The Framing of Ethnic Minorities
A qualitative study of the framing of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in Colombia

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Abstract
In 1991, Colombia crafted a new Constitution that, after decades of ignorance, recognized the existence of ethnic minorities within the country. Special rights were given to the indigenous population while disregarding the even larger minority, afro-descendants. This thesis aims to identify how indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in Colombia are framed, with the argument that the use and effect of certain frames affect the groups’ mobilisation success. Material produced by the groups themselves as well as other actors within the context is analysed to identify frames, which are then put into the social and historical context of the groups to discuss how and why the specific frames are used. In the result, it was evident that the ethnicities are framed in similar ways, but due to their historical and social contexts, the frames have distinct effects, which can explain the groups’ unequal level of political representation in the country.

Keywords
Social mobilisation, frames, framing, political representation, New Social Movements Model, indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, Colombia.
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**Terminology**

**Afro-descendants:** The definition provided by the States of the Americas is used: “A person of African origin who lives in the Americas and in the region of the African Diaspora as a result of slavery, who have been denied the exercise of their fundamental rights”. This terminology has developed as the group has gained more recognition. This study uses the most recent terminology, afro-descendants, while older studies may refer to the same group as “blacks” or “Afro Colombians”. Statistics on the minority include everyone identifying themselves as ‘Black, Afrocolombian, Raizal and Palenquera’ with the two latter being ethnic communities living in Colombia (DANE, 2018).

**Indigenous peoples:** This refers to people of indigenous origin and/or who self-identify as part of the indigenous population in Colombia.
1. Introduction
The mobilization of ethnic minorities gained strength in Latin America during the 1980s, with an especially strong mobilization of indigenous peoples (Wade, 2010: 112). This resulted in five countries imposing quotas in the form of reserved seats, with the probable intention to increase the descriptive representation of the group (dos Santos, 2016: 158). The other large ethnic minority in Latin America, afro-descendants, solely acquired reserved seats in one country, Colombia (ibid). Considering the sizes of these two ethnic groups, with around 8 percent indigenous peoples and more than 20 percent afro-descendants living in the area, this can be considered quite unproportionate (CEPAL, 2014; CEPAL, 2019).

The political inclusion of ethnic minorities, and minorities in general, is not solely important from a humanitarian perspective but is also important for the maintenance of democracy. The exclusion of minorities generally leads to its members being less politically active with an exhibited less support for the democratic regime, showing that the inclusion of historically excluded groups should be of high concern for the sitting regime (Hänni & Saalfeld, 2020: 223). However, this has not been the case in Colombia, with ethnic minorities having been discriminated against since the early 1500s. Indigenous peoples and afro-descendants suffer disproportionately from poverty, unemployment and lack of access to basic social services (Hooker, 2005: 288; Viáfara-López, et al., 2021). During the last few decades, indigenous and afro-descendant movements have organized to demand equal rights and political inclusion, with indigenous mobilisation often considered more successful (Wade, 2010: 116). The thesis does not assume that indigenous peoples have more rights than afro-descendants since this is often presented as a fact without empirical evidence to support it. The first focus of this thesis is therefore to determine the level of political representation of the groups, to see if there is a difference between indigenous and afro-descendant representation.

Secondly, the thesis will analyse possible reasons for a potential difference in representation. One of the reasons behind indigenous success to gain representation is believed to be their ability to frame their needs around their collective identity, while afro-descendants are not legitimised as a culturally distinct group, and thus are seen as less in need of specific political rights (Hooker, 2005: 301-302). This thesis will examine material with the intention to apply the theories to an empirical setting and investigate if successful mobilisation can be attributed to the use of specific frames.
2. Research question and main purpose
This qualitative study will begin by portraying the current situation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in Colombia regarding their respective political representation. Based on the findings, I will analyse how the strategy of framing can explain the differences in political representation between the groups. The analysis will be based on the New Social Movements Model (NSM) to explain how groups mobilise around certain frames and detect possible differences in framing between the two ethnic groups. More specifically, a subcategory of the NSM model called collective action frames will be used, which are sets of action-oriented beliefs intended to legitimize and inspire social movements (Snow et al., 2018: 395). Within this field, there is a recent focus on the factors contributing to the use of various frames, which is why this study will intend to analyse the reasons for a possible difference in the usage of frames by indigenous peoples and afro-descendants. Further, the existence of master frames will be analysed, which are frames that are shared by several movements, such as ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, and women’s movements (ibid). The frames will be identified by conducting a textual analysis where questions are posed to the material in order to find how the problem is framed and presented.

This study will thus contribute with an increased knowledge of the mobilisation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants within Latin America, as well as provide empirical material to the theoretical framework of the NSM model. It also provides a framework to compare the political representation of ethnic groups. The research question is:

*How can collective action frames explain differences in indigenous and afro-descendant mobilisation success in Colombia?*

3. Theoretical framework and previous research
This section will present previous research on the topics of political representation and studies conducted on ethnic minorities and their mobilisation within Latin America. These are included since this thesis will draw from previous research with the intention of contributing to these fields. This is followed by the theoretical framework which the study will use, the New Social Movements Model, which is narrowed down to focus on collective action framing and master framing.
3.1 Previous research

Most studies on political representation rely on the findings of Hanna Pitkin in 1967. Her book, “The Concept of Representation”, highlighted the importance of separating the concepts of descriptive and substantive representation. The representation of ethnic minorities is discussed by Miriam Hänni and Thomas Saalfeld (2020), where a conceptual framework is presented. They stress the need for literature combining both ethno-national minority groups and ethnically defined immigrant groups, since these have previously been studied separately (ibid: 231). The political representation of ethnic minorities within Latin America has been studied by Karen Bird and Mala Htun, among others. Most of this research was conducted during the 2000s, showing the need for updated research within the region. Most studies on political representation within the region are focused on the political representation of indigenous peoples, while afro-descendants have often been overlooked despite their larger presence in the area. Bird (2004: 33) suggests that, to complement the theoretical research that has been conducted on political representation of minority groups, there is a need for detailed empirical work. Some in depth studies have been made, with a focus on Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, most likely due to their large presence of indigenous peoples, but the comparative research of ethnic minorities is lacking and do not provide enough empirical evidence and insight to reach saturation within the field. The first focus of this thesis is therefore to determine the level of representation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants using empirical evidence.

