The Voices of the Unheard

A postcolonial analysis of how indigeneity is discursively (re)produced by international donors

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Bachelor Thesis
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Word Count: 13 441
Abstract

In the last 20 years, international donors have made efforts to increase the participation of minorities into development programmes. Despite these efforts, development actors continues to receive critique from postcolonial theorists for continuing to reinforce neocolonial and Western-centered tendencies onto minorities. Given this background, the purpose of this study is to investigate how indigenous peoples in Latin America and their issues are represented and allowed to participate in and challenge the development agenda. This is done by analysing how ‘indigeneity’ and indigenous peoples’ issues are portrayed in reports by international donors. Through a discourse analysis of two reports from the World Bank and ECLAC, this study finds that indigenous peoples are still not allowed to challenge the standard development agenda. Even though improvements have been made concerning explicit representations of indigenous peoples knowledges and values as inferior, the findings of this study show that indigenous peoples’ issues are often represented to be legitimate only when its moved to Western frameworks. These findings suggest that postcolonial attitudes towards indigenous peoples are still integrated in development programmes. This study however encourages further research of postcolonial attitudes towards indigenous peoples within international donors, and how international donors can improve in these aspects.

Keywords:
Indigeneity, postcolonial theory, United Nations, World Bank
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1. Introduction

Over the last 20 years, international donors have increased the inclusion of minorities, such as indigenous peoples, into their development programmes. The United Nations Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) states that progress has been made in terms of promoting indigenous peoples’ participation in policymaking and the political sphere, and that their engagement with indigenous peoples is grounded in a vision of protecting their rights and maintaining their cultures and way of life (ECLAC, 2019b). Another important development actor, the World Bank (WB), claim that they view poverty from multidimensional aspects and that they are continuously deepening their understanding of indigenous peoples’ priorities, needs and issues (World Bank, 2019a). However, some argue that after two decades of making development more inclusive, indigenous knowledges is still only a set of conceptual and empirical propositions that have not yet been integrated into development programmes (Briggs, 2013: 231). The representation of ‘indigeneity’ is often shallow and continues to be adjusted to the Western idea of development in order to continue the imposing of these ideas (ibid, 2013).

The reasons for the claimed change by development actors is mainly due to the major received critique against the imposing of a Western view of modernity, as well as the increased emergence of indigenous peoples in the political scene in Latin America (and other regions), which has consequently pressured the standard development views of modernity. Events such as the Zapatista uprising and the election of Evo Morales as President of Bolivia in 2006 shows that indigenous peoples are increasing their possibilities to affect politics and challenge the Eurocentric view of modernity that has been imposed on Latin America since the conquest of the region (Escobar, 2010: Mignolo, 2005). To confront this modernity view implies, for instance, changing the emphasis on individuality over community, the belief in objective knowledge and reason as the only valid modes of knowledge and to stop the construction of ‘the economy’ as an independent realm of social practice (Escobar, 2010:9-10). Despite the greater inclusion of indigenous peoples in politics, discrimination against them is still a worldwide issue. Indigenous peoples are the most marginalized group in the world, making up 15% of the world’s extreme poor while also struggling to maintain their cultural identity (Amnesty, 2019). It is therefore relevant to examine if international
donors, since their claimed changes in development, have actually confronted the old modernity view by not only including indigenous peoples, but also allowing them to affect the development agenda.

Ever since participatory development and the inclusion of indigenous knowledges have been incorporated within most international donor programmes the last 20 years, it has received substantial critique with many researchers claiming that these approaches continue to reinforce neocolonial and Western-centered tendencies (Kapoor, 2005:1203). Some authors have argued that the recognition of indigenous rights from development actors is solely a new tactic of enforcing neoliberalism (Lindroth, 2014; Enns et al., 2014), while others point out the misappropriation of indigenous knowledges from development actors (Briggs & Sharp, 2004; Briggs, 2013). Some also underline the issue of development actors using terms as social justice and poverty in a superficial manner in order to continue with the standard economic-political structures (Schwittay, 2011; Cornwall & Fujita, 2012). Mignolo (2005) discusses in his book *The Idea of Latin America* that coloniality still exists today in the sense that coloniality is what constructs our view of modernity and that modernity therefore cannot exist without coloniality. He claims that because of this, the project of modernity keeps reproducing oppression, which is our current reality in the twenty-first century (2005:12-13). There is thus a need to further examine if, and how, present development policies keep reproducing coloniality through the representation of ‘indigeneity’, although changes in the approach of development has been made.

