

Covering Migration and Migration Policies In Mexico and the United States: Perspectives of Dialogue in the Public Sphere.

Magalí Murià (Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Department of Communication. University of California, San Diego).

Resumen:

En México y Estados Unidos, son notorias las diferencias con que, en la esfera pública, se construye y representa el fenómeno migratorio y se proyecta la imagen de los migrantes. En este trabajo, se trazan algunos paralelismos entre estas imágenes con el diseño de políticas públicas en torno a la migración en ambos países, y se exploran las posibilidades de tender puentes para establecer un dialogo binacional.

Palabras clave:

migracion, políticas públicas, esfera pública, relaciones México-Estados Unidos, medios de comunicación

Introduction

The initial set of questions that motivated me to write this paper gravitate around the relation between the United States and Mexico, and the values, attitudes and representations about each other that are constructed as the interaction between these two countries grows. In the context of developments formally contained in the North America Free Trade Agreement, is our connection restricted to the trade of goods and services? Or is there a more encompassing interchange that perhaps extends to the ways in which we see and understand each other and what we have in common, both politically and culturally?

These questions can be situated in what the German scholar Jurgen Habermas identified as the *public sphere*: a domain of our social life that mediates between state and society where the controversies and debates around issues of common concern take place. As a conceptual entity and a unit of analysis, the public sphere is the ideal site to address these concerns, because it is an area where the cultural and the political coexist in constant harmony and tension. At the same time, it is within the parameters of the public sphere, that the intrinsic connectedness between government and media becomes easier to follow, particularly when it comes to the complex and yet consistent dynamics between policy-making and journalistic practices, political discourses and news stories.

In this work, I direct my attention to the intersection between politics and culture, and the ways in which government, society and media, as actors of the public sphere, generate and project values and points of view. More precisely, this paper addresses first the ways in which the governments of Mexico and the United States have dealt with the migration of Mexican nationals to the United States and second, it explores manners in which the media projects the image of migrants (particularly unauthorized migrants) in the two national contexts. This discussion takes place in a scenario where the presence and magnitude of migrant populations have increased during the last decades; and with this boost comes a growing awareness of their presence, that is constructed differently, culturally and politically, on both sides of the border.

The public sphere can be recognized as the site in which public knowledge regarding migration is constructed, as well as the institutional location where opposing factions within government and society compete to impose their views on the issue. What sources are used in the making of news about this issue, and which frames are built around it are questions that help enormously to understand how dominant visions and representations are articulated in each of the two countries. Furthermore, the manner in which migrants are seen, and migration policies formulated, illustrate, in interesting ways, the impact of an ongoing process of global interaction that affect nations, societies and citizens, and that is not alien to Mexico and the United States.

In the first part of this paper, I provide contextual information that helps to understand the growing importance of Mexican migrants in the national scenes of both Mexico and the United States. I also discuss the most common ways in which the image of migrants is constructed in the two countries, how they fit in the two nations as imagined communities and how this is related to policy-making. Finally, I offer an overview of the most recent developments in terms of migration policy-making, with a special emphasis in the post-September 11 scenario, when new actors and arguments have come into play in the migration-related controversy.

In the second part of the work, I provide some results of a comparative content analysis I conducted of migration related stories in two newsmagazines, *Proceso* and *Time*, from Mexico and the United States respectively. Despite their differences in size and scope, these two magazines mirror the views about migrants and migration in both national contexts. The theoretical discussions I address in the first part help to guide my attention to journalistic practices like the selection of sources in the two countries, as well as to the construction of frames. The differences in sourcing and framing in the two magazines relate in interesting ways to the manner in which the issue of migration and the image of migrants are constructed, as well as to policy making in the two countries.

The analysis of the data in this exercise of content analysis suggest that the media of the two countries address the issue from radically different perspectives that are actually rooted in cultural and historic trends, as well as the ways in which the government officials and diplomats of their respective countries see the issue. Despite recent efforts to reach an agreement, the governments of Mexico and the United States have not been able to reconcile essential differences in conceiving and addressing migration. However, the media reflect that there is a conversation taking place between the two public spheres, which although limited, gravitates along a shared parameter: the raising awareness of a growing link between the two countries that cannot be reversed or contained, because of its demographic magnitude.

Discourse and Policy Encounters. Migrants and Migration Policies in Mexico and the United States

Scholars that study Mexican communities in the United States are confronted with an extremely complex population group, very heterogeneous, immersed in a confusing set of different and even contradictory categories. Mexican Americans range from those who have been living in the Southwest of the United States for generations, since those territories were part of Mexico, to the members of what has already been called by many scholars “the Diaspora community”. There are businessmen, teachers and gangsters; professionals and scholars; some like to call themselves Chicanos (See Acuña 1988 and Gómez Quiñones 1990); others prefer to be Hispanics (See Vigil 1987), or Latinos (See Hero 1992), and finally, there are many more that have already mixed into the mainstream but still preserve the memory of a Mexican “abuelita”.

There are many newcomers. Some belong to the numerous elites that have been displaced in various moments of Mexican history, and have sought temporary or permanent asylum in the United States. Some others, wealthy, have found a sanctuary in U.S. financial institutions, safe from the threat of economic nationalism. There are also ethnic minorities, like Mexican Jews, for example, who show patterns of circular migration between the two countries. The presence of these migrants is most of the times unnoticed. This paper, however, deals with the stereotypical migrant. It focuses on the many who cross the border on a daily basis, without government authorization, risking their lives through the rivers or deserts, with the hope of obtaining low-income jobs in the fields and kitchens of the strongest economy of the world. Some come to stay, some leave after a few years, and some others return on a seasonal basis.

The demographic importance of Mexicans in the United States has grown significantly for both countries. Mexicans who have moved their residence from Mexico to the United States with or without U.S. authorization have increased steadily since the 1960s, most dramatically during the last two decades, when it grew from roughly 200,000 a year in the 1980s to 300,000 in the 1990s (See Alba 2002). Nowadays, it is estimated that more than 9 million Mexican-born immigrants live in the United States, which means that around one in ten Mexicans live in U.S. territory. More than half are undocumented. And, if we consider that migration flows have a direct effect on the numbers of Mexican-American populations, we can appreciate even more the demographic importance of this group. There are currently 35.3 million Mexican-Americans in the United States, which represent 13 percent of population in this country (U.S. Bureau of the Census). This number represents around one third of the entire population of Mexico (INEGI).

The demographic magnitude of this group comes accompanied by its increasing economic importance for the Mexican economy. Between 1992 and 2000 the number of households in Mexico that received remittances from relatives in the United States went from 660 thousand to 1.25 million. In 2003, Mexicans in the United States sent \$12 billion to their families back home, more foreign income than from tourism, foreign investment or exported oil.

(Mena in Los Angeles Times, 2004). More recent studies show that remittances are among the most important source of income for the balance of payments. This continues to grow. According to Mexico’s Central bank, remittances sent by Mexicans living abroad during the first quarter of 2004 reached 3 thousand 276 million dollars, 19.5 per cent more than the same of period last year.

In this context, the political discourses and cultural representation of migrants in the United States and Mexico is been subject to drastic changes in the last years. On the Mexican side, the Mexican

government has shifted its traditional politics of no politics regarding Mexican migrants into the political inclusion of this group in its political discourses and practices. Nowadays, Mexicans in the United States are considered an attractive political market for Mexican political parties and elected officials. The U.S. side, for its part, is more ambivalent about this group, but there is some indication of change. Even sectors that were traditionally anti-immigrant, like labor unions, are changing their stance towards undocumented migrants. The Mexican-American community has also become an attractive electoral market in the United States, and Mexican culture is gradually being integrated into the mainstream of American culture and Media industries.

The traitors of the past are the heroes of today: Mexico and Mexican Migrants.

In the Mexican case, the relationship between Mexico and Mexicans in the United States was mostly of distrust and despise during most of the XX Century. Because of their hybrid cultural features, Mexican migrants were perceived as a threat to the national cultural project of post-revolutionary Mexico. Despitefully called “pochos”, members of these groups were often seen as traitors, who had given up their identity to incorporate to American culture. There was not much room for them in a nationalistic discourse, which, coincidentally, also involved a strong ingredient of anti-American sentiments.

Despite some earlier indications of change (See Garza 1982, Mindiola 1986, Gómez 1981) it was not until the early 1990s, that with the process of negotiation and lobbying of the North American Free Trade Agreement, Mexican officials saw the Mexican-American community as a potential political ally (See Muriá 1997). This is also when this group’s recognition and visibility increased significantly in the Mexican public sphere. Mexicans in the United States have been more visible in recent years, due to the dramatic increases of deaths among the migrants who venture in the deserts and dangerous areas in their intent to cross the border. Also, there is growing acknowledgment of the positive impact of remittances sent by Mexican migrants in the Mexican Economy. In addition, more and more Mexican families have now relatives or acquaintances that have moved to the United States, making the issue more relevant in terms of proximity to Mexican public opinion.

