Towards an evaluation of the migratory negotiations of 2001

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Introduction

In the Guanajuato proposal, document subscribed in February 2001 by the President of Mexico Vicente Fox and the President of the United States of North America, George W. Bush, a new bilateral migratory relation was outlined, for which negotiations directed to reaching a wide agreement in the subject were established. The development of the negotiations generated great expectations that were not put into practice due to the September 11, 2001...
attacks. The purpose of this work is to start an evaluation of the fact that between February and September 2001 migratory negotiations were held between the two countries.

For this, firstly the situation of the migratory relation previous the negotiations is presented; after that, the negotiations agenda is described; in the third part the meaning of the negotiations in the governmental and social perceptions and responses in Mexico and the US is explored, as well as the advances and limitations of the vision contained in the Guanajuato Proposal; in the fourth place the fact that the migratory negotiations left important legacies and some their implications are discussed; in the final part the subject of the politics options for the management of the migratory issues in the context after the 9/11 attacks, totally different from the one when the negotiations started.

As an oncoming to the evaluation parameters, this is done from an approach related to the institutionalism; theory that underlines the role of the international institutions (Kehoane, 1989). So, on one hand, the negotiations can be seen as a product propitiated and facilitated by the existence of the North America Free Agreement (NAFTA). In the other hand, it is argued that the fact that the negotiations took place there are important repercussions and implications, even after they were suspended. Regarding the previous considerations, fist the immediate negotiations' background are briefly revised.

**The migratory relation before the negotiations**

The Mexican attitudes towards the migratory phenomenon have varies since it take up again from the Second World War (Alba, 1999, 11-37). The current bilateral agreements between 1942 and 1964—the so called braceros programs—witnessed Mexico's acceptance of emigration. In fact, the renewal of the migratory agreements was one of the central element the migration policy in Mexico in the last years of these programs and in the first years of the programs that continue after those were cancelled, between 1965 and 1974, in order to ensure the legal continuity of the migratory flow, since it was being forecasted as inevitable.

As the efforts of reestablishment the bilateral agreements of temporal workers were unsuccessful, the Mexican strategy, from the second half of the 1970's, was oriented to avoid any proclaiming on the migratory matters; such position was subsequently denominated as "the policy of not having policy" (García; 1988: 147). The rupture, around 1985, of the tacit status quo that allowed
the illegal alien's flow provoked the gradual abandonment of the aforementioned position.

In the negotiation of the NAFTA, the governments of Carlos Salinas and George Bush Sr. did not include the migratory issue, they share a similar approach about the migratory phenomenon solution when supposing that the commercial liberation would impulse the convergence of the economies in North America, which would decrease the immigration of Mexican people to the United States. However, the commercial liberation effects substituted on migration would work—if they would—in the medium and long terms. Besides, the 1994 and 1995 events in Mexico altered undesirably the context in which the NAFTA would develop.

In any case, whatever the predicted scenarios, the United States government, unilaterally, exactly at the moments when the NAFTA was starting, the reinforcement of its Southern border by means of a series of operations. In order to make more difficult the illegal entrance of migrants by the most frequented border crosses, in September 1993 the Operation Blockade (after re-named as Operation Hola-the-Line) in the El Paso, Texas zone, the first of a series of similar measurements. In November 1994 the Gate Keeper Operation began in the San Diego, California zone; followed by the Operation Safeguard in Arizona. With the Operation Rio Grande, which began in August 1997 in the southern border of Texas, the migratory control lasso of the was closed from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico.

So, the migratory dialogue appeared under the Zedillo government with a strategy from the Mexican part to handle a migratory matter. Its formulation was enclosed consciously as a product accordant to the "NAFTA spirit", since that the dialogue and the cooperation were conceived as an extension of the bilateral association relation that came from the commercial agreement.

