992 midterm elections saw the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) add five new members to bring its total to 19, the CHC flexed its political muscle. The CHC opposed H.R. 3167, the Unemployment Compensation Amendments of 1993, a bill supported by Democratic party leaders, because of the proposed funding mechanism for the bill, which included cutting welfare spending for elderly legal immigrants (Cooper 1993). Rather than attempt to block the final passage of the bill outright—the CHC's 19 votes could not harm Democrats' 83-vote margin in the House—the CHC focused its efforts at the procedural level. The special rule governing consideration of H.R. 3167, House Resolution 265, was restrictive and not projected to pass by as large a margin as the bill itself. Seeing an opportunity, Representative José Serrano (D-NY), the Chair of the CHC, informed Democratic leadership that all Latinxs in the House[3] would vote against H.Res. 265 in an attempt to stop consideration of H.R. 3167 unless the Ways and Means Committee altered the proposed funding mechanism for the bill.

This move by Serrano and the rest of the CHC forced Democratic leadership to postpone the vote on H.Res. 265. The bill was sent back to the Ways and Means Committee so its members could come up with a new way to fund the unemployment

[3] During the 103rd Congress, there were 20 Latinx members in the House and 19 of them were members of the CHC. The lone holdout was Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX), a founding member of the group who had left amid concerns that he might be pigeonholed as a Latinx legislator with little regard for other constituents.

benefits that did not target immigrants. The strategy paid off for the CHC, and for the Democratic leadership—H.R. 3167 was modified, and H.Res. 265 subsequently passed.[4] Even with only 19 members, the CHC won an important victory by threatening to bring down the rule with the help of those concerned about the rule for other reasons. During the same session of Congress, Representative Bill Richardson (D-NM) was appointed as a chief deputy whip within the Democratic Caucus, signaling greater CHC influence within the Democratic Party in the House overall, and raising the possibility of the CHC exerting more influence over which bills might be considered in the future. (Cooper 1993).

The fact that the CHC, too small to threaten the Democrats' 83 seat majority, was apparently strong enough to force Democratic leadership to amend Democratic-priority legislation, raises some questions about the CHC. How did it manage to gain this level of influence in the Democratic Caucus, especially when it consisted of an insufficient number of members and votes to affect the Democratic majority's margin on key votes? What motivated the CHC to rebel against the Democratic majority on the unemployment compensation bill, and other pieces of legislation preferred by the rest of the Democratic Caucus?

In this chapter, I answer these questions by tracing the history and development of the CHC through its first forty years of existence, from 1976 to 2016. In doing so, I draw upon theories about the nature and role of congressional caucuses, asking how well they

[4] The final margin for H.Res. 265 was 239-150, indicating that the CHC's was no idle threat. Had every CHC member and Rep. Gonzalez voted no, in addition to any other Democratic defections, the resolution would have failed. It is also worth noting that even after the changes were made to H.R. 3167, the CHC vote on H.Res. 265 was split: nine members plus Rep. Gonzalez voted yes, three members voted no, and two members did not vote.

explain the formation and activities of the CHC—i.e., does the CHC play an informational role, or does membership in the group allow members to signal their commitments to their constituents? I also examine the shifting political context within which the CHC operates and how this—alongside ideological and partisan shifts within the CHC—shapes the Caucus's prospects in Congress. I also examine evolving dynamics within the CHC tied to national origin and gender diversity both within the CHC and within the broader Latinx community, and how these affect the CHC's attempts to serve as a representative for the large, and highly diverse, Latinx community.

I begin with a brief discussion of the nature of congressional caucuses and the various roles they play in Congress, more specifically in the House. As a national constituency caucus, the CHC attempts to represent a constituency—Latinxs—that is widely dispersed throughout the United States by providing its members with information, signaling their commitment to Latinx interests, and also by providing unique benefits that are only derived from the particular type of coalitional representation offered by a group like the CHC. I then trace the history of the CHC over time, focusing on periods of shifting party control in the House and the changing role of the Caucus both as a whole and as a part of the larger Democratic Caucus. The size of the CHC matters immensely, meaning that even in a period of lengthy Democratic control of the House the CHC was somewhat weak, even if strong in its convictions, because even if all of its members defected, it could not prevent Democrats from amassing 218 Democratic votes. However, operating as a minority faction within the majority party is still greatly preferable to operating during periods of Republican control, when the CHC is forced on the defensive even as its membership—and votes—grew. I then discuss the evolving

diversity of the CHC's membership, focusing on national origin and gender dynamics within the group, and consider how variations in these two categories can affect the efforts of the CHC to carry out its primary goal of representing the Latinx community as a whole.

The CHC as a Caucus

To understand the CHC, it is first necessary to situate it within broader discussions of congressional caucuses and their roles in Congress. This includes reviewing the different types of caucuses, what drives members to join them, and what benefits are conferred upon caucus members.

According to Hammond et al. (1985), congressional caucuses are "voluntary associations of members of Congress, without recognition or line item appropriations, which seek to have a role in the policy process" (583). This is true whether congressional caucuses are classified in the House as legislation service organizations (LSOs) or congressional member organizations (CMOs). This does not mean all caucuses are the same though. Hammond (1998) identifies six primary types of caucuses: party caucuses, personal-interest caucuses, national constituency caucuses, regional caucuses, state/district caucuses, and industry caucuses. For the majority of these caucuses—especially personal-interest, regional, industry, and state/district caucuses—their goals are relatively limited and focus on the particular interest that draws members of Congress together for the purposes of forming the group in the first place. Party caucuses are essentially the political parties in Congress, namely the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference. These two groups represent the parties as a whole and construct

legislative agendas that each group then tries to implement through legislation. However, there are other partisan caucuses that exist and function within the larger party caucuses, such as the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition or the Republican House Freedom Caucus. These intraparty caucuses represent members within each political party who share a particular vision of how they believe the party ought to operate—Blue Dog Democrats are more moderate and want to draw the Democratic Party toward the center, while Freedom Caucus members are more strongly conservative than the Republican Conference as a whole and attempt to pull the Republican Party even further to the right. While these intraparty caucuses sometimes comprise a relatively small portion of the broader party caucus, there is still clear evidence of their ability to influence the behaviors of their respective parties (Bloch Rubin 2017). National constituency caucuses, by contrast, are caucuses that are primarily focused on representing a constituency that is dispersed throughout the U.S., regardless of issue or partisan affiliation. This includes groups such as the CHC, but also the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues.[5]

Congressional caucuses can be a critical source of information for members of Congress, especially as caucuses provide information in a way that "augment[s] the institutional structure of Congress" by "acting as informational counterparts to committees" (Ainsworth and Akins 1997, 408; see also Hammond 1991, 284).[6] While

[5] According to a report by the Congressional Research Service, in the 114th Congress (2015-2016) there were at least 800 officially registered caucuses in the U.S. Congress. The overwhelming majority of these were personal-interest, regional, industry, or state/district caucuses that have little impact on the policy process; there were only a handful of party and national constituency caucuses, but these are the caucuses with the most influence in Congress.

[6] This informational role of caucuses is especially useful in the contemporary Congress, where party leaders have even more power and control what information the rank and file have access to (Curry 2015).

committees provide members with information and foster specialization among members of Congress, caucuses can provide their members with additional information such as how members' constituents think about a particular issue. There are also structural constraints within committees and the House as a whole that limit representative efforts undertaken by members of Congress. Some of these constraints include the limited scope of legislation committees handle—they only take on legislation that falls within the committee's designated jurisdiction; committee leaders are also able to control the flow of information within the committee, making junior members reliant on more senior members for crucial information about legislation; finally, factions within the parties are constrained by party leadership and its ability to determine whose voices are heard within the party. Caucuses, owing to their informal nature, provide members with a way to circumvent some of these constraints (Stevens Jr. et al. 1981)—they have no limits on their jurisdiction, seniority does not condition who can receive the caucus's information, and caucuses can operate independent of the party leadership—though this also limits their ability to affect the policy process in the same manner as a congressional committee operating with the imprimatur of both the party and the House.

In a similar vein, caucuses are shown to help increase the perceived responsiveness of members of Congress to their constituents. Because members of Congress are "driven by the need for regular re-election," they have "restructured Congress to be as responsive to constituencies as possible", including building up the caucus system as a way for members to work together on issues of common interest

---

Of course, this also assumes that caucuses are insulated from partisan politics, which I show is not always the case for the CHC.

outside the institutional constraints of Congress. (Caldwell 1989, 634). As such, caucus membership can also act as a signal to constituents that their representative is paying attention to their concerns. This is especially true in districts where constituent interests are more heterogeneous, and a representative is forced to signal to a wider variety of groups that s/he is paying attention. Legislators representing these heterogeneous districts are more likely to join a greater number of caucuses, with the representative's membership in each caucus derived from some perceived interest of some subset of their constituents. Members are then able to gather information on a variety of legislative issues that are of interest to their constituents and represent those interests, whether this representation is "rooted in their desire to be reelected, their interest to make good policy, or simply their commitment to reflecting their voters" (Miler 2011, 890). Caucus membership, then, seems to facilitate members' attempts to be good substantive *and* symbolic representatives for their constituents. Caucuses can also provide networking benefits, as they allow legislators to maximize the social utility of their relationships with other relationships and form expansive networks that they can draw upon when necessary (Victor and Ringe 2009). According to Victor and Ringe, most members thus join caucuses with an eye toward "building and maintaining relationships and associations with other legislators" (746), with most legislators focused on forming social connections with legislators who also hold positions of formal power in the House because of the perceived benefit of association with party leaders and committee chairs in particular. Because of this prioritization of connecting to formal leaders within the informal space of caucuses, the caucus system "replicates and reinforces, rather than supplements and challenges, the formal distribution of power in the legislature" (762).

The CHC meets the criteria in Hammond's (1998) typology to be classified as a national constituency caucus. That is, the CHC draws together Latinx members of Congress who desire to represent the Latinx community in the U.S. as a whole, regardless of whether their own districts contain a significant proportion of Latinxs.[7] The CHC does this by providing members with information on issues that significantly affect the Latinx community, and also provides members with an opportunity to signal their commitment to the Latinx community by participating in a wide variety of Caucus activities. The CHC goes beyond these traditional benefits of caucuses, though, by virtue of being a coalitional representative for the Latinx community. Members of the CHC work together as a coalition to define what it means to be part of the Latinx community and what the interests of that community are. For example, issues like bilingual education are taken up because of their perceived equal importance to all members of the Latinx community due to the shared Spanish language; immigration primarily affects Latinxs from Mexico and Central and South America, but non-Mexican members of the CHC do not treat the issue as any less important because of this fact; all CHC members are willing to support efforts by the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico to ensure more equitable access to government aid in the form of welfare and disaster relief. Members work as a collective entity to provide a voice for the Latinx community within Congress and the legislative process, incorporating members' own views and experiences with the realities of Latinx diversity to provide representation that addresses the concerns of all members of the Latinx community rather than the desires of a simple majority of Latinxs. Being the

[7] The average CHC district, though, is at least 50% Latinx in each session of Congress since 1976.

coalitional representative for the Latinx community magnifies the role of the CHC—there is no other group that possesses the awareness of the diversity of the Latinx community and willingness to incorporate that awareness into its legislative behaviors in the same way as the CHC (see Chapters 3 and 4).

The History of the CHC

The CHC was formed in 1976. Little is known in general about the CHC and its historical role in shaping Latinx representation in Congress through its unique brand of coalitional representation. I divide the CHC's history into three distinct time periods that reflect the shifting political context within the House. The first period, 1976-1994, includes the foundation and growth of the Caucus and also the first half of its existence in Congress. This is a lengthy period of Democratic control of the House and provides an opportunity to examine the early development of the majority-Democrat CHC in an environment that we might expect to be conducive to the CHC's representation efforts. The second period spans from 1995 to 2006 and includes the shift of party control of the House to the Republicans in the 1994 midterm election. This period also includes two significant moments in the CHC's history: the move by Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and the GOP to ban legislative service organizations (LSOs) such as the CHC, and the decision by Republican Latinxs to leave the CHC over policy disagreements. The third period, 2007-2016, encapsulates both Democrats' reclamation of the House in 2007 and Republicans' return to power in 2011, as well as the ideological homogenization of the Democratic Caucus that allowed the CHC to wield even more influence as it continued to add more members.

1976-1994: Foundations and Growth

The CHC was officially founded late in 1976, near the end of the 94th Congress. Five Latinx members of Congress joined together to make this move: Ed Roybal (D-CA), Herman Badillo (D-NY), Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX), E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX), and Baltasar Corrada del Rio (D-PR). According to coverage in the *New York Times*, this move "[culminated] years of efforts to create a united voice for the national interests of the nation's growing Hispanic population" (Vidal 1976). By another account, the main motivation of the CHC's founders was to "reverse the national pattern of neglect, exclusion, and indifference suffered for decades by Spanish-speaking citizens of the U.S." (Vigil 1989, 23) Yet another perspective maintained that, while the creation of the CHC had been years in the making, the actual launch came "in the wake of a political storm that developed after Mexican-Americans in the Southwest, Cuban-Americans in Florida and Puerto Ricans in the Northeast fought for spoils in Jimmy Carter's presidential victory."[8]

While each of these ideas about why the Caucus formed has a degree of truth to it, by the midpoint of the 95th Congress (1977-1978)—the first full Congress in which the CHC existed—the representational motivation was the most prominent, evidenced by the CHC's mission statement: "to assure that all legislative action, as well as activities of the executive and other branches of government, meet the needs of Hispanic Americans."[9]

---

[8] "Hispanic Caucus gets organized," San Antonio Express-News, June 3, 1977. Records of the CHC, History Files of the CHC 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 1.

[9] "Congressional Hispanic Caucus Leads the Fight for Rights for Spanish-Speaking Citizens." Reporter, November-December 1977. Records of the CHC, History Files of the CHC 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 1.

Caucus members did not see their role as a unified representative voice for the Latinx population as limited to their activities in Congress—the CHC sought to influence all political institutions to be more attentive and responsive to the interests and concerns of the Latinx community.

Given this desire to respond to the interests of the Latinx community as a whole, the CHC also believed that non-voting members—such as the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, or delegates from Guam, the Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands—were equally important and ought to be fully included in the CHC's decision-making processes. This is underscored by Baltasar Corrada del Rio's role as one of the founding members of the CHC while serving as Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, but also the fact that Corrada del Rio had full voting privileges within the CHC that he did not have in the House; this was true also for delegates who joined the CHC in the future, such as Robert de Lugo (Virgin Islands), Ben Blaz (Guam), and Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands). There are also several instances of the other members of the CHC deferring to the Resident Commissioner on key issues affecting Puerto Rico.[10] Having a say in the actions of the CHC also marked a significant victory for the Resident Commissioner and the Delegates, as well as a boost in representation for their constituents. These members did not, and still do not, have voting privileges in the House as a whole despite their ability to serve on congressional committees, sponsor legislation, and give speeches on the floor of the House.

[10] One such example occurred in 1993. The CHC drafted a letter concerning the appointment of the Assistant U.S. Attorney for Puerto Rico. However, the letter was never sent—a note stapled on top of the letter indicated the letter was pulled due to a conflict with the office of Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barceló.

The CHC also has a clear organizational structure designed to streamline decision-making without limiting the input of individual members on the CHC's agenda or activities in the House. At the top is the Chair of the CHC, responsible for being the public face and voice of the CHC at press conferences and on the floor of the House, in addition to guiding the agenda-setting process in the CHC alongside the rest of the leadership team. Below the Chair is the Vice Chair, who runs meetings in the Chair's absence and aids the Chair in guiding the agenda-setting and decision-making processes within the group. The third-highest position early on was the Secretary-Treasurer, responsible for recording meeting minutes in addition to keeping track of the CHC's budget. The position of Secretary-Treasurer was eliminated in 1994, though, and the CHC split the Vice Chair position into First and Second Vice Chair. The two Vice Chairs now split the duties that were previously handled by the Secretary-Treasurer, though the First Vice Chair is second in the CHC's hierarchy. This leadership team is responsible for shaping the agenda of the CHC and deciding how to expend its resources; however, these three members do not have carte blanche to do whatever they want. The other members of the CHC are always communicating their concerns to leadership and bringing forward various initiatives they are working on.[11] There were no formal rules about what issues members could or could not propose to include on the agenda, so long as it was an issue that significantly affected members of the Latinx community. However, one informal rule that CHC leadership had to consider when crafting an agenda from members' suggestions was whether the CHC members were unified in their position on a given issue. If the

[11] Representative C, personal interview.

CHC did not have unanimous agreement on an issue, then the CHC was significantly less likely to publicly engage with the issue. In the words of one member, "We're divided and we send out a divided message."[12]

Table 2.1 Number of CHC Members by Party, 95th-103rd Congress

Congress	No. Democrats	No. Republicans	Pct. Of Dem. Caucus	Dem. Margin
95th (1977-78)	6	1	2.04%	+149
96th (1979-80)	5	1	1.77%	+121
97th (1981-82)	7	1	2.82%	+51
98th (1983-84)	10	1	3.64%	+103
99th (1985-86)	12	2	4.63%	+73
100th (1987-88)	11	2	4.17%	+81
101st (1989-90)	11	2	4.14%	+85
102nd (1991-92)	12	2	4.38%	+101
103rd (1993-94)	16	3	6.08%	+83

However, at this point in time—and throughout the majority of this time period—the CHC was too small to wield much power in the House, as shown in Table 2.1. In the 95th Congress, the CHC was comprised of only seven members. Six of those seven were Democrats and thus members of the majority party; however, they only accounted for about 2% of all Democrats in the House at that point. Even if the CHC voted cohesively

[12] Representative D, personal interview. The various factors influencing agenda-setting within the CHC are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

during this session of Congress, it could not successfully block legislation or motions that the Caucus deemed harmful to the Latinx community if the rest of the House Democrats supported those bills or motions. Even as the CHC grew in size later in this time period, the group was never sufficiently large to threaten the Democratic majority in the House—losing all the CHC's votes would still leave at least 218 Democrat votes. This numerical limitation was exacerbated by the Democrats' choices for Speaker of the House throughout this era. Tip O'Neill (D-MA), Jim Wright (D-TX), and Tom Foley (D-WA), as Speakers, prioritized the desires of the Democratic Party above all else. They were less willing to entertain requests from minority factions within the Democratic Caucus (Pearson 2015). This was especially the case when those minority factions did not control enough votes to threaten the comfortable margin enjoyed by Democrats throughout this time period.

Thus, the CHC was in an odd position for much of its first 20 years. Its members had lofty goals to influence the legislative process in favor of Latinxs, but there seemed too few of them to make much headway even when the vast majority of Caucus members were part of the House majority. The oddity of this position was heightened with the increasing political prominence of the Latinx community. Several members of Congress, Joan Mondale, wife of former Vice President and 1984 presidential hopeful Walter Mondale, and Charles Manatt, Chair of the Democratic National Committee, attended Caucus events, such as a national symposium on issues affecting Latinxs in 1982. These individuals attended not necessarily because of their desire to support the CHC, but because of a larger desire to devise a successful strategy to court Latinx voters in the 1984 election (Buxton 1982). A CHC dinner in 1983 was also considered "a must on the

crowded schedule of the political powers," including presidential hopeful Gary Hart, Walter Mondale, Annie Glenn on behalf of her husband John Glenn, DNC Chair Manatt, and Speaker O'Neill. The main goal for these power players was to court the CHC not for its support or to listen to its desires, but rather to use the CHC as a potential inroad to win Latinx votes in the 1984 election. This was true whether it meant beating Ronald Reagan, maintaining the Democratic majority in the House, or winning individual races further down the ticket (Hall 1983; see also Smothers 1983). Even coverage of internal developments within the CHC focused more on the Latinx community and its political potential rather than the CHC itself. When Bill Richardson was elected Chair of the Caucus in 1984, media coverage described the CHC's growing influence as contingent upon the growth of the Latinx population, rather than the merits of the CHC and its individual members (Trescott 1984).

The CHC maintained its focus, though, and continued to try and boost the representation of Latinxs. The group finally scored a legislative victory in 1983. The CHC strongly opposed the Immigration Reform and Control Act—sponsored in the House by a fellow Democrat, Rep. Romano Mazzoli of Kentucky. In part due to the CHC's efforts, Speaker O'Neill decided to pull the bill before it could be debated or receive a vote on the House floor. In the words of Rep. Robert García (D-NY), "'This was a major victory for the Hispanic Caucus'" (Pear 1983). This victory, though, was short-lived. The IRCA reappeared in 1984, prompting the CHC to introduce an alternative bill—H.R. 4909, the Immigration Reform Act of 1984—that proposed a series of immigration reforms without including the employer sanctions provision that made the IRCA an anathema to the CHC. As an example of members' growing confidence and the

strength of their opposition to the IRCA, García made a public appeal through a letter to the editor in the *New York Times* arguing for H.R. 4909 over the IRCA (García 1984). This muscle flexing ultimately failed, as the IRCA—with the support of 161 Democrats—ultimately passed the House and was signed into law by President Reagan in 1986.[13]

As the era wore on, the CHC faced other obstacles to increasing its influence and enacting its agenda in the House. One such hurdle was internal—while many Latinxs from different backgrounds agreed on the importance of such issues as bilingual education funding, differences in national origin lead to divergent interests among Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and especially Cubans (May 1987; see also Chapters 3 and 4). Another hurdle was the unwillingness of politicians to commit to aiding Latinxs or supporting the CHC's priorities. This is somewhat paradoxical, given the increased desire for Latinx votes that emerged in the 1980s. But when it came to meaningful action that would benefit Latinxs—at least in the estimation of the CHC—such as a presidential candidate promising to name a Latinx person to their Cabinet, politicians balked. According to Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA), who was CHC Chair at the time, this was "an indicator that Anglos view Latinos as 'a community that really hasn't shown it can make a difference'" (May 1987). Perhaps this is why at other times the CHC was described as "but a shadow of its role model and ally, the Black Caucus" (Rampe 1988), even though

[13]Despite their strong opposition two years prior, the CHC broke ranks on the vote to accept the conference report for the IRCA in 1986. Of 11 CHC members eligible to vote on the conference report, five voted in favor: Tony Coelho (D-CA), Esteban Torres (D-CA), Bill Richardson (D-NM), Albert Bustamante (D-TX), and Solomon Ortiz (D-TX).

the CHC never mentioned the CBC as a role model.[14] This lack of substantive impact on the part of the CHC was attributed at least in part to the difficulties in representing a constituency as diverse as the Latinx community (see Chapter 3), but could also be a consequence of the still-small size of the CHC even in the late 1980s.

By 1988, though, the CHC appeared to find a way to maximize its influence despite having so few members. In September 1988, the CHC had members with significant positions in committees and Democratic House leadership. Kika de la Garza was Chair of the Agriculture Committee, Ed Roybal chaired a subcommittee on the powerful Appropriations Committee, and Tony Coelho (D-CA) was House Majority Whip, the third-ranking post in the House Democratic leadership behind only the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader (Rampe 1988). This did not guarantee legislative victories for the CHC. However, it did signify the potential for future success, assuming members could win reelection and carry on with the CHC's mission of providing a voice to Latinxs within government. It is worth noting, though, that committee assignments were not a reliable resource the CHC could draw on to boost Latinx representation—committee assignments and leadership positions within the Democratic Caucus are heavily influenced by seniority, with the most senior Democrat on a committee typically serving as chair. The CHC was fortunate in this era that many of its members did have seniority within the Democratic Caucus—by 1988 both Ed Roybal and Kika de la Garza had served over 20 years in the House. Leadership positions within the Democratic

[14] There is no denying that the CHC and the CBC derived mutual benefit from working with each other in this and following eras (see Tyson 2016). However, the idea of the CBC as a role model which the CHC aspired to emulate has its basis in media coverage, rather than the actual activities and statements of the CHC.

Caucus were a more accessible resource for representation—these positions were not tied to seniority, evidenced by Tony Coelho serving as Majority Whip after only eight years in the House or Ben Ray Luján being named Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in 2015 after only six years in office.

The CHC received a massive boost four years later as a result of the 1992 midterm elections. The CHC gained several new members, bringing the total number of members to 19. There were now five Puerto Rican members—including the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico—and three Cuban members, accounting for around 42% of the CHC's membership. The number of Latinas also tripled, with Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) joining Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) in the CHC. The former change was underscored by the election of Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)—a Puerto Rican—as Chair of the Caucus (Welch 1992). Other signs of the growth of the CHC in terms of both size and influence included the group's creation of a task force system that mirrored the role of congressional subcommittees, indicating a desire within the CHC for greater policy knowledge that could be used to influence the legislative process. The CHC also temporarily blocked the extension of unemployment benefits over a proposal that would fund the extension of benefits by cutting welfare payments to elderly immigrants. At this point, the CHC controlled enough votes to threaten the chances of a procedural motion on the extension passing, forcing Democratic leaders to postpone the vote until they could get the CHC on board with the legislation. While this was going on, the CHC also benefited from Speaker Foley's decision to appoint Bill Richardson as deputy majority whip, a sign that Democratic leadership was finally starting to take the CHC seriously (Cooper 1993).

1995-2006: Toiling in the Minority

The gains made by the CHC in the 103rd Congress, though, were short-lived. In November of 1994, the Republican Party finally succeeded in retaking the House for the first time since the 83rd Congress (1953-1954). The GOP campaign touted the proposed Contract for America, which included a call to rein in wasteful spending within Congress. Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA), one of the authors of the Contract, used this promise within the Contract to call for an end to congressional caucuses, on the grounds that they were wastefully spending taxpayer dollars. Gingrich and other Republicans portrayed the move as essential to shrinking the size of Congress and cutting down on wasteful spending. To some legislators, though, the move was strictly partisan in nature. In addition to targeting the CHC, many Democrats viewed this as an attempt to defang the Democratic Study Group, with Rep. Martin Olav Sabo (D-MN)—a former DSG Chair—calling this "another attempt to preempt dissent by centralizing all information under the leadership" (Ross 1994).

Even though LSOs did not receive line item appropriations, members paid dues out of their own House funds, i.e. taxpayer dollars. These dues were used, in the case of the CHC, to pay the salary of the Executive Director as well as several other staffers who worked for the Caucus rather than a single member. The Caucus also had a dedicated office space on the Hill, providing a centralized location for meetings and storing of research and documents utilized by the Caucus on a regular basis. Under Gingrich and the GOP's proposal, the CHC and other caucuses would not be able to use their funds in this way and caucuses would no longer receive office space within the Capitol, meaning

caucuses would lose their staffs, their physical presence on the Hill, and ostensibly much of their ability to influence the legislative process.

The CHC knew this was coming, as the Contract was unveiled before the 1994 election; the CHC discussed the issue at a meeting held on November 30, 1994—the last Caucus meeting of the 103rd Congress. At this meeting, Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart of Florida—a Republican—asked why this move by Gingrich should not go forward, and the CHC be closed down. Chair Serrano argued that the GOP's description of caucuses as an example of wasteful spending was untrue, as caucuses were "subject to the same requirements and restrictions placed upon Congressional offices and Committees." Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ), however, gave a response that demonstrated how consistent the motivation of CHC members had been for 20 years. Menendez stated that the CHC and similar groups, such as the CBC and the CCWI, "play a special role in voicing concerns of underrepresented groups in Congress."[15]

This role of the CHC in voicing the concerns of underrepresented Latinxs in America became the main talking point in discussions about why the Caucus should continue to operate, regardless of the success of Gingrich's proposal.[16] In fact, many media accounts portrayed this move by the GOP as an attempt to disempower minority groups that had benefited immensely from the 1992 midterms and were perceived as threatening to the Republican agenda (Ross 1994). This further strengthened the belief that the CHC, as well as the CBC and the CCWI, served a function in Congress that went

[15] CHC Meeting Minutes for November 30, 1994. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.
[16] Talking Points on The 104th Congressional and People of Color, January 10, 1995. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.

beyond providing members with information or signaling their commitments to their district-based constituents.

At the first CHC meeting of the 104th Congress (1995-1996), the group discussed its options: reorganization as a congressional member organization (CMO), moving the group of Capitol Hill entirely and reconstituting it as either a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4), or becoming a political action committee.[17] As part of the decision-making process, the CHC sent a letter to Rep. Bill Thomas (R-CA)—Chair of the House Administration Committee—asking about the details of reorganizing as a CMO. The letter focused primarily on determining how the CHC might employ an Executive Director through a shared hire position split among its members—essentially making the Executive Director an employee of one of the CHC's members, rather than an employee of the CHC itself.[18] The CHC also entered into an agreement with the National Archives to deposit the papers and historical materials of the CHC in the Center for Legislative Archives in order to preserve the group's history in the event it ceased to exist.[19] Ultimately, the CHC chose to remain on the Hill and reorganize as a CMO. This entailed the significant reduction in resources mentioned earlier. The only official staffer was the Executive Director, who was technically employed by whoever was Chair of the Caucus; the Caucus no longer had a dedicated office space, with the office of the Chair becoming the de facto CHC

[17] CHC Meeting Minutes for January 5, 1995. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2. See also Memo to CHC Officers Re: Revised Options for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, January 12, 1995. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.
[18] Letter from Ed Pastor, CHC Chair, to Representative Bill Thomas, January 9, 1995. Records of the CHC. Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.
[19] Deposit Agreement regarding the Administration of the Papers and other Historical Materials of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Deposited in the Center for Legislative Archives, 1995. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.

office; and the CHC no longer had its own legislative assistants, relying instead on members' designated CHC liaisons to help carry out the research activities of the CHC on behalf of their members.

These changes, coupled with Democrats' minority status, appeared to weaken the CHC significantly, several short months after the group had finally started to wield more influence in the House. This diminution of the CHC was seen in an agenda that consisted more of opposing and blocking legislation, rather than sponsoring and pushing bills.[20] Even though the CHC continued to add members and make up a larger proportion of the Democratic Caucus in the House, as shown in Table 2.2 below, this shift in tactics was necessary. One member remarked on this dynamic, describing the Caucus's agenda as being more reactive when the Caucus and Democrats were in the minority as a necessary response to attempts by the Republican majority to pass legislation the CHC considered antithetical to Latinx interests.[21]

[20] The effect of this shift on the CHC's agenda, and the relationship between that agenda and the agenda of the Democratic Caucus in the House, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
[21] Representative C, personal interview.

Table 2.2 Number of CHC Members by Party, 104th-109th Congress

Congress	No. Democrats	No. Republicans	Pct. Of Democratic Caucus	Dem. Margin
104th (1995-96)	16	3	7.51%	–25
105th (1997-98)	17	0	7.91%	–17
106th (1999-2000)	17	0	7.80%	–11
107th (2001-02)	18	0	8.29%	–7
108th (2003-04)	20	0	9.39%	–23
109th (2005-06)	22	0	10.68%	–31

Thus, regardless of Caucus growth, the realities of partisan politics in the House significantly affected the approach of the CHC. This continued as the GOP maintained control of the House through the 1996 midterm election. In one account, Hispanic legislators in general were referred to as "a ragtag group of volunteer firefighters confronting a scorched earth campaign against immigrants" (Alvarez 1997) that was spearheaded by House Republicans. Despite this, though, the CHC continued to make gains in the House with members serving on the three powerful committees in the House: Ways and Means, Rules, and Appropriations (Alvarez 1997).

The continued growth of the Latinx population also ensured the CHC did not fade from the political landscape. Many politicians, including Hillary Rodham Clinton, continued to court the Latinx vote, especially leading up to the 2000 election and yet another opportunity for Democrats to retake the House while holding on to the

presidency (Connolly 1999).[22] But again, this desire for Latinx votes did not guarantee influence for the CHC, especially if Latinxs did not turn out to vote for Democrats in large enough numbers to convince Democrats that appealing to Latinx voters was a beneficial strategy. Another snag for the CHC in this regard was a lack of recognition among Latinxs in the mass public. For example, a Latina working at the 25th Anniversary Gala of the CHC's non-profit arm—the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute—stated that she had never heard of the CHC and generally distrusted politicians, regardless of whether they were Latinx or not, as "'they promise everything to Hispanic people, and they don't do anything to help them'" (Martinez 2002; see also Suro 2005).[23]

Aside from minority status and forced reorganization as a CMO, the CHC experienced a third major change during this time period. Early in the 105th Congress (1997-1998) Chair Xavier Becerra (D-CA) traveled to Cuba and, while there and upon his return, did not denounce the Castro government. The Cuban Republican members of the CHC at the time—Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Díaz-Balart, both of Florida—viewed this as a tacit endorsement of Castro and his actions against political opponents and the people of Cuba. They both left the Caucus, and were followed out by Henry Bonilla of Texas, who was the only other Republican member at the time. For the first time, the CHC now comprised only Democrats; there had never been more than three Republican members in the group at any one time, but this owed more to the lack of

[22] Democrats were unsuccessful on both counts, with George W. Bush receiving 35% of the Latinx vote en route to becoming president, while Republicans maintained their majority in the House.

[23] This lack of recognition has never appeared to bother the CHC though. At no point in interviews or in the archival materials was there an indication of the CHC worrying about the perception of the Caucus among Latinxs; rather, the focus was always on whether the members felt the CHC was doing a good job at working toward its goal of effectively representing all members of the Latinx community.

Latinx Republicans in Congress overall than a choice made by the CHC. From the beginning, the CHC viewed itself as a bipartisan to the point of including the descriptor in its bylaws. However, there were signs of growing partisan divides within the CHC stretching back to President Bill Clinton's first term. At a meeting on health care reform and how it would affect Latinxs, a handwritten note on the back of a memo seems to warn that members of Díaz-Balart's staff were in the room.[24] Another memo, containing copies of signed appointment letters sent by the CHC on behalf of specific appointees, was only sent to Democratic members of the Caucus.[25] Thus, even though Caucus members claimed to be motivated by the desire to give Latinxs a voice in Congress, there were clearly differences emerging along partisan lines about what precisely this entailed throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s.[26]

2007-2016: The CHC in the Age of Partisan Polarization

Now bipartisan in name only, the CHC's position was significantly boosted when Democrats managed to take back the House in the 2006 midterm election, though the CHC did not add any new members through the election and held steady at 21 members.

---

[24] Memo to CHC Health Legislative Assistants Re: Meetings to Discuss Questions Concerning Health Care Reform and Hispanics, October 6, 1993. Records of the CHC, Official Memorandums 1985-1992, Box 3, Folder 7.

[25] Memo to All CHC Members Re: Appointment letters, November 17, 1993. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 8.

[26] Republican Latinxs went on to form the Congressional Hispanic Conference in the early 2000s as a Republican counter to the CHC. To at least one CHC member, the Conference was not born out of a desire to represent Latinxs with a different point of view, but rather as retaliation by President Bush for the CHC refusing to endorse Miguel Estrada's judicial nomination. As the member put it, "So what Bush did was retaliate—Bush was the first president that no longer met with the Caucus…what he did was create a counter-caucus that they called the Hispanic Conference, Republicans" (Representative F, personal interview).

Right off the bat the CHC put pressure on the Bush administration on immigration reform—as a faction within the majority party, the CHC could now be proactive in introducing legislation rather than playing defense against Republican proposals. Further aiding the CHC in this era was a fundamental change in the relationship between the CHC and House Democratic leadership. Where past Speakers O'Neill, Wright, and Foley were focused on the party as a whole and largely ignored the smaller factions within the Democratic Caucus, newly elected Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was more open to the interests of groups within the Democratic Caucus. As Speaker, Pelosi strove to include these groups more in agenda-setting and decisionmaking for the Democratic Caucus, offering them a seat at the table at a time when the gap between the parties was widening (Peters, Jr. and Rosenthal 2010; Pearson 2015). This provided the CHC with more opportunities to push its own agenda in an attempt to influence the broader Democratic agenda (see Chapter 4), while members maintained their committee assignments and the CHC continued to both add members and account for a larger share of the Democratic Caucus, shown in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Number of CHC Members and Share of House Democratic Caucus, 110th-114th Congress

Congress	No. Members	Pct. Of Democratic Caucus	Dem. Margin
110th (2007-08)	21	8.16	+31
111th (2009-10)	25	8.99	+79
112th (2011-12)	22	10.24	–49
113th (2013-14)	26	11.90	–33
114th (2015-16)	26	12.82	–59

Note: CHC member Bob Menendez (D-NJ) is excluded from these calculations—he was appointed to an open Senate seat in January 2006, and won a full Senate term in November 2006.

The CHC's continued growth also allowed the group to flex its muscles within the Democratic Caucus as well. In 2007, Pelosi scheduled a vote on H.Res. 809, setting the rule for H.R. 3996, the Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2007. Pelosi expected this rule to pass with the full support of the Democratic Caucus. However, prior to this rule vote Pelosi allowed a vote on a proposal to exclude non-English speakers from federal workplace protections. In the eyes of the CHC, this was just the latest example of "Democratic leaders' policy of allowing members to vote in support of numerous immigration-related motions offered by the Republican minority." Other examples included excluding the CHC from negotiations on the children's health insurance bill, and the removal from the bill of a provision that would make children of legal immigrants eligible for the program. To protest this perceived ignorance of the CHC in important legislative matters, 13 members of the CHC voted no on H.Res. 809, prompting majority leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) to reportedly accuse CHC Chair Joe

Baca (D-CA) and the rest of the group of "destroying the party"; CHC member Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) viewed this as an issue where "'there's a level of respect that needs to be extended'" (Yachnin 2007; see also Wilson 2017, 218). In previous years, the CHC was not well suited to challenge Democratic leadership in this manner—the group was too small to register on the radars of previous Democratic Speakers when Democrats were in the majority with a few exceptions, such as forcing changes to the unemployment compensation bill mentioned earlier. And when the CHC was larger but Democrats were in the minority, both the CHC and the Democratic Caucus were too focused on blocking Republican legislation for the CHC to consider significantly challenging Democratic leadership. With 13 members voting against H.Res. 809, and more threatening to do so, the CHC now had the numbers to threaten the slim Democratic majority in the House. The rule ended up passing by a vote of 220-185, once the CHC felt Democratic leadership had gotten their message on the unacceptability of allowing more votes on Republican-sponsored immigration-related motions without also impressing upon other Democrats the problems with supporting these motions.

Members of the CHC again tested the Democratic Caucus in 2009, on the vote for the financial industry bailout. Characterized by Pelosi as a vital Democratic priority, 12 of the CHC's 20 members voted against the bill. Xavier Becerra was one of the 12, even though at the time he was serving as Assistant Speaker, one of the top leadership positions within the Democratic House majority (Archibald 2008). Of course, the 12-8 split within the CHC makes it difficult to argue that opposition to the financial industry bailout was truly a Caucus position. The fact that a majority of the CHC did vote against the bill, though, indicated the potential for the group to break with the rest of the

Democratic Caucus on issues more wide-ranging than just immigration, even at a time when Democratic leadership was stressing party unity and party line votes in Congress were quickly becoming the norm.

This conflicted relationship between the CHC—or at least parts of the CHC—and the Democratic Party was on display even after Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, giving Democrats unified control over the federal government. The CHC constantly pressured Obama to act on immigration reform when it had the greatest chance to pass in Congress. Early in Obama's first term the CHC issued several press releases indicating their eagerness to move forward on immigration reform with Obama. In a press release announcing the introduction of H.R. 4321 the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009—sponsored by CHC member Solomon Ortiz (D-TX)—the CHC specifically cited Obama's campaign promise "to make immigration reform a top priority" as reason for their excitement at H.R. 4321's prospects in the 111th Congress (Congressional Hispanic Caucus 2009). However, Obama chose to focus on health care reform in the first half of his first term. This contributed to the perception among some CHC members, most notably Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL), that Obama was failing to fulfill a promise made during his campaign (Preston 2010). For Gutiérrez, Obama's inaction on immigration reform was so unacceptable that Gutiérrez was reportedly considering pushing Latinx voters to stay home during the 2010 midterms to punish Obama and the rest of the party leadership Congress (Hunter and Bendery 2010). While this sentiment did not permeate the entirety of the CHC, it did contribute to the belief that despite Pelosi's more open leadership style and the Caucus's increased growth, the CHC was still lacking in political power within the Democratic majority.

Matters were not helped later in Obama's second term as the administration stepped up raids and deportations of undocumented immigrants, despite statements of concern not just from Gutiérrez and other CHC members but also House Majority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) (Constable 2016). Thus, even though the CHC was at this point entirely comprised of Democratic Latinxs, it was difficult to assume that the CHC would automatically fall in line with any and all Democratic proposals.

