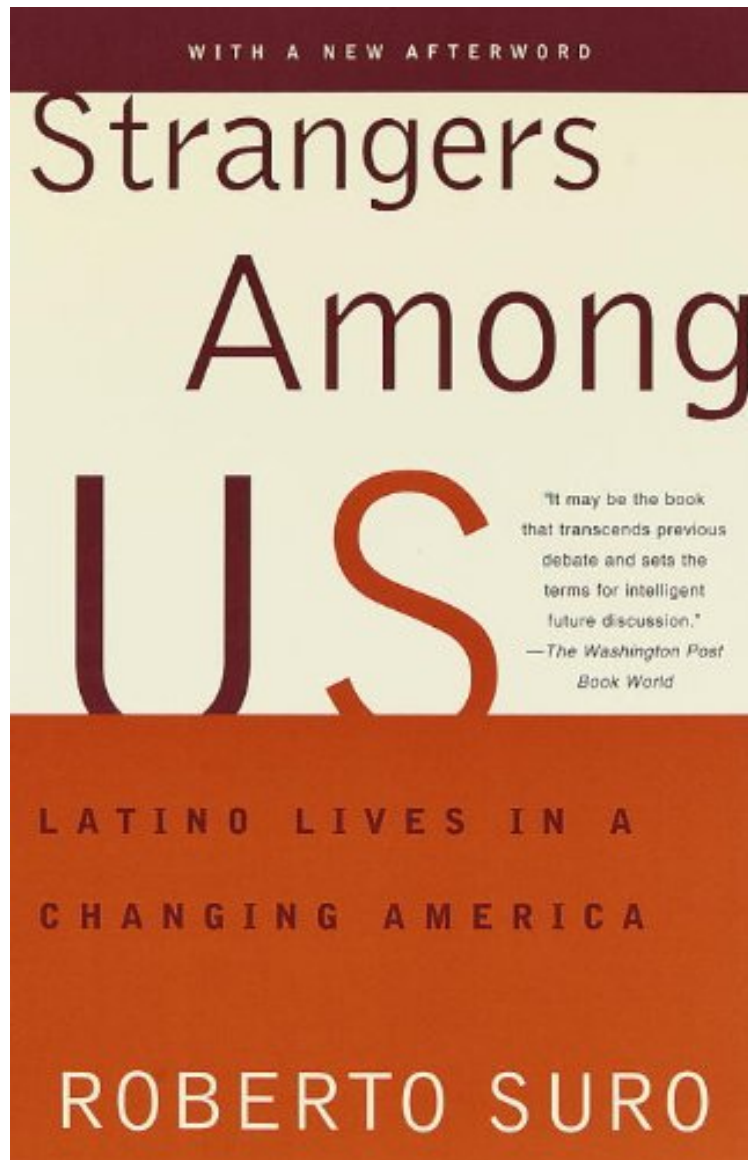


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Strangers Among Us: Latino Lives in a Changing America

Roberto Suro

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Roberto Suro : Strangers Among Us: Latino Lives in a Changing America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strangers Among Us: Latino Lives in a Changing America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Marwa Moaz Good sociological read. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Changing Faces By A Customer In the book, Strangers Among Us, the author, Roberto Suro explores several dynamics about Latino Immigration. He reminds us that Latinos vary in nationalities and is the largest growing population migrating into America. This book gives the reader a realistic view of the