The second focus of the thesis will be on the reasons for the potential differences in rights acquired by indigenous peoples and afro-descendants. Juliet Hooker (2005) attributes the difference in inclusion between these groups to their cultural aspects and ability to use culture to create a strong group identity, which legitimizes the group’s claim to rights and provides incentives for the government to comply with the demands. This is different from previous explanations such as differences in population size, organizational capacity and differences in political mobilisation (Hooker, 2005: 290). Her study does not provide further empirical evidence to illustrate how the use of culture is conceptualised by the groups, which is why this study intends to provide this material. Wade (2010) has performed studies on both indigenous and afro-descendant movements, which he presents in his book “Race and Ethnicity in Latin America”. He also recognizes that indigenous mobilisation has been more successful than that of afro-descendants and attributes this difference to the historical institutionalisation of indigenous identity which they can organize around (Wade, 2010: 117). Afro-descendant
movements, who do not have this historic basis, have in many cases of their successful mobilisation been seen to adopt an indigenous-like stance (ibid). This thesis will build on these findings to see if they can explain the situation in Colombia.

Previous research has studied indigenous and afro-descendant movements with the intention of explaining their different rates of success, some of which have included a framing perspective in their argument (see Wade, 2010; Torres, 2008). These studies have been performed within Latin America, but not with a focus on one specific country. Empirical evidence of the use of framing is also lacking in the previous research, why this thesis intends to provide material to justify or dispute the claims made in the existing research. In order to analyse the frames used by the ethnic minorities, a theoretical framework will be used.

3.2 Theoretical framework
The theoretical framework that this study uses is the actor-oriented New Social Movement Model (NSM), which suggests that individuals gather around shared concepts of culture and ideology to successfully mobilize and is the most common framework used when studying social mobilisation in Latin America (Rice, 2012: 26). In contrast to old social movements who generally mobilized around class conflicts and material needs, the NSM model emphasises cultural and identity issues, such as ethnicity, environment, and gender (ibid: 25). The model argues that political opportunity and mobilising structures in themselves are not enough to explain collective action and presents shared meaning as crucial for the legitimization and motivation of collective action (ibid: 26). A strategy presented to facilitate shared meaning and legitimization is framing, since how a problem is framed will affect how it is perceived. This concept of framing is one of the model’s key contributions to social mobilisation research, and it is attributed with mobilizing ideas and meanings that mediate between structure and agency (ibid). NSM also suggests that the failure to mobilize can be accredited to an absence of a master frame, which are flexible frames that resonates with the larger population. A central trait for NSM scholars is the aversion to seeking change through formal institutions, with the belief that the strength of social movements lies in disruption rather than electing officials (ibid).

As introduced, the NSM model, in its focus on culture and identity, proposes that framing can legitimize collective action. This study intends to analyse how the problems of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants are framed in order to create legitimacy and successful
collective action, with success being conceptualized through higher levels of political representation. The subcategories of framing that this study will focus on are collective action frames and master frames, which are explained below.

3.2.1 Collective action frames
One of the focuses of the NSM model are collective action frames, which are sets of action-oriented beliefs intended to legitimize and inspire social movements (Snow et al., 2018: 395). Frames focus on how issues are discussed, rather than what issues are discussed. Frames are constructed as movement partisans develop a shared understanding of a problematic situation which they consider needs to be changed, of who or what is to blame, and how to acquire the change and how to include more in the action (Benford & Snow, 2000: 615). An inherent feature of the framing process is the construction of identity which further is linking personal and collective identity (ibid: 632). Given the actor-oriented nature of the NSM model, the identity is developed through talks among actors and activists, through movement activities and by situating relevant actors in time and space and by attributing characteristics to them which suggests specifiable lines of action (ibid). Snow et al. (2018: 395) state that the most recent focus of the research on collective action frames are the reasons for frame variation. Drawing from this, the study will intend to specify the factors for a possible difference in the framing used by the two ethnic minorities.

3.2.2 Master frames
The possible presence of master frames will also be analysed. These frames emerge when collective action frames, that are mainly context and movement specific, expand and become flexible enough to be adapted into the campaigns of other groups (Snow et al., 2018: 395). Master frames can include human rights, health, crime and justice among others, illustrating their flexibility to be used by several different movements (Dombos, 2012: 6). A master frame commonly observed in contexts of indigenous or ethnic movements is the civil rights frame, with a focus on equal rights and opportunities (Snow et al., 2018: 395). Benford (2013: 1) suggests that successful frames used by social movements will likely be modified and used by other social movements to further their own cause. However, it cannot be assumed that frames that have been successful for one group can be effectively adopted by another group (Snow et al., 2018: 395). This study will therefore analyse a possible existence of shared master frames in the context of Colombia while taking into consideration that the frames will very likely be
modified, as well as noting that a previously successful framing might not be beneficial when adapted by another group.

3.3 Key concepts

3.3.1 Political representation
There are several central concepts that will be used in this paper, calling for the need to define them. Firstly, the concept of political representation will be defined based on the findings of Hanna Pitkin, and therefore divided into descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation occurs when elected officials in their own personas and lives are typical to the ethnic group which they represent, they do not act for a certain group, but they belong to or ‘stand for’ the group through shared characteristics with the group (Hänni & Saalfeld, 2020: 223; Pitkin, 1967: 61). The concept can further be explained as a mirror of society; that the demography of the population is being reflected in its governmental institutions. Substantive representation, on the other hand, means “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin, 1967: 209). This indicates that the person does not have to be connected to the represented group, but focus lies on elected officials’ tendency to advocate on behalf of certain groups.

3.3.2 Ethnic minority
Other concepts to be defined are ethnic groups and minorities. According to Hänni and Saalfeld (2020: 222), an ethnic group is defined as “groups of people who share a common origin, language, culture or religion and are conscious of their group membership based on these shared attributes”. An ethnic minority is an ethnic group that lives in a country where the majority stems from a different ethnic origin. These groups can further be divided into autochthonous ethnic minorities and immigrant-origin ethnic minorities (ibid). This definition includes indigenous peoples since they share a common origin and culture as well as many speak shared languages (Sawe, 2019). Afro-descendants also fall under this definition since they share a common origin, culture, and some share languages as well as religion (ibid). Both groups can be defined as minorities since they do not belong to the majority consisting of Mestizos and White European Colombians (ibid).

