



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

*School of Education and  
Communication*

# **The Others: Media representations of Indigenous Peoples in the coverage of environmental and political matters**

*A Critical Discourse- Analysis of the media coverage regarding the Mayan Train  
environmental protests and concerns in national newspapers in Mexico*

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### **Abstract**

In the coverage of the Mayan Train in the Southeast of Mexico, national newspapers have either ignored Indigenous peoples as the main stakeholders affected by this project or portrayed them as victims and enemies of modernization. The purpose of this study is to analyse how the Mexican newspapers, La Jornada & Reforma, have omitted or ‘othered’ Indigenous communities in their coverage of the Mayan Train between March and June 2022. Fifteen articles from each newspaper were chosen to be analysed to show how most of them collectivize Indigenous peoples into a minority that is represented as ignorant and in need. The language used to describe Mayan pueblos in these articles reduces Indigeneity to ideas related to the past, poverty and violence, among other concepts which evidence an ideological disconnection between environmental issues and Indigenous concerns. These media omissions and language choices do not only contribute to the othering of the Mayan identity and individuality which are already threatened by this project, but to a racist and discriminatory treat against them. This thesis aims to bring up questions about the representation of Indigenous peoples in national news media articles, as well as to think about how the rebuilding of these could help influence public mindset to incorporate Indigenous communities in environmental concerns in Mexico.

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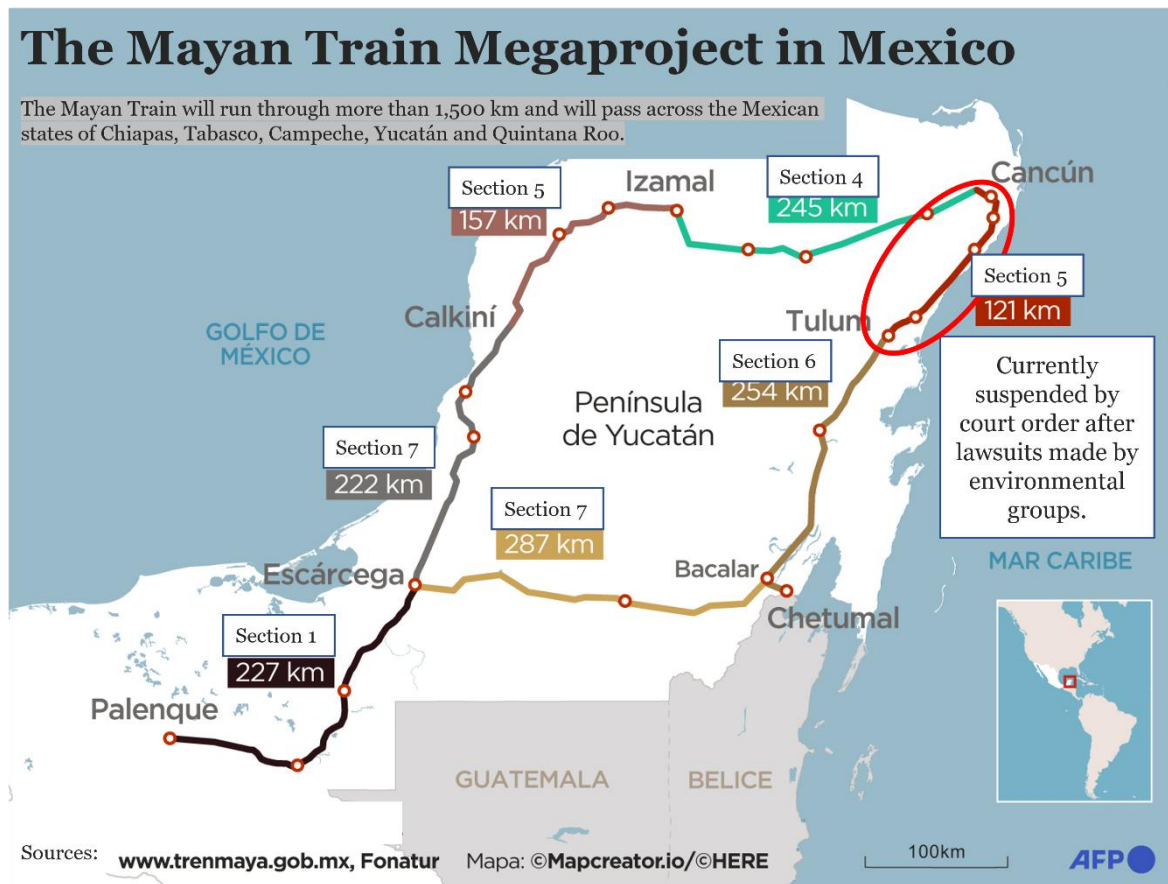
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## **1. Introduction**

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Indigenous peoples in Latin America (Burns, 1983) have been considered ignorant and in need (Hernández, 2022). In Mexico, these communities are still overlooked and romanticized by the media political actors and Mexican society, because the latter come from an integrational economic model that has achieved “progress” by unifying the country in the same identity, culture, and language (Pineda, 2018) while leaving indigeneity behind.

Quantitative and qualitative studies (CDI, 2006) regarding the perception of Indigenous communities in Mexico have shown that Mexican society considers “indigenous” as a different distant world, besides living in the same country, that denies civilization and maintains its customs (CDI, 2006). Other studies by Ansotegui (2021), Pineda (2018) and Cornejo & Bellon (2009) show the contradictions embedded in the hegemonic discourse of progress used by the Mexican government to justify the ‘benefits’ of a colonialist policy of growth (Ansotegui, 2021). As well as how this discourse has led to a loss of recognition and acknowledgement of the Mayan culture among Mexican media and therefore, society (Cornejo & Bellon, 2009). Furthermore, they agree that indigeneity in media has been represented in a homogeneous and collectivized way as a tool for domination of the Indigenous peoples in which monoculturalism and paternalism practices prevail (Pineda, 2018).

The Mayan Train is a railway project that is currently being developed under the Mexican government to provide a method of transportation for tourists along the fifteen-thousand-kilometer coastal area of the Mexican Southeast Peninsula. This train will run through all the popular beaches, and will cross through five different states: Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo (see Picture 1). The proposal of the train has been promoted to the Indigenous communities as something that will benefit them and will solve economic problems and infrastructure issues of the region such as water access and irrigation. The train project has proposed thirty stops and a creation of twelve train stations (Hernández, 2022).



Picture 1: Mayan Train route and section 5 new outline obtained from El Periódico 08/05/22

This matter has sparked much controversy among Mexican society, politics and environmental organizations. Nevertheless, media have focused on the environmental discourse surrounding the Mayan Forest without introducing Mayan voices as the main stakeholders affected by the project, causing an ideological disconnection between the environmental discourse and Indigenous concerns. Hence, these Indigenous communities have been rather ignored by media outlets and therefore, society in general.

This research is about the portrayal of the Mayan communities in two of the most influential national newspapers in Mexico: La Jornada and Reforma (left-wing and right-wing, respectively). The main purpose is to analyse how these media outlets inform the audiences about the environmental concerns and protests by different organizations which led to the indefinite suspension of the section 5 of the Mayan Train between March 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It is by analysing the words they use to represent (or collectivize) Mayan communities,

as well as how these choices are intertwined within different discourses that this research can conclude how are they subtly contributing to othering, collectivization omission of the Indigenous voices living in the Mayan Forest. Simultaneously, these omissions can give a hint about why previous attempts to promote Indigenous voices in national media have failed. (Cornejo & Bellon, 2009 & Castells-Talens, Ramos & Chan, 2010).

Thus, the main aim of this research is to contribute to the understanding of how the representations of Indigenous peoples in media discourses regarding infrastructure projects that are threatening the environment, can influence modern society's participation against these matters. While there are many organizations currently looking to protect the Mayan Forest, and media has been a great ally, they have ignored the most important stakeholders of the region. Representing these communities in media discourse could help build a new narrative that includes Indigenous peoples in public and policy agendas through news media (Hernández, 2022).

By using Critical Discourse Analysis by Machin & Mayr (2012) and 'othering' theories, Reforma's and La Jornada's articles are categorised and discussed.

To guide this study, the following research questions are used as a path to try to identify which practices have been used by Mexican media to maintain Indigenous voices in the periphery surrounding the environmental protests against the Mayan Train.

The purpose of this study is to analyse how the Mexican newspapers, La Jornada & Reforma, have omitted or 'othered' Indigenous communities in their coverage of the Mayan Train between March and June 2022:

1. How do media outlets represent the concept of Indigeneity in the coverage of the Mayan Train protests?
2. How are these representations contributing to the othering of Indigenous peoples in their coverage of the Mayan Train?
3. How do media discourses background Indigenous concerns in their coverage of environmental and political concerns?

## 2. Context

The Mayan Train railway project is one of Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador flagship projects but has had numerous controversies since even before he came into power on December 1st, 2018. Due to environmental and social concerns from different organizations (Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental 'CEMDA'; Fundación para el Debido Proceso 'DPLF'; Indignación, Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos A.C.; Consejo Regional Indígena, Popular de Xpujil 'CRIPX', Sélvame del Tren and Greenpeace among others) protests and lawsuits have been filed against its construction since 2018.

But it is until the beginning of March 2022, when the number of protests, amparos (lawsuits, injunctions and claims against the construction of the Mayan Train) have increased as well as their coverage in media. This happened because of a change of route in the original outline of section 5 of the project. This section now attempts to go through the Mayan Forest (instead of around it) endangering the wildlife of the region, the underground freshwater wells and threatening to displace the Indigenous communities living in the area.

According to the media coverage environmentalists claim that this new outline violates the jungle, the water, and the cenotes in the area. While Mexican authorities argue that the train will not harm the forest, and that these environmental organizations are groups hiding private interests behind their claims.

Regardless, Indigenous voices living in Mayan Forest have been constantly left out from these claims and concerns besides being the main social stakeholders affected by this project. Conveniently, the image of the Mayan Train shown by the media and the government, depicts a monumental piece of infrastructure that implies the path towards the future, even though the train does not look at all like these images, nor is nearly close to being finished.

The train, as proposed by the Mexican government, is aimed to "connect the Mayan world" (FONATUR, n.d.) and bring benefits to Mayan communities such as: mobility, urbanization, infrastructure, connectivity, tourism, formal jobs, a better economy, and access to basic services like water, irrigation, health, and education (FONATUR, n.d.) through foreign tourism. These features are all associated with the Western discourse of progress.

Tourism, especially in the South Peninsula of the country, plays a key role in Mexican economy, but it also embodies a colonial legacy that continues to ignore, dismiss, and displace Indigenous communities from their lands to redefine these landscapes as centers of economic revenue (Hernández, 2022). The main tourist attraction is precisely the Mayan culture, with which its existence has been turned into an object of market that offers experiences and fun in exchange for money.

The term "Maya" has become a trademark of economic value and in a product for sale specifically in the South of Mexico. This phenomenon can be seen in the touristic areas such as the "Riviera Maya" or "The Mayan Route", where in fact, there is no trace of Mayan inhabitants, only tourists. (Ansotegui, 2021). "Mayans are used to generating an economic dynamic that, until now, has not improved the living conditions of the Indigenous people themselves" (Ansotegui, 2021). Today, the word is being used to give historical and nationalist qualities to a train while trying to promote a renewed form of paternalism and assistance or as Hernández (2022) would describe it "white-saviorism".

