

Understanding Latin America

A DECODING GUIDE

Author

Alfredo Toro Hardy
Venezuelan Scholar and Diplomat

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World Scientific

FOREWORD EXCERPTS

“Addressing the profound tendencies that define a highly heterogeneous region, such as Latin America, is a complex task. To be able to do so, while simultaneously explaining the similarities and commonalities that exist within the region, is even more difficult. To that it should be added the important achievement of recreating a historical journey spanning several centuries, in a coherent, clear, thorough and pleasant manner. Alfredo Toro Hardy’s excellent book, *Understanding Latin America: A Decoding Guide*, provides a key to this region and to its historical cycles and current challenges.”

Francisco Rojas Aravena

Rector of the United Nations University for the Peace

“Ambassador Toro Hardy’s book is most important and timely. I have enjoyed reading the book and gained many new insights about the countries of Latin America from it.”

Tommy Koh

Chairman of the National University of Singapore
Centre for International Law

From afar, Latin America looks like a blurry tableau: devoid of defining lines, particularities and nuances. Little is understood about the idiosyncrasies of Latin-Americans, their cultural identity and social values. Differences between Brazilians and Spanish Americans, or amid the diverse Spanish American countries, are not sufficiently understood. Even less is known about the amplitude of the Iberian heritage of such countries, or about the miscegenation and acculturation processes that took place among their different constitutive races. There is no clarity regarding the Western nature of Latin America or about its cultural affinities with Latin Europe. Nor is there sufficient understanding of the links between the Latin population of the United States and the inhabitants of Latin America.

This book’s aims to fill the gap by focusing on Latin America’s history, culture, identity and idiosyncrasies. It serves as a guide to understand regional attitudes, meanings and behavioural differences of the region. It also analyses the present economic situation of the region, while trying to predict the future of the region. Written in a simple and accessible manner, this book will be of interest to readers keen on exploring the region for potential opportunities in trade, investment or any other kind of business and cultural endeavour.

This is one of the very few books on Latin America that serves as a guide for those seeking potential trade and business opportunities in Latin America.

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REVIEWS

*"Alfredo Toro Hardy is the quintessential scholar-diplomat. There is nobody more qualified to have produced this timely new volume. **Understanding Latin America** is an admirably sophisticated yet succinct guide to the historical milestones, political movements and economic trends that everyone should grasp when dealing with the dynamic markets stretching from Mexico to Argentina".*

Parag Khanna

*Best-selling author; Senior Research Fellow,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy*

"Alfredo Toro Hardy is one of the world's leading authorities on the developing countries and Latin America in particular. A prolific and eloquent author with an immense global experience. This new book of his is a must-read for those interested in Latin America's vibrant history, economics and culture".

Robert Harvey

Author of Liberators: Latin America's Struggle for Independence

"This is a most welcome survey of Latin America. The text displays an exceptional knowledge of modern history and the contemporary scene, from economics to culture. Alfredo Toro Hardy is a highly experienced diplomat but here he does not duck the difficult judgements and demanding prescriptions that an honest survey demands."

James Dunkerley

Former Director, Institute of the Americas at University College London

"Ambassador Toro Hardy masterfully combines his vast knowledge of the region with his extensive experience as a diplomat, to decipher the historical and cultural realities of Latin America. This timely book is a must read for anyone attempting to understand the changing landscape of Latin America in the second decade of the 21st century".

Angelo Rivero Santos

Academic Director, Center for Latin American Studies, Georgetown University

"There is a great deal that Asian countries have to learn about the Latin American republics that are so different in many ways. This book by Alfredo Toro Hardy, a distinguished author and diplomat, goes a long way towards filling this gap and will be essential reading for all Asians seeking to increase their understanding of Latin America".

Victor Bullmer-Thomas

Former Director, Chatham House

"This is a necessary guide for understanding Latin America. A key to decipher the myth of that foreign land and a window into its wide horizons.

Xu Shicheng

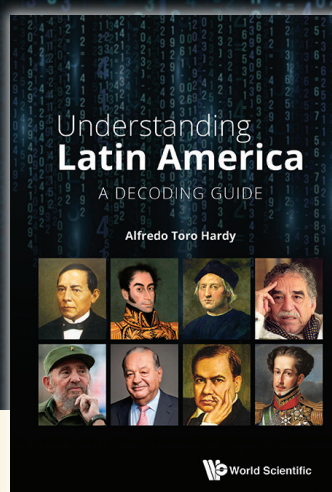
Co-founder, Institute of Latin American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

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Chapters

- Introduction
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- The Revenge of the South: Latinos in the US
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Readership

Business professionals, researchers, undergraduate and graduate students interested in knowing more about Latin America and Latin American Economic Growth; business and trade federations; institutes or centres for Latin American studies in universities.

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Author's Biography

Alfredo Toro Hardy is a Venezuelan Diplomat, scholar and public intellectual. He graduated in Law from the Central University of Venezuela with master degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and the Central University of Venezuela, and postgraduate degrees from the University of Paris II and the Ecole Nationale d'Administration, ENA.

He is one of his country's most senior career diplomats, having served as Ambassador to Washington, London, Madrid, Brasilia, Santiago de Chile, Dublin and Singapore.

As scholar he was Director of the Diplomatic Academy of the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Associate Professor at the Simón Bolívar University in Caracas, where he was Director of the Centre for North American Studies and Co-ordinator of the Institute for Higher Latin American Studies. He has been a member of the Advising Committee of the Diplomatic Academy of London, a Fulbright Scholar and a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio

Center Resident Scholar. He has also been a member of the Bellagio Center Nominations Committee. A Visiting Professor at Princeton University, he has also taught at the universities of Brasilia and Barcelona and has lectured extensively at universities and think tanks in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

Author of 18 books and co-author of 13 more on international affairs, he received the "Latino Book Award" (best book by an author whose original language is in Spanish or Portuguese) twice — at the ExpoBook America fairs celebrated in Chicago and Los Angeles in 2003 and 2008, respectively. He has published nearly 30 papers in academic magazines, including the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. He is a weekly columnist for Venezuela's leading newspaper *El Universal* and contributes frequently to written media in Latin American and Spanish languages.

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