1 It is usually maintained that the American government nullified the discussion on the migration issue.
2 Wayne A. Cornelius has documented very precisely the key changes that significantly affected the border -the application of the law in a concerted and the budget increments, which started in 1993. "First, the new Clinton administration decided, eagerly supported by the Congress, to 'be serious' with the application of the law in the border, for the first time in the history of the United States", which turned into a pronounced and sustained increment of the Immigration and Naturalization Service -which for fiscal year 2001 was of 4 300 million dollars, the triple of the amount of 1993- and the number of effective of the Border Patrol to more than the double between 1993 and 2000, when the number of agents surpassed nine thousand; second, "the new resources predicted for the control of all the border (were concentrated) in a relatively small number of segments of it, the corridors that have been traditionally used with more frequency the possible illegal immigrants", with which the "strategic base of 'prevention by dissuasion' doctrine was structured adopted by the INS throughout the Clinton administration, Wayne A. Cornelius, "Muerte en la frontera", Este País, num. 119, February, 2001, pp. 2-15.
The institutionalization of the dialogue essentially consisted on the increment of the governmental contacts in all the administrative levels—from the federal to the local ones—the creation of work commissions, the signing of understanding memoranda of different agreements (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2000), the multiplication of the consulting mechanisms and governmental functionaries from both countries, in particular on issues about the border communities (Del Castillo 2001: 117-161; Rodríguez and Hagan, 2000: 88-116).

At the end of the Zedillo and Clinton governments, as an evaluation of what was achieved, prominent members of both governments with direct responsibility on the migratory played the positive role that the dialogue would have to play in the bilateral migratory relation (Mohar and Alcaraz, 2000). In the case of the Mexican government, the strategy of dialogue allowed the achievement of a response before the migratory phenomenon, showing initiative, at the same time that this response was formed with the traditional principles of a defensive exterior policy—no interference of an State in the other businesses and the inviolability of the national sovereignty—that postulated the "no contamination" of issues. The dialogue strategy was functional to maintain the principle of the respect to the national sovereignty—in a traditional and conventional sense—in and the separation of the migratory subjects from other subjects of the bilateral relation: dialoguing does not oblige or affected the sovereignty; besides, the migratory dialogue was within its own sectorial context.

On the American side, the bilateral dialogue with Mexico barely had a place in the serried of migratory policies and strategies of that country. It was a component among many others, it was not even the most transcendental or pertinent. In Fact, the most prominent American policy about the border with Mexico was the strategy of "prevention by dissuasion", which gave place to the "operatives" to counteract the unauthorized migratory flows. The ultimate purpose of this strategy would be to facilitate the authorized flows and control

2 The multiple aspects of the American migratory policy are dealt with in the Final Report of the U.S Commission on Immigration Reform, where the dialogue with Mexico is not mentioned, despite of being this Commission the American counterpart of the Binational Study (U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997). On the binational study see (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores y Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997).
3 The unilateral policy of "prevention by dissuasion" has been happening at a very high cost, with the death of immigrants. The association between the deliberate deviation of the "migratory routes" and the sustained increment of both the deaths of Mexican migrants (and from other countries) as well as the intensification of the physical risks to which they are exposed in their attempts to crossing the border have been widely documented. According to figures from the Mexican consulates, since the beginning of the border controls reinforcement until year 2002 more than 2 000 migrants had died.
the transit of the unauthorized ones, supposedly combing the goals of facilitation and control.

The 2001 migratory negotiations

The initial proposals and actions of the Fox and Bush governments represented a deep change—in discourse and essence—of the migratory relation: the decision of establishing negotiations enclosed promising possibilities of substantial modifications in the handling of the migratory matter. Indeed, the purpose of the negotiations enclosed promising possibilities to find a legal framework that allowed the accommodation of the phenomenon. Certainly, the large "trilateral" agenda—of North America with open internal labour and energetic markets—of the elected President Fox (from July to November 2000) had been led to more realistic and pragmatic objectives; the agreement and Mexican regularization by the United States.

The Mexican government took the initiative of the conformation of the agenda that was concreted in five essential points: the regularization or legalization of the Mexican migrants residing in the United States without the correspondent permits and documentation; an agreement on a program of temporal workers that would incorporate a significant number of Mexican people; the grant of a larger number of immigration and no immigration American visas for Mexican citizens; the creation of safety and order conditions along the shared border, and the economic cooperation with the purpose of achieving a significant change in the socioeconomic conditions of the origin zones of the migratory flows. The Mexican part expressed that the five issues were part of a whole or package (the whole enchilada).6

The content of the negotiations agenda reflected many of the proposals in a binational panel that had its sessions during 2000 with the purpose of offering to the new two governments new specific guidelines for a binational policy, "a great negotiation" that would take into account both the realities of the migratory phenomenon as well as demand and interests of the both countries to this respect.7 The purpose was to make migration a sage, ordered, mutually beneficial and measured phenomenon.