According to the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (2006), Indigenous peoples are practically invisible to the Mexican society concerns. A quantitative and qualitative study called "Perception of the image of the Indigenous in Mexico" which focused on how the young urban population (between 20 and 40 years old) conceived indigeneity in the country helps understand why media outlets ignore the voices of these communities as well, as they find no audience interested in these matters.

The use of the 's' in 'peoples' is made to recognize and highlight the differences between different the different tribes and cultures among these communities (Smith, 2012). According to México's National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI, 2020) almost 70% of the population living in the Southwest of Mexico comes from Indigenous communities living in the Mayan Forest. These communities are distributed in different regions across the South Peninsula: Azatecos, Chinantecos, Nahuas, Cuicatecos, Zapotecos, Mixtecos, Chontales, Huaves, Choles and Mayan inhabitants (CDI, 2006). Nevertheless, media and Mexican society keep collectivizing them as one vulnerable group: The Others.

The Mayan Train threatens the home of thousands of Indigenous peoples living in the Mayan Forest and its construction is just the mere evidence of colonialism. This railway project attempts to displace Indigenous communities, while it deforests the jungle and endangers wildlife, with the one and only justification of progress and modernization. “No example better illustrated progress but railroads (...) The Latin American elites considered railroads as evidence par excellence to modernization. Yet, when built in Latin America, the railroads had just the opposite effect they were expected to have” (Burns, 1983).

### **3. Research Review**

Indigenous groups in Mexico have been studied from different fields. However, there is still little research about how Mayan communities of the Southwest of the country have been depicted by Mexican newspapers regarding this railway project. The case of the suspension and the protests against the Mayan Train is ideal to analyse how the environmental discourse surrounding the Mayan Forest continues to submerge Indigenous concerns and voices.

The studies presented below lay down a groundwork to help understand how Indigeneity has been built throughout the years by media and other social actors and even elites. Additionally, they dig deeper in how media outlets from Mexico and other parts of the world that have been subjects of colonization, have created an alterity from the Indigenous. The image of the “Indigenous” in mainstream media such as newspapers and tv-programs has been represented in a stereotype and discriminated way for centuries.

Ansotegui (2021) explored the contradictions and the use of Indigenous cultural symbols in the political discourse of Mexico’s President, such as the term “Mayan” to describe a train and add economic value to it. Her work analysed the contradictions found in the speeches of the President of Mexico underlined by the disagreement between AMLO and the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN), an heterogenous group of Indigenous people, activists and intellectuals which are against the development of the project. Intentionally or unintentionally, these political discourses have been distributed by media when informing about the reasons and challenges that the train faces and have represented the Indigenous communities as the enemy and antagonist of this project.

#### **3.1 Indigenous as the ‘other’**

But to understand why media represents Indigeneity as ‘otherness’, it is important to know the background of what Indigenous means. Authors such as Hernández (2022) & Burns (1983) explained how the Western view of progress impacted Indigenous communities in Latin America, specifically the Mayan community in the South of Mexico and Central America. If the Mayan Train is perceived and portrayed in media and the political discourse as a solution to Indigenous poverty in the Mayan Forest, is also because indigeneity has been portrayed as an antagonist of progress itself. While Hernández (2022) research focused on

bringing social and environmental justice to Mayan communities through the representation of Indigenous in academic discourses, it provides a solid base to do it as well in media discourses. According to Burns (1983), what we know today as ‘mainstream media’ was first a group formed by historians, politics, artists, and writers which belonged to the elites in the nineteenth century who formed the first information sources or media outlets. These elites ‘othered’ Indigenous, and portrayed them through history as ‘barbarians’, ‘savages’ and ‘ignorant’ (Burns, 1983).

Moreover, Ramírez (2015) investigated the notes of 18 foreign travelers as a historical source to study the first representations of the Indigenous peoples through descriptions of visitors coming to Mexico between 1824 and 1867. Even though these testimonials might seem outdated, they constitute a referent of social and cultural stereotypes among international society. According to Ramírez (2015), these written representations could be considered as a prelude of the Indigenous stereotypes depicted in mainstream media to this day.

To understand how the Indigenous image in mainstream media was constantly stereotyped and discriminated, Marañón et. al. (2014) analysed 46 Indigenous characters in local television programs broadcasted in Nuevo León (North Mexico) during the months of June and July 2009. These programs, as well as media articles, constantly focused on highlighting the physical features of Indigenous characters, placed them in an inferior position at the service of others; and collectivize them into one and only ethnic group: The others.

But ‘indigeneity’ has not only been represented as an alterity in Mexico or Latin American countries. The promises of ethical coverage in journalism have been absent in many countries colonized by European nations (Walker, et al., 2000). Therefore, global media has contributed with the creation of an entity as a result of Western colonization.

### **3.2 Otherness as a product of colonization in other countries**

Walker, et al. (2000) suggested that the images of Indigenous peoples reproduced by media have not changed significantly since settler-colonialism first began. These images have portrayed Indigenous communities as immature, depraved, and resistant to ‘progress’ (p.4). In this study, Walker, et al. (2000) analysed five large mainstream Canadian media outlets from 2008 to 2017 to understand how Indigenous Peoples were being represented by the media and perceived by among the Canadian public regarding renewable energies. The

results concluded that despite the absence of openly racist phrases, media article authors rarely addressed the colonial history nor included the context of Indigenous-settler relationships in their texts. Such representations, according to the authors, have been aided by government and legitimized through ‘otherness’ (p.4) and will continue to serve power as long as “newspapers are striving to find ‘balance’ between colonial forces and Indigenous perspectives” (Walker, et. al., 2000).

As well Gilroy, et. al. (2017) analysed the representation of “disabled” Indigenous peoples in print media articles during the colonial period and focused on mainstream newspapers during the first 100 years of the Australian press. Just as in Mexico and Canada, Indigenous Australians have also experienced consequences of European invasion and colonization such as wars, geographic displacement and attempted genocide.

Though the study parts from an historic lens and the period evaluated is way too long to consider for our research, its main concern is the representation of Indigenous peoples in mass media and how could contemporary news media could provide a source to decolonizing the discourse of progress in society.

### **3.3 The Indigenous in the environmental discourse**

While some environmental studies suggest that Indigenous voices normally appear in connection with the environmental discourse and land, the environmental discourse often portrays Indigenous peoples with political prejudice regarding their right to use and develop traditional lands and resources in a contemporary manner while also preserving traditional places and practices (Lowan-Trudeau, 2021). This perspective is often expressed through the contradictory, condescending, and racist discourses of the “ecological Indian” and “noble savage” (para. 4) that depicts romanticized images of primitive Indigenous communities that live in the undisturbed nature (para. 4).

For instance, Lam et. al. (2017) concluded that media coverage could undermine public interest in addressing environmental issues faced by many Indigenous communities in Canada. As well, McGaurr et. al. (2016) concludes that many times environmental claims sometimes clash with Indigenous peoples needs in the efforts to conserve the natural values of traditional lands for the 'global good' (McGaurr et. al., 2016).

The above studies part from different hypothesis that claim that the representations of the Indigenous nowadays arose from the categories imposed by colonialism (Ramírez, 2015) and has spread with the globalization of media and the discourse of Western progress. This, at the same time, has led to an attempt of a cultural homogenization that collectivizes Indigenous groups into an ignorant, savage and barbaric minority against modernization (Ansotegui, 2021). Furthermore, the above literature has demonstrated that news media articles provide a source of information that has a strong influence on population, which can contribute to the process of stereotyping, othering and suppressing Indigenous voices or any minority that shows resistance to the Western ideals of progress (Ansotegui, 2012).

While there is plenty of research on Indigenous representations in mainstream media, there is little research about the portrayal of Indigenous communities living in the Mayan Forest regarding the coverage of environmental and political matters surrounding infrastructure projects such as the Mayan Train. This thesis aims to contribute on understanding how Indigenous voices are still omitted or othered in the coverage of these concerns by analyzing the discourses in the articles of two of the most influential national newspapers in Mexico.

Finally, the above studies show evidence on how addressing particular Indigenous concerns over contemporary environmental disruptions can shape opportunities for engaging different conceptions of land and environment (Lam et. al., 2017).

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

To analyse how the concept of othering has been constructed in the context of the Mayan Train coverage, some theoretical background knowledge is provided to reflect upon the origins of the Indigenous as the ‘other’, and how these representations have led to lack of recognition or misrepresentations in media. This chapter discusses what othering stands for psychologically, historically and sociologically to offer some context regarding the origins of this practice. The terms ‘Indigenous’ and ‘colonization’ are also explained. Finally, for the purpose of this research, this chapter focuses on the othering degrees as proposed by Kristina Boréaus (2016) used to analyse the articles chosen.

To trace the cultural and social etymology of the word ‘other’ is a complex task that could lead to an endless number of meanings. The word ‘other’ is (or at least should be) simply something different “than”, as the opposite of what exists (Chawla, 2017). But generally, ‘other’ emerges in theories of the “self” across many social disciplines.

From the psychological perspective, the practice of ‘othering’ or ‘to other’ is directly connected to a form of self-consciousness (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). In simpler words, psychology states that “we” recognize ourselves upon the other’s existence, upon what is different from us. Hence, psychologically speaking, the term ‘other’ refers to anything or anybody who is not us. This also means that, for a self to exist, the existence of the ‘other’ is critical (Chawla, 2017).

### **4.1 The other as a product of colonization**

The origins of the ‘other’ can also be traced historically through colonization. By understanding that “the settler is the one who brought the native into existence and who perpetuates his existence” is logical that Indigenous communities (the colonized) were considered the ‘others’ (Chalmers, 2016). Othering then comes from the emergence of the racial and colonial power imbalances brought by Europe, the ‘other’ is then associated with the ‘colonized’, a “product of modern colonization” (Chawla, 2017).

Gilroy, et. al. (2017) define colonisation as a process of coerced alienation of Indigenous peoples that serve the interests of the growing Western metropole. Scholars have long argued

that the Western society defined and categorised the “Cultural/Racial Other” (Indigenous /aboriginal/native) as a different and inferior entity to white European races.

Meanwhile, Chalmers (2016) defines Indigeneity/ Indigenous as a social category that is rooted in otherness. Therefore, indigeneity reveals a basic paradox: the colonizer and Indigenous other are separate and dependent upon one another, simultaneously. On the one hand, indigeneity represents another that is separate from the Western view of society, a dominant society that constructs indigeneity as “barbaric” in contrast to the “civilized” settler (p.181). This image, which is generally based on archaic impressions (p.180) was in part created by the media as a way for the audiences to know the Indigenous and their way of life. López, et. al. (2018) explain that the ‘other’, such as the Indigenous, is an alterity, a product of specific political contexts and history. The concept of " Indigenous " has been entwined with notions of exoticism and alterity throughout Mexico's history (p.3). These notions are features through which Indigenous people have been known (Simpson, 2017) and are associated with the ‘other’. To be Indigenous means to be the ‘other’, and to speak of Indigeneity is to speak of colonialism (p.67).

#### **4.2 Other as the inferior**

From a sociological point of view, the ‘other’ carries a political significance that is used as a critical tool for discrimination and exclusion against individuals (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Schwalbe et., al (2000) defines othering as a process of attaching features of inferiority to marginalized groups or individuals which reproduces inequality (p. 300).