1.2 Aim and research question

The purpose and aim of this study is to investigate how indigenous peoples in Latin America and their issues have been given space in the development agenda, by analysing how ‘indigeneity’ is portrayed and represented in reports by international donors. In order to do this, two policy documents will be examined, one from the World Bank and one from the ECLAC, which is the UN’s Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2019). The main research question is:

*How are indigenous peoples and the issues of indigeneity discursively (re)produced by international donors?*
The study will hereafter consist of a section where the theoretical framework is presented. This section first highlights relevant previous research and then presents and discusses postcolonial theory as well as the decolonial theory of Walter Mignolo. After this, a presentation of the method, material and design will be given. Lastly, an analysis is conducted followed by a conclusion of the findings of this study.

2. Theoretical framework

This section outlines the theoretical perspectives on which this study is built on. First, it presents the previous research that is relevant for the study, in order to contextualize the issue of indigeneity and how it has been represented. After this, the two theories that lay ground to this study is presented. These are postcolonial theory and a decolonial theory from Walter Mignolo called ‘locus of enunciation’.

2.1. Previous research

2.1.1. Postcolonial critique of participatory development

Ever since the introduction of participatory development (PD) around 20 years ago, the approach has been both celebrated and heavily criticized. PD can be characterized as an inclusive and ‘bottom up’ approach which aims at promoting local community empowerment and country ownership of development programmes, where the civil society is engaged in policy development and agenda setting. The approach was brought forth as a rejection to the neocolonial, Western-centered tendencies of mainstream development and it is nowadays hard to find a donor agency or development institution that has not integrated the approach into their programmes (Kapoor, 2005:1203).

Several authors have raised criticism to the approach of participatory development. Kapoor (2005) argues that complicity and desire are written into participatory development which in result enables the reproduction of Western-centric politics within development. She means that although PD can provide opportunities of the local voices to be heard, it is often forgotten how unequal power relations affect the situation resulting in PD being transformed into a certain package, manageable to suit the institutional culture and demands (2005:1211). Similarly, Cornwall (2008) suggests that participation is used as a buzzword within
international organisations. The vagueness about what participation means is what have helped the promise of public inclusion to gain support and Cornwall means that there is a need for further exploration of the term by analysing: who is participating, in what and for whose benefit (2008:269).

The relation of participatory development in the realm of indigenous voices has been examined by Enns, Bersaglio and Kepe (2014), by analysing the United Nations efforts to ensure participation of indigenous peoples in the making of post-2015 development agenda. The aim of the UN was to ‘amplify the voices of the poor and other marginalised groups’, which had previously been left out of the decision-making and the design of development initiatives. However, the research found that the UN’s use of participatory development was shallow and that it therefore did not represent an actual shift in power. Indigenous voices that disagreed with the UN’s main development vision were often documented at first, but then excluded by the High Level Panel. Therefore, the participatory methods only served to legitimize the pre-established policy priorities rather than allowing disagreeing voices to influence the opinions of development. While the UN’s approach to participatory development was used in a shallow manner, the authors believe that such processes may lead to new spaces of political action and that the possibility of indigenous voices to be heard therefore still exists (2014:370, 371).

While the critical studies of participatory development have mainly analysed to what extent indigenous peoples voices have been integrated, this study will provide an analysis of if and how indigenous voices are allowed to participate by analysing discourses and framing of ‘the issues of indigeneity’. This in turn provide answers not only regarding if and how voices of indigenous peoples are being heard, but also if they are given adequate space to speak without needing to adjust to Western standards.

2.1.2. The discourse of ‘the poor’

The discourse of ‘the poor’ from development actors has been increasingly criticized for ignorance and misuse of the term. By examining the World Bank’s Consultations with the Poor, which claims to have represented the voices of more than 20 000 “poor people” in 23 countries, Cornwall (2012) claim that there are substantial power effects of using a term like ‘the poor’ and that this should be further reflected upon. She means that ‘the poor’ is not a
category that many people living in poverty would assign themselves; instead, it is a label used to designate others. Thereby, when development agencies talk of ‘the poor’, it creates as its object a mass of people who are owed something better and lends moral purpose to help these. In other words, ‘the poor’ marks the object for ‘our’ intervention, and ‘our’ compassion. Yet, the poor is also seen as responsible for their own condition which is up to them to improve, through self-help and micro-enterprise (2012: 1756, 1761).