3.3.3 Social exclusion
Lastly, social exclusion will be defined as: “the denial of equal access to opportunities imposed by certain groups of society upon others” (Buvinić, 2004: 5). This definition highlights that social exclusion affects culturally defined groups and that it is embedded in
social interaction (ibid). Indigenous peoples are met by structural barriers that limit their full social and economic inclusion, with this ethnicity making up an unproportionally large part of the poor and extremely poor in Latin America, which clearly illustrates that they are victims of social exclusion (World Bank, 2010). Afro-descendants are observed to have a lack of schooling, poor health and constrained labour market returns, which can be considered social exclusion according to the definition (World Bank, 2018: 30).

4. Research design

4.1 Case study and method

The paper will conduct a qualitative case study, where the political representation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants will be established in relation to each other. Further, the framing used by both groups will be analysed and compared with the intention of establishing the framing as a reason for a possible difference in political representation. Since the intention is to analyse the use of framing by the ethnic minorities, a qualitative case study is a logical choice since one need to deeply analyse certain material to find the frames used (Esaiasson et al., 2017: 211). The two cases are chosen since they are the main ethnic minorities in Colombia, and in the region of Latin America as a whole. Colombia is especially interesting since it is the only country in the region with affirmative actions to increase representation of both these ethnic minorities (dos Santos, 2016: 158). Since both groups have reserved seats in the Congress, this provides two cases that are rather similar, which is important when conducting a comparison (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 222ff). This follows the method of difference design, that both cases share important characteristics except for the independent variable, thus explaining the dependent variable (ibid). In the current study, this means that varieties in framing should explain the differences in political representation. Benefits with using a qualititative method is that temporality and the causal mechanism can with more likelihood be established (ibid: 270-271). This means that in this thesis, a qualitative case study provides profitable conditions to establish that it is in fact framing that affects representation, and not the other way around, as well as how the former affects the latter.

The method that will be used to analyse the material is a textual analysis, with a focus on framing and how these are used by the ethnic minorities to present their needs. The recipient of a text is the one providing its meaning, since contexts, biases and perceptions influence how someone understands a text (Esaiasson et al., 2017: 217). This is true for how a problem
is framed as well: how the recipient understands the problem depends on how it is framed in
the text. The framing is important for how an actor perceive and handles the problem, making
this an appropriate method as framing likely influences the Colombian government’s response
to indigenous and afro-descendant demands (ibid: 218). The questions that will be asked to
the material are adapted from Bacchi’s WPR (“What’s the Problem Represented to Be?”)
approach, and are the following:

1. What is the problem framed to be?
2. How has this framing of the problem come about?
3. What effects are produced by this framing of the problem?

The use of this method is beneficial for this study since it aims to compare the use of framing
by the two ethnic minorities, and how this affects their political representation. According to
Carol Bacchi (2012), concepts should be considered in terms of the specific context to which
they are attached. Therefore, it is of importance to analyse what is being attributed to the two
minorities in order to understand how they mobilise to attain political rights since one cannot
understand this process without including the historical and cultural context within which it is
set. Bacchi (2012: 21) originally presents six questions, with one concerning what is being left
unproblematised, one focusing on the assumptions that underlie the framing of the problem,
and one concerning how the framing has been produced, disseminated, and defended, and
how it has been questioned, disrupted and replaced. Considering that this study intends to
compare the use of frames, the production and development of the frames in question are not
relevant and this question will not be included. What is being left out and what assumptions
are being made in the framing is not important either, since it is the actual framing that is of
interest for the purposes of this thesis. This method will provide validity to the thesis since it
investigates what the study intends to: the extent to which framing can explain the level of
success of indigenous and afro-descendent mobilisation.

4.2 Operationalization
To be able to measure the level of political representation for indigenous peoples and afro-
descendants, an operationalization of descriptive and substantive representation is necessary.
Descriptive representation will be measured through the ratio between the minority population
in the country and the number of seats they hold in Congress. Colombia has reserved seats for
the members of these minorities, and the representatives that hold these positions are
presented clearly on the governmental website, but there is no information that I have found that states what the representatives self-identify as. This creates a difficulty in finding exactly how many indigenous people and afro-descendants that holds a position in the Chamber of Deputies (“Chamber”) or the Senate, apart from the reserved seats. This has for afro-descendants been resolved by looking at the members of Bancada Afrocolombiana, which is an alliance/voting bloc within the government promoting afro-descendant rights (Congreso Visible, ND, a). Considering that all representatives holding the reserved seats are part of the alliance, this paper will assume that all afro-descendant representatives are members of the alliance. For indigenous peoples, considering that most politicians who self-identify as indigenous belong to an indigenous party, all representatives who belong to an indigenous party will be considered indigenous (Cortes & Vega, 2012: 2).

Substantive representation is more complicated to operationalize since it intends to measure the effects certain policy decisions have on the represented group, which is not straightforward nor easy to measure. Since substantive representation is how certain groups are being represented regarding their actual interests, it does not matter who is advocating the beneficial policy. This will be operationalized by looking at the focus on indigenous peoples and/or afro-descendants in the legislative reports of the current senators. This will illustrate to what extent these groups are being represented in the policy proposals of the elected Senators since these proposals have the intention of improving the rights of ethnic minorities and are thus representing their interests. The legislative reports contain several sections, and the sections I will look at is the “Legislative projects and/or legislative project actions” and “Propositions” (my translation), since these sections includes the Senators’ policy proposals. The result of this operationalization will solely provide a base to compare the substantive representation of the two ethnic minorities, since the number obtained cannot be placed in relation to anything substantial. If this operationalization would be used to compare the representation in different countries, the number of proposals with an indigenous or afro-descendant focus in relation to the total number of proposals could be used to receive an overall percentage of representation. However, since the purpose of this operationalization is to determine if the political representations of the ethnic minorities differ, this is not necessary for this study.

