



Gretta Hernández

# Our Voice

The shared history of Mexico and the United States, commemorated in this issue to begin the celebration of the bicentennial of diplomatic relations, has also traversed the modern history of the National University. In the early twentieth century, on the eve of another centennial, that of Mexico's independence, Don Justo Sierra asked legal scholar Ezequiel A. Chávez to travel to the United States to observe how its universities were constituted and how they functioned. From his observations would be born the Law to Establish the National University of Mexico, today the UNAM. This is why it is no exaggeration to say that the United States was also present in the foundation of our university. From then on, and due to that country's preeminence on the world stage, its importance for our nation because of its geographical proximity, and the intense economic, migratory, and cultural exchange between the two, our university has given the former an outstanding place among all the countries it studies and with which it has developed academic exchanges. In the sphere of research, in 1988, the University Program for Research on the United States of America was created, the direct predecessor of the Center for Research on the United States of America (CISEUA), now the Center for Research on North America (CISAN).

This issue of *Voices of Mexico* brings together reflections about the many complex dimensions of our shared history. They range from our diplomatic relations in the times of James Monroe and the first Mexican Empire, to the challenges to bilateral relations in the twenty-first century in the post-Trump and post-COVID era.

In this issue, experts invite us to think about the complex proximity with the United States, starting with the recognition of the importance of looking at it from a historical perspective tracing both conflicts and cooperation dating back to the nineteenth century, as well as the uneven origins of the two countries' media and, therefore, the style of their political discussions. Starting from the past to better understand the present can help eliminate deep-rooted prejudices and stereotypes because knowing their origins will make us aware of them and serve to eliminate them.

To commemorate these 200 years, this issue reviews crucial historic moments. Among them are the transcendental oil expropriation, which even today influences relations between our two countries; the shift beginning in the 1980s that violence and border management have implied; and the relationship between the current governments, with the de-Trumpization of immigration policies, the continuing intense trade moving from NAFTA to the USMCA, and the divergences in environmental, foreign policy, and security issues. Naturally, our authors also ask the perennial question of whether Mexico is better off with Republicans or Democrats in office in the U.S., and recognize that women have had very restricted space for acting in the diplomatic sphere.

With an immense population of Mexican origin on the other side of the border, cultural issues matter. And they matter a great deal. The nations have been marked by divergences in their political and socio-cultural make-up, and this is reflected in cultural products like literature, film, and music, as well as in the production of contemporary art, also dealt with here.

The articles in this issue make us aware that relations between our two countries are crisscrossed by narratives: the U.S. narrative about Mexico and the Mexican narrative about the United States. This complex interdependence runs through the good neighbor policy and is illustrated in the splendid cover that announces the reflections that we share from our voices of Mexico, attesting more than ever to our editorial mission.

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Director of the Center for Research on North America



# Problemas del DESARROLLO

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