The growing numbers Mexican citizens residing in the United States have turned this group into an increasingly attractive political market. Indeed, it has become increasingly relevant for the image of the Mexican government at home to provide assistance and benefits to those living outside. In this sense, the nation, along with the administrative arm of the state, is moving beyond national borders (See Fitzgerald 2000). One of the first policy oriented decisions taken by the Mexican government to provide attention and recognition to Mexicans living in the United States, was the *Paisano* Program, which had the objective of welcoming and orienting returning migrants in their trips to Mexico.

At the same time, the Mexican government increased its consular activity throughout the United States in the pursuing of a logic that combines a discourse of human rights, with a policy of protection. Mexican diplomats actively pressured for the respect of the human rights of what they call *los indocumentados*, or “the undocumented”. This is very relevant in terms of framing because it represents a dispute in constructing the image of migrants between the two countries. The human rights discourse and the image of the undocumented are keystones in Mexico’s arguments when dealing with the United States regarding migration. As I will explain later in further detail, key in the U.S. government’s arguments are the security discourse and the image of the “illegal”.

Human rights refer to a universal set of unquestionable set of values, an idealistic approach of the issue that is in constant tension with the pragmatism of policy making. It stresses what makes us equal, regardless our citizenship, or compliance with the legal particularities of every country. It goes beyond the domestic, referring to something immutable and unquestionable that never changes and is not subject to argumentation. It is part of the enlightened religion of our days.

At the same time, the word “undocumented” as opposed to “illegal” (that is commonly used in the United States) makes us think of someone who is unprotected by the law, instead of someone who breaks it. It evokes someone who needs protection. Along these lines, “undocumented migrants” are seen as victims of a system that refuses them proper paperwork. It is also common to call them “undocumented workers”, which stresses their character as laborers, and gives the discussion a whole dimension that has to do with labor struggles and labor conditions. To think of migrants as workers gives them respectability, conveys an image of hard working people, people who migrate to the United States “to work”, which is also a common argument among those who contend in their favor.

Accordingly, Mexican consulates in the United States have invested enormous amount of resources into their Protection Departments or *Departamentos de Protección*. Since the 1800s, these Protection departments have the responsibility of overseeing a fair treatment of Mexican nationals in their various encounters with U.S. law enforcement and employers, fair trials for the convicted, medical attention for the detained, and so on. Nowadays, Protection departments are considered a priority in terms of budget

shares and attention. Other functions include reuniting families, facilitating the protection of minors, pressuring for orderly processes of repatriation, monitoring the trial of those accused of hate crimes against Mexicans, etc.

Equally important was the creation in 1990 of the Program for Attention to Mexican Communities Abroad (PCME). Since its foundation, PCME plays an active role in intervening in U.S. public affairs, with the mission of advancing the interests of Mexican nationals in the United States. They also have the mission of maintaining links with Mexican communities, providing a variety of social services that range from the areas of education, health, community development and the maintenance of Mexican identity and nationalism among Mexican Americans. PCME is the best example of the disposition of the Mexican government to extend the imagined community beyond national borders. Institutionally, it is one of the legs of the expansion of the nation into U.S. territory, with a consequent impact in the public sphere of the two countries.

In 1997, Congress passed an amendment to the Mexican Constitution that established the principle of *no pérdida de la nacionalidad mexicana* (right to keep the Mexican nationality). According to this law, Mexican citizens are now entitled to hold dual nationality. The passing of this law had serious implications, particularly because it contemplated the eventual possibility of voting. Indeed, the possibility of granting voting rights to Mexican nationals issue has been subject to open consideration. In 1998, the Mexican Congress mandated a Commission of Specialists to evaluate the possibilities of granting voting right to Mexicans living abroad. The report, that was made available to the public, provided with an overview and assessment about the costs and implications of potential programs that would make it possible to vote for Mexicans residing beyond the national borders (See *Informe*).

While already approved by the Senate, the measure has not yet been implemented. The implications of this for the public sphere are enormous. When absentee voting starts taking place, the Mexican electorate will increase by 15 percent. Because of the magnitude of this population, it is expectable that election related debates that have historically taken place within national boundaries will spread to the United States. To which extent the issues being debated will make their appearance in the public sphere at United States is still unknown, but it is evident that the media, particularly Spanish speaking media, will not find that easy to turn their back on these debates.

A good anticipation of what can happen is already observed at the local level, in several Mexican states, the state of Zacatecas being the most outstanding. Local Zacatecan legislatures have moved forward to include the possibility for émigrés to run as candidates in local elections. Local Congress even opened two seats to be occupied by migrants. As the electoral battle progresses, this will be the first election in which political candidates take their oath in U.S. soil. At the same time, campaign events are already taking place in U.S public spaces. Officials in Mexico City, for their part, say they are moving cautiously because their international ballot system would be the largest in the world, with an unknown cost (Mena in Los Angeles Times, 2004).

A few years ago, in his 2000 presidential campaign Vicente Fox included the issue of migration as an important part of his agenda. In a statement that became critically resonant for Mexican public opinion, he referred to Mexican migrants as “true heroes”, because of the difficulties that they faced in order to work in the United States and for their contribution to the national economy. In a campaign promise, Fox stated that migrants would be a priority in his political agenda (Campa y Vera in Nueva Opinión, 2002). Undeniably, Fox recognized the importance of Mexican migrants in the United States as a critical source of income for the country’s economy, and a potential electoral clout.

Another campaign promise made by Fox, was to move forward making the vote possible for Mexicans living abroad. In his relation with Mexican American businessmen, he was, in fact, accused of receiving illegal campaign funds from Mexican American actors. This accusation was formulated by representatives of the oppositional Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) in the states of California and Texas¹⁴⁹.

Fox was not the first to publicly address Mexican Americans for electoral purposes. Already in the late 1980s, opposition candidate to Carlos Salinas, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, had inaugurated the practice of campaigning in the United States, among Mexican American communities. However, once elected President of Mexico, Fox took very visible measures to strengthen the ties with Mexicans abroad. He founded an office that would act as a branch of the office of the Presidency, directed to cultivate the relation with this group. This office was replaced in August 6 of 2002 by the creation of an Institute of Mexicans Abroad (Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior, IME). Interestingly, the founding head of the recently created IME, Cándido Morales, is a Mexican-American *Mixteco* migrant. In addition, the

¹⁴⁹ The story appeared in a publication of the State of Guanajuato. See in *Correo*, “Fox Recibió...”. The fact that foreign-based representatives of political parties are engaged in these types of debates, could be used to illustrate the expansion or overlapping of the public spheres of the two countries.

government of Fox created Advisory Council for IME, that incorporates leaders and representatives of the Mexican- American Community. These leaders were elected democratically, in a nationally held election that took place in Mexican Consulates' facilities. In this process, the system of consular circumscriptions played the role of "electoral districts".

As a result of this process, one hundred representatives of the Mexican community abroad were elected to as members the Advisory Council of the IME, in addition to others that will belong to this council by invitation. This election was not transparent because it was not properly publicized (See Mercado 2002). However the concept of a national election that would be organized according to consular circumscriptions indicates interesting trends for the exercise of extra-territorial citizenship in the future with important repercussions in the public sphere.

Criminals or Victims? Illegal Aliens and the American Dream: The United States and Mexican Migrants

In the United States, views on immigration represent, says Leo Chavez, a "double helix of negative and positive attitudes" (Chavez 2001, p.3). Indeed, American ambivalence towards immigration shows many different tones. It ranges between the extremes of the welcoming image of the "country of immigrants" and the Statue of Liberty to the violent nativism of the *vigilantes* and *minutemen*, engaged in the hunt of illegal aliens in the southern border. Migrants are both considered criminals and victims, depending on who is talking. On the one hand, says Chavez, immigrants are reminders of how Americans, as a people came to be. Yet, immigrants are also new comers whose difference and "otherness" do not go unquestioned.

In his work about covering immigration, Chavez provides a historical overview of immigration discourses and policies, and the way they are expressed in basic visual strategies, symbols, icons and metaphors of magazine covers. He finds that discourses around immigration project the anxiety of a nation that is perceived to be under threat. The "new" immigrants, says Chavez, are perceived as a threat to the "nation" that is conceived of as a singular, predominantly Euro-American, English-speaking culture (Chávez 2001, p.190). A good illustration for Chavez's argument is the recently published article by American scholar Samuel Huntington on "The Hispanic Challenge", which reflects the fear of those who conceive the United States as a nation constructed on white, British and Protestant institutions and culture (See Huntington 2004).