This point of view is somewhat related to Chawla’s (2017) definition of othering, in which othering involves a process of separation that creates hierarchies among human species and has been used to classify human beings into different identity categories based on geography, nationality, religion, and ethnicity (p.2).

Finally, the theory chosen for this research parts from the linguistic point of view of ‘othering’, which as defined by Kristina Boréus (2006), is just another practice of discursive discrimination that is carried out through language. Boréus (2006) establishes that othering can take many different linguistic forms: “We as society ‘do things with words” (Austin, 1975 as mentioned by Boréus, 2006).

In this case, othering (linguistically speaking), would be just a conclusive, absolute, and irreversible practice of humans using language. Furthermore, it would imply that there is no such expression to refer to the others without pointing distinctions, which could lead to normalizing expressions, adjectives or nouns, to talk about certain people that do not belong to one group (p. 420).

### **4.3 Othering as a matter of degree in language**

Nevertheless, Boréus (2006) says that there is a difference between Othering as to refer to people of certain groups versus discriminating them when it comes to speech and stating certain features to identify them as a problem (p.420). In simpler words: There is othering to refer to someone who is not us, and there is another kind of othering used to discriminate, or generate unfavorable treatment (p.420) against certain groups or individuals.

Othering for Boréus (2006) is a matter of degree. The making of a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ could be the first step, but not the only one. When the degree of othering is low, ‘them’ (the ‘others’) are closer to us. But when the degree is higher, ‘them’ differ from ‘us’ in important ways in which now we can include important features than can be considered discrimination (p.421). To understand the degree in which ‘othering’ can be turned into discrimination against Indigenous peoples, this research is based on the four different stages of othering that Boréus (2006) proposes:

#### **4.3.1 Exclusion from discourse**

‘Exclusion’ can entail processes in which groups of people are excluded from economic resources, education, welfare, and other goods that most of the population can access (Rodgers, 1995 as cited by Boréus, 2006). But ‘discursive exclusion’ can be seen as a particular form of social exclusion that can be done by (1) the omission of voices and (2) invisibility making (p. 413).

#### **4.3.2 Social Exclusion**

Othering as a social exclusion degree states that if people’s voices are totally excluded, their opinions are neither directly voiced, nor quoted, nor referred to. According to Boréus (2006), this practice in media narrative is one step away from total exclusion. That would be, as we have seen, when the voiced interests of group members are referred to but not elaborated any further.

### **4.3.3 Invisibility Making**

The second main form of exclusion, according to Boréus is invisibility making, which refers to a biased image of a group in society. An example would be when media only mentions ‘immigrants’, ‘foreigners’, or any people belonging to ethnic minorities when bad situations or problems happen but ignores them for positive situations. In simpler words, not all visibility is positive (Boréus, 2006).

### **4.3.4 Negative Other-Presentation**

The second degree of othering would be the negative other-presentation, which refers specifically to the presentation of the ‘others’ in the discourse as inferior to the members of the group one considers oneself a member of (Boréus, 2006). This degree can be found in the media articles addressing social actors as ‘ignorant’, ‘poor’, ‘uneducated’. ‘miserable’ or describing their social actions as violent, aggressive or.

### **4.3.5 Objectification**

When it comes to objectification, we talk about a process of dehumanization. An example would be, according to Fine’s (1994) when academic research takes interest in the ‘others’ for curiosity reasons, which objectifies them as targets. In the case of the Mayan Train, the government’s justifications, which have been distributed (intentionally or unintentionally) by the media, are to increase tourism with force labor, dehumanizing the Mayan community into tools for economic growth.

### **4.3.6 Unfavourable-treatment**

This degree can be found more in political speeches or extreme-radical media, when a person/entity is asking audiences to literally act with malice or revenge towards a social group (Boréus, 2006).

Newspapers are a medium that besides transmitting stories and information, cultivate meanings, concepts and ideologies regarding social actions and social actors through assumptions, suppressions and representations.

## **5. Methods**

This thesis employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with a combination of analytical tools to examine representation of social actors as proposed by Van Leeuwen (2008) and Machin & Mayr (2012). This chapter elaborates on the main concepts of study in traditional CDS such as power and ideology, and its roots on linguistic and language studies. Moreover, describes how discursive strategies of self- and other-presentation are applied to media and journalism discourses. In addition, it contains a brief explanation of the socio-cognitive approach as developed by Van Dijk (1984) chosen to analyse and triangulate the articles process of discursive othering.

### **5.1 Media Analysis in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)**

Critical Discourse Analysis does not have a unique theoretical framework nor methodology, but instead has been built by a wide range of approaches and shared perspectives.

Traditionally, Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) had its roots in linguistic and language studies, not only studying it as a way for communication between human beings, but as an instrument that changes, controls and shapes contemporary society (Krzyżanowski & Machin, 2017).

Through time, CDS connected linguistics to social, cultural and critical theoretical analysis. This brought together discursive and social practices into a multidiscipline that focuses on studying the hidden ideologies in texts that contribute to the reproduction of dominance or inequality in societies (Van Dijk, 2001)

According to traditional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language is a means of social construction in which language both shapes and is shaped by society (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The words used by the speakers are politicised, even if we are not aware of it, because they convey, consciously or unconsciously, how we see ourselves, our identity, knowledge, value and beliefs. Consequently, it is through language in which many ideologies and social practices have been introduced and preserved unintentionally by society (Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

For instance, a choice of word in a text might suggest kinds of identities, values or activities due to socially established associations that have been built through time, history and political or economic contexts (Machin & Mayr 2012). Transferred to media studies, CDS's main focus is to unravel the underlying discourses in articles that appear normal or neutral on the surface but that might be promoting an ideology in a subtle way (p.5).

But when it comes to media articles, there are many factors regarding resources, time, 'newsworthiness', among others that can make news' objectivity a social construction of reality (p.5). According to Richardson (as mentioned by Kelsey, 2017) it is not that journalists work conspiratorially with elites or determined to reproduce dominant ideologies, but that they respond to editorial, professional and external pressures, or limitations regarding their content (p. 513).

Here is where CDS question the social role of journalism and media; considering that anything that news says about society, impacts the social relations and conceptions between the groups that conform it (p. 514). For instance, how the way Indigenous peoples are represented linguistically in media articles, has impacted in the othering of these communities in national matters.

### **5.1.1 Power & Ideology**

It is important to define the main analytical concepts at the study core of CDS. When we speak about any kind or approach of Discourse Analysis (DA), power and ideology are at the centre of the discourses underlying in language and thereby in society and media.

CDS sees *power* as a form of social interaction exercised in conversation and other forms of language (Fairclough, 2001) which is internally but also 'outside' of discourse. According to Fairclough, power is not explicit but subtle, so that it can persuade dominated groups that it is a natural and legitimized practice (Van Dijk, 1984). In media studies, CDS examines 'power over discourse' by exploring how media organizations and journalists construct discourses in their production of the news, therefore shaping news discourse and the public mindset (Machin and Niblock 2006; Krzyżanowski 2014 as mentioned by Kelsey, 2017).

Meanwhile, CDS describes *ideology* as a combination of values, ideas and actions that are represented through language in different contexts and texts. Transferred to media analysis,

this can also help understand how texts are embedded in a context. And since texts can be interpreted in different ways by different people, because of their different backgrounds, knowledge, and values, discourse is not produced without context nor can be understood without its consideration (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

## **5.2 The socio-cognitive approach**

Developed by Teun Van Dijk (1984) this approach combines insights from cognitive psychology with socially oriented areas of linguistics and communication studies. For Van Dijk (2001), discourse is a combination of various forms of social representation. He defines social cognition as “all the beliefs or social representations that people share with others of their groups or community” (Van Dijk, 2001). These representations play an important role when understanding and interpreting the relation between discourse and social structures. This approach was selected, for instance, for its background in the negative representations and stereotyping of racial minorities (Kelsey, 2017).

Van Dijk (1984) focuses on the representation of ethnic groups and minorities in mass media. On the one hand, his framework considers mass media as a source of collective opinions, while on the other, establishes that a biased opinion expressed in a media text may reach a wider audience. Hence, the approach for this research considers that mass media play an important role in maintaining and reproducing certain racist practices against ethnic groups, like the omission of their voices in environmental, social, economic or political matters.

## **5.3 Entry-level analysis**

As a first step, this research focuses on identifying the topics of all the articles selected to be analysed. A basic level of selection and abstraction of information, helps determine a thematic hierarchy into macro-topics, topics and subtopics. Topics, as described by Van Dijk’s framework (2001) summarize the text into the most important information. Secondly, this research simply looks at what kinds of words have been used more to describe and depict Indigenous peoples. It is through analysing the meaning of the words employed that CDA looks to unearth the underlying discourses in media texts. How media uses language in media articles can help “shaped, maintain and legitimize social practices” (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

As well, an extraction of how many articles addressed Indigenous concerns from the total of articles covering the Mayan Train is analysed to provide a wider perspective of the actual representations of Indigenous peoples in media. It is important to mention that the method selected for this research excludes images from the articles selected and will focus mainly on the text of every article.

#### **5.4 In-depth critical discourse analysis**

To have a deeper perspective of the analysed discourses in the articles selected for this research, CDA has proposed various forms of analysis of media language. This part of the research focuses on the pragmatic features of the texts, such as the linguistic choices or the use of words to unravel which discursive strategies are used to represent the ‘other’ in the media discourse.

The framework employed to identify how social actors are being represented in the media articles chosen, this research uses the analytical framework proposed by Van Leeuwen (2008). To compliment this research, this thesis is supported by a triangulation with Machin and Mayr’s (2012) CDA’s analytical categories on representing people and identity as well as Van Dijk’s (1984) approach to ethnic minorities.

As mentioned before in this chapter, CDA requires a solid linguistic basis. Discourse practices surrounding linguistic choices depend upon words and patterns. These can signify different discourses in media articles, speeches, texts and can guide the reader either to antagonize or empathize with the side of one of the main characters in the story (Van Dijk, 1993).

##### **5.4.1 Representation of Social Actors**

Practices regarding ‘representational strategies’ relate to the way a social group or individual is named in a text or a story. “These choices allow us to place people in the social world and to highlight or omit certain aspects of their identity” (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

There are a lot of different linguistic choices to represent people and identity, as well as to describe actions and behaviors (Machin & Mayr, 2012). However, there is no neutral way to

represent a person. Not in any language. Representational choices will always bring associations of values, ideas, and activities (p.78) and will serve to draw attention to certain aspects of identity that will be associated with certain kinds of discourses.

Van Leeuwen's analysis (2008) consists of a systematic form for the study of social actors and their semantic roles in different discourses. Van Leeuwen (2008) proposes a sociosemantic network that includes more categorizations within. For the purpose of this research and the extension of these categories, this thesis focuses on some of them, and the ways actors are represented "in terms of identities and functions they share with others" (p. 40).

#### ***5.4.1.1. Individualisation/Collectivisation***

This analytical category is useful to consider how participants are represented as part of a group instead or as individual actors in a story. According to Machin & Mayr (2012) if individuals are depicted as a group, they can be easily 'homogenised' creating a 'they are all the same' or 'you cannot tell them apart' impression. (p.101) One case for example is when media selects people in marginalized areas of a country with similar features in their everyday routines, and calls them 'Indigenous', placing them all in one same category, regardless of the fact if they consider themselves to belong to this category or not.