The framing strategies used by the ethnic groups will be identified via the questions presented earlier. Since there is not extensive research on the subject, the analysis will apply an open
approach without premade conceptions regarding possible frames (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 223). Drawing from previous research, however, this section will provide some expectations of what the frames could be. In line with the findings of Hooker (2005), I expect to find a more prominent use of identity and culture by indigenous movements, while movements for afro-descendant's rights are expected to frame their struggle as racial discrimination. Indigenous movements are thus expected to use a cultural frame, while afro-descendants are not believed to gather around a shared identity in the same way. This can be conceptualized using “culture”, “identity”, and references to the history of indigenous peoples in the region by referencing a “recuperation” of territory and “regaining” autonomy. Afro-descendants are more likely, with the frame of racial discrimination, to have a discourse that focuses on the historical exclusion of this group, with equality being at the center of their argument. This framing can include lifting historical discrimination such as enslavement, the symbol of Christopher Columbus, and use of racial language. Since indigenous mobilisation has been attributed with more legitimacy than their afro-descendant counterparts, part of their material is believed to use similar words as indigenous movements (“culture”, “we”, “history”) as a strategy to increase their own legitimacy (Wade, 2010: 117). The material will not only include situations when the ethnic groups frame their own problems but also how other actors are framing the minorities, showing a general view on the identities of the groups.

4.3 Material and time period
The material that will be used is produced in 2021, since the aim of the study is to describe and analyse the current situation in Colombia, presenting the need for contemporary information. Certain material, such as ideological platforms, do not specify when they were produced, however considering that the next election is in 2022, these platforms should be up to date. According to the NSM model, actors are the sources for collective action, which is why the material will have an action-based focus through direct manifestations of ethnic parties and social movements. However, since the model also presents the possibility of master frames that are present across society, material from institutional websites and media will also be included, to see if there are shared master frames in Colombia.

To determine the descriptive representation of the ethnic minorities, material from the Colombian government website will be used. Lists of all Senators and Representatives in Chamber are provided here, via which one can see how many belong to the ethnic minorities according to my operationalization of descriptive representation. The level of substantive
representation is, as described, found in the Senators’ legislative reports, meaning that this material will be used. There are 103 reports in total, covering the respective Senator’s activity during 2020/2021.

The material used to analyse the collective action frames will come from different sources since it is not only of interest to analyse how the groups identify themselves, but how their framing is manifested in society’s perception of them. The ideological platforms of ethnic parties and social organizations will be included since these portray how the minorities frame themselves. Information posted on the governmental website ‘www.mininterior.org.co’ regarding the ethnic groups will be used to analyse how the government describes and frames the struggles of the groups. Newspaper articles will be used to see if media uses a similar framing as the minorities, which will indicate the existence of master frames. Similar material concerning both ethnic groups has been gathered, with the intention to perform a comparative analysis. The material includes:

1) The ideological platform of ‘Movimiento Alternativo Indígena y Social’ (MAIS), an indigenous political party,
2) The ideological platform of ‘Movimiento Nacional Cimarrón’, an afro-descendant social movement,
3) Information on the governmental website about the International Day of Indigenous Peoples,
4) Information of the governmental website about a plan for ethnic development,
5) A newspaper article covering the indigenous struggle in Colombia,
6) A newspaper article covering the afro-descendant struggle in Colombia.

4.4 Limitations
The strength of a qualitative case study is, as mentioned, the establishment of temporality as well as causal mechanism, while often presenting limitations in both isolation and establishment of covariation (Teorell & Svensson, 2007: 270-271). There could be other variables affecting the political representation of the ethnic groups, as well as it could be a coincidence that the variables seem to affect each other. However, the choice of method intends to amend these issues, since the aim is to analyse how the ethnic groups use framing and how this can explain their differences in political representation. There could be other
reasons for the difference in representation as well as the covariation can be circumstantial, but the study will provide empirical evidence for how the groups use framing anyways.

Limitations with operationalization of descriptive representation since information of which representatives self-identify as indigenous or afro-descendant is not clear, and I had to operationalize this myself. There could well be representatives that this paper has missed due to them not being members of Bancada Afrocolombiana or not belonging to an indigenous party or representatives that have been included without belonging to these ethnicities. However, taking into consideration that all representatives that were clearly presented as afro-descendants are part of the alliance, and indigenous representatives have a history of belonging to indigenous parties, this operationalization will work for the purposes of this study. The difficulties with operationalizing substantive representation could also bring limitations to the paper since there are several parameters that one can include in the definition of the concept. Using another operationalization could lead to a different result in the question of which of the two groups are more politically represented. However, since this is not the focus of the paper but rather a measurement to illustrate that a difference exists, it will not drastically affect the quality of the analysis. Further, since the concept of political representation is relative to the situation in each country, this is something that needs to be taken into consideration if conducting a similar study in another country or region.

In choosing the material, some limitations have been encountered. Considering the differences in the groups, with indigenous peoples having a stronger shared identity and expressing many of their needs through political institutions via their own parties, and afro-descendants being more spread across the country and not being as coherent in their strategy, this presents a difficulty in gathering equal material. Similar material is necessary to be able to justifiably compare the results, which is why this has been the goal. Due to a general lack of information concerning the ethnic minorities in Colombia, as well as a very different approach used by both the groups themselves and the government, completely equal material has not been found. To illustrate: on the Colombian governmental website, no similar material was found regarding the groups, and two different publications were used. Nevertheless, this thesis argues that the frames should be visible all throughout society and thus in all channels concerning the groups, which is why the kind of material is not as important if it clearly presents the problem/struggle of the ethnicities, with the expectation that the frames will be portrayed in this presentation. The interpretation of the material could present some issues in
the reliability of the thesis. Since the thesis does not use a predetermined set of frames in its analysis, different researchers could find other frames in the material, depending on previous knowledge and bias. Considering that there is not enough research on the subject that could provide a clear analytical framework to identify the use of frames, this strategy is most suitable for the purposes of the thesis. Nevertheless, this method does provide potential issues with reliability.

5. Background
Considering that the effects of certain frames depend on the historic and societal context in which they are set, this section will provide a background of the situation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in Colombia, as well as describe the country’s political system since the groups act within this context.