It is not the intention in this paper to provide with the numerous interpretations and attempts to understand the ambivalence of public opinion towards immigration in the United States. However, it is worth mentioning that one of the most conventional and simple explanations correspond to what Wayne Cornelius, Philip Martin and James Hollifield understand as a confluence of markets in the one hand, that create incentives for migration and on the other hand by pressures over decision makers to restrict access (Cornelius *et.al.* 1994, pp.8-10). At the same time, a series of factors that go from the open intervention of stakeholders in the policymaking process, to opinion polls and political traditions generates a confusing scenario where discourses and policies are often crafted in contradictory manners.

In this sense, says Kitty Calavita, U.S. immigration policies are torn by three paired oppositions (Calavita 1994, p.56): The contradiction between employers seeking cheap labor and U.S. born workers whose bargaining power is threatened by an influx of foreigners, the opposition between an economy that generates high demand for unskilled labor and a political class unwilling to confront the social conflicts associated by that demand, and finally the tension between human rights values that are associated with liberal democracies and the exigencies of border controls (Calavita 1994, pp.76-78).

Some conservative authors in the United States stress the fact that the discourse about human rights has been very successful in hindering full enforcement of immigration laws. In Delaet's view, because immigration policy preferences do not influence elections outcomes, interest groups become particularly prominent in the immigration debate (Delaet, 2000 p.3). Along these lines, she confers to what she calls a "liberal coalition of ethnic groups, churches and civil rights associations" (Delaet 2000, p.3) the responsibility for the construction of a human rights discourse that plays a decisive role in the construction of policy, and in this sense, she complains, ideas can shape policy. Her discussion makes clear the tension in policy-making between pragmatism and idealism, which in fact seems to have shaped some of the ambiguities of U.S. immigration policies.

Since the 1960, 200 thousand migrants are estimated to enter illegally the United States each year. The term illegal indicates to great extent the hostile collective attitudes and negative cultural representations of the groups of foreign citizens that fixed their residence in U.S. territory without government authorization. Speaking of "illegal aliens" suggests the combination of an "invasion" (even like an extraterrestrial invasion) and the act of breaking the law or committing a crime. It makes us think of these subjects as criminals, no different than thieves, murderers or drug traffickers. They evoke a need for security, and therefore, it corresponds to the treating of the issue as "national security". This discourse

makes us focus on who is authorized by U.S. law to remain in U.S. territory. In contrast to the universal values of the human rights argument, this law is not universal; it is domestic, exclusive of the United States. Unauthorized migrants are also known as “illegals”, which strips them from their humanity, and fully identifies them with their legal status.

Towards the 1980s, the U.S. government was being perceived by the media to loose control over its own borders, so the resulting policies to deterring illegal immigration acted as a “symbolic representation of state authority”, says Peter Andreas, in his book about policing the U.S.-Mexico border (See Andreas 2000, p.x) The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was one of the first steps to deter undocumented immigration. IRCA incorporated employer’s sanctions for those who knowingly hired unauthorized workers. Motivated by the economic recession of the 1990s, the U.S. government dramatically increased the resources to contain immigration in their southwest border. Just as an example, the number of border patrol agents increased from 3,389 in 1993 to 8,200 in 1999 and it reached 10,000 in 2000 (Dominguez and Fernandez de Castro 2001, p.136).

The anti-immigrant climate reached a peak later in 1994, when Californians voted Proposition 187, in favor of measures that denied undocumented migrants from basic services, among other things. One year before, in 1993, Washington had launched *Operation Blockade*- in El Paso, Texas in an effort to place physical barriers to the flow of people across the common border. At the end of the same year, in 1993, the name was changed to *Operation Hold the Line*, and similar operations were implemented in other points of the U.S.-Mexico Border. This is the case of *Operation Gatekeeper* in San Diego. Finally, in 1996, another important piece of legislation, the IIRIRA, increased civil penalties for illegal entry, and expanded the attributions and funding of Law Enforcement Agencies in the border, like the U.S. Border Patrol. At the same time, IIRIRA prohibits federally financed legal services to bring class action suits against the INS on behalf of illegal immigrants (De Laet 2000, p.127).

During the year of 2000, some opinion leaders started talking about immigrants in ways that indicated some kind of disposition among Washington elites and key figures in the labor sector towards a policy change. There were some public conversations about possible contributions of migrant workers to the economic prosperity the United States enjoyed during the last half of the nineties. Relevant in this context, are the declarations that Alan Greenspan made, on the economic benefits of immigration. Greenspan’s stated that immigration helped hold down inflationary pressures. He also asserted that the U.S. economy needed and would continue to need foreign migrants, and that they should come legally rather than illegally. These statements had great resonance on both public spheres. In fact, Mexico interpreted this as an indication of change in the way undocumented migration to the United States was handled (See Migration News 2000).

Another important moment was marked by the declarations of the AFL-CIO, against employer sanctions and for a new amnesty for the undocumented, as well as a broad new program to educate immigrant workers about their rights. This statements reversed a traditional nativist position held by the AFL-CIO and marked a remarkable shift in the position of this Union, which, in 1986, had pronounced in favor of IRCA. From this moment on, labor unions aligned with other organizations of activists in a coalition that favors undocumented migrants.

Mark Roseblum explains how, towards the beginning of the Bush administration, the political climate seemed to be favorable in the United States for a change in immigration policy. The election of Vicente Fox as President of Mexico, redefined some aspects of the relationship between the two countries. According to Roseblum, Fox inauguration represented the culmination of drive toward democracy, which gave him an unprecedented degree of legitimacy at home and in the United States (Roseblum 2002, p.26). Also, as I already mentioned, the new Mexican President did devote a great deal of energy in addressing migrants. Finally, Latinos were identified as the largest and fastest growing major U.S. minority Group (Roseblum 2002, p.28). By then, the interest to court Latino voters was indisputable, since 5.5 million Latinos participated in the in the 2000 election doubling the turn out in comparison to 1984 (See de la Garza *et.al.* 2000).

Hide and Seek in the Crossroads: The Migration Policies of the United States and Mexico

After the termination of the Bracero program in 1964 Mexico retrenched into a “policy of no policy”, letting migration flows to run loose and unmanaged. Mexico’s rhetoric then concentrated on the discourse about Human Rights, and the protection of Mexican nationals in U.S. territory. In opposition to this view, the U.S. government fixed on a more pragmatic approach, directed to secure control of its territory.

The resulting paralysis in the negotiations between the two governments was aggravated by the two radically different views to approach the issue: While the U.S. government’s frame of national security saw immigration as a *problem* that needed to be *controlled*, the Mexican government’s view regarded it as a *phenomenon* that needed to be *administrated*. Yet, the scandals provoked by the deaths at the border,

and the growing economic and demographic importance of the Mexican American population in both countries, along with other contextual factors some of which I have mentioned above, have increased the pressure for both governments to sit down in the negotiation table and tackle the issue in a bilateral fashion.

Migration is an “intermestic” issue, which means that it falls into the often-contradictory categories of the domestic and the international. This represents another obstacle for an agreement to take place, because while the U.S. government understands the issue as an item of its domestic agenda, Mexico saw it, until very recently, as part of its foreign policy. A domestic approach justifies the U.S. government’s implementation of unilateral policies to deal with the issue, as opposed to addressing it on a bilateral basis. This logic was adopted for years by Mexico City, but it is changing recently, as Mexican diplomats continuously insist on the need for the two countries to address issues of common concern on a bilateral basis (See Herrera Lasso 1998).

The categorization of migration as a domestic issue, and its placement in the domestic agenda, gives the U.S. government more leeway in its policy decisions. It also helps to keep the Mexican government out of the decision making process. Demographically, immigrants arriving to the United States from Mexico represent around 60 percent of the total number of the foreign born population of this country. However, the U.S. government has been very cautious in giving Mexico any overt special treatment in its policy decisions, and prefers to address it in a way in which all the countries are considered indistinctively (See Papademetriou 2004). Interestingly, in the common discourses and representations of migrants that commonly circulate in the public sphere, there seems to be a growing association between unauthorized migration and migration arriving from Mexico. This last point needs to be further explored in future research.

Talks to explore a change in direction began towards the end of the 1990s, in some of the forums the two governments established to discuss the issue, such as the Working Group on Immigration and Consular Affairs, that was established in the framework of the Binational Commission¹⁵⁰ as well as the works of binational groups of experts that had started discussions months before Vicente Fox and George Bush won their respective electoral contests (See Fernández de Castro 2002 and Roseblum 2002).

A relevant step regarding migration was the signature in 1995 of the Zacatecas Agreement, that establishes standards for the “orderly and secure repatriation of migrants” and the 1996 Memorandum of Understanding on Consular Protection. Both documents emphasize the bilateral character of migration, and the need of approaching it from a corresponding bilateral approach, making it a top priority of protecting migrant’s human rights, regardless of their legal status. Another important event was the completion of the Binational Study of Migration, that was carried out with the collaboration of academics from both countries.

