

Understanding Nuances of Latina Candidate Emergence: *A Study of Latinas in San Antonio*

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ABSTRACT

Even with the steady advancement of Latinas to elective office since the 1990s, they continue to be under-represented in public office. Their relative absence diminishes the diversity of the voices of marginalized groups in U.S. politics, while their presence adds to it. Latina officeholders represent multiple groups through their support and advancement of policies that promote the interests and address the needs of many. Latinas in public office are noted for their unique means of coalition building, a characteristic approach of Latina community and political activists, that emphasizes relational politics. Based on data collected through group interviews in San Antonio, Texas, this paper identifies patterns of variables that influence Latina considerations relative to running for public office. Specific findings include the following: 1) gender and ethnicity intersect for Latinas to influence their decision to run for public office; 2) group consciousness and family support provide Latinas with resources to overcome barriers to becoming candidates; and 3) familial obligations, institutional designs of public offices in Texas, and risks associated with running for office constrain the willingness of Latinas to run for public office.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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