Covering the Two Amigos: Neo-colonial representations of Canada and Mexico in their national press

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ABSTRACT

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Gabriela Capurro

This thesis explores the ways in which Mexican and Canadian print journalism reflect, through the use of a neo-colonial discourse, the power imbalances that characterises these countries' bilateral relationship. Mexico and Canada are partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which also includes the U.S. The alliance has deep asymmetries in economic power and development between signatories, and Canada and Mexico's lack of common interests limits their diplomatic relationship to economic activities. A symptom of this is the underrepresentation Mexico and Canada have in each other's national media, with coverage limited mostly to problematic events involving both countries.

I argue that representations in the Canadian and Mexican press about the other nation reflect the power asymmetries of their bilateral relationship and, thus, maintain a neo-colonial discourse, which perpetuates the current power structures by reinforcing racism, xenophobia, otherness and exploitation.

Through quantitative and qualitative analyses of the coverage of three events during 2009 that created moments of tension between Canada and Mexico this study examines how asymmetric international power relations are expressed through a neo-colonial discourse in the media and, thus, advances an explanation of the media's role in perpetuating otherness and xenophobia, and its impact on the perception of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and Canada.

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INTRODUCTION

Neo-colonial relations emerge between developed countries and developing ones due to economic and power disparities between them (Mignolo, 2001; Shome, 1998). These relations suppose a new form of "colonization," with no occupation of land but rather industrial and labour exploitation of former colonies and the export of their natural resources to developed countries (Khor, 2001: 146). Neo-colonial relations are maintained through the establishment of free trade agreements, which facilitate the economic expansion of powerful nations to underdeveloped countries, usually former colonies (Castells, 2004; Grinspun, 1993; Bhattacharyya et al., 2002). This is the case of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which liberalizes trade flows between Canada, Mexico and the United States.

NAFTA is an alliance characterized by economic imbalances that generate power asymmetries, which give the larger economies --the U.S. and Canada-- greater political and economic influence (Cooper, 2008). Such power asymmetries have affected the relationship between Canada and Mexico (Cooper, 2008: 237, 239), which has not developed to its full potential because they are more concerned with strengthening their particular relationships with the larger NAFTA signatory, the United States (Abizaid, 2004:10, Goldfarb, 2005:1). Therefore, the Canada-Mexico relationship is driven by convenience, rather than commitment (Cooper, 2008). A symptom of this is the underrepresentation that Canada and Mexico have in one another's national media (FOCAL 2006:14). The coverage given by the Canadian press to Mexico, Mexican nationals and interests is limited to problematic events that also involve Canada.

Similarly, the Mexican press' coverage of Canada, Canadian citizens and interests, is also limited to controversial situations. I argue that press representations in Canada and Mexico about the other nation reflect the power asymmetries of their bilateral relationship and, thus, reinforce a neo-colonial discourse.

A discourse is the way in which language is used as a social practice to convey meanings and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995:3; Carvalho, 2008:162; Henry and Tator, 2002). In that sense, neo-colonial discourse is the extension of the effects of colonial domination in contemporary times (Moraña, Dussel and Jauregui, 2008:2), based on a Eurocentric ideology that considers the coloured "Other" to be less civilized and inferior. It is used to justify the economic and political control of the former colony (Mignolo, 2005; Rojo, Salomone and Zapata, 2003; Chowdhry and Nair, 2001; Bhabha, 1999). In the press, neo-colonial representations suppose the depiction of other groups and nations as less civilized, emphasizing difference and constructing them as the "Other;" and by dehumanizing and delegitimizing them, the existing power structures are maintained (Dury, 2007: 3, 9).

Neo-colonial relations can be analysed through a postcolonial perspective, which challenges the imperialist practices of powerful nations against powerless ones (Hulme, 1995) and determines the ways in which imperialism is involved in the construction of contemporary relations of power, hierarchy, and domination (Chowdhry and Nair, 2002:12). This research analyses with a postcolonial approach representations of Mexicans and Canadians in the press during the coverage of three events involving both countries to assess whether such representations reflect the power asymmetries of the Canada-Mexico relationship and, thus, reinforce a neo-colonial discourse. These key

events are the outbreak of the H1N1 flu in Mexico; Canada's imposition of a visa requirement for Mexican citizens; and the murder of a Mexican community leader who rallied against the Canadian mining company Blackfire.

The analyzed coverage was taken from the Canadian newspapers The *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail*, and the Mexican newspapers *El Universal*, *La Jornada* and *Reforma*. Content analysis and critical discourse analysis of news about the events were performed to determine if a neo-colonial discourse was conveyed by referring to racial and cultural superiority/inferiority, otherness, fear of the Other, xenophobia, and the justification of labour and resource exploitation. Canadian newspapers were expected to represent Mexico/Mexicans as culturally and racially inferior Others, who are economically underdeveloped and offer cheap labour. Mexican newspapers, on the other hand, were expected to represent Canada/Canadians as Others who considers themselves as racially and culturally superior, and take advantage of Mexican resources and labour.

Literature on the Mexico-Canada relationship is scarce and it does not assess mutual representations in the Mexican and the Canadian media about the other country or how they might affect mutual perceptions. This research addresses this by advancing an explanation of the media's role in the perception of the bilateral relationship between Mexico and Canada, and examines how asymmetric international power relations utilize or are expressed through neo-colonial media discourses.

Neo-colonial representations of the Other in the media could negatively impact mutual perceptions between Canadians and Mexicans as well as the bilateral relationship. However, the use of neo-colonial rhetorical modes is not conscious or intentional (Spurr,

2003: 3); thus, by assessing whether media depictions are contributing to the maintenance of a neo-colonial discourse, this research will generate awareness of biased representations in the press. Postcolonial analysis of media representations is also crucial for unveiling practices of power in international relations (Chowdhry, 2002: 16); thus, this research also contributes to that field of study by shedding light on how imperialism and neo-colonialism are implicated in contemporary power relations, given that "dichotomous representations of West and East, self and other, are critical to the maintenance of Western hegemony" (p. 12).

Postcoloniality and the Americas

America never saw its colonizers leave. While Asia and Africa were colonized and then decolonized, in the American continent the colonizers settled (Wright, 1992: 4). As a consequence, colonial relations between settlers and native populations were perpetuated and persist even after the independence from the European powers, and neo-colonial relations have been established between powerful and powerless nations.

According to Graham Huggan (1997), "we live in neocolonial, not postcolonial, times." Neo-colonialism is characterized by military intervention, racial oppression, global hegemony of multinational companies, and trade blocs that reinforce economic divides. However, the academy has preferred the term "postcolonial", and "it could be argued, [that postcolonialism] has risen to *account for* neo-colonialism, for continuing modes of imperialist thought and action across much of the contemporary world" (p. 22).

As a mode of explanation, postcolonialism via the neo-colonial turn has also increasingly served --as it does here-- as a frame of explanation for phenomena previously seen in

strictly economic terms. Postcolonialism has often been neglected by political economists for considering issues of race and culture as primary analytical categories (Zein-Elabdin, 2009); however, postcolonialism takes economic aspects into account by focusing on how the uneven character of global capitalism maintains neo-colonialism, and thus is as "a fundamental character of the postcolonial world" (Kayatekin, 2009: 1115).

The problematic of colonization and decolonization is examined by postcolonial studies, by challenging established institutionalized knowledge and situating issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, subalternity, diaspora, immigration and globalization within geopolitics and relations between countries and their particular histories (Shome and Hegde, 2002: 252, 258). Postcolonialism also studies the manifestations of neo-colonial relations established between developed countries and underdeveloped ones. In the case of America, a postcolonial perspective allows us to study the neo-colonial relations established in this continent between powerful countries and former colonies (Shome and Hedge, 2002); like those between the United States and Canada with Latin American countries.

Neo-colonialism is mostly based on economic interests and supposes asymmetric power relations between nations. These relations are expressed in free trade agreements that encourage foreign investment of developed countries in underdeveloped ones; in the exploitation of resources and cheap labour that perpetuates poverty in the nation that receives the foreign investment; and in the control of immigration, mostly based on race and culture. However, sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002) argues aspects such as class exploitation, sexism, and racism have only partially been taken into account

by postcolonial scholars, and that overlooking neo-colonialism is one of the most disempowering limitations of postcolonialism.

Postcolonial theory was formulated in the 1970s by Asian scholars in response to the neo-colonial and imperialist practices from powerful nations against powerless ones (Hulme, 1995). Early postcolonial scholars wrote about postcolonialism in Africa, India, Middle East, and the Caribbean, but the Americas were almost completely absent, revealing a clear geo-cultural reference point of postcolonial theory in its early stages (p.117).

The applicability of postcolonial theory to Latin America has been challenged by scholars like anthropologist Jorge Klor de Alva, who asserts that the Latin American colonial experience was very different than more recent Asian or African colonialism, and therefore postcolonialism is not applicable to that region (cited in Mignolo, 2001: 20). Other critics of postcolonialism, like literature professor Rolena Adorno, challenge this field's description of the interactions between coloniser and colonized with "antagonistic and oversimplified categories" (in Moraña et. al, 2008:4).

However, other scholars assert that postcolonial studies need to find a place in America. For example Indian historian Gyan Prakash argues for a negotiation between South Asian and American histories and suggests that postcolonialism can be "translated into other regions and disciplines" (cited in Mignolo, 2001: 18). Shome and Hedge (2002) explain that the objective of postcolonial scholarship is not to polarize cultures but to explain how the West and the "Other" constitute one another. Given that Latin American countries have not fully developed or overcome "colonial or neocolonial relationships" (Mignolo, 2001:13), it is possible to study them from a postcolonial perspective.

The temporality of the “post-” in postcolonialism has also been contested. British India and Ibero America had different temporalities. While India was under British administration, the British were expelled from the River Plate in South America (Mignolo, 2001: 431-2, 441). However, many scholars argue that postcolonialism is not the end of colonialism but the continuity and persistence of colonizing practices; thus, postcoloniality is not a temporal category and therefore goes beyond the specific identity of a given nation (Mignolo, 2001; Hulme, 1995). In that sense, Stuart Hall argues that postcolonialism does not mean "the after-effects of colonial rule have somehow been suspended," but rather that there are new power configurations emerging (cited in Mignolo, 2001: 38).

In the field of international relations, scholars Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair assert that postcolonialism is relevant for determining the ways in which imperialism is involved in the construction of contemporary relations of power, hierarchy, and domination (Chowdhry and Nair, 2002:12). In that sense, political scientists Todd Gordon and Jeffrey Webber (2008) argue that “capitalist imperialism is rooted in the logic of a socioeconomic system that is driven by the competitive pursuit of profit based on the exploitation of labour, and which is prone to over-accumulation” (p. 63). In order to generate more profit powerful countries seek new geographical regions, usually underdeveloped countries and former colonies, to access cheap labour and raw materials.

Colonialism and Imperialism have generated geopolitical differences between powerful and powerless countries, and according to Slater (2004), these differences should be stressed in the context of a post-colonial perspective on neo-colonial relations. Postcolonialism provides a framework for studying neo-colonial international relations,

taking into account the gaze of the subaltern, while challenging Western dominant discourses, forms of representation, stereotypes and notions of center and periphery (Slater, 2004; Chowdhry, 2002).

This research draws on the debate explained above and applies postcolonial theory as an overarching framework to study neo-colonial relations by considering issues of land and labour exploitation, race, and immigration. Neo-colonial relations are defined as a new form of "colonization," without occupation of land and mostly related to economic interests. Such relations are applicable to the Americas because of the economic disparities between developed countries --like Canada and the U.S.-- and Latin American countries, which have not yet overcome colonial and neo-colonial relationships with such countries (Mignolo, 2001; Shome, 1998).

Canada and Mexico are both signatories of NAFTA, an international commercial agreement that facilitates the circulation of goods and money and which also includes the United States. Free trade agreements such as NAFTA are considered an expression of neo-colonial relations (Rojo, Salomone and Zapata, 2003: 24-25). In the next section I will discuss how the agreement has impacted bilateral and power relations between Canada and Mexico.

The Canada-Mexico bilateral relationship and NAFTA

Canada and Mexico established diplomatic relations in 1944 (Canada, 2009c). Before World War II the North American subcontinent[1] was economically divided. Canada and Mexico were not considered "natural allies" (Wood, 2003: 258), as the former focused on

[1] This research considers North America as a subcontinent of the American continent.

the North Atlantic community, while the latter looked at Ibero America (Clarkson, 2008). Even after the establishment of diplomatic relations, Canada's efforts were concentrated on Europe, while Mexico attempted to position itself as a leader nation in Latin America (Ramírez, 2008: 189). The lack of common objectives was a constant limitation in the development of the Canada-Mexico relationship since the beginning, and Mexico's chronic political instability reduced Canadian interest in it (Keplak, 1996: 4).

However, power asymmetries in North America, namely the political and economic strength of the United States, gave Mexico and Canada one common interest: to limit U.S. power and influence (Keplak, 1996: 4; Randal, 1995: 16), turning the Canada-Mexico relationship into one of convenience rather than commitment (Cooper, 2008: 237, 239). During the Cold War, the bilateral relationship was characterized by a common interest in multilateralism, the vital need to access American markets and investment, the diversification of their markets, and the need to moderate U.S. Cold War policies (Keplak, 1996: 5). Since then, Mexico and Canada's relationship has been mainly economic (Randal, 1995: 17), and trade between the two has increased over the years.

Manger (2009) argues that since the early 1990s "there has been an explosion of preferential trade agreements," most of which are "North-South and bring together economies of different sizes and levels of development," and attracting big economies with foreign direct investment opportunities for multinational firms (p. 2-3). This was the case in North America, where the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed in 1993 by the United States, Canada and Mexico, eased trade barriers between these countries and increased regional integration. The negotiations began in June 1990

between Mexico and the U.S. This was not well received by Canada (Clarkson, 2008: 11), a nation that "suffers from a degree of anxiety over its reputation vis-à-vis with Mexico," according to Cooper, and considers itself to have "a more diversified (if not as special as many would like it to be) position with the United States than Mexico does" (Cooper, 2008: 239). Ottawa, fearing that Mexico would disrupt its economic relationship with the United States under the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA), sought admission to the Mexico-U.S. talks.

Canada was admitted to the negotiations and, according to Clarkson (2008), "what would have become another bilateral U.S. investment treaty morphed at the negotiating table into the controversial three-way NAFTA" (p. 12). The treaty focused on technical issues such as tariff barriers, customs administration, rules of investment, and sanitary measures, among others. As other regional agreements, NAFTA discriminated "against trade with non-member countries." (Dees et al., 2008:5).

In 2009, the economic exchange between Canada and Mexico fostered under NAFTA totalled $21.3 billion[2], of which $4.8 billion were Canadian exports to Mexico and $16.5 billion were Mexican exports to Canada (Holden, 2010:1; Mexico, 2010). Canadian exports to Mexico are mostly manufactured goods, although many of its largest specific export products are agricultural and natural resources; manufactured goods also dominate Mexican exports to Canada (Holden, 2010:2). Canadian foreign direct investment in Mexico reached $4.9 billion in 2010 (Holden, 2010), and by June 2010 there were 2,528 firms in Mexico operating with Canadian capital (Mexico, 2010). Despite the

[2] All figures are expressed in Canadian dollars. When the source provided figures in a different currency they were converted according to the Bank of Canada's exchange rate for December 1st, 2010.

economically fruitful partnership, the relationship between Mexico and Canada continues to be characterized by a lack of common goals and constant tension created by their interests in their particular bilateral relationships with the U.S., particularly ensuring access for their exports to U.S. markets (Randal, 1995: 17; Cooper, 2008: 237).

Trade blocs are formed by bigger economies with power and influence over smaller ones, and this is what supports asymmetric power relations and the neo-colonial nature of trade agreements. This is the case of NAFTA, a treaty that limits the autonomy of the smaller economies via-à-vis the United States; for example, in order to become members, Canada and Mexico lost power over their economic policies, which can only be modified as long as they do not affect their partners' economic interests (Castells, 2004; Grinspun, 1993). Similarly, NAFTA has affected the Canada-Mexico relationship by requiring "important domestic changes in Mexico" (FOCAL, 2006).

The agreement has also undermined the welfare state, reduced social security, led to job losses, and caused corporations to seek cheaper labour (Castells, 2004; Grinspun, 1993; Bhattacharyya et al., 2002). Therefore, many scholars consider that NAFTA mostly benefits transnational corporations (Grinspun, 1993; Castells, 2004; Slater, 2004; Clarkson, 2008), and thus encourages corporate imperialism.

The disparities in levels of economic development and competitiveness among the three NAFTA signatories are one major obstacle inside the agreement. According to political economist Duncan Wood: "Whereas the United States and Canada are highly developed, competitive economies with a healthy mix of agricultural, raw material, industrial and services production, Mexico faces enormous challenges in terms of structural and

economic reforms" (Wood, 2003: 253). Economic asymmetries inside NAFTA are even deeper than those of the European Union: the U.S. is economically stronger than both Canada and Mexico; U.S. citizens are richer than Mexican and Canadian ones with higher income per capita (Clarkson, 2008; Haggard, 1997).

These economic disparities have put the U.S. in a privileged position, and it could be argued that Mexico has the greatest disadvantage given that it has the smallest economy in the partnership. Both Canada and Mexico depend economically on the U.S. and have stronger bilateral relationships with this country than with each other. Wood argues that Canada and Mexico remain "distant neighbours" because they do not have high levels of cultural and social integration between them though each nation is culturally and socially integrated with the U.S.:

> Canada and the United States have reached an, at times, uneasy cultural accommodation over the last two centuries, and the United States and Mexico are experiencing a new level of cultural and social integration through the presence of tens of millions of Mexican and Latino migrants in the United States, Canada and Mexico remain distant neighbours (Wood, 2003: 259).

Despite being consolidated under NAFTA, the bilateral relationship between Canada and Mexico "is far from realizing its full potential," according to Olga Abizaid (2004), director of the Research Forum on North America at the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) (p. 2). She also asserts that though analysts predicted that Mexico and Canada would be driven together by NAFTA, both countries instead continue to prioritize their bilateral dealings with the United States (Abizaid, 2004:2). Similarly, Danielle Goldfarb, senior policy analyst at the C.D. Howe Institute, asserts that "North

America is composed of two strong bilateral relationship — Canada-U.S. and Mexico-U.S. By comparison, the Canada-Mexico relationship is weak" (Goldfarb, 2005:1). Thus, NAFTA can be considered a neo-liberal and capitalist tool that legitimates the projection of Western power over underdeveloped countries (Slater, 2004); and therefore, the Canada-Mexico relationship fostered under NAFTA is characterized by deep power and economic asymmetries, which could be reflected in neo-colonial discourses in the press.

Media discourse of minorities

Language is never neutral, objective or totally free from sociocultural and economic influences; it carries social meanings and concepts of power (Henry and Tator, 2002: 25). This is known as discourse, or the use of language as social practice (Fairclough, 2003). Discourses convey ideologies, which are ideas and ideals that have the effect of bolstering the prevailing distribution of power (Fleras, 2003 in Adeyanju, 2010: 30), in that way "ideology works to make unequal social relations appear natural, making subjects concur with the dominant worldviews" (Adeyanju, 2010: 31). The mass media are important sources of discourses as they produce and reproduce dominant ideologies, and offer a social construction of reality that reinforce the common-sense stock of knowledge through the selection of stories and the use of frames, filters and stereotypes (Jiwani, 2006; Hall, 1995; Henry and Tator, 2002; Polson and Kahle, 2010; Richardson, 2007). By selecting codes and placing events in referential contexts, journalists attribute meanings to them. Stuart Hall calls this process "encoding" and argues that it is influenced by ideology and thus the result is an expression of dominant groups' definitions of situations and events (Hall, 1977 in Adeyanju, 2010).

The study of media discourses through a postcolonial lens allows us to understand how representations of race perpetuate power structures (Shome and Hegde, 2002:261). Current neo-colonial representations of minorities or otherized groups in the media are based on the ambivalent colonial discourse (Hall, 1990 cited in Jiwani, 2006), which defined the Other as "excessively sexual, physically different, inferior in mental and social capacities, threatening, alien, savage-like, ignorant, primitive, and beyond the pale of civilization". However, the colonial discourse also considered the Other to be "exotic, erotic, mystical, innocent, majestic, and a noble relic of a bygone era" (Jiwani, 2006: 33). In that sense racialization is articulated in media discourses with "other systems of oppression" like gender, immigration status, religion and sexual orientation, and this prompts misrepresentation and underrepresentation of minorities (Adeyanju, 2010: 25).

According to communications scholar Eugenia Siapera (2010) "the concept of 'race' has expanded to incorporate not only imputed biological characteristics, but cultural ones as well – this is the so-called new racism." She argues that "in most of these discriminated groups 'race'/ethnicity and 'culture' coincide, so that ethnicities are characterized by their culture, which in turn becomes a shorthand term for race/ethnicity" (p. 133). However, racist views are usually expressed in the media in non-racial terms, using euphemisms to make reference to non-Whites such as "diversity" and "visible minorities" (Adeyanju, 2010). In those cases in which the meanings are not explicitly expressed in the text, they can be inferred from words or sentences in the text and from mental models constructed during understanding (p. 58). Another way in which media are racist in their coverage of minorities, according to Augie Fleras (in Adeyanju, 2010), is by offering "one-sided coverage that systematically denies, excludes, or marginalizes"(p. 24).

Framing of the Other in the North American media

When they provide negative or misleading representations of otherized groups --such as ethnic and cultural minorities, foreign nationals and immigrants --the mass media can trigger xenophobic attitudes by laying blame and accentuating some points of view while downplaying others (Greenberg, 2000; Hooks, 1992a). Media portrayals of minorities are one of the social structural determinants of racism (Adeyanju and Neverson, 2007: 82) and they often sustain particular power relations through the use of subordinating forms of classification, stereotypes, negation and humiliation, as contrasted to a positive self-affirmation of Western identity (Hall, 1995; Spurr, 1993 in Slater, 2004: 19; Chowdry et al., 2002). Despite abundant research on minority representation in the Canadian press and on international news flows, I am not aware of studies on the way in which other countries and foreign nationals are represented.

Underrepresentation of minorities is a recurrent problem in the Canadian press (Nancoo and Nancoo, 1996), with racialized minorities only covered when individuals are good athletes or criminals (Miller, 1996). Minorities also tend to be rendered invisible in the news media "either by ignoring stories about them or silencing minority voices" (Fleras and Kunz, 2001:79). Media representations of racialized women are equally problematic in the North American media. In her analysis of representations of black women in film, bell hooks (1992b) criticizes the construction of white and black womanhood. Similarly, Hispanic women --or *Latinas*-- have challenged cultural representations that portray them as "tropical," family oriented, irrational, emotional and over sexualized (Báez, 2006). These tropes can be understood as a result of colonialism or a form of re-colonization and

a way of othering racial minorities (Beltrán, 2002 and Guzmán, 2001 as cited in Báez, 2006).

The use of stereotypes of racialized minorities is problematic because media representations affect the public's knowledge, attitude and behaviour towards "others with whom they do not have interpersonal contact" (Johnson, 2003: 9). This is also the case with media coverage of foreign countries and nationals, whose underrepresentation impacts the foreign policy by influencing the public's perception of them (Hackett, 1989; Greenfield and Cortés, 1991; Johnson, 2003; Wanta, Golan and Lee, 2004).

Regarding the coverage of international news in Canada, it is mostly based on cultural proximity; the U.S. and Western Europe are the most covered regions, while parts of Asia and Latin America are severely underrepresented and only covered in cases of political violence, corruption, disasters, accidents and diseases, while other issues remain ignored (Hackett, 1989). When covering underdeveloped regions, the North American news media tend to rely almost exclusively on "elite voices and a near total exclusion of oppositional ones" (Vanderbush and Klak, 1996: 537), allowing the former to define the agenda and presenting reality from a Western perspective. As a result of this, Western assertions are rarely challenged (Vanderbush and Klak, 1996). When covering news generated in the Third World the North American media also "play down the direct or indirect effects or legacies of Western colonialism, corporate practices, military intervention, international trade, and politics" (van Dijk, 1995: 26). In that sense, van Dijk argues the media maintain and perpetuate the dominance of elites, not only at a national scale but also at an international one, affecting the perspective of diplomatic relations between states (p.27).

The coverage of foreign nationals tends to be related to immigration, and the Canadian media resort to stereotypical representations that emphasize the notion of otherness and threat (Bauder, 2005:45). Through the articulation of people of colour with immigration and fears of invasion, pollution and contamination, illegal entry, and opportunistic behaviour the media contribute to the depiction of immigrants as a threat to Canadian values (Jiwani, 2006, Bhattacharyya et al., 2002; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1999). Furthermore, immigrants are constructed by the media through stereotypes that suggest inferiority. These representations emphasize the immigrants' difference but do not explain the reasons why they were forced to leave their homelands (Jiwani, 2006: 48). The media also tend to relate minorities and immigration with disease and health risks, contributing to a colonial discourse of panic, racism and anxiety about racial minorities. By emphasizing difference, the media tend to link disease to identity and origin (Adenyaju and Neverson, 2007).

The representation of Mexicans in the North American media is largely based on stereotypes and negative images. In the film industry, oversimplified representations of Mexico are commonly characterized by "negativism, patronizing attitudes, and historical distortions," which boosted the white majority's perception of superiority over Mexicans (Greenfield et al., 1991: 291). Illegal immigration is also a dominant theme in film when representing Mexicans, with portrayals of "passive Mexican immigrants being saved by noble Anglos" (Greenfield et al. 1991: 299). Especially prominent in the media is the Mexican-American border, which is constructed as "a key frontier between North and South" (Slater, 2004: 151), thus it is also a cultural border.

In the North American news media, immigration is the most common theme when covering Mexicans, usually with pejorative terms such as "illegals," "illegal aliens," "undocumented workers," and "wetbacks" (Johnson, 2003: 16). In general, U.S. news media tend to present Mexicans as a problem, usually related to illegal immigration, with the use of expressions such as "flooding," "human tide," and "streaming into" the United States (Johnson, 2003). The explanation given by the news media on why Mexicans attempt to cross the border is desperation, which bolsters the self-image of the United States as good and merciful (Johnson, 2003). However, most news outlets do not explore the American need for cheap labour and the weak Mexican economy, among other factors for Mexican immigration (Johnson, 2003: 18).

Desperation and economic hardship are also common in the depiction of Mexicans in the Canadian news media, especially when referring to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program fostered under NAFTA. This program allows the temporary immigration of Mexican and Caribbean workers to help Canadian farmers during the summer, and has become vital for Canadian agriculture. However critics consider it exploitative and coercive. Bauder (2005) argues that media representations of seasonal Mexican workers reflect an ideology of economic exploitation and social exclusion. Mexican seasonal workers are depicted in the Canadian media as economic assets, subordinate labor, outsiders and a cultural threat; and even though they endure working conditions below Canadian standards, the news media constantly stress the superior Canadian wages and working conditions compared to those in Mexico (Bauder, 2005: 51). Similarly, Adeyanju argues that seasonal farm workers are considered as "unfree migrant labour"

because they are defined as temporary visitors without the right to settle permanently and as not belonging to the Canadian nation (Adeyanju, 2010: 19).

Journalists are not always aware of the frames they use to construct news because those interpretations are embedded in their own cultural context (Valenzano, 2009). And even though the media may have a powerful influence on public opinion, they do not impose their views on the readership; the public relate to media messages based on their own identities. Thus, there is no necessary correspondence between meanings encoded in a message and the interpretation of the message (Adeyanju, 2010). In that sense, audiences are not passive towards dominant discourses; the public can influence the angles from which news are constructed (Valenzano, 2009; Henry and Tator, 2002: 29; hooks, 1992[b]). For example, minorities oppose racist media depictions and tell different stories, "breaking the chain of meanings that are usually activated" (Jiwani, 2006:60), through alternative media outlets.

Mexicans and Canadians in the press

Regarding media coverage of Canada and Mexico in each other's press, FOCAL asserts that both countries are "'under-reported' by the other's news media, particularly in light of the relevance of the relationship and the deep linkages that have evolved over the last decade" (FOCAL, 2006). Despite the broad commercial and diplomatic bilateral agenda, Mexican and Canadian news media do not reflect this situation. The think-tank attributes this tendency to lack of resources in news organizations, the prioritization of news stories from the United States, and the fact that Canada and Mexico are not a military threat to one another (FOCAL, 2006). Given this underrepresentation of Mexicans and Canadians

in one another's national press, and the economic and political power imbalance between both nations, it is important to assess media representations of each other from a neo-colonial perspective to understand how they affect perception in Mexico about Canadian nationals and interests and vice versa.