changing demographics in America and how Latino immigration can positively or negatively shape the future of our country. Suro also thoroughly examines how Latinos are becoming a crucial part of America's struggle with poverty and race. Suro dissects the first generation of Latino immigrants and then the second generation of U.S born Latino children. He mentions how the Latino second generation is failing and that it's easier to fall into a decline, rather than move up beyond the everyday barriers. He identifies that the problems arise from children who are advancing quicker than their parents. The children become so absorbed in to the awful parts of the American culture. While the immigrant parents stay detached and continue to focus on making money and saving it. Parents quickly become separated from their children's developmental stages and don't remain a positive cultural influence. Instead, the children adapt to the negative behaviors of American ways, and some immigrants don't know any better. All of the struggles immigrants face is emphasized in the book, from receiving citizenship, to getting and maintaining a job, and receiving an education. Suro states that the risks of immigrants failing, increases their urge to embrace American culture and that the assimilation process is more willingly achieved to better their life in America. But what about the Latinos who choose to keep their culture and don't embrace the American culture? That is where the struggles and challenges come in, because class and identity interact with the struggles of living in America. Another important point mentioned in the book, is the idea of how vulnerable immigrants become as they migrate into America. It is easier to live, get out of poverty by molding into the American culture. This all includes learning and speaking English, going to school and moving out of the barrio and transitioning into an American. If an immigrant is able to let go of their culture and embrace America's, their transitional process will become much easier. Throughout the book, Suro introduces you to several different Latino immigrant families and describes their transition and how they're surviving. He takes you through different Latino communities across America, including Florida, Texas, California and New York. He even targets the gang life of inner city Los Angeles. This issue exploits the concerns of increasing gang life within the merge of minorities in America. Suro supports the need to keep immigration under control. He states fear of back fire if we choose not to do so as a country. The acceptance of culture isn't an issue it's the adjustment and assimilation issue. Coming to America illegally isn't easy; it presents several challenges. Adjusting to the whole new economic, social structure of America, involves several transitional steps, and getting to know the English language is a vital step. Suro emphasizes that education is the foundation for Latino advancement. With about a third of the Latino population under the age of 18, education needs to be enforced. The book takes you into the inner, less structured cities of immigrant populations and explores the high crimes rates, gang interaction and the rising teen pregnancy rates. I agree with Suro statement, that "we need to do something quick about the decline immigrant advancement or else a Latino underclass will be created permanently". Latinos need to take advantage of the economic opportunities they are given. Overall, I enjoyed this book and how Suro opens the doors to an inside view of the positive and negatives of the Latino Immigration and their struggles that come along with it. Not only did I appreciate all of the new information I gathered but I have gained more respect for Latino immigrants. This is a great book for anyone to read, to reach deeper into the Latino culture.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An educational read
By Kat Harmon
I found *Strangers Among Us* very captivating and educational. I chose this book because after reading an excerpt I realized how little I knew about the Latino population and their lives in America. I always understood the basic concepts of their immigration to America but I have never understood why they traveled here and for what reasons. Their culture was unknown to me yet I interact with them on a day-to-day basis and have lived next door to them my entire life. *Strangers Among Us* appealed to me both as an educational and pleasurable read, and helped answer some of the questions I had about this continuing large minority population. A disturbing chapter for me was about the cantina patrols and how differently Mexican-Americans are treated. It was interesting to hear how one officer readily admitted that he could never get away with the same kind of treatment in a white or African-American neighborhood. If these officers know what they are doing is wrong then why do they keep treating people this way? In my opinion, these officers do it because they know these newly arrived immigrants will not resist and they can get away with it. While reading this it reminded me of the same cycle African-Americans have had to go through in trying to live in this country. In New York, Puerto Ricans are also facing difficulties surviving in the new world. Suro makes clear that most Latinos entered the United States as sojourners, meaning they come to America to work and make money with the intentions of returning back home when they are done. When Puerto Ricans migrated to New York in the 1950s and early 1960s, they came with great hopes and dreams. In the end, some of the Puerto Rican population did succeed, but too many ended up poor and with less than what they arrived with. Many Puerto Ricans realized that they lacked the education, skill, and culture to make it up north in the big cities. Many who migrated north were losing too much and decided to either return home or try their skills in cities with greater outlooks such as Miami, where the Latino population is continually growing. From reading this book I have learned a lot more about the Latino population and their immigration to America. By hearing real life experiences I have noticed my own stereotypes toward this minority group. I never understood the hardships many had to endure just to provide for their families. Before this class I used to think that the African-American population was the only minority group that was discriminated against but *Strangers Among Us* changed my perspective on the way others and myself treat groups that are different from our white race.