5.1 Basic information
In Colombia, of the 50.8 million population, 3.8% is indigenous and 9.34% identify as afro-descendant, with many institutions suspecting that the number of afro-descendants is even higher (Mendoza, 2021: 361; Congreso Visible, ND, a). The country’s constitution is from 1991, and it can be seen as a turning point for the representation of the ethnic minorities in the country. During the 1980’s, the mobilization of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants intensified, with the constitution of 1991 marking the recognition of their struggle (Cortes & Vega, 2012: 4). Because indigenous movements were more organized when the constitution was drafted, two indigenous members were included in the committee writing the constitution, the National Constituent Assembly, which led to two reserved seats in the Senate for indigenous representatives (ibid). The constitution also recognized Colombia as multinational and multi-ethnic, giving important recognition to the ethnic minorities in the country. In 1993, two reserved seats for afro-descendant representatives in the Chamber were added to the Constitution, and in 2001, one reserved seat in the Chamber for an indigenous representative was included (ibid).

The Colombian Congress consist of two branches, a 105-seat Senate and a 167-seat Chamber of Deputies (Cortes & Vega, 2012: 6; CrC, ND, a; CrC, ND, b). In the Senate, indigenous representatives have two reserved seats while they have one reserved seat in the Chamber (Cortes & Vega, 2012: 5). Afro-descendants have two reserved seats in the Chamber, and
none in the Senate (ibid: 4). Elections are held every four years, with a national election for the Senate and a departmental election for Chamber (Canal Capital, 2018). The Senate has more power than the Chamber, and its focus is on the whole nation. The assignations of the Chamber are rather similar, while they mainly represent the constituents of their respective departments (ibid).

5.2 Historical context
The historical context of the ethnic minorities in Colombia dates back to the “discovery” of America in 1492, which is also known as the beginning of the indigenous genocide (Caballero, ND: 1). Many indigenous people were enslaved, with harsh working conditions and diseases brought by the colonizers leading to their rapid demise (World Bank, 2018: 37). The demand for cheap labour led to the importation of slaves from Africa to colonies in Colombia from the 1520s and onward (ibid). Society was controlled by a small white elite, and other ethnicities were systematically demoted to the lowest castes in society (ibid: 38). After slavery was abolished in 1852, the previous system of castes was dismantled, but the Europeans, who were seen as modern, were still considered superior to the black populations and indigenous peoples, who were associated with the past and tradition (ibid: 40, 42). From 1880 to 1930, there was a period of whitening in Latin America, with many countries, including Colombia, encouraging Europeans to migrate with the goal of creating a whiter population (ibid: 41). From 1930, the concept of Mestizaje started to gain popularity. Mestizo means mixed-blood, and the Mestizaje celebrated these identities, with the notion that mestizos would lead to harmonious race relations and a solution to racial tensions (ibid). In Colombia, the legacy of indigenous ancestors was emphasized, and mestizos of African descent were not recognized. The concept of Mestizaje lead the population to the notion that all citizens were mixed race and living in racial harmony (ibid). Nonetheless, racial inequality still existed but was discredited and silenced by this concept, since racial differentiation was seen as inciting racism (ibid: 43). Throughout the 1900s, afro-descendants were not recognized as an ethnic group and were excluded from national censuses, while indigenous populations were included.

In the 1980s, social mobilisation of indigenous and black populations initiated a change, leading up to the Constitution of 1991. This meant greater visibility and representation for ethnic minorities, but it also created electoral competition among afro-descendant movements and parties, leading to political fragmentation (Cortes & Vega, 2012: 5). Since indigenous
movements had a larger and more established network, with most organizations working under the umbrella of ONIC (National Indigenous Organisation of Colombia), political fragmentation was not observed within this group (ibid). Political rights were solely attributed to rural afro-descendant communities, disregarding the large quantities living in urban societies (World Bank, 2018: 46). Since indigenous populations had already achieved some recognition, and generally lived in rural areas and were culturally distinct, only afro-descendants who shared characteristics with those populations were recognized as an ethnic group (ibid). Today, the definition of afro-descendants has become more inclusive, but laws recognizing the rights of these communities still only pertain to cultural difference and land rights, disregarding claims of racism and racial discrimination (ibid). In the 2005 census afro-descendants, both rural and urban, could identify themselves, which indicates a development in the right direction.

5.3 Social context
Colombia has during many years been characterized by internal conflict. The country hosts several guerrilla armies and paramilitaries who are active across the nation. The Colombian government reached a peace agreement with the largest guerrilla group, FARC, in 2016, which many since has been opposed to and the expected effects have not been seen (Mendoza, 2021: 363). In 2018, President Ivan Duque was elected, leading to an intensification in the conflict since he is strongly against the agreement and believes that the guerrillas should be defeated with violence. Reports have shown that indigenous peoples and afro-descendant, specifically women, are disproportionately vulnerable to violence and displacement, as well as ethnic minorities suffer from environmental threats and land grabbing from extractive industries, considering their vast territorial control (Tenure Facility, 2018). Between 2018 and 2020, 112 indigenous peoples died because of the conflict, while afro-descendants’ deaths have not been fully differentiated in the records (Mendoza, 2021: 364). The target of these groups derives from their involvement in crop substitution, land restitution, reparation of victims and defence of environmental rights, among other factors. Ethnic leaders are met by threats, attacks, assassinations and displacements (ibid).

The COVID-19 pandemic is another important characteristic of the current situation for ethnic minorities in Colombia. Because of the powers granted President Duque during the State of Emergency that was declared during the pandemic, laws that protect constitutional principles of individual and collective rights were dismantled, including the statement in the
Constitution that Colombia is a multicultural and multi-ethnic state (Mendoza, 2021: 362-363). This threatens the fundamental rights of ethnic minorities in the country and the space for different cultures to exist within the nation (ibid).

6. Results and analysis
In this section, the results from the operationalization on descriptive and substantive representation will be presented. This is followed by a presentation on the textual analysis, where each question that is posed to the material will be discussed individually. Lastly, these results will be discussed.