Methodology

Through the analysis of the coverage of three cases this research seeks to assess:

> **RQ1:** To what extent are asymmetric power relations between Canada and Mexico utilizing neo-colonial discourses in their national press?

Even though not all the stories published on the analysed cases are expected to have neo-colonial characteristics, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> **H1:** Newspapers in Mexico and Canada convey a neo-colonial discourse on a consistent basis when covering issues involving both countries.

The neo-colonial discourse could be expressed in the newspapers' portrayals of the other country, which leads us to the next research questions:

> **RQ2:** How does the Mexican press represent Canadian citizens, organizations and interests?
>
> **RQ3:** How does the Canadian press represent Mexican citizens, organizations and interests?

It is expected that newspaper coverage in both countries will convey neo-colonial discourses related to the asymmetrical power relations between Canada and Mexico, like

racial and cultural superiority/inferiority, otherness, fear of the "Other," and xenophobia. However, neo-colonial representations in the Canadian and Mexican press are expected to differ.

> **H2:** Canadian newspapers are expected to represent Mexico/Mexicans as the colonized side --as a threat, as inferior others, opportunistic and abusive of Western generosity.
>
> **H3:** Mexican newspapers are expected to represent Canada/Canadians as the coloniser; the "other" who considers itself as racially, economically and culturally superior, abuses its power, and lacks consideration and respect.

Given the expected differences in how the Mexican and Canadian press cover the bilateral relationship and the fact that each of the analyzed cases is framed in a particular context, a fourth research question is proposed:

> **RQ4:** How is otherness constructed in each case?

Specific neo-colonial tropes are expected to be used by the press in both countries when covering each case, related to articulations such as disease and foreigners; immigration and race; and labour relations and race.

The method employed in this research combines a quantitative method --content analysis-- and a qualitative one --critical discourse analysis-- of the coverage of three events that will serve as case studies. This triangulation or combination of two complementary methodologies is needed to increase the reliability of the results (Jick, 1979): while content analysis quantifies the manifest content, features and patterns of coverage to

derive meaning from it, critical discourse analysis offers interpretation of the text, considers textual absences and argues that meaning is constructed through the interaction between producer, text and consumer (Richardson, 2007: 15). The units of analysis will be news stories published in Mexican and Canadian newspapers related to any of the three case studies, including editorials and columns.

The news outlets that will be examined are the national daily newspapers the *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail* in Canada, and *El Universal*, *La Jornada* and *Reforma* in Mexico.

The *Globe and Mail* is an English-language broadsheet newspaper with a centrist political stance. It is based in Toronto and is widely described as Canada's newspaper of record. In 2009 it had a weekly distribution of over 1,800,000 copies (Canadian Newspaper Association, 2010). During the period analysed in this research, the newspaper was owned by CTVGlobeMedia, a giant multimedia company that controls CTV network and owns twenty-seven TV stations across the country and thirty-four radio stations, and had interests in thirty-two specialty channels (Tanner, 2009).

The *National Post* is a conservative English-language broadsheet newspaper that caters to intellectual and corporate elites (Adeyanju and Neverson, 2007: 85), and supports a neo-liberal philosophy (Knight, 2001: 77, in Adeyanju, 2010). In 2009 it had a circulation close to 940,000 (Canadian Newspaper Association, 2010). For the duration of the period analysed in this research, the *National Post* was owned by CanWest Global, a media corporation with international holdings in television, radio, internet, and print media (Stoddart, 2007: 665, Skinner and Gasher, 2005).

Regarding newspaper publication in Mexico, four corporations control almost half of the market, three of which publish the newspapers analysed in this research: Grupo Reforma controls 17% of the newspaper circulation in Mexico; Grupo El Universal controls 10% of the circulation; and Grupo La Jornada controls 6% (Mastrini and Becerra; 2006: 206).

The three Mexican newspapers analyzed in this research were chosen on the basis of their national distribution and their ideological position. *El Universal* began publication in 1916; it tends to be right wing (Schwarz, 2006) and has a daily circulation of 170,000. *Reforma* was founded in 1993 (Villegas, 2006: 38); it is situated in the centre-right of the political spectrum (Schwarz, 2006) and has a circulation of 126,000. Finally, *La Jornada* was founded in 1984 (Villegas, 2006: 38); it has a leftist editorial policy (Schwarz, 2006) and a circulation of 100,000. These newspapers are the "most important and influential Mexican non-tabloid print media in terms of circulation and number of readers" (Schwarz, 2006: 52).

Other media outlets, such as *Proceso* magazine and clips from TV Azteca and Televisa in Mexico, as well as *The Toronto Star* and *The Gazette* newspapers, and clips from the CBC in Canada will be used to provide context and to serve as a control of what was included and what was left out in the analyzed coverage. Coverage of the three events in two online alternative media outlets, *The Dominion* and *Revista Contralínea,* will also be reviewed as they provide a different perspective than mainstream media.

The three events

Canada and Mexico tend to cover one another only in critical moments, so the three events analysed in this study were chosen because they generated tension between the

two countries three times during a period of eight months. However, in the first case --the outbreak of the H1N1 flu-- there is not a reciprocal coverage in the Mexican and the Canadian press; given that the Mexican newspapers were concentrated on the health crisis and not covering Canada, the tension between the two countries is only patent in the coverage given by the Canadian press. Therefore, the analysis in the first case study is not reciprocal and focuses exclusively on the Canadian newspapers.

The H1N1 flu began in Veracruz, Mexico, and quickly spread to other countries becoming a pandemic. The analysis of this case is non-reciprocal, given that it was centered only on the extensive coverage given by the Canadian press, because the Mexican press at that moment was dealing mostly with the domestic health crisis and was not concerned with information related to Canada. I examined the coverage from April 24th, 2009, when the first news story on the illness was published in Canadian national newspapers, until the end of May, when Canada already was dealing with almost twenty cases of H1N1. In this case the sample has 79 articles and I specifically analysed how the image of Mexico was constructed from the disease in the Canadian press and what neo-colonial rhetorical modes were used for it.

On July 13th, 2009 Canada imposed a visa requirement on Mexican and Czech nationals arguing that refugee claims from these countries had almost tripled that year. The analysis of the visa imposition is reciprocal as it focuses on very extensive coverage given by both the Canadian and the Mexican press. In this case I considered the news published in Canada and Mexico from July 14th, 2009 until the coverage finally declines approximately a month and a half later. The sample is composed of 91 articles and the

analysis concentrated on how newspapers in both countries qualified the measure and the reactions to it, in order to identify constructions of self and otherness.

Mariano Abarca, a community activist known for his opposition to the Canadian mining company Blackfire, was murdered on November 27th, 2009 in Chicomuselo, a town in Chiapas, Mexico. Three men linked to Blackfire were arrested in relation to Abarca's murder. The analysis of this case reveals that the murder was undercovered in the press in both countries. In this case, I examined the coverage from November 27th, 2009 to March 1st 2010. A total of 29 articles were analysed in this case, focusing on how the press dealt with Canadian economic interests in Mexico and how the opposition to it was represented.

The 199 articles examined in this research were retrieved through the Factiva database. The sample for the Canadian newspapers was corroborated through the ProQuest Canadian Newsstand database. The sample for the Mexican newspapers was corroborated by researching their online archives. The key words that prompted these results in the databases were, in the case of the H1N1 flu: "flu and Mexico;" in the case of the visa requirement: "visa and Mexico," "visa," "Canadá;" finally, in the case of Blackfire and Abarca's murder: "Mariano Abarca," "Abarca," "Blackfire and Mexico," "Blackfire," "Chicomuselo."

Each event also raised particular topics in the media and generated a different type of coverage: health crisis abroad, but potential threat in the first case; control of immigration based on race and culture in the second one; and exploitation of labour and resources in the last case. Despite the differences between the three case studies, each one offers a

window into how the other country and NAFTA are talked about in the press. They also provide the possibility to lay out the main characteristics of the coverage of Mexico and Canada in the other's national press.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research technique applied for the "objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content" of a text (Berelson, 1952: 18, in Kolmer, 2008: 118). It establishes a numerical distribution of the variables and makes inferences from these findings (Kolmer, 2008: 118). The content analysis will be performed on two levels: syntactical and semantic (Kolmer, 2008: 124). The variables that will be considered in the syntactical level are publication name; date; section; word count; headline; sources (Kolmer, 2008; Gasher, 2007, Richardson, 2007). All these elements say something about the valuation of the events given by the news outlet (Carvalho, 2008; Schwarz, 2006).

In the semantic level of analysis the variables are topic, protagonists and key words that reinforce cultural, economic and racial difference between Mexicans and Canadians. The frequent use of loaded words creates an association between them and other terms: "When a word is repeated frequently and becomes associated routinely with certain other terms and images, a symbolic linkage is formed... the meanings of two words are suggested by their proximity, their association. Indeed, over time, terms merge in public discourse" (Altheide, 2002:38-39, in Adeyanju, 2010). In that sense the constant association of negative or racist terms with nationalities, for example "Mexico" and "disease" or "illegal," or "Canada" and "despotic," may result in the blending of both terms in public discourse. A list of key words --loaded terms or words with negative

connotation-- was generated after a preliminary reading of the sample and based on the tropes used by the North American media to represent Mexicans and by the Mexican media to represent Canadians, which were explained above.

The loaded words that will be considered in the codification of the units of analysis in the Canadian press are: different/difference, Risk, Mysterious, Latino, unscrupulous/ scam, illegals, abuse/ abusive/ abuse-prone, burden, illegitimate/ fraudulent/ phony/spurious /dubious, undesirable. All these terms relate to the tropes found in the section above about the representation of Mexicans in the North American media, namely their depiction as a threat, as inferior others, opportunistic and abusive of Western generosity, and the exclusion of Mexican sources and oppositional views.

For the Mexican press, the loaded words that will be considered are: (decisión) unilateral/exclusiva, problema/problemático, ricos, xenofobia, de intempestivo/golpe/súbito/repentino/sorprende/sorprendente/como bomba/intempestiva, apurado/apresurado/premura, déspota/despótico, agresión, desprecio, malestar/inconformidad/molestia. These words denote abuse of power, lack of consideration and respect, and sense of superiority[3].

In order to have an objective and reliable analysis, a code book[4] was created to facilitate the coding process (Kolmer, 2008; Gasher, 2007), where the variables mentioned above will be recorded as precisely as possible.

[3] Unilateral/exclusive; problem/problematic; rich; xenophobic; untimely/suddenly/surprising/like a bomb/hurry/abrupt/tempestuous/rush; despot/despotic; aggression; disdain; nuisance/dissent/discomfort.
[4] See Appendix A.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary theory and method for studying the use of language by individuals and institutions in relation to power and ideology (Fairclough, 1995:1; Richardson, 2007:1). It analyses how dominance and inequality are enacted by language within systems of representation (Henry and Tator, 2002:35), looks beyond texts to take into account institutional and sociocultural contexts, and considers not only what is said and how it is said, but also what is not expressed in the text, the textual absences (Richardson, 2007; Carvalho, 2008).

Applied to the study of mass communication, critical discourse analysis "claims that in order to understand the role of the news media and their messages, one needs to pay detailed attention to the structures and strategies of such discourses and to the ways these relate to institutional arrangements, on the one hand, and to the audience, on the other hand" (van Dijk 1995: 10). For example, the analysis of topics and patterns of quotation in news reports "may reflect modes of access of various news actors or sources to the news media, whereas the content and form of a headline in the press may subtly influence the interpretation and hence the persuasive effects of news reports among the readers" (p.10).

Critical discourse analysis complements context analysis because "much of the information in discourse, and hence also in news reports, is implicit, and supplied by the recipients on the basis of their knowledge of the context of the world...many negative things about minorities may not be stated explicitly, and thus are conveyed 'between the lines'" (van Dijk, 2000 cited in Adenyahu and Neverson, 2007:97).

The critical discourse analysis performed in this research is based on Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model. This model consists of three levels of analysis: analysis of texts; analysis of discourse practice; and analysis of sociocultural practices. The first instance is concerned with the display of the text, the vocabulary used in it, and verbal strategies such as word choice made by the journalists and how sentences are constructed. The second stage of the analysis deals with text production and distribution, professional and institutional practices: what resources did the news organization invest in this particular coverage? Was the story covered as national or international news? What are the differences in coverage in the different news outlets? Finally, the third stage of analysis examines how the discourses conveyed in the texts maintain structures of power; for example, how constructions of otherness and silencing racialized sources reinforce Eurocentric racist views.

Although discourses convey broad historical meanings (Henry and Tator, 2002), it is possible to analyse them over a short period of time. For example, Joye (2010) carried out critical discourse analysis of coverage of SARS during one year in Flemish broadcasters; Parisi (1998) did critical discourse analysis of the depiction of black people on a *New York Times'* series on residents of Harlem that was published in September, 1994; finally Landau (2009) also performed a critical discourse analysis of the representation of same-sex parenting and homosexuality in general in American print media during two years.

Chapter outline

This thesis consists of three core chapters. Each chapter presents the analysis of a case study, which were organized chronologically to show how the coverage evolved from one event to the other.

In the first chapter the coverage of the outbreak of the H1N1 influenza is analysed to assess how Mexico was constructed in the Canadian press and if it had neo-colonial characteristics. I explore media discourses of disease articulated with racialized minorities and immigration in order to situate the analysis, which is focused on the Canadian newspapers the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. Mexican newspapers are not analysed in this chapter because they were dealing with the domestic sanitary crisis and Canada was not a priority. However a brief description of how the flu was covered in the Mexican press is included.

In chapter two I analyze the coverage of the visa imposition to assess how the Mexican and the Canadian press represented the other country during this diplomatic crisis that affected the bilateral relationship and if it supported a neo-colonial discourse. A review of the literature on representations of racialized minorities, specially immigrants and refugees, in the Canadian press is included, as well as a revision of how the Mexican press covers immigration. The main aspects considered in the analysis are the depiction of Mexican immigrants and refugees in the Canadian press; the portrayal of Canada in the Mexican press; the emergence of power asymmetries inside NAFTA in the coverage; and how the press in both countries interpreted each country's role in the agreement.

In chapter three press coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca is analysed focusing on constructions of otherness, on how the newspapers dealt with Canadian economic interests in Mexico and how the opposition to it was represented. The portrayal of Mexicans and Canadians in each country's press is examined, and specifically how the protesters and the victim were depicted, to determine if these representations support a neo-colonial discourse about economic imperialism, multinational firms operating in underdeveloped countries, and indigenous rights to resources. The way Canadian interests in Mexico were depicted in the press was also analysed, as well as references to Blackfire's involvement in the murder. The story received a modest amount of coverage, especially in the Canadian press suggesting little or no interest in the event.

Expected significance of the study

This research is the first attempt to research Canadian and Mexican press coverage or Mexico and Canada. Therefore, it offers a unique window into media representations and mutual perceptions between Mexicans and Canadians, and of the bilateral relationship and the role of NAFTA in it. It will contribute to our understanding of the impact that government policies, in this case foreign policy, have on the coverage of international events and the way other nations are represented. Finally, this study also contributes to research in journalism by shedding light on current trends of coverage of other groups and nations and how such trends actually contribute to maintaining biases, stereotypes and confrontation. Given that coverage of Latin America in Canadian newspapers is very limited (Gasher, 2007), it is important to analyse how is this coverage, and this study is a first attempt to do so.

CHAPTER ONE -- The "Mexican flu" and the panic pandemic

The A H1N1 influenza or swine flu virus appeared in Veracruz, Mexico, in April 2009 and quickly spread to other countries becoming a global pandemic. In the media, the illness soon became known as the "Mexican swine flu." The disease caused the closure of schools, offices, restaurants, bars, theatres and stadiums in Mexico; while the Mexican government advised its population to wear masks and avoid going out of their houses. The international community reacted by imposing travel warnings to and from Mexico. Passengers were screened at airports worldwide for flu symptoms, and some countries even put Mexicans under quarantine just on the basis of their citizenship. The outbreak also affected the pork industry in Mexico, the United States and even Canada once the influenza reached this country, as exports from the NAFTA area and consumption of pork meat were considerably reduced during the swine flu crisis.

The coverage of the swine flu outbreak in the Canadian press, specifically in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* was done from both a national and an international perspective, informing about both the spread of the disease in Canada and abroad. These Canadian newspapers paid special attention to Mexico, representing it in racialized ways, mainly through the use of stereotypes. In that sense, the Canadian press reinforced a neo-colonial discourse by constructing the Latin American country as a threat and contrasting this depiction with one of a perceived Canadian superiority. This tendency, however, was challenged by other mainstream and alternative media that questioned Canada's attitudes towards Mexico and examined the role of NAFTA in the health crisis.

Coverage of disease in the North American press

News media are important sources of health-related information and influence the way in which diseases are perceived, understood, and discussed (Houston et al., 2008; Gasher et al., 2007). Specific diseases, such as cancer or AIDS, are covered by the news media with particular frames or interpretations (Valenzano, 2009) that have an impact on how the public assess the risks related to them (Dudo et al., 2007).

Houston et al. (2008) found that AIDS has been covered by the Western media in terms of morally repugnance and hopelessness, and it is covered in terms of "risks groups" of people rather than risky behaviour. Similarly, Clarke (1992) found that AIDS was associated in media representations with moral reprobation. Thus, the coverage focused on the patients and what they did to contract the disease, which negatively affected the public's perception of them (in Gasher et al. 2007). Media coverage of cancer has had a different approach. Houston et al. (2008) argue that although cancer is depicted in the media as a consequence of the patient's behaviour, it has also been associated with disgusting symptoms and excruciating pain and death (Clarke 1992 in Gasher et al. 2007).

In the case of shorter outbreaks of a disease, like the one of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that started in China and affected 37 countries between late 2002 until mid 2003 (Leslie, 2006), the media presented what Priscilla Wald calls "outbreak narratives;" which follow "a formulaic plot that begins with the identification of an emerging infection, includes discussion of the global networks throughout which it

travels, and chronicles the epidemiological work that ends with its containment" (Wald, 2008: 1).

During the coverage of SARS the North American news media followed the geographical expansion of the disease and focused on the death toll, the number of infected people and the measures taken to control the disease, like quarantines and isolation (Houston et al. 2005: 18). Thematic frames were preferred to episodic ones[5], namely they used a public and societal angle rather than concrete, individual cases; and the sources were mostly government officials (Houston et al., 2005). This suggests a preference for the official version of the events, while alternative voices were consistently ignored.

"Outbreak narratives" like the one caused by SARS tend to promote the stigmatization of individuals or groups, behaviours and lifestyles, by associating the disease with determined places (Wald, 2008: 3). For example, Wald argues that by tracking the routes of SARS from a duck pen in China, the media suggested lack of cleanliness as a motive for the outbreak and depicted the people close to it as living in preindustrial times, which blurs the understanding of certain practices --like living close to poultry and pork farms -- as expressions of poverty (p. 5). Furthermore, by looking at the one-way direction of the disease from an underdeveloped place to a developed one stigmatizes impoverished places as it "obscures the sources of poverty and of the 'uneven development' that characterizes globalization" and presents the disease as a threat that could "transform a contemporary 'us' into a primitive 'them'" (p. 45).

[5] When using a thematic frame the event is covered from a general perspective, utilizing statistical data about the victims, containment measures and mostly using government entities as sources of information. By using an episodic frame the event is covered from a particular perspective, focusing on individual cases (Houston et al. 2005).

Through this type of coverage, people who live where the outbreak began became a threat. Mbembe and Meintjes (2003) argue that "the perception of the existence of the Other as an attempt on my life, as a mortal threat or absolute danger whose biophysical elimination would strengthen my potential to life and security (...) is one of the many imaginaries of sovereignty " (p. 18). Thus, the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides in the power to dictate who may live and who must die.

In a neo-colonial context, when articulated with immigration and race, coverage of contagious diseases tends to generate panic and attempts to minimise the perception of threat by othering those who are sick and linking the disease to identity and origin (Ungar, 1998 cited in Adenyahu and Neverson, 2007). Othering those who are sick involves rendering them primitive and underdeveloped, while ignoring the problem of poverty. In that sense by displacing "the problem of poverty onto the danger of 'primitive practices'" these accounts offer "modernization as a promised solution to, rather than part of the problem of, emerging infections" (Wald, 2008: 8).

The articulation of threat and foreignness is constant in the coverage of disease. By comparing media representations of avian flu and terror, Muntean (2009) found that both were constructed in the United States as threatening deadly alien forces that go beyond national borders and disregard conventional modes of engagement. By articulating disease with the concept of a foreign origin and an imminent threat --like terrorism-- the American news media contribute to a xenophobic discourse, thus to a colonial discourse of panic, racism and anxiety about racial minorities. Similarly, examining the SARS outbreak coverage, Leslie (2006) found that the *Globe and Mail* used a pollution risk logic, which attempted to establish who is *us* and *clean* and who is *them* and *dirty.*

Despite the newspaper's attempt to prevent readers from using racial profiles to determine SARS risk factors --mainly against Asian people-- its use of a risk logic when dealing with the Chinese government contradicted its good intention and constructed China as *them*, not *us*. Another case of racism in the Canadian press when covering a disease is that of the "Ebola panic" generated in 2001 after a Congolese woman got ill while visiting Canada. Media scholar Charles Adeyanju (2010) argues that the media used this case of "non-Ebola" --test results discarded Ebola as the cause of the woman's symptoms-- as a proxy for expressing the anxiety and insecurity that Canadians feel over the changing racial composition of Canada.

From hogs to humans: the outbreak of H1N1

Influenza A is considered the greatest pandemic disease threat to humankind, even more than HIV, Ebola and SARS, capable of infecting 30% of the world's population in months because of its rapid inter-personal transmission and its widespread seasonal scope (Gatherer, 2009). In the 20th century three pandemic flu viruses developed around the world infecting large populations; the Spanish Flu of 1918, the Asian Flu of 1957; and the Hong Kong Flu of 1968 (Appenzaller, 2005 cited in Dudo et al., 2007). In the 21st century there have been two flu pandemics so far; the H5N1 or Avian Flu that started in 1997 and has not yet been eradicated, and the H1N1 or Swine Flu that shook the world in 2009.

The 2009 A H1N1 influenza was originated in pigs and its outbreak is associated to the Mexican pig farming region of Veracruz (Gatherer, 2009). The virus quickly spread to Mexico City and the states of Mexico, Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Querétaro,

and Oaxaca (central Mexico). Schools, parks, bars, museums, churches, stadiums and all public places in Mexico City, a highly populated metropolis, were shut down as a measure to contain what seemed to be an epidemic. Public health officials, who did not know the how virulent the virus could be, asked residents to wear masks and avoid unnecessary contact with other people.

Other countries banned food imports from Mexico and recommended their citizens avoid travelling there, while the international press pointed out that there was no safe place in Mexico. In most airports in the world, travellers arriving in flights from Mexico were screened for flu symptoms, and in places like China, Mexicans were even put under quarantine.

But soon the first cases of H1N1 flu appeared in the United States and Canada, causing panic in the international community. Within a month, the flu virus had spread to more than 40 countries. This outbreak was the first of porcine influenza capable of human-to-human transmission and raised serious concerns about the possibility of a global pandemic.

However, the H1N1 flu was not as virulent as the Spanish flu, which killed 40 million people worldwide and is considered as a "worst case scenario" for a flu pandemic (Gatherer, 2009:175-176). Overall, swine flu has killed over 18,000 people worldwide since April 2009 (WHO, 2010). By June 2009, 106 people had died in Mexico because of the flu, according to the Mexican Department of Health[6].

[6] "Situación actual de la epidemia" [report] Retrieved from http://portal.salud.gob.mx/descargas/pdf/influenza/situacion_actual_epidemia_040609.pdf

During the swine flu pandemic, Mexicans lived with fear and uncertainty. Mexican authorities were not prepared to deal with the disease and the national and international media contributed to the panic by depicting an apocalyptic situation. Furthermore, the flu caused enormous economic losses to Mexico and the stigma imposed on Mexicans as carriers of the virus remained for several months.

The coverage of the H1N1 pandemic in the Canadian newspapers the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* is analyzed in this chapter, from April 23rd, 2009 until the end of May, when Canada already was already dealing with almost twenty cases of the disease. The sample is composed of 79 articles and the analysis seeks to determine how Mexico was depicted during this crisis and if that depiction maintains a neo-colonial discourse, by answering the following questions:

RQ1: What were the particular frames used in the coverage of the flu outbreak?

RQ2: How was Mexico constructed in relation to the flu?

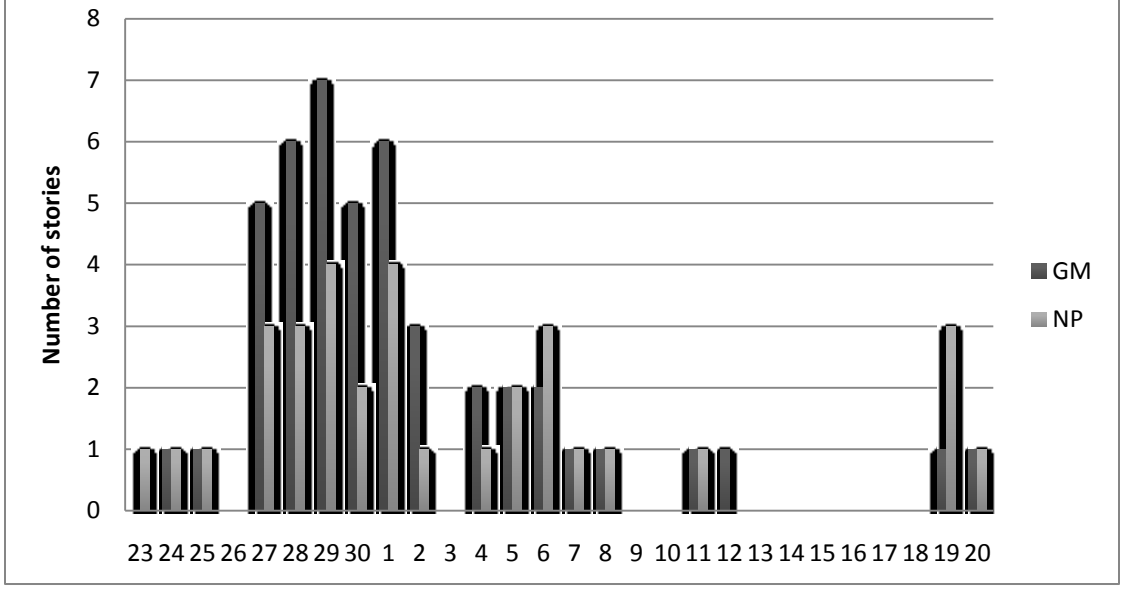
RQ3: How was otherness established?

Content analysis

The *Globe and Mail* published 46 stories about the H1N1 flu from April 24th to May 19th, which accounts for a total of 34,539 words. The *National Post* published 33 stories on the case from April 23rd to May 20th, for a total of 18,995 words. Over almost the same period of time the *Globe and Mail* published 30% more stories and almost twice the amount of words than the *National Post*, suggesting that the H1N1 flu was considered more newsworthy in the former than in the latter.

The number of stories published per day oscillated in the *National Post* between zero and four, and the days with most stories were April 27th, 28th, 29th , May 6th and 19th. This pattern of coverage is consistent with that of the *Globe and Mail*, which reached a peak in the number of stories published per day between April 27th and May 2nd. April 29th was the day with more stories about the flu in the *Globe and Mail* with 7 news pieces (figure 1). This peak of publication coincides with the emergence of the first cases of the disease in Canada, which made the coverage of the flu more local; and with the imposition of warnings on travel to Mexico, which had an important economic impact on tour operators and affected Canadian tourists planning to travel to Mexico during the summer.

Figure 1
Volume of stories published on H1N1 outbreak in the Globe and Mail and the National Post from April 24 to May 20



Front page stories are considered the most important of the day and the outbreak and spread of the H1N1 flu occupied the front page of the *Globe and Mail* on eight occasions, including one when two news pieces on the H1N1 flu were featured on page one. The topics of the stories that made the front page focused on the World Health Organization's

alert levels, the first Canadian victims and their milder symptoms they suffered compared to Mexican victims; and the economic impact. Other stories in the front page of the *Globe and Mail* dealt with human-to-human transmission of the virus and the search for "patient zero" in Veracruz, Mexico. The search for "patient zero," the source of the disease, is part of Wald's (2008) "outbreak narrative." By tracking down "patient zero" the newspaper assigned fault to an individual, who becomes a scapegoat and is stigmatized, along with the place where he comes from.