Moreover, the newer multidimensional view of poverty that have appeared in development policies (World Bank, 2019) as not purely economic but also social are argued to be used only as buzzwords, while the main interest of development actors continues to be the fostering and spreading of neoliberalism (Merritt & Chappell, 2014). While a multidimensional view of poverty is often promoted, a marketization of poverty is actually occurring, framing poverty mainly as an issue of the market and therefore something to be solved by economic interventions. Researchers have argued that providing solely marketized solutions to poverty results in adding additional layers of exclusion instead of overcoming class and gender barriers (Schwittay, 2011; Merritt & Chappell, 2014).

Largely missing from the research is the critical examination of how the discourse of the poor is related specifically to the discourse of indigenous peoples. Since indigenous peoples are often in the center of the discourse of ‘the extreme poor’ and used as a reason for intervention and solutions (World Bank, 2019), it is interesting to analyse further in which way this portraying of indigenous peoples occur.

2.1.3. The discourse of indigenous knowledges and rights

Some researchers (Sharp & Briggs, 2004; Briggs, 2013; Lindroth, 2014) have critically examined the increasing recognition of indigenous knowledges and rights by development actors. Intact with the promotion of participatory development, a promise of greater inclusion of indigenous peoples was created, meaning that the development programmes would take more account of specific local conditions, draw on the knowledge of the peoples living there and provide these with ownership of the development process (Briggs & Sharp, 2004: 661). However, when analyses have been made on how indigenous knowledges and rights are included, many argue that this is managed in a shallow manner.
When reading the research concerning the inclusion of indigenous knowledges (IK), one can notice that few improvements have been made in the last ten years. Briggs and Sharp argued in 2004 that the engagement with local knowledges was rather at a technical level instead of a fundamental or conceptual level. In other words, there was no dealing with embedded local knowledges that could compete with ‘global knowledge systems’, such as understandings of social justice and gender relations (2004: 667). In a study nearly ten years later, Briggs claimed that the inclusion of IK has moved from being purely technical to being more conceptual. However, the inclusion of IK is still problematic in practical terms since ‘local knowledges’ cannot be scaled-up from the local to the more general national/regional area. For this reason, indigenous knowledges remain in the periphery of development practice, never fully getting the possibility to change the development process (2013: 233).

In relation to indigenous knowledges gaining more attention within development, an emphasis on indigenous rights have also been included in most development programmes. Since indigenous peoples face difficult political, economic and environmental challenges, the clarification of their land rights and compensation for when these rights are violated should arguably be promoted (Lindroth, 2014). However, researchers have argued that the recognition of indigenous rights are used as tactics of neoliberal governance. Lindroth (2014) claims that the UN uses the language of ‘indigenous rights’ in a depoliticised way, covering the practices of power that are embedded in it. Because the promotion of indigenous rights take place in a legal framework that has been imposed on the peoples, their rights have gained recognition in this process only by agreeing to the constraints that follow from the framework. The indigenous peoples are free to demand their rights as long as they do not oppose the neoliberal logic of the market. Because of this, development actors often focus on ‘soft’ issues of cultural rights instead of ‘hard’ economic issues of self-determination and land rights (2014: 342, 346).

By examining how ‘indigeneity’ is represented in this study, the discourse of indigenous knowledges and rights will inevitably be analysed. The framing of indigeneity in policy documents demonstrate how indigenous knowledges and rights are being incorporated into the development process and if the issue of indigeneity as having Westernized, market-based solutions is being reproduced.
2.2. Postcolonial theory

An overview of the origins of postcoloniality and its broadness in theoretical perspectives is here presented, as this study include various sides of the postcolonial approach in its analysis. Postcolonial theory emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, initially focusing on the decolonization of the ex-British colonies in Africa and Asia through analysing discourses. The focus of the theory is the different types of oppression and domination that operate in our contemporary world, mainly by analysing the colonialism and its effect on current power relations (Young, 2016:11; Chowdhry & Nair, 2002: 2).

The critical nature of postcolonial theory, as well as the different geographical focuses authors have had, has resulted in several theories emerging within the field. Edward Said is one of the first and leading postcolonial authors, coining the term of orientalism. Said’s theory of orientalism arose in 1978 as a critique against the study of Asian and Middle Eastern language, history, and culture for being misrepresentative and patronizing. In short, orientalism is defined as Western attitudes that view Eastern societies as exotic, primitive and inferior. Portraying the Orient in contrast to the West has in turn justified its own imperialism and historical conquest (Said, 1978). Said’s idea of orientalism has gained substantial attention within postcolonial studies and inspired to many critical studies. An important and well-studied field within orientalism is feminism. A common critique towards feminism within postcolonial studies is that feminist ideology has been influenced by imperial culture (Burton, 1990); Mohanty, 2003). Antoinette Burton have used the term the “the white woman’s burden”, claiming that liberal feminism is grounded in the idea of Western values as superior and belief of having moral responsibility towards ‘saving’ women in the Third World (Burton, 1990).