6.1 Political representation
On the Colombian government website, the politicians who hold a seat in Chamber and Senate are provided. In Chamber, there are two indigenous and 13 afro-descendent representatives (Congreso Visible, ND, b). Of these, one of the indigenous representatives and two of the afro-descendant representatives hold the reserved seats for these minorities. The remaining one indigenous and 11 afro-descendant representatives were elected in the national election without special circumstances. In the Senate, two seats are occupied by indigenous representatives and two by afro-descendant representatives. In total, there are 167 Representatives in the Chamber and 105 Senators, amounting to a descriptive representation of indigenous peoples of 1,2% in Chamber and 1,9% in the Senate. For afro-descendants, the representation is 7,8% in Chamber and 1,9% in the Senate. To find the level of representation, the percentage in Chamber is divided by the percentage in the population.

Table 1: Level of descriptive representation in the Colombian Congress 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Representation in the Chamber of Deputies*</th>
<th>Representation in the Senate*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples</td>
<td>31,6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-descendants</td>
<td>83,5%</td>
<td>20,4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*100% = full descriptive representation

The numbers presented in Table 1 clearly show that afro-descendants have a high level of descriptive representation regionally, as the representatives of the Chamber are chosen in local elections. The indigenous populations’ lack of representation on this level can be explained by the demographics of the groups: since afro-descendants generally live in urban
areas and are spread out across the country, while indigenous peoples tend to gather in rural areas, this should mean that fewer elections for Chamber have indigenous voters (Hooker, 2005: 294). Regarding the Senate, indigenous peoples enjoy a higher level of representation than afro-descendants. The ethnic groups have the same number of representatives in the Senate, but since afro-descendants make up a larger part of the population, their descriptive representation is lower. This can have several explanations. Firstly, there is one reserved seat for one indigenous representative in the Senate, meaning that this group is guaranteed some level of representation. Secondly, this can indicate a larger public support for indigenous representatives, since afro-descendants constitute a larger percentage of the voters and should have higher representation. Reasonably, non-indigenous constituents voted to a higher degree on indigenous representatives than afro-descendant representatives in the election for Senate.

The result of the substantive representation is presented in the table below. It shows that projects affecting afro-descendants are included in the Senator’s legislative reports almost as often as projects affecting indigenous peoples. The results also demonstrate a tendency for Senators who support a project affecting indigenous peoples, to support several projects. This is concluded from the frequency that indigenous projects are included in the reports, which are included almost 50% more than their afro-descendant counterparts. The total percentage of Senators who include the ethnic minorities is very low considering the groups’ sizes and vulnerabilities, especially considering the current social context of internal conflict and the pandemic. The frequent inclusion of an ethnic group in the legislative report was mostly seen by Senators who belong to the ethnic group, especially in the case of indigenous Senators.

In conclusion, these results show that the substantive representation of both indigenous peoples and afro-descendants is relatively low in Colombia, with the level of representation of indigenous peoples being slightly higher than that of afro-descendants.

Table 2: Level of substantive representation in the Colombian Congress 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of mentions</th>
<th>No. of Senators mentioning the group</th>
<th>% of Senators mentioning the group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Peoples</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-descendants</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results presented show that the overall political representation of both groups is rather low in Colombia. Nonetheless, the results of both the descriptive and the substantive representation indicate that indigenous peoples enjoy a higher level of political representation than afro-descendants, especially when factoring in the sizes of the groups. Afro-descendants make up a much larger part of the population, which should result in more representation, at least descriptive, which is not the case in Colombia according to these results.

6.2 Textual analysis
In this section, the material will be asked the following questions:

1. What is the problem framed to be?
2. How has this framing of the problem come about?
3. What effects are produced by this framing of the problem?

The first question will be answered directly by the material. Examples will be provided to highlight how the different texts use framing, as well as some comparisons will be drawn. Question two has to do with the historic context of the minorities, why this will compare the findings in the texts with the section above regarding their historic contexts. The last question concerns the effects of the frames used, which in this thesis is theorized to be the level of political representation. This question will therefore be a discussion about possible reasons for how the framings used in the material have led to the political representation experienced by the minorities. Material that is similar for both ethnic groups will be presented together.

6.2.1 Frames
In the ideological platform of MAIS, the party describes their goals and provides solutions, whereas the problems they outline will be the focus of the analysis. The platform has two main focuses: the Colombian internal conflict and the environment. Within these focuses, three collective action frames can be identified: innocence, environment, and ancestry/tradition. Innocence is identified as the text repeatedly frames indigenous peoples as victims of internal conflict, of environmental degradation, and of discrimination (MAIS, ND: 2). The text’s framing also highlights the culture of indigenous peoples. Indigenous populations are attributed with certain characteristics, such as a Mother Earth being the heart of their culture, which are presented as desirable in the manifest: harmony with nature,
protecting Mother Earth and its “ancestral” uses (ibid: 1-2; UNESCO, ND). This actively frames indigenous peoples as an important, natural and obvious part of society who deserve equal rights. The text also uses frames in line with the expectations previously presented:

“(…) to tell the country that a unity of minorities forms a majority that are capable of retaking the political power of the people” (MAIS, ND: 1, my translation).

The text frames indigenous peoples as the original rulers, with the desire to retake that control. The political party uses collective action frames to present indigenous peoples as a traditional and natural part of Colombian demographics, who have received the most negative consequences by the internal conflict, and therefore earns more representation. The ideological platform of the Cimarrón Movement presents the objectives of the afro-descendant organization. As in the ideological platform of MAIS, innocence as a collective action frame can be identified in this text, suggesting the existence of a master frame. Several examples are given of the inferior position afro-descendants are held in, such as poverty, racism, racial discrimination and the weakness of social and political organizations (Cimarrón, ND: 1). They attribute these disadvantages to the history of enslavement:

“(…) in favour of the communities of afro-descendants for the crimes of enslavements, poverty, backwards education, violence, racism, discrimination, all which have been moulded during centuries of Spanish colonialism and by the republic itself.” (Cimarrón, ND: 2, my translation).