To collectivize groups, there are other categories to represent social actors as classes, or as individuals, and even in statistics. These categories are called genericization and aggregation, respectively. According to Van Leeuwen (2008) these categories are used to regulate practice and to manufacture consensus opinion among society (p.37).

#### ***5.4.1.2. Exclusion***

According to Van Leeuwen (2008) all representations include or exclude social actors that suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom their texts are intended (p. 28). Some exclusions may be "innocent", and these might be irrelevant details assumed that the readers already know. Nevertheless, these details could be closely tied to propaganda strategies (p. 28).

Some exclusions exclude both the social actors and their activities, which can mean that leave no traces. This exclusion can play a role in a critical comparison of different texts, where representations (or the lack of them) can be considered in a specific context. Nevertheless, cannot be determined in an analysis of a single text, for the simple reason that it leaves no traces behind. Machin and Mayr (2012) define this practice as a way of (not) representing other (p.29).

For instance, when the relevant actions (e.g., torturing the protesters) are included, but some or all the actors involved in them (e.g., the government, the police) are excluded, the exclusion does leave a trace. We can ask who did the torturing or who was tortured even though the text does not provide the answers (p.28).

A further distinction should be made. When there is no reference to the social actor(s) anywhere in the text, we can talk about suppression. However, when the exclusion is less radical and the excluded social actors are not mentioned in relation to a given action, but mentioned elsewhere in the text, we can speak about backgrounding. This is when the reader can “logically” infer that in fact the ones excluded are social actors in the text, but they have been deemphasized and pushed into the background (p.29).

#### **5.4.1.3. Rearrangement - Rolle allocation: Activation / Passivation**

Social actors can be represented by establishing a sociological relevance for their agency or their role in a particular story (p.23). In every news story, there is given a subject (agent/participant) and an object (affected/patient) role. Van Leeuwen (2008) establishes that sociological agency is not always realized by linguistic agency, by the grammatical role of “agent”, but that it can also be realized in other ways by possessive pronouns (as in “our”) or by a prepositional phrase with “from” in which the grammatical role is then a “patient” (p.32).

Machin and Mayr (2012) define this as *transitivity*. In simpler words, the study of what people are depicted as doing, who does what to whom and how (p.104).

In an analysis of a text, it is important to identify which kind of participants are described in passive verb sentences and which are not. For this, Van Leeuwen (2008) participants’ role into *activation* which occurs when social actors are represented as active; and *passivation*

which occurs when the social actors are represented as ‘receiving’ the action (p.33). In simpler words, the ‘doers’ and the ‘done-tos’ (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

For instance, Van Dijk (2001; as mentioned by Machin and Mayr, 2012) demonstrated that ethnic minorities are mostly shown as active agents only when they do something bad. Where they are associated with something positive, or something bad was done against them, they are represented in a passive role (p.106).

Secondly, it is important to identify the processes, or the actions performed from one group (or received by the other). And finally, the circumstances, the details of the where, when and how (p.104).

#### ***5.4.1.4. Indetermination and determination***

Indetermination is typically realized by indefinite pronouns such as “somebody,” “someone,” “some,” “some people” used in nominal function. Social actors are ‘unspecified’ or represented as ‘anonymous’ while determination is, on the contrary, when their identities are specified. Machin & Mayr (2012) also refer to this practice as anonymization. Indetermination can also be realized by a generalized entity, and that endows social actors with a kind of impersonal authority (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

#### ***5.4.1.5. Differentiation***

When an individual social actor or group is explicitly differentiated creating the difference between the “self” and the “other”, the “us” and “them”, or the “others”. Machin & Mayr (2012) describe the ‘we’ versus ‘them’ discourse as a way of othering when it comes to the classification of social actors. The concept of othering according to this category refers to cases where people are grouped together by a specific feature considered as the differential (or the bond), regardless if these people agreed that they share indeed specific this trait with the ones they have been grouped in and then depicted as ‘antagonists’, ‘enemies’ or simply ‘different’ (p.84).

CDA also states that we must look at ‘We’ vs ‘Them’ discourses where pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘they’ or ‘them’ are used to create a collective ‘other’ opposed to shared ideas against “them” to describe -other- a different, uncivilized, distant group (p.84).

For instance, it is relatively easy, when it comes to news media articles to find these discourses in quotes such as “we/they believe”, “we/they consider”, “we/they need” or in quotes stating property such as “the voice of our/their people”, “our/their rights”, “our/their region” or “our/their territories”.

#### **5.4.1.6. *Functionalisation & Honorification***

Social actors can be represented either in terms of their unique identity, by being nominated, or in terms of identities and functions they share with others (categorized). *Functionalization* occurs when social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance, an occupation or role (Van Leeuwen, 2008). According to Machin & Mayr (2012), this category can reduce people to a role that connotes legitimacy.

The way a social actor is represented can also be achieved through using terms that suggest a role of seniority that requires certain degree of respect and admiration, as well as hierarchy and power (p.82). This is called *honorification*, and it is often the name of the participant written and the official role alongside to signal the importance of the social actor involved such as ‘The Mexican President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador’ or ‘María de Jesús Patricia Martínez, Spokesperson of the Indigenous National Congress’.

#### **5.4.1.7. *Impersonalisation***

Social actors can also be represented by other means, for instance, by abstract nouns or concrete nouns whose meanings do not include the semantic feature “human.” This practice can add positive or negative qualities to a social actor or his/her actions, as well as connotations to an his/her background. Van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes two types of impersonalisation.

The first one, *abstraction*, occurs when social actors are represented by means of a quality assigned to them as a way of representation. For instance, the way in which “poor, black, Indigenous” are reduced to a quality then used to denote them, such as “the problems of a country” (p.46).

The second one, *Objectivation*, occurs when social actors are represented through a feature. For instance, ‘the poverty of the Southeast’ or “the ignorance”. This attaches closely their identity with the action in which they are represented as being engaged (p.46).

## **6. Description of Empirical Material**

In its analysis to understand how Indigenous peoples have been represented in Mexican media regarding the coverage of the Mayan Train, this chapter contains the presentation and description of how the data was collected. As well, it includes information regarding the media outlets selected and the profile of their respective audiences, with the sole purpose of provide all the variables possible that could influence this study. Finally, this chapter closes with a critical reflection on the research quality and reliability of the material obtained and the possible biases that might have influenced the results.

### **6.1 Time Frame Criteria**

To select the information that would be examined, the time frame of the coverage was first determined in a general outlook of the events regarding the Mayan Train. The research was made deductively. Once the time frame was decided, all information possible was extracted, to then place the main focus on Indigenous representations throughout the coverage. As explained in the Context chapter, the Mayan Train has been covered by media since 2018. Considering that the time frame (2018-2022) was very wide and would throw a lot of results, the time frame considered for this thesis was narrowed to March 1<sup>st</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The criteria to select this time frame was the beginning of the environmental concerns arising in March 2022 after the original outline of the route 5 of the railway project was officially changed (FONATUR, s.d.) and the dates in which environmental lawsuits and injunctions that later concluded in the indefinite suspension of the train in June 2022.

### **6.2 Sampling**

Using a media monitoring tool, 297 news articles were first obtained from The Mexican newspapers El Reforma & La Jornada. This were selected for their national impact and their different approach to social, political and economic concerns (right-wing and left-wing, respectively). Journalistic pieces which were not exclusively news articles (such as chronicles, columns, opinion notes or reports) were left out from the sample. The main criteria for this first selection, besides the time frame, was the coverage of the Mayan Train as one of the main characters of the article.

The data presented in the following table is just to give a general sense of the immense coverage the Mayan Train has been having in these Mexican media outlets during the period of time selected for this analysis.

*Table 1 – Number of articles sampled*

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Number of articles addressing the Mayan Train</b>
El Reforma	160
La Jornada	129
Total	297

To determine how many and which articles addressed Indigenous peoples explicitly or subtly, words and combinations of words, such as *mayas* (mayan), *indígenas* (indigenous), *pueblos originarios* (Indigenous peoples), *comunidades* (communities), *ejidatarios* (population), *etnias* (ethnicities) were looked upon the pieces (in headlines and text).

After this data was collected, 15 articles were selected from each newspaper to perform Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The criteria to select this material was strictly determined by stratified purposeful sampling (Bryman, 2012). This criterion, based on theoretical sampling, helped determine the number of articles analysed in a strategic way, so that the articles chosen were relevant to answer the research questions posted in the introduction chapter. This strategy for data collection was chosen to know which articles to select, and what to look for within them. At the same time, the selection was made carefully to highlight and connect the theory of othering explained above in Chapter 4.

Despite that all the sampled articles cover the Mayan Train, they differ from each other in terms of main topic, authors, headlines and extension to provide a wide range of information and context that can help this thesis achieve the data saturation needed. Articles that did not mention nor referenced Indigenous communities as characters in the story were left out of the sampling. Naturally these articles will be considered further in the discussion chapter.

The following table presents the final sample of articles to be analysed with the method above mentioned. To facilitate subsequent references to each of these articles, each one has been assigned a number according to the date on which it was published.

### 6.2.2 Reforma's articles

Table 2

<b>Article #</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date published</b>
R1	<i>Train alerts damage in caves and cenotes</i>	Jorge Ricardo	03/03/2022
R2	<i>The Mayan Train 'will only damage 100 hectares'</i>	Staff	07/03/2022
R3	<i>They urge to inform about the project in Indigenous languages</i>	Rolando Herrera	10/03/2022
R4	<i>They presume happiness with Mayan Train</i>	Víctor Osorio	26/03/2022
R5	<i>Tourism in danger because of Mayan Train</i>	Renata Tarragona	23/03/2022
R6	<i>They accuse project imposition of tourism</i>	Staff	31/03/2022
R7	<i>They refuse to listen to environmentalists</i>	Staff	3/04/2022
R8	<i>Farms in Yucatan are reproaching AMLO</i>	Staff	3/04/2022
R9	<i>They hit the brake on the Mayan Train</i>	Benito Jiménez	20/04/2022
R10	<i>They accuse obstruction in litigation against Train</i>	Staff	22/04/2022
R11	<i>Government ditches environmentalists</i>	César Martínez	25/04/2022
R12	<i>They now accuse ecocide in the Isthmus corrido</i>	Benito Jiménez	4/05/2022
R13	<i>We have not received even a pantry</i>	Jorge Ricardo	10/06/2022
R14	<i>Workers of the Mayan Train are now protesting in Mérida</i>	Staff	17/06/2022
R15	<i>Now the train runs into archaeological sites</i>	Francisco Morales V.	19/06/2022

### 6.2.3 La Jornada Articles

Table 3

<b>Article #</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date published</b>
J1	<i>They warn of social damage with the operation of the southeast train</i>	Fernando Camacho Servín	14/03/2022
J2	<i>They demand to fulfill agreements</i>	Lorenzo Chim	25/04/2022
J3	<i>They will plant 200 thousand hectares of trees in the Mayan Train area</i>	Fabiola Martínez / Roberto Garduño	25/04/2022
J4	<i>The Mayan Train has the majority support of the population, says AMLO</i>	Fabiola Martínez	1/04/2022
J5	<i>UNAM is questioning the railway project in the Yucatan Peninsula</i>	Angélica Enciso L.	1/04/2022
J6	<i>López Obrador will not meet with critics of the Mayan Train</i>	Patricia Vazquez	03/04/2022
J7	<i>López Obrador asks the military to defend and take care of the Mayan Train</i>	Roberto Garduño	04/04/2022
J8	<i>The President thanks the ejidos that accepted the Mayan Train</i>	Roberto Garduño / Fabiola Martínez	06/04/2022
J9	<i>SCJN protects Sinaloa's community against ammonia plant</i>	Eduardo Murillo	07/04/2022
J10	<i>Megaprojects prove that capitalist plundering continues: Marichuy</i>	Fernando Camacho Servín	09/04/2022
J11	<i>Communities opposed to the railway denounce the Judiciary for omission</i>	Staff	22/04/2022
J12	<i>Presidency cancels meeting with activists against the Mayan Train</i>	Staff	25/04/2022
J13	<i>AMLO offers to dispel doubts about section 5 of the Mayan Train</i>	Emir Olivares & Alonso Urrutia	27/04/2022
J14	<i>Caravan for the Wixárika dignity continues to move towards Mexico City; the National Indigenous Congress calls for support</i>	Juan Carlos G. Partida	8/05/2022
J15	<i>The failure of the meeting is obviously by the lack of inclusion: activists</i>	David Brooks	09/06/2022

### **6.3 Critical reflections**

In every study it is crucial to be aware of the limitations one might face regarding time, resources, material, and even the prejudices, preconceptions and values of oneself.

