

STUDIES ON NORTH AMERICA IN MEXICO

E v a l u a t i o n a n d P e r s p e c t i v e s

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This year, the Center for Research on North America (CISAN) is celebrating its fifth anniversary of publishing *Voices of Mexico*, previously put out by the Humanities Coordination Department. This responsibility has been an important challenge for such a new center. I believe we have a high-quality magazine, which has not only brought together the contributions of researchers and specialists on the region of North America —our center's main object of study— but has also been able to disseminate the different expressions of our rich Mexican culture. I wish to take this opportunity to honor its editors: Ambassador Hugo B. Margáin, who edited the magazine with great wisdom from 1991 to 1995, and Paz Consuelo Márquez Padilla, who has continued this work with intelligence, ability and special dedication since March 1995. I would also like to recognize all those who have collaborated in the different phases of its production; they all deserve very special congratulations.

On this anniversary, I want to say a few words about the current state of studies on North America in Mexico.

Until a few years ago, the economic integration of North America was seen as a remote possibility, difficult to bring to fruition. Today, it is a reality. NAFTA, basically oriented toward the commercial integration of the

Photos by Eduardo Sepúlveda



The UNAM Humanities Tower houses the CISAN offices.

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three countries through the formalization and regulation of greater exchange of goods and services with the elimination of trade barriers, has also brought greater interaction in other fields. In addition to having an important impact on our economic life, it has been felt in the political, social and cultural fields and, of course, in education.

With this new, greater integration and interdependence between Mexico, the United States and Canada, it is important to examine the proposals and the efforts we have made up until now, as well as our short- and medium-term goals as one of the main academic institutions in our three countries. Academic institutions play a fundamental role in educating professionals in all dis-

INSTITUTIONS IN MEXICO WITH STUDY PROGRAMS ON NORTH AMERICA

Mexico City:

National University of Mexico

1. The first effort was the **Center of Anglo-American Studies** in the Department of Philosophy and Letters in 1966. The center's aim was to research English and U.S. societies, and among its academic achievements was the publication of the magazine *Anglia*. The center disappeared in 1974 for political and ideological reasons.
2. The Humanities Coordinating Department through its Justo Sierra University Program, created the **Mexico-United States Research Area**. On October 26, 1984, the rector of the university, Octavio Rivero Serrano, authorized the creation of the **Center for the Study of the United States**. This project was even more short-lived than that of the Department of Philosophy and Letters since, by early 1986, it had already been cancelled for undisclosed reasons.
3. The **Master's Program in Mexico-U.S. Studies** at the Graduate Studies Department at the ENEP Acatlán was the first teaching program in Mexico, or, to my knowledge, in the United States, to concentrate on the bilateral relationship. The program was inaugurated in January 1984, and its main objective has been to train professionals with a multidisciplinary approach so they may understand, analyze and evaluate the political, economic, legal, social and cultural facets of the bilateral relationship.
4. The **Center for Research on North America (CISAN)** was founded November 10, 1988 under the name **University Program for Research on the United States**. Three months later the University Council approved it as the **Center for Research on the United States (CISEUA)**. Its initial aim was to establish a formal sphere for integrating and rationally channeling the material and academic resources on the United States in the humanities.

Recognizing the need to study the changes and phenomena affecting all of North America, the UNAM decided on May 19, 1993 to also foster research on Canada and its relation with the other protagonists in the region. From then on both multi- and interdisciplinary research projects have been carried out about Canada, and the center changed its name to **Center for Research on North America (CISAN)**.

Today, the **CISAN** has 38 researchers and academic technicians. The 19 researchers are divided into three areas: nine in the area of the United States; seven in the area of Mexico-United States-Canada; and three in the area of Canada. Its lines of research are political, economic, social, foreign policy, cultural-literary, legal and strategic studies.

CISAN's Permanent Program for Visiting Researchers promotes the temporary participation of outstanding specialists from other parts of Mexico and abroad.

In June 1995, **CISAN** researchers began a collective project called "Neoconservatism in North America." To date, this has led to six different international seminars and round table discussions, with the participation of a wide variety of highly qualified specialists. The results of this research will be published.

It is important to emphasize that the natural mouthpiece for **CISAN** is the magazine *Voices of Mexico*, published quarterly in English with a run of 7,000 copies, aimed mainly at foreign readers. Its main objective is that Mexico's best voices be heard in other countries. Researchers from **CISAN** as well as outstanding academics and specialists from Mexico and abroad contribute to the magazine. *Voices of Mexico* is designed both to make important aspects of Mexican culture available to the English-speaking reader and present research results about the political and socio-economic situation of the North American region.