In the *National Post* the story appeared in the front page on seven occasions, almost the same as the *Globe and Mail* despite having 30% less volume of coverage. The topics covered by the stories in the front page of the *National Post* also dealt with the first Canadian cases of the disease, the mildness of the symptoms in Canadian victims and the economic impact of the outbreak. Other front page stories in the *National Post* highlighted the alleged inaccuracy of the figures released by the Mexican authorities on the number of victims. On five occasions --April 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, and May 4th-- flu stories were in the front page of both newspapers on the same day. On April 27th both newspapers had two flu-related stories on the front page. In general, news stories in the front pages were concerned with the expansion of the pandemic and the imminent threat to Canada. The following are some examples of headlines on the front pages of the newspapers:

> Pandemic in the making; Canada raises health alarm as Mexico shuts down schools in effort to halt swine flu that has killed 20 people and possibly sickened hundreds more (*Globe and Mail* April 25, 2009).
>
> Flu fear spreads as six cases confirmed in Canada; Canadian sufferers showing milder symptoms, but health official says virus could mutate, and warns Ottawa to brace for severe cases (*Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009c).

> Swine Flu Spreads To Canada, U. S.; WHO declares health emergency; 103 dead in Mexico; possible infections in Europe, Israel (*National Post* April 27, 2009)
>
> Doubt cast on Mexican flu toll; WHO raises alert; Virus not to blame in all cases: analysis (*National Post* April 30, 2009b)

Out of the 46 stories published in the *Globe and Mail*, 10 (21%) were opinion pieces (3 editorials, 1 op-ed, 5 columns and 1 interview). The *National Post* published 6 (18%) opinion pieces out of 33 (2 editorials, 3 column, and 1 interview). The presence of editorials and columns about the swine flu outbreak indicates that the newspapers considered it an issue of public interest that had to be explored in opinion pieces.

A characteristic of the coverage in both newspapers was the use of few Mexican sources. This could be because many stories were covered as local issues, or due to the dependency of these newspapers on wire services for their coverage of international news. The *Globe and Mail* used Mexican sources in 11 stories (24%) and the *National Post* did it in 11 stories (33%). Despite being more focused on the situation in Mexico, the *Globe and Mail* used proportionately less Mexican sources in its coverage than the other newspaper. The most frequent sources in the *Globe and Mail* were Canadian officials and international organizations, while the *National Post* relied more on scientists and experts. Thus, the *Globe and Mail* had an official perspective of the flu outbreak and the *National Post* had a more diverse perspective which included a scientific view of the disease.

The semantic level of the content analysis revealed that the most frequent topics in the *Globe and Mail* were spread and containment, difference between Mexican and Canadian flu cases, and travel warnings. At first the newspaper was more concerned about the

victims and the characteristics of the disease, but later the coverage focused on the economic impact of the pandemic. The following are examples of the *Globe and Mail*'s thematic focus at the beginning and towards the end of its H1N1 coverage:

> Health officials worldwide are awaiting information from investigators representing the World Health Organization and U.S. Centres for Disease Control, who have travelled to Mexico to determine how dozens of people have died there since April 13, what their symptoms were, and whether they shared any characteristics such as age (*Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009a).

> Companies should prepare for the possibility that a quarter to a third of their staffs would be sidelined in a pandemic, either because employees are ill or have to care for a sick member of the family, Susan Toutanen, a microbiologist and infectious disease consultant at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital, said yesterday (*Globe and Mail* May 2, 2009).

In the *National Post,* the most frequent topics were spread and containment, scientific explanation, difference between cases of infection in developed and developing countries, and economic impact. For example:

> Experts baffled by the conflicting evidence around a new swine flu are hoping a Canadian epidemiologist and other medical detectives on the ground in Mexico can shed more light on the mysterious virus, and help predict what shape it might yet take around the world (*National Post* April 29, 2009).

> Public-health officials said yesterday they were watching closely for movement of the swine-flu virus between people and pigs after a Canadian herd became infected, but took pains to counter a growing fear around the world of pork products (*National Post* May 4, 2009).

Both newspapers published stories on why the flu cases in Canada were different than in Mexico. The *Globe and Mail* stressed the difference between milder Canadian cases and deadly Mexican ones; while the *National Post* had a broader approach by comparing less virulent cases in developed countries with more serious ones in developing countries.

Regarding the use of keywords, in the *Globe and Mail* 12 (26%) of the 46 news stories had at least one key word. The keywords used by this newspaper were "mysterious" (3); "different" (2); "risk" (2); "Mexican swine flu" (4); "violence" (2). In the *National Post* 4 (12%) stories had key words, and these were: "different"; "mysterious"; "Mexican swine flu" (2).

The main patterns of coverage of the swine flu pandemic in the Canadian national press were the use of Canadian and American sources and the absence of Mexican ones, which reinforced a Western perspective of Mexico; and the construction of Mexico as different from Canada and the West. By stressing the differences between virulent Mexican cases of the flu --or cases in the third world-- and milder ones in Canada --or in the rest of the developed world-- the newspapers tried to reduce their readers' anxiety and contributed to the stigmatization of Mexico, while suggesting its underdevelopment and *different* lifestyle made it biologically and culturally weaker and thus more susceptible to disease (Ungar 1998 cited in Adeyanju et al. 2007). This stigmatization was also achieved through the use of loaded words[7] in one third of the *Globe and Mail*'s coverage and one fifth of the *National Post*'s. In both cases the loaded words activated a neo-colonial discourse by exoticising Mexico (with words such as "different" and "mysterious") and depicting it as a sanitary threat (with words like "risk" and "Mexican swine flu").

Critical Discourse Analysis

Journalists in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* chose particular words and phrases for the depiction of Mexico and Mexicans during their swine flu coverage.

[7] Words with negative connotations that, through frequent repetition, become associated with other terms in public discourse.

Frequently these words and phrases referred to Mexico's inability to perform laboratory tests to identify the virus; the deadly cases of the illness in that country; Mexico's need for international help and its request for it; and the screenings Mexican seasonal workers travelling to Canada had to undergo. For example:

> Mexican authorities informed Canadian officials of the situation on April 17 and asked for help with the investigation (*Globe and Mail* April 24, 2009).
>
> Immigration Canada, which screens Mexicans for the farm-labour program, is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada and other agencies to assess current risks (*Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009b)
>
> Experts don't yet know why the virus has only killed people in Mexico (*Globe and Mail* April 28, 2009a)
>
> Mexico has no ability to conduct such tests itself (*National Post* April 30, 2009b).

These depictions, which situate Mexico in a vulnerable position and emphasize a sense of Canadian physical and technological superiority, were consistent throughout the H1N1 flu coverage in both newspapers. The concept of "screening" is particularly problematic as it articulates immigration with health risks. While Canadian tourists returning from Mexico were not forced to undergo a screening, Mexican farm workers did. In these cases race is also a factor as "screening" refers to "non-White" immigrants (Adeyanju, 2010: 53), who are more disease prone because of their *different* lifestyle. Thus, Mexican seasonal workers are racialized and depicted in the Canadian press as a threat.

Other common words and phrases used for describing Mexico in the *Globe and Mail* were "risk," "unsafe," "shuts down," and "hopes to contain" the virus. Mexicans were described as "having other infections," "carrying the virus," not having "good resistance," and "are susceptible because of genetic factors." All these words and phrases

convey a racist ideology that depict Mexicans as the "primitive 'them'" (Wald, 2008: 45) by pointing to an alleged physical inferiority which would make them disease prone and differentiating them from Canadians, who do not have infections, carry the virus or are susceptible because of genetic factors. There were, however, some positive, although condescending, expressions when referring to Mexicans in the *Globe and Mail*, like "good" and "reliable" workers, or are "calmly obeying instructions." The following are some examples of how the *Globe and Mail* made reference to Mexico and Mexicans in its coverage of the flu outbreak.

> It is also possible that the Mexican population does not have a good resistance to this particular virus (*Globe and Mail* April 28, 2009b)
>
> Mexicans may be more susceptible because of genetic factors or medical conditions (*Globe and Mail* April 29, 2009a).

Similarly, the *National Post* also used particular words and phrases to refer to Mexico. For example "filthy," "underequipped," provides "sketchy data," and "is likely to introduce a disease to Canada." These words not only suggest underdevelopment and threat, but construct a whole country in demeaning terms, foregrounding only negative aspects instead of also informing about the efforts it made to control the spread of the flu. For example:

> Evidence of its virulence comes from the somewhat sketchy data emerging from Mexico (*National Post* April 28, 2009).
>
> Mexico is one of the 13 places around the world most likely to introduce infectious disease to Canada (*National Post* April 29, 2009).

Finally, both newspapers characterized the flu as "mysterious" and emphasized the fact that it came from Mexico by calling it "Mexican flu" or "Mexican swine flu." The term "mysterious" applied to a disease relates to anxiety, "an unknown enemy, with no cure, which strikes without warning" (Adeyanju, 2010: 48). And by assigning an origin to the flu, the identity of that place --in this case Mexico-- is also associated to it. According to Adeyanju "the Othering of a disease by the Western press reassures its audiences but also reinforces the notion of Western superiority in hygiene and medicine" (2010: 26). Thus people who "look" Mexican could be subjected to racialization and discrimination.

The depiction of Mexico and Mexicans was contrasted in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* with the representations of Canada and Canadians, for which both newspapers also used common words and phrases. The most frequent words in this case were "helped," "researched," "tested," "is prepared" or "better prepared," "has mild cases," is "developing a vaccine." The *Globe and Mail* also employed words such as "concerned," "at risk," "calm," following "basic rules of hygiene," and being "internationally praised." For example:

> The adoption of pandemic plans by thousands of organizations across the country also makes us better prepared (*Globe and Mail* April 28, 2009c).
>
> Unlike other countries, Canada has what officials say are sufficient stockpiles of antiviral drugs to treat those who become ill (*Globe and Mail* May 1, 2009c)
>
> Most patients outside of Mexico have suffered only mild illness (*National Post* April 28, 2009).
>
> Canada earned international praise at the same time for the scientific support it has lent to the WHO and Mexico (*National Post* April 30, 2009b).

In general the representation of Canada and Canadians in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* is positive, emphasizing the help provided to Mexico and the preventive measures taken. According to Richardon (2007) the words used in the media to represent ourselves and the other is an ideological one; and the word choice for describing Mexico and Canada in the Canadian newspapers is consistent with a neo-colonial discourse which supports a positive self-representations and negative depictions of the Other (Hall, 1995; Spurr, 1993 in Slater, 2004: 19; Chowdry et al., 2002).

In general terms, both newspapers used terms that depicted Mexico as a threat and as incapable of dealing with the health crisis, filthy and culturally inferior; which contrasts with the depiction of Canada as superior, helpful, scientific and organized. However, the *Globe and Mail* also explained that Canada "depends on" Mexican farm workers. These depictions are consistent with van Dijk's (2006) "ideological square," a rhetorical strategy by which Our good things and Their bad things are emphasized, and Our bad things and Their good things are deemphasized. According to van Dijk , this strategy is an ideological manipulation that maintains otherness and polarization as well as power abuse.

An interesting example of naming and reference is the editorial published by the *National Post* on April 30, where the town of La Gloria in Mexico, where the first known case of swine flu appeared, is referred to by the editorialist as "the very inaptly named Mexican town"(*National Post* April 27, 2009). This comment is related to the fact that there is nothing glorious about being the source of the H1N1 flu virus. However, when considered with the sarcastic and demeaning description the author offers of the town, it reinforces a depiction of Mexico, or at least rural Mexico, as inferior.

> La Gloria is home to a massive pig farming operation whose charming infrastructure includes acres of manure lagoons. (No one knows for sure how the disease made the jump to little Edgar, but a good guess is that it involved the feces-feasting flies that swarm the very inaptly named Mexican town)" (*National Post* April 27, 2009).

This demeaning representation of La Gloria contributes to the stigmatization of Mexicans as preindustrial, while ignoring the link between their poverty and the impact of globalization in underdeveloped countries such as Mexico. This pattern is consistent with Wald's "outbreak narrative" (2008: 3-5, 45), which constructs the other --in this case Mexicans-- as a threat to industrialized societies and their lifestyle --in this case Canada.

Racialized groups tend to be represented by the media in passive roles (van Dijk, 2000), and Mexican seasonal farm workers in the *Globe and Mail* were portrayed as suspects, possible carriers of the flu virus, and passive actors who lacked agency: as soon as the workers presented symptoms they were taken to the hospital by their Canadian employers; the workers did not decide when to go to the hospital and did not go by themselves either.

> Concerns about his labour supply are coupled with vigilance toward the dozen Mexican labourers who already arrived on his farm. "Every time a worker coughs I don't take any chances – I bring him to a clinic," Mr. Notaro said yesterday (*Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009b).

When referring to Mexico both newspapers described the country as incapable of giving reliable information on the flu outbreak, and mentioned doubts that emerged about the data supplied by Mexico on the cases of swine flu and death toll, either accusing Mexico

of downplaying the impact of the illness or exaggerating it, sometimes both on the same day:

> The number of Mexicans who are suspected to have died of the swine flu is much higher than the confirmed toll (*Globe and Mail* April 30, 2009b)
>
> Virus not to blame in all cases (*National Post* April 30, 2009b)
>
> The close to 1,900 cases and 150 or more deaths linked by Mexico have inspired much fear (*National Post* April 30, 2009b)

Doubts about the information on Mexican cases of swine flu generated speculation about possible factors that contributed to the epidemic. A front page story in the *Globe and Mail* quotes a Canadian health expert saying that "maybe there's more than one thing wrong in Mexico," and that "Mexico City's air quality may be a 'key question' in explaining why the virus is more severe there" (*Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009c). This article contains some presuppositions --or taken-for-granted, implicit claims (Richardson, 2007) -- based on the readers' previous conceptions and experiences of Mexico. The source speculates that there may be "more than one thing wrong in Mexico" without any details being given on what he means. This claim appeals to the common-sense knowledge of Canadians about developing countries as plagued by all sorts of problems. This has an otherizing effect: Canadian readers could easily believe without any proof that Mexicans get more sick with the flu because of other pre-existing problems which are absent in Canada.

The *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* also included descriptions of Mexican towns and cities, most of them based on stereotypes that highlight the differences with Canadian urban centers. For example, an article in the *Globe and Mail* had a description of Mexico

City which appealed to a stereotyped concept of Mexicans: “churches, parks and soccer fields were empty” *Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009c). This sentence evokes the assumption that these are the activities Mexicans do: religion, sports and leisure.

Another description of Mexico City during the epidemic in the *Globe and Mail*: “The city, normally teeming with outdoor vendors, musicians, protesters, festivals and traffic jams, is as quiet as a morgue”(*Globe and Mail* May 1, 2009a). This description portrays a chaotic, noisy, polluted, overpopulated city. The readers could relate this depiction to their common sense knowledge of the Latin American city, based on a stereotype that highlights how different is the Mexican urban life from the Canadian experience.

Descriptions of Mexico City in the *National Post* are less frequent because the newspaper is less concerned with explaining how Mexicans were living with the flu, and is mostly concerned with giving a broader view of the expansion of the virus worldwide. Mexico City is described by the newspaper as “bustling” and “one of the biggest cities in the world” (*National Post* April 27, 2009). This is a much positive and less stereotyped view of the Mexican capital than the one expressed in the *Globe and Mail*.

Regarding the use of sources Richardson (2007) argues that the way in which they are named in the news imply a choice made by the journalist, and the social categories the journalist chooses to foreground when referring to the actors of the story have a significant impact on how they are viewed by the public (p. 49). Both newspapers identified Canadian official sources. American sources and those from the World Health Organization were in most of the cases also identified. However, Mexican sources tended

to be named in general terms, such as "Mexican authorities," which minimizes their authority.

An example of this is an article in the *Globe and Mail* about the federal seasonal farm workers' program and a possible interruption of the influx of Mexican labourers due to the flu (*Globe and Mail* April 27, 2009b), where Canadian farmers were not only identified but also directly quoted. Meanwhile, no Mexican workers were quoted or even mentioned despite the fact that many had already arrived to Canada.

The choice of the journalist to include certain sources and leave others out impacts the way the story is constructed by giving only some opinions and perspectives while neglecting others. Speaking in the news, being used as a source, is power in itself according to Richardson (2007: 87); thus, it is important to consider who are given a voice in the news and who are not. The *Globe and Mail* preferred to use official sources in its coverage of the H1N1 flu. Special priority was given in this newspaper to Canadian officials and experts; then to American officials and spokespersons for international organizations. Some of the sources used and quoted by the *Globe and Mail* were the Deputy Minister of the Public Health Agency of Canada; Canada's chief Public Health officer; the Director of infectious diseases at the Ontario Agency for health, protection and promotion; Infectious-diseases expert at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital; Spokeswoman for the U.S. Centers of Disease control. Mexican sources were few and usually indirectly quoted and identified in general terms.

The lack of Mexican sources is problematic, especially when many stories are about the epidemic in Mexico and the measures taken by this country. The *Globe and Mail* portrays

the situation in Mexico without talking to a single Mexican, almost as if Canadian sources were more qualified to speak about what is happening in that country. When referring to the spread of the disease in Mexico and the possible factors that prompted it, the *Globe and Mail* preferred to consult Canadian sources, even provincial sources like Nova Scotia's chief public health officer and an epidemiologist with the British Columbia Centre for Disease control, than talking to Mexican officials and experts, or even to health professionals of the Mexican community in Canada.

There were a few exceptions to this tendency in the *Globe and Mail*, where Mexican sources (Mexican President; residents of La Gloria; and residents of Mexico City) were mentioned and quoted. One example of this is an article on the origin of the H1N1 flu, which was taken from the Associated Press service. In this article residents from the Mexican town of La Gloria are quoted explaining why they thought their town was the origin of the flu. The mother of the five-year-old boy believed to be patient zero was also interviewed for this article and asked about the illness her son survived. Another exception is an article that describes the situation in Mexico City under lockdown, in which two Mexicans and one Canadian living in the city were quoted. This story was not taken from a wire service; instead, the journalist made the interviews by telephone.

Mexican authorities in the *Globe and Mail* usually are not directly quoted. According to Richardson (2007) quoting sources indirectly could lead to potential distortion and misrepresentation; and thus, sources who are directly quoted have a greater influence than those who are indirectly quoted, and who the journalists chooses to quote can reveal bias. For example, when referring to the travel advisory issued by Canada advising not to make unnecessary trips to Mexico, the *Globe and Mail* quoted indirectly a federal official

against a travel ban and quoted directly a provincial official in favour of a travel ban against Mexico (*Globe and Mail* April 25, 2009a). This suggests bias in favour of a travel ban that would inevitably damage Mexico's economy.

A problematic direct quote is that of a Dr. André Corriveau, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, stating that "there really is no part of Mexico where you can say is free of disease" (*Globe and Mail* April 29, 2009b). This is a false statement, given that flu cases were concentrated in Mexico City and the states of Mexico, Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Querétaro, and Oaxaca (central Mexico). This quote not only misinforms but also projects an image of Mexico as unsafe, which contrasts with the image of Canada as calm and helpful also depicted in this article. The quote reinforces a stereotyped perception of Mexico, which is otherizing and contributes to xenophobic feelings. However, the journalist did not include another source that could counterbalance this opinion.

In the *National Post's* coverage of the swine flu outbreak the preferred sources were Canadian researchers and experts, like the president of the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada; a McGill University infectious-disease specialist; an expert University of British Columbia; and an infectious disease specialist at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital. Canadian and American officers were also consulted, although less frequently than in the *Globe and Mail;* for example the U.S. Center for Disease Control officer; the chief executive of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion; an epidemiologist of the Public Health Agency of Canada; the chief of the Public Health Agency of Canada; and Ontario's acting chief medical officer. Mexican sources were also used but in this case they are residents of Mexico City telling their

personal experiences (*National Post* April 27, 2009a). The lack of Mexican researchers and experts in the *National Post*'s coverage shows that these sources probably were not trusted or considered worthy enough to be consulted. By discriminating Mexican experts as sources the *National Post* reinforced the notion of Canada as scientific and rational and Mexico as unable to handle crisis. Quotes from Mexican sources are taken from wire services.

In the *Globe and Mail* the neo-colonial discourse was maintained by under-representing Mexico by not considering the Mexican version of the H1N1 flu outbreak; and by otherizing Mexico and constructing it as a threat to Canadian security. The depiction of Canada in positive terms -- rational, in charge of the situation, and dealing with the problem-- also contributes to the neo-colonial discourse by expressing a sense of superiority over the Mexican Other, who is depicted as incapable of dealing with the crisis -- not having scientific development, needing help, being almost childlike--, is stigmatized and stereotyped through demeaning descriptions. The subordination of Mexico in the *Globe and Mail*'s coverage is also achieved by constantly relating Canada to the United States, emphasizing their similarities, while pointing out that Mexico is different to them. This formula, Canada-and-US-are-the-same-but-different-from-Mexico is constantly repeated in this newspaper's coverage by stressing the similarity between mild cases of swine flu in Canada and the U.S. while cases in Mexico were lethal; or by emphasizing the scientific development in Canada and the U.S. while Mexico is not developed enough and needs their help.

The *National Post*'s coverage of the swine flu outbreak also showed consistently a positive depiction of Canada contrasted with a negative one of Mexico. These depictions

highlighted Mexico's technological limitations for testing patients with flu-like symptoms and how Canadians and Americans were helping with the testing. The *National Post* also related Canada to the United States and emphasized their similarities, and contrasted them to Mexico. The effect of this was the same as in the *Globe and Mail*: it otherized Mexico.

The news stories about the swine flu outbreak that were published in the front page of the *Globe and Mail* generally described Mexico as a risky place; emphasized its lack of scientific development; and pointed out Canada's preparedness for a pandemic. There was also in these stories a consistent association of Canada to the US, in opposition to Mexico. Front pages in the *National Post* also reinforced the construction of otherness between Canada and Mexico. In one front page article in this newspaper the journalist made a series of statements about Mexico without naming or suggesting any sources: such statements can only be considered to be assumptions made by the writer.

> Evidence of its virulence comes from the somewhat sketchy data emerging from Mexico, which has had 1,900 cases and 149 deaths that it suspects are caused by the virus, leading some observers to talk of a relatively frightening 10% death rate (*National Post* April 28, 2009).

The journalist questions the validity of the information about swine flu victims in Mexico without showing any evidence that the data is questionable.

The *Globe and Mail* published three editorials related to the flu outbreak, but they dealt with how the flu outbreak was handled domestically and by the World Health Organization. However, the columns published in this newspaper showed mixed opinions.

In his op-ed, Canadian health expert Peter Singer projected a very positive image of Canada by pointing out that the country learned lessons from the 2003 SARS outbreak and was prepared for an influenza epidemic and helping Mexico to deal with its health crisis (*Globe and Mail* April 28, 2009c). Similarly, the newspaper's public health reporter, André Picard, in his column about spread and containment of the flu in Canada also pointed out the country's preparedness for a pandemic, and referred to the screening of Mexican seasonal farm workers as a preventive measure (*Globe and Mail* April 29, 2009c).

While the coverage of the flu in the *Globe and Mail* had a clear stance regarding the trilateral association of North American countries, in its opinion section the newspaper allowed dissenting voices that criticized the construction of Mexico as different and having nothing in common with its Anglo partners.

In a column written by a former deputy foreign minister of Mexico and an academic, it is suggested that the flu outbreak is actually an opportunity for Canada and Mexico to act as real partners in the North American agreement in order to secure the region (*Globe and Mail* May 1, 2009b). This column is prescriptive regarding what Canada should do about its NAFTA partners and criticizes the belief in Canada that its relation with the U.S. is too special to be spoiled by including Mexico.

> Recently, some Canadian voices have called for a strategy to dump Mexico and cut deals only with the United States. According to these voices, being associated with Mexico and its drug-trafficking, violence and immigration problems could infect the supposed special relationship between Ottawa and Washington (*Globe and Mail* May 1, 2009b).

This column questions the idea expressed throughout the coverage of Canada being similar to the U.S. and having nothing in common with Mexico. Similarly, columnist Margaret Wente criticized the coverage in the Canadian media of the swine flu outbreak and the panic generated by blaming Mexico and Mexicans for the disease (*Globe and Mail* April 30, 2009a).

The *National Post* also published two editorials on the swine flu outbreak. One dealt with the scientific explanation for the outbreak, while the other explained why Canadians should not be worried about the potential pandemic. This editorial expressed a sense of Canadian superiority by contrasting clean Canadian cities with healthy citizens to filthy Mexican towns with sick people. This depictions of Canada and Mexico are biased and based on a colonial discourse (Jiwani: 2006); they also ignore the differences between rural and urban life and reinforce a stereotype of Mexico as underdeveloped and ignorant of basic hygiene practices (*National Post* April 30, 2009a).

There were three columns on the swine flu published in the *National Post*. The first one assessed the first reaction of the international community to the pandemic; the second one dealt with the economic impact of the flu in Canada, and the last one evaluated the national and international response to the swine flu outbreak. This last column was written by Peter Singer, who also wrote a column about the H1N1 flu in the *Globe and Mail* (April 28, 2009c). In his *National Post* column, Singer makes a positive evaluation of Mexico's response to the influenza outbreak by saying that it "was remarkably transparent once the epidemic was underway" (*National Post* May 11, 2009). This column offers an alternative view Mexico than the one expressed throughout most of the

coverage, where Mexico was portrayed in negative terms and as not being able to deal with the health crisis.

Swine flu in the Mexican press

Coverage of the swine flu in the Mexican press was characterized by a sensationalistic depiction of the domestic crisis and an emphasis on perceived international discrimination against Mexico. Mexican news media followed closely the increase in the death toll, even considering deaths with unconfirmed causes as being product of H1N1. They also covered the congestion in hospitals with hundreds of patients claiming to have flu-like symptoms. This contributed to a feeling of uncertainty and desperation in Mexico, which was reinforced by constant questioning of the official information given on the health crisis in the media.

The news media also evaluated the political impact of the epidemic on the Calderón administration and the possibility of the government falling. In some cases, journalists compared Mexico's situation to an apocalypse fuelled by the flu, drug cartels, crime, and violence. The economic impact of the health crisis was also a priority.

International news in the Mexican press focused at the beginning of the flu crisis on the concern felt in other countries and how the international media were covering the situation in Mexico. International efforts to develop a vaccine were also an important topic in the Mexican news; however the Canadian scientific contribution was not considered crucial. In fact, Canada was not mentioned in the press during the flu crisis and that is the reason why it was not possible to do a reciprocal analysis of the Mexican

and the Canadian press in this case.The Mexican media also followed closely the increase of flu cases around the world as well as measures taken by the WHO.

The way in which Mexicans were treated abroad became a priority for the press. They followed closely the measures taken by other countries with travellers coming from Mexico. Some diplomatic issues arose because of what was perceived in Mexico as discrimination. President Calderón was quoted in the Mexican press as criticising the "unfair and hostile" attitude towards Mexicans in other countries. Mexico sent a letter of protest to Brazil for accusations coming from this country saying that Mexico was too slow in its reaction to the disease. It was also reported that Mexican national emblems were used for mockery and discrimination in other countries. The Mexican ambassador to the UN even called the international community to end "xenophobia" against Mexicans, and the Mexican foreign minister referred to the impact discriminatory comments were having on Mexico's diplomatic relations, and criticized China's actions against Mexicans there, like quarantines.

This sensationalistic coverage contributed to a feeling in Mexico of being stigmatized by the international community, which added to the domestic panic and uncertainty resulted in very defensive attitudes from commentators. Self-representation in the Mexican press reinforced a neo-colonial discourse not only by depicting the country as unprepared to handle the crisis --especially with descriptions of crowded hospitals and questioning every decision made by the government-- but also by reproducing the stereotype of Mexico as underdeveloped, pre-industrial, filthy and culturally inferior, which came up in the international press and that Mexicans heavily criticized.