In the case of the purposive sampling, this study does not allow generalization (Bryman, 2012) to all Mexican media outlets. Neither does the sample size. The articles collected were selected regarding data saturation and diversity in the information. A big sample is hard to analyse deeply. The time frame considered an important period in the main topic, and the final downscale was from 297 articles to 30 due to the limitations of time and resources.

Secondly, social research is influenced by a variety of factors that can influence the construction of knowledge about social reality. Therefore, it is important to take a critical standpoint on the reliability and validity of the study (Bryman, 2012) which, in the case of discourse analyses, could be the critical bias. Values, political ideologies, social context, culture and even language can impact directly at any point in the research (Bryman, 2012). In the case of Indigenous peoples affected by the construction of this project, for instance, the number of articles read, and the Mexican historical background of the researcher can make it difficult to take a step back from their subjects' perspective. Becker (1967 as mentioned by Bryman, 2012) identified this possibility by the tendency of sociologists to be very sympathetic to underdog groups.

As well, it is important to acknowledge that the language and the translation of every article might not have the same impact when analysed. A triangulation approach was used to try to minimize subjectivity (Bryman, 2012). For this thesis, analytical tools described in the Methods chapter (see 5.4) combine framework from Van Leeuwen (2008) and Machin & Mayr (2012) to compliment the analysis. As well the socio-cognitive approach (Van Dijk, 1984) is used to understand how media portray ethnic minorities using these analytical tools (see 5.2). Nevertheless, it is also important to say that this thesis shall not be considered as a one definitive version of social reality (Bryman, 2012), but as part of many realities build up between time, social, economic and political factors.

## 7. Analysis

### 7.1 Entry level analysis

All the analysed articles mention the Mayan Train as a macro topic, in which the main discourse topics around it mention the impact and consequences that this project might cause or that has already caused. For instance, the environmental damage, the social displacement and the cultural and archaeological property that might be lost in the construction of the project. According to these discourses, the sub-topics found in every article can be categorised in political, social and environmental tolls. For example, the sub-topic regarding political impacts focuses on the political quarrel between environmental organizations and the Mexican government, the belief that environmentalists are not concerned with the social perspective, the participation of Indigenous peoples as a political resistance or advocacy and the promise of progress and modernization as a means of justice. At the same time, the environmental impacts include all the discourse topics surrounding lawsuits against the deforestation, ecocide and the irreversible damage to the Mayan Forest. Here, the focus is mainly on the pollution of the underground rivers, caves, cenotes and the endangered biodiversity living in the region. The discussion around urbanization, tourism, land dispossession, violence and poverty in the South Peninsula, the lack of respect for human rights and self-determination of Indigenous peoples as well as the protection of the Mayan cultural heritage was encompassed within the social impacts sub-topic. To understand better how the topics and sub-topics were organized, **Figure 1** shows a train diagram with the hierarchy and classification of information obtained from the analysed articles.

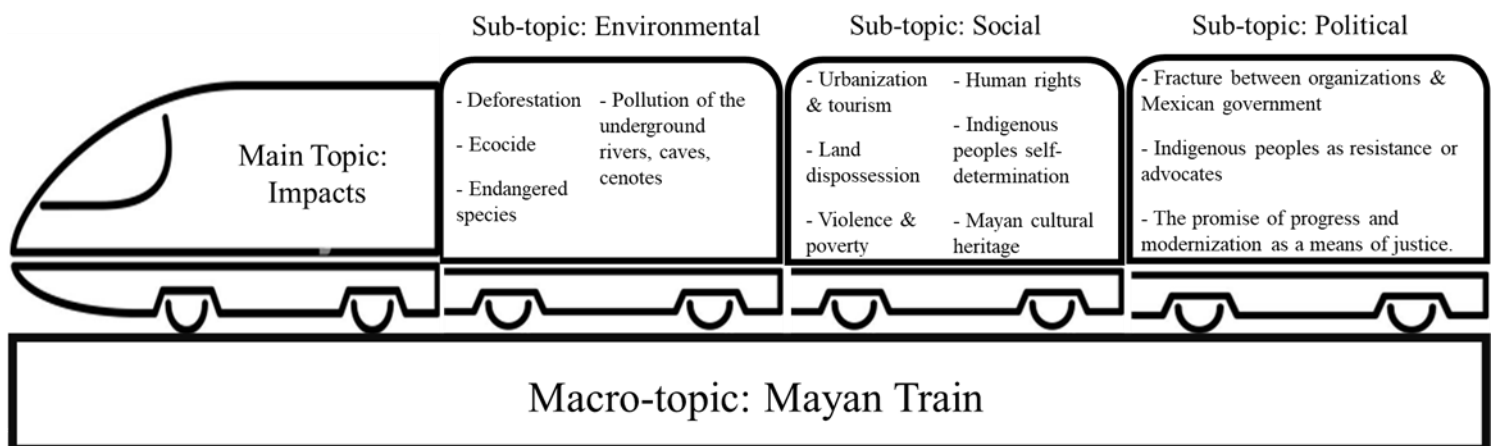


Figure 1

Besides the topics showed in **Figure 1**, which many times appear overlapped in the articles, there are side matters discussed in all the pieces such as the approach to the railway workers, the comparison with other megaprojects similar to the Mayan Train within Mexico, leaders' calls on Mexican society to support communities and Indigenous communities living in poverty conditions and the lack of inclusion in the Mayan Train discussions.

It is important to note that both newspapers discuss the immediate consequences of changing the original outline of the project by supporting their texts on government claims, on the opinion of experts and academics, as well as on statements given by heads of institutions, and organizations.

Nevertheless, this entry-level analysis allowed to give a general picture of how Mexican media addresses other matters over Indigenous peoples (see table 4).

*Table 4 - Table 5 – Articles addressing Indigenous concerns*

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Number of articles addressing the Mayan Train</b>	<b>Number of articles addressing Indigenous peoples</b>
El Reforma	160	25
La Jornada	129	27
Total	297	52

**7.2 In-depth argumentation analysis**

Ultimately, Indigenous peoples are mostly backgrounded and displaced in the Mayan Train coverage. The focus has been on the quarrel between the Mexican government and the environmentalists, whose main concern is the ecological damage to the forest. While some articles do mention Indigenous concerns as the head subject, they are normally portrayed by being differentiated between society in general and ‘them’. As well, they are constantly represented in a passive role that either ignores the social consequences that this project might bring upon them; as a threat to social harmony, and as communities that lack modernization.

### **7.2.1 Indigenous peoples are victims**

The conceptualization of victimization is built through the role allocation of Indigenous peoples as vulnerable subjects that are constantly being ignored and put aside. Overall, Indigenous peoples have been portrayed in a passive role that highlights the vulnerabilities of these communities. For example, R12 writes “*Native peoples are under threat. (These megaprojects) are an attack against the Indigenous*” (Jiménez, 2022) where their role is completely passive, as if nothing can be done by them to defend themselves. Victimization can be examined in many different angles, and in this analysis is divided into three categories.

#### **7.2.1.1 Victims of ignorance**

Indigenous, as victims of their own identity, not because of a lack of education, but a different education than Western ideals conceive. This ignorance comes from the imposition of Spanish and religion as a means of progress (Ansotegui, 2021). The chosen articles claim that the Mayan Train is being built without these communities knowing the consequences of its construction. For instance, J5 and R7 state that the communities were consulted, but without them knowing about the project or the impacts it would have; that “*the Mayan train is being built without the Indigenous communities’ knowledge of land dispossession*” (Reforma, 2022). Additionally, some articles suggest that Indigenous peoples are group easy to deceive by different institutions because of their lack of Spanish and exposure to Western ideals. For instance, J1: “*(...) they (corporations) promise the owners of the land a fair payment for their properties, but in the end, they end up defrauding them (...)*” (Camacho, 2022) and R3: “*Fonatur only delivered the privacy notices in Spanish and not in the Indigenous languages*” (Herrera, 2022). This association between Indigeneity and ignorance is also represented through speech acts, such as R13 in which a poor use of structure is used to quote an Indigenous person: “*She governs from Oaxaca, from Oaxaca is where she governs, that is why she is not in there*” (Ricardo, 2022). This quote does not only highlight a vulnerability but establishes a distance between the reader and the speaker in the text.

#### **7.2.1.2 Victims of abandonment**

Indigenous peoples have been considered as “outcasts of abandoned history” (Hernández, 2022). Nevertheless, the concept of being abandoned can be subtly underlying in the

linguistic choices used to describe Indigenous peoples and their life conditions. The articles use genericization to differentiate and collectivize Indigenous communities through impoverished features such as J10' subheading states: "*Megaprojects relegate the most vulnerable*", (Camacho, 2022). As well, article R13 describes physically a small group of Indigenous peoples by their clothing, their possessions, and their clothing by saying:

*"They arrive with the smell of sweat and smoke (...) it took 8 hours from Santiago Xanica to here, by car, walking, asking for a ride (...) There are twelve people wearing huaraches, caps, dirty backpacks (...) with their mouths closed and their eyes looking down (...) Valentino Aquino Inclán, a Zapotec Indigenous man, 45 years old, with dark skin, his toes seized inside his damp huaraches"* (Ricardo, 2022).

By mentioning their smell, the author implies that these people have not taken a shower, even though it is not clarified nor said. Immediately, the author makes obvious that the members of this community do not have the transport means to move from one place to another as easy as urban inhabitants by describing their "dirty sandals" and Aquino's toes. Additionally, physical features such as the colour of the skin, do not contribute to the readers understanding of the main topic, but to the association of the dark colour with an ethnic group.