In the six and a half years since its founding, **CISAN** has published 25 books and 11 more are being edited or are at press. The center has also organized numerous specialized courses, congresses, seminars and colloquia focusing more and more on the trilateral analysis of different questions in the region. For example, among the many activities planned for the "Neoconservatism in North America" project, there will be one called "Women in the North American Region at the End of the Millennium" and another called "NAFTA-TAFTA."

I am aware that much remains to be done in the UNAM, but it is fair to say that what has been achieved in establishing a general basis for a minimal understanding of the region is significant.

ciplines and promoting and creating original regional studies, such as those about North America, and, in the last analysis, as agents for change in the promotion of new technologies, with the aim of achieving better understanding among different sectors of our societies. It is said that any region aspiring to improve its international competitiveness needs not only business leaders,

but also academic and professional leaders, who can establish the standards and guidelines for action that may have an impact on development in accordance with its national interests.


However, we are aware of the fact that the economic and political power of the three countries in the region are uneven. We also know that the structural differences

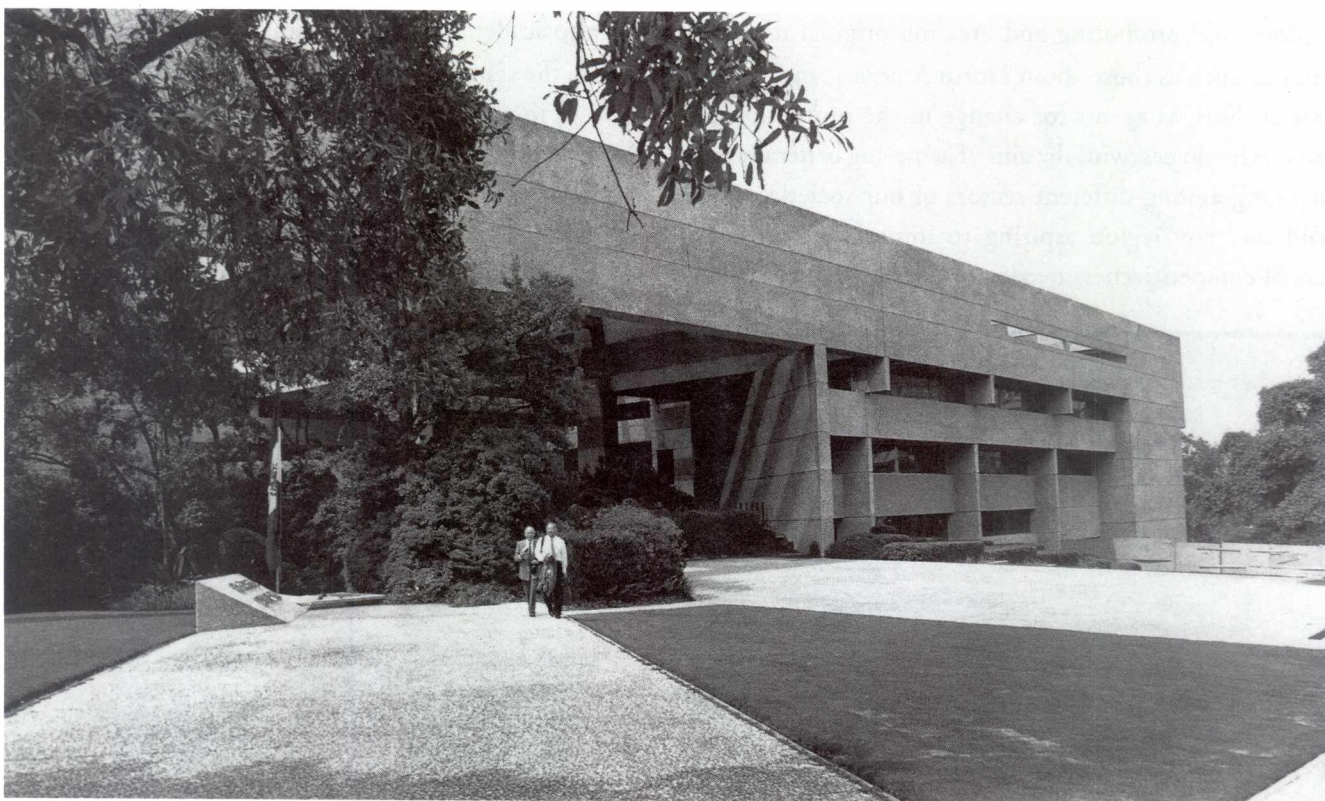
Other Institutions

5. In the mid-1970s the **U.S. Institute of the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CDE)** was created to research U.S. domestic and foreign policy as well as the U.S. economy from the Latin American perspective. In its time, the institute published a great number of very important magazines. Today it no longer exists, although its projects dealing with the United States and the integration of North America have been taken over by the **Division of International Studies**.
6. In the late 1970s the small **Center for Research on Mexico-U.S. Relations** was created by the **Center for Third World Economic and Social Studies (CEESEM)**. After publishing a few issues of the magazine *Informe*, this center was closed for eminently political reasons.
7. **The Mexico College** [One of Mexico's most important graduate studies and research centers. (Editor's Note.)] created the **Mexico-U.S. Studies Program**, today the **Study Program on the United States and Canada**, a part of the Center for International Studies. This program aims to analyze some concrete aspects of the bilateral relationship. Recently, it has produced several research projects about free trade, the results of which have been published in, among other places, the prestigious collection "México-Estados Unidos" (Mexico-United States). The program currently includes 13 research projects which all draw on its well-stocked Documentation Center.
8. The **José María Luis Mora Research Institute** was also founded at the end of the 1970s to do historical studies. One of its main achievements was the publication at the beginning of this decade of a compendium on U.S. history.
9. The **Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET)** initiated the **North American Studies Program** in 1986, but it was canceled in the early 1990s.
10. **The Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico (ITAM)** created the **Academic Program on Mexico-U.S.-Canada Relations (PARMEC)** as part of its Department of International Studies in 1992. **PARMEC** has organized many seminars and lectures and published three books. It also offers a specialized course called Studies on the United States and Canada.

Nationwide

In the 1980s, some academic institutions outside Mexico City also opened research centers for the study of North America:

11. The **Northern Border College (COLEF)** was created in Tijuana as part of a decentralization program (originally, the college had been part of the Border Studies Program of the **Mexico College**), to study border questions on site. In addition to researching different border questions, the College has a master's program in Regional Studies. Unfortunately, its **U.S. Studies Department** has been closed.
