

Prefacio / Preface / Préface

This issue of *Norteamérica* has been prepared in Washington, D.C., by the Center for North American Studies of American University. Nous souhaitons qu'il soit une contribution à l'esprit de ce grand projet savant. Esto lo convierte en algo más que un esfuerzo continental. It is part of a higher aspiration that this journal intends to promote and we are pleased to have been invited to be part of it.

Aside from being prepared in the United States, this issue is somewhat different because it features and emphasizes a particularly interesting and relevant theme: a special section on "North American Attitudes" ("les attitudes Nord-américaines/ las actitudes norteamericanas") has been included. This special section includes outstanding studies of public opinion and behavior regarding the continent's three countries. The main focus is a critical examination and assessment of the evolving attitudes that Americans, Canadians, and Mexicans have developed regarding their continental neighbors and North America, both as a region and as a community. The articles provide empirical evidence revealing these attitudes and this behavior, along with analysis of their significance and potential future direction.

Ces questions sont très importantes pour une étude générale de l'avenir de l'Amérique du Nord. Sans ces études, il serait impossible à découvrir la vraie direction de ce continent et sa capacité à devenir une communauté régionale. Les attitudes populaires parmi ces trois pays sont dans un état de changement, maintenant. Il est, peut-être, un moment de transition pour les politiques et les relations parmi ces pays et leur peuples. Nous espérons que ces essais offrent une meilleure compréhension pour toutes les gens intéressées à ce sujet.

Of course, there is a great diversity of interest in North America, scholarly and otherwise. This issue has not overlooked that diversity. Subjects ranging from continental security and sovereignty to legal and political institutions to multicultural identity are addressed. It is our hope that future issues of this journal will explore the full scope of this continental community in addition to themes related to public policy and economic relations. If North America truly constitutes a community and

not just a geographical entity or a region of distinct countries, the culture, history, and deeper sense of identity for all of the people of this continent need to be considered and appreciated. North American scholarship needs to include the efforts of humanists, natural scientists, artists, and other people who critically examine the idea of this continental community beyond the scope of social scientists and policy analysts. We are confident that this issue has made inroads into those areas of scholarly and even popular interest.

¿Qué es Norteamérica? ¿A dónde vamos y también dónde estuvimos? Estas preguntas remiten a respuestas creativamente formuladas en este volumen. Definir a nuestra comunidad es indispensable en especial si lo hacemos mexicanos, estadounidenses y canadienses, para mostrar cuánto interés y afecto despierta Norteamérica. Muchas personas no comprenden cuán fuertes son nuestros lazos familiares, de fe y de cultura. Norteamérica es nuestro camino y futuro compartidos.

As with previous issues, this time we include a chronology of significant events relating to North America that have occurred during the past several months. It also includes an interesting "critical notes" essay regarding the status of North American studies that suggests current and perhaps future trends among the continent's academic institutions. Yet another insightful interview with a public official who has a particular interest in North American issues (in this case, a member of the United States House of Representatives) also adds to the depth of the journal.

Overall, readers should find this issue thought provoking. Il devrait offrir une bonne contribution à la littérature savante au sujet de ce continent et de son avenir. Creemos que pone de relieve nuestra comprensión y aprecio por la idea de una comunidad norteamericana. We hope that you will concur in that assessment and find this issue informative and useful.

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