As mentioned previously, victimization can be analyzed from different perspectives and awarded to different agents. For instance, the previous articles represent Indigenous peoples as victims of land and natural resources dispossession and outcasts living far away from civilization's benefits. But historically, Indigenous peoples had been subject of previous abuses in which environmentalists did not interfere to help them (R8). For instance, in the Southeast of Mexico, the articles talk about the indiscriminate growth of pig farms, the extensive planting of oil palm, the exponential growth of tourism infrastructure, the privatization of beaches and the exploitation of natural wealth. This argument, according to the articles (R4), is the one used by the Mexican government, to accuse environmental organizations of lacking social perspective. In the discussion and comparison of these angles, Indigenous peoples are represented as the abandonees of activists of the Mayan Forest for decades. Once again, Indigenous communities are passive subjects, victims of exclusion. However, this time their representation is collectivized, indetermined and suppressed to legitimate a discourse of homogenization which suggests inclusion. But just as exclusions

might be “innocent”, these suppressions of their identity might be closely tied to propaganda strategies from the Mexican government. In this discourse, social actors are ‘unspecified’ or represented by a generalized entity that makes no differentiation. For instance, J13 states the above as: *“Pseudo-environmentalists with no social perspective can be very famous, but they do not have love for the people (...) they turned their back on the popular sectors”* (Urrutia & Olivares, 2022) implying that *“the people”* and *“the popular sectors”* are *“the Mexicans”* or *“the folk”* that the government cares for.

### **7.2.1.3 Victims that need salvation**

Simultaneously, abandonment is the preamble of assistance, another concept related to victimization and most importantly, the discourse of progress. For instance, J3 quotes the Mexican president argument against the environmentalists: *“the Yucatan peninsula has been abandoned for decades (...) the train aims to bring development to the region”* (Martínez & Garduño, 2022). Nevertheless, development is an abstract noun which is no further elaborated upon in this article and that is directly related to the Western idea of progress, which according to Burns (1983) is the imposed legacy of modernization and Western Europe values such as technology, urbanization, and industrialization.

The discourse of progress dismisses Indigenous peoples’ autonomy because it allocates Indigenous Peoples in a role of receivers of the benefits and depicts them as antagonists of modernization. This discourse is also known as ‘white saviorism’ (Hernández, 2022) and it is founded on *“the brown victimhood that urges European descendants to take up the moral duty to save the oppressed from their oppression”* (Hernández, 2022). A great example of this practice is R13 which quotes an Indigenous inhabitant:

*“We have been without power for two years and we are in the dark’ (...) We have not received even a pantry or any support from the government, nothing (...) the government must also remember us”* (Ricardo, 2022).

In this representation, the author is exacerbating the differentiation between Indigenous communities and Westerners using “we” and “us” pronouns. At the same time, insinuating that Westerners (the readers of the article) do have electricity at home. It depicts Indigenous

peoples as charity by highlighting that “not even a pantry” has been sent by the government, the same subject that has not given electric infrastructure to these communities.

Overall, the discourse of progress collectivizes Indigenous inhabitants by impersonalising them in abstract nouns such as: *pobreza* (poverty), *sureste* (the south), *region* (region), *abandonado* (abandoned) and *saqueado* (plundered). For example, (J6, J7, R4, respectively) refer to Indigenous pueblos: “*We are going to continue promoting the development of the south (...) the south also exists*” (Vázquez, 2022); “*In benefit of Mexico’s southeast*” (Garduño, 2022); and “*The southeast is the most deforested region in the country*” (Osorio, 2022) without even mentioning them. They lack identity.

This discourse is also found in the Mexican government claims quoted in some of the analysed articles (R4) which state that “*people of the region want and see in the Mayan Train a path of hope for their well-being and happiness in their own communities*” (Osorio, 2022).

Moreover, the government claims use differentiation to place themselves in a higher moral position, which provides some kind of authority or hierarchy to help them. This discourse can be hidden in certain abstract nouns that signify happiness or well-being as above without being so explicit in the text.

Even, this discourse can overlap with the environmental concerns, which normally consider all the features of industrialization as harmful to biodiversity. For instance, Reforma (R5) interviewed the president of the Mayab Speleological Circle regarding the impact of the Mayan Train in the local health of the environment and society. He claims that the environmental damage is a threat to tourism and progress of the region by stating that “*if the economy is over, paradise is over*” (Tarragona, 2022). In this statement, not only implies that Indigenous peoples live in bliss, but it also completely suppresses Indigenous as stakeholders.

Because progress is a broad term that implies a lot of features, this kind of discourse predominated above all the rest in the analysis, even though not all the articles portray progress as a good thing. For instance, (J7) portrays the train as a way of “*boosting tourism and development*” that “*encourages people to have a job, so that they have profits and a guarantee for the future*” (Garduño, 2012).

Perhaps the best example of all these features is the Presidential communiqué about the cancelled meeting with the environmentalists in Palacio Nacional. This statement was distributed (intentionally or unintentionally) by La Jornada on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 and quotes:

*“The Mayan Train is more than a railway, it is a sustainable development project that will expand opportunities for the population of the region in terms of economic development, education, health, housing, infrastructure, culture, Internet and sports. No more tourism and economic development with belts of poverty”* (La Jornada, 2022)

This statement does not only justify the train by numerating all the benefits it will bring but highlights Indigenous peoples’ poverty. Hence, the generic type ‘poor’ is associated with Indigeneity immediately, despite Indigenous pueblos being backgrounded.

The discourse of progress can also be hidden in Indigenous people’s demands such as *“public services, drinking water, lighting and schools”* (Chim, 2022). For example, Reforma covered a protest of workers of the Mayan Train (mostly from Indigenous communities) demanding better salaries and work conditions in which their life conditions are highlighted as a lack of progress:

*“Over there in the south, in sections two and four, the salary has already gone up and we continue to earn 1,400 pesos. We have been working on the Mayan Train for more than a year and we earn 1,400 pesos a week, it is like starving”* (Reforma, 2022).

But as mentioned before, even though a discourse is present in a text, it can be depicted as adverse. For instance (J1, J14, R9 & R12) conceive the features of development such as urbanization of Indigenous and peasant territories, the installment of maquiladoras, mineral processors and gas and oil pipelines, and the promotion of megaprojects such as the Mayan railway, as models of environmental impoverishment, dispossession of territories and growing social inequality. When it comes to the critical outlook of the discourse of progress according to Christian Fuchs (2014) *“the history of these technologies is deeply embedded into the history of capitalism, colonialism, warfare, exploitation, and inequality”* (Fuchs, 2014).

### *7.2.3 Indigenous peoples as cultural property*

Because of their origins, Indigenous peoples are associated with the past and the ancient. The following representations depict Mayan inhabitants as “*archeological wealth, the remains of the great civilizations*” (López, as quoted by Garduño, 2022) that need to be protected as cultural heritage against modernization.

This discourse has been accepted as a reality because the Mayan culture is well-known internationally as one of the most popular Mesoamerican civilizations before 2000 b. C. due to its different cultural contributions to numbering, astronomy, and mathematics systems. Therefore, the depiction of Indigenous peoples as national property, e.g. “*the extraordinary wealth that Mexicans have*” (López, as quoted by Garduño, 2022)

Still further, national media has distributed academic allegations that say that the Mayan Train has been a positive issue because it has boosted the exploration of the region, leading to unearth more ancient discoveries.

These articles use honorification and functionalisation to legitimate this discourse. E.g., in the article R15, the longest of all the articles analysed, the author interviews Helena Barba, the lead Subaquatic Archaeologist of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) regarding the sites that might be lost, found and damaged because of the new outline of the railway. Through this article, the author uses different functionalisations to make this discourse appear more legit such as “*Helena Barba, the responsible for the Office of the Yucatan Peninsula of the Underwater Archeology Subdirectorate of the INAH*”; “*the researcher with more than 22 years of experience*”, “*Barba, the leader of the Hoyo Negro Project, an international underwater initiative of exploration that has been awarded for its paleontological findings*” (Morales, 2022).

In these articles is easy to identify the suppression of Indigenous peoples and their objectification as cultural vessels. This leads the reader to think about the Mayan Forest as the remains of an ancient culture, rather than as the home of thousands of Indigenous citizens that live in there with their own social, legal, and economic systems.

#### ***7.2.4 Indigenous peoples are violent***

As mentioned in the Methods Chapter (see 6) Van Dijk (1984) stated that mass media pay less attention to ethnic minorities, unless these minority groups are involved in violence, illegality or delinquency. However, in the analysis of some of the articles distributing this discourse (J1, J10) Indigenous peoples were not portrayed as agents of violence directly but associated with violence by collectivizing them into abstract nouns suggesting that their behavior is a threat.

For instance, La Jornada (J1) interviewed an Italian anthropologist, ethnographer and expert on Indigenous rights. This person pointed out that megaprojects like the Mayan Train tend to leave behind “*a stain of blood and death*” (Camacho, 2022) arguing that one of the main effects of large-scale tourism is the increase in the number of homicides. At the same time, she uses phrases such as “*crime*”, “*illegal economy*”, “*drug and human trafficking*”, “*a creepy case*” and “*agrarian mafias*” to talk about the possible reactions of the Indigenous peoples if the Mayan Train works continue urbanizing and rearranging their territories. These linguistics choices imply with speculation that Indigenous peoples are violent when it comes to their land. Not to mention, the functionalisation used to legitimize this discourse as true even though this statement does not come from a person within the Indigenous community.

In this same article, Indigenous peoples appear in the background suppressed while the Mayan Train is depicted as the main subject responsible for the inhabitants’ possible violent behavior. The first paragraph reads: “*the Mayan train could exacerbate various expressions of violence*” (Camacho, 2022).

It is possible to identify the discourse of violence in how Indigenous members are represented in their own acts of speech. According to La Jornada (J10), while speaking on a conference about water as a resource, the spokesperson for the National Indigenous Council pointed that “*there is an alliance between the government, enterprises and criminal groups to dispossess Indigenous communities of their natural resources*” (Camacho, 2022). Even though there is no further elaboration on what it is meant by “*criminal groups*”, such associations depict something dangerous or risky. Later, according to the article, she referred to the Mayan Train as a “*project of death and destruction*” that is aimed to “*go over their death body and erase*

*our history*". The linguistic choices to represent the agent's way of speaking in this article, suggest a violent identity and behavior of the social group she belongs to.

News media in particular play a central role in the production of the mechanisms of racism and discrimination against 'risky' groups. This is also done by portraying an action that speaks of violence. For example, in the article by Reforma (R13), the author seems to possess a piece of information that the Indigenous member who is being interviewed is not aware of.

*"What they (the Indigenous inhabitants that are demanding government support) do not say is that the governor was kidnapped, and her husband was tortured and killed by the Committee for the Defense of Indigenous Peoples (Codedi)"* (Ricardo 2022).

After depicting him as a victim of abandonment (see 7.2.1.2) and placing Indigenous peoples in a passive role, the author then delivers this special information to the reader in which the Indigenous peoples' agency becomes active, because it is related to delinquency.

### ***7.2.5 Indigenous peoples as a political force/counterweigh***

This thesis refers to political forces as the pressure groups that have a significant influence on the general stability of a nation. According to different definitions and views, this stability can be social, economic, or political. These forces are capable of shaping the course of a nation with their actions or pronouncement towards or against introduced laws or projects.