Concomitant with the growth of the CHC in this era was an increase in the diversity of the CHC's members. This is explored in more detail in the next section but suffice it to say here that the CHC now had younger members, and these differences in age contributed to varying and competing perceptions about what direction the Caucus ought to take going forward. When Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX), Chair of the CHC in the 112th Congress (2011-2012), announced his retirement from Congress at the end of the term, this tension was brought to the fore. Typically, the First Vice Chair would advance to the position of Chair if they so desired. However, some had reservations about Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX) becoming Chair of the CHC. These concerns centered on Hinojosa's perceived deficiencies as a communicator and public speaker. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) was presented as a possible alternative, not because he was necessarily a better public speaker but because of the belief that the second-term congressman was a better fundraiser than Hinojosa. More importantly, as a younger member of Congress Luján would be better able "to energize the young Hispanic community" (Newhauser 2011). Not only was the average age of CHC members decreasing, but the CHC was beginning to consider more seriously the role of younger Latinxs, as they were quickly approaching the time when they could vote in elections and ostensibly help get more Latinxs elected

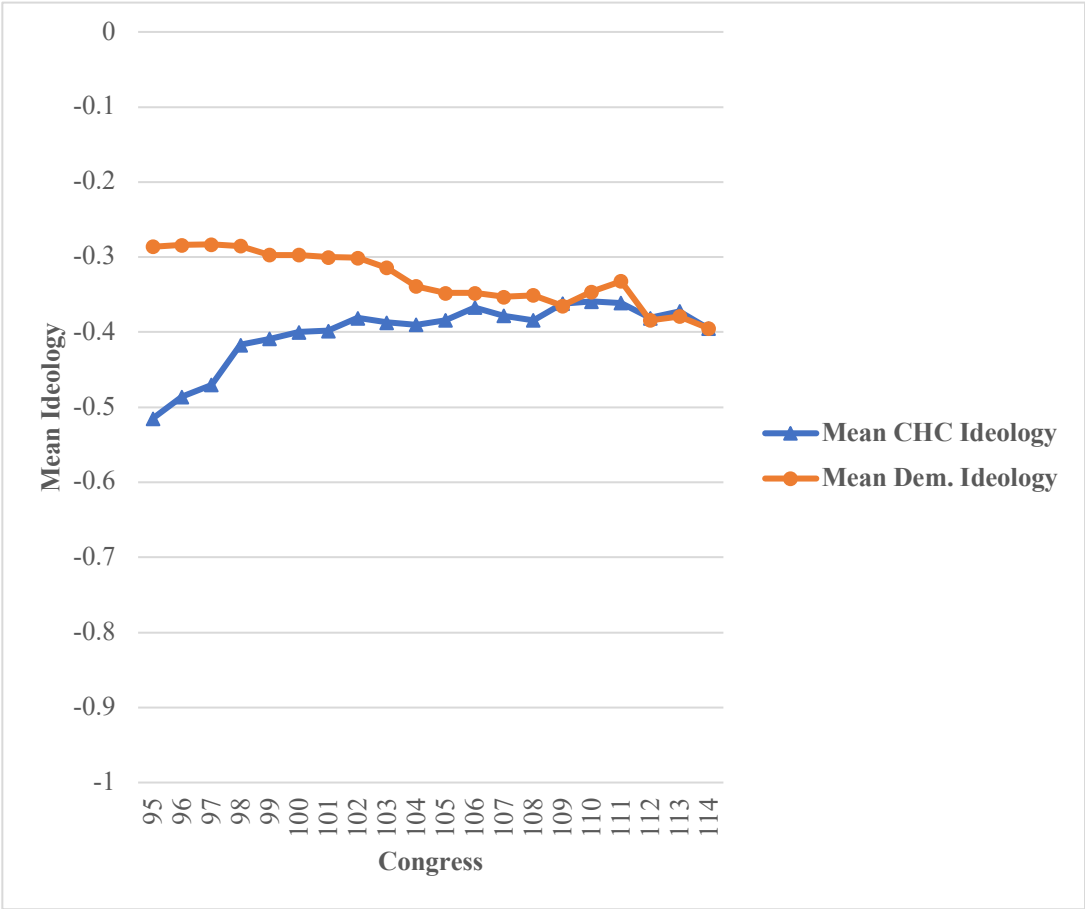
to the House, boosting the profile and power of the CHC. This was especially crucial in light of the GOP retaking the House in the 2010 midterms, forcing the CHC and other Democrats back onto the defensive while crafting a strategy to regain majority status.[27]

Perhaps echoing this logic, and reflecting the steadily growing influence of the CHC, in November 2014 Minority Leader Pelosi named Ben Ray Luján as Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (Martin 2014). The CHC now had a member who wielded significant power within the Democratic Caucus. As Chair of the DCCC, Luján was responsible for overseeing fundraising and electoral support for Democratic House candidates and incumbents, including races that might yield new potential members for the CHC. In prior years this might not have helped the CHC all that much. Figure 2.1 below shows the mean ideologies of the CHC and the Democratic Caucus from the 95th to 114th Congress, based on the DW-NOMINATE scores of each group's respective members. A score closer to -1 indicates a higher degree of liberalism, while a score closer to 0 indicates greater moderation. With a few exceptions, the CHC has always been decidedly more liberal on average than the rest of the Democratic Caucus, meaning the DCCC was less likely to offer Latinx candidates—who, because of the CHC, may be perceived as "too liberal"—substantial electoral support, especially if they were competing in a primary against a more establishment-friendly Democratic candidate. This is not the case in the 112th, 113th, or 114th Congresses though. In the 112th and 113th the Democratic Caucus as a whole is actually slightly more liberal than the

[27] Ultimately, Hinojosa was elected Chair of the CHC for the 113th Congress. As of 2019, Ben Ray Luján has never served as Chair and will not get the opportunity, as he is retiring to run for one of New Mexico's Senate seats.

CHC—though the substantive difference between the two groups is negligible—while the mean ideology of the two groups is the same in the 114th Congress, demonstrating the growing ideological congruence between the CHC and their fellow Democrats.[28]

Figure 2.1 Average Ideology for CHC and Democratic Caucus, 95th-114th Congress



Over time and especially in the era of partisan polarization, the Democratic Caucus became more homogeneously liberal, lessening the ideological gap between the two caucuses. This allowed the CHC to present its agenda as complementary to the Democratic agenda, despite the instances of conflict mentioned earlier. Thus, the CHC

[28] The slightly stronger liberalism of the Democratic Caucus in the 109th Congress might be attributed to the elections of two moderate Democrats who joined the CHC—Jim Costa (CA) and Henry Cuellar (TX). Excluding their ideology scores, the mean ideology of the CHC is more liberal than that of the Democratic Caucus in the 109th Congress.

was able to more actively pursue its years-long goal of advocating "for issues important to Hispanics through the legislative process" (CHC website) by pushing legislation, but also by identifying and supporting Latinxs running for office while the CHC and Democrats worked to retake the House.[29]

Shifting Dynamics Within the CHC

Over the last forty years, the CHC has navigated significant shifts in its internal dynamics and membership while dealing with a changing political context around it. There are two primary dynamics that affected the CHC significantly over this time span: increasing diversity in members' national origin and gender diversity. As the CHC's internal diversity increased, the CHC faced more challenges to its ability to follow through on its core mission—acting as a coalition to effectively represent the Latinx community through legislative activity.

National Origin

The difficulties inherent to representing a group as internally diverse as the Latinx community are exacerbated by the underappreciated diversity present within the CHC. Far from being a political bloc comprised of Latinx legislators who look and think the same, there is also significant diversity within the CHC, in particular diversity based on national origin. Latinxs trace their heritage and identity to at least one of several

[29] These efforts finally paid off in the 2018 midterm election, with Democrats retaking the House and the CHC gaining seven new members. For his efforts, Ben Ray Luján was rewarded with the position of Assistant House Speaker, the fourth-highest position in Democratic House leadership behind the Speaker, Majority Leader, and Majority Whip.

countries; the most prominent national origins within the Latinx community in the U.S. are Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.[30] Latinxs also hail from countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and other U.S. territories such as Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. It is this diversity that, for some, significantly complicates attempts to create a "one-group, one-spokesman front" for the Latinx community. This is because "the Mexican community in Los Angeles will have different concerns from the Puerto Rican community in New York, or the Cuban community in Miami" (Galvan 1982).

At its inception, the CHC did not reflect the diversity within the Latinx community. Of the five founding members, three were Mexican Americans and two were Puerto Rican—there were no Cuban members, or members from any other national origin group within the Caucus. However, this did not stop the CHC from moving forward with its mission of representing all Latinxs, even those groups that did not have a member in Congress or the Caucus. Despite these differences in national origin, and the perceived inability of the CHC to account for the unique interests of those groups not represented among its ranks, members still felt the CHC was well suited to this task. According to Puerto Rican Rep. Robert García (D-NY), this diversity was "a unifying bond" among Latinxs, with the CHC itself "symbolic of the search for common ground among Hispanics." Even though the CHC at the time of García's comments consisted of eight

[30] Puerto Rico is unique among these three in that it is a territory of the United States and its people are U.S. citizens. However, many Puerto Ricans identify as Puerto Rican rather than American owing to a significant perception of both the island's independence from the US and the belief that many in the U.S. view Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans as inferior to other American citizens.

Mexican Americans and three Puerto Ricans, García averred, "it effectively represents the entire community" (1983).

Table 2.4 National Origin Groups in the CHC, 95th-114th Congress

Congress	Mexico	Puerto Rico	Cuba	Portugal	C/S Am.	Terr.
95th (1977-78)	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	0	0	0	0
96th (1979-80)	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	0	0	0	0
97th (1981-82)	5 (63%)	3 (38%)	0	0	0	0
98th (1983-84)	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	0	0	0	0
99th (1985-86)	9 (64%)	3 (21%)	0	1 (7%)	0	1 (7%)
100th (1987-88)	8 (62%)	3 (23%)	0	1 (8%)	0	1 (8%)
101st (1989-90)	7 (54%)	4 (31%)	1 (8%)	0	0	1 (8%)
102nd (1991-92)	8 (57%)	4 (29%)	1 (7%)	0	0	1 (7%)
103rd (1993-94)	10 (53%)	5 (26%)	3 (16%)	0	0	1 (5%)
104th (1995-96)	11 (58%)	4 (21%)	3 (16%)	0	0	1 (5%)
105th (1997-98)	11 (65%)	4 (24%)	1 (6%)	0	0	1 (6%)
106th (1999-2000)	11 (65%)	4 (24%)	1 (6%)	0	0	1 (6%)
107th (2001-02)	12 (67%)	4 (22%)	1 (6%)	0	1 (6%)	1 (6%)
108th (2003-04)	14 (70%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0
109th (2005-06)	15 (68%)	3 (14%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)	0

110th (2007-08)	14 (67%)	3 (14%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	0
111th (2009-10)	16 (64%)	4 (16%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	0	1 (4%)
112th (2011-12)	13 (59%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	0	1 (5%)
113th (2013-14)	16 (62%)	4 (15%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)	0	1 (4%)
114th (2015-16)	17 (65%)	4 (15%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)

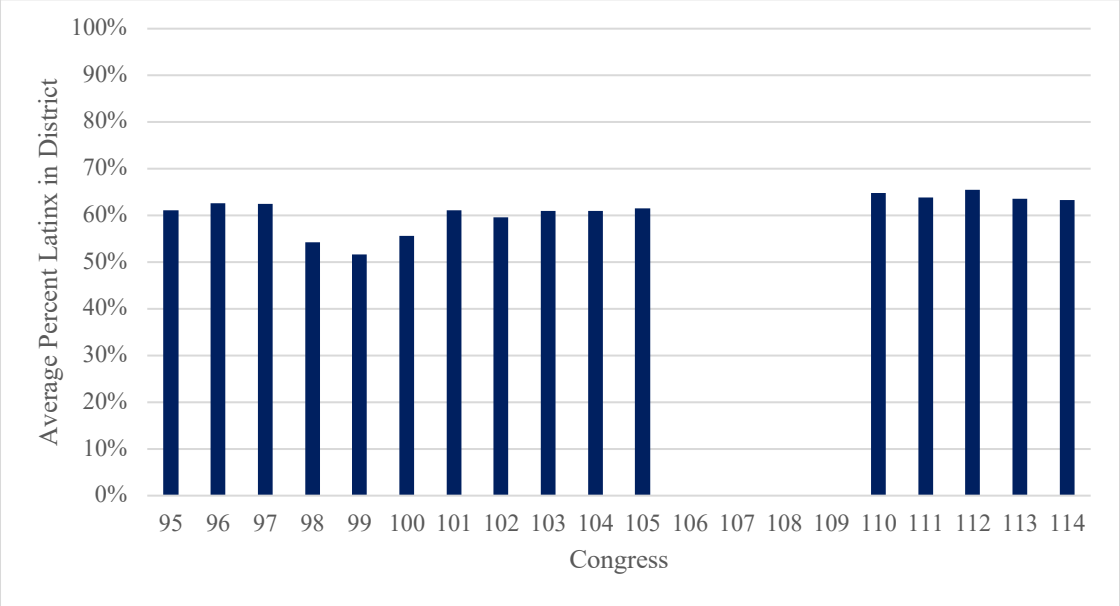
Over time though, the CHC began to more closely resemble the national origin diversity within the Latinx community. In the mid-1980s the Caucus admitted its first Portuguese member, Tony Coelho (D-CA), and its first Chamorro member, Ben Blaz (R-Guam). The Caucus did not have a Cuban member until the election of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) in 1988. According to coverage in the *Washington Post*, Ros-Lehtinen's election "stretched the boundaries of what national pollsters and politicians still refer to as the 'Hispanic vote'." Others hoped her election would "stimulate reassessment of the usefulness of labels that lump Chicano grape farmers with Cuban-American dentists and Puerto Rican cab drivers with Argentine-American schoolteachers" (Mathews 1989).

Even as the CHC continued to grow, including after the 1992 election that saw a record number of Latinxs elected to Congress (Cooper 1992), Mexican Americans still dominated the group. In every full session of Congress in which the CHC has existed, Mexican Americans account for at least 50% of members and 63% on average. Puerto Ricans, though, have seen their influence diminish steadily—in the 95th Congress (1977-1978) they accounted for 43% of CHC members, but in the 114th Congress (2015-2016)

they only accounted for 15% of all members. Cubans on average make up about 6% of the group[31], while members from Central or South American countries only account for 1% on average. This does mirror the large proportion of Latinxs in the US who identify as Mexican or Mexican American, but does not instill confidence about the representativeness of the CHC for other national origin groups within the Latinx community.

The proportions of various national origin groups within the congressional districts of the CHC members over time also point to the need for more diversity based on national origin within the CHC itself. As Figure 2.2 below shows, the average congressional district of a CHC member is always majority-Latinx. The average hovers around 63% in each session of Congress from the 95th to the 114th.

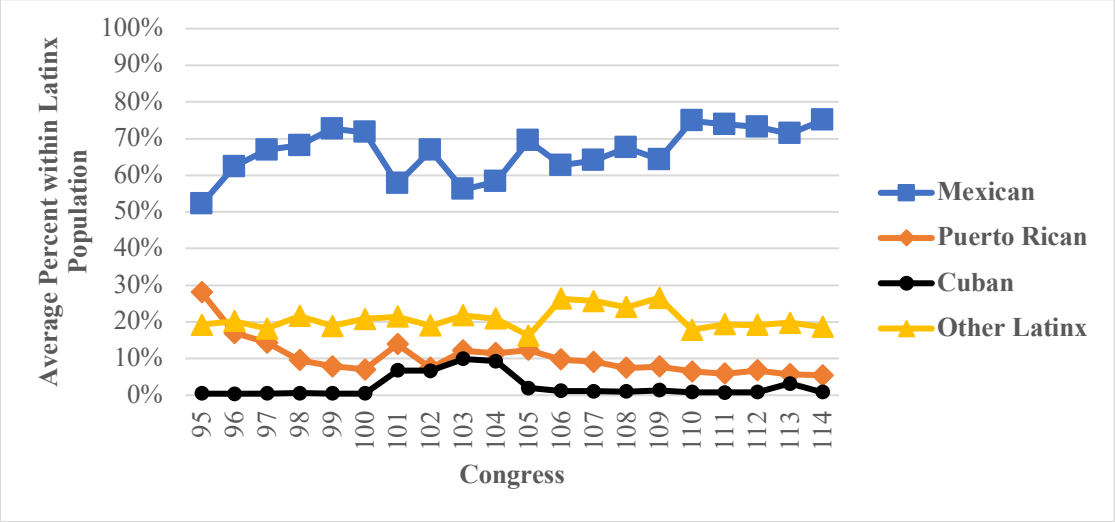
Figure 2.2 Average Percent Latinxs in CHC Districts, 95th-114th Congresses



[31] This owes in part to the decision of Republican Cubans to leave the CHC during the 105th Congress, as discussed earlier. The Cuban population is traditionally more conservative than other Latinxs, resulting in most Cuban elected officials identifying as Republicans. There were still Democratic Cubans in the CHC after the Republicans' departure, and currently there are two: Sen. Bob Menendez and Rep. Albio Sires, both of New Jersey.

However, these district populations are not homogeneous. Figure 2.3 shows the mean proportion of Latinx groups within the Latinx population of CHC members' congressional districts from the 95th to 114th Congresses, based on data from the National Historical Geographic Information System through the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series at the University of Minnesota. On average, the bulk of CHC members' districts are made up of Mexicans, though this mean is skewed by high proportions in Texas and California districts. In districts in New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey there are significant proportions of Cubans and Puerto Ricans within CHC districts, indicating the need for a more nuanced approach to representation on the part of the CHC that does not overly rely on the interests of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. The data also demonstrate the need to look beyond the three major Latinx national origin groups—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans—given that an average of at least 20% of Latinxs in CHC districts trace their national origin outside of these groups.[32]

Figure 2.3 Average Percent of National Origin Groups within Latinx Population of CHC Districts, 95th-114th Congresses



[32] The implications of this diversity within the Latinx community are explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

Gender

Less frequently discussed is the increasingly important role of gender in the CHC. This owes in part to the fact that the CHC did not include a single Latina until Ileana Ros-Lehtinen's election made her the first Latina in Congress as well as the first Cuban in the CHC. She was still the only Latina until the 1992 midterm election, known as the "year of the woman." In this election, two more Latinas were elected—Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Nydia Velázquez (D-NY). The number of women stayed the same until the 1998 midterm election, when Grace Napolitano (D-CA) was elected. Overall, Latinas have never made up more than one third of the CHC's membership, despite Latinas making up a significant proportion of the Latinx community. Even then, that high point was only recently attained, as shown below in Table 2.5. While having more Latinas in Congress and in the CHC is desirable, though, the representation of Latinas is still better than the representation of women in the House in general—Latinas account for 33% of the CHC, higher than the 23.4% mark women have reached in the 116th House.

What is also notable is that since the 106th Congress (1999-2000), five Latinas have served as Chair of the CHC. This began with Lucille Roybal-Allard in the 106th Congress, and includes two recent Chairs in Linda Sánchez (D-CA) in the 114th Congress (2015-2016) and Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM) in the 115th Congress (2017-2018).[33] Today, in the 116th Congress (2019-2020), two Latinas are part of the CHC leadership—Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA) is the Second Vice Chair, rising to the third-highest

[33] A full list of CHC Chairs and Members from the 95th-114th Congresses is available in Appendix 1.

position in the CHC in only her second term of office; Veronica Escobar (D-TX) serves as the Freshman Representative.

Table 2.5 Gender in the CHC, 95th-116th Congress

Congress	Men	Women	Pct. Women in House
95th (1977-78)	7 (100%)	0	4%
96th (1979-80)	6 (100%)	0	4%
97th (1981-82)	8 (100%)	0	5%
98th (1983-84)	11 (100%)	0	5%
99th (1985-86)	14 (100%)	0	5%
100th (1987-88)	13 (100%)	0	5%
101st (1989-90)	12 (92%)	1 (8%)	7%
102nd (1991-92)	13 (93%)	1 (7%)	6%
103rd (1993-94)	16 (84%)	3 (16%)	11%
104th (1995-96)	16 (84%)	3 (16%)	11%
105th (1997-98)	14 (82%)	3 (18%)	12%
106th (1999-2000)	13 (76%)	4 (24%)	13%
107th (2001-02)	13 (72%)	5 (28%)	14%
108th (2003-04)	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	14%
109th (2005-06)	16 (73%)	6 (27%)	16%
110th (2007-08)	17 (81%)	4 (19%)	17%
111th (2009-10)	20 (80%)	5 (20%)	17%
112th (2011-12)	17 (77%)	5 (23%)	17%
113th (2013-14)	19 (73%)	7 (27%)	18%
114th (2015-16)	19 (73%)	7 (27%)	19%

115th (2017-18)	23 (74%)	8 (26%)	20%
116th (2019-20)	25 (66%)	13 (34%)	23%

Of the five former Latina Chairs of the CHC, two currently hold significant committee assignments. Roybal-Allard is Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security of the House Appropriations Committee, while Velázquez is the Chair of the House Small Business Committee. Linda Sánchez served as Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus in the 115th Congress, providing the CHC with a significant opportunity to influence the activities of the broader Democratic Caucus, although this effect was somewhat limited as Sánchez's time as Democratic Caucus Vice Chair occurred when Democrats were still in the minority in the House. While the CHC may not have a membership that truly reflects gender diversity within the Latinx community—especially when also considering LGBTQ Latinxs—the group has worked to both accept and empower its Latina members, helping them attain significant positions in the House while simultaneously being shaped by these Latinas' years spent chairing the group and bringing Latina interests to the fore.[34]

Conclusion

Founded in 1976, the CHC has undergone significant changes in the last forty years. These changes have largely been precipitated by increases in Caucus membership,

[34] For example, prior to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen's election the CHC never included legislation that specifically targeted the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). After she was sworn in at the start of the 101st Congress in 1989, the CHC agenda included H.R. 24, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 1989. Other Latina-interest agenda items that post-date the inclusion of Latinas in the CHC include H.R. 1 the Civil Rights and Women's Equity in Employment Act of 1991 (102nd Congress), H.R. 3415 the Family Violence Prevention Act (103rd Congress), and H.R. 4439 the Latina Suicide Prevention Act (106th Congress).

as well as changes in the political context in which the group operates. Through all of this, though, the motivation and mission of the Caucus has stayed the same: to "advocate for issues important to Hispanics through the Congressional legislative process." The language used to express this mission is not always the same—in the beginning there was reference to neglect and indifference experienced by Spanish-speaking citizens, and at other times reference to influencing the executive and judicial branches as well as the legislative—but the core ideal remains unchanged. In response to the perceived and real underrepresentation of Latinxs and their interests in Congress, five Latinx Representatives joined together and formed a coalition for the express purpose of correcting this representational inequality.

For the first eighteen years of its existence, the CHC was typically too small to significantly affect vote outcomes in the House. This did not mean the Caucus could not persuade other legislators to take actions preferred by the Caucus—as evidenced by Speaker O'Neill's decision to pull the IRCA from the floor in 1984—but such instances were few and far between. Even with a Democratic majority in both the House and the CHC, the substantive influence of the CHC was limited due to political factors beyond the group's control.

Once Republicans became the House majority in the 104th Congress (1995-1996), things only got harder for the CHC. The group now had 19 members—16 Democrats and 3 Republicans—and accounted for more votes in the House. However, with Democrats in the minority and perceptions of the CHC as a Democratic caucus in all but name—a perception reinforced when Republicans left the CHC in 1997—the CHC was forced to play defense against Republican proposals, especially on immigration issues. The CHC's

abilities were further limited by Speaker Gingrich's move to ban LSOs. The CHC was able to reorganize as a CMO but lost significant resources in the process. Helping the CHC in the face of these immense changes was the persistent belief among the rest of the Democratic Caucus that winning the Latinx vote would be essential to retaking the House, especially after George W. Bush won 35% of the Latinx vote in 2000 and 40% in 2004. This belief led Democrats to engage more with the CHC in hopes it would aid their attempts to court Latinx voters; this also gave the CHC more access to Democratic leadership, and thus more opportunities to wield significant influence as the group continued to welcome new members to its ranks.

This mutually beneficial relationship paid off when Democrats regained control of the House in 2007. Not only was the CHC now both larger and part of the House majority, it now had a Speaker in Nancy Pelosi who was more willing to include the CHC in policy discussions of the broader Democratic Caucus. Democratic leadership and the CHC did not get along all the time though, especially with the perception among some CHC members that Democrats in the mid-2000s were too willing to cede ground to the GOP on immigration, even when Barack Obama was elected president and Democrats had unified control over the federal government for two years. When Republicans took back the House in 2011, the CHC was once again forced on the defensive against a GOP onslaught that took the form of several pieces of immigration legislation with which the CHC vehemently disagreed. However, the CHC was not as weak now as in the past—the group was larger and had fostered significant positive relationships with the House Democratic leadership. This culminated with Ben Ray Luján's appointment as chair of the DCCC, signifying both the Democratic Caucus's

belief in the need to appeal to Latinx voters and the growing political influence of the CHC going into the 2016 and 2018 elections.

The CHC has also reckoned with growing diversity within its membership, and how this diversity implicates the Caucus's desire to equally and adequately represent all members of the Latinx community. This is most immediately noticeable with regard to Latinx diversity based on national origin and gender. The Caucus has always been dominated by Mexican Americans, but that dynamic has slowly shifted as Latinxs from other national origin groups are elected to Congress and join the CHC. Members who trace their origins to Nicaragua, Colombia, Portugal, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands add their unique perspective to discussions that too often in the past centered on Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. This is not to say that the perspectives of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, or Cubans are unimportant—rather, it is to argue that the CHC grew stronger as a coalition and as a political force the more it expanded its membership and began to more closely reflect the national origin diversity present in the Latinx community.

Further adding to this growth and evolution was the election of Latinas to Congress, beginning with Ileana Ros-Lehtinen in 1988. For over a decade the voices of Latinas were not present in CHC meetings and discussions, even though Latinas have their own unique preferences and interests within politics and society. With Ros-Lehtinen's election, closely followed by the elections of Lucille Roybal-Allard and Nydia Velázquez, the CHC began to incorporate an awareness of those interests into its activities. And as more Latinas get elected to Congress, they also see their fortunes in the CHC rise. Both Roybal-Allard and Velázquez went on to serve as CHC Chair—with

Roybal-Allard the first Latina to hold that position—and paved the way for future CHC Chairs Grace Napolitano, Linda Sánchez and Michelle Lujan-Grisham. Even though Latinas still only account for about one third of CHC members in the 116th Congress, the future of the CHC seems likely to be shaped by Latinas for years to come: of seven new members to join the CHC in January of 2019, five were Latinas—including Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL), who also became the first CHC member of Ecuadorean descent.

Given these various shifts and fluctuations both within the CHC and the environment in which it operates, we are still left with questions about the CHC's role as a coalitional representative for the Latinx community. First and foremost, we must ask to whom the Caucus refers when it mentions representing the Latinx community—given the large number of Mexican American members and the significant proportion of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in CHC members' districts over time, does this only mean Mexican Americans? What about Puerto Ricans or Cubans, or people from Central or South America? That is, how precisely does the Caucus define Latinx identity for the purposes of pursuing its goal of increasing Latinx representation? Second, what does the CHC's legislative agenda look like when it is attempting to balance these divergent interests that exist within the Latinx community? And how successful is the CHC at leveraging its growing share of the Democratic Caucus into tangible influence on the Democratic agenda? Finally, how effective is the CHC when it comes to representing Latinxs—whether by passing legislation in the House, or other forms of influence such as shaping committee assignments and executive appointments? This first question implicates the others in significant ways and is where I now turn.

3| Representing the Community: The CHC and Latinx Identity

In Directive No. 15, adopted on May 12, 1977, the Office of Management and Budget officially defined as Hispanic "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race." This definition is used for all federal statistics and administrative reporting, including the decennial Census. When the seven Latinx members of the 95th Congress decided to form the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, though, they did so without reference to the population defined by the OMB's Directive. Rather, the CHC's founding members expressed a desire to reverse "a national pattern of neglect, exclusion, and indifference" suffered by Spanish-speaking citizens (Vigil 1989, 23). As mentioned in Chapter 2, at this point the CHC was only comprised of Mexican American and Puerto Rican members, two groups that are most obviously connected by their shared use of the Spanish language. By defining its goal as such, the CHC indicated that its core constituency comprised those American citizens who identified as Hispanic or Latinx through their shared language. However, not all Latinxs living in the US speak Spanish—given assimilation pressures and accompanying punishment for speaking Spanish, many Latinxs of later generations were not taught the language by their parents or grandparents. Focusing on the Spanish language as the primary characteristic that defines membership in the Latinx community, and thus the right to representation by the coalition embodied by the CHC, risks excluding a significant proportion of the Latinx population.

The CHC today, for its part, does present a certain awareness of the representational disparities that result from a focus on speaking Spanish as the core of Latinx identity. In the Caucus's official mission statement on its website, the Caucus refers to "addressing national issues and crafting policies that impact the Latino community in the US." There is no explicit reference to speaking Spanish or not; however, there is also no clarification on the terms of the CHC's particular brand of coalitional representation. In the previous chapter, I discussed the growing diversity in the Caucus, especially in terms of national origin—today, several national origin groups are represented among the CHC members, and there is no clear hierarchy dictating that one group is more important than another. There are also clear instances of blurred boundaries between these groups. For example, former Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL) is Puerto Rican, but for many years served as the CHC's voice on immigration issues that primarily affect Mexicans and Mexican Americans. How, though, does this happen? How is a Puerto Rican legislator able to adequately represent the interests of Mexican or Mexican American constituents? Similarly, how are non-Cuban Latinxs able to adequately represent Cuban interests? What about differences in gender, race, class, age, or some other identity group?

These questions point to one of the significant difficulties faced by the CHC in its endeavors to address issues and craft policies that impact the Latinx community, namely figuring out what precisely the CHC means when it is referring to the Latinx community. Part of this discovery necessitates a focus on how the CHC defines *Latinidad,* or Latinx identity. Accounts vary on what exactly constitutes *Latinidad.* Some contend that the concept implies pan-Latinismo or panethnicity that links all Latinxs together (Aparicio

and Chávez-Silverman 1997; García 2003), while others view *Latinidad* as contingent and fluid, shaped by the experience and social location of an individual (Price 2007; Beltrán 2010). When considering the representativeness of the CHC, it is vital that we assess the extent to which the CHC's own definition of *Latinidad* accounts for the various identities that intersect for those who identify as Latinx, most notably in terms of national origin, gender, and race but also including generational status, acculturation, and Spanish-speaking ability. This concern does not just apply to how CHC members define the grounds for membership in the coalition itself or the national constituency they claim to represent—such a decision carries enormous implications for members' decisions on legislative priorities and strategies, from what broad issue areas to focus on to what bills to support or oppose, and even which individuals to support for executive nominations. Normatively speaking, how the CHC navigates the construction of *Latinidad* affects the quality of representation for all those Latinxs whose *Latinidad* intersects with several other identities. Prior studies demonstrate the pitfalls of political approaches that doubly marginalize subgroups within groups that are already marginalized by society at large, reducing the extent to which we can claim representation for the groups as a whole actually benefits all members of the group. This is the case with Black political elites' attitudes toward Black people living with HIV/AIDS (Cohen 1999), as well as interest groups that represent racial minority groups (Strolovitch 2007).

In this chapter, I address these questions and issues in order to better understand the specific terms of the coalitional representation practiced by the CHC. Coalitional representation in the abstract assumes that there is broad agreement among coalition members on what precisely the coalition ought to be doing in service of its general goals.

This plays out differently for each coalition, necessitating a closer look at how the coalition defines itself and its members and how those decisions, made in the case of the CHC by Latinx political elites, impact those individuals who stand to benefit the most from coalitional representation while also being vulnerable to experiences of double marginalization (Cohen 1999). In the case of the CHC, the construction of a particular notion of *Latinidad* is especially important beyond the risk of marginalizing some constituencies, insofar as how the CHC defines *Latinidad* establishes a criterion for who can even be a member of the Caucus. Given that the CHC works as a coalition within Congress, understanding the basis on which the CHC decides who can even be in the room where decisions are made about the interests of the Latinx community is vital to understanding the nature of Latinx representation in Congress. Who is part of CHC meetings, I will show, shapes discussions within the CHC about how to balance its representation in a way that accounts for a wide variety of groups within the Latinx community without sacrificing the political influence the CHC enjoys because of its ability to function as a collective rather than a collection of individuals.

I rely on an interpretive approach that focuses on the archives of the CHC, alongside 20 semi-structured interviews with current and former CHC members and congressional staffers who either worked for or closely with the CHC in the House. My goal is to clarify how the CHC defines *Latinidad* when forging itself as a coalition that ostensibly provides representation to all members of a racial group with significant intersections between its primary identity and several other identities, most notably national origin, gender, generation, and immigration status. The focus is on how the CHC defines *Latinidad* for itself and its members, but also on how the CHC interpolates this

notion of *Latinidad* into the Latinx community and how this interpolation factors into the debate over the desirability of panethnicity within Latinx politics more broadly. The CHC treats *Latinidad* as more ambiguous and fluid than one might think based on its public statements, leaving membership open to those members who self-identify as Latinx—though conditioned on national origin—and similarly treating membership in the Latinx community as a matter of choice rather than legal designation. There are instances where the CHC refers to the Latinx community in broad terms, but the decision to do so is strategic and provides a political benefit to the CHC and does not reflect a disregard for the intersectionality within the Latinx community.

I begin by examining prior studies on social identity theory and group consciousness, which form the basis of the claim that Latinx identity can be treated as monolithic regardless of its intersectional nature, especially when considering issue areas that appear to affect all Latinxs in some way, e.g. immigration. I then discuss specific theories of *Latinidad* that debate the value of defining *Latinidad* in panethnic terms, and what role Latinx political elites play in shaping that debate. I then present my interpretation of relevant archival documents and interviews, shedding light on the CHC's attempts to define *Latinidad* in broader terms than one might assume at first glance, and the implications this has for Latinx representation in Congress.

Theories of Identity and *Latinidad*

Discussions about the relationship between identity and politics are wide-ranging and cover many different topics. However, when considering how the CHC constructs Latinidad both internally and for the Latinx community. I focus on social identity theory

and its treatment of racial group identity—found mostly in the subfield of political psychology—as well as accounts of the role of political elites in shaping notions of identity within the mass public. That is what I explore in this section, as well as how these theories contribute to the ongoing debate about the benefits of panethnicity within Latinx politics, and how these all come together to shape what we ought to expect out of the CHC and its particular construction of *Latinidad.*

Social Identity Theory and Group Consciousness

In political science, many discussions of identity draw heavily from the literature on social identity theory. According to Tajfel (1981) and Tajfel and Turner (1979), people have a greater sense of belonging and self-esteem when they are members in a particular group and positively associate with other members of the group. Under these conditions, members of a social group are more likely to treat the in-group with favoritism, while being more likely to engage in negative behavior toward other groups with whom they do not affiliate, or out-groups. Even when people are randomly assigned to a group, there is an increased likelihood of conflict with out-groups, emphasizing the social nature of identity and the strength of group membership in shaping behavior.

Self-categorization theory (Turner et al. 1987) builds on this, emphasizing that feelings of similarities among group members "positively distinguishes group members from outsiders" (Huddy 2001, 134), leading people to be more likely to self-categorize with the group because of the perceived benefit and positivity they associate with being a member of the group. As an extension of this, Huddy (2001) argues that "minority group membership should be extremely salient to African Americans, Hispanics, and

Asians…overwhelming national identity" (129) because of greater attachment to their social (racial) identity. This finding is echoed in other studies that specifically examine the role of social identity theory in discussions of Latinx identity, providing evidence to corroborate both social identity theory and self-categorization theory (Huddy and Virtanen 1995; Ethier and Deaux 1994).

This salience of racial identity, insofar as it can be considered a social identity, is further boosted by studies on the effects of group consciousness. Group consciousness refers to the belief that members not only positively identify with the group, they also have a strong psychological attachment to the group that manifests in the belief that all members of the group share a common set of preferences and interests, and thus perceive politics according to an evaluation of what is best for the group rather than the individual (Conover 1984). This also affects how much political sympathy we feel for our own group as opposed to any other group (Conover 1988). Concerning the Latinx population, multiple studies examine the existence of group consciousness within the community. In many of these studies, evidence is marshaled to support the argument that there is significant group consciousness among Latinxs, especially when it comes to issue areas that are perceived to significantly affect the Latinx community as a whole such as immigration or bilingual education (Sanchez 2006). Minta (2011) also finds evidence of this in a different form, insofar as he examines the role of group consciousness in the activities of Latinx political elites serving in Congress. Focusing on what he terms "strategic group uplift," Minta finds that Latinx legislators are more likely to engage in particular committee activities in the House because of the belief that the issue at hand is of importance to the Latinx population, and thus must be addressed through legislation.

The findings in Mora (2014), as well as Padilla (1985), provide stronger evidence for the role of Latinx political elites in shaping *Latinidad*. For Mora, Latinx political elites comprised one of the groups of stakeholders that actively worked to create and publicize the political usage of the identity "Hispanic"; however, she does not delve more deeply into what those efforts looked like beyond the 1970s or how they coincide with the political representation of Latinxs in Congress. Márquez (2003) also demonstrates the power of Latinx elites in shaping *Latinidad*, focusing specifically on political action groups. According to Márquez, "whenever organizations adopt a position on race, class, or culture, they reconfigure the meaning of those concepts rather than reacting in any predetermined manner" (2003, 125). Thus, organizations can have a significant effect on how identity is conceptualized and deployed, whether that deployment relies on panethnicity or not. There is also strong evidence that demonstrates the influence of elites on identity generally speaking (Chandra 2012; Drury and Reicher 2000; van Zomeren, Leach, and Spears 2010). Common to these studies, as well as Márquez (2003), is the belief that it is incumbent upon elites to impress upon the mass public the importance of embracing the identity as laid out by the elites, whether for social or political gain.

Latinidad: Panethnic, or Intersectional?

However much influence we can assign to Latinx political elites in shaping Latinx group consciousness or social identity, the fact remains that social identity theory does not provide the entire frame for answering questions about the CHC. Social identity theory presumes that members of the mass public derive a psychological benefit from group membership; however, in the case of the CHC we cannot be sure that members of

the mass public, i.e. Latinx individuals, are necessarily aware of how the CHC constructs *Latinidad* for itself and the community.[35] The CHC is primarily focused on using *Latinidad* within Congress as part of its efforts to identify legislation that significantly affects the Latinx community, and in determining its own approaches to these issues on behalf of the community.

One aspect of social identity theory and group consciousness that bears holding on to, though, concerns the assumption that the Latinx community has a core that can be clearly defined, a definition which may subsequently be used as a shorthand for understanding Latinxs' various social or political concerns. The desirability of this panethnic approach, though, has been the subject of significant debate in research on *Latinidad* outside of political psychology. Central to those who criticize a panethnic conceptualization of Latinidad is the belief that racial identity is significantly shaped by social and institutional factors. According to these theories, racial identity is defined—and racial hierarchies reinforced—by those who wish to maintain a racial hierarchy that keeps whites at the top and diminishes the role and influence of minority groups such as Latinxs (Omi and Winant 1994; Roth 2012; Molina 2014; Hero 1992; Haney López 1995). To some, even the decision to use the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" to refer to the population or community embodies a choice to refer to the group in monolithic or homogenizing terms that ignore the various differences in lived experience for Latinxs of various backgrounds (Oboler 1995). For Oboler, the panethnicity implied by terms like

[35] A detailed investigation into the relationship between Latinxs in the mass public and the CHC is a promising avenue of future research. Such research has the potential to show where Latinx political elites and Latinx constituents agree and disagree on how to define the Latinx community, what issues matter to that community, and what the best tactics are for representing those interests—whether within Congress or through other avenues such as interest groups or social movements.

Hispanic is problematic due to the fact that it "connotes that the group has or is assumed to have a presumed negative attribute of some kind—a 'social handicap' (lack of English skills, for example)" to the point that the label Hispanic becomes a means of stigmatization rather than simply referral (1995, xvi).

This becomes even more problematic when coupled with an active push for unity within *Latinidad*, which historically has been used as a tactic that pushes discrimination against Latinas within Latinx social movements, and in general ignores the gender diversity of the Latinx community (Beltrán 2010). This was most notable within the Chicano movement in the 1960s, but also animates current references to the Latinx community as the "sleeping giant" in American politics—according to Beltrán, this particular narrative assumes that the entire Latinx community has the potential to awaken and, acting as one, affect the outcomes of elections and the policymaking process, all without taking into account the fact that not all Latinxs think the same about politics and do not participate in politics in the same manner.

Other studies further highlight the differences within *Latinidad* that are ignored by reliance on the panethnic assumptions of social identity theory and group consciousness. Gutiérrez (1995) closely examines the historical differences between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants with regard to immigration policy. He argues that, because of their belief that they are truly Americans and a concomitant desire to assimilate, Mexican Americans harbor more conservative views on immigration because of their perception that Mexican immigrants—undocumented or not—harm Mexican Americans' standing in American society by speaking Spanish and holding on to aspects of Mexican culture. Mexican immigrants, however, hold more liberal views on

immigration and do not see holding on to Mexican culture as being mutually exclusive with becoming American. Similarly, Branton (2007) finds strong evidence that level of acculturation among Latinxs significantly affects Latinxs' views in several policy areas. Specifically, Branton finds that less acculturated Latinos tend to hold more favorable positions toward issues such as increasing government spending, government aid to the poor, and affirmative action than more acculturated Latinos, in addition to supporting less restrictive immigration policy than more acculturated Latinos (298).

Thus, there are significant differences that exist within the Latinx community that seriously complicate attempts to define the community in panethnic terms. However, there is also evidence for a more generous treatment of panethnicity when it comes to the U.S. Latinx population. According to Mora (2014), the use of Hispanic as a panethnic identifier was a strategic move by a diverse group of stakeholders, i.e. Latinx political elites, to boost the social and political influence of the Latinx population. These stakeholders chose to deploy the identifier Hispanic the way they did because "while they framed Hispanic ethnicity differently, they also referred to a common, albeit ambiguous, narrative about Hispanic cultural values and they became reliant on one another for expertise, data, and resources" (6). The ambiguity here is critical, especially when considering the significant diversity within the Latinx community, because "[a]mbiguous categories can be combined with others, since their broad definition makes it difficult to discern who lies outside of the group," allowing elites to "preempt resistance from those who feel that they must give up one identity in order to be part of a new category" (Mora 2014, 158). That is, when faced with dissatisfaction from those whose interests run counter to the broad Hispanic interest as defined by Latinx elites, those elites can

internally shift what they mean by Hispanic without necessarily broadcasting that shift publicly. Mora's discussion of ambiguity mirrors other treatments of the concept and its relationship to politics. Kertzer (1988) discusses ambiguity as a potential means to "[produce] bonds of solidarity without requiring uniformity of belief" (67). That is, ambiguity in the deployment of symbols and rituals in politics can draw people together across their differences by focusing on their shared support of those symbols or rituals, but without forcing them to actually agree with each other. Mexicans and Cubans may disagree on immigration policy, but the ambiguity of "Hispanic" within politics can draw support from both groups for different reasons and without forcing them to reconcile their differences on more specific issues. Thus, a wider variety of Latinx interests can be represented through the strategic deployment of a panethnic identity in public while maintaining a clear vision of the differences and nuances within the Latinx community. That is, the CHC can publicly discuss "the Latinx community" and speak in broad terms, even though its own terms for membership in the coalition and how it determines its legislative agendas and behaviors are decidedly not panethnic in nature.