7 U.S.-Mexico Migration Panel (The), México-U.S. Migration: A Shared Responsibility, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace/Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, Washington, D.C.,
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The negotiation teams met several times throughout 2001. The negotiation were about, above all, the four first subjects; the fifth subject, the one of the economic cooperation between the countries does not seem to have been treated with a comparable attention to that granted to the other four subjects. In the following negotiations' rounds the respective positions of each government had to be set, without knowing the satisfaction degree reached in each one of the subjects.

However, by declarations of functionaries before different mass media and reports of faithful sources, it is deduced that considerable advances would have been reached, an optimistic viewpoint, whether cautious, regarding the contents as well as the process serenity. The package of the points that were being negotiated was not discredited at any moment by the American counterpart; rather, the Mexican pressure for concluding early the negotiations found less echo, it was not found a parsimony attitude from the American part was perceived either. Even, before the Mexican insistence,8 it seems that President Bush had indicated his endorsement to finish a quick negotiation.

Given that the negotiation was not concluded, it is important to talk about specific advances and results. It proceeds, nonetheless, to recover the state that the four main subjects of the agenda seem to have before the negotiations were postponed (indeinitely) from the events of September 11, 2001.

The regularization of the unauthorized Mexican migrants issue was directed by the principle that those people had the opportunity to adjust their situation to that of permanent legal residents. The modalities of this opportunity could differ according to the time of residence in the United States, the economic sector they are inserted and the payment of taxes, as well as their family situation. For those who had established in more recent years, the regularization opportunity could change from a provisional situation, similar to that of temporal workers with rights to permanent legal residence.

Regarding the temporal workers program, it was looked for the acceptance of three important principles, in order to reduce their vulnerability: being treated as nationals, this is, that the salaries and the working conditions were the same as for those of the national workers; the "visa portability", to being able to move

2001. The panel had, among the members of the Mexican part, besides the participation of two functionaries with important responsibilities in the migratory issues of Zedillo government, with the participation of Jorge G. Castañeda, who would later be appointed as the Secretary of Foreign affairs in the Fox's government.

8 President Fox expressed in his visit to the United States in September 2001 to make the best of efforts to conclude with the negotiations that very year. Ginger Thompson, "Mexico. President Urges U.S. to Act Soon on Migrants", The New York Times, September 6, 2001
and being hired freely with any employer, within the established limits by the visa, and the one of the adjustment of the migratory situation, to incorporate the possibility of changing the kinds of visa under the accomplishment of previously established conditions.

Regarding the increment of available visas for Mexican citizens, different options are explored based on the recognition of the existence of a special relation, given the vicinity and deep and numerous economic, social and familiar relations between the two countries. The justification of a particular migratory treatment for Mexico was supported, before all, in the transcendental association of the two countries by the NAFTA.

The subject of the safety in the border was looking for the reduction of the risk associated to the prevention strategy by means of dissuasion, for that end, the coordination of action between the two governments was considered as unavoidable in the combat to the migrant traffickers, who were becoming criminal organizations. From the point of view of a shared responsibility, the two governments seemed to be willing to commit themselves to check their respective policies, strategies, institutions and agencies related to the vigilance of the borders.9

In the context of the actions for the economic cooperation in the migrant sending zones, it seemed that a commitment from the Mexican part was emerging, tending to propitiate a more useful utilization of the remittances for the economic and social development of the migrants' communities.10

The meaning of the negotiations: achievements and limitations

The negotiations represented qualitative changes fundamental for the bilateral migratory matter as well as in important aspects of Mexico's migratory agenda. For the first time since the braceros programs were ended, the two countries demonstrated once more the disposition of reaching agreements by means of negotiations. There are unequivocal indications that there was political willingness from both sides to reach concrete results in a reasonable period.

9 In June 2001 the understanding on border security between Mexico and the United States was signed. 10 Among the initiatives that were instrumented regarding the economic development are the governmental contributions (mainly the State ones), concurrent with the remittances, at the same time that the extension of the action geographical role and spheres of the NAD Bank, in order to including in its operation the regions with more emigration.
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The agenda of the migratory negotiation was close to the Mexican interests. The issue of the regularization of Mexican people without documents that allow them to reside and work in the US and the security in the shared border are primarily linked to the defense of the migrants' rights objective. The issue of the temporal workers program and the one of the increment of the number of immigration visas for Mexican citizens are linked to the preserving the entrance of the Mexican workers to the American labour market.