Coverage of H1N1 in other media

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) coverage of the 2009 swine flu outbreak[8] included both national and international stories. The preferred sources were both Canadian or American officials and researchers. The main topics in the CBC were the preventive measures taken in Canada and in each Canadian province. When referring to the epidemic in Mexico, the CBC consulted Mexican officials, including mayors, ambassadors and ministers. However, the CBC did not concentrate its coverage only on Mexico and Canada; the network also tracked the spread of the flu worldwide. The coverage of the pandemic in the CBC was similar to that of the *National Post* in terms of topics, sources consulted and scope.

In *The Gazette* the outbreak of the swine flu[9] was covered mostly in local terms. The stories were focused on how Quebec was dealing with the cases of flu and what measures the province had taken. In that sense, this newspaper cannot be compared to the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*.

In the case of the *Toronto Star*[10], journalists consulted mostly American and Canadian sources. The newspaper preferred to focus on the stories of Canadian victims, detailing their cases, rather than a broader view of the disease. However, it published stories on the Mexican seasonal farm workers and the fact that they were considered a threat. The *Toronto Star* even published a column in which the author defended the seasonal workers from accusations against them. This aspect of the coverage was not present in either the

[8] Articles and clips retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca.
[9] Articles retrieved from http://www.montrealgazette.com.
[10] Articles retrieved from the Factiva database.

Globe and Mail or the *National Post*, which depicted the Mexican workers as a threat. However, the *Toronto Star* referred to the swine flu as the "Mexican virus."

An aspect of the swine flu outbreak which was ignored by both the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* is the criticism against NAFTA that arose from environmentalists "because of the industrial farming practices that result in "cities of poultry and pork" that foster the disease."[11] The *Toronto Star* and the alternative online newspaper *The Dominion* both covered this. The *Toronto Star* also reported on the measures taken by the North American partners against a ban on pork exports.

Only *The Dominion* mentioned that "some blamed the spread of the virus on immigration, while others used the outbreak as an excuse to call for the closure of the US Mexico border." The alternative newspaper also criticized Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper for referring to the virus as the "Mexican flu."

Conclusion

The *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* at first centered their coverage of the A H1N1 flu on the situation in Mexico and how it was developing. They constantly emphasized that Mexico and Mexicans were "different" culturally, biologically and environmentally than Canada and Canadians in order to reduce the perception of risk in their readers. However, as the first cases of swine flu appeared in Canada the coverage began reflecting the anxiety of Canadians over the growing presence of non-White immigrants (Adenyanju, 2010: 3) and constructed Mexico and Mexicans as an imminent threat to Canadian society, by assigning a clear origin to the virus and relating it to temporary

[11] Retrieved from http://www.dominionpaper.ca

immigrants from Mexico. The coverage also appealed to Canadians' knowledge of previous outbreaks of infectious diseases generating fear and anxiety, and by articulating the threat with Mexico as the source of the illness even when it had already spread to several countries, a discourse of racial discrimination was reinforced (Wald, 2008).

The coverage in the *Globe and Mail* was more concerned with the situation in Mexico; meanwhile the *National Post* focused more on the spread of the disease around the world. Otherness was constructed in more specific terms in the *Globe and Mail* where Mexico was directly opposed to Canada. Overall both newspapers expressed a very positive image of Canada as benevolent, scientific and rational; and negative depictions of Mexico as underdeveloped and unable to handle the crisis.

The use of Mexican sources in the coverage of the H1N1 flu in the Canadian newspapers was very limited (between 22% and 33% of the stories used at least one Mexican source). Most of the Mexican sources used in the sample were official voices --officials, authorities--; while no alternative voices were consulted by the Canadian journalists. This is consistent with the tendency of North American news media explained in the previous chapter to cover developing regions based on official versions which coincide with Western or Eurocentric views.

Another rhetorical strategy used in both publications was to associate Canadian and American flu cases and efforts, while opposing them to the ones in Mexico. In that way American and Canadian cases were "milder" than in Mexico; and Canada and the U.S. researched and helped, as opposed to Mexico's "passivity" (van Dijk, 2000). These depictions of Mexico as an inferior racialized Other contribute to neo-colonial power

relations. The fact that swine flu was considered a Mexican illness instead of a North American one --despite cases in the U.S.--, and that neither newspaper mentioned the role of the NAFTA agreement in the pork industry --and on the extreme poverty in which some people in Mexico live in--, is also a strategy for distancing Canada form the source of the illness (Wald, 2008).

These depictions of inferiority against Mexico correlate with the criticism found in the Mexican press about discrimination and xenophobia in the international community. However, the Mexican media also resented the international stigmatization of Mexico and its citizens, who were considered suspects just based on their passports.

The analyzed coverage of the A H1N1 fu in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* shows how asymmetric power relations between Canada and Mexico are reflected in the news media though the use of a neo-colonial discourse that emphasizes difference, stereotype, and a perceived sense of superiority over the racialized Other. Mexico was not only identified as the origin of the disease but also as a threat, and by articulating disease with a foreign origin and an imminent threat news media contribute to a xenophobic discourse (Muntean 2009).

CHAPTER 2 -- Canada's imposition of a visa requirement on Mexico

On July 13th, 2009, Canada imposed a visa requirement on citizens from the Czech Republic and Mexico, its NAFTA partner. The measure, which Canada argued meant to discourage "bogus" refugee claims, caught travellers and officials in Mexico by surprise as no previous warnings were issued, and was enforced 24 hours after being announced. In the following days, chaos erupted outside the Canadian embassy in Mexico City as thousands of confused and desperate Mexican travellers attempted to get a visa.

The visa imposition was covered by the Canadian and the Mexican press for approximately one month. The coverage started on July 14th and a week later it was almost over; however, the NAFTA summit held in Guadalajara, Mexico, on August 9th brought new media attention on the visa imposition. Media discourses play an important role in shaping public opinion on immigration, influencing policy debate and immigration laws (Bauder, 2008: 289), for example on how Mexican and Canadian citizens judge the imposition of a visa and how they perceive citizens from the other country after such a measure is taken. Representations of immigrants in the media also affect attitudes towards them, creating anxieties and fears, rallying for support against immigration and legitimating immigration policies (p. 290).

In the Canadian press, the event was covered from two perspectives: Mexico's alleged abuse of Canada's immigration policies, and the deficiencies of the refugee system. By portraying Canada as a generous and morally superior country and Mexico as abusive, the Canadian press maintained a neo-colonial discourse, emphasizing the otherness of Mexico and the perception of Mexicans as a potential threat while ignoring the poverty

and violence that push them to leave their country. In the Mexican press, the visa imposition was seen as a backward step in the bilateral relationship and regional integration, and the way in which the measure was announced was criticized as unfair. Canada was depicted as despotic and arrogant, which also prompted criticism of NAFTA and the perceived disadvantaged position of Mexico in it. These characteristics of the coverage reinforce a neo-colonial discourse, because they suggest a Canadian feeling of superiority vis-à-vis Mexico; as well as the perception in Mexico of being abused by a powerful country.

Immigration in the North American media

Immigration is a recurring topic in the North American media because both Canada and the United States receive large amounts of immigrants every year, especially Mexican ones. Mexican migration is overwhelmingly directed to the US because of strong economic ties, and it is facilitated by historical linkages, geographic proximity, and established social and familial networks (George and Young, 2006). However, beginning in 2001 Mexican immigration to Canada began to increase, especially the number of refugee claims. These claims have a low acceptance rate because Mexico is not considered in Canada a "refugee-producing country," so asylum seekers from this country are primarily considered economic refugees (George and Young, 2006). This context influences how Mexican immigrants and refuge seekers are covered in the Canadian and American press.

In the United States, the media tend to articulate immigration with criminality, and these concepts are "so closely connected rhetorically that the slippage form immigrant to

criminal seems almost natural" (Flores, 2003: 363). Thus an anti-immigration discourse is promoted (Wieskamp, 2007). American media also tend to discursively construct the "illegal immigrant" as a metonym for Latino immigrants, generating bias against this racial group (Stewart et al, 2011).

Canada is a country that promotes multiculturalism (Siapera, 2010: 37) and has a worldwide reputation for its immigration law; which "balances the desire for economic and demographic growth, commitment to humanitarianism and the need for national security" (Bauder, 2008: 290). However, the coverage of immigration in the news media is not very different from that in the American media. In his analysis of how the Canadian media cover immigration, Bauder (2008) found that danger, or the construction of immigration as a risk, is the most frequent theme. Similarly, Vukov (2003) argues that the media in Canada play a crucial role in articulating immigration, criminality and fear. She asserts that these articulations are effective because they are mediated through two affective myths that reinforce the way in which Canadians imagine themselves as a nation: on the one hand, a welcoming nation generous to the immigrants and refugees and, on the other hand, "an insecure panicked nation that must protect itself against outside threats that would abuse its tolerance" (p. 340).

Coverage of immigration in the news media impact how audiences understand immigration and form their opinions about immigrants (Flores, 2003: 365) and also refugees. In their research on the attitudes of Canadians towards refugees, Pratt and Valverde (2002) found that the Canadian public is "often suspicious of refugees and has perceived them as 'masters of confusion' and as potential criminals" (in Adeyanju, 2010: 55).

In their coverage of immigration issues, the Canadian media not only depict immigrants and refugees as threats, but also criticize immigration policies. In his study of opinion discourses in the coverage of the arrival to Canada of four boatloads of "illegal" Chinese migrants in 1999, Greenberg (2000) found that the media expressed anger and frustration against the government and resentment against refugee-seekers (p. 530).

In the North American media, Mexicans tend to be depicted in relation to illegal immigration. During the 20th century, two narratives emerged in the American media related to Mexican immigrants, one of need and another one of the Mexican problem (Flores, 2003). The first narrative depicted Mexicans as the ideal immigrant workforce -- they were good peons, an instant solution to the lack of labour, they were controllable and did not pose a threat as eastern Europeans and Asians were thought to (p. 369). Conversely, the second narrative directed attention to the numbers of immigrants entering the country and the influence Mexicans could have on the economy (p. 372). While the narrative of need did not depict Mexicans as permanent immigrants but as outside of the national body, the narrative of the Mexican problem depicted them as diseased, criminal, and with the intention of staying in the country, which made them a threat to the nation and its people (p.374).

Similar discourses can still be found in the North American media (Flores, 2003). Branton and Dunaway (2008) found that news organizations closer to the U.S.- Mexico border generate a higher volume of stories about Latino immigration issues, produce a higher volume of articles featuring negative aspects of immigration, and offer more coverage of the illegal aspects of immigration than news outlets further from the border.

In general, U.S. news media tend to present Mexicans as a problem, usually related to illegal immigration (Johnson, 2003).

Coverage of immigration in the Mexican media

Research on how the Mexican media covers immigration is minimal. In his exploratory study, Muñiz (2011) examined the frames used in the Mexican media when covering immigration. Other studies have focused on the host country; however this study considered the dual position of Mexico both as a country with high rates of emigration and as a receptor of immigrants from Central American countries, among others. Results showed that the main frames with which immigration is covered in the Mexican media were "political debate," "delinquency and expulsion," "processes of regularization," and "migratory experience." Despite of Mexico's dual position, most of the coverage was focused on events that happened in the United States --the top recipient of Mexican immigrants--, while events that occurred in Mexico related to immigration were given less attention. Most of the news related to immigration that occurred in the U.S. focused on the political debate. This contrasts with the frame of delinquency and illegal entry, which are more common in the coverage of immigration in host countries, like the United States and Spain (p.228). Conversely, the dominant frame used for news originating in Mexico was more negative and focused on crime and expulsion (p.232).

Results also showed that the news media preferred to cover immigration focusing on the problematic aspects of it and laying blame on different institutions and actors for it (p.230). Regarding immigration policy, the Mexican news media also tended to pay more

attention to those of other countries, while the Mexican immigration policy was usually not mentioned (p.233).

Canada's visa imposition on Mexican citizens

On July 14th, 2009, Canada announced a visa requirement for Mexican and Czech nationals as a way to reduce a perceived increase of "bogus" refugee applications. According to Immigration Canada, applications presented by Mexicans had increased from 3,007 in 2000 to 20,685 in 2009. This positioned Mexico as the top source country of refugee claimants, however only 10% of those applications were successful (Canada, 2010b).

The visa caused indignation in Mexico, not because of the requirement itself, but because of the way it was announced. Both governments had been discussing a solution to the increasing refugee requests, and the Mexican government had proposed alternative solutions. However, Canada imposed the visa and made its decision public without previously sending a diplomatic communication warning Mexican authorities about the measure (*Reforma* July 16, 2009a). The Mexican media reported that Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper had informed President Felipe Calderón of the visa on May 1st during a telephone conversation in which the latter was thanking the Canadian leader for his country's help during the influenza crisis months before (*Reforma* July 17, 2009a). This situation generated anger in Mexico and the country sent a letter of protest to Canada and imposed a diplomatic visa for Canadian officials.

This visa imposition affected thousands of Mexicans. Every year 250,000 Mexican tourists, students and workers travelled to Canada (*Globe and Mail* July 14, 2009), and

1,300,000 Canadians travelled to Mexico (*National Post* July 17, 2009; *El Universal* July 17, 2009). The requirement coincided with the summer holidays, thus affecting thousands of Mexican tourists, especially those travelling a few days after the announcement. Mexican citizens studying in Canada, as well as making stops in Canada while travelling to other places, were also affected.

The process for obtaining the visa also sparked heavy criticism in Mexico. It could only be requested in the Canadian embassy in Mexico City, so thousands of people lined up outside the embassy. Information was not available in Spanish and this made the process confusing for many applicants. Embassy officials did not speak Spanish either and would not answer specific questions. Furthermore, the resources allocated for the processing of visas were not enough and a backlog was produced.

The imposition of the visa generated anger in Mexico and also some questioning of the refugee system in Canada, but most importantly it affected the bilateral relationship. Mexico's former Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda told the *Globe and Mail* recently that "Mexicans loved Canada. Now the visa is an irritant" (*Globe and Mail* May 9, 2011), which suggests that the incident changed the relationship.

In this chapter the Mexican and Canadian coverage of the visa imposition is analysed to assess how they represented the other country during this diplomatic crisis. The coverage is analysed in both Canadian and Mexican newspapers from July 14th, 2009, when the measure was announced, until the coverage finally declines approximately a month and a half later. This chapter seeks also to determine how these depictions contribute to sustain a neo-colonial discourse, by answering the following questions:

RQ1: How were Mexican immigrants depicted in the Canadian press? How were Canadians depicted in the Mexican press?

RQ2: What was the reaction of the Mexican press to the visa requirement?

RQ3: What was considered the "problem" and who the "responsible" in each country?

RQ4: Did power relations inside NAFTA emerge in the press?

The sample is composed of 91 articles. The *Globe and Mail* published 13; the *National Post* 14; *Jornada* 14; *Universal* 21; and *Reforma* 29. In the first part of both the content and critical discourse analysis sections the Canadian newspapers are examined, and the Mexican ones are analysed in the latter part of the sections.

Content analysis

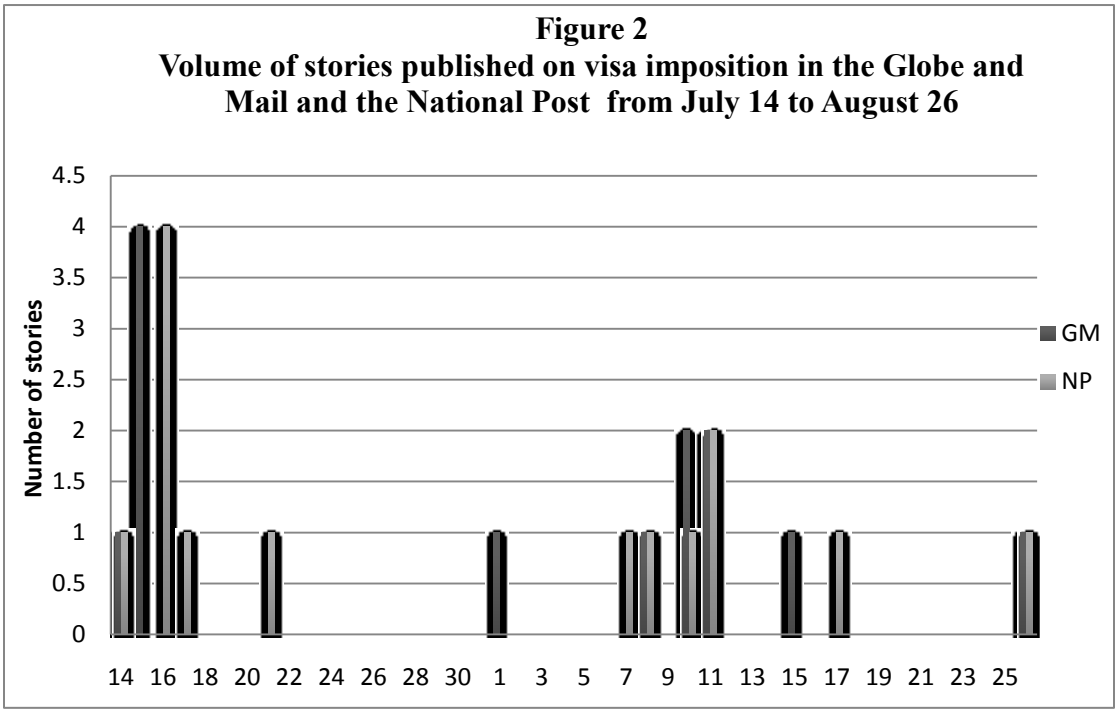
Canadian newspapers

The *Globe and Mail* published 13 stories about Canada's visa imposition on Mexican citizens from July 14th to August 26th, which accounts for a total of 8,466 words. The *National Post* published 14 stories in the same period of time, for a total of 9,328 words. With a difference of only one story and 1,000 words, both newspapers had almost the same volume of coverage. This suggests that the topic was equally newsworthy in both newspapers.

The number of stories on the visa oscillated between zero and four per day in the Canadian newspapers. The *Globe and Mail* had the highest number of stories on the topic on July 15th, while in the *National Post* did on July 16th (see figure 2). This is the first peak of publication with the two newspapers having a similar volume of coverage due to

the announcement of the visa on July 14th and the first reactions to it. The second peak occurred between August 7th and 11th, coinciding with the North American summit held on August 9th in Guadalajara, Mexico. This was the first time the Mexican and the Canadian leaders met after the imposition of the visa.

Figure 2
Volume of stories published on visa imposition in the Globe and Mail and the National Post from July 14 to August 26



Stories on the visa imposition were published in the front page of the Canadian newspapers on four occasions: two in the *National Post* and two in the *Globe and Mail.* When a story is published on the cover of a newspaper it is considered one of the most important --or the most important-- news of the day. In the *Globe and Mail* the visa imposition was on the front page on July 15th, the morning after the measure was announced, and on August 10th, the second and last day of the NAFTA summit in Guadalajara. The topics of the stories in front page were the need to reform Canada's immigration and refugee system, and the impact of the imposition on the bilateral relationship with Mexico. In the *National Post*, the story made the front page on August

10th and 17th, which are related to the NAFTA summit and the reactions to it. The topics dealt with in these stories were the need to overhaul Canada's refugee and immigration system, and how the measure affected the NAFTA summit. Both newspapers considered the diplomatic relations and the need for internal political reform the most important aspects of the visa imposition story. However, the *Globe and Mail* dealt with the diplomatic aspect from a bilateral position, while the *National Post* did it from a regional position. This suggests that the latter considers Canada's relationship with Mexico valuable in a multilateral context but not necessarily in a bilateral one.

The following are the headlines on the visa imposition published in the front pages of the Canadian newspapers:

> Minister calls for overhaul of Canada's refugee system; Ottawa must process asylum claims faster, Kenney says in defence of new visa rules (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009).
>
> Harper blames Canada for visa furor; Prime Minister aims to soothe feelings of insulted NAFTA partner by saying dysfunctional refugee system encourages bogus claims (*Globe and Mail* August 10, 2009).
>
> Refugee system faulty, PM says; Mexico Summit; Harper blames Canadian law for visa flap (*National Post* August 10, 2009).
>
> Tories prepare to fast-track refugee claims; Officials may hear claimants from 'safe' countries more quickly (*National Post* August 17, 2009).

In its coverage of the visa imposition, the *Globe and Mail* published 5 opinion pieces, which accounts for 38% of the stories on the subject (3 editorials and 2 columns). The *National Post* had 8 opinion pieces, which make 57% of its coverage (3 editorials, 4 op-eds and 1 column). Most of the opinion pieces in the Canadian press argue for a reform of the country's immigration system; however, others explore the economic and diplomatic

impact of the imposition of a visa on Mexican citizens. The higher number of opinion pieces on the topic in the *National Post* indicates that this newspaper considered the story an important topic for public debate.

The visa imposition was covered in the Canadian press as both an international and a domestic story. Thus, the use of Mexican sources in their coverage was low. The *Globe and Mail* used Mexican sources in 3 stories (23%), and the *National Post* did it in 5 stories (36%). This could be due to the fact that both newspapers concentrated more on the domestic side of the story, namely the need for reform of the Canadian refugee and immigration system. The use of few Mexican sources, especially in the *Globe and Mail*, is consistent with the pattern found in the previous chapter. The most frequent sources in the *Globe and Mail* were Canadian officials and private sector, while the *National Post* used mostly Canadian officials as sources. This shows that both newspapers offered official and Canadian versions of the story, while other voices were ignored.

During the first days of coverage the most recurrent topics in *Globe and Mail* were the need to reform Canada's refugee system, economic impact, and the chaos generated in the Canadian embassy in Mexico City. However, as the NAFTA summit approached, the frequent topics changed to impact on the bilateral relationship, impact on the summit, national security, and the burden "bogus" refugees are for the Canadian system. In the *National Post* the frequent topics remained constant during all the coverage. These topics were economic impact; need to reform the refugee system; the bilateral relationship with Mexico; and the impact on NAFTA. The following are examples of how the Canadian newspapers dealt with the topics mentioned above:

> Canada needs a refugee-claims system that will quickly turn away those who falsely claim persecution to take advantage of the country's generosity, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney says. (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009a)
>
> This year's Three Amigos gathering among Canada, the United States and Mexico will be the first time Mr. Harper meets Mexican President Felipe Calderon since slapping surprise travel restrictions on visitors from Mexico last month. (*Globe and Mail* August 8, 2009)
>
> Seeking to smooth relations with Mexico at a high-profile summit here, Prime Minister Stephen Harper blamed Canada's decision to impose visas on Mexican nationals on Canada's refugee system, and urged Parliament to enact changes to stem the flow of "bogus" claims. (*National Post* August 10, 2009)
>
> The recent controversy over Canada imposing visa requirements on travelers arriving from the Czech Republic and Mexico has revealed flaws in our dysfunctional refugee system. (*National Post* August 26, 2009)

Both newspapers published stories on how the visa imposition was not Mexico's fault, but Canada's for having a clogged immigration system. However, if there actually was a clogging in the system, Mexico and the Czech Republic would not have been the only countries targeted by the visa imposition, it would have rather been applied to every country. Thus, there is a logical flaw in the argument that it is not Mexico's fault, but a general clogging of the system. And, therefore, it can be presumed that Mexicans and Czechs were targeted on other basis, such as racial and cultural differences.

Both Canadian newspapers also covered the anxiety generated by the visa imposition on Mexican travellers and the chaotic situation at the embassy in Mexico City.

The presence of key words --terms with negative connotations that, through frequent repetition, become associated with other concepts in public discourse-- is high in the Canadian coverage of the visa imposition, compared to the use of key words in the previous chapter. All the key words in this case referred to Mexicans and Mexican

immigrants in negative and pejorative terms. In the *Globe and Mail* 16 key terms were used in 9 stories (69% of the coverage). The loaded terms used in this newspaper were "dubious," "abuse" (3), "panic," "bogus" (4), "phony," "scam," "unscrupulous," "illegals," "Latino," "violence," and "burden."

In the *National Post* 26 key words were used in 12 articles (86%). These terms were "burden" (2), "violence," "scam," "bogus"(7), "fraudulent"(3), "abuse"(4), "illegal"(3), "phony"(2), "illegitimate"(2), and "undesirable."

References to bogus refugee claimants who abuse the generous Canadian system were constant throughout the coverage. This is particularly evident when analysing the use of loaded terms the newspapers used frequently to refer to Mexican citizens and immigrants. It is in the use of these terms that a racist neo-colonial discourse can be perceived, by characterizing Mexican immigrants as a burden, as illegitimate and undesirable, instead of analysing the possible motivations these immigrants have for leaving Mexico (like poverty, corruption, violence, and drug cartels).

Mexican newspapers

The imposition the visa requirement was also covered by the Mexican press. *La Jornada* published 14 stories from July 14th to August 10th, which accounts for 8,118 words; *El Universal* published 21 stories from July 14th to August 11th, for a total of 7,556 words; and *Reforma* published 29 stories from July 14th to August 12th, accounting for 14,033. It is clear from these numbers that while *La Jornada* and *El Universal* published a similar volume of coverage on the visa story --also similar to the volumes published by the

Canadian newspapers-- *Reforma* gave greater importance to the visa story by publishing almost twice the number of words on the subject than the rest of newspapers.

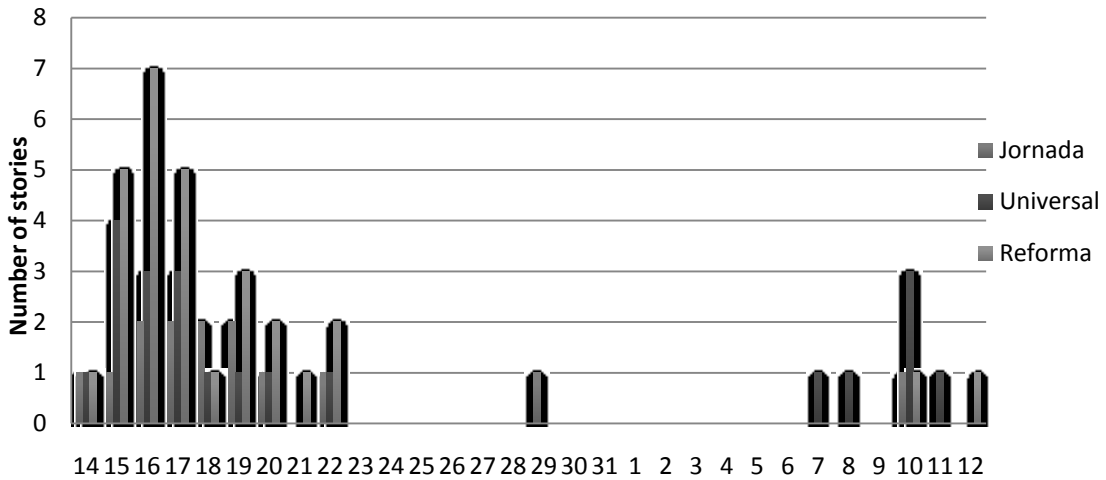
The number of stories published per day in *La Jornada* oscillated between zero and two, and the days with more stories were from July 16th to 19th. In the case of *El Universal* the number of stories published per day varied between zero and four, and the days with more stories were from July 15th to 17th. Finally, in the case of *Reforma*, the number of news published on the topic each day varied from zero to seven, being the days with most coverage July 15th, 16th and 17th. There is a clear peak of publication of stories related to the visa imposition coinciding with the announcement of the requirement and the reaction to it in the following days (see figure 3).

There is also a second, smaller peak in publication from August 7th to 12th, which responds to the NAFTA summit. However, the maximum number of stories published per day in this case was 3 in *El Universal*. This tendency shows that the Mexican press gave more importance to the reaction to the visa imposition than to its impact on Mexico's relationship with Canada or on the trilateral partnership.

Stories on the visa imposition were published on front page of the Mexican newspapers on eight occasions. *La Jornada* did so on July 17th, and the topic of the story was the official response of the Mexican government to Canada by imposing a visa requirement on Canadian diplomats. In *El Universal* the story was on the front page on July 15th, 16th, 17th, and August 10th, and the topics were the need for Canada to reform its refugee system, the outrage felt in Mexico by the imposition, the economic impact, and the damage caused to the bilateral relationship. In the case of *Reforma*, the visa requirement

was on the front page on July 14th, 15th and 17th. The topics covered on these front pages were the chaotic process for obtaining a visa, the need for Canada to reform its refugee system, and the impact of the measure on the bilateral relationship.