12. In Cholula, state of Puebla, the **University of the Americas (UDLA)** established a master's program in **U.S. Studies** in the late 1980s. The program is interdisciplinary and aims to train professionals in analyzing the history, politics, society and culture of the United States and their impact abroad.
13. The **Institute for Historical Research at the San Nicolás Hidalgo University of Michoacán** offers an advanced course in **U.S. history**. In addition, the institute is carrying out an overall research project called "U.S. History and Expansionism in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1898."
14. The **Center for Mexico-United States-Canadian Studies** is part of the **Center for Strategic Studies at the Monterrey Technological Institute of Higher Learning (ITESM)**; this center is working on three research projects about free trade in the region.
15. The Program for Research on the United States at the **University of Colima** is developing a research project about Contemporary Intellectual History in the United States.
16. Lastly, the **Autonomous University of Sinaloa** recently opened up the **Mexico-U.S. Studies Area** in its History Department. It is currently carrying out two research projects about specific aspects of the bilateral relations between Mexico and the United States. 



Mexico College, one of Mexico's most important graduate studies and research centers hosts the Study Program on the United States and Canada.

in their educational systems are significant. That is why it would be interesting to examine the European educational integration experience, just as we would profit from looking at the Canadian experience vis-à-vis the United States to finally arrive at concrete ways of collaborating in education from the different perspectives of the three North American countries.

The discussion and analysis on the impact that North American integration under NAFTA has had on education are really quite recent. However, I am convinced that the success of integration depends, among other things, on being able to overcome the great dif-

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ferences in educational levels among the countries involved.

It is also important to recognize the rapid technological advances in telecommunications, especially through the impressive development of computers and, above all, the sophisticated Internet system. All this has permitted the instantaneous transmission of many types of information (library archives, specialized documents and texts) across national borders. This wonderful technological progress, a direct response to globalization, is a watershed for economic, educational and cultural change in any country. It has made academic exchange more dynamic and reduced the differences in research among the North American countries since today they all have the same tools for accessing information and, therefore, contacts and alliances have multiplied exponentially, definitely enriching the current trilateral research projects. The increasing importance of this interaction has made it essential that Mexico for-

malize and systematize scientific studies about the United States and Canada. If we take into consideration that in the 1990s the number of actors in the increasingly difficult and complex trilateral relation has grown substantially, it is even more urgent to deepen their study. This new complexity in trilateral relations has sometimes generated unprecedented situations and furthered the deepening of the differences in their perceptions and viewpoints. I think that our efforts in Mexico to systematize the study of the region have gradually eliminated some misconceptions which came about mainly due to the lack of knowledge. Today, these efforts allow us to promote a more objective, less prejudiced view of our northern neighbors.