This framing of afro-descendants as victims of enslavement is repeated throughout the text, with a focus on racism, exploitation and discrimination that build the foundation for the demand of equal rights. There is also a slight presence of an identity frame. The text mentions “Africanity” and that afro-descendants should “know their history” (Cimarrón, ND: 1, 3). This is an indication that afro-descendant movements are trying to increase their legitimacy as an ethnic group, with a shared culture and identity.

On the governmental website, www.mininterior.gov.co, there is a publication about the International Day of Indigenous Peoples. This day is celebrated across the world to illuminate
indigenous rights. In the text, two frames are identified: indigenous peoples are framed as rather primitive, and as the country’s legacy. The publication states:

“(…) our own ancestry”, “(…) our history and our legacy” (Mininterior, ND, my translation).

These extracts show how the government frames indigenous peoples as the country’s legacy and history and are justifying their demands for equal rights from this perspective. They are also framing indigenous peoples as primitive, as they present health care, education, preservation of traditions and access to the advantages of the modern world as areas within which they need increased rights, with no mentioning of political rights (Mininterior, ND). That they should have the right to access the modern world frames indigenous peoples as rather primitive, with the notion that they cannot develop without the help of others. This is shown at the end of the text as well:

“(…) as well as they need support to also be able to access a better future” (Mininterior, ND, my translation).

This shows the framing of indigenous peoples as a primitive people, who need to access a better future and cannot do so without support. The corresponding governmental publication with an afro-descendant focus is a plan for ethnic development. In the plan, afro-descendants are framed quite similarly to indigenous peoples:

“To promote, in a secure, ordered and sustainable way, the use and exploitation of territory, the execution of autonomy, the protection of cultural identity and the ancestral practices” (Mininterior, 2021: 2, my translation).

Afro-descendants are attributed with a cultural identity, their history is acknowledged as well as their right to territory and autonomy. This can indicate that the afro-descendant strategy to legitimize their cause by using similar frames of culture and identity as indigenous movements has been successful, with the government now attributing them with these traits (Wade, 2010: 117). The text also says:

“(…) at harmony with nature” (Mininterior, 2021: 3, my translation)
This connects to a previously used framing of indigenous peoples, in the ideological platform of MAIS, indicating that a master frame of environmental protection exists for both ethnic groups.

The article about the indigenous struggle describes how indigenous leaders are affected by the internal conflict. It has two main frames: innocence and history. Indigenous peoples are presented as one of the most vulnerable populations of the internal conflict, both historically and presently (Sardiña, 2021). The framing of innocence is seen throughout the article:

“(...) there is an institutional weakness within the territories regarding fundamental rights for life, education, the Earth and especially human rights” (Sardiña, 2021, my translation).

Indigenous peoples are framed as victims of a society that is systematically disadvantageous. This further strengthens the notion that a master frame of innocence is present in Colombia. Their rights are also justified through a framing of history:

“Peaceful recuperation of ancestral territory” (Sardiña, 2021, my translation).

The use of the word “recuperation” highlights the historic connection of indigenous peoples and is used to legitimize their claim to the territory. In the article about the afro-descendant struggle in Colombia, there are not as strong frames as in the other material. Two frames that can be identified are identity and innocence. In the article, an afro-descendant professor state:

“It’s a way of telling Colombia and its people that we are a people who historically has contributed to the construction of who we are today” (Cortés, 2021, my translation).

This frames afro-descendants as one people, increasing their legitimacy as a group with shared identity and culture. The article also discusses how the afro-descendant perspective has historically been forgotten, with the goal that these perspectives will now become a point of reference in the construction of scientific, social and political knowledge (Cortés, 2021). The reasons for the exclusion of this perspective, and for the lack of opportunities for afro-
descendants, is attributed to systemic racism and low efforts by the state. This can indicate the use of an innocence frame, since the article declares that less public spending is directed towards afro-descendant communities, and that the people have the potential, suggesting that they are the victims of unequal rights and opportunities (ibid). This resembles the framing of innocence which has been identified in a lot of the previous material.

6.2.2 Historic impact
To answer the question of how the framing has come about, one must look beyond the material and put it into its historic context. Framing of problems often uses history to resonate with the recipient of the text, convincing them that the group’s demands (here: political representation) are reasonable and deserved, based on the group’s historic context. In the analysis of frames, six frames were identified: innocence, historic exclusion, environmental protection, ancestry/tradition, primitive and identity/culture. The first frame, innocence, was used in four of the texts, two times to frame indigenous peoples and two times to frame afro-descendants and can be considered a master frame. The use of this frame can be connected to the history of the groups, reflecting how they have always been in an inferior role, a victim role, to the white Europeans. The social hierarchies that were moulded during the period of enslavement are still visible in the Colombian society, causing the social exclusion of these ethnic minorities and presenting difficulties in their struggle for equal rights. Framing the ethnic groups as innocent is drawing from this historic experience and legitimizing their demands: since they have been taken advantage of since the 1500s, they deserve equal rights today.

The reference to historic exclusion has a similar background as the innocence frame. It is used once to frame each group in the material. When framing indigenous mobilization, it uses the word “recuperation”, referencing the autonomy over territory these groups had before the Europeans came. Using this frame, it presents indigenous peoples as the original rulers, and thus deserving of getting their power back.

The frame of environmental protection is used once to frame indigenous peoples and one in the framing of afro-descendants. This frame portrays these groups as nurturing, caring and peaceful, since there are in harmony with nature and protect it. This frame resonates with the indigenous connection to nature and might indicate the tendency of framing afro-descendants similarly to indigenous groups. It is an effective frame to portray these minorities’
vulnerability, considering the ongoing land grabbing from extractive industries. Framing the groups as peaceful and harmonious with nature effectively portrays the government and companies exploiting their territory as the guilty parties, once again highlighting the innocence of the minorities.

Indigenous peoples are further framed as primitive and attributed with ancestry and tradition. These frames can be connected to the historical view on indigenous populations as part of the past, ancient and traditional. It is the governmental website that uses the framing of primitive, which reflects a tendency by the State to view indigenous populations in the same way as in the 1900s, which can explain why they suffer from discrimination and insufficient rights. The framing of ancestry and tradition can also be connected to this view on indigenous peoples; however, it can also be interpreted as the framing of historic exclusion: since indigenous populations are the original inhabitants of Colombia, they deserve equal rights.

