

OUR VOICE

At this writing, a few days before President Donald Trump's 100-days-in-office report, not only the United States but also many other nations of the world are in political ferment. Cases in point are Venezuela, Turkey, France, and Great Britain, where the sources of the tension may be specifically domestic, but also all have in common a citizenry clamoring to get out from under the interests of political leaders and/or parties.

In this sense, the future of democracy is undoubtedly one of the uncertainties facing humankind. That's why we are taking advantage of this space to remember the eminent Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori, who passed away last April 4, leaving a huge intellectual legacy in this field.

For this philosopher, democracy cannot be explained as a function of what is aspired through it or in the sense of how things should be, but as a symbiosis with what it actually is, thus amalgamating a prescriptive-descriptive definition. We can simplify by saying that for Sartori, democracy is simultaneously an ideal, a principle of legitimacy, and a system for managing power.¹

We should also remember that U.S. democracy is characterized, among other things, by having given rise to the first political parties and by remaining influential until today. Currently, the Republican and Democratic Parties are in serious internal disarray, clearly shown by Trump's entry into the White House.

Given the importance of this for Mexico, most of the contents of this issue directly or indirectly center on analyzing topics of special importance.

We begin with the splendid contribution by our colleague Paz Consuelo Márquez-Padilla, who was the director of the CISAN between 1997 and 2001. She very succinctly presents the key social, political, economic, and cultural elements underlying Trump's victory, framing her argument in the profound significance that both federalism and checks and balances have for the U.S. political system.

For a comprehensive view of the kick-off of the new administration, we have an article by renowned media and communications expert Manuel Chavez. His contribution about the strategy Trump used to distort reality and gain followers by discrediting the traditional press and television media, together with his intensive use of Twitter to attack and revile his opponents, and, above all, to retain his captive followers, is obligatory reading. It is interesting to note that 28 million people currently follow the president of the United States on Twitter.

It is certainly surprising that when carefully reviewing the difficulties in Mexico-U.S. relations given the hostility of an administration that disqualifies any reciprocity or contribution on Mexico's part, the reality is that the bilateral agenda items remain unchanged: security,

¹ See Giovanni Sartori, *Elementos de teoría política* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987), Chapter 4.

trade, immigration, and energy. However, the new facet of this relationship is that NAFTA will be renegotiated in the coming months; this is why we include two articles on its effects to illustrate the complexity this process will present.

Elisa Dávalos presents us with the quintessential case of the auto industry: linking it up through value chains spanning the whole North American region has favored its recovery in the United States and has catapulted Mexico to ninth position worldwide in this important industry.

To contrast points of view, international relations specialist Roberto Zepeda illustrates the role of Midwestern unionized workers in electing Donald Trump. Displaced by globalization, technological innovation, and even financial markets, blue collar workers opted for the Republican candidate, trusting in his promise to recreate their jobs.

Two factors come together here: one, Mexico's successful positioning in the auto industry, and the other, the loss of jobs of this kind in the United States. Trump manipulated both to attract followers with the win-win argument of recovering jobs for U.S. workers and completely rejecting NAFTA if necessary.

Any of our regular readers will immediately note that this issue offers something different: a dossier with fascinating contributions from six U.S. academics from the University of Arizona, dealing with important aspects of the Sonora/Arizona border area. We invite you to look over the dossier's contents to discover their value added for *Voices of Mexico's* traditional fare.

Our "Special Section," edited by Canadian researcher Kathy Sexsmith, an expert in immigration and development, brings together several articles by members of a new generation of researchers. They concentrate their attention on undocumented agricultural workers settled in the U.S. Northeast. Their forceful, well-documented arguments demonstrate the exploitation by employers, the enormous risks women and teenagers face at the hands of organized crime networks, and the tensions between workers and owners. What stands out in all the contributions is the authors' activism and solidarity with vulnerable immigrants. Their commitment is not limited to informed, erudite denunciations, but includes accompanying, advising, and creating social capital to empower undocumented migrants through collective action.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our CISAN colleague Teresa Jiménez for her care in selecting the materials for the section on the diversity and wealth of the art of illustration in Mexico. Our "Art and Culture" section looks at this field of endeavor, with its rich history dating all the way back to the indescribable beauty of the pre-Colombian codices.

I would venture to say as a corollary that the true "Splendor of Mexico" resides in the very soul of our nation. Despite the increasing difficulties and problems we face, our country continues to reproduce a unique artistic sensibility materialized in the vitality and creativity of our architects, sculptors, painters, writers, poets, illustrators, and artisans.

In this issue, we celebrate the genius of architect Teodoro González de León and the aesthetic contributions of Mexican women artists like María Eugenia de la Garza and Alexandra Aktories.

I send our readers an ode in thanks.

Silvia Núñez García
Director of CISAN