Mora's treatment of Hispanic panethnicity echoes an earlier study by Padilla (1985), establishing Latino ethnic identity as what he terms a "situational ethnic identity." By this, Padilla means

> "…this multiethnic unit is fabricated and becomes most appropriate or salient for social action during those particular situations or moments when two or more Spanish-speaking ethnic groups are affected by the structural forces noted above and mobilize themselves as one to overcome this impact" (4)

In this sense, a broad *Latinidad* is only present when multiple Spanish-speaking groups interact as one when the situation demands such agreement. This does not mean that, for

example, Mexican Americans or Puerto Ricans give up their own unique preferences or ideals; rather, it means that they recognize situations where these preferences or ideals are temporarily in congruence, and work together to realize those goals. Panethnicity, then, is not always detrimental to the political standing of Latinxs in American society and politics—it has strategic benefit when deployed in particular situations, and in many ways can help Latinx political elites insert Latinx interests into high-level discussions without allowing opponents to exclude specific groups, owing to the intentionally ambiguous definition of "Hispanic" or "Latino" used by these groups.

The risk of worsening representation for members of the Latinx community places an even higher burden on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and how it chooses to define the terms of its coalition, i.e. how it defines *Latinidad* and the Latinx community that it wants to represent. Does the CHC rely on panethnicity in the simplistic sense criticized by Oboler, Beltrán, and others? Or is the CHC strategically presenting itself as representing a broad "Latino" or "Hispanic" community as a means of strategically engaging with other actors in the American political system in a way that boosts rather than hinders Latinx representation? This should not be taken as a question of choosing panethnicity or not—Beltrán, Oboler, and others who criticize panethnicity are focused more specifically on appeals to unity and solidarity within the Latinx community that necessitate the effacement of nuance and complexity within the community. Panethnicity in the abstract does not require this, but simply the affirmation that there is something within *Latinidad* that draws Latinxs together. The more appropriate question, then, concerns how well the CHC identifies and navigates the

diversity of the Latinx community and whether the group's deployment of panethnicity appears more problematic or beneficial for the political representation of Latinxs.

The decision by the CHC to use "Hispanic" in the coalition's name certainly provides some grounds for skepticism in this regard. However, the name of the group does not tell the whole story about the CHC's relationship to *Latinidad.* Using an interpretive approach that draws on close readings of the CHC's archival documents and elite interviews, I investigate the ways in which the CHC 1) constructs a vision of *Latinidad* that incorporates an awareness of the inherent diversity of the Latinx community; and 2) actively utilizes this vision of *Latinidad* when determining membership in the Caucus, the scope and nature of the Caucus's legislative behaviors, and representing the Latinx community. While the group sometimes issues statements and takes actions that appear to prioritize one group of Latinxs over another, or that focus on the Latinx community broadly defined, its members still demonstrate awareness of Latinx intersectionality and its importance in Latinx representation.

The CHC and the Construction of *Latinidad*

How can we know, though, that the CHC constructs *Latinidad* in a way that goes beyond speaking Spanish and that accounts for the intersectionality within the Latinx community? I take up each of these concerns in turn, focusing first on the CHC's attempts to reconcile the perceived necessity of speaking Spanish with its desire to allow any member who identifies as Latinx or Hispanic. I then discuss the various ways in which the CHC has shown its acute awareness of the other identities that intersect with *Latinidad*—especially national origin, gender, and race—and has taken several steps over

the years to not only maintain this awareness, but to actively incorporate it into the activities the Caucus engages in as part of its attempts to equally represent all Latinxs.

The Role of Language

There is no mistaking the historical and cultural role of the Spanish language in shaping Latinx identity. While the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's official definition of Hispanic does not mention speaking Spanish as necessary for claiming Hispanic identity, there is an unspoken assumption that speaking Spanish is inextricably linked to identifying as Hispanic or Latinx. Studies in political science and other fields also demonstrate this reliance on language. Padilla (1985) explicitly defines situational ethnic identity as the context-driven union of two or more Spanish-speaking groups—in his study Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans—without reference to self-identification (see also Capetillo-Ponce 2010). This viewpoint is at times complicated by assimilation pressures that attach a negative connotation to speaking Spanish, which is often juxtaposed with the belief that one who speaks little or no Spanish cannot possibly be Latinx (García Bedolla 2003). Carter and Callesano (2018) take this even further, showing that even distinct dialects of Spanish can be integral to "constructing the kinds of difference within the category 'Latino'" mentioned earlier here and in prior research.

With the Spanish language playing such an important role in conceptions of *Latinidad* at the local level, we must ask what role Spanish plays in the CHC's own construction of *Latinidad*. Does the CHC prioritize Spanish-speaking ability when deciding who can be a member and who is represented by the coalition it embodies? Or is

language only an ancillary characteristic of the CHC's *Latinidad*, neither necessary nor sufficient grounds for defining *Latinidad* for the purposes of political representation?

The archives of the CHC contain records of a sequence of events that help answer these questions. As mentioned earlier, the CHC initially defined its purpose in terms of aiding Spanish-speaking citizens who experienced neglect, exclusion, and indifference within American society and politics. This was challenged, though, near the end of the CHC's first decade of existence. Rep. Tony Coelho (D-CA) formally requested to join the CHC as a full member. Being of Portuguese descent, it was not immediately clear that Coelho *could* join as a full member—the CHC's bylaws said only Hispanic legislators could occupy such a position within the CHC and enjoy the voting rights associated with full membership.

However, the CHC's bylaws at the time did not explicitly define what it meant to be Hispanic.[36] Coelho's request was discussed by the CHC in multiple meetings over several months and two sessions of Congress. The first meeting took place on February 29, 1984. At this meeting, Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM) mentioned to the rest of the CHC that Coelho's request had been made—there was no actual vote at this meeting on whether or not to admit Coelho.[37] The CHC next broached the issue on September 27, 1984, nearly seven months later. Notably, this was right before the end of the 98th Congress, when there was no guarantee that Coelho—or any other CHC member—would be in Congress at the start of the 99th Congress in January of 1985. At this meeting,

---

[36] Bylaws of the CHC as amended October 9, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 2, Folder 5.

[37] CHC Meeting Minutes for February 29, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 1, Folder 3.

Richardson—now Chair of the CHC—submitted a report that cited the OMB definition of Hispanic as based primarily on self-identification rather than language. On this basis the CHC would be able to admit Coelho because he identified as Latinx, despite the fact that he traced his heritage to a Portuguese-speaking rather than a Spanish-speaking country. However, the CHC again did not vote on Coelho's request—instead, they requested a legal briefing on the issue from the Library of Congress, indicating some uncertainty within the CHC as to whether the group was bound by the OMB's definition of Hispanic, or if the CHC had more leeway in determining its criteria for membership.[38] One week later, on October 3, 1984, the CHC again discussed Coelho's request to join the coalition. Richardson again advocated on behalf of Coelho, relying largely on the phrase "other Spanish origin" in the OMB's definition of Hispanic to negate concerns that Coelho traced his ancestry to a Portuguese-speaking rather than Spanish-speaking country. There is no evidence of contestation or disagreement here on the part of the other CHC members—Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA) seconded Richardson's motion to admit Coelho as a full member, and the rest of the CHC agreed to the motion by unanimous consent.[39]

Despite the fact that the vote to admit Coelho was unanimous, the entire sequence of events served as a critical juncture in the history of the CHC after less than a decade of existence. The CHC was faced with a decision not only on how to define *Latinidad* for the purposes of membership and participating in coalitional representation for the Latinx

[38] CHC Meeting Minutes for September 27, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 1, Folder 1.
[39] CHC Meeting Minutes for October 3, 1984. Records of the CHC, History Files of the CHC 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 4.

community, but also with a critical moment to decide whether the Caucus would prioritize panethnicity in its approach. On the first count, the CHC chose to rely on self-identification more heavily than language in defining *Latinidad* for its members. However, there were still reservations about opening up membership to any member who might arbitrarily claim Latinx identity. As with Coelho, the CHC conditioned acceptance of potential members' self-identification on the ability to trace one's ancestry to a Spanish-speaking nation, or at the very least a nation with a language closely related to Spanish including but not limited to Portuguese[40]. This ensured that those members who traced their lineage to non-Spanish speaking countries could still be full members of the coalition, without forcing the CHC to undertake the uncomfortable task of denying someone's self-identification. The reliance on self-identification combined with national origin, but without requiring the actual ability to speak Spanish, in determining *Latinidad* for CHC members was further reinforced in November of 1985, with the decision to admit Rep. Ben Blaz (R-Guam)—who identified as Chamorro—to the Caucus as a full member even though the initial motion was to invite Blaz only as an honorary member.[41]

On the second count, concerning panethnicity, the Coelho and Blaz decisions provide evidence of the CHC acting strategically. The CHC made a decision that both took into account the fact that language can and does matter for many people, and went further by demonstrating the CHC's belief that *Latinidad* ought to be defined by more

---

[40] This underscores the importance of national origin to the CHC both in terms of decision-making and behavior discussed in Chapter 2.

[41] CHC Meeting Minutes for November 19, 1985. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 1, Folder 5. This precedent continues to hold true in the 116th Congress, with the CHC including members of Portuguese descent (Jim Costa, D-CA, and Lori Trahan, D-MA), from Guam (Michael San Nicolas, D) and from the Northern Mariana Islands (Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan, D).

than linguistics. In this sense, the CHC pushed back against panethnicity and provided support for a more particularistic vision of *Latinidad*. However, the CHC still portrayed itself after admitting Coelho as a group dedicated to representing the Latinx community as a whole and did not change its messaging to refer to itself as a group that represented Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Portuguese. The Caucus still chose to publicly present itself as a broad Latinx organization, though what is important here is that the criteria for deciding who would be in the room and thus able to participate in significant decisions affecting the Latinx community did not require members to give up their own unique identities for the sake of the Latinx collective.

This broad approach also comes out in an interview with a CHC member. In this member's recollection, there was "diversity within diversity in [the CHC]" due to members being Mexican American, Cuban, or Puerto Rican. After members like Jim Costa (D-CA) joined the CHC, "we had Portuguese!"[42] The tone here is not one of dismay or confusion; rather, this member was genuinely excited at the prospect of the diversity within the CHC increasing due to the presence of members of Portuguese descent. This member goes on to describe how the internal diversity of the CHC—reflecting the diversity within the Latinx community as a whole—came out in subtle ways, such as how individuals spoke Spanish. According to this member,

> "…my Spanish was horrible, I'm embarrassed to say—but those members who were totally bilingual, the Spanish of Nydia Velázquez was markedly different from the Spanish of Solomon Ortiz. The Spanish of Bob Menendez from New Jersey was markedly different from even Nydia Velázquez…And there was a difference between Solomon Ortiz or Silvestre Reyes from Texas. So you know, that's a big challenge even today—the diversity within the Latino community"[43]

[42] Representative A, personal interview.
[43] Representative A, personal interview.

Relying on Spanish-speaking ability, then, would result in a coalition that did not adequately account for a factor that significantly divides the Latinx community (García Bedolla 2003). Even this member, who is of Mexican American descent, could have been excluded from the CHC on the basis of their Spanish being "horrible," diminishing the representativeness of the CHC and its conception of *Latinidad*. The differences between Nydia Velázquez and Bob Menendez are also important to note, as Velázquez is Puerto Rican and Menendez is Cuban. How could the CHC hope to represent Latinxs if it relied on a definition of Latinx identity that considers Puerto Ricans and Cubans in similar terms even though they are markedly different not just culturally or in terms of historical experiences, but also how they speak Spanish?

The fact that Representative A is aware of these nuances, combined with the CHC's bylaws not explicitly defining Latinx identity in terms of language, points to the CHC as a whole being aware of these complexities both within the Caucus itself and among Latinx constituents living throughout the United States. In other interviews no other member or staffer considered membership in the Caucus, or access to representation via the Caucus and its activities, as conditioned on the ability to adequately speak Spanish. Multiple references are made to national origin, gender, and age, pointing to a conceptualization of *Latinidad* by the CHC that is more complicated and more cognizant of the intersectionality of Latinx experiences in the U.S.

Intersectionality and Latinidad

What does it look like for the CHC to foreground intersectionality in how it defines its own membership and *Latinidad*, though? As Representative A mentioned earlier, relying on some other factor beyond language was crucial for the CHC as only drawing on language could theoretically disqualify certain members from CHC membership, or perhaps create conflict among those who spoke a different type of Spanish than others. Consequently, as hinted at in the discussion within the CHC on the OMB definition of Hispanic, self-identification plays a significant role in shaping how the CHC thinks of *Latinidad* both for its members—and the coalition of which they are members—and its constituents, i.e. the Latinx community.

This is so because, as a whole, the CHC is aware of the intersectional nature of Latinx identity—being Latinx is affected by other identities, such as national origin, gender, and race.[44] This is captured in interviews when members refer to "diversity within diversity" within the Caucus.[45] Reference is also made to an increased diversification of the CHC over time. This development is especially appreciated as the CHC is, in the view of one member, a group "that's usually clamoring for diversification"[46] both internally and within American politics and society more broadly speaking. This diversification has a direct impact on the CHC's ability to realize its representational goal, for Representative D, because the continued growth of the Caucus

[44] In this particular context, race is largely characterized by differences in skin color. For many who identify racially as Latino/a/x, Hispanic, or with their country of origin, differences in skin color do not hold the same significance as they do in the US. However, they are confronted with American conceptions of race when they are in the US, and must attempt to reconcile this with their own personal views of race despite those racial identities ascribed to them by others.

[45] Representative A, personal interview.

[46] Representative D, personal interview.

ensures that "there will be more people from different parts of the country with different understandings to bring to the Caucus."[47]

In a specific sense, this comment reflects an awareness of the effect of geography on *Latinidad*—being from or living in a different part of the U.S. shapes one's experiences and preferences in a meaningful way. Geography also affects the legislative approaches of individual CHC members. According to Staffer G, members from New York or California tend to be more liberal and activist than members from Texas, who tend to be more ideologically moderate and prefer a more traditional approach to policy-making[48]. For example, more moderate members such as Henry Cuellar (D-TX)—who represents a district close to the U.S.-Mexico border—have proven more likely to vote for incremental immigration reform measures that fall short of granting legal status to all undocumented immigrants while also increasing funding for border security measures; more liberal members like Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL) frequently vote against these same measures, owing to their belief that this incremental approach perpetually kicks the promise of citizenship or permanent resident status further down the road. Other non-geographic instances of disagreement within the CHC include divides among Puerto Rican members on whether Puerto Rico should remain a commonwealth or become a state. At one point, Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)—the CHC Chair—and Gutiérrez both opposed legislation that would mandate a vote in Puerto Rico on the island's status. Pedro Pierluisi (D-PR), the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, sponsored the

[47] Representative D, personal interview.
[48] Staffer G, personal interview.

legislation and giving the residents of Puerto Rico the chance to vote on their future (Sherman 2010).[49]

Thus, the CHC must attempt to craft policies and positions that successfully balance these competing ideologies within its ranks. The CHC signaled a commitment to balancing these competing motives and preferences in a meeting held on March 4, 1993. At this meeting, the CHC met with President Bill Clinton's Chief of Staff, Mack McLarty. While McLarty used this opportunity to try and get the CHC to commit to supporting Clinton's proposed economic package in the House, the CHC had a different goal. After Chair José Serrano (D-NY) informed McLarty of the diversity of the CHC, members "requested more sensitivity to communities' diversity in the appointments of government officials; more flexibility on immigration procedures" and "sensitivity to the territories' needs and the inequities in service to these areas."[50] What we see here is an instance of the CHC using its position and its ability to hold meetings with powerful members of the presidential administration to not only inform those individuals of the diversity within the CHC and the Latinx community, but also to request more awareness of this diversity in executive decision-making processes. Serrano did not have to mention the diversity of the CHC's membership, and the members did not have to refer to communities in the plural when speaking with McLarty; these choices reflect a conscious

[49] Given this internal divide on the issue, the CHC as a whole did not formally take a position on H.R. 2499, the Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2010. The bill passed the House with 18 CHC members voting yes, Gutiérrez and Velázquez voting no, and Silvestre Reyes (D-TX) and Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX) not voting.

[50] CHC Meeting Minutes for March 4, 1993. Records of the CHC, Official Memorandums 1985-1992, Box 3, Folder 5.

effort on the part of the CHC to treat *Latinidad* as diverse and multifaceted, rather than homogenous and monolithic.

Aside from this general focus on diversity within the Latinx community, the CHC has most often concerned itself with acknowledging the various ways in which national origin intersects with the Caucus's notion of *Latinidad*. Many Latinxs identify with their country of origin, rather than Latino/a/x or Hispanic, and think of this as their primary identity. Many of the differences in Latinx preferences and politics discussed earlier in this chapter arise from differences in national origin. In part, this is because Latinxs from different countries have divergent experiences within American society and politics. Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans are the largest Latinx national origin groups in the US, and they all think differently about politics. In the interviews Representative F—as well as Representative A and Staffer E—demonstrated an awareness of the historical rootedness of these differences between national origin groups:

> "Well yeah, sure, there were some differences and they are differences because each one of us has a different history—as Mexican Americans…if you tell my wife when she came over she will get all over you and tell you that literally the river crossed us, we didn't cross the river. And so Mexican Americans have a different perspective because, in all honesty, we were conquered and defeated, and that changed everything there in terms of treatment."[51]

But what Representative F also speaks to are the benefits of having these diverse experiences represented within the Latinx community. While Mexicans and Cubans, for example, might differ on significant policy issues such as immigration, according to Representative F "[Mexican Americans] benefited tremendously when the Cubans came over because a lot of the bilingual stuff wouldn't have come about but because it was

[51] Representative F, personal interview.

meeting the needs of the Cubans"[52] those bilingual education programs were treated more favorably and ultimately received federal funding. If not for the CHC's recognition of these complexities, and its willingness to represent Mexicans and Cubans equally despite the significant Mexican influence among CHC membership over time (see Chapter 2), perhaps bilingual education programs would not have received the federal support they did, ultimately harming a significant legislative priority of the CHC and its constituents.

Perhaps because the CHC was aware of the implications of not paying sufficient attention to national origin diversity both internally and within *Latinidad*, the coalition was active in ensuring legal recognition of and protection against discrimination on the basis of national origin. An internal memo sent from the CHC's Executive Director, Rick López, to a staffer of the House Judiciary Committee referenced a colloquy that took place on the floor of the House between CHC Chair Solomon Ortiz (D-TX) and Rep. Jack Brooks (D-TX), who at the time was Chair of the House Judiciary Committee. The colloquy centered on H.R. 1, Civil Rights and Women's Equity in Employment Act of 1991—sponsored by Brooks—and the bill's effect on the Supreme Court's decision in *Saint Francis College v. Al-Khazraji*. In *Saint Francis*, the Court ruled that discrimination protections in Section 1981 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 extended to ancestry and ethnic origin; Ortiz and the CHC were concerned, though, that the proposed wording of Section 102 of H.R. 1 would nullify that ruling. Ortiz explicitly asked Brooks if national origin should be afforded the same protection against discrimination as ancestry or ethnic origin—Brooks agreed, stating that Section 1981

[52] Representative F, personal interview.

extended to discrimination based on national origin and that this application was not changed by H.R. 1. Rather than focusing broadly on Hispanic or Latinx ancestry, Ortiz chose to explicitly discuss the effects of this legislation on national origin, using his position as Chair to signal the CHC's commitment to coalitional representation and a notion of *Latinidad* that holds onto, rather than ignores, the nuances introduced because of national origin diversity.[53]

A third example of the CHC's attention to and incorporation of national origin diversity in its approach to representing the Latinx community occurred in April of 1993. At their regular meeting, the CHC's members were discussing the recent Supreme Court vacancy after Justice Byron White's retirement announcement. At issue for the CHC was whether to endorse the list of potential Latinx nominees created by the National Hispanic Bar Association. For Cuban Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart (R-FL), it was highly important that the process of creating a list of potential Latinx Supreme Court nominees be "a comprehensive one including the full participation of the three major groups within the U.S. Hispanic community: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans." Díaz-Balart also stated that he would not support any process or list that did not include at least one Cuban American candidate. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM) echoed this view, prompting what the minutes refer to as a "dynamic discussion" among the members on how to approach the issue. As a solution, the CHC agreed to commend the work of the National Hispanic Bar Association on creating its list and to endorse the concept of a Hispanic candidate for the Supreme Court but not the list created by the Association. The

[53] Memo to House Judiciary Committee Re: Colloquy on National Origin, November 5, 1991. Records of the CHC, Official Memorandums 1985-1992, Box 3, Folder 1.

latter part of the solution arose from Díaz-Balart's concerns, as well as Rep. Kika de la Garza (D-TX) stating his reservations about the CHC endorsing a list based on outside research with no input from the CHC or its members.[54] Not only did this discussion demonstrate the bipartisan nature of the CHC's brand of coalitional representation, it also clearly demonstrated the awareness of the CHC's members to the need to represent Latinxs from all national origins equally and meaningfully. Endorsing the National Hispanic Bar Association's list—with its lack of a potential Cuban American nominee—was an easy option that still would have fulfilled the CHC's goal of pushing for increased Latinx representation broadly speaking. However, the CHC chose to take a more difficult route, endorsing the concept of having a Latinx Supreme Court nominee while calling for a process that would give fair consideration to potential nominees of Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican origin.[55]

While national origin receives the bulk of the CHC's attention when it comes to crafting an intersectional notion of *Latinidad* for the coalition and its constituents, there is also a clear commitment to recognizing the role of gender diversity within the Caucus and the Latinx community. A clear example of this comes from a CHC meeting held in November of 1994. In Chapter 2, we saw the CHC had no Latina members until 1989 with the election of Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL). She was the only Latina both in the

[54] CHC Meeting Minutes for April 1, 1993. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 3, Folder 1.

[55] Of course, this does not speak to the CHC's awareness of Latinxs from Central or South American countries, and their representation within American politics. This owes in part to the lack of members from those countries serving in Congress. In recent years, though, there are CHC members who trace their national origin to the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. Based on the behavior of the CHC in the early 1990's, it is not unreasonable to think that these members have been able to push the CHC to broaden its focus from the three major Latinx national origin groups to *all* Latinx national origin groups, regardless of size or influence.

Caucus and in Congress until the famous "year of the woman" in 1992, which saw both Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) elected to the House.

Ros-Lehtinen briefly served as Secretary-Treasurer—the 3rd highest position in the CHC's leadership, behind the Chair and the Vice Chair—for the Caucus during the 102nd Congress (1991-1992); however she stepped down from the position before her term expired, meaning there was no Latina serving in the CHC's leadership for the remainder of the 102nd Congress. There also was not a Latina among the CHC's leadership team in the 103rd Congress, despite the steadily growing number of women in Congress, and the increasing influence of women on American politics. In November of 1994, the CHC was discussing nominations for leadership positions for the 104th Congress, set to begin in January of 1995. At this meeting Bill Richardson (D-NM), a former Chair of the CHC, remarked on the necessity of nominating a Latina for a leadership position within the CHC, specifically the position of Secretary-Treasurer. At this same meeting, Roybal-Allard contended that the Secretary-Treasurer position was obsolete, and that the CHC should reorganize the leadership structure. Roybal-Allard proposed a structure with a First and Second Vice Chair, both ranked below the Chair and sharing the old duties of the Secretary-Treasurer, but with both positions more equal in nature than Secretary-Treasurer had been relative to Vice Chair in the old structure. The rest of the CHC agreed to Roybal-Allard's proposal, and voted to amend the bylaws and institute this new leadership structure.[56]

[56] CHC Meeting Minutes for November 30, 1994. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.

Following the amendment to the bylaws, Roybal-Allard was nominated and unanimously elected to the position of Second Vice Chair, making her the first Latina in the CHC's leadership in nearly two years. This development also signaled a stronger commitment on the part of the CHC to internally empowering Latina members. As mentioned in Chapter 2, five Latinas have served as Chair of the CHC in the last ten sessions of Congress, beginning with Roybal-Allard in the 106th Congress. This is in part because the new leadership structure adopted in November of 1994 has created an informal line of succession—typically, the First Vice Chair will ascend to the role of Chair, and the Second Vice Chair will become First Vice Chair with the expectation that they too will become Chair in the future if they so desire. This is especially important as the number of Latinas in the CHC continues to grow—in the 116th Congress (2019-2020), Latinas account for one third of CHC members[57], compared to a paltry 7% in the 101st Congress (1989-1990).

When it comes to race and its intersection with *Latinidad*, there are differing perspectives within the Caucus. For some CHC members, *Latinidad* reflects an ethnic rather than a racial identity. Representative A, for example, stated that

> "[Mexican Americans] weren't a race so it wasn't as African Americans were distinctly another race and identified as such, [Mexican Americans] were an ethnic group that...basically suffered the same type of prejudice and discrimination that Blacks did."[58]

[57] Latina members also account for some of the increase in national origin diversity in the CHC: Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL) is the first member of Ecuadorean descent, while Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA) is of Guatemalan descent.
[58] Representative A, personal interview.

For members who share this view, more emphasis is placed on national origin diversity and how this shapes *Latinidad*, affecting how the CHC defines both the terms of its coalition and its core constituency.

However, this is not the only perspective in the CHC. For Representative E, *Latinidad* is itself a racial identity that transcends the typical marker of racial identity in the United States, skin color:

> "I mean we were Hispanics and that included Cubans, it included Mexican Americans and even Blacks were included because there were some Blacks from Cuba and other parts of South America that they didn't consider themselves Black, they considered themselves Hispanics. SO the Hispanic Caucus covered all of them, regardless of where you're from the Caucus was very interested in your needs, to see if we could resolve them."[59]

In many Central and South American countries, as well as Caribbean nations such as the Dominican Republic, race is not defined by skin color as it is in the U.S. For example, darker-skinned people from the Dominican Republic might always identify themselves as Dominican, or perhaps Latino/a/x or Latin American, but not as Black. However, upon arrival in the U.S. they are identified as Black or African American because of their skin color, regardless of their own self-identification. Representative E's statement indicates awareness of this issue within *Latinidad*, and the importance of the CHC being willing to represent people of Latinx origins who might not speak Spanish or "look Latinx." Even though these experiences of misidentification are typically negative, they add even more nuance to the intersectionality of *Latinidad* to which the CHC must pay attention when crafting its policies and pursuing legislation in the House.

[59] Representative E, personal interview.

What is again important here is the emphasis on self-identification, though it is once again conditioned on national origin. While CHC members in the past appeared to limit *Latinidad* to those who speak Spanish, they are ultimately willing to represent anyone who identifies as Latinx or Hispanic as long as they trace their ancestry to a Spanish-speaking country or a country with a close linguistic relationship to Spanish, as in the decision to admit legislators with Portuguese or Chamorro heritage as full members. The CHC also attempts to set boundaries on *Latinidad* in a more partisan sense, limiting members to those who share the CHC's stated position on key issue areas such as immigration. Thus, even if a legislator self-identifies as Latinx and has the appropriate ancestry, they are not guaranteed membership in the CHC. A clear example of this is former Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and his attempt to join the CHC in 2017. A majority of CHC members voted against Curbelo's request—despite his Cuban heritage and self-identification as Latino—largely because of the perception that his political beliefs did not line up with the interests of the Latinx community as defined by the CHC. This included Curbelo's refusal to sign on as a cosponsor of the DREAM Act in the House, signaling to many CHC members his unwillingness to support the immigration priorities deemed by the CHC to be vital to the Latinx community (Caygle 2017).[60] Regardless, the core idea remains: the Latinx community is, in the eyes of the CHC, a diverse community that encompasses the intersections of many different identities. The goal of the Caucus, then, is to represent anyone and everyone who identifies with

[60] This does, of course, raise questions about whether the CHC's determination of the "Latinx position" on immigration, and other issues, is an accurate reflection of the preferences of Latinxs or simply a reflection of the extent to which partisan polarization influences how the CHC defines and characterizes Latinx interests.

Latinidad, loosely defined, even as doing so fundamentally alters the CHC itself. In the words of Representative D:

> "We now have more women in the Caucus, we have people from different parts of the country that we didn't have before, we have more members in general, we have more veterans in general than we've had before, we have more people who are professionals…So there's a lot of different experience that people bring to the Caucus, personal experiences, and this has been very good, and in that sense the Caucus has changed dramatically."[61]

Latinidad **and Representation**

Latinidad is complex—Latinx identity intersects with various other identities, including national origin and gender, in meaningful ways. These intersections are not lost on the CHC. For both its members and its constituents, *Latinidad* is not limited only to those who speak Spanish. Latinxs are anyone who self-identifies as such, with the caveat that their national origin or ancestry must be linked to a Spanish-speaking country or a country with a language closely related to Spanish.[62] In leaving its definition of *Latinidad* intentionally vague and fluid, the CHC ensures that all individuals who identify as Latinx both feel heard and represented by the group even though the distinct preferences of Latinx individuals and groups may be at odds with each other. This is reflected in the CHC's recognition of significant differences based on national origin and gender in the

[61] Representative D, personal interview.

[62] In the cases of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, the relationship between Chamorro and Spanish is itself the product of Spanish colonization of the islands.

Caucus's position on judicial nominees[63] and in leadership structure,[64] as well as the CHC's active attempts to work with rather than against these intersections.

Why, then, does the CHC make statements and issue press releases that do not highlight the varied experiences and preferences of Latinxs, opting instead to refer to the broad, panethnic "Latinx community"? As mentioned earlier, despite its awareness of and attention to intersectionality within the Latinx community, the CHC is similar to the stakeholders described by Mora (2014) and acts strategically in its usage of panethnicity. Were the CHC to explicitly tie a policy or position to a specific subgroup within the Latinx community, opponents would use the opportunity to label the issue as too particularistic and undeserving of sustained legislative or political focus. Or, opponents might take the opportunity to stoke tensions between Latinx subgroups and heighten the perception that they are competing for representation and resources in a two-tiered system that works to disadvantage racial minority groups (Hero 1992). The decision to publicly use the language of panethnicity is thus strategic, as shown earlier in the discussion of bilingual education, but also implied in the discussion of the April 1993 meeting regarding nominating a Latinx to replace Byron White on the Supreme Court. While the other members of the CHC agreed with Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart that the process of identifying potential nominees ought to include all national origin groups and produce an inclusive list, the CHC would likely have presented its choices as simply good Latinx nominees rather than good Mexican American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban

[63] CHC Meeting Minutes for April 1, 1993. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 3, Folder 1.
[64] CHC Meeting Minutes for November 30, 1994. Records of the CHC, Administrative Files 1985-1993, Box 1, Folder 2.

American nominees. In fact, this was the case in a letter the CHC sent to President Clinton prior to that April meeting, urging him to nominate a Hispanic to replace Justice White without reference to national origin or any other kind of diversity within the Latinx community.[65]

This has significant implications for Latinx representation in Congress. According to Representative A, there is strength in numbers rather than individuals in Congress[66]—but how do you ensure that those numbers accurately reflect the entire constituency you represent? Both for its members and its constituency, i.e. the Latinx community, the CHC defines *Latinidad* broadly and with some deference to individuals' self-identification. The CHC is also active in its attempts to recognize the diversity and intersectionality within the community, whether in discussing what it means to be Latinx and a member of the CHC, diversifying the leadership of the CHC, or explicitly highlighting diversity in policy decisions or endorsements for executive appointments, among other things. The difference here between the coalition and the individual goes back to what Representative A said—there is strength in numbers. An individual legislator surely can push other members of the House and Congress as a whole to be more attentive to diversity, and to pay attention to intersectionality within their own communities. However, this does not guarantee that legislation will reflect this awareness. As a coalition, the CHC not only allows its members to actively explore what being Latinx means for themselves and by extension, their own communities—whether this means congressional districts, gender

[65] Letter to President Bill Clinton, March 23, 1992. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 3, Folder 1.
[66] Representative A, personal interview.

groups, national origin group, or something else—it also allows the members to leverage their collective influence and power in a more meaningful way, namely pushing legislation that benefits multiple groups within the Latinx community instead of focusing on those groups within the community that are more sizable and thus perceived by some to be more important.

But what does this look like in practice? In a press release from January 27, 1983, the CHC announced that Rep. Robert García (D-NY) was unanimously reelected as Chair of the CHC. In his remarks, García highlighted the necessity of a CHC agenda that reflected the needs of "our community". He also stated, though, that members each represented their "own communities,"[67] implying that the broad community represented by the CHC was in fact comprised of several smaller communities. The challenge faced by the CHC in 1983, and today, was to craft a legislative agenda that appealed to all of these communities.

García specifically mentioned health, education, housing, and employment issues as especially important, but did not explain why he and the rest of the CHC believed these to be the core issue areas that demanded attention within the Latinx community. Also unclear from García's statements was precisely which groups within the Latinx community would benefit the most from a focus on these issues—would health or education policies equally affect Mexican Americans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans? What about younger versus older Latinxs, new immigrants or citizens, men or women? In short, we are left wondering how exactly the CHC is able to construct a legislative agenda that

[67] Press Release, "Garcia Re-Elected Chairman," January 27, 1983. Records of the CHC, History Files of the CHC 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 3.

attempts to balance the wide range of interests that are encompassed within the coalition that is the CHC precisely because of its decision to define *Latinidad* broadly, and how well the CHC is able to wield its collective power to get this agenda accepted by other members of the House and effectively implement its policy goals from year to year. I address these questions and discuss the diversity of the CHC's legislative agenda alongside its influence on Democratic priorities in the House as well as the overall effectiveness of the CHC, in the next two chapters.

4| The CHC and Agenda-Setting in the House

In October of 1983, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill (D-MA) pulled the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1983 (H.R. 1510) from the House floor schedule and shelved it for the remainder of the 98th Congress. Speaker O'Neill's decision to remove a bill scheduled for debate from the congressional agenda was somewhat uncommon, illustrating the influence of the CHC on immigration policy. In O'Neill's words, he pulled the bill because "he could find 'no constituency' in favor of it" (Cohodas 1983). This is surprising, given that the bill was sponsored and championed by Democrats, most notably Rep. Romano Mazzoli of Kentucky and Rep. Peter Rodino, Jr. of New Jersey. Why, then, did the Speaker remark that he could find no constituency in favor of passing the legislation, especially when a related bill—S. 529—had already passed the Senate months prior? O'Neill indicated that his decision was driven by the vocal opposition to H.R. 1510 by members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. In fact, CHC Chair Rep. Robert García (D-NY) considered O'Neill's decision to pull H.R. 1510 to be "the first victory we've had as a cohesive body" (Cohodas 1983).

Although the Immigration Reform and Control act ultimately passed the House and Senate and was signed into law by President Reagan in the 99th Congress, O'Neill's decision to act on the concerns of the Caucus in the 98th Congress raises significant questions not only about the role of the Hispanic Caucus in shaping the legislative agenda of the Democratic Party in the House—both its priorities and positions—but also about the extent to which the CHC's own legislative agenda represents the significant diversity

within the Latinx community (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). In this chapter I analyze the substantive content of the CHC's legislative agendas from 1977 to 2016 in order to assess the diversity of the legislation on the agendas from year to year. For this analysis, I rely on systematic analyses of several data sources in order to determine which bills, resolutions, amendments, and broad issue areas were on the CHC's agenda in each session of Congress that the group has existed. Drawing on the Congressional Bills Project, I then examine the substantive diversity of the CHC's agendas from year to year alongside the differences in political perspective among various Latinx subgroups, most notably those defined by national origin. While the CHC may appear to be an organization that broadly homogenizes Latinxs for the sake of political expediency, variation in the content of the CHC's agendas over time indicates an awareness of Latinx diversity that results in legislative agendas that cover a wide variety of issue areas that matter differently to Mexicans or Puerto Ricans or Cubans or Latinxs from other countries, but without sacrificing the coalitional nature of the CHC or its goal of representing all Latinxs.

I also analyze the extent to which the Hispanic Caucus influenced the agenda of the Democratic Caucus—i.e., the bills that the majority party brings to the House floor—from 1977 to 2016. Did the Hispanic Caucus leverage its own legislative agenda, filled with bills and resolutions designed to benefit the Latinx community, in order to help craft a House Democratic Caucus agenda that encompassed the concerns of this specific constituency within the Democratic Caucus? I engage this question here, in an attempt to assess the relationship between the Hispanic Caucus and the House Democratic Caucus as the CHC attempted to enhance the political representation of Latinxs. Using the CHC's

agendas—as identified in the systematic analysis described above—in conjunction with Democratic Caucus agendas for the same time period, I empirically assess the relationship between the two groups' agendas. Just as CHC opposition to H.R. 1510 caused the bill to be removed from the Democratic agenda, I expect that the opposite relationship also holds true and that sufficient CHC support for legislation can get the Democratic leadership to pay similar attention to the legislation. However, I do not find significant evidence that the Caucus agenda spills over onto the Democratic agenda, regardless of whether the Democratic Party is in the majority or minority in the House. This raises questions about the extent to which non-Latinx Democrats actually represent Latinx interests, and highlights the necessity of the CHC's coalitional representation at other stages of the legislative process.

Caucuses and Agenda Politics in Congress

Prior studies on agenda setting in Congress demonstrate the strong influence of political parties and congressional committees. While agenda setting in the House follows a complicated process with some limited opportunities for individual members to attempt to insert their own preferences on to the agenda, the final impact of these individuals is often considered miniscule compared to the influences of political parties and party leadership. In the House, the majority party typically constructs a legislative agenda with many items designed to realizing that party's political and policy goals and that will attract 218 majority party votes (e.g., Rohde 1991). The minority party has few opportunities to meaningfully obstruct the implementation of the majority party's agenda if it has the support of 218 majority party members.

Cox and McCubbins (2005; 2007) theorize House political parties as legislative cartels, where the majority has an advantage at every stage of the legislative process. The majority party is careful to balance its usage of positive and negative agenda powers depending on the political context. When the majority party is fairly homogeneous, the majority will tilt the balance toward positive agenda power—bills introduced in such conditions are likely to be supported by a majority of the majority and have high chances of passing the House. The majority party is cautious though when it is more heterogeneous, as rank-and-file members who deviate from the preferred position of party leaders may use positive agenda power to introduce legislation unfavorable to the majority of the party. In this scenario, the majority party will rely more on negative agenda powers in order to block bills that would divide the majority party and hurt its reputation.[68]

The exercise of positive or negative agenda power by party leaders, though, is not the only method of influencing the agenda in the House. Committees can and do play a significant role in the agenda setting process by acting as gatekeepers that control access to the agenda and the rest of the legislative process (Shepsle and Weingast 1987). Committees promote a "specialization of production that can result in higher-quality policy responses at lower cost" (Adler and Wilkerson 2012, 64). That is, committee members can craft compulsory legislation that they prefer and which falls within the committee's jurisdiction, and then push that legislation on to the House agenda because

[68] It is important to note here that party leaders in the House were not always so powerful. Prior to a series of reforms instituted between 1970 and 1977, committee chairs wielded considerable power and shaped the day-to-day operations of the House (Rohde 1991).

of the deference afforded to committees in this system of specialized production.[69] Even today, when party leaders in the post-reform House wield significant control over the agenda, committees still play an important role by winnowing out bills that the committee decides do not deserve the committee's attention (Krutz 2005). While Krutz finds that the intensity of a bill sponsor's efforts to push their bill through a committee plays a significant role in shaping the outcomes of the winnowing process, this does not take away from the overall power of committees to determine which bills will get the chance to be debated on the floor of the House[70].

Congressional Caucuses and the Agenda

If the agenda-setting process in the House is so tightly controlled by parties, party leaders, and congressional committees, then what room is left for member organizations to assert themselves with respect to the agenda? Consideration of the role played by congressional member organizations, i.e. congressional caucuses, sheds light on unique organizations that provide members with an alternative means to access and influence the legislative agenda. Caucuses provide members of Congress with an opportunity to influence the legislative agenda even if those members represent a minority faction within the majority party, insofar as caucuses function as collective entities that have more relative power than individual members of Congress, especially considering that

[69] For a differing perspective on committees that highlights their informational role in Congress, see Krehbiel (1991).

[70] Rank-and-file members use discharge petitions, which force bills out of committees without a formal committee vote, as a check on the agenda powers of committee chairs and party leaders (Crombez, Groseclose, and Krehbiel 2006; see also Pearson and Schickler 2009). The CHC, however, does not have a history of utilizing discharge petitions in its representational efforts.

caucuses can leverage the threat of withholding votes in order to see their own agenda priorities realized. Many different caucuses exist in the House, and each caucus has a unique basis for its membership. Some caucuses are based on partisan identity, while others are based on regional concerns, or the caucuses draw in members who share a concern with a particular issue area. Indeed, caucuses provide members of Congress with a unique opportunity to signal to a wide variety of constituents the members' attention to issues that are not always captured in campaigns or roll call votes (Miler 2010).