Strangers Among Us is a lucid, informed, and cliché-shattering examination of Latino immigration to the United States--its history, the vast transformations it is fast producing in American society, and the challenges it will present for decades to come. In making vivid an array of people, places, and events that are little known to most Americans, the author--an American journalist who is himself the son of Latino immigrants--makes an often bewildering phenomenon vastly more understandable. He tells the stories of a number of large Latino communities, linked in a chronological narrative that starts with the Puerto Rican migration to East Harlem in the 1950s and continues through the California-bound rush of Mexicans and Central Americans in the 1990s. He takes us into the world of Mexican-American gang members; Guatemalan Mayas in suburban Houston; Cuban businessmen in Miami; Dominican bodega owners in New York. We see people who represent a unique transnationalism and a new form of immigrant assimilation--foreigners who come from close by and visit home frequently, so that they virtually live in two lands. Like other groups of immigrants who preceded them onto American shores, Latinos, as they begin to find a place for themselves here, are changing the way this nation thinks of itself. These are people who defy easy categorization: they are neither white nor black; their households often include both legal and illegal immigrants; most struggle toward some kind of economic stability, but so many others fall short that they have become the new face of the urban poor. Some Latinos endure the special poverty of people who work long hours for wages that barely ensure survival. Their children grow up learning more from their televisions than from their teachers, knowing what they want from America but not how to get it. Looking to the future, we see clearly that the sheer number of Latino newcomers will force the United States to develop new means of managing relations among diverse ethnic groups and of creating economic opportunity for all. But we also see a catalog of conflict and struggle: Latinos in confrontation with blacks; Latinos wrestling with the strain of illegal immigration on their communities; Latinos fighting the backlash that is denying legal immigrants access to welfare programs. Critical both of incoherent government policies and of the failures of minority-group advocacy, the author proposes solutions of his own, including a rejection of illegal immigration by Latinos themselves paired with government efforts to deter unlawful journeys into the United States, and a new emphasis on English-language training as an aid to successful assimilation. Roberto Suro has written a timely, controversial, and hugely illuminating book. From the Hardcover edition.

.com In solid journalistic prose, the Washington Post's Roberto Suro illuminates the critical issues associated with Latino immigration to America--including poverty, bilingual education, and the relationship of Latinos to blacks as well as whites--by depicting the lives of Latino immigrants and their children, all of whom are struggling to make a life for themselves in the United States. There's a lot more to Latino immigration than Southern California; from Puerto Ricans in New York City to Cubans in Miami, Latinos are transforming America's ethnic makeup and economy. Suro examines why the immigrants come and what happens to them once they've arrived. With an eye to the future (in which Latinos, if organized, may represent a powerful voting bloc), Suro offers common-sense suggestions on how the Latino community can take a proactive stance on illegal immigration and English-language training to facilitate full integration into American society. From Booklist Anecdotal in form, advocational in content, Suro's exploration underscores the complexity of contemporary experiences in Latino immigration. He arranges the stories by the newcomers' country of origin and the cities where they have concentrated; for example, Dominicans in New York or Mexicans in Los Angeles. Suro, a reporter for the Washington Post, gathers person-in-the-street stories of the Cuban experience in Miami; the Guatemalan in Houston; or the Puerto Rican in New York. As the title implies, he discovers doubts among the new immigrants about American culture, specifically how its plagues influence teenage youth with televised materialism, gangs, drugs, school truancy, ingrained poverty, etc. These issues mix differently from city to city, and shade from the sociological to the political. Suro surveys the latter in terms of the incipient Latino displacement of blacks as America's largest minority, a process most advanced in Los Angeles. A densely textured portrait that concludes with Suro's agenda for a new assimilation process that should engage those involved with Latino immigration. Gilbert Taylor From Kirkus sAn effective study of the fastest growing minority population in the US, Latinos; the narrative seamlessly weaves together reportage, biography, and policy analysis. As a term, "Latinos" (or "Hispanics") hides more than it reveals, for it includes groups as diverse as Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in New York, Chicanos in L.A., and Guatemalan Mayans in Houston. Eschewing vapid conclusions from aggregate data to tell of these groups, Suro shows that each Latino immigrant group is a separate story and that many biographies make up each story. Still, Latino immigration as a whole, both legal and illegal, has greatly accelerated over the past decade or so, and immigrants have arrived in the US at a time when a changing economy and an unsympathetic social mood (not unconnected phenomena) make their futures in the US tenuous at best. They arrive to find low paying service jobs whose real wages continue to fall, but little room for advancement for themselves or, more importantly, for their children, who desire a middle-class life but lack the skills needed to gain it. At the same time, they become the repository of the majority population's fear of change and difference, and of the majority's own precarious position in a dynamic economy. Ill-considered and punitive immigration "reforms" (such as California's Proposition 187 or the federal immigration law of 1996) exacerbate the economic and social problems of the newly arrived while doing nothing to stem the tide of illegal immigration. A vicious circle ensues in which all lose. The

author, a staff writer for the Washington Post and himself a second-generation Latino, argues forcefully and persuasively, in passionate detail, for rational and effective immigration controls, but also for social programs especially education that will equip immigrants and their children with the tools necessary for survival in a treacherous economy. Everyone will find something here to disagree with, but this is a book of immediate importance and lasting significance. -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.