Figure 3
Volume of stories published on visa imposition in *La Jornada*, *El Universal* and *Reforma* from July 14 to August 12



The following are some examples of the headlines in the Mexican papers' front pages:

> Temporary imposition of visa on Mexicans: Canada; SRE imposes it to diplomats (*La Jornada* July 17, 2009)[12].
>
> Canada exceeds the US in requisites for visa. Paperwork for obtaining a Canadian visa, imposed on July 13th, is greater than that required by the American embassy (*El Universal* July 16, 2009).[13]
>
> Surprises! everyone Canadian visa (*Reforma* July 15, 2009).[14]

[12] Temporal, exigencia de visa a mexicanos: Canadá; la SRE la impone a diplomáticos.
[13] Canadá supera a EU en requisitos para dar visas. Los trámites para obtener la visa canadiense, impuestos el pasado 13 de julio, son mayores a los que requiere la embajada de EU.
[14] ¡Sorprende! a todos visa canadiense.

In these examples, *La Jornada* refers to the Mexican official response to Canada for the visa imposition; *El Universal* refers to the requirements imposed by the Canadian embassy in Mexico City to obtain the visa, and highlights that the process is even more complicated than at the American embassy; finally, *Reforma* simply states complete surprise generated by the visa imposition.

Given the volume of news published in the Mexican press on the visa it is surprising that there are not more front pages on the subject. This could be because the stories were run in more specialized sections of the newspapers --economy, tourism, lifestyle, business-- and explored other angles of the event.

Regarding opinion pieces, *La Jornada* published 4 (29% of its coverage), of which 2 were editorials and 2 columns; *El Universal* published 1 column, which accounts for 5% of its coverage; and *Reforma* published 7 columns and 1 op-ed (28%). Compared to the Canadian press, Mexican newspapers had a small percentage of opinion pieces published in the Mexican newspapers, which suggests that they focused most on factual pieces and did not consider the visa imposition a top priority for public debate. This contrasts with the coverage in the Canadian newspapers, which published several columns and editorials on the subject.

The use of Canadian sources in the three Mexican newspapers was similar. In the case of *La Jornada,* it was high: 8 stories had Canadian sources, which accounts for 57% of the coverage. *El Universal* also had a high rate of use of Canadian sources with 10 stories (47%). *Reforma*, however had only 8 stories with Canadian sources (28%), which is similar to the low rate of Mexican sources in the Canadian press. This does not suggest

that *Reforma* opted necessarily for a Mexican view of the event, disregarding Canadian voices. The Mexican newspapers had a similar number of stories with Canadian sources, but due to *Reforma*'s high volume of news about the visa imposition, its percentage of stories with Canadian sources is lower.

Overall, *La Jornada* and *Reforma* prioritized officials and representatives of the private sector as sources; *El Universal* preferred officials and the private sector but, also people affected by the visa imposition. This suggests a general concern in the Mexican press for the economic and political impact of the visa.

The main topics dealt with in the Mexican newspapers were the need for a reform of the Canadian refugee system, the impact of the measure in the bilateral relationship, the process for obtaining a visa, economic impact, and the effect of the visa on the NAFTA summit. *La Jornada* and *Reforma* also published pieces on how Mexico had some responsibility on the imposition of the visa; *Reforma* and *El Universal* also explored how the new visa would affect Mexican seasonal workers travelling to Canada; *El Universal* and *Jornada* also dealt with possible changes to the Mexican foreign policy. In general, Mexican newspapers focused during the first peak of coverage on the immediate effect of the visa on travellers and tourism and what the Mexican government's response would be; and during the second one, the newspapers dealt more with the diplomatic long term impact of the visa. The following are examples of the earlier moment of the coverage:

> Since early in the morning, people of different ages made a long queue along Hegel, Tres Picos and Campos Eliseos streets; expressions of desperation, boredom, anguish and disagreement arose among the people about the recent

> decision of the Canadian government to impose a visa on Mexicans (*La Jornada* July 16, 2009).[15]
>
> Canada exceeds the US in requisites for visa. Paperwork for obtaining a Canadian visa, imposed on July 13th, is greater than that required by the American embassy. By contrast to what is required to enter the United States, those interested in travelling to Canada must present documents in English or French (*El Universal* July 16, 2009a).[16]
>
> The visa imposed immediately by the Canadian government on Mexicans surprised tourists, temporary workers, airlines and even the Canadian embassy (in Mexico City), which was overwhelmed by hundreds of phone calls and a wave of visitors (*Reforma* July 15, 2009a).[17]

And the following are examples of the later moment of the coverage:

> The diplomatic impasse caused by Canada's decision to impose a visa on July 13th 2009, the same day it was announced, was not overcome in the one-hour long conversation held by the two leaders, first with their committees and then alone (*La Jornada* August 10, 2009).[18]
>
> At the beginning of the North American Summit, the United States denied the existence of legislative conditions to implement a migratory reform and Canada decided not to revert the visa imposition on Mexican travellers (*El Universal* August 10, 2009).[19]
>
> The Canadian government recognized that it is "difficult" to establish a deadline to revert the visa imposition on Mexico. During the bilateral meeting (…) the

[15] Desde temprano, personas de diversas edades hicieron una larga hilera sobre las calles de Hegel, Tres Picos y Campos Eliseos; expresiones de desesperación, aburrimiento, angustia y desacuerdo surgieron entre los asistentes ante la reciente determinación del gobierno de Canadá, que impuso el requisito de visa a los mexicanos.

[16] Los trámites para obtener la visa canadiense, impuestos el pasado 13 de julio, son mayores a los que requiere la embajada de EU. A diferencia de lo que se solicita para ingresar a Estados Unidos, los interesados en viajar a Canadá deben de entregar en inglés o francés la documentación.

[17] La visa que el Gobierno canadiense impuso de manera inmediata a los mexicanos sorprendió a turistas, estudiantes, trabajadores temporales, líneas aéreas y hasta a la propia Embajada de Canadá, que se vio rebasada por cientos de llamadas y una oleada de visitas a sus oficinas.

[18] El diferendo diplomático provocado por la decisión de Canadá de imponer el requisito de las visas el 13 de julio de 2009, mismo día en que lo dio a conocer, no logró zanjarse en la conversación de una hora que sostuvieron los dos mandatarios, primero acompañados por sus comitivas y después solos.

[19] En el inicio de la Cumbre de Líderes de América del Norte, Estados Unidos descartó que haya condiciones legislativas para instrumentar una reforma migratoria y Canadá determinó no dar marcha atrás a la imposición del visado a visitantes mexicanos.

> disagreement about the measure imposed on July 14th was reiterated (*Reforma* August 10, 2009).[20]

The use of keywords in the coverage of the visa imposition in the Mexican press was relatively low compared to their presence in the Canadian press. *La Jornada* used 5 keywords in 4 stories (29%), and these were "molestia" (nuisance, 2), "exclusiva" (exclusive); "intempestiva" (untimely); and "inconformidad" (dissent). *El Universal* used 3 keywords in 2 stories (10%), and these were "premura" (hurry); "inconformidad" (dissent); and "unilateral" (unilateral). Finally, *Reforma* used 17 keywords in 11 articles (38%), and these terms were "premura" (hurry); "sorprende" (surprises, 2), "déspotas" (despots, 3), "desprecio" (disdain); "como bomba" (like a bomb); "malestar" (discomfort); "repentina" (sudden); "unilateral" (unilateral, 2), "súbita" (abrupt); "intempestiva" (tempestuous, 2); "apresurada" (rush); and "de golpe" (suddenly). All these loaded terms refer to Canada's attitude, perceived as inconsiderate and unilateral, and the surprise felt by Mexicans and their rejection of the visa imposition.

Coverage in terms of topics and sources was very similar in the Canadian newspapers and the Mexican press. They both were overwhelmingly dependant on official sources. However the Mexican press was more open to Canadian sources than the Canadian press was to Mexican sources. In both countries the press covered the chaotic process Mexicans had to go through to obtain a visa, but the Mexican press did it in more detail. Finally, the Canadian press tended to use more loaded words depicting Mexicans and

[20] El Gobierno mexicano reconoció que "difícilmente" se podrá establecer un plazo para que Canadá retire la imposición de visa al País. Durante el encuentro bilateral (…) se reiteró el desacuerdo sobre la medida impuesta el pasado 14 de julio.

immigrants as abuse-prone and a as a burden than the Mexican press used keywords depicting Canadians as despotic and inconsiderate.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Canadian newspapers

The coverage of the imposition of the visa requirement on Mexicans in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* reveals specific ways of how the Canadian press depict self and otherness. The representation of Mexico and Mexicans combined a positive image of a friend and ally that was offended, with the image of an abusive country that threatened to overwhelm the generous Canadian refugee system. For example:

> The visa requirement was met by howls of protest, with the Czechs recalling their ambassador in protest and Mexico also stating its unhappiness (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009a).
>
> The new rules, announced Monday, come into effect tomorrow, and were introduced to curb the growing tide of bogus refugee claimants from these two countries (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009a).
>
> Mr. Calderon is understood to be deeply unhappy at the Canadian government's decision to demand that Mexican nationals travelling to Canada now require visas (*National Post* August 7, 2009)
>
> The visa issue, which has incensed Mexican officials and provoked an uproar in the Mexican media, will top Mr. Calderon's agenda (*National Post* August 8, 2009)

Other words used for the depiction of Mexico in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* were "safe;" "proud nation," "regrets," "closely monitor," "panicked," "frustrated," "disappointed," "angry," "furious," "annoyed," "outrage," "corruption." These terms suggest an emotional reaction to the visa. Despite describing Mexico as a safe country,

whose citizens do not deserve refugee status, Mexico was also incongruently described as being in a "brutal war against rival drug cartels" (*National Post* August 10, 2009).

Refugee claimants from Mexico were depicted in the two Canadian newspapers in negative terms: "burden," illegitimate," "fraudulent," "questionable," "bogus," "without merit," "threaten to overwhelm," "possibly criminals," "seek to abuse our good nature." Words such as "growing tide" and "flood" were also used repeatedly by the Canadian newspapers when referring to Mexican refugee claimants, which relates to the notion of drowning and thus suggest a potential threat. The presence of large numbers of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the United States was also reminded constantly in the Canadian press as a warning of what could happen in Canada.

There were also stories in the Canadian press that did not explicitly qualify Mexican claimants as "bogus" but implied it by referring to them as "travellers" with no apparent reason to be refugees, and by ignoring important factors, such as the drug war in Mexico, that could have motivated their claims. For example:

> Ottawa placed the restrictions on citizens of Mexico and the Czech Republic to counter a rising number of travellers who claimed refugee status in Canada rather than return home (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009a).

This example also shows what van Dijk (1993) calls the "numbers game." This is a tactic to generate panic by presenting the number of Others entering the country in an alarmist way. In that sense, the reference to a "rising number of travellers" does not specify how many exactly or over what period of time; neither is it explained what is the percentage of refugees entering the country in comparison to the rest of the population, nor does it refer to the number of people who leave the country. Such references to the amount of

immigrants entering the country generate the impression that immigration is out of control and that the systems that should stop it do not work.

The depiction of Canada in the Canadian press during the diplomatic crisis focused on two themes: Canadian generosity and the need for an overhaul of the refugee system, which was referred to as "dysfunctional," "abuse-prone" and "overburdened." The following are examples of how Canadians were depicted in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post.*

> Canada needs a refugee-claims system that will quickly turn away those who falsely claim persecution to take advantage of the country's generosity, Immigration Minnister Jason Kenney says (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009a).
>
> Those two democratic countries account for an unreasonable large number of refugee claimants in Canada, burdening a generous system (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009b).
>
> We need not feel guilty about refusing to play patsy to tens of thousands more who seek to abuse our good nature (*National Post* July 16, 2009a).
>
> Canada has the most generous refugee system in the world (*National Post* July 16, 2009b)

In these examples the newspapers assign blame to the immigrants for the visa, who could actually be considered victims of the measure. Van Dijk (2003) refers to this strategy as "semantic reversals of blame." In these quotes Canada is not to blame for imposing an unfriendly measure; rather immigrants should be blamed.

The coverage of the visa imposition in the Canadian press was characterized in most cases by a positive self-representation and a negative depiction of the Other, which supports a neo-colonial discourse (Hall, 1995; Spurr, 1993 in Slater, 2004: 19; Chowdry et al., 2002). Mexico was constructed in negative terms, as abusive and corrupt, and

Mexican refugees as illegitimate and non-deserving. However, there were also instances in which Mexico's condition of friend and ally was reminded. In the case of Canada, the country was mostly depicted as generous and with a good international reputation. However, the failure of its refugee system became a frequent topic.

Regarding the use of sources, both newspapers relied heavily on official sources because this was a diplomatic impasse. Most of the sources in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* were Canadian and clearly identified. Some advocacy and human rights sources were mentioned, but they were usually in the final paragraphs of the stories and almost never quoted.

When Mexican sources were used they were often referred to as "Mexican officials" or the "Mexican government," which reduces the importance of the source and also what it is saying. One exception to this is a story in the *National Post* in which the Mexican foreign secretary was identified and directly quoted (*National Post* July 17, 2009.)

In the *Globe and Mail* Mexicans waiting outside the Canadian embassy in Mexico City to apply for a visa were identified with their full names. The visa applicants used as sources by the *Globe and Mail* were "the ideal Canadian tourists," which shows that the newspaper attempted to explain the other side of Mexican immigration, the tourists that enter Canada legally and leave when they are supposed to do it. The *National Post* did not publish any stories about the chaos that erupted in the Canadian embassy in Mexico City.

According to Richardson (2007), speaking in the news is power in itself, with sources directly quoted having more influence than those who are indirectly quoted (p.87). In the

coverage of the visa imposition the Canadian newspapers prioritized official sources, experts and those in the private sector, most of them Canadian. Some of the sources used and quoted by the *Globe and Mail* were the Canadian Prime Minister; Canadian Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism; a Toronto immigration lawyer; executive director of the Canadian Foundation for the Americas; a former Canadian trade negotiator; Canadian ambassador to Washington; a Canadian veteran diplomat; and Canadian tour operators.

The *National Post* also preferred Canadian sources; which included the Canadian Prime Minister; Canadian Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism; a spokesperson for the Canadian Prime Minister; vice-president of legislative affairs for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

The lack of Mexican sources could be explained by the fact that both newspapers dealt with the story as mainly a domestic issue. However, the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* both had correspondents in Mexico at the time due to the meeting of NAFTA foreign ministers --preparing the NAFTA summit-- taking place in Guadalajara, Mexico at the time the imposition was announced.

During the coverage of the visa imposition in the Canadian newspapers the economic and political impact in Canada was prioritized, while the human aspect of the story was mostly ignored. In the *Globe and Mail* the information given by Canadian officials was emphasized, and placed at the beginning of the stories. Also important but in a second instance was the economic impact of the visa imposition, namely how it would affect tourism in Canada. Another important theme was the impact of the visa on NAFTA,

especially as the North American summit approached. At the beginning of the coverage, critics were quoted saying that "the new regulations go against the spirit of the North American free-trade agreement and Canada's renewed focus on economic and political integration of the region" (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009c). The *Globe and Mail* also quoted experts saying that the relationship with Mexico is not as "intense" and "complicated" as that with the United States. The same piece suggests that Mexico is a rival more than a partner in NAFTA, by competing for the US's attention (*Globe and Mail* August 8, 2009).

In the *National Post* the Canadian official declarations were also prioritized. However, human rights advocates and critics were also included, although towards the end of the articles. This newspaper paid more attention to the damage caused to the bilateral relationship than to the individuals affected by the visa. The *National Post* criticised the visa and suggested internal political motivations for the measure.

The information considered the least important in the Canadian press, and thus placed in the last paragraphs, referred to the impact the visa imposition had in Mexico and its citizens. For example, the chaos generated in the Canadian embassy because of the lack of resources to deal with the applications was barely covered. This is both a minimization of the impact that the imposition had and a lack of interest on the consequences of Canada's actions. Also deemphasized was the announcement of Canada sending officers to assist Mexican security forces in the war against drug cartels. This could be because it would suggest Mexico is not a safe country, but in fact a violent war-torn country, which could have caused the spike in the refugee claims.

Opinion pieces in the Canadian newspapers were very diverse. In the *Globe and Mail,* the first editorial on the subject, published the day after the visa was announced, supported the action of the government as a means to alleviate the refugee system and "not to allow it to be hijacked by economic migrants." Mexico was depicted as a democratic county (and thus not refugee-producing) that unnecessarily burdens the generous Canadian system with false applications (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009b).

The second editorial was published almost a month later and it showed a change in the attitude towards the visa by qualifying it as "retrograde" while suggesting that the Canadian government should work to "facilitate legitimate travel by the citizens of a fellow member of NAFTA" (*Globe and Mail* August 11, 2009). The sudden criticism of the *Globe and Mail* against the visa could be due to the NAFTA summit that took place two days before.

The last editorial showed a return to the newspaper's original posture towards the visa by supporting it and criticising Amnesty International for saying that the measure interferes with the independence of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board. The editorial suggests that the human rights group should be more concerned with the abuses of Canada's refugee system. The piece described Mexico as a country "Canada deems safe" and its refugee claims as "without merit." This statement suggests that Canada has the power to decide who is safe and who is not. At the same time it reinforces the idea stated by George and Young (2006) that Mexico is not a "refugee-producing country."

There were two columns published on the visa imposition in the *Globe and Mail*. In the first one, national affairs columnist Jeffrey Simpson argued that Canada is afraid of

surges in refugee rates because "we cannot turn away any would-be claimants before they enter Canada" (*Globe and Mail* July 15, 2009d). This is the first reference to Canada's fear. Simpson proposes as a solution the implementation of a list of countries from which Canada would not accept refugee claims for considering them safe. This also points to Canada's power to decide who is a worthy victim and who is not.

The second column, also written by Simpson and published a week before the NAFTA summit, criticized the visa imposition and exposed a situation that challenges what Simpson calls the well known Canadian reputation as an open and friendly country:

> For a country that likes to brag about a supposedly unsullied international reputation and feasts upon a moral superiority – The World Needs More Canada! – it must come as a shock to hear every political party and editorial commentator in a friendly country denouncing Canada. Welcome to Mexico, where the decision to impose visas on all would-be travellers to Canada has been greeted with outrage across the political spectrum. Nobody in Mexico has a kind word to say about the Canadian decision, since it is rightly considered a slap in the dace for a proud nation (*Globe and Mail* August 1, 2009).

The columnist criticised those who supported the visa implementation suggesting that they do not care about the extra costs it generated, the damage on the bilateral relationship and tourism, and the damage to Canada's reputation. Simpson reminds that Mexico proposed solutions before Canada decided to impose the visa. He also described Mexico as "gripped by a terrible drug war" and suggests this as the cause for the high amount of refugee claims.

The five opinion pieces published in the *Globe and Mail* were all written by staff members, the newspaper did not seek other opinions, from experts for example. The ideas

exposed in those pieces tended to vary as the NAFTA summit approached in favour of Mexico.

In the *National Post* there were eight opinion pieces published on the topic. The first editorial supported the visa imposition by stating that "one of the first duties of a government is to protect the nation and its security" (*National Post* July 16, 2009a); thus suggesting that refugees from Mexico are a security threat. But also an economic threat: they "threaten to overwhelm both Immigration officials and local and provincial welfare programs (...) the cost to Canadian tax payers can easily top $150,000 per refugee family." These claims reinforce the idea that Canada needed to defend itself from Mexicans who "seek to abuse our good nature." The notion that imposing a visa is a matter of national security and a duty instead of an unfriendly measure imposed against two specific countries is a way of mitigating the aggression (van Dijk, 2003).

The idea of abuse is reiterated in the op-ed published on the same day, in which the former ambassador Martin Collacott refers to the "massive abuse of our refugee determination system" (*National Post* July 16, 2009b). The author reminds the readers of the "millions of Mexicans illegally resident in the United States" and that this could happen in Canada, because it has the "most generous refugee system in the world." Another op-ed published on July 16 also refers to Mexican immigrants in other countries thanks to a "thriving and sophisticated industry in smuggling Mexicans into more prosperous countries", but the author does not consider the visa imposition a solution to "Canada's abuse-prone refugee system" (*National Post* July 16, 2009c). This depiction of Mexicans as abusive and with a immigrant smuggling industry highlights the idea of immigrants as "masters of confusion" identified by Pratt and Valverde (2002).

The next editorial was published two days after the NAFTA summit, and it criticized Canada's "broken" refugee system. According to the piece, the system has not been fixed due to domestic political skirmishes. The editorial suggests that the system is too lax with the "flood" of asylum seekers "from suspect nations." By depicting the immigrants' countries of origin as "suspect" the editorial is criminalizing all refugee claimants, and by referring to them as a "flood" it emphasised the alleged threat they pose to Canada. The last editorial was published on August 26th and dealt with the refugee system from a domestic perspective, suggesting that the system has not been improved because of disagreements among political parties.

The *National Post* published an op-ed by Mexico's ambassador to Canada, Francisco Barrio-Terrazas. This piece is very different than the others because it exposed Mexico's take on the visa imposition by explaining that this country has a "long and ancient tradition of providing asylum and refuge," which makes it similar to Canada. By emphasizing similarity instead of difference, the ambassador also refers to the important touristic impact that Canada and Mexico have on one another. He also refers to "intermediary groups and organizations" that "take advantage of Canada's long response times in assessing refugee claims" (*National Post* July 21, 2009). By assigning blame to illegal intermediary groups which Mexico is fighting and the dysfunctional Canadian system, the ambassador depicted an image of Mexico as victim of the visa imposition.

Conversely, a later op-ed by Karen Mazurkevich, administrator of the Canadian International Council, published two days after the summit expressed a very different opinion. Marzukevich refers to Mexican immigrants as a "flow of illegals, possibly criminals" (*National Post* August 11, 2009) and defended the visa. Her argument is that

Mexico is instable and corrupt and this is causing the high levels of immigration to Canada and other countries, and she emphasized the similarities of Canada and the United States and their differences with Mexico, ignoring the historical and economic links between Mexico and the United States which could also explain the high numbers of Mexicans living on American soil. This is congruent with Flores (2003) and Vukov's (2003) argument that immigration and criminalization are constantly articulated in the North American press.

There was a column published by the *National Post* on August 7th by political columnist John Ivison, in which he heavily criticized the visa imposition as "misguided." The column explained how good and "warm" the relations were between the two countries and that "as damaging as the decision itself was the way in which it was communicated to the Mexicans by the Harper government" (*National Post* August 7, 2009). The *National Post* had a more varied discussion regarding what could improve Canada's refugee system than the *Globe and Mail*. However, all the writers agreed that Mexico is abusive and constitutes a threat. This construction of immigration as a risk is consistent with Bauder's (2008) findings of danger as the most frequent theme in the North American media when covering immigration. By allowing the Mexican ambassador to expose Mexico's view of the visa requirement the newspaper offered overall a balance to the dominant opinion expressed by its columnists.

Mexican newspapers

In the Mexican newspapers, the visa imposition was mostly covered from the perspective of the affected country and insulted partner. The representation of Canada focused on the sudden and unilateral nature of the visa imposition, which was perceived as arrogant and

distrustful, and on the inability of the Canadian embassy to process all the visa applications and how this affected Mexicans. For example:

> The way in which this measure was announced – a few hours before it was enforced ad without allowing those affected by it to take preventive measures – shows distrust from the Canadian authorities towards Mexican ones (*La Jornada* July 15, 2009).[21]
>
> Canada broke a process of dialogue, and decided suddenly to impose a visa (*El Universal* July 16, 2009a).[22]
>
> The staff at the consulate, with a poor Spanish and lacking a clear system to deal with the visa, was overwhelmed (*Reforma* July 15, 2009a).[23]

Other words used in the Mexican press to describe Canada were "desconfía" (distrusts); "impone" (imposes); "rebasada" (overwhelmed); "intempestivo" (tempestuous); "no da marcha atrás" (does not reverse); "dificulta" (hamper); "entorpece" (obstruct); "justifica" (justifies); "rompió" (broke); "sobrecargado" (overwhelmed); "déspotas" (despots); "saturada"(saturated); "atora" (blocks); "cautela" (caution); "falto de criterio" (lack of common sense); "criticable" (reproachable), all of which refer to a perceived distrust and arrogance from Canadian authorities, and unpreparedness to execute the measure. Most of these terms also emphasize the alleged mistreatment received by Mexicans at the Canadian embassy. However, on two occasions Canada was also qualified as "generous".

When referring to Mexico, the newspapers emphasized the general discontent and what was perceived as a weak response of the government; however, the newspapers also recognized some responsibility of the Latin American country. For example:

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[21] [L]a manera en que dicha determinación fue dada a conocer – a unas horas de entrar en vigor y sin permitir que los afectados tomaran las previsiones necesarias – da cuenta de un dejo de desconfianza de las autoridades canadienses hacia las mexicanas.

[22] Canadá rompió un proceso de diálogo, y decidió de un momento a otro imponer visas.

[23] [E]l personal consular, con un escaso español y sin un claro sistema para enfrentar el trámite de la visa, no se daba abasto.

> The most worrying aspect of the event is the erratic reaction of the Mexican diplomacy, which – beyond the concise press release issued last Monday, in which it regretted the Canadian decision – has been ineffective (*La Jornada* July 15, 2009).[24]
>
> The applicants must complete a long list of requisites, which includes presenting the documents in English or French (*El Universal* July 16, 2009b).[25]
>
> This terrible ordeal, similar for tens of Mexicans, began last Monday evening when they heard about the Canadian visa imposition. Since 8 am they started to pack the Canadian embassy, the only place where the visa application can be submitted (*Reforma* July 15, 2009b).[26]

Other words used in the Mexican press to depict Mexico were: "lamenta" (regrets); "hay molestia" (there is discomfort); "negocia" (negotiates); "molesto" (upset); "afectado" (affected); "desencantado" (disenchanted); "en desacuerdo" (disagreement); "desesperación" (desperation) "aburrimiento" (boredom); "angustia" (anguish); "respetuoso" (respectful); "busca solucionar" (seeks to solve); "es parcialmente responsable" (is partially responsible); "condena" (condems); "protesta" (protests); "prudente" (cautious); "comedido" (moderate); "inconforme" (dissenting); "deplora" (deplores); "rechaza" (rejects); "malestar" (discomfort); "sorpresa" (surprise); "irritado" (irritated); "enojado" (angry); "tenemos culpa" (we are to blame); "abusamos" (we abused) and responsable" (responsible). These terms refer to feelings of anger, disenchantment and desperation; they emphasize rejection and condemnation of the visa imposition, as well as inconformity. However, they also allude to Mexico's responsibility

[24] Con todo, lo más preocupante del episodio es la reacción errática de la diplomacia mexicana, la cual – más allá de un escueto comunicado emitido el pasado lunes, en que lamentaba la decisión del gobierno canadiense – se ha mostrado inoperante.
[25] Los solicitantes, por su parte, hoy deben cumplir con una larga lista de requisitos, que incluye entregar la documentación en inglés o francés.
[26] El vía crucis, similar para decenas de mexicanos, comenzó en la tarde-noche del pasado lunes cuando se enteraron de la solicitud de visa por parte de Canadá. Desde las 08:00 horas comenzaron a abarrotar la Embajada canadiense, pues es la única que lleva a cabo el trámite de visado.

and alleged abuse of the Canadian refugee system. All these ways of representation in the Mexican press show a consistent positive self representation and a negative representation of Canada as despotic and arrogant. Although there were some exceptional cases in which Canada was referred to as generous and Mexico as responsible for the restriction, these were rare.

Mexican newspapers tended to rely on official sources. However, they used both Mexican and Canadian sources of information in the same proportion, despite covering the issue mostly as a domestic story. Canadian sources were not only fully identified in the Mexican press, but also fully quoted. These sources were the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism; Canadian Foreign Minister; Canadian ambassador to Mexico.

The Mexican sources were the Minister of Foreign Affairs; sub-secretary of foreign affairs; president of the Mexican Hotel Association; Mexican ambassador to Canada; several members of Congress; several visa applicants; president of the Mexican association of Travel Agencies; coordinator of Juridical Issues of the State of Mexico; Secretary of Tourism.

The constant use of Canadian sources could be due to the fact that the Canadian ambassador to Mexico turned to the media as soon as the visa was imposed to explain the Mexican population the reasons for the measure. Also favourable to the use of Canadian sources was the presence of the Canadian foreign minister in Guadalajara during the trilateral meetings previous to the NAFTA summit, and later of the Canadian Prime Minister in the same city for the summit.