A third classical postcolonial theory is the work of Gayatri Spivak, who argues that the subaltern (meaning groups that are marginalised based on, for instance, class, gender, race and age) cannot speak, not because the subaltern does not have a voice but because speaking is a transaction between the speaker and the listener. While ‘the listener’ is the West, trying to adjust the speaker to its own standards and values, the subaltern will not be heard. Critical work should therefore not focus on giving the subaltern voice, but instead on clearing the space to allow the subaltern to speak. In other words, the subaltern is reduced from subject
status (having agency) to object status (lacking agency) (Spivak, 1988). Spivak also untangles hierarchical structures within subalternty, meaning that being postcolonial or ‘ethnic’ does not automatically mean that one is subaltern. In the same way, being a native from the Third World does not mean that one can speak for indigenous subalternity (Kapoor, 2005: 631).

As a central tenet of postcolonial theory is examining the interrelations of power and the dimension of class, gender and race (Chowdhry & Nail, 2002:2), it is appropriate to use the theories of Said, Burton and Spivak in relation to the portraying of indigeneity by international actors. As discussed earlier, indigenous peoples have the last 20 years been given more space in development programmes. From the reasoning of Spivak’s theory which underline the different layers of oppression, indigenous peoples are the most marginalized group of subalternity (Amnesty, 2019) and it is therefore relevant to analyse if development approaches have changed recently and actually given the subaltern the space needed to speak and be heard. Orientalism has often studied the oppression from the First World to the Third World concerning questions of gender or race (Burton, 1990; Mohanty, 2003; Said, 1978), however, fewer studies has been conducted on the representation of minorities such as indigenous peoples. This study therefore uses a set of classic postcolonial theories on a newer, less studied area.

2.3. Locus of enunciation

The Argentinian professor Walter Mignolo is a leading author and theoretician in decoloniality, especially concerning questions of Latin America. The theory of decoloniality is similar to postcoloniality, however there are some differences. Whereas postcolonial theory often refer to the nineteenth and twentieth century, decolonial theory starts its analysis as far back as to the European conquest of what came to be known as the Americas. Therefore, the geographical origin of the two theories differ, where postcolonial theory emerged and focus on the Middle East and South Asia, while decolonial theory emerged from the work of Latin American scholars. While much of postcolonial studies remain in the realm of the cultural, addressing issues of the material and of the socio-economic, the studies of modernity/coloniality emerged from decolonial authors such as Mignolo (Bhambra, 2014).

In his book The Idea of Latin America, Walter Mignolo describes how the idea of Latin America has been created by and in contrast to the West and therefore says more about
Western values than Latin American ones. Connected to this idea is the concept of ‘the locus of enunciation’, meant by Mignolo as the position in the world that classifies, orders and determines what is and what isn’t. This is done by creating and reproducing discourses of distinguishing between “me” the modern, progressive actor against “you/them” the underdeveloped, illegitimate actor. In other words, the locus of enunciation are those who assign the standards of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify (2005:8). Mignolo argues that discourses like this allows the West to keep on being the centre of economic and political organisation, model of social life, and the example of human achievement (2005:96).

The theory of ‘locus of enunciation’ encounters questions of knowledge power and production, which is a relevant factor to examine in the policy documents that will be analysed. A central tenet of postcolonial (and decolonial) theory is its concern with the status of the voices of subaltern peoples in Western knowledge systems (Sharp & Briggs, 2004:664). Similar to Mignolos’ statements of knowledge, Sharp and Briggs (2004) mean that local knowledge and narratives are solely heard and accepted when they move to the central terrain of Western views. In other words, indigenous knowledges are allowed to offer technical solutions that fit the current development world-view, but not to challenge the values, content or structure of this view. To change the locus of enunciation would mean to allow the voices of ‘others’ to criticize dominant worldviews and propose alternative agendas. This would, for instance, mean that science is seen as one knowledge system among many (2004:665, 668). Mignolo agrees upon this, claiming that in order to account for experiences, feelings and worldviews beyond the focus of European narratives, the map of knowledge and understanding must be redrawn and make room for the local historical grounding of knowledge (2005:10).

