

# Our Voice

## Thirty Years



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In August 2019, we began a series of activities to make the importance of the CISAN's production of knowledge in North American studies even more visible than it already was.

Originally created as the Center for Research on the United States of America in the year the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended, it was an innovative step in the university. It recognized the fundamental importance for Mexico of having a deep understanding of U.S. society, economy, and ways of doing politics domestically and abroad. This was clearly even more important in the context of the signing of NAFTA, when the center established our country's first Canadian studies area.

This special issue of *Voices of Mexico* is one of those commemorative activities. Since the magazine was created in the CISAN to disseminate our country's thinking and culture through—as its name implies—our voices, in many cases university voices, in order to eradicate simplistic stereotypes, we thought that it was

vital that our voices from the CISAN express our opinions about the development of the region over the last three decades.

The way we approach our object of study has changed. Initially, the then-multidisciplinary research was divided into geographical areas: the projects fit into Mexico-U.S. studies, U.S. studies, and Canadian studies.

Historical and geopolitical circumstances made it clear that the mere territorial approach did not describe the wealth of research being carried out. So, the areas were then designated within three broad themes: strategic studies, globality, and integration.

However, over the last decade, our work's growing interdisciplinary nature has led the projects to move in those three areas situated in seven flexible lines of research that often overlap: security and governability; economic, integration, and development processes; migration and borders; cultural identities and processes; social actors, structures, and processes; and political ideas and institutions. Through these lines of research, we are able to cover the complexity of relationships established not only among nations, but also among the communities they host.

This special issue of *Voices of Mexico* shows how we have changed and who we are today. It is a kind of patchwork, with combined swatches of different colors, patterns, and textures based on an underlying theme that results in a harmony based on contrast.

The CISAN is not only the projects developed in these lines of research and that then result in articles, books, and academic events like colloquia and conferences. The technical-academic areas complement the research, precisely by making it possible to make that knowledge visible through dissemination. The CISAN is, of course, the people who do their work in it and whose personalities and styles can be found in the articles in this issue, some through the analyses of the different moments that stand out over these three decades, others through theoretical reflection, and still others through the life stories that mesh with the development of their research that is also a life project.

As another way of celebrating, we share with our readers works by artists who offer a different vision of the themes we deal with in the social sciences and the humanities. This means that our art section is also a remembrance of our activities. In addition, this commemorative issue celebrates the close, academically fruitful personal relationships that the CISAN has maintained with colleagues from universities in the United States and Canada.

The issue is also special because it is being published during the Covid-19 pandemic, a time that has forced us to work differently. For that reason, since we cannot distribute it physically, we hope that its virtual version reaches our collaborators and readers in time so that they can celebrate with us as they work. **MM**

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