Three weeks after being elected, George Bush had paid a visit to President Fox in his Ranch in Guanajuato. In this meeting, it was announced that Bush had been receptive to the proposal of negotiating a possible agreement with Mexico regarding immigration and both governments started diplomatic talks in mid 2001. By April 2001, in the first negotiation’s meeting, Mexico imposed its five priorities in the agenda, or what Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda called “the whole enchilada” and other members of the Mexican negotiation team preferred to name “the grand bargain” (Papademetriou 2002, pp.1-3): earned regularization that would create opportunities for undocumented population to move to the status of “lawful permanent resident”, a temporary worker program for new Mexican workers, rooted in the recognition of U.S. labor market’s demand for such workers, and finally, border management and security arrangements, that would represent an extension of the Smart Borders Agreement that was signed with Canada.

During an official visit President Fox made to President Bush in September 5, 2001, the two presidents issued a joint communiqué in which they confirmed “their commitment to seek realistic and innovative approaches regarding the issue of immigration with the purpose that migration takes place in a framework of security, order, respect to international law and dignity”. Their statement made reference to the

Efforts to seek correspondence between the needs and interests of the workers and the employers, as well as to address social and economic requirements in both countries, respect human dignity of all migrants regardless their legal status and acknowledge their contributions to the economic development of both societies, as well as to emphasize shared responsibility so that migration takes place through secure and legal channels (U.S. Embassy, 2001).

¹⁵⁰ The Binational Commission was founded in 1981 in order to build institutional channels of communication. The Commission works at a Cabinet level and meets annually to maintain dialogue in issues of common interest. Nowadays, it is composed by 16 working groups, that work under the coordination of Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, and the State Department.

In the talks that took place at this point, it seemed that the two governments had moved to a common articulation of discourse, this time focusing on a common effort to match workers and employers, placing themselves more as facilitators in economic terms. From the emotional emphasis of human rights and protection of fellow citizens employed by the Mexicans, and the protection of national security and national territory used by the U.S. government there seemed to be a move towards a more technical discourse that highlighted common interests, with an economics rationale.

In this summit, both governments pledged to put an end of “the policy of no policy” to a negotiated response to perhaps one of the most difficult and explosive issues of the bilateral agenda. Important in terms of the production of discourse, was the acknowledgment on the U.S. side of the contributions undocumented migrants have made to economic development, which provides a radically different cultural representation of the negative image often implied by the invasive “illegal alien”.

According to Marc Roseblum, Mexico succeeded at this point in “changing the terms of the policy-making debate, forcing U.S.-policy makers to recognize that immigration policy is not made in a vacuum, and that its effects are not only felt within the United States” (Roseblum, 2002, p.17)¹⁵¹. During his visit to Washington, Fox sustained an interview with 24 legislature leaders, including the leaders of the two Chambers. In the meeting, Senator Jeff Sessions, from Alabama, even discussed the phrasing of the contents of the agreement. His intervention went along the lines that the word “amnesty” would not be easy to sell politically to U.S. public opinion, and he suggested to use the word “earned adjustment” (Fernández de Castro 2002, p.126).

According to scholars, the terrorist attacks of September 11 seriously reversed the negotiations that may have led to an agreement in migration between Mexico and the United States. Washington re-focused its priorities upon “internal security” and put the expectations on a migration agreement on the back burner. In this context, the government of Fox was placed under attack at home for “openly cooperating with the US anti-terrorist campaign through strengthened border control, greater U.S. intelligence presence, and increased information sharing on visa applications” (Alba 2002, p.5). As Mexican scholar Francisco Alba puts it, “the media interpreted the Smart Border Agreements signed by the Fox administration in March 2002 as a gratuitous concession to the United States” (Alba 2002, p.5).

Post-September 11 negotiations between the two governments continue, although priorities changed on the U.S. side. According to some analysts, as the electoral calendar moves forward, the possibilities of buying “the whole enchilada” are less and less viable. On more than one occasion, diplomats and government officials conveyed messages of an intention to continue negotiations. For instance, a few days before the annual meeting of the Binational Commission that took place on November 2002 in Mexico City, the new U.S. Ambassador in Mexico City, Antonio Garza, declared to the national media that the migratory agenda “continues to be important for both nations and confirmed the interest of his country in seeking a solution to this issue” (Ruiz in Reforma, 2002). In the meetings of the Binational Commission, George W. Bush asked Mexico in a videotaped message to be “patient” in the solution of migratory problems, at the time that Fox urged him to return to negotiations “in order to reach real agreements” (El Informador, 2002).

As the relationship between Bush and Fox visibly cooled, the great expectation created by campaign promises is now firing back. In terms of narrative, some newspapers denounced a defeat in the Binational Summit. One of the headlines “U.S. imposes its agenda in the Binational” (Millán in Reforma, 2002), denotes resentment towards the fact that nothing concrete regarding immigration came out from the meeting, but instead, placed more importance on security related issues. However, during the visit to Mexico City, Colin Powell made repeated statements that the migratory issue is still in the agenda of the White House and he promised to: “work as hard and as fast as we can.” (Gedda in Associated Press, 2003). The appeal to patience was also presented in the United States: “Mexico Agrees to Be Patient in Talks” (Bordreaux in Los Angeles Times, 2002).

Important in regards to security discourse was a headline of Associated Press, “Mexican Migrants pose no threat”, focusing on a part of the President’s inaugural speech where he pointed that Mexicans in the United States pose no terror threat, and calling to give a legal status to 4 million undocumented Mexicans living north the border (Gedda in Associated Press 2002). This headline is particularly interesting, because it indicates the inclusion in migration related discourses (both in favor and against) of post September 11 security considerations. It may also help to explain the presence, in posterior meetings, of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and other members of the intelligence community from both countries in the discussion of these issues.

¹⁵¹ This view illustrates my thesis that the great asymmetries in power between Mexico and the United States, do not linearly connect to the relation between the two public spheres.

Other stories in the United States were not so friendly or focused on conciliation: “Mexico wants to strike Migration Deal on U.S.,” said Reuters’ headline (Arshad in Reuters, 2002). In another story by Associated Press, the reporter quoted an expert in migration studies that attributed Mexico’s impatience to Fox’s inability to build consensus at home: “Steven Camarota, director of research for the Center of Migration Studies, says Fox has had no luck getting his domestic initiatives approved by the Mexican Congress and sees an immigration agreement with his northern neighbor as his best hope for a political breakthrough”. (Associated Press 2002). According to the Washington Post, “Powell’s trip here, like a one-day visit to Canada two weeks ago, was designed largely to mend fences with a neighbor that has felt ignored since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Many Mexicans, like many Canadians, believe that Washington has lost interest in bilateral relations as it focuses on fighting terrorism.” (Sullivan and Kessler in The Washington Post, 2002). Still, public support for Fox’s approaches to the United States is visibly eroding. As the same story says

Mexicans are increasingly disappointed that warm ties between Bush and Fox have yielded few concrete results, especially on changes to U.S. immigration policy, which is Mexico’s number one foreign policy priority. Despite heightened security in the past year, Mexican immigrants continue to flow illegally into the United States and deaths in remote desert border areas have increased sharply (Sullivan and Kessler in The Washington Post, 2002)

It is worth mentioning that Mexican diplomats in the United States have overtly pushed to influence public debate in favor of returning to the discussion of a migration agreement. In a radical twist of policy, a weak country like Mexico has moved from fiercely defending the principle of non-intervention (See Ojeda 1976) to using intervention in the public sphere as a useful diplomatic tool in dealing with the most powerful country in the world. Likewise, in an article he signed in The Baltimore Sun, Mexican Ambassador in Washington, Juan José Bremer, urged the U.S. government to “give a concrete meaning and content” to the binational alliance by re-launching the negotiations regarding migration” (Ruiz in Reforma, 2002). Along with the Ambassador, the Mexican Consuls in Chicago, Miami and San Francisco, published similar articles in local newspapers.

The relationship between the two governments hit the bottom when in January 2003, Mexico, which was sitting as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in the United Nations, declared its intention of voting against U.S. decision to invade Irak in March of that year. While the move towards an agreement on immigration halted, the Mexican government changed its approach from the fight for the “whole enchilada” to selected regional more localized battles: the quest for the acceptance of a Mexican issued I.D or *matrícula consular*.

The experience of the *matrículas* is a good case in point of the ways in which the Mexican moment have made deliberate attempts to introduce frames and perspectives that coincide with the interests of Mexican migrants, in the public sphere of the United States. The acceptance of the *matrícula* by financial institutions and other instances enormously benefit undocumented migrants, because it allows them to present a legal form of ID, particularly since, after September 11, the possession of a photo ID has become a prerequisite for entering buildings and hospitals, traveling and even going to the movies. Very important is the ability to open bank accounts, and wiring money to their relatives in Mexico.