Articles J2, J8, J9, J11, J14, R6, R8 and R10 depicted Indigenous peoples as content citizens, and even include their nominal function by naming them. Even though some articles still collectivize them in a group, the identities of the social actors are 'specified' not only by the determination of their municipality, but by the names of their ethnic groups.

J14 writes: *"The Indigenous community of San Sebastián Teponahuatlán (Waut+a) and its annex Tuxpan (Kuruxi Manuwe), belonging to the Wixárika people, began a long march of more than 900 km demanding that the federal government provides immediately a solution to their land problem"* (Partida, 2022).

As shown in the quote above, not all discourses represent Indigenous peoples as passive subjects and victims of abandonment nor employ differentiation as a tool to create a gap between society and the 'other(s)'. While the above representations of Indigenous peoples as

ignorant or violent (see 7.2.2.1 & 7.2.4) this discourse endows Indigenous peoples with authority.

For instance, and J8 and R10 talk about the same community and their anger against the government without representing them as violent entities. Both articles allocate Indigenous communities in an active role capable of using legal channels to request the protection of their rights to their territories and natural resources and employ legal terms which are normally not associated with Indigeneity, e.g.:

*“The Assembly of Defenders of the Maya Múuch' Xúinbal territory filed an amparo for violations of their rights as a native Mayan pueblo”, “the right to participate in determinations that may affect their territory and natural resources” (La Jornada, 2022).*

Meanwhile, article R10 even includes a quotation of an Indigenous representative of this same community, same which is completely different as shown in R13 (see 7.2.1.1), e.g.:

*“The judiciary is being totally permissive and acquiescent, since its resolutions deny the suspension of the Mayan Train project due to mere formalities, despite the existence of evidence and reported facts of the devastation of the flora and fauna, as well as the integrity of our Mayan villages in Yucatan”, (Reforma, 2022)*

This article does not only represent a Mayan voice as non-violent and non-ignorant, but it also gathers the environmental and the social causes. Other articles have depicted these causes as exclusive by backgrounding or suppressing the interests of one another.

As mentioned in the discourse of violence (see 7.2.4), the linguistic choices to represent an agent's way of speaking can suggest identity and behavior. For instance, article R8 reported that 21 Mayan native communities came together to send a letter to Mexican president asking him to attend their needs:

*“We and other peoples who experience the impacts of the pork industry want to start a dialogue table on the actions that must be carried out to protect water, the environment, health and our rights as Mayan people. We hope that our rights are guaranteed.”*

Besides the use of pronouns “we” and “our”, the linguistic choices “dialogue” and “hope” guide the reader to associate how Indigenous communities decide to solve their concerns.

Yet this endowment can also be used strategically for propaganda. It is important to note that there are no good or bad discourses. It all depends on the researcher's values and how these discourses are used. In simpler words, with what purpose are they being used. Article J15 quoted a leader of the Movement for Socialism saying that it was time to "*raise our voices and all of those who are excluded (...) time for Indigenous peoples and not for empires (...)*" (Brooks, 2022). In this article, Indigenous communities are also being represented as a political force, but the use of differentiation and contentious words places them as a resistance, and the rest of society as an antagonist.

## **8. Discussion**

During this chapter, the research findings and analyses are interpreted alongside the theoretical framework and previous findings from previous research in order to answer the research questions presented at the beginning of this paper (see Chapter 1).

### **8.1 RQ 1 – The concept of Indigeneity in Mexican media outlets**

Indigeneity is constructed as an alterity (López, et. al., 2018) by both newspapers through the highlight or differentiation of certain features of the communities mentioned. Overall, the analysed media outlets build up the concept of Indigeneity from different abstract ideas such as the past, poverty, ignorance, violence, isolation, and lack of public services. As a result, Indigeneity has now been built as a generic or racialized type, by been attached to a social group.

This thesis verifies that Indigeneity is rooted in otherness (Simpson, 2017) because these communities are portrayed in many articles as the remains of great civilizations with certain features that are associated with the Indigenous peoples' life conditions and behaviors. These latter are notions through which the 'others' have been (and are still) known (Simpson, 2017).

This comes because Indigeneity has its roots in the history of Mexico as a nation, just as López, et. al. (2018) explained, the concept of " Indigenous " is attached to Mexico's history (p.3). Indigenous peoples were 'the others when European colonizers came to these territories and conquered (Chawla, 2017 & Chalmers, 2016) and in order to govern them and integrate them into a system, that served the interests of the 'Western colonizers', these latter needed to force Indigenous peoples into a coerced homogenous entity (Gilroy, et. al., 2017 & Pineda, 2018).

For instance, Walker, et al. (2000) research suggested that the images of Indigenous peoples reproduced by media have not changed significantly since settler-colonialism first began. This analysis agrees that media has followed and perpetuated this discourse through collectivizing them into a generic type and reducing their individuality to the remains of a nation's past. This, even when the Mayan Forest is and has been the home of Indigenous communities since before colonization. As well, this discourse has led to a loss of recognition

and acknowledgement of the Mayan culture among Mexican media and therefore, society (Cornejo & Bellon, 2009 and CDI, 2006).

This cannot be a matter of accusation only. The works of the Mayan Train have boosted the exploration of the region, leading to unearth ancient discoveries, and media to cover them. This chapter also contains how these discoveries have not only led to media to exclude Indigenous contemporary concerns', but how have these been backgrounded by other matters, including the archaeological findings within the Mayan Forest.

Other findings (Ramírez, 2015) have shown that elites have associated Indigeneity through history as a 'barbaric', 'savage' and 'ignorant' (Burns, 1983) feature. This genericization has built a stereotype associated with violence, which has constituted a social and cultural referent among international society as well. This stereotype has only been reinforced by different discourses that suggest primitive and feral behaviors resistant to progress and urbanization. This discourses include the environmental discourse that many times disregards Indigenous communities as "ecological Indians" and "savages" for protecting their land practices (Lowan-Trudeau, 2021).

Simultaneously, both La Jornada and Reforma have contributed to the distribution of political claims which uphold Western Europe values such as technology, urbanization and industrialization of the region. even when these values "are deeply embedded into the history of capitalism, colonialism, warfare, exploitation, and inequality" (Fuchs, 2014).

These claims, even when not pronounced by them, are legitimized by the constant use of functionalizations and honorifics to depict moral authority over these communities. Furthermore, they conceptualize Indigeneity as an alterity with no autonomy, even when not distributing these claims, by portraying their life conditions as part of their identity.

Simultaneously, this research findings show that in the articles analysed Indigenous peoples are constantly shown in a passive role. Such as Marañón et. al. (2014) findings, Indigenous characters are constantly depicted in service of others. This role has also made them victims to be objectified by the same discourse of progress as force of labor, as an instrument for economy and development, as a political weapon against environmentalists (or the government) and as a support for tourism.

Finally, Indigeneity has been conceptualized as a minority for the simple fact of exclusion and omission in the general coverage. From 297 articles, 52 mention Indigenous. Indigeneity has been then conceived by media as an undeniable invisibility.

### **8.2 RQ 2 – Othering of Indigenous Peoples**

Both media outlets could be ‘othering’ Indigenous communities in their representations by pointing simply out their Indigeneity in their texts. It would not be precise to say if this emphasis is made intentionally, or just to provide information to the audiences about these communities living in the Mayan Forest. It could be merely an exercise of recognizing their existence. In that case, this ‘othering’ is being used to classify them as social actors, into a different identity category based on geography and ethnicity (Chawla, 2017).

Van Dijk (1993 as mentioned by Machin & Mayr 2012) establishes that news media articles try to align audiences alongside or against the social actors in a story. This ‘ideological squaring’ as he calls it, is usually used to create opposites, or emphasize ‘otherness’ in a text. Therefore, it is important to ask if this collectivization into a generic type is actually necessary to acknowledge their identities or if it is used as a differentiator to make them inferior.

Regardless, ‘othering’ carries a political significance, even if not intended to (López, et.al., 2018 & Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Machin and Mayr (2012) assured that there is no neutral way to represent a person. However, previous research (Ramírez, 2015) concluded that mainstream media constantly focused on highlighting certain features that revealed and collectivize them as an inferior race. But even if it was not intended, media (nor society) cannot help to ‘do things with words’ (Bóreaus, 2006).

This analysis found not only that media contributes to Indigenous Peoples othering but perpetuates it through different discourses and degrees that lead to a never-ending cycle of discrimination.

For instance, the first degree of othering, according to Boréaus (2006) is exclusion. This includes either Indigenous peoples’ voices totally ignored by media or anonymized in matters that concern them as stakeholders. According to Krumer-Nevo & Sidi (2012) othering is another way of “exile” (p. 307). It is not necessary to portray them as abandoned to ‘other’

them. For instance, the number of articles that do address concerns of the Mayan communities, are considerably less (only 18%) than the ones addressing the environmental consequences or the political quarrels (82%) (see 7.1). By just not writing about these communities nor the consequences of the Mayan Train to their territories, media are contributing to the exile of these natives. Such as the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (2006) reported in the study "Perception of the image of the Indigenous in Mexico" (see 2) to practically being invisible to Mexican society (CDI, 2006).

The second and third degrees of othering come when media write about Indigenous communities but depict them as inferior to the rest of society. This done by associating them with 'ignorant', 'poor', 'uneducated', 'miserable' or 'violent' discourses (Boréus, 2016). Here it can be argued that topics about minorities are generally negative (Van Dijk, 1993) and, according to the findings of this thesis, Indigeneity is not considered a normal or contemporary feature, but a threat to all who are not them (us).

Furthermore, when media covers the Mayan matters as remains of the past civilizations or distributes claims that impersonalise Indigenous peoples as the 'south'/'southeast region' or reduce them to tools for tourism and economic growth.

These degrees all lead to an unfavourable treatment against Indigenous peoples. This is when society starts to act with malice towards these communities (Boréus, 2006). In simpler words, othering in different degrees in media, either by omitting Indigenous voices, or misrepresenting them, contributes to racist and discrimination acts against them (see Figure 2).

