

THE POLITICS AND POLICY OF THE ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION ON LATINO COMMUNITIES

SERGIO I. GARCIA-RIOS

University of Washington, Seattle

STEPHEN A. NUÑO

Northern Arizona University

ABSTRACT

Economic vitality is an essential component of political participation and the structural impediments to economic stability among Latinos have long been seen as a barrier to the social and political resources that are important to becoming fully integrated members of society. In turn, we know that ethnic identity also has an impact on participation and that perceived assaults on that identity can be an impetus for action. Given the recent downturn in the economy and resulting negativity toward Latinos and immigrants we find it important to evaluate the impact that economics has on Latino political behavior and the role national politics plays on Latino ethnic identity. In particular we argue that the recent economic downturn is likely to have complex impact on Latinos' level of participation. We argue that while the negative economic situation may decrease Latino political participation the resultant political discussion may replace that lost participation with a greater identity-based political response. Finally, we discuss the policy implications and argue for a postmodern alternative to public administration that allows for greater self-governance.

Public Administration & Management

Volume 16, Number 2, 171-205