In a nationwide effort to gain acceptance of the *matrícula*, Mexico flexed the muscle of its 47 consulates in the United States. Mexican diplomats, with the help of Mexican American activists, actively lobbied local governments, elected officials and financial institutions to advance in these very concrete steps in the interest of Mexican nationals. The rhetoric of those fighting for the *matrículas* and the drivers licenses was constructed around the situation of unauthorized Mexican migrants who live “in the shadows”, condemned to invisibility, due to their legal status. This permeated to the press, as is shown in the following fragment from the New York Times:

For nearly a decade, Reynaldo Montes de Oca Suarez strived to be invisible. He melted in and out of crowds, ducking police officers and city officials. He flourished in the bustling anonymity of restaurant kitchens here, building a life as a cook amid the clattering plates and spitting frying pans. But in recent months, Mr. Montes de Oca and other undocumented immigrants from Mexico have begun stepping out of the shadows. This summer, Indianapolis and seven other Midwestern cities started accepting an identity card issued by the Mexican government, offering Mexicans who are here illegally a startling new sense of legitimacy (Swarns in the New York Times, 2003).

Although Mexican consulates have been issuing *matrículas* since the 1800s, it was not until 2003 that they actively lobbied local U.S. authorities, overtly bypassing the federal government, in order to get

the document accepted for locally based transactions. In a period of six months, between January and July of 2003, they issued 1.4 million cards, mostly to undocumented migrants.

The quest for the acceptance of the *matrículas* encountered a divided Congress and Bush administration. As I already mentioned, the issue of security had already been introduced the agenda, along with the appearance of political actors involved in that area. Interestingly, the discourse of those opposing the card gravitated more along the lines of security, in the light of the terrorist threat, than on the fact that the card would benefit unauthorized migrants. Arguments about the possible forgeries of the I.D. that could compromise the homeland security were the most common among opponents, like the FBI, which pointed at the possibility of fraud. In an effort to halt the acceptance of the card, the Judiciary Committee in Congress pressured the Department of Treasury to revise the regulations that allow financial institutions to accept a foreign-government issued ID (Gamboa in Associated Press, 2003).

The massive lobbying effort conducted by the Mexican government in favor of the cards paid off when, in July 2003, the Department of Treasury opened a period of public comments, that would be used in its decision of allowing or not, the State Department to put limitations in the issuance of the *matrículas*. In the survey, 77% of the comments logged favored the *matrícula*, and in the end, the Treasury Department announced that it would allow the banks to accept it. Nowadays, *matrículas* acceptance is growing at a fast pace nationwide.

By the end of 2003, several lawmakers in the United States had already introduced immigration reform bills. "Border Security and Migration Law (HR2899) is among the ones with most resonance. It was endorsed by Republicans John McCain and Jim Kolve, from Arizona, with the format of a guest-worker proposal that would allow millions of foreigners to live and work in the United States. With tacit approval of the President, these senators pushed the bill because it would "reduce migrant deaths on the U.S.-Arizona border, fill needs of low-skilled labor nationwide and improve national security" (Pittman in Tucson Citizen, 2003).

By then it was obvious that, at least for the moment, the period of distance between the two governments started coming to an end by the end of 2003. In the Summit of the Americas, that took place in Monterrey, Mexico, Bush and Fox pledged to renew talks about migration (Alonso in Los Angeles Times, 2003). In January 7 of 2004, the U.S. President proposed immigration law changes to allow workers from Mexico to enter the United States, under a series of conditions. This move was considered by many a strategic step to win the Latino vote in the Presidential election. However, it was not been very well received, because it is difficult to implement, and because of its unilateral character (See Papademetriou 2004).

In this regard, the White House utilized the argument of the United States being a nation of immigrants, as Press Secretary Scott McClellan said with regards to the proposal: "It is important for America to be a welcoming society. We are a nation of immigrants and we are better for it" (Hunt in Associated Press, 2004). At the same time, President Bush presented it in the same economic tone that I mentioned before, when referring to an "immigration policy that helps match any willing employer with any willing employee" (Hunt in Associated Press, 2004). In his formal request to Congress, Bush talked about the risk to national security of having "eight million unidentified, unauthorized immigrants in the United States" (See Jachimowicz 2004).

Migration Coverage in Mexico and the United States. A Content Analysis Of Two Newsmagazines.

The manner in which migration is addressed, represented and discussed in the public debates of Mexico and the United States, need to be explored comparatively. It is also important to analyze the different ways in which these two debates meet, cross and overlap, and to explore the possibilities of conceptualizing it on a binational basis. As crucial actors in the public sphere, the media convey images and reflect controversies. They also incorporate different points of views and values. Have Mexico and the United States established shared patterns of communication regarding issues they share, like for instance, migration? In an effort to explore possible answers to this question, I devote the following section to discuss the results of a comparative content analysis of two news magazines, one from Mexico and the other one from the United States.

In this part, I assume that the more journalists use sources from the other side the more possible it is for the other's view to be acknowledged. When this happens, it increases the possibilities of achieving mutual understanding between two different postures. At the same time, coincidence in the framing of stories and

selection of issues may indicate that a degree of dialogue and conversation between the two parts is emerging. This could lead eventually to a common agenda. This discussion may be relevant to explain the possible emergence of a binational public sphere between Mexico and the United States, which I will discuss in the conclusions.

In this context, I arranged the questions of this section along two clusters: Practices of Sourcing and Construction of frames. Regarding the first item, I ask myself: How often are sources from the other country quoted in these stories? How frequently are non-government organizations quoted *vis a vis* government sources? When are immigrants or would-be immigrants, common citizens or experts quoted? As for the second cluster, I focus on questions like: What are the ideas and symbols more commonly used to frame the migration debate? Is there a coincidence in the frames and issues that are emphasized by the two presses, and if so, how and when?

In order to respond these questions, I conducted a content analysis of two news magazines, *Proceso*, from Mexico and *Time* from the United States. *Time Magazine* was founded in 1923 and it currently has a circulation of more than four million issues. Its role in the process of shaping and reflecting public opinion is undisputable. *Proceso* works in a much smaller range, it is estimated to reach around 400 thousand readers. However, this magazine is also an important site of discussion of public matters in the Mexican public sphere. It was founded in 1976, and it has a long tradition of independent journalism.

The practices of sourcing record the types of actors that are most commonly quoted in the coverage from the two countries. In this, I was interested on finding out if the stories tended to use all the actors and stakeholders involved in migration and migration policies, or if there were parties that had more access. In the construction of frames I incorporate elements that are useful in understanding the framing, such as the dominant themes, as well as indicative keywords that are present in both the headline and the body of the stories. Additionally I track the most common views about migrants that are projected in the coverage. In all the cases, I analyzed the results comparatively, mostly to explore which are the coincidences and differences between the coverage of the two magazines. The comparisons are assisted by simple statistical analysis, and I also perform some qualitative analysis, particularly of headlines and texts that can be journalistic stories or political speeches.

Migration Coverage in *Time* and *Proceso*

Migration is one of the most salient issues in the agenda between Mexico and the United States. This shared interest is reflected in a similar amount of migration coverage in both *Time* and *Proceso*. As I will show, the number of existing stories is comparable. However, divergent coverage regarding the origin of migration, indicate sharp differences in the way the issue is addressed in both countries and the importance each side concede to the other. As we know, the United States' tradition as a recipient of immigrants can be tracked to the mere foundations of its existence as a nation. Despite the fact that the first waves of immigrants arrived from Europe, this country has been the destination of migration waves from all over the world. In opposition, Mexico's history as a source country of migrants is relatively new, and until very recently, the United States has been the only destination for Mexican migrants.

As a reflection of this, the amount of coverage about migration in both magazines is comparable: 27 stories in *Time* and 25 in *Proceso*. However, there are differences in the direction of this coverage. *Proceso's* coverage is more ethnocentric, and *Time* is more geographically plural. While *Proceso* devoted 87.5 % of its coverage to Mexican migration, *Time* presented Mexico as only one in many sending countries, accounting only for 19.2% of the coverage, like in the case of China, and the remaining 3.8%, 7.7% and 3.8% went for Haiti, Central America and other Caribbean countries, respectively. Interestingly, in almost half of its articles, *Times* did not make reference to any specific country when talking about migration, but addressed the issue in a more general way, as opposed to *Proceso*, which is mostly specific to Mexico (See Figure 2).