When it comes to congressional agenda setting, though, not all types of caucuses have the same goals or utilize the same methods. According to Hammond et al. (1985), different types of caucuses choose to focus on either agenda setting—getting issues and bills the caucuses care about on the agenda—or agenda maintenance—keeping the issues important to the caucuses salient in the eyes of both Congress and the mass public. National constituency caucuses, e.g. the Congressional Hispanic Caucus or the Congressional Black Caucus, engage in both agenda setting and agenda maintenance. Both groups focus on "increasing saliency among the mass and attentive publics and among congressional and administrative decision-makers" (594). These efforts are bolstered by the fact that, because these are national constituency caucuses and are thus presumed to speak for the entirety of the national constituency in question, the CBC and the CHC and their members "often serve as spokespersons for their national constituencies, and they are considered so by the national media" (595). Such perceptions by the media help cement the status of national constituency caucuses in the eyes of the public, and facilitate success for these groups in getting issues on both public and governmental agendas, i.e. making issues salient and getting them attention in Congress.

Ultimately, Hammond et al. conclude, caucuses are generally successful when they engage in both agenda setting—actually putting items on agendas—and agenda maintenance—keeping salient those issues that are already on agendas (584). As such, caucuses are able to wield a significant amount of agenda influence in Congress (603).

Hammond (1991) also argues that, at the time, the influence of caucuses was further bolstered by the decentralized nature of Congress. In her view, the decentralization of Congress contributed to a scenario where congressional leaders were expected to pay more attention to the demands of individuals and groups within Congress. Even as Congress today is increasingly centralized in the hands of party leaders, caucuses—especially national constituency caucuses—help crystallize these individual and group demands, serving an informational function that is critical to party leadership in its efforts to be as responsive as possible to the demands of the rank and file within Congress. Indeed, as Hammond puts it, caucuses "supplement leadership functions through information activities and by identifying and training future leaders" (293), raising the prospect of future leaders who are already aware of the demands of caucuses and who in fact are committed to realizing the goals of caucuses through legislative activities.

Hammond's view is complicated, though, by later developments in Congress, most notably the ban on Legislative Service Organizations (LSOs) implemented by Newt Gingrich and Republicans in the 104th Congress. Gingrich's move barred LSOs from receiving congressional funding, staff, and office space, attempting to shut caucuses out of the proceedings of the House both formally and informally. The effects of this measure continue to be seen today even as groups such as the CHC and the CBC have continued

to exist in the face of Gingrich's ban—both groups reorganized as Congressional Member Organizations (CMOs) and altered their staffing and funding structures to be in compliance with House rules. Despite these changes—including significant reductions in the CHC's operating budget and staff—the CHC has continued to focus on representing Latinx interests in Congress through its members' legislative activities and through agenda setting within the Democratic Caucus. While there are certainly complications arising from the claim that the CHC represents all Latinx interests, it is difficult to argue against the claim that the CHC is a coalitional entity comprising Latinx legislators who try to work together on issues that are considered critical among the Latinx population such as bilingual education, higher education access, and immigration (Rodriguez 2002; Wilson 2017). Rodriguez offers a broad account of various Latinx political coalitions—including the CHC but also Latinx interest groups such as the National Council of La Raza—and their efforts to empower Latinxs. Rodriguez presents the CHC as a coalition, though his account does not examine the tangible effects of the CHC on aspects of the legislative process such as agenda setting. Wilson's study of the inclusion and incorporation of Latinxs and their interests in Congress digs a bit deeper, providing anecdotal evidence of the CHC pushing the Democratic Party toward the CHC's position on immigration issues.

Despite the claims made by Hammond et al., Hammond, and Rodriguez, there is still little empirical evidence showing the specific influence that the CHC is able to exert on the legislative agenda of the Democratic Party or the general legislative agenda of the House of Representatives as a whole. Power in Congress is more centralized now than it was in the early 1990's, and the role of congressional caucuses was fundamentally altered

by the restrictions placed upon LSOs in the 104th Congress. Some accounts do demonstrate the possibility that the CHC can affect the Democratic agenda on key Latinx issues such as immigration (Wilson 2017). However, Wilson's account is comprised of a case study of CHC efforts on immigration with no investigation of how those efforts empirically affect the agenda setting of the Democratic Party. There is also no investigation here of the collective efforts of the CHC on other issue areas that are traditionally of interest to the Latinx population, including bilingual education, access to higher education, minority business promotion, health care, and employment discrimination.

Other research demonstrates the power of intraparty organizations such as the Democratic Study Group, the Republican Study Committee, and the House Freedom Caucus to influence the congressional agenda even when these groups are minority factions within their respective political parties (Bloch Rubin 2017). According to Bloch Rubin, intraparty organizations "empower legislators of varying ideological stripes to achieve collective and coordinated action by providing selective incentives to cooperative members…and instituting rules and procedures to promote group decision making" (4). What is unclear is where groups such as the CHC fit into Bloch Rubin's theorization of the power of intraparty organizations: the CHC is technically a bipartisan *inter*party organization, and the basis of its formation was not strong disagreement with the direction of one of the political parties but rather a desire to do more for Latinxs *alongside* members' broader work within Congress. Nevertheless, Bloch Rubin's findings demonstrate the ability of factions within the House to significantly affect the

legislative agenda despite the strong efforts made by party leaders to keep control over the agenda to themselves.

Legislative Agendas of the CHC

The legislative agendas of the CHC are important to analyze because they provide information on what issues the Caucus determines to be of the utmost importance, and they illuminate how Caucus members think about the Latinx community and its interests. The Latinx community has a high degree of internal diversity—based on national origin, age, immigration status, and level of acculturation—and also lacks a strong unifying experience that provides all Latinxs with the same social or political experience in the United States. Contrast this to the Congressional Black Caucus, which embodies a continued commitment to the civil rights movement that has shaped the social and political experiences of all African Americans living in the United States for over five decades (Barnett 1975; Singh 1998; Pinney and Serra 1999). Latinxs have not experienced an event or era that equally affects all Latinxs in the same way—during the fights for inclusion and over assimilation in the 1950s and 1960s, members of different Latinx ethnicities had their own viewpoints rather than a unified approach. Mexicans living in the southwestern United States were treated differently than Puerto Ricans living in the northeast, and Cubans fleeing the Castro regime were themselves treated differently than either Mexicans or Puerto Ricans. There are also marked differences within each ethnic group that make it difficult to argue that all Latinxs view politics in the same way (Gutiérrez 1995; Beltrán 2010; Fraga et al. 2010).

This is not to say that it is impossible for there to be an issue area that equally affects all Latinxs. Immigration issues, while primarily affecting Mexicans and Latinxs from Central and South America, have over time come to affect Latinxs from Puerto Rico and Cuba as well. This is not because of a change in status—Puerto Rico is still a US territory, meaning people born in Puerto Rico are legally US citizens, while Cubans fleeing communism are still welcomed with (relatively) open arms—but because of the increased racialization of ethnicity. While the languages used to define race and ethnicity are considered different, their utility is still the same—to mark and exclude certain groups from American citizenship and whiteness (Hattam 2007). Thus, while Puerto Ricans and Cubans have different experiences and interests with regard to immigration issues than Mexicans or Central or South Americans, to be Puerto Rican or Cuban today is considered analogous to being Mexican or Central or South American because members of these groups are racialized in the same way. This development is not lost on members of the CHC—in the words of one member, with regard to immigration Cubans "were treated very differently but now are starting to be treated just the same, getting kicked out the way that Mexicans do."[71]

Does the Caucus's legislative agenda reflect these developments, though? It is one thing for a member of the Caucus to acknowledge that the dynamics surrounding issues such as immigration have changed and affect members of Latinx ethnic groups in different ways. It is another thing to say that the Caucus incorporates this understanding into its efforts at coalitional representation. To determine which scenario is the case,

[71] Representative F, personal interview. See also Molina 2014.

though, it is important to first understand the various factors that go into the construction of the CHC's agenda.

For the most part, the CHC's agenda is constructed in response to input from members on what issues they want to focus on in a given session of Congress. According to one congressional staffer, the Caucus treats as more important those issues that are salient to the Latinx community as a whole, providing the specific examples of immigration, health care, and education. Smaller issues tend to be more district-specific and are brought up by individual members appealing directly to the chair or the executive director of the Caucus to try and get these issues on the agenda.[72] Such an approach is echoed by members of the Caucus:

> "You know obviously members all have some input and you're going to start with how it impacts their local districts; and then we have to, within the Caucus itself we have to start defining what is the greater interest for communities that look like ours."[73]

That said, members suggested there are certain issue areas that are always going to be on the Caucus's agenda because of their lasting importance to the Latinx community:

> "We had maybe three to five major issues that are never going to change and our position on them – the importance of federal assistance on education and things like that, on immigration, health care. And so members that wanted to come into our organization pretty much had to be aligned with those because why would they want to be such a minority voice out of twenty-something?"[74]

Even if a member didn't have a strong stance on immigration, health care, or education, then, it is likely that they still would decide to go along with the Caucus's decision to

---

[72] Staffer A, personal interview.
[73] Representative A, personal interview.
[74] Representative A, personal interview.

prioritize these issues because of the feeling that these are the core issues for Latinxs across sessions of Congress.

Something else intimated in Representative A's comments is a seeming desire among Caucus members to present a united front and speak with one voice on those issues of primary concern to the Caucus. As another member put it, there is a simple reason this happens:

> "Because our plan is to be a voice that you recognize, that someone like you working for a college or a newspaper would say, 'As professor of this college I can tell you, class, that the Hispanic Caucus supports or does not support such and such.' We're divided and we send out a divided message."[75]

Representative D's response here is telling when determining whether the Caucus incorporates concerns of specific Latinx ethnic groups when constructing its own agenda. Given the desire of the Caucus to be seen as a strong coalition that represents Latinx interests, and to not send a divided message, it seems the Caucus may avoid taking up issues that could create disagreements among members. In this regard, the internal agenda setting politics of the CHC closely mirrors that of intraparty organizations, wherein organization leaders play a significant role in "managing the substance and scope of their blocs' ambitions, and balancing members' competing views on policy design and strategy" in order to construct an agenda of stated goals that "may not reflect the primary priorities of all members, but instead those issues on which group members *are least likely to disagree*" (Bloch Rubin 2017, 15, emphasis added). This was further emphasized in other interviews by staffers and members alike, with the common sentiment being that

[75] Representative D, personal interview.

the Caucus avoids taking a clear position on an issue where there is not a clear consensus among Caucus members on what that position should be:

> "There's other issues that I think the Caucus shies away from because there is division among the members about which direction to go – probably the Puerto Rican statehood issue is probably the perfect example of that. Even within the Puerto Rican members of Congress…there is a split among them."[76]

Consequently, the Caucus tends to avoid taking strong positions on the Puerto Rico statehood question or the desirability of the Cuban embargo. According to one staffer though, even with these general division on Puerto Rico or Cuba policy, members would still band together on key issues like immigration reform.[77] Immigration, for example, is often seen as an issue that primarily affects Mexican Americans but Puerto Rican and Cuban members of the Caucus still work together with Mexican American members to realize positive immigration reform.[78] Perhaps the most telling sign of the Caucus's efforts to be cognizant of Latinx diversity while constructing an agenda responsive to all Latinxs' interests comes from a Caucus member explicitly discussing the complex nature of *Latinidad* as a racial identity:

> "I mean we were Hispanics and that included Cubans, it included Mexican Americans and even blacks were included because there were some blacks from Cuba and other parts of South America that they didn't consider themselves black, they considered themselves Hispanics. So the Hispanic Caucus covered all of them, regardless of where you're from the Caucus was very interested in your needs."[79]

Caucus members and staffers, then, appear to be cognizant of the issues of diversity that potentially plague attempts to create a cohesive legislative agenda that represents the

---

[76] Representative C, personal interview.
[77] Staffer C, personal interview.
[78] Representative C, personal interview.
[79] Representative E, personal interview.

interests of all Latinxs across a wide variety of ethnic groups. While members of these ethnic groups have in some ways been racialized such that they are treated the same in American society, there are still marked differences to which the Caucus is attentive when determining what issues to prioritize when working on behalf of a panethnic "Latinx community." What, then, do the resultant legislative agendas actually look like?

Identifying the CHC's Agendas

Identifying the legislative agendas of the CHC over the last forty years is not as simple as searching for a statement from the Caucus in each session of Congress. Rarely does the CHC issue a statement detailing the issue areas and legislation they are going to focus on in a given session of Congress. More often, the CHC may offer a list of issues that it considers important, but the specific legislation is determined by what is introduced in Congress or what issues come up during the session and to which the CHC must react. Thus, identifying legislative agendas requires a systematic analysis of multiple sources that contain information on legislation debated in Congress and the positions taken by various individuals and groups on the legislation.

I systematically analyze five different sources to determine the CHC's legislative agendas going back to 1977. First, I searched the *Congressional Record*, which records all actions on the floors of the House and Senate including speeches, roll call votes, and extensions of remarks. The *Record* is an ideal source because it is available for every year the Caucus has existed and includes all legislation debated on the floor of the House or in committees. I also relied on *CQ Weekly*, which publishes articles and information on various aspects of the legislative process, including positions taken by individual

members of Congress or groups on certain pieces of legislation. For both the *Congressional Record* and *CQ Weekly*, I used the same systematic approach. I conducted targeted searches using the terms "Hispanic Caucus" and "CHC", limiting my results to each individual Congress, and went through each search result to determine if the result included a clear indication of the CHC's position on an issue. I kept track of those items with clear CHC positions in a database that also includes the session of Congress the item was introduced, the date of the *CQ* article or entry in the *Record*, the appropriate citation for those items found in the *Record*, and if applicable the name and number for the bill, resolution, or amendment. For *CQ Weekly*, the searches are conducted in *CQ*'s internal search engine; for the *Congressional Record*, I utilize the ProQuest Congressional database and limit results to those that can be found in both the bound and daily editions of the *Record.*

I also analyzed the press releases issued by the CHC, hosted on the webpage of the current chair of the Caucus. Press releases offer clear insight into the position of the Caucus on an issue, but they are limited in two respects: 1) previous press releases are only available as far back as the 108th Congress, from 2003-2004; and 2) press releases do not capture all instances where the CHC has taken a clear stance on an issue, as not all of the legislation the CHC prioritizes may be considered salient enough to merit inclusion in a press release. I copied and pasted the text of each press release into a single document for each session of Congress and read through each of the press releases to see which ones indicate the CHC's position on an issue, or whether an issue is deemed important by the CHC. I kept track of these results in the same database as results for the

Congressional Record and *CQ Weekly*, logging the same identifying information for each result.

The third source I use for identifying the CHC's legislative agendas is the archived materials of the CHC itself, housed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Over the course of multiple trips to the National Archives, I scanned hundreds of documents from the CHC archive in order to facilitate reading and coding the documents. Like the press releases, the archival materials are limited in that they only cover a short time period within the Caucus's forty years of existence, from 1982-1995.[80] For those years, though, the archival materials are especially helpful. The materials include minutes of CHC meetings and copies of official memorandums sent among CHC members and staff. These minutes and memos include CHC debates over which issues to focus on, as well as what position the CHC ought to take on a given piece of legislation. As with the press releases, I read through the meeting minutes and memos, as well as the attachments to the memos, making note of any clear indication of the CHC's position on an issue. I make note of the date of the archival document in question in the database, and record issues prioritized by the CHC as well as bills, resolutions, or amendments mentioned in the archival documents.

The final source I use to identify the content of the CHC's legislative agendas focuses specifically on bills. First, I identified all bills introduced between the 95th and 114th Congresses that were sponsored by a member of the CHC. For each of these bills, I

[80] Once the CHC became a CMO without a dedicated office space, it became much harder to keep the CHC's records organized as the records moved with the Executive Director (who also often changed from one Congress to the next) to the new Chair's office at the beginning of each session of Congress.

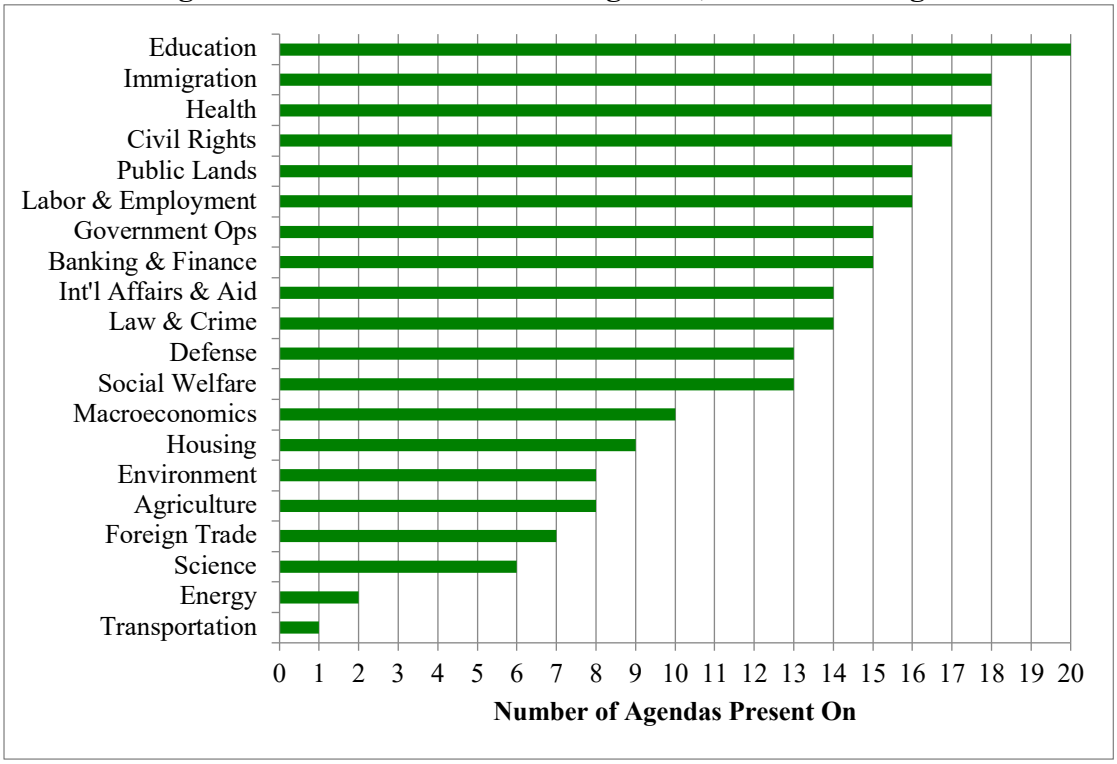
then determined how many other members of the CHC cosponsored each bill. If a CHC member sponsored a bill and the number of cosponsors plus the sponsor equaled a majority of the CHC's membership in the session of Congress that bill was introduced, the bill was considered part of the CHC's agenda for that session of Congress. I used this threshold to control for legislation sponsored by CHC members that does not address broad Latinx interests, e.g. district-focused legislation, that other CHC members might cosponsor due to friendship or a desire for reciprocal cosponsorship on their own district-focused legislation.

After using these sources to identify issue areas, bills, resolutions, and amendments prioritized by the CHC over the years—that is, identifying the CHC's legislative agendas—I code each of the results using the coding scheme of the Congressional Bills Project. Items are coded based on the area in which they have their primary effect, meaning that a bill that mentions immigration but focuses primarily on agricultural subsidies would be coded under agriculture. In cases where the CHC simply makes a statement indicating its commitment to do work in a specific issue area, the coding is straightforward and matches up well with the Congressional Bills codebook. Where the coding becomes tricky is when looking at specific bills, resolutions, and amendments. The Congressional Bills Project only focuses on bills introduced in the House and the Senate and does not include coding for resolutions or amendments. However, there are several cases where the CHC's agenda focuses not on a bill but rather on a specific amendment to a bill, or else to a House, Senate, or joint resolution. In the case of resolutions, I code these based on the Congressional Bills coding scheme and the specific content of the resolution. In the case of amendments, I deviate slightly from the

Congressional Bills coding scheme in that I code the entry primarily based on the area affected by the amendment rather than the bill itself. For example, in the 109th Congress H.R. 3010 dealt with appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education for FY2006. In the sources mentioned above, there is no clear indication of the CHC's position on H.R. 3010 itself. There is, however, an entry in the *Congressional Record* indicating the CHC's support of Senate Amendment 2262—offered by Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)—to increase funding for education programs serving Hispanic students. The Congressional Bills Project would code H.R. 3010 as "government operations," since the bill deals with appropriations for multiple departments. I code this as "education," because the CHC's agenda includes S. Amdt. 2262 and its support for HSI funding.

Over the last forty years, the CHC has included on its agenda items in each of the issue areas covered in the Congressional Bills Project codebook—ranging from macroeconomics to public lands and water management—at least once.

Figure 4.1 Issue Areas on CHC Agendas, 95th-114th Congresses



As shown in Figure 4.1, in twenty sessions of Congress, only two issue areas were included on the CHC agenda in two or fewer sessions—energy and transportation. Some issues are clearly more important than others though. Several issue areas received steady attention: civil rights, health, labor and employment, education, immigration, and public lands and water management appeared on more than 15 out of 20 CHC agendas. Of these, education is the most prevalent issue and was included on the CHC agenda in every session of Congress.[81] The prevalence of education on the CHC agenda comports with prior research that demonstrates the consistent focus of the Latinx community on education—specifically bilingual education issues—over the years (Sanchez 2006;

[81]It is worth noting here that there is relatively little data to identify the CHC's agenda in several sessions of Congress: the 95th, 96th, 97th, and 104th. Systematic analysis returned fewer than five results for each of these sessions.

Uhlaner and Garcia 2002; Uhlaner 1991). The next most common issues focused on by the CHC are health and immigration, which appeared on 18 out of 20 legislative agendas. That immigration is not on the CHC agenda in every session is surprising, as immigration is often seen as a quintessentially Latinx issue. However, immigration's importance to the broader Latinx community is complicated, with evidence that many Latinxs are concerned that too many immigrants are coming to the US while at the same time being highly supportive of recent immigrants (Sanchez 2006; see also de la Garza et al. 1991). When asked about issues that potentially divide the Latinx community in interviews, though, interviewees never mentioned immigration as a possibility; one interviewee even mentioned the willingness of non-Mexicans to work with Mexicans and Mexican Americans on immigration because of the perception that the issue affected all Latinxs in some way.[82]

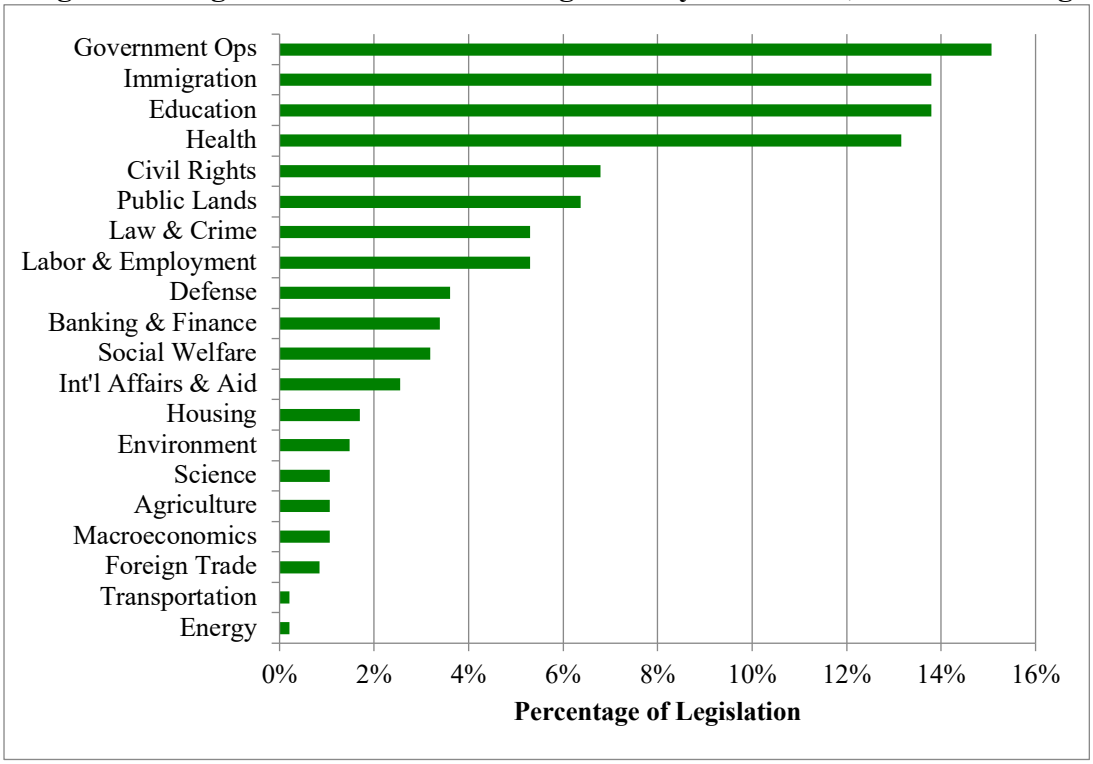
Civil rights is the next most common agenda issue, showing up on 17 agendas. Within this issue area, much of the CHC's focus and resources were dedicated to protecting advances embodied within the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This was manifest in the CHC's efforts in the early 1990s to extend provisions of the VRA that necessitated voting materials and information be available in languages other than English, as well as more recent efforts by the CHC to attempt to influence judicial decisions such as *Shelby County v. Holder*. Labor and employment and public lands and water management each show up on 16 agendas. Both of these categories capture many issues that are important to the CHC, including protecting workers' rights and ensuring equal access to

[82] Representative F, personal interview.

employment for all. The public lands category also encompasses any legislation targeting US territories such as Puerto Rico, which is represented in the CHC by multiple members including but not limited to the Resident Commissioner.

When looking only at legislative items that make it on to the CHC's legislative agenda—i.e. bills, resolutions, and amendments—the core priorities of the CHC become clearer. Looking at all sessions of Congress in which the CHC has existed, the majority of the legislative items on the CHC's agendas comprise four issue areas: health, education, immigration, and government operations. There are some years where the CHC does not prioritize any legislation in some of these issue areas, and there are some years where any one of these issue areas does not account for the majority of legislation prioritized by the CHC. When looking at the entire tenure of the CHC, though, it is clear that these are the issue areas that are most important to the CHC and might be taken to be what the CHC considers to be "Latinx interests."

Figure 4.2 Legislative Items on CHC Agendas by Issue Area, 95th-114th Congress



Within these four issue areas, it most surprising that immigration does not account for the highest proportion of legislation on the CHC's legislative agendas since 1977—that distinction belongs to government operations with 15.07% of all legislation on CHC agendas. There are 65 unique legislative items dealing with immigration on the CHC's agendas, or 13.80% of all legislation prioritized by the CHC. Ten of these items were introduced between the 98th and 101st Congresses, coinciding with the debates and votes on the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Sen. Alan Simpson (R-WY) sponsored the legislation, which was strongly opposed by the CHC. An earlier version of the bill was introduced in the 98th Congress that did not receive time on the floor in the House, thanks in part to the CHC's efforts to persuade Speaker Tip O'Neill (D-MA) to block the legislation. The version of the bill introduced in the 99th Congress, though,

passed the House and Senate and was signed into law by President Reagan. In both the 98th and 99th Congresses, Ed Roybal (D-CA) introduced immigration reform legislation on behalf of the CHC as counters to Simpson's bills. These bills, H.R. 4909 in the 98th Congress and H.R. 2180 in the 99th Congress, received the full support of all members of the CHC. There were other legislative items dealing with immigration introduced in this span of time, but the IRCA received the bulk of the CHC's attention because of its employer sanctions provisions that required employers to not hire undocumented immigrants. CHC members were concerned that such language in the bill would result in increased discrimination against anybody who might look like an immigrant, which in the debates over the IRCA was taken to mean any Latinx who might apply for a job. These concerns over the potential for anti-Latinx discrimination resulted in the CHC sending a Dear Colleague letter to be sent to all CHC members and associate members pushing for support of Ed Roybal's House Joint Resolution 534. H. J. Res. 534 expressed approval of findings by the Comptroller General regarding patterns of employment discrimination as a result of the employer sanctions provisions of the IRCA, and consequently called for the repeal of those provisions.[83] The resolution died in committee, but received the support of a majority of the Caucus; the only members who did not cosponsor the resolution were Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Ben Blaz (R-Guam), Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands), and Solomon Ortiz (D-TX).

Immigration legislation has maintained a strong presence on the CHC's agenda, especially in recent years as Republicans gained control of the presidency and the House,

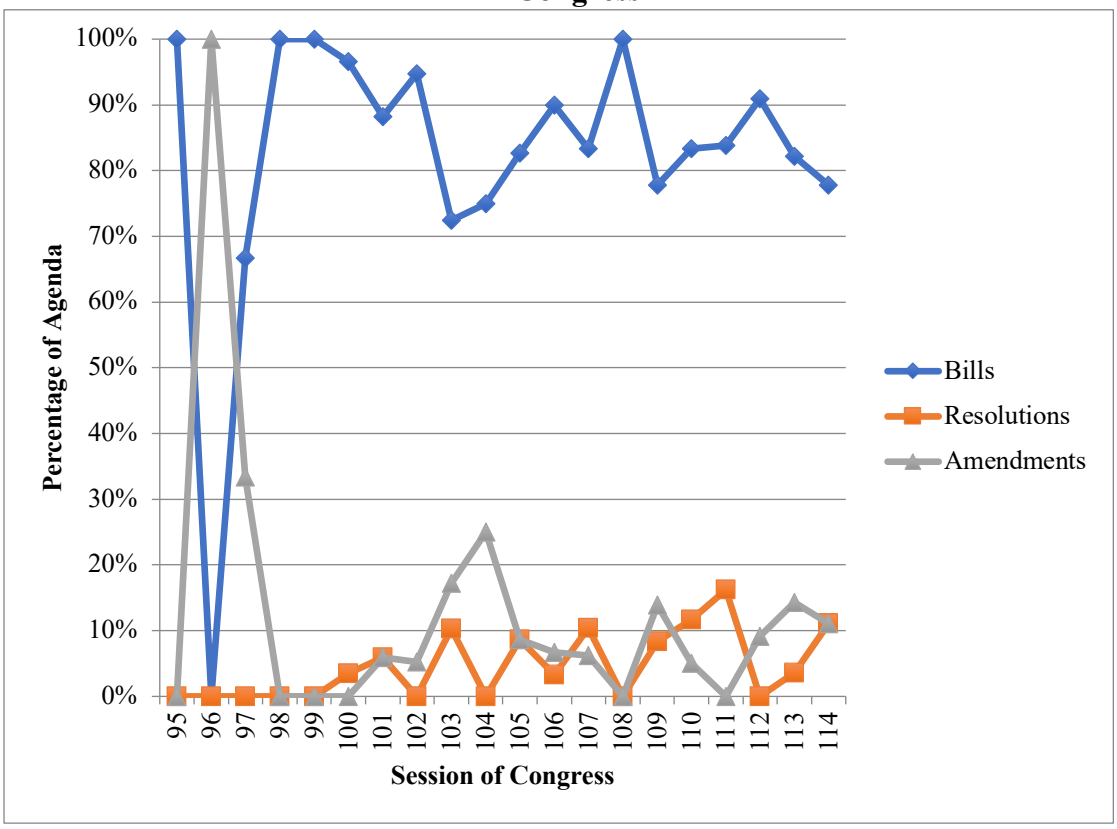
[83] Memo to Chairman de la Garza Re: H.J. Resolution 534, April 5, 1990. Records of the CHC, Official Memorandums 1985-1992, Box 2, Folder 5.

and made strong pushes on anti-immigrant legislation. Nearly half of the legislative items in immigration on the CHC's agendas have been introduced in Congress since the 107th Congress (2001-2002). These items are not all House or Senate bills—these also include amendments that affect immigration but are attached to ostensibly non-immigration bills. One example is H. Amdt. 1199, introduced by Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) in the 114th Congress. Gosar's amendment proposed modifying H.R. 5293, Department of Defense Appropriations Act for FY2017, to prohibit the use of Department of Defense funds to enlist recipients of benefits under President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program in the military. While H.R. 5293 is at its core a defense bill, the CHC did not take a stand on the bill itself but on Gosar's amendment and its focused attack on immigrants. The amendment narrowly failed on a roll call vote in the House, though it is difficult to ascribe that failure to the opposition of the CHC as thirty Republicans joined 181 Democrats in voting against the amendment.

Overall, the CHC has become more active in Congress and has constructed larger legislative agendas as its membership has grown. Agendas from the 105th to 114th Congresses account for nearly three quarters—73.04%—of all legislation considered by the CHC, even though this period marks the transition of the CHC from an LSO to a CMO with fewer resources. Before the 105th, the most explosive period of growth for the CHC was in the 103rd Congress, which had a legislative agenda larger than any prior session. However, the CHC's agendas did not start being consistently large until the 109th Congress. A constant fact regardless of the session of Congress or the size of the agenda, though, is that the CHC has primarily focused on Latinx-interest bills rather than resolutions or amendments. Across all sessions of Congress, 85.84% of items on CHC

agendas are bills, compared to 6.98% and 7.19% for resolutions and amendments respectively.

Figure 4.3 Number of Legislative Items on CHC Agendas by Type, 95th-114th Congress



Even in the 110th Congress, the session with the largest CHC agenda—thus the agenda with the greatest chance of being diverse with regard to legislation type—83.33% of the agenda was comprised of bills while resolutions and amendments account for 11.67% and 5% respectively. There are also multiple sessions where the entirety of the agenda comprised only bills[84]. This focus on bills is not surprising, as bills carry the most substantive weight in Congress and if the CHC wants to achieve the most success with

[84] This is the case in the 95th, 98th, 99th, and 108th Congresses. Due to data limitations, the agenda for the 95th Congress comprises only one bill. These same limitations produce a 96th Congress agenda that only one amendment and agendas in the 97th and 104th Congresses that contain fewer than five items total.

regard to realizing Latinx interests, it makes sense that their efforts would focus on legislation that has the chance of becoming law (unlike resolutions). This does not explain the lack of focus on amendments, though—the greatest focus given to amendments is in the 103rd and 109th Congresses, where the CHC placed five amendments on its agenda.

As noted earlier, the recent agendas of the CHC highlight the perpetual focus of the Caucus on health, immigration, and government operations. In all sessions since and including the 110th Congress, legislation in these three issue areas has accounted for about 50% of the CHC's legislative agenda. What is notable here is not that these issues have necessarily gained in focus, but that other core issues have decreased in focus. Education was a lynchpin of the CHC's legislative agendas in the 1980s and early 1990s, especially protecting bilingual education programs, but has not been as important to the CHC in the last decade compared to these other issue areas.

This decline in focus on education legislation is also indicative of a larger trend in the CHC's agenda-setting approach in recent years. For the majority of time since the 110th Congress, the Democratic Party has been in the minority in the House. This means the CHC has been in the minority as well, as all CHC members since the 105th Congress have been Democrats. As a bloc of the minority party, the CHC is less able to pursue those legislative items that it *wants*, and instead must focus on reacting to legislation introduced by the Republican majority that the CHC *needs* to take a stand on, whether that stand is one of support or one of opposition. This delineation between proactive versus reactive agenda-setting is not a subconscious one that is lost on CHC members, and is in fact acknowledged as a factor that affects how the Caucus approaches

policymaking. When asked how the Caucus's approach shifted between Democratic and Republican presidencies and congressional majorities, one member responded:

> Well I mean, you know obviously you have less sway because you don't have a Democratic president, and it's all been defense for the most part and making an appeal to the public to put pressure on the administration – sometimes it's worked and sometimes it hasn't."[85]

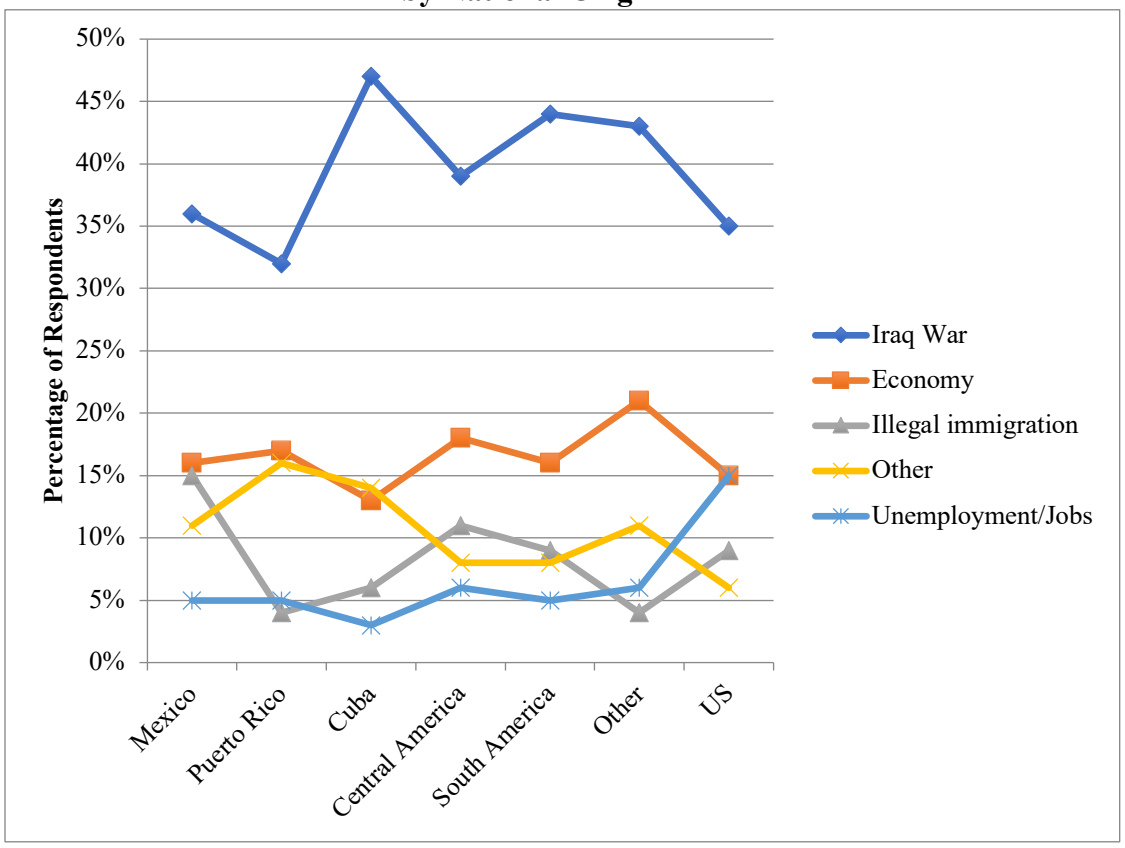
Viewed in this light, it is not surprising that the CHC's legislative agendas have developed over the last decade to have a heavy focus on healthcare and immigration. With constant criticism by the Republican majority of the Affordable Care Act and making health services available to immigrants, and sharp polarization on how to approach immigration reform between the Democratic and Republican parties, it logically follows that the Caucus's agenda has focused on these two highly salient issue areas and the specific Latinx interests they encompass.

Even with this shifting focus toward healthcare and immigration in recent years, though, the CHC's legislative agendas overall reflect a commitment on the part of the CHC to representing all groups within the Latinx community. Recall from Figure 4.1 that each major issue area included in the Congressional Bills Project has appeared on at least one CHC agenda and more than half of those issue areas appear on at least 10 CHC agendas, indicating at least 20 years of attention from the CHC. If the CHC were exclusively focused on the interests of, for example, one national origin group over all others then the agendas would not demonstrate this level of diversity. In a given year, Latinxs of different national origin groups will prioritize different issue areas. For example, in the 2006 Latino National Survey—shown below in Figure 4.4—we see

[85] Representative C, personal interview.

marked differences between Latinxs of various national origins when they were asked to identify the most important problem of the day.

Figure 4.4 2006 Latino National Survey, Most Important Problem Responses by National Origin



Looking beyond the Iraq War, which was at the forefront of everyone's minds in 2006, we see some interesting differences among Latinxs. Latinxs who claimed their nation of origin as the U.S. were significantly more concerned with unemployment and jobs than Latinxs of any other national origin group. Mexican respondents were more concerned about illegal immigration than any other Latinxs—in fact, among non-Mexican Latinxs there was never more than 10% of respondents who identified illegal immigration as the most important problem in 2006, despite the significant immigration rallies and protest that occurred at that time. In the 109th Congress (2005-2006), the CHC's agenda reflected

this divergence within the Latinx community. The agenda comprised 15 distinct issue areas that included immigration and employment, but also civil rights, social welfare, foreign affairs, and energy issues. These latter issue areas are captured in the 2006 LNS data by the "other" response option, which was a popular response among Puerto Ricans and Cubans.

This agenda diversity has only increased over time, coinciding with the diversification of the CHC's membership discussed in Chapter 2—as the number of CHC members increases and comprises members from more national origins than Mexico and Puerto Rico, the average number of issue areas included on the agenda also increases. For the first two decades of the CHC's existence, the agenda included an average of 7 issue areas. In the last decade, beginning with the 110th Congress (2007-2008), the CHC agenda on average includes 11 issue areas and in multiple instances surpasses that average. While this does not mean the CHC includes every issue of concern to each member of the Latinx community on its legislative agenda in a given session of Congress, the evidence presented here suggests the CHC still attempts to craft an agenda that reflects the diversity of views and experiences contained within the Latinx community.[86]

Shared Agendas? The CHC's Influence on the Democratic Agenda

[86] This attention to diversity, though, does not outweigh the CHC's other concerns when it comes to crafting an agenda, i.e. presenting a unified Latinx voice to the public. Even if the CHC's agenda includes issues that affect specific members of the Latinx community, this does not mean that the CHC's members are unanimous on how or how strongly to push for some of these issues, thus minimizing the possibility of the CHC discussing the issue publicly for fear of presenting a divided rather than unified image to the public.