As a specialist in the United States and as director of the Center for Research on North America of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, I consider it extremely important to steadfastly continue the systematization of studies on North America. From an overall perspective, these studies have offered us invaluable information about

their complex political, economic and social systems and greater understanding of more complex relations, which are influenced by economic integration. I am convinced that it is essential to establish even more contacts, agreements or accords with U.S. and Canadian academic institutions to promote greater exchange among professors, researchers and students and, of course, to consolidate the continual exchange of information.

While it is the case that since the 1970s, several academic institutions, aware of the need to study the United States from Mexico, set up a few specialized research centers, they are still insufficient. Unfortunately, in Mexico we still lack a deep understanding of the political and economic systems of the two countries with which we have most interaction.

However, it is only fair to say that several universities, institutes, departments and centers have developed projects to analyze, even if in a limited way, some of the realities of North America, even though in the majority



The Center for Economic Research and Teaching, through its Division of International Studies, promotes research on the United States and the integration of North America.

of cases Mexico-U.S. relations occupy a privileged place in their work.

Despite the efforts of the programs mentioned, some of which no longer exist, a solid tradition of research has not yet been established, given that the majority of the

projects are teaching activities and many others do not have enough research staff. This lessens their importance, perhaps not as individual projects, but as research centers. New programs and centers dedicated to the study of the United States have proliferated, but their

RESEARCH PROJECTS ABOUT NORTH AMERICA IN MEXICO

Center for Research on North America (CISAN)

United States Area

- Barbara Driscoll Kelly: *Minorities, Race and Ethnicity in the United States in the Framework of Their Contemporary Social Movements.*
- Rosa Cusminsky: *Evaluation of California Manufacturing.*
- Remedios Gómez Arnau: *U.S. Foreign Policy Toward North America.*
- Claire Joysmith Smith: *Cultural-Literary Presence and Perspectives of Multiculturalism in the United States.*
- Paz Consuelo Márquez-Padilla: *U.S. Political Thought.*
- Silvia Núñez García: *-Class Inequality and Social Structure in the United States. -Elections in Mexico, Canada and the United States, 1994.*
- César Pérez Espinosa: *Legislative Leadership and the Structure of the U.S. Congress.*
- Antonio Rivera Flores: *Higher Education in the United States.*
- José Luis Valdés: *The United States and Democracy in Latin America: Political Transition and Militarism.*

Mexico-United States-Canada Area

- Mónica Gambrill Ruppert: *The Maquiladora Industry in the Development of Mexico.*
- Elizabeth Gutiérrez Romero: *Comparison of Manufacturing Productivity in the United States, Mexico and Canada.*
- Alejandro Mercado Celis: *Analysis of the Factors for the Placement of Asian Investment in California, the United States and Baja California, Mexico.*
- Eduardo Ramírez García: *Reform of the U.S. Banking System and Mechanisms for Solving Controversies in the North American Free Trade Agreement.*
- Rosío Vargas Suárez: *-The U.S. Energy Sector: Some Implications for Mexico. -The Free Trade Agreement and the Modernization of the Mexican Energy Sector.*
- Silvia Elena Vélez Quero: *Anti-Drug Policies in the North American Region in the 1990s: Convergence and Divergence.*
- Mónica Vereá Campos: *Migration Policies in the North American Region: Implications for Mexico.*

Canada Area

- Julián Castro Rea: *Canada and the Constitutional Crisis; and Elections in Canada.*
- Graciela Martínez-Zalce: *Canada: Two Heritages in Search of an Identity.*
- Elisa Dávalos: *Canadian Regional Industrial Policy in the Context of the Integration of the North American Bloc.*

Trilateral Projects

- *Political Systems in North America. Challenges and Convergence*, Gregory Mahler, University of Mississippi; Robert J. Jackson, Carleton University; and Julián Castro Rea, CISAN-UNAM;
- *Quebec and Ontario*, Mónica Vereá Campos, CISAN-UNAM; and Richard Beach and Jeanne Kissner, Center for Canadian Studies, SUNY, Plattsburgh, New York;
- *Women in the North American Region*, Mónica Vereá, CISAN-UNAM; Graciela Hierro, PUEG-UNAM; Luz Elena Gutiérrez de Velasco, PIEM-COLMEX; Joan Koreman, Women's Studies Program, University of Maryland; Peta Tancred, Center for Research and Teaching on Women, McGill University.

main focus is the U.S. relation to Mexico and not the study of the North American region as a whole. This tendency to concentrate efforts on bilateral Mexico-U.S. relations has diminished the importance of studies about the United States and Canada per se. The result is fewer

new perspectives of analysis even in the research about the relationship between Mexico and the United States itself.