This, in fact, is also consistent with U.S. immigration policies, which have recurrently refused to concede Mexico any special status, despite the overwhelming amount of migrants that establish themselves in the United States. As I have mentioned before Mexican officials have struggled to obtain Mexican migrants a special treatment, and to have the issue discussed with concrete regards to Mexican nationals, which would set the basis for addressing the issue on a bilateral basis. It would be risky to assert that this is the reason why *Time's* coverage follows this pattern, as it is undeniable that migrants from all types of nationalities immigrate to the United States on a daily basis, with and without proper documentation.

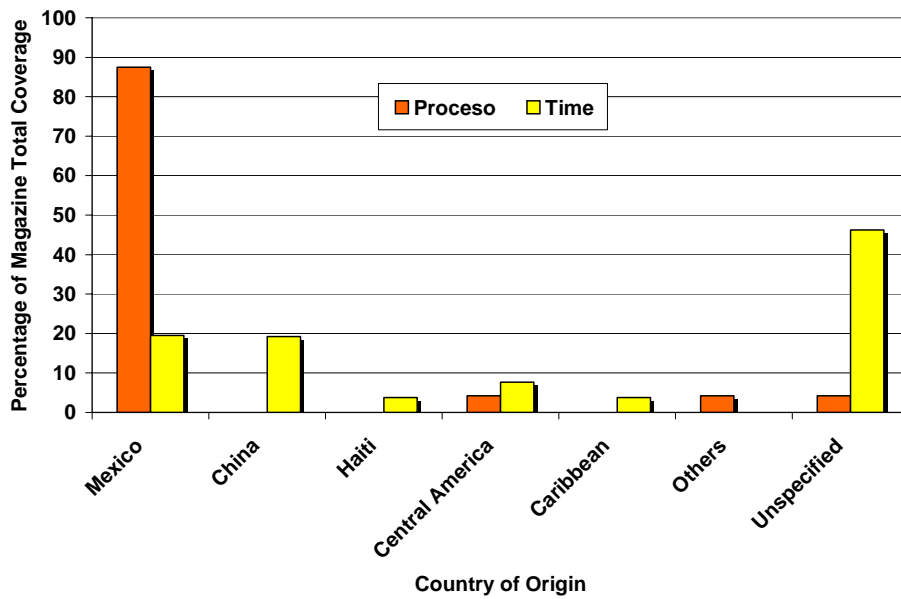


Figure 2. Origin of Migration

Discordance in the two magazines regarding the diversity of origin can also be related to differences in the inclusion of an international context in the coverage of *Proceso* and *Time*. To measure this, I counted the number of times an article included some kind of international context, that made the reader think beyond the main case of the article. Additionally, a chi square test was performed to measure if there was an impact of the type of magazine. The relationship, although close, is statistically significant (See Table 6).

Magazine	International Context	No international context	Pearson Chi Square
Proceso	27%	57%	3.8 sig .049
Time	73%	43%	

The results in this case are indicative in the context of the great asymmetry between the two countries, and on the fact that the United States is way more important for Mexico, than Mexico is for its powerful northern neighbor. This, I believe, may have been accentuated in the past years, with the strengthening of ties between the two nations. However, this difference is also related to the fact that migration in Mexico is seen as a bilateral issue with the United States, since until very recently this country has been the only destination for migrants.

Practices of Sourcing

The two magazines, *Proceso* and *Time*, are showing a comparable amount of sources (*Proceso* 77 and *Time* 79). However, there are some differences in the type of sources each magazine quotes. *Proceso* greatly relies on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). A total of 19.5% of their sources were NGOs from the United States, such as MALDEF, Americas Watch, Amnesty International and American Friends Committee from San Diego. These organizations are mostly devoted to the defense of migrant's human rights. They must be part of what Delaet calls the "liberal coalition" of interest groups, which are present in the immigration policy debate. An additional 16.9% of their sources were Mexican NGOs, in

general institutions that provide humanitarian support to migrants in the border region, like the YMCA and *Casa del Migrante*. These institutions are mostly religious, some of them of U.S. origin, like the YMCA, and they are also committed to provide humanitarian assistance. As I mentioned above, the humanitarian focus coincides not only with the emphasis of most of the coverage of *Proceso*, but also with the view of the Mexican government. The other source that is significantly quoted in *Proceso*'s coverage of migration is Mexican authorities (13%).

In contrast to *Proceso*, American NGOs represent an 8.9% of *Time*'s total sources, and there are no quotes of Mexican NGOs. At the same time, 25.3% of their sources are represented by U.S. authorities as opposed to 3.8% of quotes of Mexican authorities. It is worth noting in this case that the percentage of quotes to authorities from the opposite country is not similar in *Time* and *Proceso* (3.8% and 13% respectively). *Time*'s quotes to U.S. authorities (25.3%), however, exceeds those of *Proceso* to Mexican authorities (17%) (See Figure 1).

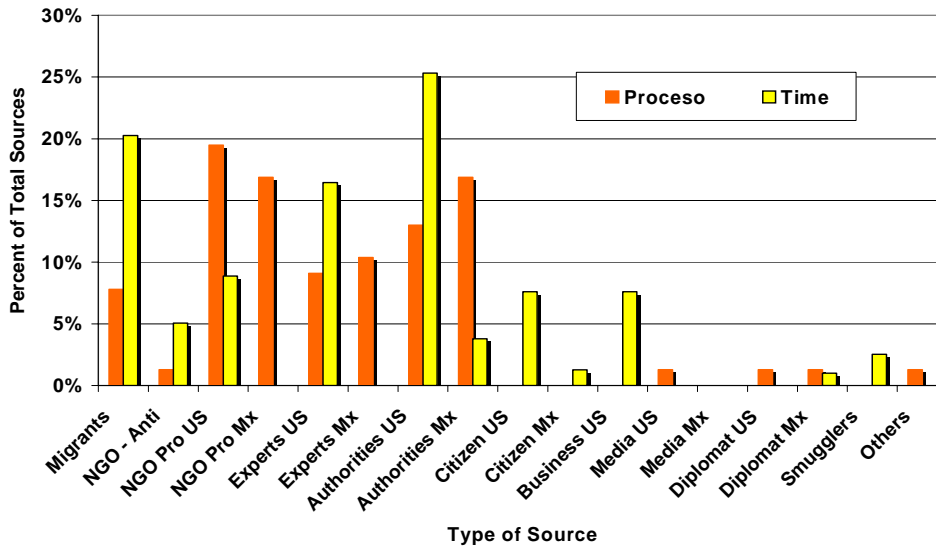


Figure 1. Sources Quoted

Construction of Frames

Despite the large amount of times that Time quotes U.S. authorities, this magazine was less likely to project the U.S. government's position than Proceso the Mexican government's point of view, if we consider that, as I argued before, the Mexican government has primarily emphasized the human rights issue in the agenda, while security is considered Washington's priority.

Table 1 shows the frequency in which each of the 10 different views about migration coded in this paper appeared in both *Time* and *Proceso*. The table shows that there is a sharp division between the coverage of the two magazines in four main frames, all related to either a non favorable image of migrants that does not appear in the Mexican magazine, or with public discussions occurring only in the United States, as I will explain in further detail below. In the remaining 6 items, there seem to be an obvious imbalance in the emphasis each magazine confers to the different views of migrants, and treatment of the issue. The most remarkable one is the emphasis the Mexican magazine places on human rights (40%) as opposed to *Time* (3.7%) and the attention *Time* devotes to security (14.8%) as opposed to *Proceso* (4%).

Table 1 - Percentages of *Proceso* and *Time* coverage where points of views appear

Point of view	Proceso	Time
Migrants as victims	52%	33%
Migrants as criminals	8%	11%
Negative image of migrants (burden)	0	22%
Positive image of migrants (courage, contributions)	12%	33%
Human rights/civil rights	40%	4%
Security, control over borders	4%	15%
Migration as a necessity	20%	11%
Migration as breaking the law	0	7%
USA as a country of migrants	0	18%
Perception of Cultural Threat	0	15%

It is also worth mentioning that *Time* was more likely to present different views, including contradictory frames, in each story than *Proceso*, which seems to be more homogeneous in its coverage. To illustrate this, the 10 different frames identified in this work (See Table 2) were grouped in two large categories, each of them presenting a favorable or not favorable position towards migration. Table 2 shows how the two groupings were distributed.

Table 2 – Points of view by Groupings	
Favorable	Not favorable
Migrants as victims	<i>Migrants as criminals</i>
Positive image (in terms of their contributions to U.S. society, and as courageous and brave)	Negative image (considering them a burden for the budget)
<i>Human Rights/Civil Rights</i>	Security/control of borders
Migration as a necessity (economic or of asylum)	<i>Migration as breaking the law</i>
United States as a country of immigrants	Perception of cultural threat (mostly language)

The unfavorable view as a whole leads to a hostile view of migrants, considering them as lawbreakers and a burden for the welfare state. Under this scope, unauthorized migrants are associated with common criminals in speeches and articles, like is the case of a news conference held by President Clinton in November 1995: “I think the is –my answer is- we need even more border guards, we need to accelerate the deportation of people who have been found through the criminal justice system or otherwise who are illegal aliens” (Clinton 1995). I already explained that this association between unauthorized immigrants and common criminals is present repeatedly in official discourse, as it is also shown in a statement Clinton made on Senate Action on immigration legislation, in May 1996: “We are deporting record numbers of criminal and other illegal aliens from the United States” (Clinton 1996).