3. Methodology and research design

The following section will start with presenting the case selection. Further on, the methods and operationalisation that is used to answer the research question is presented as well as the data selection and a discussion of the choice of method and its limitations.
3.1 Case selection

The case of this study is how the World Bank and the UN represents the issue of indigeneity in their policies. This will be done by analysing one policy report from the World Bank, and another one from ECLAC, which is the UN’s Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLAC, 2019). There are several reasons as to why this study have chosen these two international donors above others. Although both donors strive for the same development goals, such as eradicating poverty and reducing social inequalities, they are two quite different types organisations which work with development in different manners. The World Bank consists of a family of five international organizations (IOs) that give conditioned loans to ‘developing’ countries. Besides the loans, meant to support investment in areas such as education, health, financial and environmental management, the World Bank gives support through policy advice, research and technological assistance (World Bank, 2019b). The UN and ECLAC on the other hand, work with development in quite a different manner. ECLAC’s aim to promote economic and social development is done not by loans, but by undertaking a comprehensive analysis of development processes through examination the design and evaluation of public policies (ECLAC, 2019a). ECLAC also constantly works with promoting the sustainable goals set up by the UN and integrates this into their development reports (ECLAC, 2019b). However, both actors are multilateral donors since they are supported internationally and give funding of some sort. Furthermore, the overall goal of their development projects is the same. Both actors have also stated clearly that they have changed their approach towards a more participatory development and inclusion of indigenous knowledges in their programmes (World Bank, 2019a; ECLAC, 2019b).

The main reason for the choice of these two actors is because they are representative cases, meaning that they represent a broader population of cases (Gerring, 2015:5), which in this study is the case of ‘international donors’. The World Bank and the UN are two of the biggest development actors in the world and therefore they are arguably representative in that their programmes have great influence over other international donors as well as a great impact over the lives of others. Moreover, this study have chosen two different types of typical cases, since the actors differentiate in how they help other countries to develop. The choice of representative, typical cases is because it increases the possibility to generalise the results
(Gerring, 2015:5). This, because if the results show that both actors represent the issues of indigeneity in similar ways, the result is able to speak for more than solely ‘one type’ of development actor.

The choice of examining the case of indigenous peoples in Latin America is mainly because of the substantial influence actors such as the World Bank has had on minorities in the region, and the critique and political mobilization by indigenous peoples that have followed. Ever since the region of Latin America was conquered, indigenous peoples have been oppressed and encouraged to abandon their identities by the West. Although considerable change has occurred since then, it is important to examine how much have changed concerning the continuing enforcement of Western values upon minorities in Latin America. Many argue that the voices of indigenous peoples are being included today more than ever, however there is a need to critically analyse to what extent indigenous peoples are portrayed and given space by influential development actors (Cuppes, 2013).

3.2 Discourse analysis

The method that is used in order to investigate the main research question is discourse analysis. More specifically, a discourse analysis drawing from Carol Bacchi’s “What’s the problem represented to be?” is used in this study, since its focus on societal power structures is suiting for this study.

The use of discourse analysis as a method implies that some theoretical assumptions about how our social reality is constructed must be accepted. Discourse analysis is based on the theory of social constructivism as well as poststructuralism. Social constructivism argues that our knowledge of the world should not be treated as an objective truth, since the way we understand and represent the world is created by the historical and cultural context around us. It is therefore emphasized that knowledge is created and maintained by social processes, and that different social understandings result in different social action. Poststructuralism can be seen as a subcategory within social constructivism, which underline that language and discourse constructs meaning in our social world and meaning is constantly changing. Since these philosophical premises about the role of language in a society must be accepted, the method of discourse analysis is intertwined with theory and cannot be detached from it (Phillips and W. Jørgensen, 2002:1). Because this study is based on postcolonial theory,
which agrees upon the views of social constructivism, the use of discourse analysis as a method is appropriate.

3.2.1 What’s the Problem Represented to Be?

This study will draw mainly on the approach of Carol Bacchi, called “What’s the problem represented to be?” (WPR). The WPR approach is a tool intended to assist critical interrogation of public policies. The main premise is that policies and policy proposals contain problem representations, because what an organisation proposes to do about something reveals what the organisation think is problematic. The task of WPR is therefore to analyze how policies represent the problem and critically examine this representation (Bacchi, 2012: 21). It is important to underline that WPR is not a form of critical discourse analysis, since it has a different understanding of discourse. WPR does not understand discourse as language use, but instead discourse is understood as the use of knowledges. The goal of WPR is therefore to tease out deep-seated ‘ways of thinking’ that underpin political practices, rather than to analyse how people shape arguments (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014).

