

OUR VOICE

This issue was prepared during Mexico's midterm election campaigns, when President Enrique Peña Nieto found himself with a tattered image and an approval rating of only 32 percent, the lowest in decades for a president midterm, according to BBC World.

The president's party, the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution, dropped 10 points in the balloting compared to the 2012 elections, with 29 percent of the votes, although it continued to be the country's largest political force. Its wins came in Mexico's poorest regions, the most populated states, and even those marked by violence. It is interesting to note that the number of votes exceeded predictions: 47 percent of registered voters went to the polls. In addition, some independent candidates came out on top, outstanding among whom was Jaime "Bronco" Rodríguez Calderón, who won the governor's seat in Nuevo León. This state is a leader in northern Mexico since its economic development is very positive, positioning it as one of the five states with the most foreign direct investment due to its links with the U.S. economy.

Precisely to talk about relations between Mexico and the United States, in this issue we have included articles by UNAM researcher Leonardo Curzio and Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera from the University of Texas at Brownsville. The former wields his capability for summary in pointing to the central issues dealt with at the meetings between the leaders of our two countries, reiterating the themes of trade and security and adding, fortunately, education. The latter article predicts that the Mexico-U.S. border will once again be a talking point in the 2016 U.S. elections and invites our readers to review the author's reasoning on this matter.

Also in these pages, Jonathan D. Rosen looks at an important domestic U.S. issue, explaining why it has been extensively covered in the international press in recent months: the events documenting police brutality against Afro-Americans and Latinos in that country amidst the increasing militarization of police forces. He emphasizes the growing racism and the risks that this implies for safeguarding civil rights, but above all the legitimate right of U.S. Americans to take to the streets, like in the cases of Ferguson and Baltimore, to demand reforms to stop the abuses by those charged with defending the lives and physical integrity of the public.

Marisol Franco explains how women's participation in drug trafficking rings in Mexico has been essential, though it has changed from their being in charge in some cases in the early twentieth century to being subordinate and violently exploited in most cases today.

This issue's "Art and Culture" section offers several examples that will stimulate everything from our readers' imagination to their taste buds. Let me first mention the article by Denise and Magdalena Rosenzweig, who had the enormous privilege of working directly in cataloging Frida Kahlo's wardrobe and personal items. Her determination to wear traditional *huipil* blouses from the region of Tehuantepec, shawls, and other traditional indigenous clothing closed a perfect circle, an inseparable amalgam of the woman and the sublime artist. Mexico has in this painter a cultural icon that allows the world to recognize her beauty and talent. Her clothing is evidence of pride in wearing the work of our artisans.

In another order of things, this issue is festooned with popular music and dance as part of Mexico City's urban culture. Gina Bechelany writes about the atmosphere and characteristics of the emblematic Los Angeles Ballroom, where *danzón* and other Latino rhythms continue to recreate a space where everyone joins the fiesta. Anchored in a working class neighborhood, this venue's fame has transcended

generations, social classes, and nationalities; in the harmonious movement of the dance, they all find a unique space for coexisting.

Returning to the pleasures of the palate, the world knows that Mexico's culinary tradition is exceptional. Part of this legacy is Mexican baked goods; Isabel Morales tells us their story. Introduced by Europeans in the colonial period, this fundamental part of our diet gradually took root among the populace, who made it something all our own through the combination of unique forms and unusual names, delighting us every day.

As a corollary to these articles, we ask our readers to look at the Folk Art Museum as written by Teresa Jiménez. Without a doubt, this museum contains pieces that demonstrate the diversity, wealth, color, and passion for life of our traditional artists.

Voices of Mexico continues to distinguish itself as it has since its beginnings as a magazine that disseminates the work of prestigious Mexican authors. In this issue, we pay posthumous homage to Vicente Leñero, known for his social commitment and valuable artistic production. Journalist, playwright, novelist, and script writer, Leñero created an entire school with his ability to communicate the vicissitudes of Mexico's marginalized population. A man of profound Catholic convictions, he leaves us a legacy of a vast oeuvre to reiterate the value of ethics in the face of an ominous world.

Continuing in the literary vein, Iván González's article contributes an interesting reflection contrasting the work of U.S.-American Nobel Prize laureate William Faulkner and Mexican writer Juan Rulfo. González underlines their affinities, among which is the centrality of characters who are outsiders marked by violence, such as in paradigmatic works like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Rulfo's *El llano en llamas* (The Plain in Flames).

CISAN researcher Camelia Tigau draws our attention to one of the great issues of contemporary debate: skilled migration. Bringing together eight articles by scholars in the field, the special section allows us to identify the big challenges of Mexico's geographical proximity with the United States and Canada, marked by growing interdependence that has not managed to close the gap of the asymmetries that affect our country in particular. In today's knowledge era, demographic trends emerge that point to the aging population in advanced societies like the United States, which, together with the lack of investment in Mexico in technological and scientific development and the wage differential, end up making us the fourth country that contributes human capital to the United States, surpassed only by the skilled migration from India, Canada, or Great Britain.

This discussion cannot be separated from the unconcluded debate about the migratory reform in the United States. All indicators show that the priority interest in that reform is to attract highly-skilled migrants to cover the deficit of human resources in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Focusing attention on women's growing role in this competitive context, as well as analyzing in detail the results of public policies aimed at educating new highly-skilled personnel in Mexico like those of the Conacyt, are some of the obligatory reflections in several of the contributions to this section.

To finish up, I urge you to read the reviews of the books we offer here, particularly the one of the book by Paz Consuelo Márquez-Padilla, given the crisis and conflicts that have continued to escalate in different parts of the globe. One sad example is the case of Ayotzinapa, in the state of Guerrero, which reiterates that Mexico is by no means the exception. For that very reason, we have decided that this issue should include how this unfortunate event has been dealt with, recognizing that corruption and impunity are still pending issues for our country. We did it in the pen of the Mexican journalist José Buendía.

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