Fox's government accepted in a more directed and open way the objective, buried by almost every previous government, included that of Ernesto Zedillo, of ensuring the entrance of the Mexican workers to the American labour markets, in which, progressively and gradually the Mexicans have been entering, since this government felt it was not responsible that the migration of Mexican people was linked to the particularities of the national development, whose limitations and failures were attributed to previous governments and to the priista regimen.

With Fox's government, Mexico made the migratory negotiations the axis of the foreign policy with the United States, attitude that the latter answered positively when it was seriously involved in these negotiations. By the composition of the last responsible of the negotiations it is inferred the important role the geopolitical considerations acquired. The active participation of the Department of State in the negotiations met the satisfaction of an old Mexican demand about what was considered an American neglecting by the null or scarce attention the responsible people of the US exterior policy gave the migration issue (Rico, 1992: 221-283). Specifically, the responsibility of the negotiations lay down the superior level of the correspondent governments: the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Government, in Mexico; the Secretary of the Department of State and the Attorney General, in the United States. This group of secretaries met for the first time in Washington on April 4th, 2001, where it was reaffirmed the decision taken in Guanajuato of reaching significant agreements in a relatively delimited temporal horizon.

Until before the Fox and Bush governments there was an asymmetry in the degree of migratory involvement by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries: the involvement by the Mexican part was prominent; whereas the one of the American part was rather for protocol and rutinary. This interlocutors' leveling promised having potentially favorable implications for the negotiations.

11 Bush's government also acted under the premise that its relation with Mexico was a prioritary relation to the United States.
12 It is symptomatic of this asymmetry the fact that there are no members from the Department of
In the interior policy part of Mexico, the migratory negotiations widened, on one side, the subjects of the very agenda and made, on the other, that from the principles it was moved to concrete proposals. In the past, Mexico had been enclosed in the universal and abstract principle of the defense of the Mexican migrants—an unbreakable obligation and traditional object of the consular functions in any country regarding its citizens. The negotiations made the Mexican part, without renouncing to its principles and traditional objectives, about the respect of the migrants' rights and the acceptance by the American part that the Mexican migration is a reality of the economic interdependence.

Without a doubt that with the decision of making of the migratory matter the central part of the bilateral relations, Fox's government invested and risked a large political capital. The displacement towards the concretion and realism in the way of facing the migratory phenomenon revealed changes in the way of thinking in the economic, social and political relations in North America, in particular with the United States. The new orientation seemed looking for the establishment of more congruent relations between the different spheres of the complex bilateral interaction.13

Until September 11, 2001, the strategy seemed to give the Mexican government good dividends, in the exterior as well as in the interior14. The negotiations were a political asset of Vicente Fox's government, when perceiving the serenity, amplitude and above all, the insecurity and vulnerability conditions, these characteristics were associated with the inexistence of agreements of inevitable phenomena. I believe that is better to have agreements—as limited as they might be—that bound the parts to determinate behavior rules, if there is not a juridical instrument.15

Regarding the achievements, the fact that the United States was a the negotiations table strengthened and inspired the acknowledgement that the

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13 Behind the Mexican stand point is perceived the renewed vision on the Jorge G. Castañeda's North America. To this respect, I find continuity between his vision as Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the one expressed, in the past, as an analyst. On his previous positions see (Castañeda, 1993: 66-80).

14 The changes that took place in the Mexican political scenario starting with the new government had opened great spaces for a renewed relation, a more constructive one between Mexico and the United States (which should include, eventually, Canada).

15 From the perspective of the Mexican objectives I think that, even if what was agreed on was limited, the country and the migrants would have be in a better situation than the one there is in the absence of negotiations. Both the regularization (as partial and limited as this would have been) of the "undocumented people", as well as any extension of the visas and fees availability -temporal and permanent- would reduce the spaces and circumstances conducive to the exposition to the risks derived from the unauthorized crossings and the secrecy.
American economy exercises a sustained demand of Mexican migrant workers, whose social and economical contribution is appreciated. Until recent dates there had not been found an adequate channel to achieve this acknowledgement.