Canadian sources were usually quoted explaining the reasons for the visa or expressing their interest on reverting the measure as soon as possible. For example:

> Meanwhile, Cannon underscored: 'we are not looking to have difficulties with our allies, and nothing in this situation makes us think that it will be permanent,' making reference to the visa for Mexican travellers. He explained that 'there has been an increase in the number of immigrants that arrive to Canada looking for a refugee status, which (…) is above acceptable levels' (*La Jornada* July 17, 2009).[27]
>
> The Canadian ambassador in Mexico, Guillermo Rishchynski, justified the imposition of a visa to Mexicans travelling to his country due to the 'explosion' of fake refugee applications made by Mexicans that have overwhelmed the asylum system (*El Universal* July 15, 2009a).[28]
>
> The Canadian ambassador in Mexico, José Guillermo Rishchynski, told REFORMA yesterday that the decision to impose a visa on Mexicans was not decided overnight and that it had been discussed with the Mexican government for months (*Reforma* July 15, 2009a).[29]

Mexican sources were mostly quoted condemning the visa and explaining Mexico's response to the measure, and few refer to the illegal intermediaries in Mexico that promote false refugee claims. For example:

> The Mexican Foreign Minister announced that 'due to the decision of the Canadian government to request a visa from all Mexican citizens, we have agreed – and this was informed today to the Canadian government – to suspend the no-visa agreement in official and diplomatic passports' (*La Jornada* July 17, 2009).[30]

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[27] En tanto, Cannon subrayó: 'no estamos buscando dificultades con nuestros aliados, y nada en esta situación nos lleva a creer que será permanente,' refiriéndose a la imposición de visa a viajeros mexicanos. Explicó que 'ha habido un incremento en el número de inmigrantes que llegan a Canadá buscando el estatus de refugiados, lo cual (…) está muy por arriba de los niveles aceptables.'

[28] El embajador de Canadá en México, Guillermo Rishchynski, justificó la obligación de visado a los mexicanos que viajen a su país, debido a que la 'explosión' de falsas solicitudes de refugio de connacionales generó una sobrecarga en el sistema de asilo.

[29] El embajador de Canadá en México, José Guillermo Rishchynski, aseguró ayer a REFORMA que la decisión de imponer el visado a los mexicanos no se dio de un día a otro y que discutieron el asunto con el Gobierno mexicano desde hace meses.

[30] [L]a canciller Mexicana anunció que 'por la decisión del gobierno canadiense de pedir visa a todo ciudadano mexicano, hemos acordado – y esto fue comunicado hoy al gobierno canadiense – suspender el acuerdo de no emplear visas en pasaportes oficiales y diplomáticos.'

> According to the Secretary of the Foreign Relations Committee, Cuauhtémoc Sandoval (PRD), the position of the Camadian government for the imposition of a visa requirement on Mexicans 'is an anti-Mexican policy that breaks the historical friendly relations' (*El Universal* July 15, 2009b).[31]
>
> This is very unfair, appalling for the people to find out that they were not given permission to enter the country when at the time they bought their plane tickets that requisite did not exist, that does not respect the sense of justice (*Reforma* July 16, 2009b).[32]

Visa applicants were only quoted in *Reforma*. These sources were always complaining about the process for obtaining one and the alleged mistreatment they received at the Canadian embassy. However, none of the successful visa applicants were mentioned. For example:

> 'They ruined my plans. They say I don't have enough money, and I already showed them all my credit cards. They are despots,' regretted Moises Dana (*Reforma* July 15, 2009a).[33]
>
> 'The people who give information don't speak Spanish,' explained Orlando Medina, who has a plane ticket for July 20 (*Reforma* July 15, 2009b).[34]

The aspects of the visa imposition that were prioritized during the first days of coverage in the Mexican press were the explanations given by Canadian authorities and the process to obtain a visa. What remained deemphasized at this moment in the coverage was the sovereign right of Canada to impose the visa. A couple of days after the announcement,

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[31] Para el secretario de la Comisión de Relaciones Exteriores, Cuauhtémoc Sandoval (PRD), la postura del gobierno de Canadá para imponer visas a mexicanos 'es una política antimexicana que rompe con los lazos históricos de amistad.'

[32] Es muy injusto, poco digno para la gente recibir una noticia de que no se les otorgue la entrada al país cuando en el momento en que ellos compraron sus boletos no existía ese requisito, eso no respeta el sentido de justicia

[33] 'Me echaron a perder mis planes. Dicen que no tengo dinero, y ya les enseñé todas mis tarjetas de crédito. Son unos déspotas,' lamentó Moisés Dana.

[34] 'La gente que da informes no habla español,' comentó Orlando Medina, quien tiene un boleto para viajar a Canadá el 20 de julio próximo

the focus shifted to reactions of the Mexican government, politicians and private sector, as well as to what would be Mexico's response. Also foregrounded was the negative impact of the visa on the Mexican tourism industry, however, the impact on the Canadian tourism industry was not assessed.

The focus of the coverage shifted to the impact of the visa on regional integration when the foreign ministers of Canada, the United States and Mexico met to prepare the NAFTA summit. During the summit, the help offered by Canada to control the drug related violence in Mexico remained backgrounded, as if minimizing the Canadian effort or not considering it enough to make up for the visa imposition. Completely absent from the coverage were the testimonials and experiences of successful visa applicants who did not experience any problems at the embassy. Also ignored was the fact that the embassy could not operate efficiently when the visa was just imposed and that the alleged mistreatment suffered by applicants could have been due to an overwhelmed and overworked staff at the embassy.

The Mexican newspapers prioritized the most negative aspects of the visa; and throughout the entire coverage the three newspapers emphasized the undiplomatic way in which the visa was communicated.

Opinion pieces about the visa imposition were published in the three Mexican newspapers. However, *El Universal* published only one column, which suggests it did not consider the topic a priority; *La Jornada* had a clear position on the topic expressed in two editorials, and also published two columns where two different opinions were

expressed; *Reforma* did not publish editorials but allowed for some debate by running eight columns on the subject.

In *La Jornada,* two editorials were published on the visa imposition and both criticized the measure as a symptom of the asymmetries in the bilateral relationship between Canada and Mexico and in NAFTA as a whole. The first editorial argued that the unconventional way in which Canada communicated its decision to impose a visa shows a lack of respect and undervalue of Mexico that is grounded on economic and power asymmetries between the two countries:

> The way in which this measure was announced (…) shows distrust from the Canadian authorities towards Mexican ones, a feeling that does not correspond to the diplomatic treatment among friendly nations (...)a deep lack of political equity – due to the economic asymmetry – between the three nations that are part of the North American Free Trade Agreement becomes evident (*La Jornada* July 15, 2009).[35]

The second editorial is more emphatic on the colonial nature of NAFTA --especially the fact that Canadian corporations get great revenue from exploiting Mexican resources but do not give back to that country in the same measure-- and the disadvantage that Mexico has vis- à -vis Canada and the United States. A symptom of this, according to the piece, is Mexico's inability to impose a reciprocal migratory measure on Canadian travellers because of economic reasons:

> The deep unbalance between what Canada gives and what it gets from our country makes it inevitable to perceive, as background to this bilateral relationship, a colonialist logic instead of the search for mutual benefit, which

[35] [L]a manera en que dicha determinación fue dada a conocer (…) da cuenta de un dejo de desconfianza de las autoridades canadienses hacia las mexicanas, sentir que no corresponde al trato diplomático entre naciones amigas (…) queda de manifiesto una profunda falta de equidad política – amén de la asimetría económica – entre las tres naciones que integran el Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte.

> supposedly would have to emerge from the integrationist project to which our country has been subjected for fifteen years (*La Jornada* July 19, 2009a).[36]

The two columns published in *La Jornada* express radically different opinions. The first one suggested that even though there are fake refugee applications, there are also legitimate Mexican refugees that need protection and that Canada decided to ignore them. It argued that Canada should continue giving the benefit of the doubt to all refugee claimants and review every case (*La Jornada* July 19, 2009).

Conversely, the second column gave a very positive depiction of Canada and suggested that the refugee applicants are not those who suffer from the increased level of violence in Mexico, but are mostly economic migrants and undocumented Mexican immigrants in the United States that try to move to Canada. Finally, it also criticized the Mexican imposition of a diplomatic visa on Canada, qualifying it as an "easy and useless posture" (*La Jornada* July 20, 2009).

La Jornada has a clear anti-visa position, which is expressed in its editorials. However, it published two columns expressing different opinions, even though the newspaper did not promote an active discussion of the visa imposition either.

El Universal only published one column on the visa imposition and there were no editorials on the issue. This suggests that the newspaper did not consider the visa imposition a key topic worth of public discussion. The column (*El Universal* August 8, 2009) argued in favour of strong trilateral institutions in North America to control the

[36] El profundo desequilibrio entre lo que Canadá otorga y lo que recibe de nuestro país hace inevitable percibir, como trasfondo de esa relación bilateral, una lógica de tipo colonialista antes que la procuración de beneficios mutuos que supuestamente tendrían que derivar del proceso integracionista a que el país ha sido sometido desde hace tres lustros.

flow of immigrants because, according to the author, it was the uncontrolled immigration what caused the visa imposition on Mexican travellers and not Canada's official explanation for the visa --namely the increase in false refugee claims. The author, former Mexican ambassador to the United Nations Enrique Berruga Filloy, argued that migration in North America is necessary for Canada and the United States to be able to maintain their quality of life with the help of cheap labour. This statement points out NAFTA's neo-colonial character.

Reforma published eight opinion pieces on the visa imposition; four of them were radically against the measure and heavily criticized Canada, and two were in favour of the visa and strongly criticized Mexico.

The columns and op-ed against the visa tended to be alarmist and used hyperboles and metaphors to depict an image of Canada as disrespectful, capricious, improvised and stupid. The first column (*Reforma* July 17, 2009a) suggested that Canada miscalculated the effect of the measure and in trying to curb an avalanche of refugees they received an avalanche of tourists for which it was not prepared. The piece also referred to Prime Minister Harper's announcement of the visa to President Calderón and qualified the Canadian leader as lacking diplomatic tact. Another column (*Reforma* July 17, 2009b) argued that the visa made Canadian officials in the embassy --who qualified as "deaf ghosts"[37] -- despotic with Mexicans. The piece also referred to the process for obtaining a visa, which is "a true nightmare"[38], and to the requirement to fill forms and present documents in either English or French: "One has to be a polyglot to visit Canada"[39]. This

[37] Sordos fantasmas.
[38] Una verdadera pesadilla.
[39] Hay que ser políglota para visitar Canadá.

statement is particularly telling because it refers to a cultural barrier that segregates most Mexicans.

A column published after the NAFTA summit (*Reforma* August 12, 2009) clearly expressed through the use of sarcasm the resentment felt by most Mexicans over the visa imposition. The piece strongly criticized the Canadian Prime Minister by ridiculing him and suggesting that he was disconnected from the dialogue between Mexico and the United States during the summit; even mocking his airplane; and criticizing the visa imposition by suggesting that Canada will get an important revenue from it:

> Hopefully with all the money Canada is ripping us off with the visa they will change the official airplane for one that does not look like the Red Baron's airplane (*Reforma* August 12, 2009).[40]

Finally, in the op-ed, Carlos Dade, executive director of the Canadian Foundation for the Amercias (FOCAL), not only criticized the visa imposition by saying it damaged the bilateral relationship, but he also argued that Canada needs to come up with proposals to solve all the problems caused to Mexicans by the visa imposition --which is unthinkable in the case of the American visa, for example (*Reforma* July 19, 2009).

The two columns in *Reforma* which agreed with the visa imposition did so by pointing out an alleged paranoia and chauvinistic feeling in Mexico that would have led politicians, journalists and the general population to believe that the visa was an anti-Mexican measure:

[40] Es de desear que con el billetote que Canadá nos arranca ahora por la visa, cambien el avión oficial por otro que no parezca el del Barón Rojo.

> There are also those who see the unexpected requisite to have a visa as a new aggression against Mexico, like the ones that abounded some months ago during the sanitary crisis[41]. It is far from being that. (*Reforma* July 16, 2009c).[42]

Both pieces also refer to Canada's generosity and to what the authors perceived as abuse from illegitimate refugee claimants:

> Many Mexicans abused the generous Canadian immigration policy, and lied to obtain a residency there. Some even renounced without doubt to their condition of Mexican machos and falsely declared to be homosexuals, and said that because of their sexual option they were discriminated in this underdeveloped country, just to receive asylum from Canada (*Reforma* July 20, 2009).[43]

Coverage of the visa imposition in other media

Other Canadian news outlets that covered the visa imposition on Mexico also relied heavily on official sources and the focus with which they covered the issue was similar to that of the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post.* One angle that was only found in the *Toronto Star*[44] was the possible impact of the visa imposition on Canada's commercial relations with the European Union and Latin America. Another angle exclusive to the *Star* was the analysis of how Mexicans who reside in Canada were affected, for example declarations by the president of the Mexican business association in Canada. The newspaper covered the criticism that emerged in Canada over imposing a visa on legitimate visitors. The *Star* also published a poll according to which 69% of Canadians

[41] This refers to the outbreak of the H1N1 flu months before.
[42] No falta quien vea en el inopinado requisito de contar con visa una nueva agresión a México, como las que menudearon hace meses con motivo de la crisis sanitaria. Está lejos de ser así
[43] Muchos mexicanos abusaron de la generosa política migratoria de los canadienses, y mintieron para obtener la residencia allá. Incluso algunos no dudaron en renunciar momentáneamente a su condición de machos mexicanos, y declararon falsamente ser homosexuales, y dijeron que por su preferencia sexual sufrían discriminación en este país subdesarrollado, con tal de recibir asilo en Canadá
[44] Articles retrieved from the Factiva database.

supported the visa. The coverage of the NAFTA summit was focused on the bilateral relationships between the U.S. and Canada, and the U.S. and Mexico.

In the case of the CBC[45], it also relied mainly on official sources for its coverage of the visa imposition. However, the coverage also had a greater human aspect than that in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, with images of the chaos outside the embassy in Mexico City and interviews with Mexicans affected by the visa.

The alternative news site *The Dominion* did not cover the visa imposition.

Overall the Canadian news media preferred official versions and did not cover opposition to the visa to the same extent as they covered the implementation of it. The CBC was the news outlet that looked into more detail the chaotic situation for Mexican travellers applying for a visa.

During the same period of time, other Mexican news outlets covered the same aspects as *La Jornada*, *El Universal* and *Reforma* did. *Proceso* magazine[46] relied on official sources to report on the visa imposition and Canada's justification for it. It also covered the reaction to the visa in Mexico and the imposition of a diplomatic visa for Canadian officials. *Proceso* cited an interview to minister Kenney published in the *Globe and Mail.* It also covered all the information released by the Canadian embassy, including that the temporary worker's program would not be affected.

[45] Articles and clips retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca.
[46] Articles retrieved from http://www.proceso.com.mx.

TV network Televisa[47] was the only Mexican news outlet to cover the economic impact of the visa on Canadian tourism, besides the other aspects already mentioned. It also paid attention to the information released by the embassy and reports on how many visas were issued. Televisa also covered internal reactions, like the official response of Mexico and the reaction in Congress demanding an extension of the grace period.

Alternative media, such as *Revista Contralínea,*[48]did not cover the visa imposition.

The Mexican news media covered all the same aspects of the visa imposition. In general, they covered the story as an official issue and did not include many expert voices or human rights groups.

Conclusion

The coverage of the visa imposition in the Canadian and the Mexican press was similar in terms of topics and sources: both criticised the measure and referred to the need for a reform of Canada's refugee system. In both countries the press also made reference to the alleged abuse of Mexican immigrants, and official sources were privileged in the five newspapers while alternative voices were ignored.

Representations of self and Other also followed the same pattern in the Mexican and the Canadian press: "us" was portrayed in positive terms, and "them" in negative ones. The Canadian press used a large number of loaded terms when referring to Mexico and Mexicans mostly as abusive and corrupt; and characterizing Mexican immigrants as a burden, as illegitimate and undesirable. The tendency to criminalize immigrants was

[47] Articles and clips retrieved from http://www2.esmas.com/noticierostelevisa
[48] Articles retrieved from http://www.contralinea.com.mx

especially evident in the *National Post*, which referred to them as "potential criminals" and "suspect nations." All these discursive strategies, based on stereotypes and otherness maintain a racist discourse that, even if the opposition to immigration is not direct, expose the audience to the negative aspect of immigration (Adeyanju, 2010:53), for example how refugees are an economic burden that affect tax payers.

The use of keywords in the Mexican press was relatively low compared to their presence in the Canadian press. However, these loaded terms reinforced the perception of Canada as despotic and disrespectful. The representation of Canada focused on the sudden and unilateral nature of the visa imposition, which was perceived as arrogant and distrustful attitude, and on the inability of the Canadian embassy to process al the visa applications and how this affected Mexicans. By emphasizing a perceived underestimation of Mexico by Canadian authorities, the Mexican media contributed to a neo-colonial discourse based on resentment against the powerful Other.

The Canadian and Mexican press assigned fault for the diplomatic impasse to both countries, although with different approaches. In the Canadian case the problem was Mexican abuse and thus Mexico was to blame; while in the Mexican press the problem was Canada's lax refugee system and thus Canada was to blame. Canada blamed Mexico because it deems it a safe country, thus refugee claimants from Mexico become all bogus and suppose a risk for Canadians. Especially in the *National Post* refugees were depicted as a threat. Mexico, on the other hand, accused Canada of being despotic and having a broken, abuse-prone refugee system. However for the Mexican press the visa is a symptom of the asymmetric relationship between Canada and Mexico, which became more patent when Mexico was unable to impose a reciprocal measure against Canada.

Power relations inside NAFTA also emerged in the press in both countries, even to the point of questioning the existence of the alliance. In the Canadian press, it was suggested that the alliance was not beneficial for the country and a bilateral relationship with the US is preferable. The Mexican press highlighted that NAFTA was not beneficial because the bigger partners take advantage of Mexico. However, the Mexican press did not argue for abandoning NAFTA but suggested reinforcing it with strong trilateral institutions.

CHAPTER THREE -- The mining company and the murdered activist

On November 27th, 2009 two men on a motorcycle shot and killed Mariano Abarca, a Mexican anti-mining activist, outside his house in Chicomuselo, Mexico. The crime outraged activists in the region, who blamed Blackfire Exploration Ltd., a Canadian mining company operating in the area. Abarca had been protesting against Blackfire's operations in Chiapas. Three men linked to Blackfire were arrested. Days after the murder, the mine was closed by Mexican authorities due to "environmental violations." Blackfire argued that they never received an explanation for the closing of the mine. The Canadian company also accused local Mexican authorities of extortion after having paid the mayor of Chicomuselo large sums of money. However, Blackfire later admitted to having made those payments to get local authorities to control protests against the mine and keep activists away. Protests erupted in Chiapas after the murder of Abarca, coinciding with the visit of Canada's Governor General to the region.

Despite the similarity with the Saro-Wiwa[49] case, the murder of Mariano Abarca had almost no international impact and was given very limited coverage in both the Mexican and the Canadian press. The alternative media in Canada gave a more comprehensive coverage of Abarca's murder than the mainstream media. However, in Mexico, the alternative media covered even less of the Abarca case than the daily mainstream press. I analyzed the coverage of the Abarca case from November 27th, 2009 to March 1st, 2010,

[49] Kenule Saro-Wiwa was a Nigerian environmental activist who led a nonviolent campaign against multinational oil companies, especially Shell. Saro-Wiwa was arrested, tried by a military tribunal and hanged in1995. His death prompted international outrage and a three-year suspension for Nigeria from the Commonwealth. Saro-Wiwa's death also generated public backlash against Shell; the company faced accusations of being involved with the Nigerian government for the activist's death.

to determine how Canadian interests in Mexico were depicted and how activists were portrayed in order to assess if these representations supported a neo-colonial discourse.

In both countries, the press relied heavily on official sources and neglected aspects of the story that could have contributed to a better understanding of it. The *Globe and Mail* tended to ignore alternative voices; some Mexican newspapers based their coverage exclusively on Mexican sources while others marginalized activists and advocacy groups. Another commonality found between the two countries was that the murder of Mariano Abarca sparked debates over domestic issues, such as the regulation of corporations operating abroad and the need for the government to offer protection to activists.

Despite having all these implications, the story received a modest amount of coverage, especially in the Canadian press[50]. According to van Dijk (1995) low coverage in developed countries of news happening in the south is due to the imbalance in news flows generated by the dominance of Western news agencies and the lack of correspondents in developing countries. Events happening in the developing world only get covered when they are perceived as a threat to the developed world, and usually the impact of Western colonialism and imperialism in the event is downplayed. Given that the murder of Abarca was related to an international mining activity that could be qualified as imperialist and did not suppose a threat to Canada, the Canadian media did not consider it newsworthy and offered a very limited coverage. In the Mexican press, in-

[50] The activities of Canadian mining companies in Latin America tend to be underreported in that country's mainstream media. For example, at the beginning of May 2011 there was a massive indigenous mobilization in Panama against Canadian mining. The event was only covered in Canada by alternative news outlets such as *The Dominion.* Similarly, protests in Peru against Canadian mining companies in May and June 2011 were covered by some regional newspapers in Canada but not by the ones with national circulation.

depth coverage of the murder would have supposed challenging foreign mining activities fostered by NAFTA, thus, challenging also the interests of dominant elites.

Imperialism and Canadian mining in Latin America

Canadian mining in Latin America has been constantly a target of anti-imperialist activists (Gordon and Webber, 2008: 64). Therefore, to properly situate and analyze coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca it is necessary to review scholarship on Latin American political economy and imperialism.

According to political scientists Jeffey Weber and Todd Gordon, Canadian mining in Latin America began with the "neoliberal counter-reformation of the 1980s and 1990s in the region" (Gordon and Webber, 2008: 64), when the agrarian policies adopted by Latin American states in previous decades were dismantled, favouring the individualization of land rights over collective land rights. Gordon and Webber (2008) qualify Canadian mining in Latin America as capitalist imperialism, driven by the competitive pursuit of profit and based on the exploitation of labour (p. 63). In that sense, to increase profits, developed countries, like Canada, and corporations, like Blackfire, seek for new regions where they can access cheap labour and raw materials. But the creation of such new spaces of accumulation, usually former colonies, such as Mexico, "inevitably involves the forceful and violent reorganization of people's lives" (p. 65).

The appropriation of land and resources in underdeveloped countries, where transnational corporations are usually protected by the State, shows what Gargi Bhattacharyya (2002) calls the power of whiteness: "its capacity to impoverish, starve, contaminate and murder, all seemingly within the bounds of legality" (p.9). Free trade agreements, such as

NAFTA, which are aimed at maximizing profit and force underdeveloped countries to export their natural resources and sell cheap labour to international corporations, encourage these imperialistic activities (Khor, 2001).

In Mexico, the constitutional reforms that paved the way for NAFTA allowed foreign corporations to hold mining concessions previously reserved for Mexican firms. The government began in the late 1990s to "grant mining concessions for exploration and exploitation to transnational mining corporations, for the most part based in Canada" (SIPAZ, 2008). Before these reforms, the Mexican people had the right to the land and the state had the right to the resources below the soil; however, the mineral reforms granted mining companies the priority to the land over the people living in it (SIPAZ, 2008). Indigenous communities close to the mines became affected by the environmental impact of mining activities, such as industrial run-off affecting water resources, and loss of fertile land. Thus, mining and resistance to it constitute a conflict between poor and indigenous communities and foreign mining corporations (Gordon and Webber, 2008: 68).

Resistance against transnational mining companies in Mexico has been organized at a community, national and international level. In Chiapas, the Mexican Network of Those Affected by Mining (REMA, Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Minería) is one of the main actors in organizing resistance against Canadian mining company Blackfire (SIPAZ, 2008). Mariano Abarca was the leader of REMA.

Coverage of economic imperialism and resistance in the North American press

There are very few studies on how the North American press covers mining, or any kind of resource exploitation by corporations, nationally or abroad. Sociologist Mark C. J. Stoddart found in his study on how the *Vancouver Sun* covered the debate over the Working Forest policy of the government of British Columbia, that coverage was dominated by official and expert sources, while First Nations and other affected groups were silenced, a tendency that supports "the hegemony of capitalism and the liberal democratic state" (Stoddart, 2007).

The silencing of affected groups and alternative voices in the news media can be explained by the multiple forces that influence news production. Hackett and Uzelman (2003) investigated the influences on Canadian press content based on Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) hierarchical model and concluded that the political stance of each medium, determined by ownership, influence content. Their study also showed that "double standards or patterns of omission (...) tend to be consistent with what one would expect from corporate and commercial pressures" (p.342). Therefore, controversial issues involving corporations and affecting racialized groups tend to be underreported.

Alternative media emerge from "social processes marked by the fight against domination," like mining, and "supposes various practices (counter hegemonic, free, popular, communitarian, independent), creating new media to challenge the manipulation exercised by the big media corporations, which control production and distribution of information and meaning"[51] (Sel, 2009:14). In that sense, alternative news outlets are

[51]...los diversos medios alternativos surgen en el marco de procesos sociales signados por las luchas contra la dominación (…) La comunicación alternativa se plantea entonces como prácticas diversas

expected to spread information that is ignored by the mainstream media, which is affected by corporate interests.

There is no literature on how the Mexican or Latin American mainstream press cover foreign investment, and resource exploitation by transnational corporations. Neither are there studies on how this is covered by alternative media.

Blackfire and the murder of Mariano Abarca

In 2009 Blackfire, a Canadian mining company based in Calgary, faced strong opposition from activists against the operation of its barite mine in the municipality of Chicomuselo, Chiapas, Mexico. The protesters argued that the mine polluted the environment and that the company had illegally seized their lands (*La Jornada* December 8, 2009).

One of these anti-mining activists was murdered on Novermber 27th outside his home in Chicomuselo. The crime caused outrage among activists in the region who began protests and accused the transnational firm of being behind Abarca's murder. Three men linked to Blackfire were arrested in relation to the crime. Shortly after, the mine was closed by Mexican authorities due to "environmental violations." This prompted Blackfire's accusation against the mayor of Chicomuselo for extortion; however, the company later admitted to having paid the mayor to control opposition and keep the activists away. Protests coincided with the visit to Chiapas of Michaëlle Jean, Canada's Governor General at the time.

(contrahegemónicas, libres, populares, comunitarias, independientes), creando nuevos medios para enfrentar la manipulación ejercida por los grandes conglomerados mediáticos, que hegemonizan la producción y distribución de información y significados.

Abarca opposed the barite mine owned by Blackfire in Chiapas because, he argued, it was "damaging the environment and contaminating the nearby river" (*Globe and Mail* December 8, 2009). On August 17th, Abarca had been arrested after Blackfire accused him of delinquency, among other charges, after a protest led that took place outside the mine. Due to national and international pressure, Abarca was released after spending ten days in prison. Then the activist sued Blackfire's public relations manager, José Antonio Flores Villatoro, for threatening to kill him if he did not stop his protest against the Canadian firm's activities (*La Jornada* November 28 and 29, 2009).

Abarca's murder affected Canadian politics by fuelling the debate in Parliament, which had been going on since February, over the conduct of Canadian mining companies operating abroad and Bill C-300 --a law that would impose sanctions on firms that violate human rights and environmental standards overseas (*Globe and Mail* December 12, 2009). Despite this, the story received a modest amount of coverage, especially in the Canadian press. The low volume of coverage concurs with van Dijk's (1995) argument that low coverage in the north of news generated in the south is due to the dominance of Western news agencies and the lack of correspondents in developing countries, and a general lack of interest in stories that do not pose a threat to the First World.

Content and critical discourse analyses were carried out on the coverage of the murder in the Canadian and Mexican press from November 27th, 2009 --when the activist was killed-- to March 1st 2010, focusing on how the newspapers dealt with Canadian economic interests in Mexico and how the opposition to it was represented, in order to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How were Canadian interests in Mexico depicted both in the Canadian and the Mexican press?

RQ2: How were Mexican activists portrayed?