I am convinced that the academic analysis of the new type of emerging relations require new forms of research which will lead to different answers and solutions so

- *Culture, Media and the Music Industry. A Comparative Analysis of the Cases of Mexico, the United States and Canada*, William Straw, Centre for Research on Canadian Cultural Industries and the Institutions; Steven Jones, Tulsa University, Oklahoma; and Graciela Martínez-Zalce, CISAN-UNAM.

Collective Project

- *Neoconservatism in North America*

Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE)

- Arturo Borja Tamayo and Judith Mariscal: *The Computing and Telecommunications Sectors in North America*.
- Arturo Borja Tamayo: *The Study of International Relations in the Americas and the Limits of Neorealist Theory*.
- Jorge Chabat: *Mexico's Entry into the Post-Cold-War Order: From Nationalism to Imperfect Interdependence*.
- Sofía Gallardo: *Transnationalization of Environmentalist Networks and Groups in the Face of NAFTA*.
- Imtiaz Hussain: *The Mechanism for Settling Controversies in the North American Free Trade Agreement: A Case Study in Agriculture*.
- María Isabel Studer: *The Auto Sector in North America*.
- Miguel Angel Valverde: *Domestic Policy and the Formulation of Foreign Economic Policy: The Negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement*.
- Jesús Velasco Grajales: *The Influence of Neoconservative Thinking on Changes in the U.S. State, 1960-1988*.

Mexico College

- Ilan Bizberg: *The Impact of the Opening of the Mexican Economy and NAFTA on the Domestic Labor Market and the Mexican System of Industrial Relations*.
- Gustavo Vega: *The Political Economy of Free Trade in North America*.
- Lorenzo Meyer: *History of Mexico-U.S. Relations*.
- Gerardo Bueno: *Mexico-U.S. Economic Relations, 1981-1993*.
- Blanca Torres: *The Impact of Environmental Problems on Mexico-U.S. Relations*.
- Sergio Aguayo: *Images of Mexico in U.S. Media, 1945-1991*.
- Samuel del Villar: *The Fight Against Drug Trafficking in Mexico and the United States*.
- Carlos Alba: *The Effects of Free Trade on Small Businesses in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico*.
- Celia Toro: *Drug Trafficking Control Policy as an Instrument of Foreign Policy*.
- Bernardo Mabire: *Mexican Nationalism and Its Impact on Mexico-U.S. Relations*.
- José Luis Méndez: *Public Policy and Organizations for Industrial Development in Pennsylvania, United States, and Nuevo León, Mexico*.
- Francisco Alba: *The Impact of Free Trade on Rural Mexican Communities*.

University of the Americas

- David R. Dávila Villers: *NAFTA Foreign Policy Toward Latin America*.
- Isidro Morales Moreno: *Industrial Policies after NAFTA. The Case of the Textile and Petrochemical Industry of Mexico*.
- Robert Shadow: *Sacred Land, Holy Water: A Social History of Mora Country in New Mexico, 1860-1900*.
- Edward Simmen: *The Role of the "Wet Back" and His/Her Descendants in Contemporary Mexican and U.S. Fiction*.
- Alfredo Nava: *The Role of the State and Free Enterprise in the Scientific and Technological Development of the United States, Canada and Mexico*.



The José María Luis Mora Research Institute specializes in historical research.

that, without disregarding the wealth of past experience, it will be possible to reformulate positions, answers and strategies of analysis to understand our northern neighbors. It is important to avoid the two extremes into which most studies have fallen in the past: the emotional rejection of everything linked to the United States on the one hand, and, on the other, our total integration as a panacea.

I would like to conclude with some queries that I think are in need of immediate consideration: What role should universities and, in general, higher education play in Mexico in the economic opening? Which areas of study or disciplines will require reinforcement with economic modernization? Are we prepared for an economy which tends to become highly competitive and therefore demands accelerated training of the workforce? Are we facing a brain drain even bigger than the one we have already suffered? Should we promote teaching and research programs about North American studies in Mexico and about Mexican studies in the United States and Canada? Should we begin to formulate a plan for integrated trinational education? Is the ERASMUS Project, designed to allow for higher student mobility in European countries, an example we should follow for designing and defining our priorities in terms of education for the 1990s? Is this the moment to begin to plan our Academic Free Trade Agreement? And finally, to what point are we able to exploit the potential of greater academic integration without affecting our cultural values? ❧



UNAM'S ENEP Acatlán offers a master's program in Mexico-U.S. relations.

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