Nonetheless, the principles contained in the Guanajuato Proposal to find a solution of the migratory phenomenon also enclose important limitations. To this respect, it is important to put into perspective the basic mutual understandings that look for altering the current incentive system that sustains the great dynamism of the migratory phenomenon of Mexicans towards the US.

There is no doubt that the ideology of the economic integration, emerged and sustained also by the technological changes, when propelling the demolition of the commercial barriers and the research is also giving incentives to the mobility of individuals and social groups. Without disclaiming the achievements reached in terms of the principles contained in the Guanajuato Proposal, this reiterates previous positions and does not open new ways that allow anticipating an important cooperation in the economic and financial contexts, in the context of the bilateral relation, for the development of Mexico. Indeed, the Guanajuato Proposal enunciates the need of paying special attention to the efforts directed to "reducing the economic breach that there is between and in the heart of both societies and consolidating an economic community of North America that benefits the less developed zones of the region and the more vulnerable social groups". However, regarding the instruments, economic policies and the political commitments it is not transcended in the essence of the NAFTA original vision.

In the two governments predominates a faith and an unbreakable stake on the commerce and the irreplaceable role of the macroeconomic discipline to reach the objectives of the convergence and the economic development. Both presidents are emphatic regarding the Guanajuato Proposal: "We share a commitment with the free trade as engine of the economic growth and inclusive development". And are willing to support those measures "that derive in a healthy fiscal development, low inflation rates and solid financial systems". The matter is not only a disagreement with the need of maintaining the economic discipline and preserving and promoting free trade; the matter is the insufficiency of these instruments to consolidate this economic community that deliberately promotes in its less developed zones and its more vulnerable social groups.

17 The acknowledgement of this demand and this contribution constituted a latent third Mexican objective in the migratory relation. See on this matter, (Weintraub et al., 1999).
19 An analysis, even a superficial one, of the conjuncture of the Mexican economy in the decade of
The absence in the Guanajuato Proposal of a regional vision with a more cooperative and solidary character, and of regional cohesion, in order to retrieve what this economic integration and the free trade do not guarantee, it suggests the reason for which the negotiations on cooperation and economic development experienced scarce advancements. In the proposal there is not an understanding that allows setting the bases for the acceptance of both governments and societies of support measures sustained in resources—economic, financial and other—resources to create equality conditions—in terms of physical infrastructure and human resources training—to the interior of the regional space.20

Without transcendental agreements for the purpose of propitiating a shared prosperity is not feasible to glimpse scenarios of a regional community to the interior of which there is viability the ordered workers and citizens' mobility. Only if among the populations established expectations of living in "similar economic and social spaces" are generated, is feasible to give credibility, acceptance and adherence to migratory agreements as those that were being negotiated; on the contrary, these would be easily overcome by uncontrollable migration pressures, as the current ones.

The migratory negotiations: legacies and implications

The fact that negotiations took place, however, has left important legacies. Both governments invested much political capital in these negotiations, which acquired great visibility and notoriety as to get back to status quo previous this decision and this fact. The expectations that could not be achieved and would have satisfied significantly the demands of the Mexican agenda have changed the terms under which the migratory matter in both countries is currently planted.

Related to the latter, there is the fact that the reality and functionality of the migratory phenomenon received acknowledgements not only from the governments but from all the important political actors of both countries. The reasoning that led both countries to establish migratory negotiations will surely be affected, but not diminished in their essence. The economic and demographic forces that are underneath this reality and functionality did not disappear under

1990, would show that the free trade and the economic orthodoxy have not been enough or satisfactorily instrumental for the Benefit of less developed zones and more vulnerable social groups.

20 An egalitarian (at level playing field) that the American philosophy likes to defend. From an immediatist vision, the binational cooperation logic, in the context was stipulated in the in the order of the (North America Development Bank (NADBank).
the ashes of the Twin Towers. The economic, financial and migratory interrelations will predictably remain as structural components of a complex bilateral relation. In fact, the contraction of future migratory scenarios is usually centered in considerations on the binational economic and demographic trends.21

In Mexico, the callings to the negotiation and the existence of a migratory agreement has become part of the agenda of all political parties, of the mass media and of almost every leader of opinion.22 Other legacies are the re-evaluation of the very migrants role, the re—discovery of the remittances contribution —mainly for the regional and local development— that has been greatly appreciated, and the re-dimensioning of the value, but of the Mexican communities in the US and the Mexican—Americans.