The last framing, identity/culture, is used in the material to justify the rights of afro-descendants. It is not used in the material portraying indigenous peoples, which is rather surprising since all previous research suggests that this frame is widely used by indigenous peoples. However, indigenous populations have been attributed with a shared identity and distinct culture, considering their inclusion in national censuses during the 1900s when afro-descendants were excluded. This could signify that this frame is no longer necessary to use since it has become self-evident. The use of identity/culture to frame afro-descendants can thus imply that this is a master frame, adapted from indigenous movements to legitimize afro-descendants as a culturally distinct group.

6.2.3 Discussion
What effects that are produced by the framing cannot be answered directly by the material since the material does not specify what consequences its framing has. This section will focus on the connection between the results of political representation and the materials’ framing to see how the latter affects minorities’ representation. Since the analysis found the use of similar frames by the groups, it is evident that collective action frames cannot solely explain the differences in mobilisation success. This section will intend to provide reasons for the lower level of political representation experienced by afro-descendants, especially in situations where similar collective action frames have been used.
As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Snow et al. (2018: 395) state that the most recent focus of the research on collective action frames is the reasons for frame variation. In the analysis, one can identify that the groups to a large extent use the same frames, with some variation. This variation can be attributed to the different contexts of the groups, with indigenous movements being more acknowledged due to their clear cultural distinction and long history of successful mobilisation. Afro-descendants have been able to adapt to indigenous frames in order to increase their own legitimacy as an ethnic and cultural group, which is why the identity and culture frame was identified in all the materials. Throughout the analysis, one can identify a consequent use by both groups of shared meaning to motivate collective action, with repeated use of a shared history, culture, and identity to legitimate mobilisation (Rice, 2012: 26).

The analysis discovered that afro-descendants are to a large extent attributed the same frames as historically used to frame indigenous peoples: using the frames of identity, culture, and environmental protectors. This reverberates with the expectation made earlier in this thesis that afro-descendants are likely to use indigenous framing since these groups have been more successful in creating legitimacy and successful collective action. This is especially visible in the governmental project, which identifies afro-descendants as a culturally distinct group, with ancestral practices and a shared identity (Mininterior, 2021: 2). For indigenous peoples, however, their historically used frames do not seem to develop their identity to the same extent as for afro-descendants. The governmental publication frames them in the same way as during the 1900s, portraying them as primitive and unmodern. This indicates that the effect of the framing of indigenous peoples, using words such as legacy and tradition, is hindering a developed perception of the group, and their inclusion within a modern society.

That the adaptation of the identity/culture frame by afro-descendants has not been as successful for their mobilisation as the original frame used by indigenous peoples is predicted in the NSM model. Adapted master frames are not always effective when used by another group, which can explain the lower level of political representation seen for afro-descendants (Snow et al., 2018: 395). Another similar frame that was observed to portray both indigenous peoples and afro-descendants was the innocence frame, which was especially frequent in the material and could be identified within other framings as well. The effects of using innocence to frame the ethnic minorities can be a resonance within the general population that these
groups deserve representation since they have been victims without their own voices for several centuries. This fits into the civil rights frame presented in the theoretical framework, which highlights equal rights and opportunities, and suggests that this is a master frame used by both minorities. Again, even though indigenous movements have successfully mobilized around this framing, afro-descendants have not been as successful (Torres, 2008: 141). This can be explained by the historical context of the group; as a result of the Mestizaje in the 1900s, among other factors, afro-descendants are still not fully recognized as an ethnic group. Justifying their demand for rights using the frame of innocence thus loses its effect, since many do not attribute this group with a joint history of discrimination.

The findings of this analysis have two significations. Firstly, it finds that afro-descendants uses similar frames as indigenous peoples in order to increase their legitimacy as an ethnic group. Indigenous peoples’ use of the frames is more successful, considering their higher level of political representation, but the adaptation of indigenous frames seems to be increasing afro-descendant movement’s legitimacy. Secondly, while the framing of tradition, culture, and identity seems to increase afro-descendant’s legitimacy, it hinders the image of indigenous populations from developing and adapting to the modern world. This would explain why the group is underrepresented within politics since the ethnicity’s main goals are framed primarily as regaining control over land and having influence over crop production (Crc, ND, b).

Connecting back to the purpose of this thesis, the analysis shows that the successful mobilisation of ethnic movements cannot solely be attributed to the use of specific frames. The use of frames can legitimize groups and lead to successful mobilization, but this success cannot be attributed to the specific frames. The effects are determined to a large extent by the historical and social contexts of the groups, which is why there is a difference in the success of indigenous and afro-descendant movements, despite their use of similar frames.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has had a two-part focus: identifying the political representation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants and providing explanations for how the use of frames affect the differences in successful mobilisation. It found that even though the groups are framed similarly, indigenous peoples have a higher level of political representation than afro-descendants. This difference was explained by the historical and social contexts of the groups,
which affects the effect of the framing, thus limiting the extent to which collective action frames alone can explain differences in social mobilisation. The results were in line with previous research within the field, which has suggested that the cultural framing of indigenous peoples has resonated better with the State than a similar framing of afro-descendants. However, the thesis found that afro-descendants are gaining legitimacy as a culturally distinct group, which is a recent development. It also found that the framing of indigenous peoples as traditional is effective in their legitimization as a group but might hinder their further development into the social and political sphere.

The main contribution of this thesis is the empirical evidence since this is not provided within many similar studies. The result and analysis have also provided evidence for the NSM model since the claims of this theoretical framework could be identified and proven using the material. Considering the complexity of explaining the effects of historical and social contexts, this thesis has provided a starting point for future research within the field. More empirical research is necessary to fully understand and explain social mobilisation of ethnic minorities in Latin America.

Other potential factors that affect the mobilisation success have not been taken into consideration in this thesis. These factors could include international support, cooperation with NGOs and other organisations, and financial support. Considering the different perceptions of the ethnic minorities by the outside world, this could signify a difference within the external support they receive, possibly affecting their ability to successfully mobilise. Other strategies used by the ethnic minorities, apart from framing, have not been analysed in this thesis either, whereas factors such as political opportunities also could explain the level of mobilisation success.
8. List of references


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