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## Latino USA: Struggles, Challenges, Contributions, and Transformations

Félix Masud-Piloto

José Soltero

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### Cover Page Footnote

This article is from an earlier iteration of *Diálogo* which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."

# LATINO USA:

## Struggles, Challenges, Contributions, and Transformations

by Félix Masud-Piloto  
and José Soltero



Photo by Claudia Morales Haro

In January 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau declared that after reaching 37 million, Latinos had become the largest ethnic minority in the United States. The landmark event was not a surprise to most. On the contrary, a mix of historical, political, and economic factors have made migration from Latin America a constant in American history. Historically, the Latino presence in the United States predates the first British settlements and the founding of this nation by more than a century, and until 1848, most of what is today the U.S. Southwest belonged to Mexico and was populated by Mexicans and Native Americans. More recently, especially after World War II and as a result of wars, political turmoil, economic depressions, and increased U.S. interference in Latin American affairs, immigration from the region has increased dramatically. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, from 1990 to 2000, the Latino population in the U.S. grew by 12,951,759 persons, or 57.9%. The Bureau estimates that by the end of 2003, the Latino population in the U.S. will be close to 38 million.

Like the millions of immigrants from all over the world that have made this nation what it is today, Latinos have a long history of struggle to overcome colonization, discrimination, exploitation, hostility, racism, and stereotypes. Despite those conditions, Latinos have

forged strong communities that have thrived and prospered in this nation of immigrants. In this issue of *Diálogo*, we focus on some of the many struggles and challenges Latino immigrants face in this country, recognize some of the many contributions they make to American society, and show how those contributions are transforming the country for the better.

In our regular *Defendiendo lo Nuestro* and *Desde el Mero Medio* sections, John Koval, Sonia Soltero, José Soltero, Ray Salazar, José Muñoz Serrano, Félix Masud-Piloto, and Madeline Cámara discuss Latino realities in the labor market, education, intra-group conflicts, the impact of the *Bracero* Program on its participants, the politics of immigration, the effects of the Vietnam war on *Chicanos*, and the creativity and dilemmas of exile writers. As usual, this issue also includes original poetry, dialogues, as well as movie, art exhibit, and book reviews.

In sum, these articles, essays and reviews provide a diverse portrait of the complex communities Latinos have built and continue building in the U.S. We hope that they will contribute to a better understanding of the great diversity, dynamism, and complexity that characterize the Latino population in the United States.