In the United States, the fact of existence of the migratory negotiations have had important implications, among them, the demand to the two presidents to comply with their promise of negotiating a historic migratory agreement (for the labour needs and economic interests and the security of that country) and the persistence of explicit acknowledgements to the existence of a demand of Mexican migrant workers by important economic sectors, mainly owners', of some leaderships from political parties, of influent social organizations, in particular the Catholic church (Mexican and American bishops)23 and of public opinion influent segments.24

Perspectives and politic options after 9/11, 2001

From the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 2001 in New York, the migratory negotiation context was substantially affected. Until before that date, the negotiations seem to go smoothly. After that date, and as the time has passed, the scenarios to recommence the negotiations and reach a migratory agreement have become more and more unfavorable. In fact, there is not a date for the recommencement of the negotiations. Even more, new circumstances have cancelled the exceptionally favorable context for the Mexican objectives.25 The prevailing

21 Both the "peak" or the migratory trip" scenario, as the one of the "sustained dynamic" of migration make intervene the demographic deceleration and the intensification of the economic and social relations that had been established between the two countries.
22 The increment of articles in the Mexican newspapers on the subject of a migratory agreement has grown in the first five months of 2003.
25 The new circumstances have estranged Bush's government from the search of political gains between the "Hispanic", when pushing a migratory agreement as they had previously been doing it.
exceptional conditions before 9/11 that could have allowed very acceptable and comprehensive responses, have indeed turn to ashes.

The relations between the two countries have become to the "normal" channels in which the agenda and times of the relations "go back to" the field of the United States. In the context after 9/11, the migratory agenda accommodated the national security and fight against terrorism issues, which were introduced urgently instead of the migratory negotiations. In this context, the United States pressures for concessions and imposes conditions (which was not present, at least explicitly, in the situation before the attacks).

The internal considerations and interests of the United States (their national security) are preponderant again, clearly above the geopolitical related to the vicinity and the development of Mexico. The anti-immigrant (and anti-Mexican) actors and voices raise their head once more. The American society is moving towards less accommodating attitudes to immigration (in some cases totally xenophobic attitudes are raising). The national security considerations have become predominant, and have gained ground to the economic interests. It is undeniable that it will be very complicated to achieve the American acceptance of any agreement the executives reach. The Congress, as well as the public of such country will resist making more flexible the access rules. Indeed, the task of "lobbying" an agreement will become much more difficult and politically expensive.

On the Mexican side, the deceptions by the no concretion of an agreement before the unmeasured expectations from the migratory negotiations, the frustrations by the lack of results or "benefits" of a closer bilateral relation (to the existence of a migratory agreement is added the negative of a NAFTA renegotiation in the case of agriculture) and the discrepancies on the Iraq case in the Security Council have not only provoked a cooling in the bilateral relations, but have given pabulum to a nationalist, anti-American rhetoric, that tends to reduce the government's maneuvering margins.

However, the Mexican government cannot stop insisting the American government the need of negotiating a migratory agreement, substituting the current and highly expensive status quo. The demand for an agreement (legacy of having started the negotiations) has become a political and social reclaim that the Mexican government has now to face and just now that it is trying to negotiate it, the agreement has become almost impossible and very expensive.

Talking about a migration agreement had great sense in the exceptional circumstances posterior to the Guanajuato Proposal (February to September
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2001) that offered reasonable expectations of obtaining a good part of the migratory package (the negotiations seem to be on how much was reach of it); the the parts seem to understand it so. Talking about the migratory agreement in the context posterior to 9/11 would probably mean many different things for both parts. Even if the pressure for reaching an agreement seems to be very promising, at the same time is the risk for the reciprocal bilateral demands that imply reaching credibility in the negotiation.

However, the voices and pressures to negotiate a migratory agreement seem not to take into account that the context posterior to 9/11 is particularly unfavorable for Mexico (justly the contrary to the previous context that was exceptionally favorable). Searching a previous migratory negotiation inevitably implies the "contamination of subjects", something that Mexico has tried to avoid in the bilateral relations, at least on the security and migration issues.26 To insist in the conceptualization and demand of a migratory agreement could speed and deepen this contamination (before its time), without equivalent counterparts. Under these circumstances it is necessary to thing again the contents and strategies on the migratory matter.