In order to analyse forms of social knowledge according to WPR, one must pose six questions to the texts that are analysed. First, the researcher must examine what the ‘problem’ is represented to be in a specific policy, which can be more than one issue. Secondly, in order to analyse implicit messages the researcher should also ask to the text what presuppositions or assumptions underpin the representation of the problem. The third factor is to examine how this representation of the ‘problem’ has come about. Since silences also speak, the fourth question to the text is where the silences are, what is left unproblematic in the problem representation and if the problem could be thought about differently. The fifth question is what effects this representation of the ‘problem’ produces. Lastly, it is necessary to analyse how and where this representation of the ‘problem’ has been produced, disseminated and defended and how it has been questioned. These six questions are the main analytical questions posed to the two policy documents. However, the questions are modified to suit this study.

As mentioned before, this study will analyse how the issue of indigeneity is represented in the policy documents of the World Bank and ECLAC, drawing on postcolonial theories presented earlier in the text. WPR claim that the public is not governed by policies and
programs, but by how problems are constituted within these policies (Bacchi, 2012: 22). It is therefore relevant to the aim of the study to investigate how indigenous peoples and the issues of ‘indigeneity’ are represented in development policies. By studying how the issue of indigeneity is framed, one goes in depth of representation and why certain solutions are offered over others. Moreover, analysing the discourse from the WPR questions in the policy documents will provide answers not only directly to the questions, but it will also answer if and how indigenous peoples are given space to speak. What is meant by ‘given space to speak’ is if indigenous knowledges and voices are allowed to challenge the values, content or structure of Western views and thereby the standard development process. Due to limited resources, mainly in time, the aim of this study is not to investigate what effect the policies have on the lives of indigenous peoples. However, it will inevitably examine what effects the representations of indigeneity has on the solutions brought forth in the policy documents.

As the previous research and theories demonstrate, the representation of indigenous peoples concerns several issues. While the WPR questions are the basis of the analytical framework, sub-questions are added in order to provide some guidelines in the analysis. Drawing from the theories and the previous research, the sub-questions relate to the main issues that are often brought forth as relevant concerning indigeneity. The choice to analyse the discourse of the poor and the inclusion of indigenous knowledges and rights is because these issues are often highlighted by both development actors and research, which arguably means that they are important dimensions in the representation of the issues of indigeneity. Furthermore, to examine if the donors believe they have moral responsibility to help indigenous peoples’ because they view themselves as superior is important since postcolonial theorists have often criticized development actors for this. Another sub-question that is analysed in the text is tied to Spivak’s theory and concerns whether indigenous peoples are given agency and being treated as subjects, or if this is left unproblematic in the reports. Moreover, when analysing the effects of the representation, a sub-question about marketized solutions is posed to the text, since both previous research and theories have underlined this as a way of adjusting indigenous peoples to the economic system of the West (Schwittay, 2011; Said, 1978). Since question 3 and 6 of WPR are reflected upon and responded by the theories, they are not explicitly asked to the texts. However, they are present in the analysis due to the basis of postcolonial theory.
The main analytical questions (WPR) | The sub-questions
--- | ---
1. What’s the issue(s) of indigeneity represented to be in the policies of the World Bank and ECLAC? | • How is the issue of indigenous peoples’ poverty discussed?
• How is the issue of indigenous rights discussed?
• How is the issue of the incorporation of indigenous knowledges discussed? Is there a different view on different indigenous knowledges?

2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the issue(s) of indigeneity? | • Are the development actors writing as if they have a moral responsibility to help the indigenous peoples?

3. How has this representation of the issue(s) of indigeneity come about? |

4. What is left unproblematic in the representation of indigenous peoples’ issues? Where are the silences? Can the issue be thought about differently? | • Are indigenous peoples written about as subjects or objects?

5. What effects are produced by this representation of the issue(s) of indigeneity? | • Are marketized solutions to the issues of ‘indigeneity’ brought forth?

6. How/where has this representation of the issue(s) of indigeneity been produced and defended? How has it been questioned? |

3.3 Data selection

The material chosen in this study consist of two policy report documents, one from the World Bank and the other from ECLAC. The document from the WB is called Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century and it is a 106 pages long document, taken from the World Bank’s website. This policy report is published in 2015, shining light on the situation of indigenous peoples across Latin America (World Bank, 2018). The document from the ECLAC is called Guaranteeing Indigenous People’s Rights in Latin America and it is a 110
pages long document, taken from ECLAC’s website. The report is published in 2014, prepared by ECLAC and carried out at the request of UNPFII in collaboration with several groups within the UN, such as UNDP and UN Women. The document discusses progress made in the past decade and the challenges that remain concerning indigenous peoples development (ECLAC, 2014).