Knowing the content of the CHC's legislative agendas, we can now determine how much those agendas affect the legislative agendas of the Democratic Caucus in the House. Functionally, the CHC behaves much like Bloch Rubin's (2017) intraparty organizations insofar as the CHC has been closely aligned with the Democratic Party throughout its existence. However, since the CHC's mission is not explicitly partisan, it is an open question as to whether the CHC wields the same power as other intraparty organizations and effectively leverages its own agenda against the Democratic Caucus's agenda and causes the latter to come into closer resonance with the former, or else how these agendas diverge from each other.

Given the perceived closeness between the CHC and the rest of the Democrats, there does not seem much reason to believe that the Hispanic Caucus's legislative agendas will influence the agenda of House Democrats rather than the other way around. The CHC has been comprised of only Democrats since the 105th Congress. Democrats have become more homogeneously liberal over time, lessening the ideological distance between the CHC and the rest of the Democratic Caucus. The CHC also seems to have a very close relationship with the Democratic leadership in the House, especially as both groups realize that they often need each other—the CHC needs the Democratic Caucus on its side because the CHC is too small to attempt to make policy on its own, and the Democrats need the CHC because the group makes up a sizable proportion of votes in the Democratic Caucus.[87] CHC members have also held leadership positions within the Democratic Caucus, with Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-CA, chairing the Democratic Caucus in

[87] Staffer D, personal interview.

the 113th and 114th Congresses and Rep. Linda Sánchez, D-CA, serving as the vice chair of the Democratic Caucus in the 115th Congress. Hispanic Caucus members have also served among the Democratic House leadership, with Rep. Ed Pastor, D-AZ, serving as a deputy whip from the 106th Congress until his retirement at the end of the 113th Congress, and Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-NM, serving as Assistant Speaker in the 116th Congress after previously serving as chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

The CHC does not, however, simply follow along with the Democratic agenda. In multiple interviews, members and staffers mentioned the willingness of Democratic leadership to actually defer to the Caucus on immigration because of the belief that the Caucus had the expertise on the issue and therefore ought to lead on immigration policy. In the words of one member,

> "On immigration issues Pelosi basically said we're looking to the Caucus, we're going to follow their lead. So that's their issue, it's our [Democrats'] issue. So we had to make sure that in dealing with the immigration issue that we were not only, not only was it going to be our own Caucus issue but we knew that then that was going to transfer and become a Democratic issue. Basically…on immigration they said ok, we're going to follow [the Hispanic Caucus]."[88]

Based on this information, as well as prior evidence from Wilson (2017) and Bloch Rubin's finding that intraparty organizations represent "a unique source of institutional authority that does not first require members to control majoritarian institutions" (299) that can "fundamentally alter the ostensibly majoritarian character of our national legislature…by prioritizing the interests of vocal and agitated minority factions" (304), it is reasonable to infer that when it comes to legislation that primarily affects the Latinx community, the Hispanic Caucus may be able to use its position as the coalition

[88] Representative B, personal interview.

responsible for representing Latinx interests to persuade the rest of the Democratic Caucus in the House to adopt the CHC position on such legislation:

> **H_1:** The inclusion of bills on the CHC agenda will increase the likelihood of those bills' inclusion on the Democratic agenda.

Discussing agenda setting in the House without mentioning the influence of partisanship and majority status is impossible. As discussed earlier, various theories of agenda setting in Congress alternately highlight the high degree of agenda control exerted by power leaders or committee chairs. If we take party cartel theory (Cox and McCubbins 2007) to be accurate, then we ought to expect that the CHC's influence on the Democratic agenda is contingent on whether a majority of the Democratic Caucus supports the CHC's legislative priorities. Party cartels not only control the distribution of positive and negative agenda powers, they also control committee assignments and by extension the gatekeeping function served by committees. Thus, the Democratic Caucus must be in the House majority to provide the greatest possibility of passing CHC—and by extension, Latinx—legislative priorities. If Democrats are in the minority in the House, then they do not have the same influence over agenda setting, both because they do not have as much control on the distribution of agenda powers and because none of the Democratic Caucus's members can be committee chairs. These factors, combined with growing polarization in the House drawing the CHC and the rest of the Democratic Caucus closer together ideologically, indicate that the CHC's priorities ought to appeal to a greater proportion of Democrats, satisfying the majority of the majority threshold set by party cartel theory. As such, there is a strong likelihood that the CHC's influence on the Democratic agenda is contingent on the majority status of the Democratic Party:

H_2: The effect of inclusion on the CHC agenda will be stronger when Democrats are in the majority in the House, and weaker when Democrats are in the minority.

Data & Methods

The independent variable for this analysis is drawn from the final source used for the systematic analysis above. Using the Congressional Bills Project dataset, which includes all bills introduced in the House from the 95th to the 114th Congress (N=131,082), I construct a CHC agenda variable that is coded 1 for bills on the CHC's agenda that are sponsored by a CHC member and cosponsored by a majority of the remaining members of the CHC. Having a CHC member sponsor a bill that has the support of a majority of the CHC provides a clear indication of support for legislation that is less likely to be clouded by the Democratic Caucus taking a stand on a bill—the decision to cosponsor is not tied solely to which party supports a bill, otherwise all Democrats would cosponsor all Democratic legislation. When it comes to press releases, statements in the *Congressional Record*, archival materials, and *CQ Weekly* articles, it is difficult to determine which came first—the CHC position on a bill, or the Democratic position on a bill. This sequencing issue complicates attempts to determine the causal relationship between the groups' legislative agendas, and thus makes that data inappropriate for this analysis. Using this metric, there are 253 CHC bills introduced from the 95th to the 114th Congress.

The dependent variable is a dichotomous measure of a bill's inclusion on the Democratic agenda between the 95th and 114th Congresses. These bills are identified in two ways. First, I analyze CQ's Key Vote tables for each session of Congress and identify those bills that received support from the majority of the Democratic Party. CQ's

Key Vote tables are not a perfect indication of the Democratic Party's legislative priorities in a given session of Congress; I rely on these tables, though, because there is not a source that lists all the specific bills prioritized by the Democratic Party—most sources simply list the issue areas the Democrats cared about in a particular session of Congress. Coding all bills in an issue area as a one on the Democratic agenda variable would heavily bias the results, making this an untenable option for identifying Democratic agendas[89].

The second way I identify Democratic priorities is more limited than CQ's Key Vote tables in that this measure is only usable in recent sessions of Congress. Drawing on Curry (2015), I code as Democratic agenda items those bills numbered HR 1-10 when the Democrats were the majority party and bills numbered HR 11-20 when the Democrats were the minority party. According to Curry, this practice of reserving bills 1-10 for the Speaker to assign to bills as they see fit and reserving bills 11-20 for the Minority Leader did not become a House norm until the 106th Congress. Starting in 1999, then, bills 1-10 and 11-20 can be taken to represent the respective legislative priorities of the majority and minority parties in the House. Overall, there are 168 bills that are considered part of the Democratic agenda from the 95th to 114th Congresses in my coding scheme.

I also include several variables to control for factors that may affect the composition of the Democratic agenda in core Latinx issue areas. Because of the noted

[89] Another issue with CQ's Key Vote tables is that they do not provide much insight into the Democratic Party's legislative priorities when the Democrats are the minority party in the House—many of the key votes in those sessions are Republican priorities roundly opposed by the Democrats. There are some key votes in these sessions with support from a majority of Democrats that I consider to be part of the Democratic agenda, though Democratic agendas in these sessions are markedly smaller than in those sessions where Democrats were the majority party.

effects of partisanship in Congress, especially in the House, I control for the party of a bill's primary sponsor as well as the party of the president. I also control for the gender of a bill's primary sponsor. Related to these is a binary variable indicating whether the Democratic Caucus is the majority party in a given session of Congress. I also control for the proportion of the Democratic Caucus comprised of Hispanic Caucus members, given critical mass theories that argue that when a group reaches a certain threshold, its influence will increase (Rouse 2013). This variable is interacted with the CHC agenda variable, to ensure the relationship tested is between the CHC's proportion of the Democratic Caucus and CHC bills rather than all bills introduced in the House. I control for the average ideology of the CHC in each session of Congress, as well as the average ideology of the Democratic Caucus in each session of Congress. Lastly, I control for rising polarization in the House with a measure of the absolute distance between the ideological means of Democrats and Republicans in each session of Congress.

I estimate several models using these variables. First, I estimate the effects for all years the CHC has existed, covering the 95th through 114th Congress. I also estimate separate models for different time periods that allow me to test Hypothesis 2: Era 1 covers the 95th to 103rd Congress, when Democrats were in the majority; Era 2 covers the 104th-109th Congress, with Republican majorities; Era 3 covers the 110th-111th Congress when control of the House shifted back to the Democrats; and Era 4 covers the 112th-114th Congress when Republicans regained control of the House. These eras also allow me to assess the effect of polarization on the Democratic agenda—the distance between the two parties becomes more pronounced in each subsequent era. Because there are relatively few bills included on Democratic agendas out of 131,000 total bills introduced,

even when looking at specific time periods, using a standard logistic regression does not make sense. Using standard logit would introduce bias into the estimates given the low variance in, and small sample size of, the dependent variable, thus producing inaccurate estimates of the effect of the CHC's agenda on the Democratic agenda. To correct for this, I utilize a penalized likelihood logit model. Like King and Zeng's (2001) rare events logit model, the penalized likelihood model accounts for the low number of positive events in the dependent variable and reduces small sample bias in likelihood estimation. I specifically use the BRGLM package in Stata, as opposed to firthlogit, because BRGLM is designed especially for use with a binary dependent variable, as is the case here.

Results

Looking at all time periods when the CHC has existed, regardless of whether Democrats were in the majority or the minority, the inclusion of bills on the CHC's agenda appears to have no effect on the content of the Democratic agenda. This is surprising, given that more than half of the bills in the dataset were introduced during periods of Democratic control of the House. The interaction term between inclusion on the CHC's agenda and the CHC's proportion of the Democratic Caucus is also insignificant, indicating that the CHC's proportion of the Democratic Caucus does not affect the chances of a CHC bill being included on the Democratic agenda. Even though the CHC's share of the Democratic Caucus has been steadily increasing over the last few decades, the CHC does not appear to wield sufficient influence to shape the most important items on the Democrats' agenda when looking at the last forty years as a whole. The Democrats' agenda is similarly unaffected by the increasing proportions of

Latinxs (and African Americans) serving in the House over time. The coefficient for the proportion of Latinxs serving in the House is significant but incorrectly signed, indicating that more Latinxs in the House drives down the chances of CHC agenda items being included on the Democrats' agenda.

Consistent with prior research on agenda setting in the House, the effects of partisanship and committee membership do have significant effects on the content of the Democratic agenda. Bills that are sponsored by Republicans are less likely to be included on the Democratic agenda, a finding that is consistent with increased polarization in the House that has severely diminished the number of bipartisan bills considered in the House. The polarization measure itself is insignificant, though the positive coefficient is reassuring: increased polarization ought to make Democrats more likely to include CHC priorities on their own agenda, which makes sense as the ideological distance between the CHC and the rest of the Democrats continues to shrink as the Democrats as a whole become more liberal.

Table 4.1 Effect of CHC Agenda on Democratic Agenda, All Eras

	All Eras 95th-114th
Inclusion on CHC Agenda	-3.154 (3.223)
Mean CHC DW-Nominate	-2.563 (2.474)
chc_agenda* chc_pct	0.431 (0.307)
Important Bill	3.325*** (1.053)
% Latinx In House	-0.374** (0.184)

% Black In House	0.155 (0.108)
House Polarization	2.192 (2.148)
Republican President	-0.436*** (0.124)
Republican Sponsor	-0.014*** (0.002)
Woman Sponsor	-1.541*** (0.412)
Number of Cosponsors	0.013*** (0.001)
Ref. Cmte Chair	1.390*** (0.293)
Ranking Ref. Cmte	1.902*** (0.657)
Member Ref. Cmte	0.946*** (0.170)
Chair any Committee	0.857*** (0.280)
Ranking any Committee	-0.863 (0.626)
Constant	-11.075*** (1.378)
N	131082

Standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

The Democratic agenda is also significantly affected by the party affiliation of the president—having a Republican president decreases the chances of a bill being included

on the Democratic agenda, perhaps indicating an unwillingness of the Democratic Caucus to consider bills that the leadership fears will not receive support from the president. Having the bill's sponsor be the chair or ranking member of the committee of referral has a significant and positive effect on a bill's chances of being placed on the Democratic agenda. This is consistent with theories that portray congressional committees as gatekeepers that control which legislation makes it to the floor of the House, a consideration that must be taken into account prior to other aspects of the legislative process such as roll call votes. Whether a bill is substantively important also matters greatly—Democrats are far more likely to incorporate bills that contain major substantive provisions rather than bills that are symbolic or commemorative in nature.

A disturbing finding concerns the effect of a bill sponsor's gender on the content of the Democratic agenda. The coefficient for gender is negative and significant, indicating that bills sponsored by women are less likely to be included on the Democratic agenda. Even though the Democratic Party as a whole portrays itself as the party most concerned with women's issues and rights, this concern does not apparently extend to heeding the legislative efforts of Democratic women serving in the House. This does not mean that no part of the agenda responds to women's interests—it is possible that women's interests are just as likely to be included in bills sponsored by men, though that is unclear from the data and analysis used here.

Looking at specific time periods—shown below in Table 4.2—there is also no support for Hypothesis 2. Out of the four time periods analyzed, inclusion on the CHC's agenda is never a significant predictor of a bill's inclusion on the Democratic agenda. An interesting result is that during Era 2, when Republicans controlled the House and banned

legislative service organizations, the effect of inclusion on the CHC agenda on the Democratic agenda is actually negative. While this result is not significant, the fact that the CHC's prioritization of a bill could actually cause the Democratic Party to deprioritize the same bill indicates that the relationship between the two groups is perhaps not as strong as CHC members and staffers think.

The interaction term for inclusion on the CHC agenda and the CHC's proportion of the Democratic Caucus is also insignificant in Era 1. This was a lengthy period of Democratic control of the House spanning almost 20 years, but it is also an era when the membership of the CHC was often very small relative to the number of Democrats in the House (see Chapter 2). Era 1 is also characterized by an internally divided Democratic Party—for most of the era, southern Democrats had not yet officially switched to the Republican party. The interaction term was omitted from the models for Eras 2, 3, and 4 due to collinearity issues.

Table 4.2 Effect of CHC Agenda on Democratic Agenda, by Era

	Era 1 95th- 103rd	Era 2 104th- 109th	Era 3 110th-111th	Era 4 112th- 114th
On CHC Agenda	3.801 (4.294)	-3.756 (5.988)	8.482 (13.844)	5.906 (5.772)
Mean CHC DW-Nominate	-5.037 (9.362)	2.117 (6.479)	214.652 (667.062)	8.407 (20.423)
chc_agenda* chc_pct	-0.252 (0.972)	—	—	—
Important Bill	2.125** (0.917)	2.071** (0.897)	1.601** 0.764	3.383*** (1.159)
% Latinx In House	-0.746 (1.079)	1.062 (0.748)	—	-1.021 (1.011)
% Black In House	0.123 (0.309)	-0.172 (0.841)	—	—

House Polarization	5.232 (9.117)	-4.031 (12.575)	—	—
Republican President	-0.390 (0.327)	0.023 (0.494)	—	—
Republican Sponsor	-0.037*** (0.010)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.024*** (0.008)	-0.024*** (0.005)
Woman Sponsor	-0.013 (0.946)	-2.283** (0.939)	-0.575 (0.377)	-1.514*** (0.505)
Number of Cosponsors	0.014*** (0.001)	0.010*** (0.001)	0.012*** (0.001)	0.016*** (0.001)
Ref. Cmte Chair	0.867** (0.351)	1.816*** (0.633)	1.831*** (0.539)	1.556*** (0.471)
Ranking Ref. Cmte	-0.700 (1.279)	2.808*** (1.008)	-0.029 (1.198)	0.604 (0.629)
Member Ref. Cmte	1.648 (0.254)	-0.063 (0.271)	0.403 (0.306)	1.125*** (0.329)
Chair any Committee	0.999 (0.342)	0.221 (0.595)	0.549 (0.505)	2.059*** (0.631)
Ranking any Committee	2.706 (1.240)	-0.486 (0.984	2.316** (1.160)	-0.186 (0.531)
Constant	-9.893 (6.996)	-2.628 (13.252)	63.923 (226.286)	-1.013 (8.366)
N	65575	32525	13897	19085

Standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Demonstrating the strength of partisanship in the House over time, the party of a bill's sponsor is a significant predictor of that bill's inclusion on the Democratic agenda. While the party variable is insignificant in Era 2, it is highly significant and negative in Eras 1, 3, and 4, indicating that those bills sponsored by Republicans are less likely to be included on the Democratic agenda whether polarization in the House is low (Era 1) or high (Eras 3 and 4). Other common predictors of agenda inclusion are also significant in all time periods, speaking to the already demonstrated power of committees in

gatekeeping and controlling the content of the agenda. In all eras, having a bill sponsor who is also the chair of the committee to which a bill is referred is highly significant and positive. That is, bills sponsored by chairs of the committee of referral are more likely than other bills to be included on the Democratic agenda. This result is slightly confusing when looking at periods of Republican control, since it is impossible for Democrats to be committee chairs when their party is the minority. There are, however, a handful of bills on the Democratic agenda sponsored by Republicans, which may explain why this variable matters in Eras 2 and 4. As in the overall model, important bills are more likely to be included on Democrats' agenda than symbolic or commemorative measures in every era. This raises questions about the importance the Democratic Caucus attaches to Latinx interest legislation, especially as Democrats become more liberal and Latinxs (and other minorities) comprise a larger proportion of the party and also likely Democratic voters.

While the results reported here do not show support for Hypothesis 2, they do demonstrate the steady influence of parties and committees on the Democratic agenda over the last 40 years. Thus, while it is difficult to conclude that the CHC wields as much power as Bloch Rubin (2017) attributes to intraparty organizations such as the House Freedom Caucus or the Republican Study Committee, it is no stretch to conclude that the agenda process within the Democratic Caucus is controlled by party leaders, committee chairs and ranking members, or both. Even though the CHC does not often deviate from the party line on core issues, and in fact receives some degree of perceived deference on core Latinx issues such as immigration, the interests of the CHC are not likely to be integrated into the Democratic agenda.

Conclusion

When it comes to agenda setting in Congress, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus does not exert influence on the legislative agenda of the broader Democratic Caucus. Whether Democrats are in the majority or the minority in the House, the CHC's decision to include a bill on its own agenda does not improve the chances of that same bill being included on the Democratic agenda. The interests of Latinxs, then, are not guaranteed the attention of the rest of the Democratic Caucus, significantly decreasing the opportunity for these interests to be realized through legislation. The Democratic agenda instead is more likely to comprise bills sponsored by Democrats who chair or are the ranking member of the committee to which bills are referred, and also have a larger number of cosponsors. The CHC's proportion of the Democratic Caucus is also insignificant. Even though the number of Latinxs serving in Congress has steadily increased during the existence of the CHC, they still do not appear to have a significant amount of influence on the legislative priorities of the Democratic Caucus. This is true even when Latinx members of Congress form a coalition such as the CHC in order to maximize their power and resources in the House.

The apparent lack of incorporation of Latinx interests on the part of the Democratic Caucus complicates prior scholarship that argues Latinx interests are well-represented by liberal Democratic members of Congress (Hero and Tolbert 1995; Wallace 2014b). If Latinx interests—as defined by the CHC through the agendas it creates and bills it sponsors—are not incorporated into the Democratic agenda, then it is difficult to argue that non-Latinx Democrats are just as aware of Latinx interests as are

CHC members. More likely here is that the Democratic Caucus assumes that pursuing any kind of legislation deemed important by Democratic leadership in the House will benefit Latinxs, resting on the belief that Latinxs are a captured constituency that will always vote for Democrats in elections because of the perception that Republicans are not likely to ever respond positively to Latinx interests (Frymer 1999). If this is the case, then the coalitional representation offered by the CHC is even more important, as the CHC is able to introduce legislation that reflects Latinx interests and highlights the ways in which Latinx interests may align with or diverge from the interests of the broader Democratic Caucus. The question remains though, how effective the CHC is in pushing this legislation through the legislative process without the apparent backing of the Democratic leadership.

Equally important here is the way in which the Hispanic Caucus's agenda reflects the efforts of members of the CHC to grapple with the complexities of *Latinidad* and pursue a legislative agenda that embraces rather than effaces the diverse interests of Latinx ethnic groups. *Latinidad* incorporates Latinxs from a wide variety of national origins—Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and others—who have distinct interests and preferences that are not always in agreement with each other. CHC members are cognizant of these differences and incorporate this awareness into their agenda-setting practices, though they also realize that the racial narrative in the U.S. has evolved in such a way that the fates of these Latinx ethnic groups, regardless of their differences, are inextricably linked and thus must be pursued together rather than separately. The basis of the Hispanic Caucus as a coalition, then, is the recognition and incorporation of Latinxs across a wide variety of social and political experiences. This coalition then works on

behalf of Latinxs by constructing a panethnic narrative that melds the interests of these groups together, but at the same time maintains the nuances and complexities that define *Latinidad*. The effects of this coalitional representation might not be seen when it comes to the agenda setting process, but it at the very least provides the groundwork for CHC members to build upon when attempting to realize Latinx interests at other stages of the legislative process.

5| Taking Care of Business: The Legislative Effectiveness of the CHC

In September of 1994, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus issued a press release celebrating the passage in the House of an education bill—H.R. 6—that included several measures proposed by the Caucus. The press release enumerated the changes the Caucus-backed reforms made to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These proposed changes were originally part of a separate bill proposed by the Caucus that did not pass the House—H.R. 3229, the Equal Access to Education Act of 1993—sponsored by then-Caucus chair Jose Sérrano (D-NY) and cosponsored by a majority of the remaining members of the Caucus. Thus, even though the original vehicle for the Caucus's education priorities in the 103rd Congress did not survive the legislative process, the Caucus was ultimately effective in securing the legal recognition of measures addressing what Sérrano described in the press release as "the most important issue facing the Hispanic community."[90]. Throughout its forty-year existence in the House of Representatives, the Hispanic Caucus has pushed a diverse agenda focused on passing or blocking many bills and resolutions. While the agenda-setting stage is important in determining which issues the Caucus will focus on in a given session of Congress, more important is whether the Caucus is effective at passing or blocking those bills or

[90] Press Release, "House passes Hispanic Caucus education proposals," September 30, 1994. Records of the CHC, Audio-Visual Records 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 11.

resolutions the Caucus considers most impactful to the Latinx community and its interests.

Understanding the conditions under which members of Congress enjoy legislative success—especially when discussing passing legislation—is important for a variety of reasons. In part, legislative success matters because without success for which members can claim credit, it is difficult for members to secure reelection. According to Mayhew (1974), securing reelection is the preeminent concern of all members of Congress. Even if members have particular policy interests that they wish to advance, such actions cannot take place if the member no longer holds elected office. Even for those members who are truly focused on making good public policy rather than securing reelection (Fenno 1973; Fenno 1978), legislative success is paramount—one cannot claim to have made good public policy if they are unable to point to legislation that codifies that member's specific policy positions (Volden and Wiseman 2014).

Based on its stated mission, the Hispanic Caucus is primarily concerned with making good public policy to represent Latinx Americans, i.e. passing legislation that realizes or protects the interests of Latinx communities. How effective, though, is the Caucus when it comes to passing legislation in the House of Representatives? What factors increase the legislative effectiveness of the members of the Hispanic Caucus? I attempt to answer these questions in the rest of this chapter. I focus only on the House of Representatives because congressional caucuses have a much stronger impact in the House than in the Senate, and the Caucus has at most only ever had one member from the Senate among its ranks. Using an original index to measure CHC support for specific bills or resolutions throughout the Caucus's existence in Congress, I examine CHC

effectiveness in the House from 1977 to 2016. I find some evidence that the intensity of CHC support for legislation can help push that legislation further in the legislative process though other factors such as which party controls the House and a bill's perceived importance attenuate this effect. More importantly, I demonstrate the limits of measuring legislative effectiveness and congressional representation purely in terms of passing legislation, drawing on what might be considered "non-traditional" measure of effectiveness, including but not limited to the CHC's efforts to shape the composition of Democratic House leadership, congressional committees, and executive appointments, as well as generally providing a public voice for the Latinx community and its interests.

In the rest of this chapter, I first discuss the prior research on legislative effectiveness and explore how the findings in this research may be expected to bear on the legislative effectiveness of the Hispanic Caucus. I then lay out the data and methods used for my analyses and report the results of these analyses. I then explore non-traditional forms of legislative effectiveness, drawing primarily on evidence from the National Archives and the CHC's own press releases from the last decade, highlighting the efforts of the CHC to boost Latinx representation by creating more opportunities for Latinx individuals not only within Congress but also the executive branch and the federal judiciary. I conclude with a discussion of the quantitative results alongside the non-traditional forms of effectiveness, and what these two bodies of evidence indicate about the Hispanic Caucus's ability to adequately represent the Latinx community.

Legislative Effectiveness in the House

In prior studies of legislative effectiveness, there is little direct reference to groups of legislators working together, with focus instead given to the effectiveness of individual legislators and the factors that affect the prospects of effectiveness for those individuals (Anderson et al. 2003; Volden and Wiseman 2014). This is true both for studies that analyze legislative effectiveness in the Senate (Moore and Thomas 1991) and those studies that focus on the House (Frantzich 1979; Volden and Wiseman 2014).

Majority party membership, membership in party leadership, seniority, electoral security, and ideological moderation have all been found to affect a legislator's chances of getting legislation passed in the House. Volden and Wiseman (2014), calculate a Legislative Effectiveness Score (LES) for each member of the House based on how far every bill each member has ever introduced in the House makes it in the legislative process. They find that LES's are higher for members of the majority party, especially when examining which bills receive action in committees. However, when it comes to bills that are reported by committees and receive action on the floor of the House, majority and minority party members are equally effective (69). Volden and Wiseman also find that majority and minority status affect the legislative effectiveness of women and African Americans in the House. Women in the minority party are more effective than men in the minority party, while men and women are equally effective when in the majority; African Americans are no more or less effective than other Democrats when in the minority, but when Democrats are the majority party African Americans are markedly less effective than other Democrats when the party is in the majority (116). Frantzich (1979) found that majority party membership is a key factor in determining the legislative effectiveness of an individual member. Other factors that matter for Frantzich include

whether a bill's sponsor is a member of the party leadership, the seniority of the member, the member's electoral security, and ideological moderation. For Frantzich, the influence of electoral security is especially important: those members who are less electorally secure will introduce less legislation and will also be less successful in passing that legislation. This comports well with Mayhew's (1974) argument that members of Congress are single-minded seekers of reelection. Given this concern with attaining and keeping office, it makes sense that members whose reelection prospects are less than certain will not take the risk of sponsoring legislation that could potentially form the basis of an opposition campaign.

Other studies highlight Frantzich's finding regarding the effectiveness of ideological moderates in the House. Anderson et al. (2003) argue that legislators who are at the ideological extreme of either party are less likely to enjoy legislative success, while ideological moderates in both parties are more likely to see their bills survive the legislative process. Anderson et al. also find that this need for moderation extends to the behaviors in which members engage to ensure their bills pass the House. Those members who do not sponsor too many bills or do not speak too often on the floor of the House are more likely to see their bills pass than those members who speak either too much or too little, and who sponsor too many or too few bills (177). Attaining legislative success, then, is a delicate balancing act for all members of Congress regardless of which party they belong to or how long they have served in Congress.

Other research deepens the discussion of the effect of partisanship on the legislative effectiveness of individual legislators. Kim (2006) argues that majority status is a key resource in the House that predicts legislative success, while Miquel and Snyder,

Jr. (2006) find that members of the majority party are more effective than members of the minority party. Cox and Terry (2008) agree with Anderson et al.'s findings in that Cox and Terry conclude the majority party enjoys greater legislative success. Cox and Terry differ, however, in their attribution of the majority advantage to the greater resources available to members of the majority party, rather than simply the fact that a legislator is a member of the majority party. Hasecke and Mycoff (2007) further drive home the influence of partisanship on legislative success with their study on the effects of party loyalty in the House. According to Hasecke and Mycoff, membership in the majority party does not guarantee access to its resources and higher chances of legislative success. Rather, legislative success is a selective benefit that is primarily afforded to those members who demonstrate high levels of party loyalty. In this case, party loyalty refers both to voting in line with the party's wishes on given issues, or contributing money to party reelection efforts. This makes sense when considered alongside other research that demonstrates the strong desire of the majority to maintain its majority status, a desire that dictates many of the behaviors exhibited by the majority party in the House (Jacobson 2001; Curry 2015; Lee 2016).

Aside from Volden and Wiseman (2014), there is little consideration of the role played by race in determining which legislators are able to get bills through the legislative process. At the state level, Bratton and Haynie (1999) find that black legislators are more likely to introduce black interest bills than non-Black people and that women are more likely to introduce women's interest bills than men. The findings with regard to women are echoed in Bratton (2005). In this study, again at the state level, Bratton finds that women more likely to focus on women's interests than men. She also

finds that "women are generally at least as likely as men to pass legislation even when they make up a very small minority of the institution" (121). That is, even when women legislators only have token status in a given legislature, i.e. less than 15% of the legislature's members, women are still able to enjoy legislative success. Because both of these studies are conducted at the state level though, it is difficult to conclude that the findings necessarily apply to Congress.

To be sure, there are studies that have demonstrated the important role played in securing some degree of substantive Latinx representation by having more Latinx legislators serving in Congress. Minta (2011) focuses on committee oversight hearings, and finds that Latinx members of congressional committees push those committees to pay more attention to Latinx interests by holding oversight hearings on certain issues. That is, Latinx members of Congress are more likely to push Latinx interests than white non-Latinx members of Congress, echoing Bratton and Haynie's (1999) findings with regard to black legislators. While Minta does not discuss this explicitly in terms of legislative effectiveness, his findings do indicate that Latinx members of Congress are able to articulate and advocate for Latinx interests in Congress. Rouse (2013) finds that committees are equally important for Latinx representation at the state level, especially when it comes to participation in vital committee activities such as markups. Not only does descriptive representation mean that more Latinxs are serving in legislatures, these Latinx legislators are more active in committee activities when dealing with legislation that is highly salient to the Latinx community. This increased participation by Latinx legislators, Rouse argues, occurs because these Latinx legislators "believe that committee participation is a crucial part of the legislative process" that "makes a difference for the

descriptive representation of their constituents and the broader Latino community" (87). The question remains, though, whether these efforts translate to the ultimate passage of Latinx-interest legislation, especially at the national level.

In this vein, several studies focus on the outcomes of roll call votes as a determinant of Latinx substantive representation. Several scholars indicate that increased descriptive representation of Latinxs does not translate to what is more traditionally thought of as legislative effectiveness or success, i.e. getting bills to pass the House and ultimately become law. According to Casellas (2011), the "presence of Latino representatives makes no difference in voting patterns for any of the legislative bodies" (137), whether considering the U.S. Congress or one of several state legislatures he analyzes. Ultimately, Casellas concludes, "Latino citizens apparently do not experience greater degrees of direct substantive representation when they elect Latino representatives as opposed to non-Latino representatives" (137). This echoes other studies that reach the same conclusion with regard to the outcomes of roll call votes (Hero and Tolbert 1995; Rouse 2013; Wallace 2014b). Again, it is necessary to note that these studies, like those focused on committee activity by Latinx legislators, focus on the legislative efforts of individual Latinx members of Congress rather than on a coalition of Latinx legislators. Furthermore, these previous studies of Latinx descriptive representation do not examine the legislative effectiveness of Latinx members of Congress as a measure of bills passed[91]. Rather, they focus on whether Latinx representatives' voting behavior lines up

[91] Some of these studies, most notably Hero and Tolbert (1995), do focus on collective partisan representation as a possible substitute for Latinx descriptive representation—that is, they argue that Latinx interests are just as well-represented by liberal Democrats as by Latinxs, obviating the need for Latinx descriptive representation. This collective partisan representation, though, does not mirror the kind of

with Latinx interests in broad issue areas, which does not test the ability of Latinx legislators to push desired legislation through the different stages of the legislative process.

More recent scholarship on Latinx representation and the effectiveness of Latinx legislators does offer some insight on the role of the Hispanic Caucus. Wilson (2017) argues that in the 110th and 111th Congresses, "Latino representatives acted strategically to extract limited policy accommodations and achieved real if limited legislative influence" (235). Note that Wilson's version of legislative effectiveness does pay attention to the fact that bill passage is not the only possible indicator of effectiveness: Wilson argues that much of the influence of Latinx lawmakers and the Hispanic Caucus is wielded behind the scenes in an effort to sway the legislative decision making of other members of the House. Thus for Wilson, legislative effectiveness for Latinx legislators refers to Latino representation in legislative decision making, which Wilson defines as "the extent to which legislative decisions appear to comport with the preferences of a majority of Latino representatives and to which the efforts of those Latino representatives appear to have been pivotal to a particular outcome" (209). Through this conceptualization of Latinx legislators' effectiveness, Wilson does more to highlight the importance of all stages in the legislative process rather than just final passage votes.

Wilson's account still does not, however, empirically test the effectiveness of the Hispanic Caucus—Wilson's account relies on a case study of the Caucus's involvement in immigration issues in only the 110th and 111th Congresses. While immigration has

conscious effort made to represent the interests of the Latinx community that defines coalitional representation vis-à-vis the CHC.

always been an important aspect of the Caucus agenda for the last forty years, it is far from the only issue the Caucus cares about (see Chapter 4). Focusing only on the 110th and 111th Congresses also does not account for the efforts of the Caucus to influence legislative decision making when Republicans control the House, an important factor to consider since the Caucus does not stop working toward Latinx interests when Democrats are the minority party.

What, then, are we to expect of the Hispanic Caucus? Is the Caucus successful in pushing its desired legislation through the House? I argue that despite the noted influence of partisanship and ideology on legislative effectiveness in previous studies, the role of Latinx legislators banding together in a coalition such as the Hispanic Caucus cannot be ignored. The demonstrated linkage between descriptive and substantive representation for Latinxs provides some hope that coalitional representation will be just as effective, with the Caucus effectively ushering Latinx-interest legislation through the House. This relationship is likely attenuated, though, by how much support the Caucus throws behind a particular issue. If the issue is of minimal importance and does not receive much support from the Caucus other than being on the Caucus's agenda, then it is logical to expect that such a bill is unlikely to advance far in the legislative process.

> **H_1:** The Hispanic Caucus will enjoy more legislative effectiveness at later stages of the legislative process with legislation that receives a higher degree of support from the Hispanic Caucus.

The role of partisanship in shaping legislative effectiveness cannot be ignored. Based on prior studies, it makes sense to expect the legislative effectiveness of the Hispanic Caucus to be affected by which party controls the House. Aside from the fact that the agenda of the Democratic Party appears to more often reflect Latinx interests

than the Republican agenda—so much so that some accounts consider Latinxs to be a captured constituency for the Democratic Party (Frymer 1999)—the trends among Caucus members also point to a strong linkage between the Caucus and the Democratic Party. Since the inception of the Caucus in 1976, the membership of the Caucus has always been majority-Democrat. In fact, there have been no Republican members of the Hispanic Caucus since a disagreement over the CHC's position on Cuba in the 105th Congress. Even when Republicans participated in the Caucus, the highest number of Republican members of the Caucus was three in both the 103rd and 104th Congresses. Given this trend, and interviewees' belief that the CHC and the Democratic Party are best served when the two groups work together (see Chapter 4), it makes sense that the Hispanic Caucus would be most effective when Democrats control the House and ostensibly the majority of the Democratic Party is amenable to passing Latinx interest legislation.

> **H_2**: The legislative effectiveness of the Hispanic Caucus will be higher when the Democratic Party is the majority party in the House.

Finally, while studies such as Wilson's focus on the role of the Caucus in pushing immigration legislation, there is reason to believe that the Caucus is just as active in other issue areas. While immigration is certainly an issue area that receives significant Caucus attention in any session of Congress, there are some years where other issue areas receive more focus, e.g. in the 110th Congress when the Caucus prioritized health and education legislation. Even when looking at Caucus-sponsored bills, i.e. bills sponsored by a Caucus member and cosponsored by a majority of the Caucus, immigration accounts for a lower percentage of such bills than health, education, government operations, and

public lands (which includes bills affecting Puerto Rico). Thus, it does not make sense to condense the Hispanic Caucus's legislative effectiveness to only immigration legislation. Rather, the Hispanic Caucus is likely to be most effective in all issue areas that comprise the bulk of its agenda over time, as legislation in those issue areas is likely to receive high levels of Caucus support when compared to legislation in issue areas that comprise a smaller proportion of the Caucus agendas.

> **H_3**: The Hispanic Caucus will be more legislatively effective in the core Latinx issue areas of health, education, public lands, and immigration[92] than on legislation in other issue areas.

Data & Methods

In order to test the legislative effectiveness of the Hispanic Caucus, it is first necessary to determine the best way to measure legislative effectiveness. There are two primary methods to measure effectiveness in prior research. One method calculates a legislator's effectiveness as their "hit rate," or the percentage of bills sponsored by that legislator that pass the House or Senate. Another method calculates effectiveness as simply a count of the number of a member's sponsored bills that pass. The latter strategy is preferred in recent scholarship, on the basis that relying on the hit rate measure produces biased or inefficient estimates of legislative effectiveness because the measure does not account for the total number of bills introduced by an individual member of Congress. A member with a hit rate of 100% who only sponsors one bill should not

[92] I do not include government operations legislation in this hypothesis, despite the fact that many CHC bills are coded as government operations, because relatively few of these bills are explicitly Latinx-focused. Government operations, as a broad issue area, includes many appropriation measures and related bills that are often considered legislative necessities and which do not necessarily affect one demographic group more than others.

necessarily be considered more effective than a member with a hit rate of 50% on thirty sponsored bills, i.e. passing 15 bills (Anderson et al. 2003, 362). The majority of prior studies of legislative effectiveness rely on one or the other of these measurements, though others rely on surveys of legislators and staffers to construct a reputation-based measure of legislative success (Miquel and Snyder, Jr. 2006).

Volden and Wiseman (2014) utilize yet another measure—the Legislative Effectiveness Score—to assess the effectiveness of individual legislators. For each member of the House from the 93rd to the 110th Congress, they code each bill introduced by a member as commemorative, substantive, or substantive and significant. Each bill's progress through the legislative process is recorded, based on completing certain steps: introduced in the House, received action in committee, received action beyond committee, passed the House, and became law (19). These 15 measures are then combined and normalized, with greater weight given to receiving action in or beyond committee, passing the House and becoming law. Thus, a sponsor whose legislation receives a floor vote or passes the House is considered more effective than a sponsor whose legislation dies in committee, and accordingly has a higher LES.

Another issue that arises when studying is legislative effectiveness is the term "legislative effectiveness" itself. Most studies of legislative effectiveness treat the term as interchangeable with "legislative success". However, other studies take issue with this conflation of the two terms. According to Hasecke and Mycoff (2007), legislative effectiveness refers to a situation where "a member has been able to get a policy objective, consistent with his or her own preferences enacted into law," while legislative success is taken to mean "sponsoring a bill that is chosen as the legislative vehicle" for

enacting a particular policy objective. An individual member can thus be effective without necessarily being successful (609; see also Adler et al. 2003).

Here, I refer to legislative effectiveness as defined by Hasecke and Mycoff, rather than legislative success, because I am looking at the effectiveness of the Hispanic Caucus when it comes to any legislation that targets Latinx interests regardless of whether the legislative vehicle is an item sponsored by a member of the Caucus. I opt against measuring the effectiveness of the Caucus as either its hit rate or as a count of the number of bills supported by the Caucus that pass the House, because such measurement ignores the fact that the vast majority of bills do not get out of committee, much less receive a final passage vote on the floor of the House. Legislative effectiveness, then, must be considered at other stages of the legislative process, such as whether bills or resolutions get reported out of committee or pass the House.

Using a limited version of the Congressional Bills Project dataset (Adler and Wilkerson 2012), I construct for my dependent variable an additive index that indicates how far a bill or resolution advances in the legislative process. The index ranges from 0 to 3, with items receiving a point for each successful step in the legislative process: being reported out of committee, passing the House, and becoming law[93]. I limit the dataset to only those bills that were included on the CHC's legislative agenda from 1977 to 2016, rather than all bills introduced in the time period, to ensure that all estimated effects are with regard to the ability of the CHC to push its desired legislation through the legislative

[93] Every item in the Congressional Bills Project dataset has already been introduced in the House, so giving items a point for introduction is unnecessary.

process rather than all legislation, as this would severely bias the results[94]. This method is similar to how Volden and Wiseman (2014) calculate their Legislative Effectiveness Score for individual legislators, giving more weight to legislation that becomes law than legislation that dies in committee. Where I differ from Volden and Wiseman is that I do not use this information to calculate an LES for the CHC as a whole or each of its individual members, and then test which factors push the LES higher or lower—of primary interest here is what factors affect the probability that a piece of legislation will be successful at these different stages of the legislative process.

My main independent variable is also an additive index, measuring the degree of Hispanic Caucus support for a particular legislative item. This index ranges from 0 to 3, with items receiving a point for each of the following: being sponsored by a CHC member and cosponsored by a majority of the Caucus (see Chapter 4), being the subject of a CHC press release, and whether a Caucus member gave a speech in support of the bill when it was introduced in the House. I expect that items with higher levels of Caucus support will be more likely to advance further in the legislative process even when controlling for other factors that typically affect legislative effectiveness. These factors include the party affiliation of a bill's sponsor and which party is in the majority in the House (Volden and Wiseman 2014; Cox and Terry 2008; Miquel and Snyder, Jr. 2006; Anderson et al. 2003), as well as the gender of a bill's sponsor, the percent of Latinx

[94] The CHC agenda is typically significantly much smaller than the universe of bills introduced in the House in a given session of Congress, meaning there would be an overabundance of zeros in the dataset if I included all bills introduced in the House over the last forty years.

legislators in the House, and the position of an item's sponsor of the committee to which the item is referred.