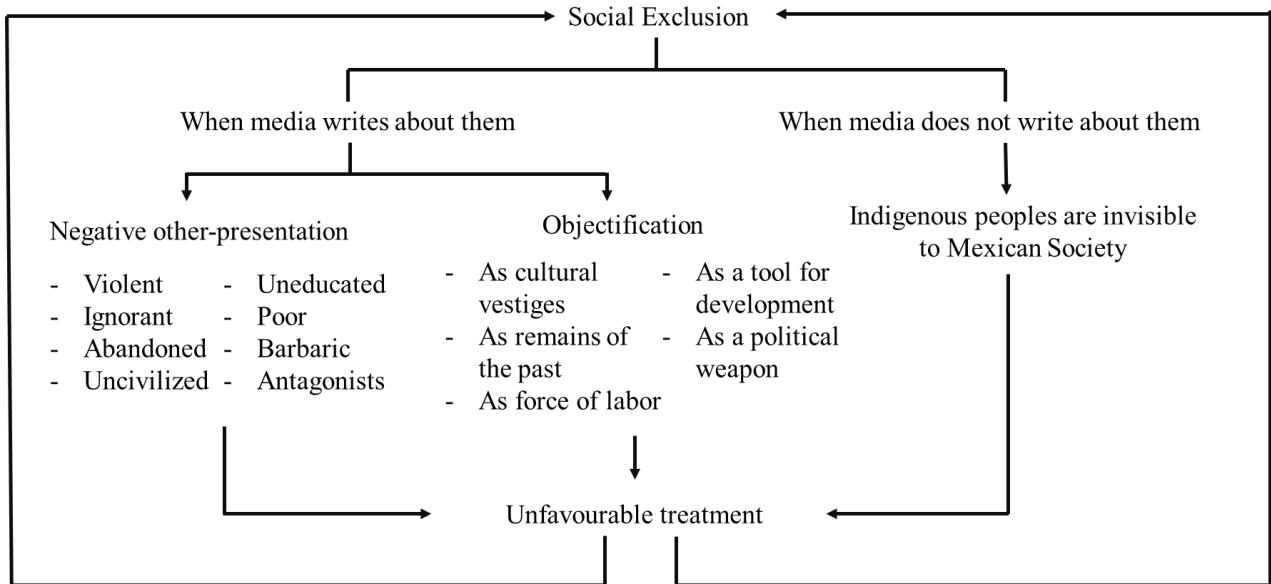


Figure 2

As shown, the analytical categories used to represent social actors do not only contribute to othering in different degrees. They attach features of inferiority to ethnic groups, which end up reproducing more inequality and marginalization against these communities. This attachment of inferiority features, or ‘othering’ as Schwalbe et., al (2000) defines it, perpetuates the never-ending cycle of inequality (p. 300).

Previous studies on the discourses regarding the Mayan Train (Ansotegui, 2021) and the representations of Indigenous peoples in mainstream media (Ramírez, 2015) concluded that media has a strong influence in the conceptualization of minorities among population. Misrepresentations and lack of representations of Indigenous actors in news media stories take part in ignoring, stereotyping, othering and poorly treating of Indigenous peoples or any minority that shows resistance to the Western ideals of progress (Ansotegui, 2021).

Ultimately, the portrayal of Indigenous as a pressure group within society to counter political power or private interests employs differentiation as well to establish a relationship of antagonism. Although this leads to questioning if this depiction also ‘others’ Indigenous communities and to what degree. Moreover, if there could be the case in which ‘othering’ could lead to social change by media representing ethnic minorities as efficient, capable, humane, and civilized.

### **8.3 RQ 3 – Indigenous Peoples’ backgrounded**

Both Reforma and La Jornada, in their coverage of the Mayan Train matters, suppress Indigenous peoples in their headlines, while backgrounding them in their text. Nevertheless, La Jornada (left-wing) addresses these communities more as the main topic, while Reforma (right-wing) mentions Indigenous peoples in the background of the text (see 10.1: Tables 6 & 7).

Overall, Indigenous voices in both media outlets are kept in the dark while the environmental concerns and the political quarrel between activists and the Mexican government regarding the Mayan Train is placed at the front as the main course. While Hernández (2022) claims that there is a connection between the concept of the Indigenous and the environment, the case of the Mayan Train shows a huge disconnection between these two concepts which according to McGaurr et. al. (2016), are a matter of pragmatism and convenience for environmental justice. As shown, this coverage has pushed Indigenous peoples into the background and reduced them to being casualties of a war between environmentalists and politicians. Even though some articles mention displacement and the consequences of invading their territories, the agency of these communities is completely passive.

Apparently, when media focuses on environmental or political concerns and places Indigenous peoples’ concerns at the back as a collectivized concept such as ‘social harm’, hegemony is legitimized (Walker, et. al., 2000). This causes the audiences to believe that environmental or political concerns are much more important than the Indigenous. Leading these communities back to total exclusion (again). So, despite that some studies claim that the environmental discourse is constantly attempting to find common ground with Indigenous peoples because it is driven by the concern for environmental justice, media coverage of contemporary Indigenous environmental topics often reveals societal prejudices and associated discourses (McGaurr et. al., 2016). If media coverage will focus mainly on environmental issues, the environmental discourse should incorporate Indigenous peoples’ concerns as well (Lam, et. al., 2017).

## 9. Conclusions

This chapter resumes this research findings and discussion, but none of the following assertions should be considered as conclusive, but as a path on building on the importance of Indigenous representations in Mexican media outlets.

Overall, the analysed articles show that media outlets are struggling to find balance between the coverage of environmental and political matters, and Indigenous concerns in the context of the Mayan Train. More importantly, these matters in media have displaced Indigenous voices as stakeholders of the consequences of the project.

Media articles have categorised, represented and depicted Indigenous peoples as one embodied identity against modernization and now, these othering practices have contributed to the lack of recognition of Indigenous concerns in the matter of the Mayan Train construction.

It is important to consider that just as media influences society's perception through representations, media coverage is also evidence of a society's behavior towards ethnic minorities. In simpler words, media discourses display beyond their texts, a reality of social exclusion, discrimination and collectivization of Indigenous peoples.

Based on the analyses and results presented in the above chapters, this thesis resolves that besides providing information, media discourses can also promote and perpetuate racial meanings, concepts and ideologies regarding social actors and their behaviours. Hence, when representing social actors from an ethnic minority that historically has been conceptualized through stereotypes associated with violence or ignorance, any level of othering contributes to the discrimination or mistreatment towards the members of this community.

This thesis suggests rethinking the structure of news media stories, when covering matters that affect Indigenous communities directly, including their role in their story, and their perspective. This could provide the audiences a wider context that allows a better and more inclusive understanding of the issue. Even if media are not to be the only ones to blame in the exclusion of Indigenous peoples, it is important that media outlets take responsibility and

seize their platform to help in inclusion efforts. Ultimately, media and society must reflect on the voices left out from national conversations.

Finally, it is important to consider that media, intentionally or not, reproduces a sense of reality, but not reality in its whole. And that reality is, as well, a concept of perception. Likewise, social studies are always subject to interpretations according to one's values and ideologies. There are many other external and internal factors that influence the way information is provided, and the way it is received as well.

This thesis does not attempt neither to accuse nor disclose any blame or act to the media outlets chosen to be sampled, nor to the authors of the analysed articles. The analysis performed and its results are done accordingly to the researcher's considerations. To help determine if exposure to stereotyped content and othering practices in media discourses influence positive or negatively audiences, further analyses on the representations of Indigenous people in mass media and the discourses attached to them need to be performed.

## 10. Appendix

In order to analyse Indigenous representations, the criteria to select the previous analysed articles in both newspapers was that the articles included the words phrases: *indígena* (indigenous) and its synonyms such as, *comunidades indígenas* (Indigenous peoples), *mayas* (Mayan), *campesinos* (peasants), *comunidades rurales* (communities of peasants), *etnias* (ethnic groups), *pueblos originarios/indígenas* (Indigenous peoples/folk), (*habitantes* (inhabitants), *comunidades* (communities), *pueblos originarios* (Indigenous peoples or natives), *gente* (people), *pobladores* (occupants), *etnias* (ethnic groups) and *minorías* (minorities).

Note: Articles that portray Indigenous peoples as main topic might overlap or not with those that highlight Indigenous Peoples in the headline.

### 10.1 Entry level analysis: Indigenous peoples in text

Table 6 – *Reforma*: Indigenous backgrounding in text and headline

Newspaper	Do not mention Indigenous Peoples	Indigenous Peoples mentioned in text but not as main topic	Indigenous Peoples as main topic	Indigenous peoples appear in the headline
Reforma	R2, R5, R9, R15	R1, R4, R7, R11	R3, R6, R8, R10, R12, R13, R14	R3
<b>Total</b>	4	4	7	1

Table 7 – *La Jornada*: Indigenous backgrounding in text and headline

Newspaper	Do not mention Indigenous Peoples	Indigenous Peoples mentioned in text but not as main topic	Indigenous Peoples as main topic	Indigenous peoples appear in the headline
La Jornada	J3, J7, J13	J4, J6, J12	J1, J2, J5, J8, J9, J10, J11, J14, J15	J9, J11, J14
<b>Total</b>	3	3	9	3

## 10.2 Entry level analysis by coverage

Note: Articles that address social might overlap within environmental and political matters as well and vice versa.

Table 8 - Articles by topics

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Social</b>
Reforma	R1, R2, R4, R5, R7, R8, R9, R11, R12, R15	R2, R4, R6, R7, R8, R11, R13	R3, R6, R8, R10, R12, R13, R14, R15
<b>Total</b>	10	7	8
La Jornada	J3, J4, J5, J6, J8, J9, J10, J12, J13	J3, J4, J6, J7, J10, J11, J12, J13	J1, J2, J5, J8, J9, J10, J14, J15
<b>Total</b>	9	8	8

## 10.3 In-depth analysis according to analytical categories

Table 9 - Articles by CDA tools

<b>Analytical categories</b>	<b>La Jornada</b>	<b>Reforma</b>
Individualisation	J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, J6, J7, J8, J9, J10, J11, J12, J13, J14, J15	R1, R4, R7, R9, R12, R13, R15
Collectivisation	J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, J6, J7, J8, J9, J10, J11, J12, J13, J14, J15,	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14
Collectivisation – Genericisation	J2, J3, J8, J10, J13, J15, J12	R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R12, R13, R14
Collectivisation – Aggregation	J14	R1, R8, R11, R15
Exclusion – Suppression	J3, J7, J13	R2, R5, R9, R15
Exclusion – Backgrounding	J1, J3, J4, J6, J12, J13	R1, R4, R7, R11, R12
Role allocation – Activation	J8, J10, J11	R8, R10, R14
Role allocation – Passivation	J1, J5, J9	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R11, R12, R15
Determination	J8, J10, J14, J15	R3, R8, R10, R12
Indetermination – Anonymization	J4, J6, J7, J10, J11, J13, J15	R1, R4, R5, R7, R9, R11, R14
Differentiation	J1, J7, J8, J9, J10, J13, J14, J15	R3, R6, R8, R10, R12, R13, R14, R15
Functionalisation – Honorifics	J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, J6, J7, J8, J9, J10, J11, J12, J13, J14, J15	R1, R4, R7, R9, R12, R15
Impersonalisation – Abstraction	J1, J3, J5, J10	R4, R15
Impersonalisation – Objectivation	J3, J4, J6, J7	R4, R5, R7, R14, R15

## 10.4 In-depth analysis by discourses

Note: These discourses are strictly related to one another, they might overlap within each other.

Table 10 – Victimization discourses

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Ignorance</b>	<b>Abandonment</b>	<b>Salvation/Progress</b>
Reforma	R3, R7, R13, R14	R1, R4, R7, R8, R12, R13, R14	R1, R2, R4, R5, R9, R11, R12, R13, R14
<b>Total</b>	4	7	9
Jornada	J1, J4, J5	J8, J11, J12, J14, J15	J1, J2, J3, J6, J7, J12, J13, J14, J15
<b>Total</b>	3	5	9

Table 11 – Articles categorized by discourses

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Cultural property</b>	<b>Violent</b>	<b>Political force</b>
Reforma	R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R8, R9, R10, R12, R13, R14	R13, R15	R13, R14	R6, R7, R8, R10, R11, R13
<b>Total</b>	12	2	2	6
La Jornada	J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, J6, J7, J8, J11, J12, J13, J14, J15	J1, J4, J7	J1, J5, J10, J15	J2, J4, J8, J9, J10, J11, J14, J15
<b>Total</b>	13	3	4	8

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