This view of migration as breaking the law, some of the headlines in *Time* magazine are pretty explicit, for example this one that makes reference to Proposition 187: “Making and breaking the law. California’s sweeping ballot initiative against illegal immigrants wins big before landing to court” (Hornblower in *Time*, 1994). An interesting case where the whole issue of unauthorized migration is regarded as breaking the law has to do with the scandal that forced Labor Secretary-designate Linda Chavez to withdraw her nomination in January 2001, due to allegations that she had hired an illegal worker to perform chores around her house. If in this case the main focus of the attention is not the migrant but the employer, the fact that Chavez was in the end forced to withdraw her nomination makes it more than explicit that the issue of undocumented migration is understood as breaking the law (Reaves in *Time*, 2001).

The negative view about migrants often sees them as a burden, particularly to social security, like in the following quote: “A bigger complaint is the cost of social services such as welfare, medical care and schooling for immigrants and their children who have no right even to be in the country” (Church in *Time*, 1993). They are also perceived as a cultural threat, particularly regarding language. On several occasions, *Time* articles quoted sources expressing fear that Spanish is increasingly spoken in

construction sites, schools and public offices. Finally, as for security and border control, headlines like “The unwelcome mat. As the proposition 187 debate rears, the U.S. begins an intensive effort to seal off a 2000 border” (Gwynne in *Time*, 1994) makes explicit that there is a perceived need to seal the border. This other one “Borderline competent? The INS tightens up and sorts through more than 6 million illegal aliens already in your midst” (Morse in *Time*, 2001), also conveys an image that the United States is working to secure control of the territory.

The favorable view as a whole leads to an understanding of migration that is more sympathetic of migrants. It often implies seeing them as victims, either of authorities that may abuse and mistreat them, or smugglers that put their lives in risk with the consequent personal tragedies. In this way, a *Proceso* headline of a story with no author would refer to migration as the “Most cruel manifestation of Mexican poverty. Uprooting, disintegration, helplessness” (*Proceso*), for instance, while another one, more graphic, would read “Drown, ran over, dehydrated, shot...not even the risk of dying stops the exodus of the undocumented” (Espinosa and Gutierrez in *Proceso*, 2002). This headline also portrays migrants as brave and courageous, an image that is also present in some of the coverage. In this fashion, *Time*, for instance, refers to immigration as an odyssey: “Coming to America. The long, harsh odyssey of a Chinese illegal smuggled from Fujian Province to New Jersey” (Mccarthy in *Time*, 2000).

In the U.S. side, the view of migrants as victims commonly goes hand in hand with the demonizing of smugglers: “People smugglers Inc. Why the illegal business of crossing the border is getting better organized, and more lethal” (Padgett in *Time*, 2003). Also, they can be portrayed as victims of U.S. policies, like in “Out of the Shadows. An estimated 4.5 million Mexicans live in America illegally. Vicente Fox is asking George W. Bush to free them from their need to hide” (Duffy in *Time*, 2001). This headline implies that illegal migrants are prisoners that need to be freed. The idea of people living in the shadow seems to be quite common, as in this following headline “The Shadow of the Law. For illegal aliens, life in a new land is mostly one of poverty, anxiety and loneliness” (Walsh in *Time*, 1993). This article stresses how people immigrate to the United States illegally, lured by the possibility of a better life, but what they find is “hardship, privation, loneliness, and exploitation” (Walsh in *Time*, 1993).

The human rights discourse can be illustrated in headlines such as *Proceso*’s: “In the hands of the INS, systematic violation of human rights of the undocumented, accuses Amnesty International”, and perhaps more indirect, making reference to the drama of slavery, *Time* also refers to civil rights, although not directly: “Slaves of New York. How crime has mismanaged laws have made the city the biggest magnet for Chinese illegals” (Barnes in *Time*, 1998). If in this headline the criticism of human rights violation is not against the U.S. government as in the *Proceso* headline, the article refers to the conditions of slavery in which thousands of Chinese immigrants live as they try to pay back smugglers their trip to the United States. In the case of the human rights and security frames, the difference between the two magazines is remarkable: In 90.9% of the times a human rights frame appeared in the coverage corresponded to *Proceso*. In contrast, 80 percent of the times a security frame appeared, it did so in *Time*, as opposed to the remaining 20% in *Proceso*.

As for viewing migration as a necessity, in personal profiles or trips of the journalist to source areas of migration, some of the articles emphasize the conditions the migrants face at home, the wage difference that attract migrants to the United States, or the harsh political situation (in the case of Haiti) that forced thousands to embark in a search for political asylum running away from persecution and death. This is the case in the following fragment: “Because he did not have resources, Roberto Castell abandoned his studies in High School N.13 of the University of Colima. Despite looking for employment in the region, he only found a temporary position as a peasant, with a salary of 50 pesos a day. This is when this young man decided to emigrate to the United States” (Espinosa in *Proceso*, 2000).

Finally, the discourse that the United States is a country of immigrants is commonly used by those who are sympathetic of migration, belong to a human rights or civil rights organizations, or are migrants themselves. This is a common argument present in public discussion about the issue in the United States, and is rarely considered in Mexico. As Leo Chavez puts it, this position is symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, which, as he has recorded, tends to often appear in magazine covers. The Statue of Liberty’s importance as a national symbol, he says, serves as the focus point for articles on patriotism and immigrant experiences (Chávez 2000, p.130).

As follows, it is interesting that in 1991, 1993 and 1994, *Time* magazine published articles with headlines paraphrasing the poem by Emma Lazarus that is inscribed in the Statue of Liberty “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...”. The 1991 article, “Immigration give me your rich, your lucky...In the must sweeping policy revision in 25 years, the U.S. will welcome increasing numbers of Europeans and well-heeled foreigners” (Lacayo in *Time*, 1991). This article makes reference to regulations that grant a green card to immigrants who put at least 1 million into an American business that employs more than 10 workers, as a result of the Immigration Act of 1990, which revised the 1965 law that opened the doors for non-Europeans.

The 1993 article “Send back your Tired, Your Poor...As illegal entries into the U.S. rise at a time of job shortages and budget woes, a backlash is gaining force” (Church in Time, 1993), this article touches on the fact that perhaps the situation in 1993 was different from 1883, when the poem was written, and that “at a time of slow job growth and pinched budgets for social services, the country simply cannot accommodate a flood of the world’s “homeless tempest-tost”. Finally, the 1994 made specific reference to the passing of Proposition 187: “Keep out, you tired you poor...Around the country, and especially in California, outrage over immigration is becoming electoral dynamite” (Gibbs in Time, 1994). “In a country built by immigrants”, says this article, “it is a measure of the deep dissatisfaction with the generosity of the welfare state that the public has seized on aliens as the enemy within”. In this article, it is visible that, while the argument of the country of immigrants is made, the view of migrants as an economic burden to the State is also present.

This coexistence of frames reflects that, as opposed to Mexico, Americans have not achieved consensus over the issue of migration. In fact, it seems to be far more complex than what is commonly exposed in the Mexican media, and the U.S. coverage revised in this paper tends to reflect this debate more often than its Mexican counterpart. In the sample of articles from *Proceso* and *Time*, I counted the cases in which a favorable and a non favorable position towards migrants were presented together in the same article. While *Proceso* only exposed the two positions once in 25 cases, *Time* magazine did it on 5 occasions in 27 cases. This does not mean that *Time* magazine did not show consistency in its arguments, or that the messages were ambivalent, but rather that the two sides of the story were more likely to occur than in *Proceso* either explicitly or implicitly.

Table 3 shows significant correlations between specific views, in both *Proceso* and *Time*. As it is shown, in *Time* magazine the favorable human rights frame tended to be presented together with the view of migration as a necessity, also favorable. Also, the non-favorable view of migrants as criminals was also associated with a view of migration as a cultural threat. Interestingly, the security frame is shown associated with a negative image of migrants, which may support the idea that the security argument in the United States comes together with a posture that is not favorable to migrants, seeing them as a burden, as opposed to the pure legalistic imperative of securing the territory.