Because the dependent variable is ordinal, I use ordered logistic regression to test the effect of Caucus support on how far items advance in the legislative process. I run several models that test this relationship under various conditions. First, I estimate the effect for all years in the dataset, 1977 to 2016. I then separate the bills into four separate eras that reflect shifts in party control of the House: Era 1 (Democratic control, 1977-1994), Era 2 (Republican control, 1995-2006), Era 3 (Democratic control, 2007-2010), and Era 4 (Republican control, 2011-2016). These eras also have the benefit of capturing different levels of polarization in the House, with polarization becoming more pronounced in the later eras. With regard to Era 1 and Era 2—the periods of Democratic control—the eras also capture a shift in leadership styles from the vote-focused styles of Tip O'Neill (D-MA), Jim Wright (D-TX), and Tom Foley (D-WA) in Era 1 to the coalition-minded Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) in Era 2.

Results

Over the last forty years, the CHC has placed 365 unique bills and resolutions on its agenda. Each of these pieces of legislation has received varying levels of support from the Caucus. 228 of the 365 pieces of legislation scored a 1 on the CHC support measure, meaning those items were the subject of a CHC press release, a floor speech at the item's introduction, or were sponsored by a majority of the CHC's membership. 61 of the items scored a 2, indicating stronger support by the CHC. Only four pieces of legislation scored a 3, indicating the highest level of CHC support. These items were the subject of a CHC

press release, a floor speech by a CHC member upon the item's introduction in the House, and were cosponsored by a majority of the CHC's membership. There is also significant variation in how far each of these pieces of legislation advanced through the legislative process. By virtue of being included in the Congressional Bills Project dataset, each of these items cleared the first step of being introduced in the House. The next step in the process, at least in the legislative effectiveness index created here, concerns whether the items get reported out of the committees in the House to which they were referred. Only 58, or 15.89%, of the legislative items supported by the CHC in the last forty years were successfully reported out of their respective committee of referral. 87 legislative items, or 23.84 %, managed to pass the House. Only 32 of the legislative items on the CHC agenda in the last forty years—8.77% of the total and 36.78% of those items that passed in the House—survived all the way through the legislative process to pass the Senate, be signed by the president, and thus be enacted into law. Notably, none of the legislation that scored a 3 on the CHC support index, i.e. legislation that received the most intense CHC support, became law. In fact, 40.63% of the CHC agenda items that became law did not receive any CHC support beyond inclusion on the agenda while another 43.75% only scored 1 on the support index. The remaining five items on the CHC agenda that became law scored a 2 on the support index.[95] This small percentage of

[95] All of these items were bills. Three were symbolic measures that renamed a post office in California (H.R. 4053 in the 109th Congress), awarded a congressional gold medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment of the US Army, known as the Borinqueneers (H.R. 1726 in the 113th Congress), and authorized the construction of a monument commemorating American forces that liberated Guam in World War II in the Pacific National Historical Park in Guam (H.R. 1944 in the 103rd Congress). The other two bills were substantive: H.R. 4312 in the 102nd Congress, a CHC priority mentioned multiple times in archival documents, extended bilingual election requirements in the Voting Rights Act; and H.R. 1281 in the 113th Congress reauthorized a grant program for the detection of heritable disorders in newborns.

CHC priorities becoming law might indicate, to some, that the Caucus is not very effective at pushing its desired legislation through the legislative process. However, when considered alongside the fact that only about 16% of the thousands of bills introduced in each session of Congress *on average* are reported out of committee (Krutz 2005, 315), the CHC actually appears to be slightly more effective than Congress as a whole.

What factors make some bills or resolutions more or less likely to survive through the legislative process, though? Why is it that some legislation is able to pass the House and the Senate before being signed by the president while some legislation languishes in committees or is defeated in roll call votes on the floor of the House? Looking at Table 5.1 below, the degree of the CHC's support for a specific piece of legislation has a significant effect on how far legislation gets in the legislative process. This effect, though, goes in the opposite direction of what I expect—increased CHC support for a piece of legislation *decreases* the chances of that legislation scoring a 3 on the success index and becoming law. As noted earlier, not one of the four bills that received the highest level of CHC support became law. Higher levels of CHC support for legislation, i.e. the CHC engages in multiple activities that signals its support for the legislation in question, actually makes it harder for legislation to get out of committee, pass the House, and ultimately become law. Thus, the CHC does not appear to be all that effective at ushering Latinx interests through the House. The steady increase in the proportion of Latinxs serving in the House between 1977 and 2016 also does not seem to matter, as the interaction term between the percent of Latinxs in the House and the CHC support measure is insignificant.

Table 5.1 Effect of Level of CHC Support on Legislative Success[96]

	All Eras 1977-2016
CHC Support Index	-1.231*
	(0.630)
% Latinx * CHC Support	0.065
	(0.104)
Republican President	-0.533*
	(0.274)
Republican Sponsor	0.009**
	(0.004)
No. of Cosponsors	0.001
	(0.002)
Chair of Referral Cmte	2.308***
	(0.414)
Member of Referral Cmte	0.566**
	(0.288)
Cut 1	0.930
	(0.729)
Cut 2	1.884**
	(0.738)
Cut 3	3.279***
	(0.773)
N	365
Pseudo R^2	0.1636
Log likelihood	-265.112

Standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Having a Republican president also decreases the chances of items on the CHC agenda making it very far in the House. Having the legislation's primary sponsor being a

[96] The control for gender is not shown here, due to statistical insignificance in all specifications of the model.

Republican, though, does not decrease the chances of the legislation. The effect of a Republican sponsor is positive and significant, though the coefficient is so small as to be indistinguishable from zero, indicating a negligible substantive effect. In accordance with theories on the power of committees in Congress acting as gatekeepers that significantly affect what bills survive beyond committees, having a sponsor who is either the chair of the committee of referral or a member of the committee of referral both have significant and positive effects on whether a bill advances through the legislative process. In more recent sessions of Congress, this power of committees is perhaps indistinguishable from the power of party leaders in the House; in this model, though, committees appear to be more powerful than party leaders. Thus, it is possible that even though explicit support for legislation by the CHC might harm a bill or resolution's prospects of passing the House and becoming law, individual members of the Caucus may make up for this by exerting their influence on committees—whether as chairs or rank and file members—to push the legislation to the House floor.

Changes in Party Control

When I analyze discrete eras in congressional history separately, important differences emerge. In Era 1, a lengthy period of Democratic control of the House from the 95th to 103rd Congresses (1977-1994), the level of CHC support is not a significant predictor of legislation going further in the legislative process. Even if the effect of CHC support were significant, the coefficient is negatively signed, indicating again that stronger CHC support for a bill or resolution would actually harm that item's chances of being reported out of committee, passing the House, or becoming law. In fact, in Era 1

there is only one significant predictor of success for bills or resolutions: whether the bill's sponsor is a member of the committee of referral. Having the sponsor of a bill or resolution as a member of the committee of referral has a strong positive effect on how much success is enjoyed by that legislation (and its sponsor). Again, there is the chance here that individual CHC members may make up for the lack of collective CHC influence on the outcomes of the legislative process by virtue of their positions on committees, but only if the legislation in question is referred to those committees with CHC members.

These results are also not unexpected, given the more moderate nature of the Democratic Caucus, relatively low partisan polarization in the House, and the styles of the Speakers from this era. The CHC's positions on key legislation, while certainly in line with the rest of today's Democrats, were notably more liberal than those of their Democratic colleagues throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. This divergence is epitomized by legislation such as the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (see Chapter 4), a conservative immigration reform measure sponsored and voted for by many Democrats in the House. The styles of Speakers Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright, and Tom Foley also did not help the CHC in this era. Each of these Speakers was primarily focused on making sure they had the necessary votes to pass legislation, including votes from the more moderate and conservative wing of the party (Rohde 1991). This concern with whipping votes translated to a willingness among these Speakers to ignore the voice of the CHC, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, because the CHC did not comprise a sufficiently large number of potential votes that their exclusion would jeopardize Democratic priorities in the House. Thus, even with less polarization between the two

parties, the CHC was often on the outside looking in, in no small part because of the dearth of Latinxs serving in Congress.

Era 2 spans the 104th through 109th Congresses, from 1995 to 2009. This era began with the Republican Party taking back control of the House, accompanied by Rep. Newt Gingrich's (R-GA) ascension to the position of Speaker of the House. Especially notable in this time period is the successful move by Gingrich and the Republican Party to ban legislative service organizations (LSOs). According to members of the CHC and the CBC, as well as other critics, Gingrich and other Republicans intended the ban as a way of weakening racial minorities precisely when African Americans, Latinxs, and women were gaining power and influence in the House. In the words of Rep. Jose Sérrano, the CHC "got a little too uppity" when fighting with Republicans over immigration issues (Cooper 1994). The ban was implemented early in the 104th Congress, severely limiting the resources available to the CHC and other congressional caucuses. The CHC did reorganize later in the 104th Congress as a congressional member organization (CMO), though this reorganization left the CHC with fewer dedicated staffers than before and without its own office space on the Hill.

Given these developments, it is not all that surprising that the CHC's support for legislation has a significant negative effect on how far that legislation goes in the House. The Republican Party under Gingrich was diametrically opposed to the CHC on core Latinx issues such as immigration, meaning any Latinx interest legislation would face serious hurdles in even getting referred to a committee (especially when taking into account Gingrich's shuffling of committee chairs). One positive and significant effect on legislative success comes from the partisan affiliation of a bill or resolution's sponsor.

Bills sponsored by Republicans were more likely to make it further in the legislative process than bills sponsored by Democrats. Thus, the 14 items on the CHC agenda that were sponsored by Republicans were more likely to advance further in the House than the remaining 126 items on the CHC's agenda. Furthermore, having a bill's sponsor be the chair of the committee of referral strongly increases the chances of the bill making it further in the legislative process; given this was an era of Republican control of the House, this benefit could not be enjoyed by any CHC members as all CHC members from the 105th Congress onward have been Democrats.

Table 5.2 Effect of Level of CHC Support on Legislative Success in Different Eras

	Era 1 1977-1994	Era 2 1995-2006	Era 3 2007-2010	Era 4 2011-2016
CHC Support Index	-1.223 (1.898)	-8.561** (3.536)	29.245** (13.406)	1.301 (7.264)
% Latinx * CHC Support	0.164 (0.495)	1.482** (0.610)	-4.636** (2.065)	-0.249 (0.952)
Republican President	-1.194 (0.798)	-1.416* (0.726)	-2.599** (1.033)	—[97]
Republican Sponsor	-0.140 (11.050)	0.030*** (0.010)	0.001 (0.017)	0.024 (0.018)
No. of Cosponsors	0.004 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.005)	-0.002 (0.003)	0.009 (0.006)
Chair of Referral Cmte	0.479 (0.661)	3.430** (1.435)	3.712*** (0.808)	2.938 (2.708)
Member of Referral Cmte	1.795*** (0.685)	-1.127 (0.774)	0.538 (0.555)	-1.934 (1.409)
Cut 1	-14.345	2.053	-3.595	4.033**

[97] The control for the president's party affiliation is not included in Era 4 due to a lack of variation—Barack Obama was president for the entirety of this era. As with the full model, the control variable for gender was excluded due to consistent insignificance.

	(1104.991)	(1.993)	(2.446)	(1.960)
Cut 2	-13.773	3.008	-1.509	4.774**
	(1104.991)	(2.022)	(2.415)	(2.040)
Cut 3	-12.475	4.644**	0.523	5.930***
	(1104.991)	(2.119)	(2.429)	(2.179)
N	98	140	86	41
Pseudo R^2	0.1979	0.2905	0.2596	0.1491
Log likelihood	-69.464	-62.075	-72.840	-24.586

Standard errors in parentheses. * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Democrats regained control of the House in the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007 to 2010). For the first time, stronger CHC support for a particular piece of legislation has a positive and significant effect on how well that legislation fares in the legislative process. That is, legislation that receives more attention from the CHC in the form of speeches, press releases, and cosponsorship is more likely to pass the House and become law than legislation that receives little or no support from the CHC. Part of this newfound legislative success for the CHC can be explained by Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) ascension to the role of Speaker of the House. Unlike Democratic Speakers O'Neill, Wright, and Foley in Era 1, Pelosi's goal as speaker was not only to ensure sufficient votes to pass Democratic priorities in the House but also to ensure that all groups within the Democratic Caucus felt included and represented by the Democratic leadership and its agenda (Peters, Jr. and Simon Rosenthal 2010; Pearson 2015). This is in no small part because in the 110th and 111th Congresses, Latinxs and other minority groups were much better represented in the House than in Congresses past. Thus, these groups represented a larger proportion of the votes required by the Democrats to ensure the passage of their own legislative priorities. This era is also marked by increased partisan polarization and a

leftward ideological shift in the Democratic Party, bringing the ideological means of the Democrats and the CHC much closer together.

The effect of a bill's sponsor being chair of the committee of referral is again positive and significant, speaking to the power of committee chairs in shaping discussions on the floor of the House. However, at this point in time committee chairs are less independent of the party leadership, and thus the results here speak more to the overarching power of parties and party leaders in the House than the independent power of committees in the House. A potential counter to this effect, though, is the significant negative effect of having a Republican president in office. Even with Democratic control of the House, having George W. Bush as president for the first two years of this era diminished the chances of CHC priorities ultimately becoming law; this effect might be exaggerated, however, because more of the CHC's priorities in Era 3 happened to be introduced in the last two years of Bush's presidency. 53 out of the 86 items on the CHC's agenda in this era were introduced in the 110th Congress, compared to only 33 in the 111th Congress; in the 111th Congress, though, proportionally more of the CHC's priorities advanced beyond the committee stage than in the 110th Congress.

Finally, Era 4 represents the Republican Party regaining control of the House in the 2010 midterms through the end of the 114th Congress in 2016. Once again the variable for the CHC support index is insignificant, but positive. If the effect of increased CHC support for legislation were significant, it would increase that legislation's chances of surviving the legislative process. In fact, all variables fail to meet standard levels of significance in Era 4. This is not too surprising for variables such as whether a bill's sponsor is chair of the committee of referral or a member of the majority party, as

Republicans control the House in this era of high polarization and nearly all CHC agenda items are Democrat-sponsored bills that would likely be blocked at the committee stage on principle. Given the high degree of partisan polarization and gridlock in these most recent sessions of Congress, it is not all that surprising that legislation sponsored by members of the minority party is less likely to survive in Republican-controlled committees and in roll call votes where they require significant Republican support in order to pass.

Latinx Issue Areas

Determining the relationship between CHC support and legislation's passage by issue area is more difficult. Because there are too few bills or resolutions on the CHC agenda in a given issue area—the lowest number of items in any one issue area is two, while the highest is only 58—it is not possible to conduct reliable statistical analyses. Thus, there isn't a way to test the causal relationship between intensity of CHC support and how far an item advances in the legislative process.

It is, however, possible to look at how many items on the CHC's support agenda in the core issue areas identified in Hypothesis 3 end up passing the House as a descriptive measure that does shed some light on the legislative effectiveness of the CHC. Table 5.3 shows the effectiveness rate of the CHC for legislative items in the health, education, immigration, and public lands issue areas.

Table 5.3 CHC Legislative Effectiveness by Issue Area

	Number of Items	# Pass House	% Pass House
Health	58	12	20.69%
Education	47	11	23.40%
Immigration	26	0	0.00%
Public Lands (Territories)	28	7	25.00%

In three of the issue areas—health, education, and public lands—the CHC enjoys moderate success. At least 20% of the CHC's priorities in each of these issue areas end up passing the House, a remarkable statistic given the relatively low number of bills that manage to pass in either chamber of Congress, let alone receive a floor vote, in a given session of Congress. A potential explanation is that many of the bills or resolutions in these issue areas are also favored by a majority of the Democratic Party, providing these items with a higher chance of surviving throughout the legislative process. This does not mean, however, that the CHC played no role in pushing these items through the House. While the power of partisanship may have played a significant role in protecting these items as they advanced through the House, the efforts of a unified coalition of Democratic members certainly cannot be overlooked. This is especially true with controversial legislation in these issue areas that was considered in the most recent sessions of Congress. For example, the Affordable Care Act would not have passed in the 110th Congress if any Democrats chose to vote no on the landmark legislation. The decision of the CHC to fully support the legislation, then, was vital to the bill's survival. Even though the passage of the ACA was a largely Democratic priority, the CHC saw the

bill as a win for the Latinx community despite the lack of a public option provision and acted accordingly to ensure the CHC's favored outcome.

However, despite this example there is also clear evidence that partisan polarization seriously mitigates the effectiveness of the CHC. Not one of the immigration measures supported by the CHC passed the House. This includes the CHC's alternative immigration reform bill that was introduced to challenge the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the most recent bipartisan attempts at immigration reform in the 113th Congress. Immigration has always been a divisive issue, with the CHC and the Democratic Party aligning to the left of the ideological spectrum and supporting increases in immigration while lessening the burden on immigrants who wish to live in the U.S. Such positions are diametrically opposed by the Republican Party, which exerts significant effort to block liberal immigration legislation or push through strongly conservative legislation to curb immigration or cut the benefits made available to immigrants. This stark partisan disagreement on immigration means that as control of the House shifts, so too does the viability of immigration legislation that aids immigrants in their quest to come to the U.S. When Democrats are in the majority, such legislation is more likely to pass, though paradoxically the CHC is less likely to wield much influence on the provisions of such bills. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, for example, was sponsored by Democrats and passed in a Democrat-controlled House over the strong opposition of the CHC. While the Democratic Party has become more receptive to the desires of the CHC on immigration since the 1980's, the fact remains that Democratic control does not guarantee perfect synchronicity between the CHC and Democratic Caucus agendas. For the CHC, though, this situation is preferable to a

Republican-controlled House determined to crack down on all immigration, whether legal or illegal. At least with regard to immigration, then, it is difficult to argue that the CHC is effective, though this is not for a lack of effort on the part of the CHC. Immigration as an issue area is simply too polarized for the CHC to tilt the scales one way or another.

Blocking Legislation

While legislative effectiveness to this point has been operationalized as the passage of legislation that promotes or protects Latinx interests, just as much attention must be paid to the CHC's efforts to *block* legislation that actively attempts to harm Latinxs and their interests. As mentioned earlier, Democrats have always comprised a majority of CHC members; in fact, the CHC has been comprised entirely of Democrats since the 105th Congress. As a consequence, whenever Democrats are the House minority, the CHC is hard-pressed to find opportunities to pass Latinx-friendly legislation. Rather, the CHC must focus on blocking Republican-sponsored legislation that aims to reduce Latinx eligibility for government benefits, curtail immigration, or diminish support for programs supported by the CHC such as bilingual education programs. This reality is captured succinctly in interviews. When asked what one of the biggest challenges has been for the Caucus, one representative replied:

> "Well I mean, well obviously—most of us, or all of us, being Democrats and being in the minority party in Congress, obviously we're hopeful for a period soon that we can be in the majority and actually, you know, move on many of these issues and many of the bills we support. Right now, like I said, *it's mostly defense* – so I would say being buried in the minority party has been difficult."[98]

[98] Representative C, personal interview.

When the Democratic Party is in the minority the CHC is relatively powerless to move on the bills that CHC members support and would like to see pass the House. Legislative effectiveness as measured above, then, does not make as much sense when the Caucus is in the minority.

This does not mean that the efforts of the CHC to block legislation are only relevant when Democrats are in the minority. There have been multiple instances in the past when the CHC has opposed Democratic legislation because of the belief that such legislation in fact harms Latinx interests, or because the CHC feels that the legislation in question represents a compromise in which Latinxs lose more than they gain. Regardless of Democratic majority status, then, it is not possible to tell the entire story of legislative effectiveness vis-à-vis the Hispanic Caucus without also delving more deeply into how effective the CHC is at preventing legislation the Caucus deems unfavorable from advancing very far through the legislative process.

Using the same sources for bill identification discussed in the previous chapter and earlier in this chapter, there are a total of 54 legislative items that were included on the CHC's legislative agendas over the last forty years by virtue of the CHC's opposition to the items. Opposition was gleaned from systematic analysis of CHC press releases, archival documents, and statements in both the *Congressional Record* and *CQ Weekly*. Because opposition is not easily recorded through an activity such as cosponsorship, I did not use the cosponsorship standard described in Chapter 4. Without a source similar to cosponsorship, it is difficult to disentangle CHC and Democratic opposition to any given piece of legislation, complicating attempts to make causal claims with regard to CHC

efforts at blocking legislation. There are also simply too few items on the CHC's opposition agenda to carry out any kind of regression analysis. Looking at the descriptive statistics, though, does paint an interesting portrait of the CHC and its oppositional efforts in the House.

Table 5.4 Content of CHC Opposition Agenda by Type of Legislative Item

	Number of Items	Percentage of Items
Amendments	9	16.67%
Resolutions	8	14.8%
Bills	37	68.52%

Of the 54 items opposed by the CHC, the clear majority are bills. A full two thirds of the CHC's opposition agenda—68.52%—is comprised of bills, which is not surprising given that anti-Latinx bills are the most significant threat to Latinx interests. In this vein, it makes sense that amendments constitute the next-largest segment of the opposition agenda at 16.67%. Resolutions make up the smallest proportion of the CHC's opposition agenda at 14.8%.

Another relevant distinction to make here is between appropriations and budget measures versus other types of legislation. Oftentimes appropriations and budget measures are highly partisan, especially in recent sessions of Congress, and so the CHC's opposition to these measures may be more closely tied to Democratic partisan identity rather than concern for the Latinx community and its interests. Thus, it is no surprise that the CHC has opposed such House resolutions as those aimed at the passage of the GOP budget in the 109th Congress. There is a common thread among the appropriations-based

amendments and bills opposed by the CHC: of the four amendments and six bills, in the majority of cases CHC opposition was driven by the belief that either the amendments themselves or certain provisions of the bills were explicitly designed to harm Latinx immigrants and/or Latinx interests in other issue areas. For example, in the 96th Congress the CHC opposed Rep. William Ashbrook's (R-OH) amendment on H.R. 7998—the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1981—that would have reduced funding for bilingual education programs championed by the CHC. In other instances, the issue in question was immigration, such as in the 110th Congress when the CHC opposed two Democratic appropriations measures, H.R. 3093 and H.R. 2764, because of the inclusion of what the CHC saw as anti-immigrant provisions or in the 114th Congress when the CHC opposed H. Amdt. 1199 on H.R. 5293, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for 2017, which would prohibit the use of funds to enlist in the military immigrants with deferred status through President Obama's DACA program.

Table 5.5 CHC Blocking Effectiveness on Appropriations/Budget Measures

	Number of Items	Failed/Did Not Pass House	Agreed To/Pass House
Amendments	4	2	2
Resolutions	4	1	3
Bills	6	0	6

Table 5.5 shows the overall effectiveness of the CHC when it comes to blocking appropriations or budget related amendments, resolutions, and bills. Of the 9 amendments opposed by the CHC, 4 were attached to appropriations bills. The CHC broke even with

these amendments: two were agreed to—one by voice vote and one by recorded vote—while two failed, again one by voice vote and the other by recorded vote. The CHC was less successful at blocking budget resolutions, such as H.Con.Res. 95 and H.Con.Res. 376 in the 109th Congress, introducing the GOP budget for Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007 respectively. Three of the four budget resolutions—notably, all introducing a GOP budget plan during periods of GOP control of the House—passed the House. The one remaining budget resolution, H.J.Res. 99 in the 114th Congress making continuing appropriations for Fiscal Year 2017, died in committee. Thus, the CHC was only 25% effective at blocking resolutions it chose to oppose. The CHC is least effective, though, when it comes to blocking appropriations bills. The CHC has opposed six such bills over the last four decades, and all six of these bills passed the House. Four of these bills went on to become law, signaling a clear loss for the CHC. Overall, out of 14 appropriations or budget related items opposed by the CHC, 11 were agreed to or passed the House while only three failed to get as far in the legislative process. Given that these are appropriations or budget measures, though, it is possible that CHC opposition was never going to be sufficient to overcome 1) the perception that such measures are considered by necessary by nearly all members of Congress and are thus nearly assured to pass, and 2) the intense support of the majority party, which will endeavor to make sure that measures funding the government will always pass lest the failure to pass be used against the majority in future elections.

Focusing only on non-appropriations measures, we see similar trends. Of the five non-appropriations amendments, three failed in the House on recorded votes. One amendment, H. Amdt. 534 on H.R. 2 the Student Results Act of 1999 in the 106th

Congress, was agreed to in the House. One amendment, which aimed to designate English as the official language of the federal government, was agreed to in the House but only after the amendment itself had been amended to minimize the part of the amendment opposed by the CHC[99]. The blocking effectiveness rate of the CHC on amendments, then, is a respectable 60%.

Table 5.6 CHC Blocking Effectiveness – Non-Appropriations Measures

	Number of Items	Failed/Did Not Pass House	Agreed To/Passed House
Amendments	5	3	2
Resolutions	4	2	2
Bills	31	6	25

When it comes to blocking non-budgetary resolutions, though, the CHC is not as effective. The CHC is not necessarily inept when it comes to blocking resolutions either, though. Of the four resolutions, one died in committee—H.J.Res. 171 in the 103rd Congress, which proposed a constitutional amendment to make English the official language of the United States. One resolution—H.J.Res. 499 in the 100th Congress, calling on the President to decertify Mexico as an anti-drug partner—was reported out of committee but failed to pass the House. The other two resolutions—H.J.Res. 58 in the 105th Congress and H.Res. 639 in the 114th Congress—both managed to pass the House. Even though a resolution passing the House does not carry any force of law, their passage

[99] Even though the amendment was amended in a way that would appear to make the original more amenable to the CHC, there is no record of the CHC updating its stance on the amendment. I treat the agreement on this amendment, then, as a loss for the CHC, especially since the revised version of the amendment still allowed for the possibility of making English the official language for all federal government business at some point in the future.

still represents an inability on the part of the CHC to convince a majority of the House to side with the Latinx community on issues considered important enough to be the subjects of House resolutions. On non-budget resolutions, though, the CHC essentially broke even—half of the resolutions failed to pass the House while the other half did pass.

The CHC is least effective when it comes to blocking bills. Of 31 bills, only two bills died in committee while four were reported out of committee but either did not receive a floor vote or failed to pass in their respective floor vote. 25 of the bills opposed by the CHC, though, managed to pass the House. Only seven of these bills ultimately became law, though, representing something of a win for the CHC[100]. However, since these bills still passed the House it is difficult to argue that this should not count against the CHC's efforts at blocking legislation with which it does not agree. Thus, the blocking effectiveness rate of the CHC with regard to bills is only 19.35%, demonstrating the relative weakness of the CHC as a force of legislative opposition. This does not mean that the CHC's opposition to certain legislation is wholly meaningless—even when unsuccessful at blocking legislation, the CHC's vocal opposition to a bill through publicly accessible forms as press releases and floor speeches can raise awareness of that legislation, and signal to Latinx communities that the CHC is still committed to representing their interests despite the best efforts of unfriendly legislators.

Because the CHC approaches its role in Congress differently depending on if the Democratic Party is in the minority or the majority in the House, it makes sense to also

[100] Since bills becoming law is also contingent on the approval of both the Senate and the President, it is difficult to say that the CHC is directly responsible for these 18 bills not becoming law. At best, it might be possible to say that the two bills that failed in conference committee were affected by CHC opposition in some way.

analyze the CHC's blocking effectiveness during periods of differing partisan control. Table 5.7 shows the blockage rates for the CHC during periods of Democratic control, i.e. from 1977 to 1994 and from 2007 to 2010. Only 16 out of the 54 items opposed by the CHC were opposed during periods of Democratic control: five amendments, two resolutions, and 9 bills. Out of these 16 items, four were appropriations-related. All three of the non-appropriations amendments failed, as did both of the resolutions, indicating five clear wins for the CHC. Keeping with the overall trend, the CHC lost more on bills: of seven non-appropriations bills, one bill died in committee, one bill was reported out of committee and subsequently failed, and five bills passed the House with two of these five becoming law. Thus, the CHC was only effective at blocking 28.57% of the bills it opposed during Democratic control of the House.

Table 5.7 CHC Blocking Effectiveness During Democratic Control

	Number of Items	Failed/Did Not Pass House	Agreed To/Passed House
Amendments (General)	3	3	0
Resolutions (General)	2	2	0
Bills (General)	7	2	5
Amendments (Appropriations)	2	1	1
Resolutions (Appropriations)	0	–	–
Bills (Appropriations)	2	0	2

The CHC was equally ineffective when looking at appropriations-related amendments and bills. Of two such amendments, one was agreed to and one failed, while both of the opposed appropriation bills passed. While only one of these appropriations bills became law, the fact that both passed the House still demonstrates a lack of effectiveness on the part of the CHC.

Just because the CHC has always been primarily comprised of Democrats does not mean that the CHC only opposed GOP-backed legislation. During the periods of Democratic control of the House, the CHC opposed eight Democrat-sponsored bills—including two appropriations measures—and one resolution, compared to one GOP-sponsored bill, one GOP resolution, and five GOP-sponsored amendments. However, despite this imbalance the effectiveness of the CHC appears to be directly related to the majority status of the Democratic Party and the strength of partisanship in the House. Out of the seven GOP-backed items opposed by the CHC, the bill and resolution both died in committee while four of the amendments failed, leaving only one amendment that was agreed to by voice vote in the 96th Congress. In contrast, seven of the eight Democratic bills opposed by the CHC passed the House with three of those seven becoming law. The Democratic resolution was reported by committee but did not pass the House. The effectiveness of the CHC at blocking GOP-sponsored legislation is significantly boosted by Democratic control of the House, especially in later sessions of Congress, as the Democratic majority is unlikely to let through any Republican measure that is not supported by a majority of the Democratic Party. This same dynamic works against the CHC when it comes to Democratic measures—even though the CHC is comprised mostly of Democrats, it is still too small and does not control enough votes to force the

Democratic leadership to heed the CHC's wishes when it comes to legislation that is ostensibly seen as favorable by a majority of Democrats in the House.

Table 5.8 CHC Blocking Effectiveness During Republican Control

	Number of Items	Failed/Did Not Pass House	Agreed To/Passed House
Amendments (General)	2	0	2
Resolutions (General)	2	0	2
Bills (General)	24	4	20
Amendments (Appropriations)	2	1	1
Resolutions (Appropriations)	4	1	3
Bills (Appropriations)	4	0	4

The effect of partisanship is even more clearly seen during periods of Republican control of the House, i.e. 1995 to 2006 and 2011 to 2016. A Republican sponsored every amendment, resolution, or bill on the CHC's opposition agenda during these time periods, demonstrating the general antipathy of the Republican Party toward Latinx interests (at least in the eyes of the CHC). 10 items were focused on appropriations or the budget, leaving 28 non-appropriations or budget items. Of these non-appropriations or budget items, two of two amendments were agreed to, two of two resolutions passed the House, and 20 bills passed the House with five becoming law. Thus, the CHC only won on four non-appropriations measures, with one bill dying in committee and three bills reported out of committee but failing to subsequently pass the House. The CHC did not

do any better on appropriations or budget focused legislation during periods of Republican control. Of two amendments, one passed and one failed; of four resolutions, three passed while one died in committee; and of four bills, all four passed the House while three became law. Thus, while the CHC is relatively weak when it comes to blocking legislation during periods of Democratic control it is downright powerless when it comes to attempting to block legislation during periods of Republican control.

This disparity between periods of Democratic and Republican control, as well as the overall trends in the CHC's blocking effectiveness, together highlight the continuing power of partisanship and polarization in the House. Even though the CHC is a de facto faction of the Democratic Party, the power of the party apparatus is difficult to overcome even when CHC members strongly disagree with the legislation offered by their Democratic colleagues. The priority for the Democratic Party is passing legislation preferred by a majority of the Democratic Party, a mindset that will continue to disadvantage the CHC so long as it comprises less than a majority of the Democratic Caucus's membership. The fact that the CHC only opposes Republican measures during periods of Republican control does indicate, though, that the rest of the Democratic Party is willing to work with the Caucus—or at least not work against it—when the Democratic Party is in the minority. Where the power of partisanship and polarization comes into play, though, is in the inability of the CHC to prevent legislation of any type from advancing through the legislative process.

Non-Traditional Forms of Effectiveness

Despite the fact the CHC appears relatively ineffective in terms of passing legislation, this is not the only form of legislative effectiveness that ought to be considered here. Prior scholarship highlights at least one way of measuring effectiveness that does not rely on the passage of legislation—Miquel and Snyder, Jr. (2006) and Hall (1996) both rely on a reputational measure of legislative effectiveness. To construct this measure, members of Congress and congressional staffers respond to survey questions asking them to assess the legislative acumen of other members of Congress, based on whatever factors the respondents consider integral to being an effective lawmaker. Such a measure, though, does not necessarily capture the efforts of legislators who choose to work together as in the CHC—this survey-based measure focuses on the reputation of an individual legislator, rather than a group of legislators. Thus, when discussing the effectiveness of the CHC beyond the ability to pass bills, resolutions, or amendments, we must choose a standard that applies to the CHC as a whole.

In the course of analyzing the archival materials of the CHC and conducting interviews with CHC members and staffers, it became clear that the CHC did not focus the entirety of its resources and efforts in the House on passing or blocking legislation. Just as much attention was given to activities that receive little attention among the public but are no less important in affecting the activities of Congress in the long term. These include the CHC advocating for its members' appointments to powerful and influential committees in the House; the CHC attempting to influence a wide variety of executive nominations, including for cabinet secretaries and seats within the federal judiciary; the CHC acting as a training ground for members with aspirations to Democratic House leadership; and the CHC publicly voicing the interests of Latinxs and sending letters to

other legislators to garner support for CHC positions. The legislative effectiveness of the CHC then, and by extension coalitional representation of the Latinx community, can be measured by paying attention to instances where the CHC successfully engaged in one or more of these activities.[101]

Congressional Committees

As mentioned in Chapter 4, congressional committees traditionally have a significant amount of power. Even today, with tremendous increases in polarization and centralization of power in the hands of party leaders (Curry 2015; Lee 2016), being the chair of a congressional committee or subcommittee still imbues a member with a significant amount of influence in the issue areas that fall within the committee's jurisdiction. It makes sense, then, that the CHC would attempt to get as many of its members as possible seats on powerful House committees such as Appropriations, Ways and Means, or Rules.

Within the archives, there are three such instances of the CHC working behind the scenes to influence committee assignments within the Democratic Caucus. The earliest example was in September of 1984. The CHC drafted a letter to Speaker Tip O'Neill, requesting that Rep. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands), be appointed to the immensely powerful Appropriations Committee. In the letter, the CHC emphasized de Lugo's willingness to be a team player and to support the goals of the Democratic Caucus. There

[101] I do not count instances of failure against the CHC here. The simple act of making present the interests of the Latinx community by, say, promoting a Latinx nominee for a federal judgeship, thrusts Latinx interests into the spotlight regardless of the outcome of a nomination process that the CHC has exceedingly little ability to alter, given there are only two Senators currently among the CHC's members.

was no explicit mention of de Lugo's presence on Appropriations as a potential boon for Latinx representation, though the CHC's letter did indicate a belief that de Lugo's inclusion "would enhance the configuration of the Committee" without counting against the restriction on how many Democrats could serve on the committee given that de Lugo was a non-voting delegate.[102] This request ultimately failed, and de Lugo was not appointed to Appropriations.

Later in 1984, the CHC again tried to influence committee assignments, though this attempt was in a way much more significant than attempting to get a CHC member assigned to Appropriations. Writing again to Speaker O'Neill, the CHC urged the appointment of the Chair of the CHC—Robert García (D-NY), at the time—to the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. While Appropriations is a powerful committee because it is the committee of jurisdiction for all appropriations bills that control government spending and thus significant portions of funding for other legislation, Steering and Policy is in a sense more powerful in that members of this committee both advise party leaders on policy (though perhaps less so in the contemporary Congress) and determine committee assignments for the Democratic Caucus. Even without a seat on Appropriations, the CHC could theoretically influence the actions of Appropriations and other congressional committees by having a say in which other members were assigned to those committees. Contrasted to the letter sent on behalf of de Lugo, this letter specifically emphasized the growing political role of the Latinx population in the United States. The CHC argued that because of this growing

[102] Letter to Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., September 26, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 1, Folder 1.

Latinx presence and influence, "to have Hispanic members serving on this body would give a unique perspective to the decision-making role that this committee serves in Congress". The presence of the CHC Chair on Steering and Policy would also "contribute to a broader-based consensus for Democratic policy".[103] However, as with the request for de Lugo to receive a seat on Appropriations, the CHC was also unsuccessful here and García was not appointed to Steering and Policy.[104]

The last archival example again concerns the Appropriations Committee. In April of 1992, the CHC sent a letter to Speaker Tom Foley (D-WA) requesting that not one but two CHC members—José Serrano (D-NY), and Esteban Torres (D-CA)—be assigned to Appropriations for the 103rd Congress, beginning in January of 1993. Similar to the letter sent to Speaker O'Neill regarding Steering and Policy, this letter also emphasized the representational benefit of having Latinx members on the Appropriations committee. The situation here was slightly different—Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA), a founding member of the CHC, announced his intention to retire from Congress at the end of the 102nd Congress. At the time, Roybal was the only Latinx member serving on Appropriations. According to the CHC, Roybal's departure from the committee would "leave the nation's 24 million Hispanics without an effective voice in the federal appropriations process", a lack that would be "even more noticeable with the anticipated addition of several new Democratic

[103] Letter to Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., October 10, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments, Box 1, Folder 1. The phrasing here also demonstrates the possibility of some divides between the CHC and the rest of the Democratic Caucus in the mid-1980s, which makes the perceived closeness of the two groups on the part of the CHC discussed in Chapter 4 all the more confusing. If the CHC believed the Democratic Caucus needed to appeal more to Latinx interests, then why did the CHC not put more pressure on Democrats when presented with those opportunities?

[104] Ultimately, the CHC did end up with some representation on Steering and Policy when Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ) was assigned to the committee in the early 2000s.

Members" to the CHC in the 103rd Congress.[105] On face, it may appear the CHC over-reached with this request for two seats on Appropriations to make up for the loss of one. However, the CHC's argument appeared to be persuasive to Speaker Foley and Serrano and Torres were both assigned to Appropriations for the 103rd Congress, giving the CHC significant influence on one of the most powerful committees in the House.

While there are no archives to draw on for the most recent sessions of Congress, CHC press releases celebrating members' assignments to committees and subcommittees provide some insight to areas where the CHC has focused its attention and its efforts to gain a foothold within the House in the contemporary Congress. These include instances such as José Serrano and Lucille Roybal-Allard being named chairs of different Appropriations subcommittees. The continued focus of the CHC on gaining a foothold through committees is also on display in the 116th Congress (2019-2020). In this session, the CHC most notably has five members serving on Appropriations: Lucille Roybal-Allard, as Chair of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security; José Serrano, as Chair of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; Henry Cuellar (D-TX), Pete Aguilar (D-CA), and Norma Torres (D-CA). Torres is also the lone CHC member on the Rules Committee. The CHC also has two members on the Ways and Means Committee—Linda Sánchez (D-CA) and Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)—as well as four members on the Judiciary Committee: Lou Correa (D-CA), Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL), Sylvia Garcia (D-TX), and Veronica Escobar (D-TX). Finally, the CHC has two committee chairs: Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) chairs the Committee on Natural Resources,

[105] Letter to Thomas Foley, April 7, 1992. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 2, Folder 8.

while Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) chairs the Small Business Committee. The increased presence of CHC members among committee leadership in this most recent session of Congress is in part a result of the increasing size of the CHC over time (see Chapter 2) but also a testament to the historical efforts of the CHC to push Democratic leadership to be more open to including CHC members in their considerations for committee assignments precisely because of their CHC membership and their connections to the Latinx community.

Executive Appointments

The CHC has also been very active in attempting to shape executive nominations and appointments, most notably within the federal judiciary. Because the CHC is primarily a House caucus, and confirmation votes for executive nominations are only held in the Senate, the CHC's tangible influence on this process is inherently limited. This has not stopped the CHC from sending letters to Senators or issuing numerous press releases stating the CHC's position on a given nominee and trying to persuade others to vote in line with the CHC's interests. In 1984 the CHC sent a letter to Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC)—Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee—expressing the CHC's support of Juan Torruella's nomination for a seat on the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. The letter to Thurmond emphasized the fact that Torruella was the first Puerto Rican nominated for a leadership position at the First Circuit, in addition to recounting Torruella's qualifications to serve as a Circuit Court judge.[106] The CHC's

[106] Letter to Sen. Strom Thurmond, September 5, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 1, Folder 2.

efforts were successful—Torruella was confirmed to as a judge for the First Circuit, providing Latinxs with a voice within the federal judiciary.