The reasons for choosing this data is because it is two extensive reports concerning only indigenous peoples in Latin America and their progress and challenges according to these two development actors, which is in line with what this study wants to examine. Furthermore, both reports are close in time, which is an important aspect since the study wants to investigate current portraying of indigenous peoples. Due to the aim of this study, only the parts concerning the challenges and issues of indigenous peoples will be read in the reports, which results in 147 pages being analysed. Although the material may seem insufficient, it is an important factor when using the method of discourse analysis that the amount of the material is not too extensive in order for the analysis to be detailed and transparent (Phillips and W. Jørgensen, 2002). The choice of a smaller amount of material allows me to read the reports twice, resulting in a more thorough analysis.

3.4 Choice of method and limitations

Discourse analysis and specifically WPR is a relevant method for the material and purpose of this study to examine how the issue of indigeneity is portrayed since it is a method that considers how knowledge, both written and spoken, establishes social and cultural perspectives and identities (Gee, 2011; Bacchi & Bonham, 2014). The discourse of the issues of ‘indigeneity’ is appropriate to analyse because it directly affects what space is given the indigenous peoples to speak and also the solutions that are brought forth to solve the problems. Furthermore, an analysis of how the problem is represented, provides answers about if and how postcolonial ideas are reproduced in the realm of indigenous peoples. A large part of postcolonial theory concerns subtle, indirect representations and the tool of WPR allows an examination of implicit messages in how an actor represents someone and how certain deep-seated knowledges affect this (Archibald, 2019), which is something that might be difficult to detect with other methods.
There are however some limitations of the chosen material and method of this study. Due to the time limit of this study, only two reports from two international donors are analysed. The small amount of reports as well as actors increases the uncertainty concerning the results of the study. Therefore, future research of more actors and a larger amount of material is encouraged. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, the small amount of material results in a more thorough analysis of the reports, which is significant for this qualitative analysis. Another limitation that is necessary to emphasize is that when using the method of discourse analysis, the researcher contributes to the creation of the discourses that are being studied with their own interpretations. Because of the interpretative nature of discourse analysis, intersubjectivity is not completely achievable. Instead, Bacchi underlines that the researcher must practice reflexivity and problematize one's own understanding in order to not simply lay out biased opinions (Bacchi, 2009; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000:111). This self-reflexivity is something that will be present throughout the analysis and discussed further in the conclusion.

4. Analysis

Drawing on the WPR approach, an analysis is conducted on what the issues of indigeneity is represented to be. Furthermore, the assumptions of the represented problems are analysed as well as the factors that, according to postcolonial theory, could be part of the problem but that are not addressed in the report. Lastly, the effects of the representation of the issues are analysed. As previously mentioned, questions 3 and 6 of the WPR approach are not questions that are explicitly analysed in the texts. Instead, the answers of these questions are discussed in the analysis from the theoretical stance taken in this study. Furthermore, the analysis will be divided into three thematic parts based on the findings in previous research. First, the discourse of indigenous knowledges is analysed. Secondly, an analysis of the discourse concerning indigenous peoples’ poverty is presented and lastly, the discourse of indigenous peoples’ rights is analysed. This is done both because previous research has shown that these are the most contested questions within postcolonial theory when it comes to the portraying of indigeneity and indigenous peoples’ issues, and also because these themes are the most prevailing ones throughout both reports. After deconstructing and analysing each part, the overall representation of indigeneity and their issues is discussed in the conclusion.
4.1 Indigenous peoples’ knowledges

4.1.1 What is the problem represented to be?

Indigenous knowledges are highlighted at various points in both reports, where the main issue is represented to be that indigenous knowledges are not given enough space to participate in development efforts. Although both actors provide somewhat different perspectives of the issue, both the report from ECLAC and from the World Bank discuss that the problems of participatory development has to do with the failure of implementing the right to self-determination. The right to self-determination as well as the right to territory is underlined as related to knowledges, since there is a belief that the identities of indigenous peoples’ are strongly connected to their territories and that they should be allowed to determine themselves how to live in these territories. Indigenous knowledges, territories and rights are thereby represented to be interlinked. Important to note is that the identified problem is the lacking of rights implementation, rather than as an issue of the law itself lacking clarity (ECLAC, 2014:11-32; World Bank, 2015:45-56).

