Historically, the relationship between Hispanics and the U.S. is not a new process if we take into account the three century old historical interaction of Mexicans with the U.S. Today, the visibility of Hispanics is a direct consequence of massive waves of immigrants which began in the 1940s; starting with the Bracero Program, which employed Mexican agricultural workers, and the intense immigration of Puerto Ricans who came to work in the industrial sector to replace the waning American labor force during wartime, successive waves of Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, Venezuelans, Colombians, Argentines, and as always Mexicans have come to the U.S.

It wouldn’t be incorrect to argue that the U.S. has directly and indirectly contributed in the creation of a new Latino culture. The ‘Latino’ is a U.S. social product. However, we must be careful with the term, because it still used to mean Hispanics and there are differences.

In the United States of America the word Latino has been used interchangeably with the word Hispanic since in this country the Spanish and English languages are intertwined and their various contextual signifiers are therefore interpreted in diverse forms.

According to the literary critic, William Luis, in the United States the use of “Latino” and Hispanic is closely linked to two different experiences.

"IN THE 60S THE WORD “LATINO” RE-EMERGES AS A SELF-REFERENTIAL DESCRIPTION WHICH ORIGINATED FROM THE COMMUNITY AND AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE WORD “HISPANIC” OR “HISPANO”.

Nonetheless, it is essential to emphasize that in the current political discourses that Chicano and Puerto Rican activists began in the 60s, during the civil rights movement headed by Dr. Martin Luther King, the word “Latino” re-emerged as a self-referential description which originated from the community and as an alternative to the word “Hispanic” or “Hispano” which institutions of the United States utilize as they study demographic trends in the context of various state-sponsored activities. It must be emphasized that the manner in which the above institutions use these words tends to “construct,” using a discursive term, and therefore homogenize an otherwise heterogeneous community insofar as this community’s relationship with its national origin and its gender, class and ethnicity are concerned.

Besides its socio-political specificity, in the U.S. the term Latino refers to a cultural process that has not only gestated from within the communities of Latin American immigrants in this country but that also is a manifestation of the transnational and transcultural character of the various Latin American cultures.

When one discusses the issue of Latino identity one is talking mainly about a political and social identity in which the individual - not the institutions- defines himself or herself as Latino. The Latinos in the United States constitute a heterogeneous community whose diversity is dictated by cultural, historical, sociological and racial factors.

This racial and cultural diversity has probably not contributed to a better understanding between the Latino community and governmental organizations. This confrontation