In Ronald Reagan's second term, the CHC again promoted a Latinx individual for a judgeship at the federal district court level. Rather than write to the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, though, this time the CHC wrote directly to President Reagan to express its support of Nelson Diaz for the nomination. In this letter, though, the CHC only focused on Diaz's qualifications for the judgeship, with no mention of Diaz's Latinx identity or the importance of his potential nomination for the Latinx community. The decision not to mention the importance of nominating Diaz for the Latinx community is certainly interesting, though not necessarily causal in President Reagan's decision not to nominate Diaz for the judgeship.[107]The CHC continued to attempt to influence executive judicial nominations under President Clinton as well, sending Clinton a letter exhorting the President to nominate a Hispanic judge to replace Byron White on the Supreme Court.[108] As with Nelson Diaz, this appeal to the chief executive was unsuccessful—Clinton did not nominate a Latinx judge to replace Justice White. However, this did not dissuade the CHC from attempting to shape the membership of the federal judiciary. Press releases of the CHC show the group actively supporting Sonia Sotomayor's nomination to the Supreme Court in 2009, but also opposing the nominations of John Roberts for Chief Justice in 2005 and Samuel Alito as an Associate Justice in 2006. The CHC also opposed the circuit court nomination of Leslie Southwick in 2007, while

[107] Letter to President Reagan, 1987. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 2, Folder 2.
[108] Letter to President Clinton, March 23, 1993. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 3, Folder 1.

supporting the circuit court nomination of Goodwin Liu in 2011. Perhaps one of the more notable examples of the CHC attempting to wield influence on judicial nominations came in 2001, though, when the CHC refused to endorse Miguel Estrada's nomination by George W. Bush for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Despite Estrada being Latinx, the CHC opposed his nomination based on its belief that Estrada's positions were antithetical to the interests of the Latinx community. The CHC was not willing to support just any Latinx for a position within the federal judiciary—potential Latinx nominees were still expected to represent the Latinx community and its interests as defined by the CHC and its members.

Aside from judicial nominations, the CHC has also attempted to influence executive nominations to the Cabinet, ambassadorships, and executive agencies in an effort to introduce Latinx voices throughout the executive branch. Based on press releases issued by the CHC in the last decade, the group has been active in trying to influence Cabinet-level nominations for Secretaries of Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and Interior; Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security; Deputy Secretary of Transportation; and Under Secretary of Commerce. Notably, not all of these nominees were Latinx—the CHC chose to support individuals for these Cabinet positions based on the CHC's own judgment about the extent to which the CHC felt it could work with these individuals on behalf of the Latinx community. The CHC also actively—and successfully—pushed for a Latinx to be confirmed as Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, providing a Latinx voice within the executive agency that deals with many issues often taken up by the CHC in its focus on immigration issues.

The (Democratic) Leaders of Tomorrow

Another avenue for the CHC to boost Latinx representation without necessarily passing legislation is in preparing its members for potential leadership positions within the House Democratic Caucus. These positions allow the CHC to exert more control over the legislative agenda of the Democratic Caucus, and—contrary to the findings in the previous chapter—bring that agenda closer to the CHC's own. Of course, CHC members' experiences within the group are no guarantee of a position within the Democratic leadership. Until very recently the Democratic Caucus has heavily relied on seniority to determine not just committee assignments but also positions within the Democratic Caucus. Even as new members of the Democratic Caucus push back against the seniority norm, it still determines which members occupy many of these positions.

With that being said, the CHC has a good track record of placing its members within Democratic leadership, especially those members who also served in leadership in the CHC itself. Xavier Becerra (D-CA) served as Chair of the CHC in the 105th Congress (1997-1998) and continued to be an active member of the CHC on his way to becoming Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus from 2009 to 2013. Becerra then served as Chair of the Democratic Caucus from 2013 until he retired from Congress at the end of 2016 to successfully run for Attorney General of California. Similarly, Linda Sánchez (D-CA) served as Chair of the CHC in the 114th Congress (2015-2016). Immediately afterward, Sánchez became Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus. Ed Pastor (D-AZ) served as CHC Chair in the 104th Congress (1995-1996)—overseeing the CHC's transition from legislative service organization to congressional member organization—before he was

appointed as a deputy whip in 1999. Pastor held his position as a deputy whip until he retired from Congress in 2014, at the end of the 113th Congress. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) never served as Chair of the CHC, but he was an active member within the group and its taskforces before he was appointed Chief Deputy Whip in the 113th Congress. Luján then served as Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, responsible for overseeing and coordinating efforts to get Democrats elected to the House. As a reward for his efforts helping Democrats retake the House majority in the 2018 midterm election, Luján was selected for the position of Assistant House Speaker in the 116th Congress.

Having a member in any one of these positions does not guarantee the representation of Latinx interests, whether by the CHC or by any individual member of Congress. However, the simple fact that within the last 20 years CHC members have consistently gone from being influential within the CHC to being influential within the Democratic Caucus points to the ability of the CHC to provide a voice for the Latinx community that carries weight among the other Democratic members of the House. This is especially so when considered alongside the fact that, prior to the late 1990s, the CHC had few or no members who were simultaneously influential within both the CHC and the Democratic Caucus. Add to this the fact that when a CHC member is considered for one of these leadership positions the remaining members of the CHC support their candidacy, and the continued growth of the CHC underscores the growing benefit of coalitional representation for both CHC members and the Latinx community as a whole.

Making Latinx Voices Present

Perhaps the hardest type of effectiveness to measure, but also the one that most directly speaks to the coalitional representation provided by the CHC, is embodied by the efforts of the group to raise awareness of Latinx interests in Congress through letters sent to colleagues and otherwise giving a voice to the Latinx community, i.e. making the Latinx community present in the House. The most direct example of this kind of effort on the part of the CHC is found in Dear Colleague letters. These letters are sent by members of Congress to other members, often to solicit support for legislation authored by the letter writer. In its history, the CHC has circulated several Dear Colleague letters to the rest of the House. These include a letter sent in May 1984 urging support for H.R. 5231, the Academic Equity and Excellence through Bilingual Education Act of 1984, which was included in the broader bill H.R. 11, an omnibus bill for reauthorizing several education programs. Members of the CHC were original sponsors of H.R. 5231, and wanted to ensure that other members were both aware of and on board with keeping the provisions of H.R. 5231 that were incorporated into H.R. 11.[109] The CHC was so determined, they sent a second Dear Colleague two months later, once again exhorting other members to vote for H.R. 11 and, by extension, for H.R. 5231 and its funding for bilingual education programs.[110]

In 1984, the CHC circulated another Dear Colleague letter concerning the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1984, which the group strongly opposed. The purpose of this letter was to persuade other members of the House to vote against the

[109] Dear Colleague, May 18, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 3.
[110] Dear Colleague, July 23, 1984. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 8, Folder 13.

proposed rule for debate on the bill. According to the CHC, the process under which the rule was developed was "unjust" with an amendment preparation process that was too restrictive in that only amendments proposed during a meeting of the Rules Committee were allowed without notifying members that amendments needed to be submitted to the Rules Committee. The CHC also argued that the Rules Committee failed to fully consider Rep. Ed Roybal's alternative immigration bill, supported by the CHC as a sensible substitute for the IRCA.[111] Other Dear Colleagues focused on a wide variety of issues, including the United Farm Workers movement's grape boycott[112], support for the Minority Small Business Development Act[113], support for H.R. 1561 Hispanic-Serving Institutions of Higher Education Act of 1989[114], and support for H.R. 4312 Voting Rights Language Assistance Act of 1992.[115]

While Dear Colleague letters are effective in some instances, they are not the only tool of the CHC to influence other members of Congress to pay attention to Latinx interests. The CHC also sends letters directly to Representatives and Senators to express the view of the CHC and to persuade the recipient to vote in accordance with the CHC position. In one instance, the CHC sent a letter to Rep. Paul Simon (D-IL)—Chair of the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education—requesting an invitation for the Chair of the CHC to testify in support of provisions within the reauthorization of the Higher

---

[111] Dear Colleague, 1984. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 1, Folder 2.
[112] Dear Colleague, July 25, 1985. Records of the CHC, Official Memorandums 1985-1992, Box 1, Folder 1.
[113] Dear Colleague July 15, 1987. Records of the CHC, Official Memorandums 1985-1992, Box 1, Folder 7.
[114] Dear Colleague April 12, 1989. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 11, Folder 3.
[115] Dear Colleague June 29, 1992. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 2.

Education Act that ensured access to higher education for Latinxs and other minority groups.[116] At another point, the CHC sent a letter to Sen. Dale Bumpers (D-AR)—Chair of the Committee on Small Business—in regard to S. 1993 Minority Business Development Programs Reform Act of 1987 and changes the CHC felt would more greatly benefit the Latinx community were they incorporated into the final version of the bill.[117] The CHC also sent letters to Democratic leadership urging them to bring to the House floor legislation supported by the CHC. The most notable example here is with regard to H.R. 4312, the Voting Rights Language Assistance Act of 1992. The CHC first contacted Rep. Jack Brooks (D-TX), Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, urging Brooks to advance the bill out of committee so that it might receive a vote on the floor of the House.[118] Once this strategy proved successful and the Judiciary Committee reported favorably on H.R. 4312, the CHC sent a letter to Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) urging him to bring the bill to the House floor for a final passage vote.[119] On the same day, the CHC sent the same letter to Speaker Tom Foley, urging him to bring H.R. 4312 to the floor of the House for a vote.[120] These attempts by the CHC proved successful—within a month, H.R. 4312 passed in the House before going on to pass the

[116] Letter to Rep. Paul Simon, March 5, 1984. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 9, Folder 5.
[117] Letter to Sen. Dale Bumpers, February 18, 1988. Records of the CHC, Meeting Minutes with Attachments 1984-1994, Box 2, Folder 4.
[118] Letter to Rep. Jack Brooks, May 14, 1992. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 2.
[119] Letter to Rep. Richard Gephardt, June 29, 1992. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 2.
[120] Letter to Speaker Tom Foley, June 29, 1992. Records of the CHC, Subject Files 1982-1994, Box 1, Folder 2.

Senate, and was ultimately signed into law by President Clinton by the end of August 1992.

Even if the CHC's concerted effort at sending letters to powerful members of the Democratic Caucus to push H.R. 4312 during the 102nd Congress had not been effective, the simple fact the CHC felt it had enough clout to send those letters with the possibility of a credible response by the recipients speaks to the power of the CHC in raising awareness of the Latinx community and its interests, as defined by the CHC and its members. Had the Judiciary Committee not reported the bill to the House, or Democratic leadership not scheduled a final passage vote, the CHC still provided critical information to a powerful committee chair, the House Majority Leader, and the Speaker of the House on an issue deemed critical to the Latinx community and increasing the chances that these legislators would recall that information when considering future legislation that might affect the Latinx community. The same can be said for the Dear Colleague letters sent by the CHC throughout the years—even if the recipients did not vote for the position entailed in the letters, the simple act of sending the letters served as an declaration of the CHC's position and by extension a statement of what position other legislators ought to take if they wanted to be perceived by the CHC as allies of the CHC and the Latinx community.

Conclusion

Thinking about effectiveness in terms of simply passing legislation, we see that the Caucus is relatively effective at passing its priorities in Congress – of the 365 bills and resolutions that comprise the CHC's support agenda over the last forty years, 32 bills

(8.77%) became law. This number is actually high compared to the yearly average for Congress as a whole; even the fact that 87 of the items supported by the CHC, or 23.84%, managed to pass the House is outside the norm for Congress as a whole.

However, as the analyses in this chapter show, these descriptive facts only tell part of the story. While having the CHC in Congress certainly has some benefit for the representation of Latinx interests, the decision of the Caucus to support specific pieces of legislation does not directly translate to increased chances of that legislation passing the House and thus having a chance to be signed into law. The low effectiveness of the CHC is on display even when examining variations in how intensely the CHC supports particular bills or resolutions. Even when the effect of more intense CHC support for legislation is statistically significant, the relationship is the opposite of expectations: more intense CHC support for legislation actually drives down the odds of that legislation advancing further in the legislative process, though the matter might be more that the CHC puts more energy into bills that already have a lesser chance of passing due to other factors.

When looking at specific eras in the history of Congress, though, we see that the CHC's effectiveness is heavily affected by party control and polarization in the House. The level of CHC support is positive and significant only in an era of high polarization and Democratic control of the House, at a time when the ideological gap between the CHC and the rest of the Democratic Party is smaller than in years past. In periods of Republican control, regardless of polarization, the effect of CHC support on the outcomes of the legislative process is either negative and significant or insignificant. When it comes to blocking legislation that the CHC opposes on the basis of that legislation

disproportionately harming the Latinx community, on the whole the Caucus is relatively ineffective regardless of which party controls the House.

Given the steady growth of the CHC over time, which has translated to a much larger coalition agitating in Congress on behalf of the Latinx community, this overall lack of effectiveness is troubling as well as sobering. While the benefits of coalitional representation may be seen in terms of how well the diversity of the Latinx community is represented in the CHC's internal deliberations and the perspective the CHC shares with the rest of the Democratic Caucus, there seems to be little substantive benefit to this particular kind of coalitional representation. However, the results of these analyses do not mean that CHC members think their efforts are meaningless. To some, the issue is not that the CHC is bound to be ineffective; rather, it is simply a question of how cohesive the Caucus is on a particular issue. The more cohesive the CHC is, then the more likely the CHC is to be successful both when supporting and opposing legislation.[121] This need for cohesion is echoed by another staffer, who described effectiveness in Congress as being closely tied to having more votes in the House:

> "With a lot of members and a lot of votes, I think [the CHC] becomes stronger all the time…The [Latinx] community's gaining in political strength and so is [the Caucus]. You know 20 years ago? Yeah, they were representing them but [the Caucus's] voice was smaller just like the community's voice was smaller."[122]

That is, the effectiveness of the CHC is not only to be found in the passage of legislation. Simply having more Latinx members of Congress who are also members of the CHC, in a reflection of the growing size and influence of the diverse Latinx community, is in and

[121] Staffer A, personal interview; and Staffer H, personal interview.
[122] Staffer B, personal interview.

of itself a mark of the effectiveness and also the necessity of a coalitional representative such as the CHC.

Others affiliated with the Caucus do believe, though, that the Caucus has been effective in the legislative sense outlined earlier. Over the decades, the CHC has increased the amount of attention paid to immigration as a core Latinx issue, to the point that the Democratic Caucus tends to defer to the CHC on many issues associated with immigration.[123] Combined with this focus on immigration is the CHC's concerted effort to increase its own profile within the Latinx community and in Washington, D.C., a strategy that one representative feels has translated to significant success for the CHC:

> "I think the Latinos, the Latino Caucus has been effective in kind of nudging leadership in the past. I think the leadership we have now learned from those experiences when they were members coming up the ladder, I think we played a major role. Also I think through our internship program and through our…even our annual gala and conference where we invite so many people, thousands of people, to show up in Washington…I think we've made the Caucus better known in the community. Certainly, extremely well known in the media—you know, very often you'll hear, 'And the Hispanic Caucus, they said they will not…'. You know, that was something we didn't hear in the past, so it's changed quite a bit in that sense. Either the real power or the perception of power—both can be very powerful."[124]

The relationship between the CHC and the Democratic Party also has an effect on how members and staffers rate the effectiveness of the CHC. For one member, the effectiveness of the CHC is not necessarily tied to how many members or votes the Caucus represents. Rather, the question is how closely the CHC agenda fits within the Democratic agenda. When asked to rate how effective the CHC has been, the member responded:

---

[123] Representative C, personal interview.
[124] Representative E, personal interview.

> "Well I think within—well within the Democratic agenda, effective because we were able to you know, to keep that agenda and I think, uh, in the agenda with the Republicans we were able to either defeat bad legislation or we were able to invoke where we could legislation that would, that was beneficial to the Hispanic community."[125]

The comments of this member demonstrate the belief that the legislative effectiveness of the Caucus is closely tied to the prospects of the Democratic Party, especially when considered alongside the belief of other members and staffers that one indicator of CHC effectiveness has been increasing Democratic awareness of and support for the CHC's priorities on immigration. This response also underscores the earlier observation that, in periods of Republican control, the CHC has only opposed Republican-backed legislation and no Democratic legislation. There is a clear belief by this member that the Republican Party is unlikely to sponsor legislation beneficial to the Latinx community, indicating that the CHC's effectiveness in periods of Republican control is highly contingent on the power of the CHC to obstruct the Republican majority rather than pass legislation, a tough prospect when the CHC is a minority faction within the minority party in the House.

Even though the statistical evidence indicates the CHC has only limited effectiveness in the House of Representatives, this does not mean that members of the CHC necessarily think that their efforts are for naught. While the CHC may not get bills or resolutions that recognize Latinx interests to pass the House, members of the CHC still see the Caucus as effective because of the CHC's ability to increase awareness of Latinx priorities within the broader Democratic Caucus and subsequently shape the positions of

[125] Representative B, personal interview.

the Democratic Caucus on these issues. While these efforts are most often seen with regard to immigration, the CHC also works to boost awareness of Latinx interests in other issue areas. Evidence from the CHC's own archives highlight efforts to influence assignments to the powerful Appropriations Committee in the House, as well as pushing presidents to nominate Latinxs for federal judicial appointments. When it comes to committee assignments, the CHC is again constrained by partisanship insofar as party leaders—especially in the contemporary Congress—exercise tight control over committee assignments, and due to its lack of Senate members the CHC cannot feasibly alter a confirmation vote. Despite these constraints, the group is not dissuaded and is in fact successful at getting CHC member seats on powerful committees, and in some instances backing someone who gets confirmed by the Senate as was the case with Sonia Sotomayor's nomination to the Supreme Court or Hilda Solis's nomination as Secretary of Labor.[126]

The CHC has also demonstrated its success in training its members for leadership positions in the Democratic Caucus in the House, bolstering Hammond's claim that "caucus training has become a legitimate route to formal positions of power" (1991, 286). Having CHC members serve within Democratic leadership is arguably a greater sign of the effectiveness of the CHC than getting members on committees or Latinx nominees confirmed by the Senate—CHC members who are also Chair or Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus, or who serve on the whip team, are well-positioned to champion the interests of the Latinx community throughout the broader Democratic Caucus, thus

[126] There are also examples of the CHC successfully participating in efforts to block executive nominees, e.g. Miguel Estrada in 2001.

bolstering Latinx representation. Absent this voice within Democratic leadership, though, the CHC also demonstrates its effectiveness in the House and as the coalitional representative for the Latinx community in a much more simple and direct way: by issuing public press releases stating the positions of the CHC, in conjunction with sending letters to other legislators persuading them to support the position of the CHC and by extension that of the Latinx community. Through the use of Dear Colleague letters and letters to Democratic leadership urging favorable committee reports or the scheduling of floor votes, the CHC broadcasts the interests of the Latinx community for all members of Congress to hear regardless of the final outcomes of the legislative process.

Thus, some might argue that coalitional representation is more similar to descriptive or surrogate representation than substantive representation. The benefits of descriptive representation are often more symbolic in nature and have to do with the ability of descriptive representatives to crystallize the interests of underrepresented minority groups (Mansbridge 1999), while substantive representation entails passing legislation that aligns with a group's interests. Certainly this is the case if only looking purely at the statistical analyses presented here. However, the fact that CHC members themselves see their coalition as effective by virtue of their work to bring Latinx interests into the spotlight on Capitol Hill demonstrates the necessity of reconceptualizing substantive representation in a way that accounts for this critical step in the legislative process. While the ultimate goal of members of Congress and the clearest indicator of legislative effectiveness is getting favorable legislation through the legislative process to pass the House, the prospects of legislation passing are significantly boosted when

members of Congress are first made aware of the community in whose interest legislation is being proposed and precisely why this legislation matters for that community. As a coalitional representative, the CHC and its members do this crucial work for the Latinx community through a variety of methods that are not limited to simply passing or defeating legislation. While the data do not show a coalition that is entirely effective at all stages of the legislative process, they do show a group that is laying the groundwork for a more responsive and representative institution of government, and a strong argument for treating Latinx representation as an issue that spans American political institutions.

6| Conclusion

The story of Latinx representation in Congress is complicated. Some evidence indicates the presence of individual Latinx legislators in Congress directly contributes to the substantive representation of Latinx interests through various legislative activities, including committee markups and bill sponsorship (Minta 2011; Rouse 2013). These findings push the desirability of descriptive representation, arguing that the increased presence of legislators from underrepresented groups is critical to the representation of those groups' interests and their equitable inclusion in American politics (Mansbridge 1999). However, other studies demonstrate the possibility that Latinx interests can be substantively represented even when there are few or no Latinx members of Congress. In such a situation, what matters is legislators' partisan and ideological identifications, i.e. they are liberal Democrats (Hero and Tolbert 1995; Wallace 2014b).

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that this debate on the linkage between descriptive and substantive representation for Latinxs in the US is incomplete. Where studies of descriptive and substantive representation fall short is in their focus on individual legislators and the actions they take as individuals who are focused on representing their own districts rather than a national constituency. Because Latinx identity is complex and encompasses a wide variety of views and experiences, it is not useful to treat one legislator as a stand-in for the entire Latinx community. Rather, we must treat Latinx representation in Congress as a coalitional endeavor—several Latinx legislators joining together and navigating the nuances within the Latinx community to

form a coalition that is focused on effectively representing all Latinxs living in the United States.

Coalitional representation, in this sense, deepens the proposed link between descriptive and substantive representation. Coalitional representation is by necessity more aware of and responsive to the diversity of the Latinx community. From the beginning, members of the coalition must decide whom they are representing, on what grounds, and in what manner. Without this awareness of Latinx diversity, the coalition would be woefully inadequate at representing the entirety of the Latinx community.

For Latinxs, the CHC is the successful manifestation of this coalitional imperative. The CHC was formed in 1976 with the goal of trying to "reverse the national pattern of neglect, exclusion and indifference suffered for decades by Spanish-speaking citizens of the U.S." (Vigil 1989, 23). While there were other motivations that pushed the foundation of the CHC, the most consistent desire among the CHC's members over the last 40 years is the desire to represent the entirety of the Latinx community. Members relied on the representational mission of the CHC as the primary reason to keep the group in operation after Republicans moved to end congressional caucuses in the 1990s, and current members still view the primary role of the CHC as representing Latinxs and their interests in Congress.

As explored in Chapter 2, the CHC underwent many changes that altered the boundaries of the coalition and influenced the CHC's actions as a representative for Latinxs. The group became more diverse in terms of both national origin and gender, while simultaneously becoming more partisan and ideologically liberal since the late 1990s. As the CHC became a de facto intraparty caucus within the Democratic Caucus

after Republican Latinxs left the group due to policy disagreements, the CHC also saw shifts in its relative position within the broader Democratic Caucus. In earlier periods of Democratic control of the House, the Caucus had relatively little influence, owing in large part to the preference of Democratic Speakers O'Neill, Wright, and Foley to prioritize the desires of the Democratic Caucus as a whole over the interests of any one faction within the group, especially if that faction was too small to threaten the Democratic majority. This changed in 2007 with Nancy Pelosi's election as Speaker when Democrats regained control of the House—Pelosi's leadership style relied more on fostering strong relationships between the Democratic Caucus and its subgroups (Peters, Jr. and Simon Rosenthal 2010; Pearson 2015). Thus, Pelosi was more willing than her predecessors to give the CHC a seat at the table when it came to setting Democratic priorities in the House. Aside from these shifts in Democratic leadership, the CHC also had to navigate the difficulties associated with being the minority party in the House when Democrats lost their advantage in 1995 and again in 2011. Despite these shifting dynamics both within and outside the Caucus, though, the group still functioned as a coalition determined to represent the Latinx community as a whole.

However, in order to carry out this primary coalitional function the CHC first had to define the terms of the coalition: who was part of it, who was covered and why, and what issues the Caucus would focus on. Thus, the CHC had to decide what it means when members referred to "the Latinx community"—was this a misbegotten attempt at homogenizing Latinxs and their experiences (Beltrán 2010), or a strategic usage of panethnicity designed to help the CHC act effectively on behalf of Latinxs of divergent backgrounds with intersectional identities (Mora 2014)?

Chapter 3 points toward the latter. The CHC and its members are deeply aware of the diversity of the Latinx community and how this implicates the CHC's attempts at coalitional representation, both in terms of the internal dynamics of the coalition and how the CHC views the Latinx community. The Caucus operates with a notion of *Latinidad* that incorporates this awareness at a high level. In Caucus meetings, members do not speak about issues in generalities—as evidenced by Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart's position during a discussion on a judicial nomination mentioned in Chapter 3—members speak about how issues affect specific segments of the Latinx community and try to pay attention to the differences that exist within the community.

Membership in the Caucus is also not limited to only those members who view *Latinidad* in a particular way—the Caucus is open to any legislator who identifies as Latinx or Hispanic, provided they are able to trace their heritage or ancestry to a Spanish-speaking country or a country with close ties to the Spanish language. This does not mean, though, that speaking Spanish is a prerequisite for CHC membership—demonstrating one's heritage is sufficient grounds to request to join the coalition. Thus, while the CHC has set boundaries on what it means to be a member of the group, the members themselves do not directly police the identities of potential members.[127] As a result, the CHC is able to present its membership in broad terms, comprising Latinxs from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences of *Latinidad.* Presenting both the CHC and the Latinx community in broad terms helps boost the political appeal of

[127] While the CHC does not police members' identities in terms of heritage or Spanish-speaking ability, the recent drama surrounding Republican Carlos Curbelo's request to join the group—discussed in Chapter 3—points to the possibility of an informal partisan and ideological condition for CHC membership. Even if a legislator identifies as Latinx and can point to Latinx heritage, aligning with the Republican Party and its policy positions appears to disqualify them from CHC membership.

working with the CHC, as its activities seem to affect more people rather than a small subset of a minority group; this perception allows non-Latinx legislators to believe they are currying favor with even more voters, a significant concern in a world where members of Congress are constantly focused on securing re-election.

This spills over into the legislative activities of the CHC. In Chapter 4 I found that when constructing its legislative agenda in a given session of Congress, the CHC focuses on a wide variety of issue areas, reflecting the diverse priorities of Latinxs. This results in larger agendas filled with both specific legislation the Caucus supports (or opposes), as well as broad statements by the CHC affirming its commitment to address a particular issue area in a given session of Congress. These agendas are constrained in an important way, though. There is a strong norm in which the CHC does not take a public position on an issue unless there is unanimous agreement among members on what that position ought to be. As a result, the CHC does not have a stated position on issues such as the Cuba embargo, Puerto Rico's status or potential statehood, or legislation that divides the group such as NAFTA in the early 1990s. Even so, the CHC's legislative agenda from year to year encompasses a broad array of issue areas, with issues like education, immigration, and healthcare especially prominent. The broad scope of the CHC's agendas reflects the variety of perspectives and preferences present in the Latinx community, with the diversity of the CHC's agendas increasing alongside the national origin diversity within the group.

When it comes to the substantive impact of the CHC's particular brand of coalitional representation, though, the Caucus appears in a less than favorable light. The CHC's agenda in a given session of Congress has little to no significant effect on the

agenda of the Democratic Caucus. Controlling for a host of factors that typically influence agenda setting in the House—including partisan identity of the legislation's sponsor, polarization in the House, the committee memberships of the sponsor, and the gender of the sponsor—the inclusion of legislation on the CHC's agenda does not have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood that same legislation is included on the agenda of the Democratic Caucus. The partisan identity and status in the committee system of the legislation's sponsor are significant predictors of whether that legislation is included on the Democratic agenda. The apparent lack of agenda influence for the CHC is even present when looking at periods of shifting party control in the House. Whether Democrats are in the majority—the case from 1976-1994 and 2007-2010—or in the minority—the case from 1995-2006 and 2011-2016—the legislation on the CHC's agenda is not significantly more likely to end up on the Democratic Caucus's agenda. This is true both in years where the CHC was too small to garner attention from House Democratic leadership and in more recent sessions of Congress with a Democratic House leadership team that is ostensibly more open to the concerns of minority groups within the Democratic Caucus. This is even more surprising given the Democratic Caucus's trend toward being more homogeneously liberal while simultaneously moving closer to the average ideology of the CHC, lessening the space for potential disagreement between the two groups. We see agreement on legislation such as the Affordable Care Act, included on the agendas of both the Democratic and Hispanic Caucuses. As a faction of the Democratic Caucus, this implies the CHC's concerns are not incorporated by the other House Democrats. As Congress becomes more polarized and the ideological gap between the CHC and the Democratic Caucus lessens, this agenda synergy is observed

more often and the CHC pursues much of the same legislation as the rest of the Democratic Caucus. However, there is no evidence to indicate a causal relationship between the CHC and Democratic agendas—agreement between the two groups on legislation such as the ACA or even the DREAM Act thus might owe more to the groups' shared partisan affiliation rather than direct influence one way or the other.

Similarly, the CHC's decision on how strongly to support a particular bill or resolution on its agenda does not positively affect legislative outcomes in the House, as shown in Chapter 5. Legislation that receives high levels of support from the CHC, while more likely to advance out of committees, is not significantly more likely than other legislation to pass the House or become law. In fact, the overall effect of increased CHC support on the chances of legislation passing in the House is negative—increased CHC support decreases the chances of that legislation becoming law. Even in periods of Democratic control of the House, the CHC throwing its weight behind a bill or resolution does not much improve that legislation's prospects. This lack of legislative effectiveness is even more readily apparent when the Democrats are the minority party in the House, and the CHC is more focused on blocking Republican legislation rather than passing its own bills or resolutions. In these time periods, the CHC has very limited opportunities—if any—to introduce legislation and attempt to push it through the House. In those rare instances, the effect of CHC support on likelihood of passing the House is again significant and negative, which is to be expected. Even when closely analyzing the CHC's efforts to block GOP-sponsored legislation as part of a more reactionary agenda, the CHC is ineffective at blocking bills and only somewhat effective at blocking amendments and resolutions that the CHC deems harmful to Latinx interests. Even in

those instances of blocking effectiveness, the activities that contribute to successfully blocking legislation occur behind the scenes and are not easily measured, making it difficult to determine whether the CHC's efforts are integral to legislation failing to pass the House regardless of which party is in the majority at the time.

Passing legislation ought not be the only measure of legislative effectiveness, though, by which we evaluate the CHC and coalitional representation. The CHC engages in other behaviors designed to increase the voice of Latinxs within American political institutions—affecting committee assignments, influencing executive nominations, and changing the makeup of the House Democratic leadership are but a few examples. Previous Caucus Chairs such as Xavier Becerra and Linda Sánchez translated their leadership experience in the CHC into powerful positions within the Democratic Caucus, with Becerra serving as Caucus Chair and Sánchez serving as Vice Chair. Several CHC members have used their experience within the CHC as leverage to gain appointments to the whip team. Ben Ray Luján, though never Chair of the CHC, served as Chair of the DCCC before being elevated to the position of Assistant Speaker in the 116th Congress (2019-2020). The CHC has also been successful in getting its members seats on powerful House committees. At one point, Ed Roybal (D-CA)—the lone CHC member on Appropriations—was retiring and the CHC wrote a letter to the Speaker requesting that José Serrano (D-NY) and Esteban Torres (D-CA) be appointed to Appropriations to ensure continued Latinx representation on the committee. Ultimately, the CHC was successful and ended up with more influence on the Appropriations Committee than before, marking a significant win for the representation of Latinx interests. The CHC also flexed its muscle by helping to torpedo Miguel Estrada's federal circuit court nomination.

While the CHC's refusal to support Estrada was not the only factor that contributed to his failed nomination, it certainly did not help Estrada's case that the coalition perceived to speak for the Latinx community viewed him as a poor choice for a federal judgeship.

More importantly, the CHC has gone to great lengths to both recognize and publicly advocate for the varied interests of the Latinx community. This is demonstrated through various public press conferences, statements, and press releases issued by the Caucus. While these might be considered secondary measures of legislative effectiveness, they nevertheless point to the unique benefit coalitional representation confers upon the Latinx community. As a coalition of Latinx legislators spanning a wide variety of national origins and experiences, coupled with increasing gender diversity, the CHC provides the Latinx community with a group of advocates in Congress who are intimately and deeply aware of the complexities and nuances that exist within the Latinx community and that seriously complicate attempts to define a singular Latinx identity. Caucus members must navigate these issues both among themselves and in their decisions about which issues to prioritize and how to pursue their legislative goals, while at the same time making other members of Congress more aware of these differences within the Latinx community and of the necessity of acknowledging these differences rather than ignoring them. As individual legislators, the members of the CHC are not immediately confronted with these difficult discussions about identity and thus do not always bring them to bear on their legislative activities.

Participating in these discussions is a necessary first step in constructing and maintaining the coalition that is the CHC, laying the groundwork for a more expansive conception of political representation that goes beyond the simple descriptive type that

simply requires Latinxs be elected to Congress. This coalitional representation confers benefits upon the Latinx community that affect all Latinxs and facilitate the substantive representation of Latinx interests, even though the empirical evidence is found in non-traditional measures of legislative influence such as influencing committee assignments or raising awareness through public appeals. More importantly, the reliance of the CHC on these alternative avenues for engaging in representation point to the need for political scientists to treat representation as more expansive than the passage of legislation—legislation is but one way members of Congress make present the voices of their constituents, though legislation is perhaps the most visible and one of the easier facets of representation to measure.

Coalitional Representation and Representative Democracy

Discussing Latinx representation in Congress in terms of coalitional representation provided by the CHC has significant tangible and normative implications. Tangibly, these findings speak to the power of a congressional caucus to circumvent partisan polarization and structural constraints to empower its members and represent its constituents, going beyond a simple informational or symbolic role. Normatively, the presence of the CHC speaks to the nature of American representative democracy. More specifically, these findings affect the extent to which we can claim American political institutions such as Congress are both representative and democratic.

The Power of Caucuses

Much has been made of the ability of intraparty partisan factions to influence the activities of the party caucuses in Congress (Bloch Rubin 2017). What my findings demonstrate is that the CHC—a national constituency caucus that is technically bipartisan—is also able to exert influence in the House, though in a slightly different manner than the Blue Dog Coalition or the House Freedom Caucus.

The influence of the CHC goes beyond the roles typically assigned to caucuses, i.e. that they provide information to members to complement the committee system (Ainsworth and Akins 1997) or provide an opportunity for members to send a signal to their constituents concerning what issues the member is prioritizing during their time in office (Miler 2011). The CHC does engage in these activities with regard to the Latinx interests that the CHC defines, but it also goes further by virtue of its active engagement in coalitional representation. The CHC creates a legislative agenda focused on the Latinx community and issues the CHC members deem important to that community. The CHC then engages in a variety of activities to implement that agenda throughout the legislative process. Some of these activities are not very successful—unlike Bloch Rubin's (2017) intraparty factions, the CHC is not adept at pushing the Democratic Caucus's agenda into closer alignment with the CHC's own agenda. Even with a more open Democratic Caucus and Democratic leadership (Peters, Jr. and Simon Rosenthal 2010), the CHC is unable to take advantage. This is also the case when assessing the legislative effectiveness of the CHC. The CHC does not have much to show for their efforts, often losing out to partisan polarization or as a consequence of controlling too few votes in the House.

But the CHC is far from useless when it comes to Latinx representation. Working as a unified coalition, the CHC's members engage in a series of concerted efforts to raise awareness of Latinx interests in Congress. CHC members actively push for the nomination of Latinxs for executive appointments, try to get each other into favorable committee assignments and party leadership positions, and engage in outreach efforts—such as Dear Colleague letters and public press conferences—designed to inform other legislators of Latinx priorities, and subsequently pressure these legislators to work with the CHC. Whether this results in the passage of legislation is immaterial—providing a voice for the wide variety of interests held within a significantly diverse Latinx community that are often ignored in Congress is itself a victory for the CHC. This ensures other legislators will always be aware of Latinxs, and perhaps be more attentive to their interests. Without the CHC acting as a coalition that draws the Latinx community together while maintaining the political complexity of that community, the representation of the Latinx community would suffer as "legislative responsiveness to marginalized group concerns is most likely when that experience can be fully expressed and thoughtfully considered" (Williams 1998, 13). The full expression and subsequent thoughtful consideration of the concerns of marginalized Latinxs is facilitated by the actions of the CHC who work together to craft a legislative approach that actively integrates these concerns based on CHC members' own experiences as members of the Latinx community, an approach that cannot be mimicked by non-Latinx legislators who do not share those same experiences.

Without coalitional representation, the CHC cannot push us to expand our view of what a caucus can do, or what we ought to consider as an indicator of adequate

representation. It is through coalitional representation that we are presented with a caucus in the CHC that is highly attuned to diversity within the national Latinx constituency—without the formation of the CHC in 1976, Latinx members would be left to work as individuals who are comparatively weak actors because an individual member of Congress does not have access to the same resources as a group of legislators working together toward a common goal. But this is not simply a caucus working toward an assumed common goal, as "sharing an identity can mean sharing a stake in something beyond oneself that includes those who also share that identity but who still experience it differently" (Hames-García 2011, 11). That is, a national constituency caucus such as the CHC is not representing a monolithic Latinx constituency—the CHC provides representation to people who share *Latinidad* but who have different experiences based on their inclusion within *Latinidad*. In this sense, the CHC and its actions push us to think of other national constituency caucuses as coalitional representatives, necessarily navigating the internal diversity of their own constituencies to ensure representation that is more responsive to a wider variety of people. Combined with a more expansive interpretation of what constitutes representation, i.e. including actions that are not passing bills, we are thus presented with the possibility that coalitional representation can change how we think not just of congressional caucuses but also the prospects for the representation of marginalized groups within the U.S. Congress.

How Representative is Our Democracy?

The ways in which the CHC pushes us to reconsider the nature of caucuses and congressional representation of marginalized groups also has significant normative

implications that extend to American politics more broadly speaking. The fact that the recognition of Latinx diversity and the active representation of the Latinx community requires the presence of the CHC in the first place does not instill confidence when evaluating either the representative or the democratic of component of what we call American representative democracy. How can we call Congress, or American political institutions in general, representation when under regular circumstances the Latinx community does not have a voice? How can we call democratic a system where not all people have an equal say in the system's daily operation or its outcomes?

The fact that the CHC is necessary in the first place, with members motivated by indifference to the Latinx community, underscores prior claims that the very concept of democracy in America is "premised on various forms of exclusion" (Balfour 2011, 98). The exclusion of Latinxs, as well as other minority groups, is treated as the price to pay in order to preserve representative democracy for a specific class of citizens, i.e. white males. Exacerbating this is the concept of liberal representation, wherein "fair representation for marginalized groups…is guaranteed by the principle of 'one person, one vote'" (Williams 1998, 10). Liberal representation presumes that the ability to vote in democratic elections is a sufficient condition to ensure fair outcomes, despite the fact that the standing of citizen embodied in the right to vote is "derived primarily from its denial to slaves, to some white men, and to all white women" (Shklar 1991, 16). Tying fairness in representation to the "one person, one vote" maxim also presumes that the processes which produce the items to be voted upon, e.g. the legislative process producing legislation for legislators to vote on in the House, is itself inherently fair if only because everyone is able to vote through the proxy that is their elected representative. This

ignores the various ways in which the legislative process is biased against the representation of minority interests, and the very conditions that produce the indifference to Latinxs and their interests that prompted the foundation of the CHC. Thus, we might expand the exclusion Shklar describes as fundamental to citizenship as standing to include Latinxs—even when afforded the right to vote, exclusion and discrimination are still both possible and likely because of the lack of Latinx voices within institutions of power—especially Latinx voices that speak for all members of the community rather than a select subset.

In this sense, Latinxs in America experience what Iris Marion Young (1990) refers to as oppression:

> "systematic institutional processes which prevent some people from learning and using satisfying and expansive skills in socially recognized settings, or institutionalized social processes which inhibit people's ability to play and communicate with others or to express their feelings and perspective on social life in contexts where others can listen" (38)

More specifically, underrepresented Latinxs experience marginalization, where "a whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life" (Young 1990, 53) and which involves "the deprivation of…institutionalized conditions for exercising capacities in a context of recognition and interaction" (55), when they do not have a voice in Congress that can make the Latinx community present and advocate for the community within those institutions that are tasked with setting the conditions for a society that is ostensibly open to people of all backgrounds and walks of life. This oppression is especially troubling when "the capacity of the distinctive voices of marginalized groups to inform policy decisions depends heavily on the *deliberative* qualities of legislative decision making" (Williams 1998, 13).

Having the CHC in Congress, providing a voice for the Latinx community as a coalition that is aware of and embodies the diversity within the Latinx community, offers the beginnings of a way to end—or at least lessen—this oppression. Through their letters, press releases, agendas, and attempts to influence various aspects of American politics, CHC members push back against the oppression and marginalization of the Latinx community. They do so by engaging fully in the deliberative qualities of congressional activity and ensuring that every action the CHC takes is geared toward making the voice of the Latinx community both loud and clear. To be sure, this does not guarantee success—legislation that is detrimental to the Latinx community still becomes law, and the CHC is not always able to pass its preferred legislation or get Latinxs confirmed to the federal judiciary or added to powerful committees in the House. Even with the increasingly close relationship between the CHC and the rest of the Democratic Caucus, there are instances of the Democratic Caucus pursuing legislation with which the CHC disagrees—such as the Immigration Reform and Control Act in the 1980s or Obama's increased immigration raids and deportations—but which the CHC is powerless to stop. Nevertheless, the CHC's presence and activities represent the first step toward some measure of justice within American political institutions, insofar as justice requires "institutions that promote reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression" (Young 1990, 47). While the empirical findings presented here do indicate significant constraints on the CHC's ability to fully realize this kind of justice, there is room for future improvement as the CHC continues to grow both in size and influence in the House.