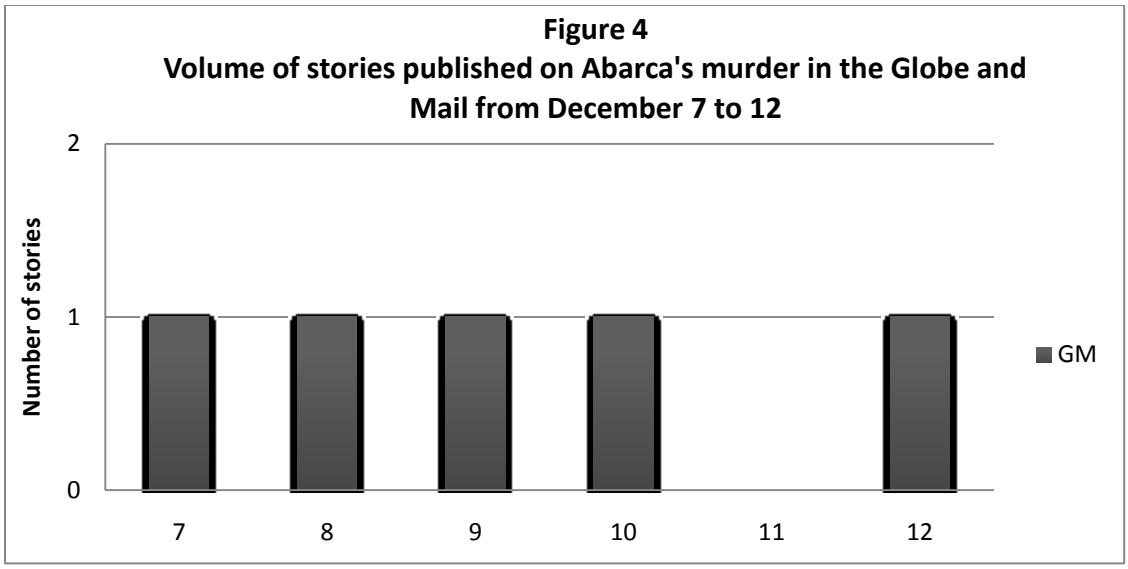
RQ3: Did NAFTA emerge in the coverage?

Content Analysis

Canadian newspapers

In Canada, the murder of Mariano Abarca was covered in the *Globe and Mail* but not in the *National Post*. The *Globe and Mail* published 5 stories on the Abarca case from December 7th to 12th, 2009, which accounts for a total of 3,193 words. The scarce coverage given by this newspaper to the event and the complete lack of coverage in the *National Post* suggests that the crime and the alleged involvement of Blackfire in it were not considered newsworthy enough for the Canadian press.

The maximum number of stories on the subject published per day in the *Globe and Mail* was one, except on December 11th when there were no stories published on the Abarca case (figure 4). Even though the murder occurred in November, the story appeared in the *Globe and Mail* only in the second week of December, probably due to the visit of Canada's Governor General at the time, Michaëlle Jean, to Mexico on those days, and the hundreds of activists that protested against Canadian mining companies and the death of Abarca while she was there. However, the story was not considered a priority and it was never published on the front page of the newspaper. Nor was it considered a topic for public debate, which is suggested by the absence of opinion pieces.



In the coverage of the Abarca case Mexican, sources were consulted in the 5 stories published (100%) by the *Globe and Mail*. Canadian sources were also consulted in 4 stories (80%). This shows the same priority was given to both Canadian and Mexican sources; however this could be due to the fact that most of the coverage was taken from the Canadian Press wire service. The sources consulted in the *Globe and Mail* were the Governor General, protesters, private sector, politicians and officials.

The topics addressed by the *Globe and Mail* were the protests, Jean's visit, the arrest of suspects, the debate of Bill C-300 in the Canadian Parliament, the closing of Blackfire's mine in Chicomuselo, and the alleged extortion suffered by the Canadian firm. The *Globe and Mail* gave priority to the impact the murder had on the debate over Bill C-300. The following are examples of the topics covered by the Canadian newspaper:

> Governor-General Michaëlle Jean's visit to Mexico this week risks being overshadowed by local protests over the shooting death of an anti-mining activist who had made a Canadian company the focus of his final campaign (*Globe and Mail* December 7, 2009).

> Canada's miners are lobbying against a private member's bill that would impose sanctions on resource companies found to have committed human rights and environmental abuses in other countries (*Globe and Mail* December 8, 2009).
>
> About 50 supporters of slain protester Mariano Abarca Robledo gathered yesterday in the colonial town of San Cristobal de Las Casas, where Ms. Jean was visiting a women's collective. The protesters, who were kept about 200 metres away from Ms. Jean, wore paper cutouts of skulls over their faces, and carried signs bearing Ms. Abarca Roblero's photo (*Globe and Mail* December 10, 2009).

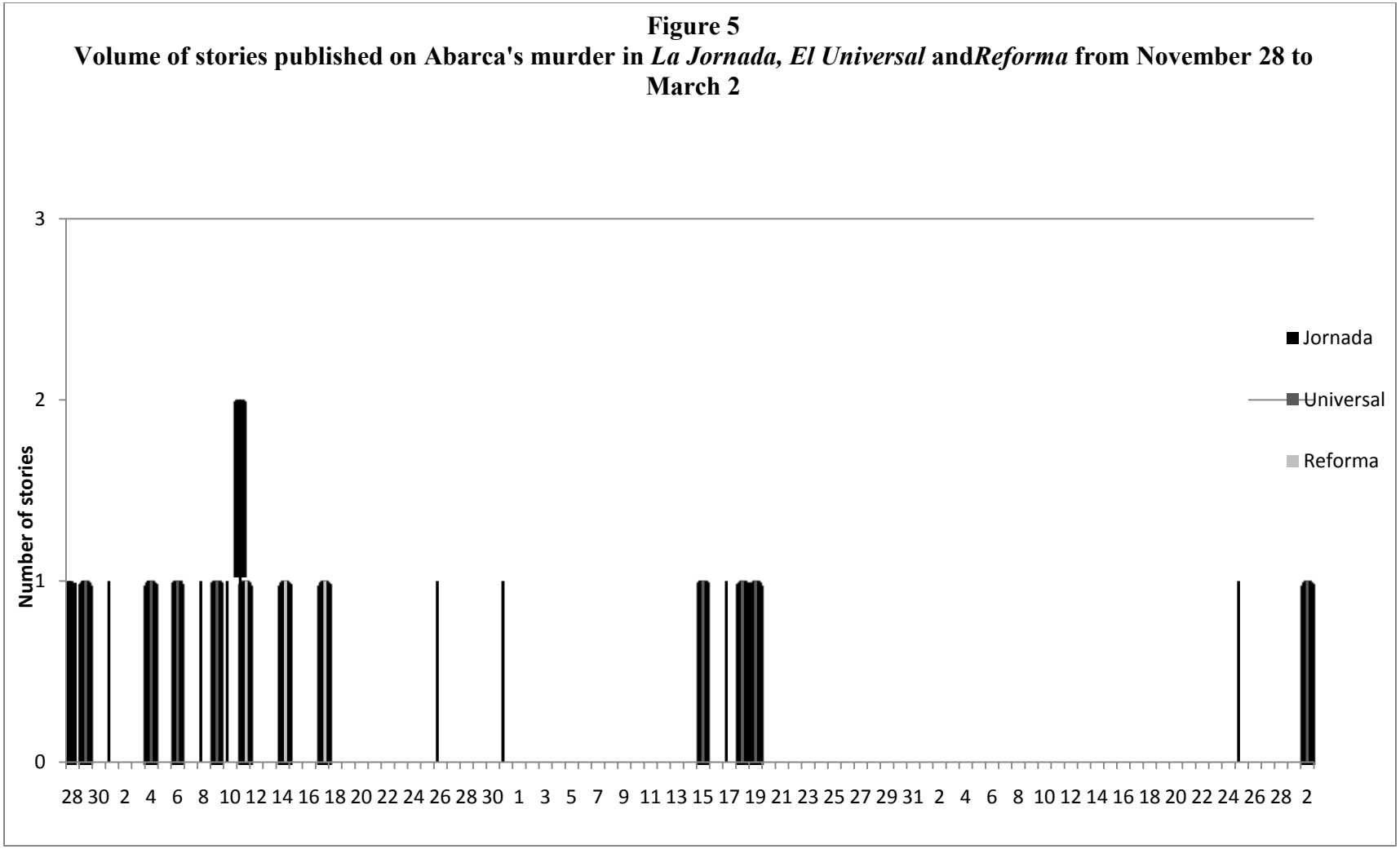
In *Globe and Mail* the only keyword used was "risk," and it appeared only once. The lack of use of keywords could be due to the general under coverage of the story and the prioritization of Canadian sources.

Mexican Newspapers

The murder of Mariano Abarca and the protests that followed were covered by the Mexican press, although coverage was also very limited. *La Jornada* published 13 stories from November 28th to February 25th, which accounts for 5,841 words; *El Universal* published 8 stories November 29th to March 2nd, for a total of 2,448 words; and *Reforma* published 3 stories from December 11th to January 17th, accounting for 2,057 words. *Reforma* began coverage of the story later than the other two newspapers. *La Jornada* published more than twice number of the stories than the other Mexican newspapers and almost twice as much as the *Globe and Mail*, which suggest that the Abarca case was given more importance in this daily with a left wing editorial stance.

The number of stories published per day in *La Jornada* oscillated between zero and two, and the day with more coverage was December 11th; in both *El Universal* and *Reforma* the number of stories varied between zero and one (figure 5).

Figure 5
Volume of stories published on Abarca's murder in *La Jornada, El Universal* and*Reforma* from November 28 to March 2



There were two stages in the coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca in the Mexican press. The first one is from November 28th to December 11th, and coincides with Michaëlle Jean's visit to Mexico and the reactions to the murder, including protests. The second one is from January 15th to 19th, and is related to the arrest of more suspects of the murder.

As in the *Globe and* Mail, the coverage of the murder was never on the front page of the Mexican newspapers, which suggest that it was not a priority. However, there were opinion pieces published in the Mexican press suggesting that, despite not being a priority, the Abarca case did spark some debate. *La Jornada* published two columns (15%), both addressing issues of activism and human rights; *El Universal* published one column (12.5%), which also referred to violence, human rights and activism; in *Reforma* the Abarca case was mentioned in two opinion pieces that referred to several topics, the first was about the alleged extortion suffered by Blackfire, and the other one dealt with the arrest of a suspect.

The use of Mexican sources was higher than the use of Canadian ones in the Mexican press. *La Jornada* used Mexican sources in 12 stories (93%) and Canadian sources in three stories (23%); *El Universal* used Mexican sources in seven stories (87%) and had no Canadian sources in all its coverage; finally, *Reforma* published two stories with Mexican sources (66%) and one story with a Canadian source (33%). This suggests that the murder of Mariano Abarca was covered in the Mexican press as national news despite involving a Canadian corporation, and this is probably due to the fact that the Mexican newspapers did not use a wire service for their coverage. The sources consulted by the Mexican press were the Canadian Governor General, protesters, private sector, victims,

officials, international organizations and NGOs. The use of these sources shows that all the involved parties were considered, which could suggest a balanced coverage of the event. The sources were also very similar to those used in the coverage of the event in the *Globe and Mail*.

The topics included in the coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca in the Mexican press were the murder itself, reactions to it, protests, probe, arrests, activism, human rights, Jean's visit, closing of the mine, and the alleged extortion suffered by the Canadian firm. *Reforma*, similarly to the *Globe and Mail*, was more interested in the economic aspect of the closing of the mine and the accusation of extortion. *La Jornada* and *El Universal* were more concerned with the social angle of the story, focusing mainly on activism and human rights. The following are examples of this:

> The Canadian company Blackfire is behind the murder of Mariano Abarca Roblero on Friday night in Chicomuselo, where he lead a movement against this company's mine exploitation, said the victim's son and social organizations, activists and academics (*La Jornada* November 29, 2009)[52]
>
> The state's government closed the Canadian mining company Black Fire Exploration México in Chicomuselo for violating environmental norms (*El Universal* December 9, 2009).[53]
>
> The conflict that the Canadian mining company Blackfire has with activists that opposed its project in Chicomuselo, Chiapas, is becoming more turbid. The company was involved in a scandal after the death of Mariano Abarca Roblero, the leader of the protests against it (...) Now the company strikes back. It revealed that it had been extorted by the mayor of Chicomuselo (*Reforma* December 14, 2009).[54]

[52] La empresa canadiense Black Fire (sic.) está detrás del asesinato de Mariano Abarca Roblero, ocurrido la noche del viernes eqn Chicomuselo, donde encabezaba un movimiento contra la explotación minera que realiza esta compañía, acusaron hoy un hijo de la víctima y organizaciones sociales, activistas y académicos.

[53] El gobierno del estado clausuró la minera de origen canadiense Black Fire Exploration México establecida en Chicomuselo, por incumplir con las normas ambientales.

[54] El conflicto que la minera canadiense Blackfire mantiene con activistas que se opusieron al proyecto ubicado en Chicomuselo, Chiapas, está tomando un tono cada vez más turbio. La minera se vio envuelta en

The Mexican newspapers did not use any of the keywords in their coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca. Likewise, coverage in the *Globe and Mail* only presented one keyword. The lack of use of keywords could be explained by the lack of interest showed by the analyzed newspapers on the Abarca case.

The content analysis shows that in both Mexico and Canada the murder of Mariano Abarca was not a priority. This could be due to newsworthiness, like the fact that the conflict between activists and Blackfire was concentrated in a small geographic area, or the fact that only one person died. However, it could also respond to a capitalist interest that affects how news organizations cover stories involving foreign investment and international corporations (Hackett and Uzelman, 2003).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Canadian newspapers

The neo-colonial tendency of a positive self-representation and a negative representation of the Other (Hall, 1995; Spurr, 1993 in Slater, 2004: 19; Chowdry et al., 2002) found in the previous chapters was maintained during the coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca in the *Globe and Mail*. Mexicans were generally depicted as resenting Canadian activities in Mexico. For example:

> Protests over the shooting death of Mr. Abarca were already expected to greet the Governor-General, but she now faces increased rancor with the criminal allegations involving a mine employee (*Globe and Mail* December 8, 2009).

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un escándalo tras la muerte de Mariano Abarca Roblero, líder de las protestas contra la minera, a finales de noviembre (…) Ahora la empresa contraataca. Revela que había sido extorsionada por el edil perredista de Chicomuselo

> With the final day of her Mexican state visit marked by protests and shouts of "Canada, get out," Governor-General Michaëlle Jean has condemned last month's high-profile murder of an anti-mining activist who had opposed a Canadian mining development (*Globe and Mail* December 10, 2009).

When covering the crime, the *Globe and Mail* constantly related the story to the debate over Bill C-300 in Parliament, which dealt with the behaviour of Canadian corporations operating abroad. For example:

> Three men linked to Blackfire, including a current employee, were recently arrested in the Nov. 27 slaying of activist Mariano Abarca Roblero, who had publicly protested against the mining operation located in Chicomuselo, Chiapas (*Globe and Mail* December 9, 2009).
>
> Mr. McKay, the author of Bill C-300 said allegations like those levied against Blackfire, even if unproven, damage the company, the industry and the reputation of all Canadians (*Globe and Mail* December 9, 2009).

Other words and phrases used in the *Globe and Mail* to represent Mexico and Mexicans were "disrupts;" "overshadows;" "protests;" "rancour;" "shuts down;" "extorts," and "key trading partner." Other words used in the newspaper to refer to Canada and Canadians were "denies;" "funds aid programs;" "tries to renew friendship;" "condemns;" "embattled;" and "follows closely the situation." There is a clear ideological square with positive self-representation and a negative representation of the Other, in this case Mexico. The ideological square is a strategy that emphasizes Our positive aspects and Their negative ones, while deemphasizing Our negative aspects and Their positive ones (van Dijk, 2006). Canada and Canadians are represented as friendly and, while denying any role in Abarca's death, monitoring the investigations; Mexico and Mexicans are referred to as resentful and obstructive.

Regarding the representation of anti-mining activists, the *Globe and Mail* referred to Mariano Abarca as an "anti-mining activist," "leader in an organization," or "slain Mexican activist/protester" who "organized resistance" and "led opposition" to Blackfire. The activists who protested after his death were generally described as a "threat", for example when the newspaper stated that Jean's visit to Mexico was "at risk" because of the protests (*Globe and Mail* December 7, 2009). Protesters were also depicted as reacting aggressively.

Regarding self-representation, the *Globe and Mail* depicted Blackfire as "entangled" in a murder probe, but cooperating with authorities and denying any participation in the crime, which was referred to as a "Mexican mystery," or in the death threats Abarca received for months. This minimizes the importance of the "unproven" accusation against the Canadian firm, (*Globe and Mail* December 12, 2009). By qualifying the crime as a "Mexican mystery" it is rendered exotic, distant and unrelated to Canada or Canadians; while qualifying the accusation against Blackfire of "unproven," suggesting the innocence of the arrested men related to the company, is a way of mitigating the impact and importance of the crime (van Dijk, 2003). The Canadian origin of Blackfire was also emphasized throughout the coverage of the murder.

The Governor-General was depicted as trying to improve the "strained relations between the two countries" (*Globe and Mail* December 8, 2009); and as in danger because of the protesters, who were kept 200 meters away from where Jean was. However, the newspaper did not explain how her trip could be at risk or overshadowed by protesters. Meanwhile, Mexican authorities were depicted as deceiving when they shut down Blackfire's barite mine because of environmental violations. According to a headline in

the *Globe and Mail* Mexican authorities "deny (the) action has any connection to slaying of activist," which in fact suggests a possible connection and that the shutdown of the mine was a response to Abarca's murder.

In its first day of coverage of the Abarca case, the *Globe and Mail* relied on Mexican press reports. However, from the second day onwards the president, executives and spokesperson of Blackfire, the president of the Mining Association of Canada, and lawyers for other Canadian mining companies are quoted in the stories. Other Canadian sources were the Governor-General, junior Foreign Minister Peter Kent, and their spokespersons, as well as members of Parliament. These sources are quoted several times throughout the coverage. Mexican sources were quoted few times, a spokesman for the Mexican embassy in Ottawa and an activist who knew Abarca were quoted once each. Despite using both Mexican and Canadian sources, direct quotes came mostly from the latter. This shows that the coverage in the *Globe and Mail* favoured the Canadian version of the Abarca murder. Despite the *Globe and Mail*'s use of Canadian Press wire service, which would make Mexican sources available, anti-mining activists were marginalized as the coverage adopted a national approach, focusing on Blackfire's defence and on the debates over Bill C-300.

The *Globe and Mail* prioritized certain topics during the coverage of the Abarca case, which were usually dealt with in the first paragraphs of the articles; for example the accusation against Blackfire and its alleged involvement in the murder; the company's response to the accusation; and the reaction of the Canadian mining industry. Jean's visit to Mexico was also broadly covered and was usually linked to the "strained" bilateral relationship since Canada imposed a visa requirement on Mexican travellers in July 2009.

The arrest of three men allegedly linked to Blackfire, as well as the closing of the mine, were also foregrounded. The last story published by the *Globe and Mail* on the case dealt with an accusation of extortion made by Blackfire against local authorities, and this was given priority to the extent that it took attention away from the real of the problem, namely the murder of Abarca, the alleged environmental violations and the bribery charge against the mining firm.

Also mentioned in the *Globe and Mail,* but downplayed, were the reasons of Abarca's activism, why he was protesting against Blackfire, like the environmental impact of the mine, death threats against activists, bribery of authorities, expropriation of lands. This is only explained in the second day of coverage and from then on it was barely mentioned. Deemphasizing Abarca's motives for activism --a positive aspect of the Other-- and the alleged crimes committed by Blackfire --a negative aspect of Canadians-- is also part of van Dijk's ideological square.

It was surprising to find an absolute absence of any declarations from the Abarca family and from the leadership of REMA, the anti-mining group lead by the murdered activist. Also absent were declarations made by NGOs in Canada and Mexico who oppose Canadian mining activities in Mexico.

The choice of sources reveals a Canadian focus on the story in the *Globe and Mail* to the extent that the coverage not only started a week after the murder, but ignored the anti-mining organizations' arguments against Blackfire. The newspaper was more concerned with how the protests would affect Jean's visit and Canadian reputation abroad.

Mexican newspapers

Coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca in the Mexican press was constantly linked to the Canadian mining company, Blackfire. However, the Mexican newspapers dealt with the case mostly as domestic news. Nonetheless, when referring to Canadian ventures in Mexico the newspapers tended to be critical and to highlight the perceived negative aspects of it.

> (...) these companies (foreign mining companies), instead of generating wellbeing, pollute and destroy, affect the territorial wealth of the indigenous peoples, divide communities and corrupt. The result is this murder" (*La Jornada,* December 4, 2009).[55]
>
> (Activists) fight for the defence of mangrove swamps, the dispossession of land, the rights of indigenous peoples, and against (...) foreign mining companies that devastate the environment (*El Universal* December 4, 2009).[56]

Blackfire was constantly referred to as the "Canadian firm" (empresa canadiense) and "Canadian mining company" (minera canadiense); emphasizing its foreign origin and, thus, its difference from the Mexican people affected by it. The newspapers also reiterated that it was "accused by many organizations for the murder" (diversas organizaciones acusan del asesinato). While the *Globe and Mail* only referred to an "unproven" accusation, the Mexican press clearly identified who was accusing Blackfire.

The Canadian Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, and the junior Foreign Minister Peter Kent were depicted in the Mexican press as condemning and deploring the murder of Abarca. However, *La Jornada* also quoted the Canadian organization Common Borders

[55] …estas empresas, en lugar de generar bienestar, contaminan y destruyen, dañan el patrimonio territorial de los pueblos indios, dividen comunidades y corrompen. El resultado es este asesinato.
[56] Luchan por la defensa de los manglares, el despojo de tierras, los derechos indígenas, y en contra de las (…) empresas mineras extranjeras que devastan el medio ambiente.

as criticizing Kent's silence about the multiple petitions for a meeting between the Canadian authorities visiting Chiapas, REMA members, and community leaders:

> Meanwhile, the Canadian organization Common Borders, which includes unions, churches, students, environmentalists, and other sectors in that country, regretted Kent's silence about the requests for a meeting between the Canadian authorities that visited Chiapas, the Mexican Network of Those Affected by Mining and community leaders (*La Jornada* December 11, 2009).[57]

Other words used to depict Canada and Canadians in the Mexican press were "threatens" (amenaza); "harasses" (hostiga); "murders" (asesina); "destroy" (destruyen); "pollute" (contaminan); "condemns" (condena); "deplores" (deplora); "disrespects" (no respeta); "breaks promises" (incumple). These terms, as well as the depictions explained above, result in a negative portrayal of all Canadians in general in the Mexican press, which contribute to the notion that Canada is abusing Mexico through its economic investments in that country.

Conversely, and consistent with the results found in previous chapters, the representation of Mexicans in the Mexican press was positive. Mariano Abarca was referred to as an "opposition leader" (dirigente opositor); "regional leader" (dirigente regional); "activist" (activista) who was "leading a movement against Blackfire's exploitation" (encabezaba un movimiento contra la explotación de Blackfire). He was also depicted as a "community leader"; "environmentalist and a human rights activist." The use of these terms contributes to an idealized and heroic depiction of the activist; it could be argued that to some extent he is depicted as David fighting the powerful transnational Goliath.

[57] Mientras, la organización Fronteras Comunes de Canadá, que agrupa a sindicatos, iglesias, estudiantes, ambientalistas y otros sectores de ese país, lamentó el silencio de Kent ante las peticiones para efectuar una reunión entre las autoridades canadienses que visitaron Chiapas, la Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Minería y representantes de las comunidades.

The depiction of other activists and protesters was also more positive in the Mexican newspapers than in the Canadian press. According to the Mexican newspapers, protesters wanted to "talk" (dialogar) with the Canadian Governor General. This suggests that they are reasonable people who want a dialogue --positive representation--; in contrast to the notions of rancour, anger and threat related to the protesters in the Canadian press. However, in the Mexican press the conflict was not directly between the protesters and Jean but with the Mexican state, who impeded them, by using the "Presidential Guard" (Estado Mayor Presidencial), to reach her. Therefore, it is suggested that the Mexican government is not only protecting the Canadian Governor General but also Canadian interests in Mexico.

Other words used to depict Mexico and Mexicans were "arrests" (arresta); "protest" (manifiestan); "demands" (exige); "shuts down" (clausura). These terms suggest action; Mexicans are portrayed in an active role against perceived foreign abuse.

Regarding the use of sources, *La Jornada* quoted a member of REMA close to the Abarca family, who in the first day of coverage already linked Blackfire to the murder and referred to death threats received by the victim. Abarca's son, who also referred to threats received by his father from Blackfire's workers, was also quoted. The newspaper also consulted sources from Mexican indigenous organizations who complained about the rampant insecurity and lack of protection that anti-mining activists face in Mexico. Protesters were quoted saying that they would not rest until "the company has paid for all its crimes and is expelled definitively from Chiapas" (*La Jornada* December 10, 2009).[58]

[58] No descansaremos hasta que la empresa haya pagado todos sus crímenes, y haya sido expulsada definitivamente de Chiapas.

Amnesty International's petition for protection for Abarca's family and a witness of the murder was also reported in *La Jornada*. Despite all these accusations the newspaper did not consult any sources from Blackfire. A Canadian organization was quoted and this wasd the only time a Canadian NGO was mentioned in all the coverage of the Abarca case in the Mexican press. The Canadian Governor General was quoted condemning the murder and pledging to follow closely the investigation. Kent was also quoted highlighting all the commonalities between Mexico and Canada.

In *El Universal* and *Reforma* the most common sources were official ones, such as the office of the regional attorney and the Ministry of Environment. In *El Universal* human rights and indigenous advocacy groups were also frequent sources, as well as REMA members consulted by the newspaper during the murder probe. Despite constant accusations against Blackfire for violations of human rights and environmental regulations, the Mexican press did not consult any sources from the mining company. By ignoring its point of view, the newspapers reinforced not only the notion of otherness but also a perceived indifference of the Canadian firm. However, the lack of Canadian sources could also be aimed at reducing the perception of any responsibility in the murder.

During the first days of coverage, the Mexican press tended to prioritize the murder of Abarca and the harassment suffered by anti-mining activists. Eventually the lack of protection for activists became subject of debate in opinion pieces. The protests that erupted after the murder were also prioritized as well as the fact that protesters were blocked from accessing the Canadian Governor General. Blackfire's alleged involvement in the murder and the arrest of suspects were also highlighted in the Mexican press, as

was the closedown of the barite mine. Jean and Kent's comments, as well as their refusal to meet with protesters, were also included in the Mexican newspapers, but not in a priority place. However, information about previous confrontations between Blackfire and activists was not foregrounded, and neither were international, environmental and indigenous organizations' asking for protection. In *El Universal* and *Reforma* the visit made by Jean and Kent was completely ignored. Also absent from the three newspapers was the Parliamentary debate in Canada, fuelled by the murder of Mariano Abarca, on Bill C-300.

The murder of Mariano Abarca was discussed in five opinion pieces. Three of the columns explored the topic of human rights violations, harassment and repression against community leaders and organizations, in which the murder of Abarca was used as an example of the chaos and violence in Mexico:

> The harassment and repression by governmental and non-governmental actors (national and transnational) against social leaders of organizations and movements defending their rights to land, food, water, healthcare, employment, a healthy environment, like was the case of the recent murder of mister Mariano Abarca, who opposed the activities of the Canadian mining company Blackfire in the state of Chiapas, and who had already denounced the threats received from that company (*La Jornada* December 26, 2009).[59]
>
> The Centre Fray Bartolome de las Casas argued that despite the death threats that the company's employees would have made to Abarca, which were publicly denounced by the social fighter, the Justice authorities did not give him the necessary protection (*La Jornada* December 31, 2009).[60]

[59] El hostigamiento y la represión por actores estatales y no estatales (nacionales y transnacionales) hacia líderes sociales de organizaciones y movimientos que defienden sus derechos a la tierra, a la alimentación, al agua, a la salud, al trabajo y al medio ambiente sano como fue el caso del reciente asesinato del señor Mariano Abarca, opositor a las actividades de la minera canadiense Blackfire en el estado de Chiapas, quien ya había denunciado amenazas de parte de esa empresa.

[60] El Centro Fray Bartolomé de las Casas sostuvo que a pesar de las amenazas de muerte que funcionarios de la empresa habrían hecho a Abarca, las cuales fueron denunciadas públicamente por el luchador social, las autoridades de procuración de justicia no le brindaron la seguridad necesaria.

