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Our Voice

Several anniversaries coincide with this issue of *Voices of Mexico*. Our center is thirty-five years old this year. But, also, it actually officially became the CISAN thirty years ago when it created the first Canadian Studies Area, not only at the UNAM, but also in Latin America, in response to becoming more familiar with our neighbor further to the north when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect.

This year, however, we also celebrate eighty years of diplomatic relations between Mexico and Canada, a milestone that was celebrated both by government and academia early this year. How surprised were we when in late February, right after the commemorations, the Canadian government issued a notification that Mexican tourists would now be required to get a visa to travel there, an act that seemed to me to be almost ironic. It is even more surprising that Mexicans with U.S. visas will have priority for getting the Canadian visa, thus excluding many, many from our country who want to travel to Canada.

This issue of *Voices of Mexico* deals with these paradoxes: Mexican and Canadian academics dialogue about the back-and-forth of this bilateral relationship that has flowed intermittently since the middle of the last century, so often in the shadow of our mutual neighbor.

As the articles show, over these eighty years, there have been *chiaroscuros* in which the trade and economic relationship has consolidated, as have cultural and artistic exchanges and civil society interrelations. So, the readers of this issue, together with the experts, will be able to look into situations as diverse as de-regionalization; the different positions regarding the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program; the options for linking up beyond the federal governments and Quebec's successes in doing so; domestic problems in Canada such as the consequences of deregulation; and, in geopolitics, the case of the Arctic. But they will also find information on civil society efforts to establish links among indigenous communities, women refugees, or to improve seasonal workers' living and working conditions; as well as the efforts of artistic communities who seek to express themselves in Canada's non-dominant languages or who use the latter so their work can be more widely read.

Lastly, and no less important, is what could be called academic diplomacy, carried out in universities fostering exchanges, bilateral dialogues, and specialized publications. In the specific case of the CISAN, these efforts have made it possible to consolidate an interdisciplinary area of study that generates knowledge in this field in Spanish, considering the importance of disseminating our production about Canada to benefit not only our students, but also the decision-makers who decide about bilateral relations, their problems, and their benefits.

We hope this issue of *Voices of Mexico* can be an example of that academic diplomacy and its benefits.

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