Looking to the Future: The Trump Era and Beyond

What are the chances that the CHC and its practice of coalitional representation will increasingly affect the outcomes of the legislative process, particularly as the share of the Latinx population grows? That is, how will the CHC's continued presence in the House push Congress to promote and respect Latinx interests without oppression? The question is difficult to answer definitively, owing at least in part to the slow growth of the CHC relative to the growing Latinx share of the population. Recent research estimates the Latinx share of the U.S. population at around 18% (Flores 2017), with predicted growth to 29% by the year 2050 (Passel and Cohn 2008). In contrast, the current share of the CHC in Congress is around 9% while the group accounted for about 1% of Congress when it was founded 40 years ago. It is highly unlikely there will be the necessary 150 CHC members to match the estimated Latinx population share in 2050. The effects of this disparity are exacerbated by the fact that the average CHC district is majority-Latinx, while there are few non-Latinx legislators who represent majority-Latinx districts. In order for the CHC to experience the necessary growth to lessen the disparity between its own share of Congress and the Latinx share of the population, the CHC needs more members who represent majority-white districts. By adding these members, the CHC can present its activities as appealing to Latinx and non-Latinx constituents alike, prompting other Democrats to perceive the CHC as more influential and thus more deserving of attention.

The CHC is also, as mentioned earlier, constrained by partisan polarization and, at times, Democrats' minority party status in the House. Even when Democrats are in the majority, the CHC comprises a minority of the party. In the 116th Congress (2019-2020),

the CHC has a record-high 38 members. If CHC members defect from a party vote, majority party Democrats would only have a two vote margin.[128] However, the Republican Party controls the Senate and the presidency. Thus, even with Democrats regaining control of the House after the 2018 midterm elections the CHC has largely been on the defensive, reacting to President Donald Trump and the GOP's aggressive pursuit of an agenda focused on curbing undocumented immigration through a combination of a proposed border wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, forcible separation of migrant families, and increased raids and deportations by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As a result, the CHC's agenda throughout the 116th Congress—and also for the entirety of the 115th Congress (2017-2018)—has almost exclusively focused on preventing the implementation of these strategies by the Trump administration, or else trying to curtail their continued use. Even in instances where the CHC has been proactive in its legislative behaviors, the focus is primarily on protecting immigrants. For example, Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) introduced H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019, canceling removal proceedings against certain immigrants and providing them with a path toward permanent resident status. Bills such as H.R. 6 are more symbolic than substantive though, signaling the CHC's commitment to protecting immigrants but without a significant chance of becoming law. H.R. 6 passed in the Democrat-controlled House by a 237-187 margin, but it has not received a vote in the Senate and even if the bill passed the Senate, it would not survive a likely presidential veto.

[128] The numerical congruence here is somewhat misleading. Of those 38 CHC members, only 36 are voting members of the House. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Mariana Islands) and Michael San Nicolas (Guam) are Delegates, and thus unable to vote in the House despite their full membership in the CHC.

However, the CHC has also seen its profile grow as a result of its perceived importance in combating the Republican immigration agenda. When Trump declared a national emergency to gain access to funds for constructing his proposed border wall, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) tapped CHC Chair Joaquin Castro (D-TX) to write the privileged resolution to terminate the national emergency declaration. In the past the CHC Chair might not have been assigned to write such an important resolution; that Pelosi selected Castro speaks to the CHC's growing clout within the Democratic Caucus in the 116th Congress.[129]

Going forward, though, the CHC must deal with internal divisions, even on issues such as immigration. In a press release, the CHC condemned the recent passage of H.R. 3410—the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act, 2019—as "a betrayal of our American values" because of its failure to adequately address "the rampant human rights abuses" against immigrants held in government custody (Congressional Hispanic Caucus 2019). In a break from the norm discussed in Chapter 4—where the CHC avoids taking stances on internally divisive issues for fear of presenting a divided message from a coalition that is ostensibly united in its representation of the Latinx community—the CHC issued this statement even though nine CHC members voted for H.R. 3401. Henry Cuellar, a Texan like Castro, voted yes because as a representative of a border district encompassing Laredo he considers as his top priority "to provide the necessary funding and resources to

[129] House Joint Resolution 46 passed the House and Senate by comfortable margins—245-182 in the House and 59-41 in the Senate. However, Trump vetoed the legislation and the subsequent House vote to override the veto failed to garner the necessary two-thirds majority, 248-181. 234 Democrats voted yes, while 14 Republicans crossed party lines; one Democrat and two Republicans did not vote.

help the children, families, and communities that are suffering at the southern border" (Taylor 2019). Divides over incremental versus holistic approaches to immigration reform are not new to the CHC; what portends uncertainty for the future of the group is the public statement despite disunity within the group, with even some of the more liberal members of the CHC voting yes on the legislation.[130]

In a similar vein, the CHC is also grappling with the growing progressive push within the Democratic Caucus, owing in part to CHC member Alexandria Ocasio Cortez's (D-NY) activism and fame. Ocasio-Cortez is treated by many media outlets—and her Twitter followers—as one of the faces of the progressive movement, and the CHC gladly welcomed her into the fold. However, there appeared to be some reservations among incumbent CHC members regarding Ocasio-Cortez's campaign call to abolish ICE (Carrasquillo 2018). However, the demographics within the CHC continue to change in a way that may obviate this potential disagreement—younger, more liberal members are starting to comprise a larger proportion of the CHC's membership. They are balanced out by older, comparatively more moderate members, but as those older members retire from Congress—e.g. José Serrano, the longest-tenured member of the CHC, when his term ends in 2020—the CHC must decide what the group will look like going forward, especially as younger Latinxs' come of age politically and begin to participate more fully in American politics.

[130] The CHC members who voted yes on H.R. 3401, in addition to Cuellar, are: Salud Carbajal (CA), Jim Costa (CA), Vicente Gonzalez (TX), Mike Levin (CA), Xochitl Torres Small (NM), Raul Ruiz (CA), José Serrano (NY), and Albio Sires (NJ).

Another possible issue for the CHC in the future concerns the relationship between the CHC and the Latinx community. Here, I have focused on the ways in which the CHC and its members define *Latinidad*, the interests of the Latinx community, and how they pursue those interests in Congress. However, in doing so I narrowly focus on the perspectives and actions of Latinx political elites with little mention of how Latinx constituents think about their own identity or what issues they think are most important for their community. Thus there is the distinct possibility that while the CHC pays attention to Latinx diversity and incorporates this into its very character and actions in Congress, the CHC may still act counter to the interests of many of the Latinxs it represents. The risk here is underscored sizable numbers of Latinx votes going to Republican candidates in key races in the 2018 midterms for the U.S. Senate and governorships in Arizona, California, Florida, Nevada, and Texas.

Table 6.1 Latinx Vote Choice in 2018 Senate and Governor Races

	GOP Candidate (Gov.)	Dem. Candidate (Gov.)	GOP Candidate (Senate)	Dem. Candidate (Senate)
AZ	27%	70%	31%	69%
CA	19%	77%	N/A	N/A
FL	36%	61%	45%	54%
NV	26%	69%	30%	67%
TX	42%	53%	35%	64%

Since Republican members left the CHC in the late 1990s, the CHC membership has been entirely composed of congressional Democrats (see Chapter 2). But Latinxs do not uniformly vote for Democratic candidates for national or statewide office. In Florida, a

significant number of Latinxs voted for Republican Rick Scott in the Senate election over incumbent Democrat Bill Nelson despite Scott's support for many of the Trump administration's immigration policies. A similar trend is present in Texas, where over 40% of Latinxs voted for Republican Greg Abbott in the gubernatorial election despite his strong support for the national GOP's presumably anti-Latinx agenda. A public opinion survey fielded in 2019 by Latino Decisions also indicated Latinxs' willingness to vote for Republican candidates in future elections if the voters feel the candidates share their values and policy priorities (Schaller 2019). The demonstrated willingness of Latinxs to vote for Republican candidates in past and future elections, coupled with the CHC's strongly Democratic leanings since the late 1990s, raise questions about how in touch the CHC is with the political leanings and preferences of the Latinx community as a whole. Investigating this relationship also speaks to the agenda setting process of the CHC and the desirability of coalitional representation—given that the CHC's agenda largely consists of positions that are congruent with those of the Democratic Caucus and that the CHC frequently castigates Republicans as anti-Latinx, it is unlikely that Republican Latinxs in the mass public feel represented by this coalition, let alone individual Democratic Latinx legislators.[131]

[131] A logical outgrowth of this research concerns the role of state equivalents of the CHC. The CHC's decision to take Democratic positions and interpolate these onto the Latinx community is possibly a reaction to the perception that most Latinxs identify as Democrats, and thus the CHC chooses to focus on the majority of the national constituency. At the state level, though, legislators must pay attention to distinctions at a much smaller level—e.g. by county or by city—that expose legislators to significantly more diversity among their Latinx constituents. These state caucuses, then, may exhibit a form of coalitional representation that is even more attuned to Latinx diversity than that of the CHC. State caucuses are also likely to have different legislative agendas than the CHC, given the inability of states to legislate on certain issues such as immigration, but also the ability of states to engage in more targeted legislative activity on other issues, e.g. education.

Ultimately, future research has significant potential to qualify or bolster the findings presented here. We now have a firm grasp of how Latinx political elites in Congress navigate the diversity of the Latinx community in their efforts to form a coalition that provides a voice in Congress for as many Latinxs as possible. What we do not know is how these efforts and the CHC's active recognition and incorporation of Latinx diversity is actually perceived—if at all—by Latinx constituents or if the CHC's elite perspective leans more toward issues that are considered insignificant by the Latinx community. Even if there is a disconnect between the CHC and Latinxs in the mass public though, the evidence here provides reason to believe that the CHC and its members will continue to do what they believe is best for the Latinx community out of a legitimate desire to bolster Latinx representation rather than cynically courting votes for reelection. In this sense, the CHC and its practice of coalitional representation push American political institutions in the direction of justice and towards being more fully representative and democratic.

Bibliography

Adler, E. Scott, and John D. Wilkerson. 2012. *Congress and the Politics of Problem Solving*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Adler, E. Scott, T.J. Feeley, and John D. Wilkerson. 2003. "Bill Sponsorship and Success in Congress: Why We Should Change the Way We Study Legislative Effectiveness." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Ainsworth, Scott H., and Frances Akins. 1997. "The Informational Role of Caucuses in the U.S. Congress." *American Politics Quarterly* 25(4): 407-430.

Alvarez, Lizette. 1997. "For Hispanic Lawmakers, Time to Take the Offensive." *The New York Times*. August 25.

Anderson, William D., Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, and Valeria Sinclair-Chapman. 2003. "The Keys to Legislative Success in the U.S. House of Representatives." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 28(3): 357-386.

Aparicio, Francis R., and Susana Chávez-Silverman. 1997. "Introduction." In *Tropicalizations: Transcultural Representations of Latinidad*, eds. Francis R. Aparicio and Susana Chávez-Silverman, 1-17. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

Archibald, Randal C. 2008. "Black and Hispanic Caucuses Resisted Pelosi on Bailout." *The New York Times*. October 1.

Balfour, Lawrie. 2011. *Democracy's Reconstruction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Barnett, Marguerite Ross. 1975. "The Congressional Black Caucus." *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 32(1): 34-50.

Beltrán, Cristina. 2010. *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bloch Rubin, Ruth. 2017. *Building the Bloc: Intraparty Organization in the U.S. Congress*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Branton, Regina. 2007. "Latino Attitudes toward Various Areas of Public Policy: The Importance of Acculturation." *Political Research Quarterly* 60(2): 293-303.

Bratton, Kathleen A. 2005. “Critical Mass Theory Revisited: The Behavior and Success of Token Women in State Legislatures.” *Politics & Gender* 1(1): 97-125.

Bratton, Kathleen A., and Kerry L. Haynie. 1999. “Agenda Setting and Legislative Success in State Legislatures: The Effects of Gender and Race.” *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 658-679.

Buxton, Kathryn. 1982. “The Clout Of the Caucus.” *The Washington Post*. September 17.

Caldwell, Charles F. 1989. “Government by Caucus: Informal Legislative Groups in an Era of Congressional Reform.” *Journal of Law & Politics* 5: 625-655.

Capetillo-Ponce, Jorge. 2010. “Black-Latino/a Relations in Boston: Two Trends of Collective Identification.” *Latino Studies* 8(2): 244-270.

Carrasquillo, Adrian. 2018. “Hispanic Caucus Welcomes Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez with Open Arms—But Maybe Not Her Entire Platform.” The Intercept. June 29. < https://theintercept.com/2018/06/29/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-congressional-hispanic-caucus/>.

Carter, Phillip M., and Salvatore Callesano. 2018. “The Social Meaning of Spanish in Miami: Dialect Perceptions and Implications for Socioeconomic Class, Income, and Employment.” *Latino Studies* 16: 65-90.

Casellas, Jason P. 2011. *Latino Representation in State Houses and Congress*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Caygle, Heather. 2017. “Hispanic caucus weighs whether to let Republican join.” Politico.com. November 1. <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/11/01/hispanic-caucus-weighs-gop-244430>.

Chandra, Kanchan. 2012. *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, Cathy J. 1999. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Cohodas, Nadine. 1983. “O’Neill Pulls Immigration Reform Measure.” *CQ Weekly*. October 8. <http://library.cqpress.com.ezp3.lib.umn.edu/cqweekly/wr098401544>.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus. 2009. “Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) Introduces Immigration Reform Legislation.” Congressional Hispanic Caucus Website. December 16. <https://congressionalhispaniccaucus-

castro.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congressional-hispanic-caucus-chc-introduces-immigration-reform>.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus. 2019. "CHC Statement on the Passage of the Dream and Promise Act, H.R. 6." Congressional Hispanic Caucus Website. June 4. < https://congressionalhispaniccaucus-castro.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/chc-statement-on-the-passage-of-the-dream-and-promise-act-hr-6>.

Connolly, Ceci. 1999. "Politicians Court Hispanic Vote." *The Washington Post*. September 16.

Conover, Pamela Johnston. 1984. "The Influence of Group Identification on Political Perception and Evaluation." *The Journal of Politics* 46(3): 760-785.

Conover, Pamela Johnston. 1988. "The Role of Social Groups in Political Thinking." *British Journal of Political Science* 18(1): 51-76.

Constable, Pamela. 2016. "Raids to continue, despite outcry." *The Washington Post*. January 9.

Cooper, Kenneth J. 1992. "Congress's Hispanic Membership Likely to Grow 50% for Next Term." *The Washington Post*. October 3.

Cooper, Kenneth J. 1993. "Hispanic Caucus Shows Its New-Found Clout." *The Washington Post*. October 2.

Cooper, Kenneth J. 1994. "GOP Moves to Restrict Caucus Funds." *The Washington Post*. December 7.

Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cox, Gary W., and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2007. *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cox, Gary W., and William C. Terry. 2008. "Legislative Productivity in the 93d-105th Congresses." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 33(4): 603-618.

Crombez, Christophe, Tim Groseclose, and Keith Krehbiel. 2006. "Gatekeeping." *The Journal of Politics* 68(2): 322-334.

Curry, James M. 2015. *Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dawson, Michael C. 1994. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

de la Garza, Rodolfo O., Jerry L. Polinard, Robert D. Wrinkle, and Tomas Longoria. 1991. "Understanding Intra-ethnic Variations: Mexican Origin Population Views of Immigration." *Social Science Quarterly* 72(2): 379-387.

Dovi, Suzanne. 2002. "Preferable Descriptive Representatives: Will Just Any Woman, Black, or Latino Do?" *American Political Science Review* 96(4): 729-743.

Drury, John, and Steve Reicher. 2000. "Collective Action and Psychological Change: The Emergence of New Social Identities." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 39(4): 579-604.

Ethier, Kathleen A., and Kay Deaux. 1994. "Negotiating Social Identity When Contexts Change: Maintaining Identification and Responding to Threat." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67(2): 243-251.

Fenno, Richard. 1973. *Congressmen in Committees*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Fenno, Richard. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Flores, Antonio. 2017. "Facts on U.S. Latinos, 2015." Pew Research Center. September 18. <https://www.pewhispanic.org/2017/09/18/facts-on-u-s-latinos/>.

Fraga, Luis R., John A. Garcia, Rodney E. Hero, Michael Jones-Correa, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and Gary M. Segura. *Latino Lives in America: Making It Home*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Frantzich, Stephen. 1979. "Who Makes Our Laws? The Legislative Effectiveness of Members of the U.S. Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 4(3): 409-428.

Frymer, Paul. 1999. *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Galvan, Manuel. 1982. "Who speaks for Hispanic Americans?" *Chicago Tribune*. June 20.

García, John A. 2003. *Latino Politics in America: Community, Culture, and Interests, 3rd Edition*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

García, Robert. 1983. "Hispanics: Diversity and Unity." *The Washington Post*. August 24.

García, Robert. 1984. “The Fairer Cure for U.S. Immigration Problems.” *The New York Times.* May 9.

García Bedolla, Lisa. 2003. “The Identity Paradox: Latino Language, Politics and Selective Dissociation.” *Latino Studies* 1: 264-283.

Gile, Roxanne L., and Charles E. Jones. 1995. “Congressional Racial Solidarity: Exploring Congressional Black Caucus Voting Cohesion, 1971-1990.” *Journal of Black Studies* 25(5): 622-641.

Gutiérrez, David. 1995. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hall, Carla. 1983. “Courting Hispanic Power.” *The Washington Post*. September 16.

Hall, Richard L. 1996. *Participation in Congress.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hames-García, Michael. 2011. *Identity Complex: Making the Case for Multiplicity.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Hammond, Susan Webb, Daniel P. Mulhollan, and Arthur G. Stevens, Jr. 1985. “Informal Congressional Caucuses and Agenda Setting.” *The Western Political Quarterly* 38(4): 583-605.

Hammond, Susan Webb. 1991. “Congressional Caucuses and Party Leaders in the House of Representatives.” *Political Science Quarterly* 106(2): 277-294.

Hammond, Susan Webb. 1998. *Congressional Caucuses in National Policymaking.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Haney López, Ian. 1995. “The Social Construction of Race.” In *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*, ed. Richard Delgado, 191-203. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Hasecke, Edward B., and Jason D. Mycoff. 2007. “Party Loyalty and Legislative Success: Are Loyal Majority Party Members More Successful in the U.S. House of Representatives?” *Political Research Quarterly* 60(4): 607-617.

Hattam, Victoria. 2007. *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hawkesworth, Mary. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race-Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced-Gendered Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 529-550.

Hero, Rodney E. 1992. *Latinos and the U.S. Political System: Two-Tiered Pluralism*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Hero, Rodney E., and Caroline J. Tolbert. 1995. "Latino Substantive Representation in the U.S. House of Representatives: Direct, Indirect, or Nonexistent?" *American Journal of Political Science* 39(3): 640-652.

Huddy, Leonie, and Simo Virtanen. 1995. "Subgroup Differentiation and Subgroup Bias Among Latinos as a Function of Familiarity and Positive Distinctiveness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68(1): 97-108.

Huddy, Leonie. 2001. "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory." *Political Psychology* 22(1): 127-156.

Hunter, Kathleen, and Jennifer Bendery. 2010. "Hispanic Lawmakers Disagree on Strategy." *Roll Call*. April 21.

Jacobson, Gary. 2001. *The Politics of Congressional Elections,* 5th ed. New York, NY: Longman.

Kertzer, David I. 1988. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kim, Claire Jean. 2000. *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Kim, Henry. 2006. "Agenda Setting, Clout, and Logrolls in the U.S. House." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

King, Jr., Marvin P. 2011. "Bill Preference: The Continued Relevance of the Congressional Black Caucus." *Politics & Policy* 39(3): 421-439.

King, Gary, and Langche Zeng. 2001. "Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data." *Political Analysis* 9(2): 137-163.

Krehbiel, Keith. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Krutz, Glen S. 2005. "'Winnowing' in the U.S. Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 313-326.

Lee, Frances E. 2009. *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lee, Frances E. 2016. *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lee, May. 1987. "Latinos Aim for Progress via Politics." *The Los Angeles Times*. July 27.

Levy, Arthur B., and Susan Stoudinger. 1976. "Sources of Voting Cues for the Congressional Black Caucus." *Journal of Black Studies* 7(1): 29-46.

Madison, James. 1987. *Federalist No. 52*, in *The Federalist Papers: James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay*, ed. Isaac Kramnick, 322-326. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'." *The Journal of Politics* 61(3): 628-657.

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation." *American Political Science Review* 97(4): 515-528.

Márquez, Benjamin. 2003. *Constructing Identities in Mexican American Political Organizations: Choosing Issues, Taking Sides*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Martin, Jonathan. 2014. "Ben Ray Luján to Helm Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee." *The New York Times*. November 17. <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2014/11/17/ray-lujan-to-helm-democratic-congressional-campaign-committee/?searchResultPosition=1>.

Martinez, Barbara E. 2002. "Cutting the Cake 2,000 Ways: Hispanic Caucus Institute Marks a Happy 25th." *The Washington Post.* September 19.

Mathews, Jay. 1989. "Florida Election Points to Hispanics' Divisions." *The Washington Post*. September 10.

Mayhew, David R. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection,* 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Miler, Kristina C. 2010. *Constituency Representation in Congress: The View from Capitol Hill*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Miler, Kristina C. 2011. "The Constituency Motivations of Caucus Membership." *American Politics Research* 39(5): 885-920.

Mill, John Stuart. 1991. *Considerations on Representative Government*. New York, NY: Prometheus Books.

Minta, Michael D. 2011. *Oversight: Representing the Interests of Blacks and Latinos in Congress*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Miquel, Gerard Padró I, and James M. Snyder, Jr. 2006. "Legislative Effectiveness and Legislative Careers." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31(3): 347-381.

Molina, Natalia. 2014. *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Moore, Michael K., and Sue Thomas. 1991. "Explaining Legislative Success in the U.S. Senate: The Role of the Majority and Minority Parties." *The Western Political Quarterly* 44(4): 959-970.

Mora, G. Cristina. 2014. *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Newhauser, Daniel. 2011. "Hispanic Caucus Faces Power Vacuum: Following Retirements, Leadership Path Unclear." *Roll Call*. November 29. <http://www.rollcall.com/news/Hispanic-Caucus-Faces-Power-Vacuum-210598-1.html>.

Oboler, Suzanne. 1995. *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 1994. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Padilla, Felix M. 1985. *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Passel, Jeffrey S., and D'Vera Cohn. 2008. "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050." Pew Research Center. February 11. <https://www.pewhispanic.org/2008/02/11/us-population-projections-2005-2050/>.

Pear, Robert. 1983. "Immigration and Politics: Hispanic Bloc's Fears Key to Failure of Bill." *The New York Times.* October 6.

Pearson, Kathryn, and Eric Schickler. 2009. "Discharge Petitions, Agenda Control, and the Congressional Committee System, 1929-76." *The Journal of Politics* 71(4): 1238-1256.

Pearson, Kathryn. 2015. *Party Discipline in the U.S. House of Representatives.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Peters, Jr., Ronald M., and Cindy Simon Rosenthal. 2010. *Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the New American Politics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Pinney, Neil, and George Serra. 1999. "The Congressional Black Caucus and Vote Cohesion: Placing the Caucus Within House Voting Patterns." *Political Research Quarterly* 52(3): 583-608.

Pinney, Neil, and George Serra. 2002. "A Voice for Black Interests: Congressional Black Caucus Cohesion and Bill Cosponsorship." *Congress & the Presidency* 29(1): 69-86.

Pitkin, Hanna F. 1967. *The Concept of Representation.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Preston, Julia. 2010. "A Potential Obama Ally Becomes an Outspoken Foe on Immigration." *The New York Times*. May 29.

Price, Patricia L. 2007. "Cohering Culture on *Calle Ocho*: The Pause and Flow of *Latinidad*." *Globalizations* 4(1): 81-99.

Rampe, David. 1988. "Power Panel in Making: the Hispanic Caucus." *The New York Times*. September 30.

Rodriguez, David. 2002. *Latino National Political Coalitions: Struggles and Challenges*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Rohde, David W. 1991. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ross, Michael. 1994. "GOP Plans to Cut Funds for Black Caucus, Others." *The Los Angeles Times.* December 7.

Roth, Wendy D. 2012. *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Rouse, Stella M. 2013. *Latinos in the Legislative Process: Interests and Influence.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Sanchez, Gabriel R. 2006. "The Role of Group Consciousness in Latino Public Opinion." *Political Research Quarterly* 59(3): 435-446.

Schaller, Tom. 2019. “New UnidosUS poll confirms Latinos’ 2020 preferences.” Latino Decisions. June 26. https://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/new-unidosus-poll-confirms-latinos-2020-preferences/>.

Schildkraut, Deborah J. 2016. “Latino Attitudes About Surrogate Representation in the United States.” *Social Science Quarterly* 97(3): 714-728.

Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. “The Institutional Foundations of Committee Power.” *The American Political Science Review* 81(1): 85-104.

Sherman, Jake. 2010. “Puerto Ricans split on statehood vote.” Politico.com. April 27. < https://www.politico.com/story/2010/04/puerto-ricans-split-on-statehood-vote-036380>.

Shklar, Judith N. 1991. *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Singh, Robert. 1998. *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congress*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Smothers, Ronald. 1983. “Two Parties Woo Votes Of Hispanic Americans.” *The New York Times*. September 17.

Stevens, Jr., Arthur G., Daniel P. Mulhollan, and Paul S. Rundquist. 1981. “U.S. Congressional Structure and Representation: The Role of Informal Groups.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 6(3): 415-437.

Strolovitch, Dara Z. 2007. *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Suro, Roberto. 2005. “Latino Power? It Will Take Time for the Population Boom to Translate.” *The Washington Post*. June 26.

Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. 1979. “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict.” In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel, 33-47. Monterey, CA: Brooks Cole Publishing.

Tajfel, Henri. 1981. *Human Groups and Social Categories.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, Steve. 2019. “Cuellar, Gonzalez, break with CHC on border bill.” Rio Grande Guardian. Juen 29. < https://riograndeguardian.com/cuellar-gonzalez-break-with-chc-on-border-aid-bill/>.

Trescott, Jacqueline. 1984. “Rallying Around Richardson.” *The Washington Post*. September 21.

Turner, John C., Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, and Margaret S. Wetherell. 1987. *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*. New York, NY: Basil Blackwell.

Tyson, Vanessa C. 2016. *Twists of Fate: Multiracial Coalitions and Minority Representation in the US House of Representatives.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Uhlaner, Carole Jean, and F. Chris Garcia. 2002. “Latino Public Opinion.” In Barbera Norrander and Clyde Wilcox, eds., *Understanding Public Opinion*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Uhlaner, Carole Jean. 1991. “Perceived Discrimination and Prejudice and the Coalition Prospects of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans.” In Bryan O. Jackson and Michael B. Preston, eds., *Racial and Ethnic Politics in California*. Berkeley, CA: Institute for Governmental Studies Press.

van Zomeren, Martijn, Colin Wayne Leach, and Russell Spears. 2010. “Does Group Efficacy Increase Group Identification? Resolving Their Paradoxical Relationship.” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46(6): 1055-1060.

Victor, Jennifer Nicoll, and Nils Ringe. 2009. “The Social Utility of Informal Institutions: Caucuses as networks in the 110th U.S. House of Representatives.” *American Politics Research* 37(5): 742-766.

Vidal, David. 1976. “Congressional Caucus Is Formed To Speak for Hispanic Population.” *The New York Times*. December 9.

Vigil, Maurilio E. 1989. “The Congressional Hispanic Caucus: Illusions and Realities of Power.” *Journal of Hispanic Policy* 4: 19-30.

Volden, Craig, and Alan E. Wiseman. 2014. *Legislative Effectiveness in the United States Congress: The Lawmakers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wallace, Sophia J. 2014a. “Examining Latino Support for Descriptive Representation: The Role of Identity and Discrimination.” *Social Science Quarterly* 95(2): 311-327.

Wallace, Sophia J. 2014b. “Representing Latinos: Examining Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress.” *Political Research Quarterly* 67(4): 917-929.

Welch, William M. 1992. “Minority Gains Fuel Power Plays in Congress.” *The Los Angeles Times*. December 13.

Williams, Melissa S. 1998. *Voice, Trust, and Memory: Marginalized Groups and the Failings of Liberal Representation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wilson, Walter C. 2017. *From Inclusion to Influence: Latino Representation in Congress and Latino Political Incorporation in America*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Yachnin, Jennifer. 2007. “CHC Revolts Over Leadership Snubs.” *Roll Call*. November 12.

Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1

The membership of the CHC for each session of Congress from the 95th Congress (1977-1978) through the 116th Congress (2019-2020) is listed below.

** denotes CHC Chair. Prior to the 101st Congress, the CHC's officer elections coincided with Hispanic Heritage Month in September rather than the ending of the current congressional session. As a result, there were technically two Chairs in the 98th, 99th, 100th, and 101st Congresses, though their terms never overlapped.

+ denotes a non-voting member of the House.

95th (1977-1978)

1. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)**
2. Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
3. Rep. Herman Badillo (D-NY) – until December 31, 1977
4. Rep. Robert García (D-NY) – from February 14, 1978
5. Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada del Río (D-Puerto Rico)+
6. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
7. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)

96th (1979-1980)

1. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)**
2. 2. Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
3. Rep. Robert García (D-NY)
4. Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada del Río (D-Puerto Rico)+
5. Rep. E "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
6. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)

97th (1981-1982)

1. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
2. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)
3. Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
4. Rep. Robert García (D-NY)**
5. Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada del Río (D-Puerto Rico)+
6. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
7. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)
8. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

98th (1983-1984)

1. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
2. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)

3. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)
4. Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
5. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)**
6. Rep. Robert García (D-NY)**
7. Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada del Río (D-Puerto Rico)+
8. Rep. E "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
9. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)
10. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
11. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

99th (1985-1986)

1. Rep. Tony Coelho (D-CA)
2. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)**
3. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)
4. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)
5. Del. Ben Blaz (R-Guam)+
6. Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
7. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)**
8. Rep. Robert García (D-NY)
9. Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster (D-Puerto Rico)+
10. Rep. Albert Bustamante (D-TX)
11. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
12. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)
13. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
14. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

100th (1987-1988)

1. Rep. Tony Coelho (D-CA)
2. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
3. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)
4. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)**
5. Del. Ben Blaz (R-Guam)+
6. Rep. Manuel Lujan, Jr. (R-NM)
7. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)
8. Rep. Robert García (D-NY)
9. Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster (D-Puerto Rico)+**
10. Rep. Albert Bustamante (D-TX)**
11. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
12. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
13. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

101st (1989-1990)

1. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
2. Rep. Ed Roybal (D-CA)
3. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)

4. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)
5. Del. Ben Blaz (R-Guam)+
6. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)
7. Rep. Robert García (D-NY)
8. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
9. Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster (D-Puerto Rico)+**
10. Rep. Albert Bustamante (D-TX)
11. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)**
12. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
13. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

102nd (1991-1992)

1. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
3. Red. Ed Roybal (D-CA)
4. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)
5. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)
6. Del. Ben Blaz (R-Guam)+
7. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)
8. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
9. Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster (D-Puerto Rico)+ - until March 4, 1992
10. Resident Commissioner Antonio Colorado (D-Puerto Rico)+ - from March 4, 1992
11. Rep. Albert Bustamante (D-TX)
12. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
13. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)**
14. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

103rd (1993-1994)

1. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
3. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
4. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
5. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)
6. Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart (R-FL)
7. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)
8. Del. Robert Underwood (D-Guam)+
9. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
10. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
11. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)
12. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)**
13. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
14. Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barceló (D-Puerto Rico)+
15. Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-TX)
16. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)

17. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
18. Rep. Frank Tejeda (D-TX)
19. Del. Ron de Lugo (D-Virgin Islands)+

104th (1995-1996)

1. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)**
2. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
3. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
4. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
5. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)
6. Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart (R-FL)
7. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL)
8. Del. Robert Underwood (D-Guam)+
9. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
10. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
11. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM)
12. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
13. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
14. Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barceló (D-Puerto Rico)+
15. Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-TX)
16. Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza (D-TX)
17. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)
18. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
19. Rep. Frank Tejeda (D-TX)

105th (1997-1998)

1. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)**
3. Rep. Matthew Martínez (D-CA)
4. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
5. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
6. Rep. Esteban Torres (D-CA)
7. Del. Robert Underwood (D-Guam)+
8. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
9. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
10. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
11. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
12. Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barceló (D-Puerto Rico)+
13. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX)
14. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
15. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
16. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)
17. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX)

106th (1999-2000)

1. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)
3. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
4. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
5. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)**
6. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
7. Del. Robert Underwood (D-Guam)+
8. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
9. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
10. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
11. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
12. Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barceló (D-Puerto Rico)+
13. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)
14. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
15. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
16. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)
17. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX)

107th (2001-2002)

1. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)
3. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
4. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
5. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
6. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
7. Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA)
8. Del. Robert Underwood (D-Guam)+
9. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
10. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
11. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
12. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
13. Resident Commissioner Aníbal Acevedo Vilá (D-Puerto Rico)+
14. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)
15. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
16. Rep. Solomon Ortiz (D-TX)
17. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)**
18. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX)

108th (2003-2004)

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)
4. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
5. Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA)
6. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)

7. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
8. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
9. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
10. Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA)
11. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
12. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
13. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
14. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
15. Resident Commissioner Aníbal Acevedo Vilá (D-Puerto Rico)+
16. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)
17. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
18. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
19. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)
20. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX)**

109th (2005-2006)

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)
4. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
5. Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA)
6. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
7. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)**
8. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
9. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
10. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
11. Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA)
12. Rep. John Salazar (D-CO)
13. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
14. Rep. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) – Senator after January 16, 2006
15. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
16. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
17. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
18. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
19. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)
20. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
21. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
22. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)

110th (2007-2008)

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)**
4. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
5. Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA)

6. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
7. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
8. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
9. Rep. Hilda Solis (D-CA)
10. Rep. John Salazar (D-CO)
11. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
12. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
13. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
14. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
15. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
16. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
17. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)
18. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
19. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
20. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)
21. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX)

111th (2009-2010)

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)
4. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
5. Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA)
6. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
7. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
8. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
9. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
10. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
11. Rep. John Salazar (D-CO)
12. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
13. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
14. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
15. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
16. Del. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-Northern Mariana Islands)+
17. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
18. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)**
19. Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi (D-Puerto Rico)+
20. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
21. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)
22. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
23. Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
24. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)
25. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX)

112th (2011-2012)

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Joe Baca (D-CA)
4. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
5. Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-CA)
6. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
7. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
8. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
9. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
10. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
11. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
12. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
13. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
14. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
15. Del. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-Northern Mariana Islands)+
16. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
17. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
18. Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi (D-Puerto Rico)+
19. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
20. Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX)**
21. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
22. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX)

<u>113th (2013-2014)</u>

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
4. Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)
5. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
6. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
7. Rep. Gloria Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
8. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
9. Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA)
10. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
11. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
12. Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA)
13. Rep. Joe Garcia (D-FL)
14. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
15. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
16. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
17. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
18. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)
19. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
20. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
21. Del. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-Northern Mariana Islands)+

22. Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi (D-Puerto Rico)+
23. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX)
24. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
25. Rep. Pete Gallego (D-TX)
26. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)**

114th (2015-2016)

1. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA)
4. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA)
5. Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)
6. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
7. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
8. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
9. Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA)
10. Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
11. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)**
12. Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA)
13. Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA)
14. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
15. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
16. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
17. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
18. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)
19. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
20. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
21. Del. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-Northern Mariana Islands)+
22. Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi (D-Puerto Rico)+
23. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX)
24. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
25. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-TX)
26. Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX)

115th (2017-2018)

1. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Jim Costa (CA)
4. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA)
5. Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)
6. Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA)
7. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
8. Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)
9. Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA)
10. Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA)

11. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
12. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
13. Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA)
14. Rep. Lou Correa (D-CA)
15. Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA)
16. Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL)
17. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL)
18. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
19. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
20. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)**
21. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
22. Del. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-Northern Mariana Islands)+
23. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
24. Rep. Ruben Kihuen (D-NV)
25. Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY)
26. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
27. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
28. Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX)
29. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX)
30. Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
31. Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX)

116th (2019-2020)

1. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
2. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
3. Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA)
4. Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA)
5. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA)
6. Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)
7. Rep. Gil Cisneros (D-CA)
8. Rep. Lou Correa (D-CA)
9. Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
10. Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA)
11. Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA)
12. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)
13. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
14. Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA)
15. Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)
16. Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA)
17. Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA)
18. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL)
19. Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL)
20. Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-Guam)+
21. Rep. Jesús “Chuy” García (D-IL)
22. Rep. Lori Trahan (D-MA)

23. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
24. Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ)
25. Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ)
26. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM)
27. Rep. Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM)
28. Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY)
29. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)
30. Rep. José Serrano (D-NY)
31. Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY)
32. Del. Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-Northern Mariana Islands)+
33. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX)**
34. Rep Henry Cuellar (D-TX)
35. Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX)
36. Rep. Sylvia Garcia (D-TX)
37. Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (D-TX)
38. Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX)

Appendix 2 – Interviews

Included below are the original interview questions asked of CHC members and staffers during the interviews. Due to time constraints not all questions were asked in every interview, and in many instances the responses of the interviewees prompted unscripted follow-up questions. Congressional staffers were asked the same questions with modified wordings commensurate with their role. 18 interviews were conducted, either via phone or in person: 7 Democratic CHC members (all of whom served as Chair at one point) and 11 Democratic staffers who either worked for or alongside the CHC. Several attempts to secure interviews with Republican CHC members and staffers proved unsuccessful.

I. Initial experiences with CHC

1. How did you decide to run for Congress?
2. What were some of the issues you were most interested in when you first got to Congress?
3. How much of what you cared about was affected by representing a majority-Latino district?
4. How did you go about joining the CHC – did they approach you, or did you know you wanted to join as soon as you made it to Congress?
5. How did joining the CHC affect your ability to legislate on the issues you cared about?
6. What was your initial impression of the CHC?
7. Did you think of the CHC as an independent organization, or a partner of congressional/party leadership?
8. How important was the CHC to your work in Congress in general?

II. Working in the CHC

1. What positions did you hold in the CHC during your tenure?
    a. How did you come to be in this position – did you have to actively campaign to get your CHC colleagues to vote for you?
    b. How would you say serving in this position affected your other efforts as a member of Congress?
    c. Would you say that your work in this position aided your efforts at representing your district?
        i. [If yes] Why do you think your work in the CHC facilitated representation of your district?
2. How did the CHC decide on its legislative agenda?
    a. How much of the legislative agenda depended on who was chair at the time?
    b. How similar (or different) was the CHC'S agenda to that of the House as a whole?
    c. How much of the CHC's agenda was a response to the House's agenda (especially when Republicans controlled the House), or to the President's agenda?
    d. How often did the CHC agenda include issues that were divisive among CHC members?
        i. What was the source of this division – was it because of different viewpoints among different Latino ethnicities, or something different?
        ii. How did the CHC decide where to stand on these internally divisive issues?
        iii. How did those tensions affect the interactions between CHC members?
        iv. Do you think that CHC membership was representative of the Latino population in the US as a whole?
    e. Did the CHC ever prioritize issues in its agenda that clashed with the Democratic Party's agenda?
3. How active were the CHC task forces in shaping the CHC's legislative agenda in a given session of Congress?
4. Given that most CHC members have been Democrats, to what extent during your tenure did the CHC try to work with the Republican Party?
    a. When the CHC did work with Republicans, what was the response from the Democratic Party?
    b. How did CHC members view the decision of Republican Latinos to leave the CHC, and later form the Hispanic Conference?
5. When the CHC chose to back people in elections, for executive appointments, or for committee assignments, how were those decisions made within the Caucus?
    a. How strongly would the CHC push for these candidates?
    b. Did the CHC have sufficient access to attempt to persuade the president on executive appointments?

    c. How successful was the CHC in pushing for its members to receive favorable committee assignments?
6. How would you assess the role of the CHC in the House when you left Congress?
    a. Was the CHC still relatively independent, or was it closely tied to the Democratic leadership?
7. What do you think were some of the biggest challenges the CHC has faced?
    a. Do you see it as a challenge trying to come up with an agenda that serves the interests of all Latinos equally?
    b. How would the CHC, or the individual members, do this?
    c. How would you deal with issues that affected some groups more than others, e.g. women's issues, Cuba, Puerto Rico statehood?
8. What are some of the major successes of the CHC?

III. Daily Functions of the CHC

1. After the ban on LSOs in the mid-1990s, where did the CHC receive funding from?
    a. Was the size of the budget ever a significant constraint on the CHC's legislative efforts?
    b. Did the budget affect the ability of the CHC to hire dedicated staff?
2. How important were the research and information services, such as regular legislative briefings, provided by the CHC to its members?
    a. Were these services unique to the CHC, or could members get this same information elsewhere?
3. How often did the CHC whip need to convince CHC members to accept the CHC position on an issue? How effective was the whip?
4. How were decisions made about which CHC members should testify before congressional committees on certain issues?
5. How were decisions made about which CHC members should give floor speeches in favor of/against key pieces of legislation?
6. When the CHC crafted its own proposed bills, how was it decided who should sponsor the bill and introduce it on the floor?
7. What are the day-to-day interactions between the CHC and other organizations, either inside or outside Congress?
    a. How did CHC members perceive the role of the CHCI?
    b. What were interactions like between the CHC and other caucuses such as the CBC or the CAPAC?
8. What were daily interactions like between the CHC and the Democratic Party?
    a. Did the CHC Chair have opportunities to engage with party leadership on issues of concern to the CHC?
    b. How did the CHC react if the Democratic Party took a stance opposite the CHC?
    c. How were relations with the Democratic Party affected by higher Republican support among Latinos in the 2000 and 2004 elections?

IV. CHC Elections

1. How did people decide whom to support in votes for CHC executive positions?
    a. Were the elections competitive, or was there a general consensus on who would serve in the leadership in a given session of Congress?
    b. Did members take into account factors such as seniority when casting their votes?

V. Concluding Questions

1. [For MCs who served prior to 1994-95] How did Gingrich's ban on LSOs affect the ability of the CHC to do its work?
2. How would you judge the effectiveness of the CHC in representing Latino interests?
3. Is there anything that you think the CHC could have done or approached differently during your time in Congress, or that you think it should be doing differently now?