In the case of *Proceso*, however, the security frame is associated with migration as a necessity, which deserves further attention. One interpretation could be that the coverage here is making points about the conditions of lawlessness in the border, that makes migrants easy prey of bandits, smugglers and other criminals. Another possibility is that the whenever the imperative of security is acknowledged by *Proceso*, this concession is accompanied by the justification that migrants are not criminals, and that they choose to migrate due to economic necessity instead. Finally and expectedly, *Proceso* tends to link the human rights frame with viewing migrants as victims.

Table 3 - Correlations between views in <i>Time</i> and <i>Proceso</i>				
	Human Rights	Security	Migration as Breaking the Law	Perception of Cultural Threat
Proceso				
Migrants as Victims	.458 <i>sig.021</i>			
Migration as an economic necessity		.408 <i>sig .043</i>		
Time				
Migrants as Criminals			.800 <i>sig .000</i>	.848 <i>sig.000</i>
Negative image of immigrants		.529 <i>sig 005</i>		

Migration as a necessity	.555 sig .003			
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In order to address the discussion I presented above about the words “illegal” and “undocumented,” I counted the times each word appear in both magazines. I expected to find the word “undocumented” more frequently present in *Proceso*, and the word “illegal” in *Time*. It is hard to know to which extent the media shows the same commitment as the governments of the two countries to use either word. In general, we see that, unlike their respective governments, the media is not absolutely committed to the use of one term or the other, and sometimes, they seem to be used as synonyms. Yet, it is still visible that *Proceso* is more inclined to use the word “undocumented” while *Time* refers more to “illegals,” “illegal immigrants” or “illegal aliens.” An interesting case in point is an article in *Time* magazine, that mentioned the word “undocumented” in quotes: “No one knows the numbers, of course, but official estimates put the illegal –or ‘undocumented’- influx at more than 300,000 a year currently and almost 5 million over the past 10 years” (Nelán in *Time*, 1993).

A test was conducted to compare the means in the times the two words were used in the two magazines. In average, *Proceso* used the word “undocumented” 1.40 times per article, as opposed to 0.44 times in *Time*. Although the difference in means is not statistically significant, there is still a notorious imbalance between the two magazines (See Table 4). As for the word “illegal,” the difference is visible. *Time* magazine used this word 3.30 times in average, while the average for *Proceso* is only 0.60.

Regarding the sharing of themes, a first reading of the articles helped me to determine which were the most common themes that appeared in the stories of the two magazines. I then listed them and checked to which extent the other magazine was likely to focus on the same theme. Interestingly, the two magazines shared concern for five out of the 8 themes that were identified in this paper while the remaining five were only addressed in one of the two outlets (See Table 5). Labor conditions of migrants was shared by both *Proceso* and *Time* that devoted 16% and 18.5% of their total coverage respectively.

Another common theme was the profiles of migrants, that I consider important because it gives a

<i>Table 4 - References to the Terms “Undocumented” and “Illegal” in Time and Proceso</i>				
	Means	Differences in Means	T Value for Differences in Means*	Sig (1 tailed)
Undocumented				
Proceso	1.40	.96	1.90	.032
<i>Time</i>	.44			
Illegal				
Proceso	.60	-2.70	-3.67	.001
<i>Time</i>	3.30			
*Equal variances not assumed				

voice to the undocumented and provides the issue of migration with a human face. In 44% of its coverage, *Proceso*, included stories of individual undocumented migrants, and *Time* did the same in 33% of their stories. Despite *Proceso*'s coverage is higher, this magazine only quoted the migrants as sources in 8% of the times, as opposed to *Time* that did so 20% of the times. Other themes in which the coverage was comparable between the two magazines were coverage of policy decisions (20% in *Proceso*, and 26% in *Time*), incidents like deaths, robberies, etc. (12% in *Proceso* and 11% in *Time*), conditions in the home country (4% in *Proceso* and 3.7% in *Time*).

Table 5 - Percentage of times each magazine referred to shared and not shared themes.		
	<i>Proceso</i>	<i>Time</i>
Shared Themes		
Undocumented Migrants (Profiles)	44%	33%
Policy Decisions	28%	26%
Labor Conditions	16%	18%
Incidents	12%	11%
Conditions at home country	4%	3.7%
Themes not shared		
Human rights	32%	0
Smuggling	0	15%
Demographics	0	11%

The themes not shared had to do with human rights, which was already mentioned, of which *Proceso* made references in 32% of its articles, while *Time* did not mention at all as a theme. The other two issues, smuggling and demographics, were present in 14.8% and 11.1% of *Time*'s articles respectively, while *Proceso* did not share this interest. It is worth mentioning that in the themes of shared concern, the percentages of coverage are very similar, and show a comparable descending pattern in Table 5, which may indicate that both magazines not only share an interest in these themes, but also confer them a equivalent importance. As for the issues where concern is not shared, it is also worth mentioning that with the exception of human rights, which I have addressed extensively in this paper, the percentages of coverage are still not very high. This may have positive implications for the discussion about a binational public sphere, were the media from the two countries address pretty much the same types of themes within the issue of migration, and confer to them comparable degrees of importance. However, more research should be done in this regard.

Conclusions

In the first part of this paper, I have overviewed a period in the history of the relationship between Mexico and the United States when, in relation to migration, it may be relevant to search for the connections between the two public spheres. I have also shown that there is a conversation between the two governments, where the media play a part, and even if the rhetorical coordinates are not necessarily the same, there are some shared parameters that may be a point of departure.

In the first part, I mentioned the change in direction of Mexican foreign policy, from a position that strongly endorsed the principle of non-intervention, to coordinated and calculated lobbying efforts that influence public opinion and local governments in the United States. The experience of the *matrículas* discuss represent an interesting case in point in which Mexican consuls in the United States conducted an expansive campaign directed to public opinion, financial institutions and local governments to promote the use of the *matrícula*.

Although the intervention of a foreign government in domestic U.S. affairs is not new, the massive lobbying at a local level, through consular circumscriptions way beyond Washington circles is without precedent in U.S.-Mexican relations. Like Melissa Johnson suggests, as “well spoken, well-dressed” Mexican officials become more successful in becoming reputable sources, the Mexican point of view is more and more likely to appear in the media (Johnson, 2003, p.22).

In the process of constructing discourses and policies about migration, Mexico’s trajectory is much easier to follow. In the last two decades it moved from exclusion to inclusion, from ignoring and even despising migrants, to elevating them to the category of heroes. Accordingly, the Mexican government has designed a series of policies to bring attention to this group, both in the realm of domestic policy-making as well as in its diplomatic activity. In this sense, it can be said that migration is now to Mexico the most important issue in the bilateral agenda with its powerful northern neighbor.

In the United States, instead, the image of migrants and the articulation of migration policies has been much more tricky to categorize. This difficulty corresponds to the ambivalence regarding the issue that is found in public opinion. On the northern side of the border, there is a wide range of actors (interest groups, activist coalitions, labor unions, businessmen of all sorts) that move in different directions on a bipartisan basis, all attempting to introduce their views of migrants and their political position regarding migration policies in the public sphere. In this paper, I address some of the discourses that cross and overlap in the creation of a public policy that can be contradictory at times, but that in the long term have fulfilled the overall purpose of containing and deterring immigration.

Regarding media content, my data suggests that there are strong differences in the way migration news are constructed, particularly regarding the conventions of sourcing and the construction of frames. These differences are rooted in cultural and historical trends that are inherently linked with the policy making of each country. However, when reporting about migration, there is still a tendency to share the same themes about the issue that, I believe, open some possibilities for convergence. In the establishment of any kind of dialogue, it is important that both parts talk about the same themes, because it may indicate a possibility for comparable framing.

Along these lines, a future historical comparison of media coverage may help to find if there has been change overtime, either towards or away from similar frames. In this regard, an interesting indicator can be to track the use of keywords like “illegal” and “undocumented” in different historical periods. As I discussed, these terms are good mirrors of the views and representations about migrants that are constructed at a much broader level.

The public sphere can be recognized as the site in which public knowledge regarding migration is constructed, as well as the institutional location where interests and factions compete to impose their points of view. In this work, I have shown how this public knowledge is constructed in Mexico and the United States, in reference to different sets of national and cross-national relations between government and media that establish contact with each other through diplomatic interaction and news stories.

This paper is a work in process that at the same time deals with a constantly changing subject. The developments of the upcoming electoral processes in both Mexico and the United States will be determinant in shaping future scenarios, as well as the progress of diplomatic talks. Even if there is no migration agreement, the overtime progress of a widespread exodus of Mexicans may have implications for the ways in which the issue of migration is seen, represented and addressed in the two countries, with consequent repercussions for the public sphere. In the meantime, the millions of people that embody the flesh and blood linkages between Mexico and the United States, as well as the mounting number of human tragedies in the rivers and deserts of the common border continue to grow. They serve as a live reminder to diplomats and politicians that something needs to be done about migration.

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