



### Foreword by Henry Cisneros

*“Understanding is precisely what Cristina Benitez offers in Latinization. In one well-organized and clearly-written book she explains common attributes of the nation’s diverse and multi-faceted Latino community. The understanding it will make possible can itself help shape the American future. As her reasoned explanations help Americans understand the new faces, the new accents, the new last names, this book will do its part to unleash the potential of these new Americans.”*

The front pages of national and local press are covered with charts, graphs and numbers highlighting the irrefutable fact that the Latino population is making significant changes in the United States. The U.S. Census documents this dynamic immigrant movement with data, giving marketers, politicians and sociologists information to help them create products and affect U.S. policy. Raw data gives us a basis for understanding, but to appreciate the significance of the movement we must go further.

The purpose of this book is to go beyond the numbers and show what this immigrant movement means to the United States of America. We will use statistics as a starting point but delve deeper to paint pictures, hear music and weave the stories of the Latino population in the United States of America. We will explore the *Latinization* of our country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and see how it is changing the face of America. But first, let’s define *Latinization*.

*Latinization* is a movement. It is a force – a series of Latino values and trends that affect how we view the world. It isn’t any one particular or isolated event, but rather a combination of influences born from the twenty-two different Spanish-speaking countries that are homelands to the Hispanic people in the United States. We see the influences of these countries from Argentinean tango to mate tea from Uruguay.

Latinization fuses the Latino influences into the North American lifestyle enriching both cultures simultaneously. As Latinos integrate into the United States and adopt new ways of living, the U.S. is embracing a variety of Latino values, styles and language. This book will examine a wide range of these influences and explore their impact and implications.

The Latino culture is vibrant, loyal, family-centric, expressive, demonstrative, playful, fatalistic, romantic, colorful, dramatic, musical, hard working and courageous. We will show examples of the Latino influences from marketing to politics to media, combined with interviews from outstanding leaders that highlight the Latino values that are having an impact in the U.S. today.

This book is for marketers, corporate leaders, Latino studies and general interest readers with the goal to heighten their awareness of *Latinization* and help both non-Latino and Latino people in the United States bridge their cultures with mutual understanding. My aim is to promote an appreciation of Latinos and help us all embrace the diversity of our country.

Cristina Benitez