

The Latino Mayors: San Antonio Politics and Policies

Sharon Navarro

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ABSTRACT

San Antonio, Texas is the seventh largest city in the U.S. and the second largest city in Texas with a minority majority Latino population. It is the fastest growing of the top 10 largest cities in the U.S. Despite its Latino demographic dominance, San Antonio has only had three modern Latino Mayors: Henry Cisneros, Edward Garza, and, Julian Castro. This essay examines why this city has had only a few Latino mayors and what it takes for such candidates to win the mayoral office. This essay concludes with the following findings. First, time and opportunity are critical to winning an election. Second, for a minority candidate to win the mayoral office, a coalition is necessary. Third, serving on the city council is a necessary apprenticeship for winning office. This report is significant for understanding the political incorporation of Latino mayors into American politics. All three Latino mayors highlight the importance of consensus building, cooperation, and the absence of a confrontational spirit, which is key for Latinos to have a place at the table.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Sharon A. Navarro is an associate professor of Political Science at University of Texas at San Antonio. She received a doctorate of philosophy from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Her research focuses on women in politics and Latino politics. She co-edited *Latino Americans and Political Participation*, co-authored *Politiclas: Latina Public Officials in Texas*, co-edited and authored *Latina Legislator: Leticia Van De Putte and the Road to Leadership*. She has also published articles in numerous journals. She is currently writing second book titled *Leticia Van de Putte: The Race for Texas Lieutenant Governor* and a co-edited book titled *Latinas Shaping American Politics*.