Although it seems a countersense, the discussion on the strategy could have precedence over the contents, since I consider there is not a wide national consensus on the latter. The proposal of the "migratory package" as strategy is discarded in the immediate horizon. An aesthetic option is that of giving small steps in order to escape from the "minimalism" that in the current circumstances could enclose a migratory negotiation that would hardly be "integral".

The strategy of small steps is not the same as inactivity. Some parts of the package can be impulse 27 and "active policies" can be executed for the Mexican migrants and citizens in the US (vg. To promote the consular register, to explore pilot programs, to court the Mexican diaspora, to facilitate the sending of remittances). The spectrum of interlocutors can also be diversified and establish contacts with the Congressmen, in migratory commissions and in other commissions, with non-governmental organizations and with business groups. In the short term, a "contention strategy" or a "morose and slippery strategy" (a

26 The American part has already extended the agenda. It is responsibility of the National Security Office ("Homeland Security Department") to intervene in the migratory negotiations.
27 The regularization of undocumented Mexicans could be favored by the intents of the United States of setting order in its house, registering more eagerly all the residents of the country. The temporal workers programs are favored by influent and different economic interests. The security in the border has become more and more important, but due to very different reasons and goals than the protection of emigrants.
piecemeal strategy) would earn some time while a new package is constructed and the content of a migratory agenda is thought again for the 9/11 context.

The current Mexican demand of a migratory agreement does not seem to incorporate a specific content, or only incorporates a reduced content—referred to one, or various of the components of the previous package—, so that the risks that are taken if they are to be seated at the negotiations table without a defined and precise agenda are too many. In the circumstances posterior 9/11, the negotiations will be, indeed, very difficult negotiations; a give and take process, of gains and (also) of concessions. Are there consensuses on what the country should look for and what, eventually, would be willing to give in order to reach a migratory agreement?

In my opinion, the five points of the package are still valid, all and every one of them. Any migratory agreement that deserves such name must, at least, include them all (on the contrary, it would be a regression). In the discussion and declarations that are reported in the mass media I find a very risky gap between the demand for a migratory agreement and the emptiness about the contents of it. It seems that we are going back to the traditional attitude of the past, when returning to a posture of principles; being the demand for a migratory agreement a species of additional principle.

After 9/11 any migratory negotiation is contaminated, as least regarding the security issues. If the contamination is inevitable, Mexico should expand its agenda with wider and more ambitious objectives and goals. Two areas are candidates to be included in a larger agenda: the economic cooperation and the incorporation of Central America (the security issue is discussed de facto along with the one on migration).

In the area of the economic cooperation, the challenges to re-establish the limitations that the American political economy implies are enormous (as it has been seen already). About the incorporation of Central America in potential bilateral negotiations, until now there a more questions than answers. Until where will be advocated for the acceptance of the "exceptionalism" of Mexico in the North America of NAFTA context? Which are the priorities and concrete points of a Mexican agenda in the context of migratory flows of a wider regional character—it includes Central America at least—that make Mexico a transit and destination country? Is it favorable to link the bilateral migratory agenda with the United States with the "regional" one within the Migration Regional Group (MRG)?
In the second binational agenda, the country changed from the principles to the concrete proposals in order to establish negotiations with the United States based on the Guanajuato Proposal in February 2001. Has the country made the same transit—from principles to proposals in security issues—from the attacks of September 11, 2001? Has the country an integral, congruent migratory policy that integrates the realities of immigration, transit and emigration?

In the "North America space" will surely involve, at least in the short and medium terms, to do negotiations of Central America. The government should be prepared to ponder the trade-offs, included possible different categories of intra and extra regional mobility, which would include future migratory negotiations with the United States: the circumstances are very special so no option should be a priori discarded. Given the unexpected attacks of September 11, their implications can be as unforeseen and unsuspected as those attacks.

In this context, to discuss the long term visions and perspectives on the insertion of Mexico in North America (further the NAFTA) and in Central America is an imperative to direct the most immediate decisions.

The connections among migration, commercial integration and national security should give place to an open discussion in order not to interrupt the commercial flows, but neither the labour and people flows, at the same time that the genuine preoccupations of the national security are also taken into account. The scenario of a "Northern perimeter", to the interior of which a coordination, cooperation and "harmonization" space of laws and policies on migration and mobility would be created that excludes Mexico, has high probabilities of become real. The challenges and decisions for Mexico to this respect are very difficult since they include keeping with the profundization of integration.

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