> In the field they murder community and indigenous leaders. A few days ago Mariano Abarca Roblero, social fighter against the Canadian mining company Blackfire, and Miguel Perez Cazales, of the People's Front for the Defence of the Land in Morelos, were executed (*El Universal* December 4, 2009).[61]

In these columns Blackfire was depicted as abusive and the accusations against it, even though still unproven, were referred to as certain. However, the debate was not centered on Blackfire or on Canadian ventures in Mexico, nor was it about how to stop the alleged abuse of foreign corporations; the debate was mainly about the lack of protection and the responsibility of the Mexican government and politicians in the protection of activists and in guarantying their right to protest.

The other two opinion pieces were published by *Reforma*. The first one, based on documents published by the *Globe and Mail,* in which Blackfire accused local Mexican authorities of extortion, dedicates the first third of the text to this case and then moves on to commenting on other news. This column explains the accusations made by Blackfire and, without assigning any responsibilities, describes the whole scandal as "turbid" (*Reforma* December 14, 2009).

The last column resembles a gossip column in which several topics are discussed. One of them is about the arrest of a politician arrested as suspect of the murder of Mariano Abarca. However, Blackfire was not mentioned in the two sentences dedicated to the topic.

[61] En el campo asesinan a líderes campesinos e indígenas. En días pasados Mariano Abarca Roblero, luchador social contra la minera canadiense Black Fire en Chiapas, y Miguel Pérez Cazales, del Frente de los Pueblos en Defensa de la Tierra en Morelos, fueron ejecutados.

Coverage of Abarca's death in other media

Coverage of the story in the *Toronto Star*[62] was more detailed than the one in the *Globe and Mail*, especially when describing the murder, the protests and the arrested suspects. However, there were few articles published. The *Star* consulted official sources, activists, advocacy groups and Blackfire executives; in that sense, it gave a more balanced account of the events. It also reported that Blackfire asked the Canadian embassy in Mexico to intervene in the conflict, an aspect that was absent in the analysed newspapers. However, the visit of Michaëlle Jean to Mexico was not covered as extensively as in the *Globe and Mail*; while the debate over Bill C-300 was absent.

The CBC[63] covered the story in a similar way as the *Star*: it consulted official sources, advocacy groups, Blackfire executives, and both Mexican and Canadian activists. It also covered Jean's visit and the debate in the Canadian Parliament over Bill C-300. The CBC gave extensive background on the case; it reviewed previous confrontations between Abarca and Blackfire and even argued that the activist had become a serious problem for the mining company, an aspect that was not fully explained by other mainstream media. CBC Radio also offered extensive coverage of the story, including reports from a reporter in Chiapas. Two years later, CBC Radio continues to transmit sporadic updates on the probe on Abarca's murder, now involving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

These two Canadian news outlets covered aspects of the story that the *Globe and Mail* ignored. In contrast to the national newspaper, the other news outlets explored in greater detail the involvement of Abarca with Blackfire, as well as the perception that the people

[62] Articles retrieved from http://www.thestar.com.
[63] Articles and clips retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca.

affected by the mining company have of Canada. In that sense, the *Globe and Mail* contributed to a neo-colonial discourse by offering a limited depiction of the Other and silencing the alternative voices that could have enriched its readers' understanding of the conflict between activists and mining companies abroad and of the Abarca murder.

Other Mexican news outlets also covered the crime. In August 2009 *Proceso,*[64] covered Abarca's abduction and arrest. It also covered his release and detailed the charges against him laid by Blackfire. *Proceso* quoted activists and human rights organizations in Mexico who blamed local authorities and the Canadian government for Abarca's abduction, an aspect that was not covered in any other news outlet. The magazine also quoted Abarca's lawyer. After the murder, *Proceso* focused on Mexican and Canadian advocacy groups that demanded an investigation on Blackfire. No sources from the Canadian mining company were consulted, but Jean's comments on the murder were reported, as well as the debate in Canada over Bill C-300. *Proceso* also covered the accusation of extortion made by Blackfire against local authorities, based on the documents published by the *Globe and Mail*. The coverage in the magazine also turned into a debate over the criminalization of activists in Mexico.

In Mexican television networks the murder of Mariano Abarca was not a priority-- in contrast to the CBC. TV Azteca did not cover any information related to Blackfire or Abarca; while Televisa[65] only reported on the shutdown of the mine and barely mentioned Abarca. This coverage was very similar to that of *Reforma*.

[64] Articles retrieved from http://www.proceso.com.mx.
[65] Articles and clips retrieved from http://www2.esmas.com/noticierotelevisa.

Alternative media was expected to offer richer coverage of the Abarca case in both countries. *The Dominion*[66] began covering the case of Mariano Abarca in August, 2009, when he was arrested. Quoting his lawyer and Amnesty International, the site argued that Abarca was abducted by men who turned out to be police officers who then arrested him. *The Dominion* also covered Abarca's release in October 2009 and interviewed him. The news site covered his death, quoting his family and Mexican and Canadian advocacy groups. It also covered the debate on Bill C-300 and Blackfire's alleged confession to paying off the mayor to control the opposition to the mine. This is the only news outlet in Canada that covered that aspect of the story. However, the news site did not consult any sources from Blackfire.

Contralínea[67] magazine not only did not cover the murder of Mariano Abarca, but only mentioned Canadian mining companies in one piece on human rights violations published in January 2010.

Conclusion

Coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca was very limited in both the Mexican and the Canadian press. The story never made the front page in the newspapers and some publications --like the *National Post*-- completely ignored the event. The selection of news is based on newsworthiness criteria, but it is also ideologically grounded (Jiwani, 2006: 38); thus, the lack of coverage is an expression of little or no interest in the event, which could be due to indifference over the rights of the Other and a tendency to favour corporate interests.

[66] Articles retrieved from http://www.dominionpaper.ca.
[67] Articles retrieved from http://www.contralinea.com.mx.

The *Globe and Mail* accused the protesters of being a theat; however it did not quote any of them. The Canadian newspaper also highlighted Jean and Kent's attempt to improve the relationship with Mexico; while the Mexican media emphasized that the Canadian authorities ignored the protesters and refused to meet with them. In general, the *Globe and Mail* prioritized a Canadian angle, most of the time ignoring the activists' point of view, and when activists or victims were included in the stories they were presented with no credentials, their names and position inside organizations were not given. This tendency is consistent with Stoddart's (2007) findings on how the Canadian press cover resource exploitation by corporations.

The Mexican press tended to assign more importance to Mexican sources, not only official ones, but also advocacy groups and NGOs that were ignored by the Canadian press. However, by covering the story as local news, the Mexican newspapers did not seek information from wire services to get a Canadian perspective or to report on the debate generated in the Canadian Parliament over Bill C-300.

The *Globe and Mail* constantly reminded its readers about the tensions between Mexico and Canada over the visa imposition in July. Despite this, NAFTA did not emerge in the coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca; its role in encouraging foreign investment and export of raw materials was not assessed, and neither was the lack of tighter regulations for transnational corporations operating in the NAFTA region. The Mexican newspapers did not mention either NAFTA or the visa impasse in their coverage of the Abarca case.

The *Globe and Mail* used both Canadian and Mexican sources and the Mexican press relied more on local sources. However, the four newspapers tended to prefer official sources. The critical discourse analysis showed in detail a mixed tendency in the Mexican newspapers: *La Jornada*, a left wing daily, relied more on NGOs and on declarations by the victim's family and community leaders; *El Universal*, a right wing newspaper, had more alternative voices but was hesitant to link Blackfire to the murder; and *Reforma*, a centrist publication, covered the story more like the *Globe and Mail.*

Alternative media in Canada gave a more comprehensive coverage, as was expected (Sel, 2009), than the mainstream media. However, in Mexico, the alternative media covered even less on the Abarca case than the mainstream daily press. Comprehensive reporting on the murder of Mariano Abarca could only be found in a weekly magazine.

The press in both countries covered the murder of Mariano Abarca in a limited way, despite the protests it sparked, the numerous complaints from international organizations, and the debate over corporate responsibility abroad in the Canadian Parliament. The lack of interest could be explained by the fact that the murder of Abarca did not suppose a threat to Canada in any way; while extensive coverage in both countries could have supposed addressing the effects of Western imperialism, corporate practices, and international trade (van Dijk, 1995: 26). By underreporting the story and ignoring the political and economic implications of the crime, as well as the role of NAFTA in generating such scenarios of economic imperialism, newspapers in Canada and Mexico perpetuated the dominance of elites and supported a neo-colonial discourse.

CONCLUSION

I began this project with the following central question: do media accounts of Mexicans in Canada, and media accounts of Canadians in Mexico, reflect the power asymmetries of the Canada-Mexico relationship? My analysis of print media coverage of three recent events of significance to both countries suggests that this may indeed be the case. The power asymmetries of the bilateral relationship are being reproduced in the press through a neo-colonial discourse[68], which could impact the mutual perceptions between Mexicans and Canadians, through racism and xenophobia, and thus perpetuate the existent power structures.

The specific questions that guided this research were: To what extent are asymmetric power relations between Canada and Mexico utilizing neo-colonial discourses in their national press? How does the Mexican press represent Canadian citizens, organizations and interests? How does the Canadian press represent Mexican citizens, organizations and interests? How is otherness constructed in each case? Based on these questions I hypothesised that newspapers in Mexico and Canada convey a neo-colonial discourse on a consistent basis when covering issues involving both countries; Canadian newspapers were expected to represent Mexico/Mexicans as a threat, as inferior Others, opportunistic and abusive; Mexican newspapers were expected to represent Canada/Canadians as the

[68] Neo-colonial discourse is the extension of the effects of colonial domination in contemporary times (Moraña, Dussel and Jauregui, 2008:2), based on an Eurocentric ideology that considers the coloured "Other" to be less civilized and inferior; and it is used to justify the economic and political control of the former colony (Mignolo, 2005; Rojo, Salomone and Zapata, 2003; Chowdhry and Nair, 2001; Bhabha, 1999). In the press, neo-colonial representations suppose the depiction of other groups and nations as less civilized, emphasizing difference and constructing them as the "Other;" and by dehumanizing and delegitimizing them, the existing power structures are maintained (Dury, 2007: 3, 9).

powerful Other who considers itself as racially, economically and culturally superior, and abuses its power.

Despite some exceptions, there were repeated references to key aspects of a neo-colonial discourse in much of the reportage I examined. These aspects were: (1) racial and cultural superiority/inferiority; (2) otherness; (3) xenophobia; and (4) the justification of labour and resource exploitation based on economic expansion. These aspects all reflected the asymmetric power relations between the two countries.

Racism

Canadian newspapers were expected to represent Mexico/Mexicans as a culturally and racially inferior Others; and Mexican newspapers, on the other hand, were expected to represent Canada/Canadians as arrogant and abusive. It can be said that the press in both countries fulfilled these expectations. However, discriminatory statements were not based on explicit racist terms, but rather on claims of cultural superiority/inferiority, in accordance to the "new racism"[69] (Van Dijk, 2000; Siapera, 2010).

Demeaning and racist depictions of the Other in the press normalize and maintain current power structures, like the asymmetric power relations between Canada and Mexico. These depictions were found throughout the analysed coverage in the Mexican and the Canadian press, which suggest that "[racist] constructions (...) have become deeply embedded within the cultural commonsense" (Flores, 2003: 381). For example, in the case of the visa imposition Mexicans were depicted in the Canadian press as culturally

[69] According to van Dijk (2000) in New Racism racialized groups are not considered biologically inferior, but culturally different. Difference is based on perceived deficiencies that are considered to need correction (p.34).

different --abusive, dishonest--, and by immigrating in large numbers they became a threat to Canadian-ness. Such racist depictions could negatively influence the public's perception towards racialized minorities, and thus it is crucial to expose them.

There were instances in which both countries covered similar topics from similar angles, using the same depictions. For example, in the case of the flu outbreak they suggested that the data published by the Mexican government was questionable; and in the case of the visa imposition they suggested that Mexicans were reacting very emotionally to the measure. However, due to the asymmetric power relations between Mexico and Canada, the connotation of these similar expressions varies depending on who challenges the information given by the Mexican government and who qualifies Mexicans as being emotional.

Canada has a domestic and an international reputation for being a tolerant multicultural country; therefore, the way in which the Canadian media cover racialized Others could be perceived as unbiased and fair, while in fact it could be conveying a racist discourse that perpetuates Eurocentric power structures (Shome and Hegde, 2002). In this context, by depicting Mexico and Mexicans in demeaning terms --such as qualifying them as being emotional or sketchy-- the Canadian press contributed to a sense of Western superiority over underdeveloped, mainly non-white nations. By exposing coverage trends in the Canadian press that support a neo-colonial discourse, this research challenges the perception of the media reflecting the country's policies of multiculturalism and tolerance, which are widely considered Canadian values.

Otherness

Otherness was constructed in both the Mexican and the Canadian press by opposing negative representations of the Other to positive self-representations. This seemed to be in response to perceived aggressions, namely a health threat, undesired immigration or immigration restrictions, protests or corporate power abuse.

In the first case, the H1N1 outbreak, the Canadian press depicted Mexico in negative terms as underdeveloped and unable to handle the crisis and expressed a very positive image of Canada as benevolent, scientific and rational. Canadian newspapers constantly emphasized that Mexico and Mexicans were "different" culturally, biologically and environmentally in order to reduce the perception of risk in their readers. As the virus extended over the world, coverage in the Canadian press began reflecting the anxiety of Canadians over the growing presence of non-White immigrants (Adenyanju, 2010: 3) and constructed Mexico and Mexicans as an imminent threat to Canadian society.

In the visa case, otherness was constructed by assigning fault: the "Other" is guilty of what is happening to "us." In the Canadian press the problem was Mexican abuse, and thus Mexico was to blame. A large number of loaded terms was used when referring to Mexico and Mexicans mostly as abusive and corrupt; and characterizing immigrants as a burden, illegitimate and undesirable. The Mexican press determined that the problem was Canada's lax refugee system. Canadians were depicted as despotic, disrespectful, and arrogant, which contradicts their worldwide reputation as tolerant. For example, Mexican newspapers reported mistreatment against visa applicants; however, they did not mention those Mexicans who successfully obtained the permit. The Mexican press also assessed

the visa imposition as a symptom of the asymmetric relationship between Canada and Mexico, which became more obvious when Mexico was unable to impose a reciprocal measure against Canada.

Finally, in the coverage of Abarca's murder the Canadian press depicted Mexicans as a risk and a threat, as resentful, obstructive, deceiving and aggressive. It also neglected them as sources. By centering its coverage on official versions, the *Globe and Mail* marginalized the protesters' argument that corporations such as Blackfire restrict their access to natural resources, pollute the environment and exploit them. In the Mexican newspapers, othering was achieved by constantly emphasizing Blackfire's Canadian origin and by referring to the alleged pollution, abuse and destruction generated by it as damage inflicted from the outside. The Mexican press also emphasized that Canadian authorities did not want to meet with the activists as well as the alleged involvement of Blackfire in the crime, all of which suggests arrogance. The Mexican press covered this case emphasizing a perceived underestimation of Mexico by Canadian authorities, which contributed to a neo-colonial discourse based on resentment against the powerful Other.

In the three cases, otherness was accentuated in the Mexican and Canadian press by a low rate in the use of sources from the other country and alternative sources. This legitimates the dominant discourse about the Other instead of challenging it. The Canadian press tended to disregard Mexican sources. In the first two cases, they were consulted only in one third of the coverage. Most of the Mexican sources were official voices while alternative ones tended to be ignored. Mexican sources were not properly identified in the Canadian press and they were mostly referenced towards the end of the stories, in a secondary plane; thus, reducing the sources' credibility and importance.

These patterns of coverage, such as the exclusion of Mexican sources and oppositional views, and demeaning portrayals of Mexicans, served to improve the self-perception of the dominant majority by reinforcing a racist colonial discourse that depicts the members of the white society as superior (Jiwani, 2006; Jiwani and Young, 2006; Johnson, 2003; Greenfield et al., 1991).

Mexican newspapers consulted Canadian sources on a regular basis. *El Universal* used Canadian sources in almost half of the coverage of the visa imposition and none in the coverage of the murder of Abarca; *Reforma* used them in one third of its coverage; and *La Jornada* used Canadian sources mostly in the coverage of the visa imposition (57%), but also in the coverage of the murder (23%). The higher number of Canadian sources in the coverage of the visa imposition could be due to the fact that the measure was implemented in the Canadian embassy in Mexico City; thus, sources were available to the Mexican press; whereas Canadian sources were not easily available in the case of the murder of Abarca. In general the Mexican newspapers also preferred official sources. However, conversely to what the Canadian press did, Canadian sources were clearly identified in the Mexican newspapers and were not always placed at the end of the articles. This suggests that Canadian sources were given the same importance and authority as Mexican ones.

Xenophobia

By offering demeaning representations of the Other, the press in Canada and Mexico maintained a xenophobic attitude. In the Canadian press discriminatory depictions of Mexico and Mexicans were constant, usually referring to them as a threat, either by

carrying an infectious virus, by sending "waves" of immigrants, or by protesting against Canadian corporations. Mexicans were also portrayed as primitive, filthy, sketchy and problematic. This reinforced a discourse of racial discrimination and xenophobia. References to risk or threat were especially present in the *National Post*. Mexico and Mexicans were also depicted as abusive and corrupt; Mexican immigrants were characterized as a burden, as illegitimate and undesirable. The tendency to criminalize immigrants was also especially evident in the *National Post*, which referred to them as "potential criminals" and "suspect nations."

By highlighting only negative aspects Canadians were mostly depicted as disrespectful, arrogant, and despotic in the Mexican newspapers; which was particularly evident in the coverage of the visa imposition, and could have also contributed to xenophobic feelings. Negative depictions of Canada were more frequent in *La Jornada*, the leftist daily than in the other two --centrist and right wing. This suggests that despite general trends of coverage the newspapers' political stance impacts the way news are covered.

Negative and demeaning representations of the Other were constant in the five analyzed newspapers, challenging notions of friendship between the two countries. However, there were some exceptions to this, for example in the coverage of the influenza outbreak the Canadian newspapers made reference to Mexicans as good workers; and in the coverage of the visa imposition there were opinion pieces criticizing the measure as offensive towards an ally country. However, these "positive" references to Mexicans tended to be patronizing. Thus, the neo-colonial discourse was emphasized in the Canadian press in cases of confrontation or controversy with demeaning depictions of Mexico; but also with patronizing portrayals of the Other as innocent and childlike (Jiwani, 2006: 33). In the

Mexican press one exception was the opinion pieces justifying the visa imposition by recognizing that large numbers of Mexicans stay illegally in Canada.

Justification of exploitation

Perpetuating existing power structures and normalizing them is a key aspect of neo-colonial discourse. This was very explicit in the coverage of the murder of Mariano Abarca, a story that dealt with the rights of natives to resources, exploitation of labour by international corporations, the role of NAFTA in generating such scenarios of economic imperialism, and the alleged complicity of the Mexican government tolerating this abuse. In both countries the press found almost no interest in the story, and by underreporting it and not analysing the causes and consequences of the power imbalance between Canada and Mexico and the role of the North American alliance in perpetuating it, the newspapers reinforced a neo-colonial discourse that maintains dominant structures of power. However, the low coverage of this case also suggests indifference over the rights of the "native Other" and a tendency to favour corporate interests.

Despite reflecting the power asymmetry between the two countries, the Canadian press suggested that NAFTA was not beneficial for Canada and a bilateral relationship with the US was preferable. Meanwhile the Mexican press highlighted that the alliance was not beneficial for Mexico because the bigger partners took advantage of it. The press in both countries assessed the role of NAFTA in terms of how beneficial it is for each nation but did not analyse the role of the alliance in perpetuating imperialistic relations.

The Mexican and the Canadian press perpetuated racism, intolerance and xenophobia by reproducing a neo-colonial discourse that reflected the power asymmetries between the

two countries, without questioning what generates the power imbalance. By unveiling media depictions that contribute to the maintenance of a neo-colonial discourse, this research generates awareness of biased representations of the Other that could negatively impact the bilateral relationship between Canada and Mexico as well as mutual perceptions. This research also contributes to the scholarship in International Relations by shedding light on how imperialism and neo-colonialism are implicated in contemporary power relations, given that "dichotomous representations of West and East, self and other, are critical to the maintenance of Western hegemony" (Chowdhry, 2002: 12, 16).

Significance of my project and avenues for further research

As a journalism studies scholar interested in international journalism and in media representations of otherized groups, I intend with this research to contribute to our understanding of how international news can reflect the power relations between countries, and how it maintains biases, stereotypes and confrontation. As far as I am aware, this is the first research on Canadian and Mexican press coverage of Mexico and Canada. It is also the first study on how the media in these two countries cover their allies. Therefore, it offers a unique window to media representations and mutual perceptions between Mexicans and Canadians, and of the bilateral relationship and the role of NAFTA in it.

My results shed light on how government policies, in this case foreign policy, are reflected on the coverage of international events and the representation of other nations. Given that media accounts influence the public's perception, this research also generates awareness of the biases of media portrayals and the impact they could have on political decisions. This research also complements the literature on the Canada-Mexico

relationship and permits a better understanding of it; thus it could be valuable for government organizations and think tanks in both countries.

While carrying out this research, I identified several gaps in scholarship that this study intends to fill to some extent and serve as a basis for future research. Studies on how the Canadian press depicts other countries are very limited and necessary, as such depictions could affect the perception Canadians have of other countries as well as the perception they have of immigrant communities in Canada. Research on how Canadian corporations with operations abroad are covered by the media is also scarce and necessary given the wide Canadian involvement in mining activities in Latin America and the intense popular opposition to it in the region. Thus, the findings presented in this study could be a basis for further exploration of these topics.

Aside from Muñiz's (2011) exploratory study on the frames used in the Mexican media when covering immigration, research on how the Mexican media covers immigration is also scarce. Studies that do exist tend to be limited to media coverage of immigration to Mexico, ignoring Mexico's high levels of emigration. Considering the extent of Mexican immigration to other countries, studies on how the Mexican media covers this exodus and how it depicts the host countries are relevant and important.

In terms of diplomatic relations, further research is also needed on how both the Canadian and the Mexican media cover other allies and trading partners from both the developed and the developing world. Such research would expand the results presented in this study and assess them in light of media representations of other nations.

When analysing the coverage on the influenza outbreak, Canadian newspapers tended to be discriminatory towards Mexicans. This was a tendency that occurred in the media worldwide and which the Mexican press resented. In that sense, the coverage given by the Canadian newspapers --otherizing, stereotyping, racist-- could have been part of a global reaction to the pandemic. And so we could imagine such a study on how Mexicans were represented by the international press during the coverage of the pandemic. Conversely, the analyses of cases in this study confirmed that the Canadian coverage of Mexico consistently maintains a neo-colonial discourse.

Despite these results, this research is limited to the study of three events that occurred in 2009; therefore further research is needed to confirm that a neo-colonial discourse is maintained in the Mexican and Canadian press over a longer period of time. This research is as well limited to five newspapers. The analysis could be expanded to coverage in other types of media (television, internet, radio), and in different newspapers, for example dailies with regional circulation instead of national.

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December 9, 2009. “Mexican authorities shut down Blackfire mine; Officials cite environmental infractions for temporary closing of barite operation; deny action has any connection to slaying of activist.”

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April 28, 2009. “Not the killer pandemic strain; Death toll at 149, but mild cases in U.S., Canada.”

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April 30, 2009b. “Doubt cast on Mexican flu toll; WHO raises alert; Virus not to blame in all cases: analysis.”

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July 16, 2009c. “Why we can’t fix our abuse-prone refugee system.”

July 17, 2009. “Canada’s envoys will need visas; Retaliation for new rules for Mexican visitors.”

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August 7, 2009. “Kenney misplays his hand; Slapping visas on Mexicans was misguided.”

August 8, 2009. “Harper unlikely to bend on visas: official; Mexico sore spot.”

August 10, 2009. “Refugee system faulty, PM says; Mexico Summit; Harper blames Canadian law for visa flap.”

August 11, 2009. “The U.S. war on drugs is ravaging Mexico.”

August 26, 2009. “Why our refugee system stays broken.”

La Jornada

July 15, 2009. “Visas y equívocos diplomáticos.”

July 16, 2009. “Desde temprano cientos de personas hicieron fila alrededor de la embajada para obtener visa.”

July 17, 2009. “Temporal, exigencia de visa a mexicanos: Canadá; la SER la impone a diplomáticos.”

July 19, 2009a. “México-Canadá: una relación desigual.”

July 19, 2009b. “Asilo político y visas.”

July 20, 2009. “Visas, visados y refugiados.”
August 10, 2009. “Visa canadiense: ni un paso atrás.”
November 28, 2009. “Asesinan a líder opositor a explotar minas en Chiapas.”
November 29, 2009. “Chiapas: culpan a minera canadiense del asesinato de dirigente opositor.”
December 8, 2009. “Clausuran autoridades de Chiapas mina de Blackfire.”
December 10, 2009. Condena gobernadora de Canadá asesinato de activista en Chiapas.”
December 11, 2009. “Lamentan asesinato de activista.”
December 26, 2009. “Asignaturas pendientes.”
December 31, 2009. “Muerte y persecución enfrentan activistas ambientales en el país.”

El Universal
July 15, 2009a. “Canadá: mexicanos pusieron en riesgo el sistema de asilo.”
July 15, 2009b. “El Congreso condena la medida; exige a la SER protesta enérgica.”
July 16, 2009a. “Canadá supera a EU en requisitos para dar visas.”
July 16, 2009b. “Tomará tres meses a Canadá agilizar visa.”
July 17, 2009. “SER no pedirá visas a turistas de Canadá.”
August 8, 2009. “El club de Norteamérica.”
August 10, 2009. “Ni reforma migratoria, ni Canadá retira visas.”
December 4, 2009. “PRD, el cómplice.”
December 9, 2009. “ONG exigen frenar proyectos de extracción en Chicomuselo.”

Reforma
July 15, 2009a. “¡Sorprende! a todos visa canadiense.”
July 15, 2009b. “Nadie me dice qué hacer.”
July 16, 2009a. “Protesta la Cancillería por visa.”
July 16, 2009b. “Atora Canadá a Mexiquenses.”
July 16, 2009c. “Plaza Pública: Canadá apetecible, reticente.”
July 17, 2009a. “Templo mayor.”
July 17, 2009b. “Jaque Mate: Por una visa.”
July 19, 2009. “México y Canadá: ¿qué haremos?”

July 20, 2009. “De Política y Cosas Peores: Canadá.”

August 10, 2009. “Reprocha FCH visa canadiense.”

August 12, 2009. “Gaceta del Angel: Los días felices II.”

December 14, 2009. “Capitanes.”

Appendix A – Codebook

CODEBOOK

1. NEWSPAPER
1. Globe and Mail
2. National Post
3. Reforma
4. El Universal
5. La Jornada

2. DATE

3. CASE
1. H1N1 flu
2. Visa
3. Blackfire/Abarca

4. TYPE OF UNIT
1. Article
2. Editorial/Op Ed
3. Column
4. Letter

5. WORD COUNT

6. PAGE NUMBER/SECTION

7. GRAPHICS
1. Yes
2. No

8. ACTORS
1. President/Prime Minister/Governor General
2. Officials (including ministers, diplomats and government spokespersons)
3. International organization
4. Politicians
5. Researchers/experts
6. Private sector
7. Victims (people who suffer the consequences of the event)
8. Protesters
9. Media

9. SOURCES (who gives the information to the journalist?)

1. Canadian
2. Mexican
3. Canadian and Mexican
4. Other countries
5. International organization (UN, WHO, UNESCO, etc.)
6. Not stated in the story

10. KEY WORDS

Keywords Canada:

different/difference
Risk
Mysterious (when exoticising Mexico/cans)
Mexican Flu
Latino
unscrupulous/ scam
illegals
abuse/ abusive/ abuse-prone
burden
illegitimate/ fraudulent/ phony/spurious /dubious
undesirable
frighten/frightened/panic/fear/freak out (When related to Mexico/cans)
violence (when related to Mexico/cans)

Keywords Mexico:

(decisión) Unilateral/ exclusiva
problema/problemático
ricos
xenofobia
de golpe/súbito/repentino/sorprende/sorprendente/como bomba/intempestiva
apurado/apresurado/premura
déspota/despótico/desprecio
agresión
malestar/inconformidad/molestia