The World Bank report also connects the issue of indigenous knowledges to the lack of a legal definition of ‘indigeneity’. The World Bank report mean that each nation state tends to have their own definition of indigeneity and that this results in discriminatory practices towards them and their knowledges (2015:50). Furthermore, the reports bring forth the perspective of indigenous peoples, discussing that they often “hold different conceptions of value and production, as well as contrasting social and cultural characteristics” (2015:46). For instance, the fact that wealth is not always measured in materialistic ways within indigenous communities is highlighted (ibid). Because of this, lack of participation in decision-making is a bigger issue than material income when it comes to indigenous knowledges, according to the World Bank report (2015: 47).

The ECLAC report instead bring forth the issue of indigenous knowledges from a historical perspective, claiming that the intrusion of the Europeans meant the stripping “…not only of the territories they lived in and their spaces for social and cultural reproduction but also of their culture, their worldviews and their ways of interacting with nature.” (2014:11). The report claims that this is relevant, since from this were created institutions “designed to develop and exploit the work of indigenous persons” (2014:12). However, the report
discusses this period as not being an issue today and underline that indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination now has been recognized by the UN. Instead, it states the issue as being the important gaps in the implementation of the right of self-determination that needs to be closed (2014:13, 31).

To represent the issue of indigenous knowledges as being a lack of participation and legislation can, from the lens of postcolonial theory, be problematic. Although there are positive sides to promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, it is done in a framework of requirements.

“Some requirements for the exercise of self-determination are the strengthening of the relevant institutions, as well as the potentials and capacities to engage with the State, and honouring even treaties or agreements concluded in the past.” (ECLAC, 2014:16)

Postcolonial theory would argue that this discourse can be problematic since it continues to produce the idea of indigenous peoples and their knowledges as adjustable to the requirements made from Western values (Briggs, 2004; Lindroth, 2014). Furthermore, the perspectives brought forth of how different indigenous knowledges are to Western knowledges and that Western institutions were created to exploit the work of indigenous peoples is separated from the issue. This can be seen, since part of the issue of indigenous knowledges is not represented to be the possible contradictions in Western legislation towards indigenous peoples values. Since the represented problem is not the lack of clarity in the promotion of rights, but rather the lack of implementing this right, one could also argue that indigenous knowledges are not allowed to challenge the framework.

4.1.2 Assumptions in the representation

An important part of postcolonial theory is to acknowledge how former colonial structures affect current institutions and norms, creating new forms of colonialism (Mignolo, 2005: Said, 1978). This is something that the ECLAC report discusses to some extent. Nonetheless, they seem to assume that this period is over, since it is separated from the representation of the issue of indigenous knowledges (2014:11-32). Although colonialism does not exist in the same manner as it did five centuries ago, it arguably takes on other expressions today which are important to reflect upon, especially when representing issues concerning indigenous
knowledges, since failing to do so leads to ignoring important power relations that exist today (Mignolo, 2005).

Both reports from ECLAC and World Bank assume that indigenous peoples are able to express their knowledges within the Western legal framework and that there are no contradictions in values, when they promote participatory development. As Mignolo argues, to change the locus of enunciation is to allow the knowledges of ‘others’ to criticize dominant worldviews and propose alternative agendas (2005:665, 668). However, to represent the issue of knowledges in a rights-based manner does not necessarily allow this critique to take place but instead it arguably enforces legal requirements onto indigenous peoples’ ways of expression. In addition to this, the World Bank report assume that the legal frameworks “...reflect the intention to break away from the tradition of exclusion, racism, and discrimination against ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities.” (2015:49).

The reports do discuss the fact that “what makes ‘a life worth living’ is where indigenous peoples might disagree with poverty assessments and with the development solutions proposed by nonindigenous actors” (World Bank, 2015:46), however there are arguably still assumptions that indigenous knowledges can and desire to be included into the Western view of development. For instance, the ECLAC report promotes “putting forward a new model of society, questioning the development paradigm and proposing good living as an alternative.” (2014:25). ‘Good living’ is a concept of development brought forth by indigenous peoples’ knowledges which is highly critical of capitalism and growth, and therefore critical of an important pillar in neoliberalist agenda (Balch, 2013). However, ECLAC is a promoter of market economy which can be seen, for instance, in its support of UN’s Sustainable Development Goals 2030 where one of the goals is economic growth (ECLAC, 2019b). Furthermore, it can be seen in other parts of the report, where market economy is detached from the representation of the issue (ECLAC, 2014). Thereby one could argue that it is either assumed that indigenous knowledges can adjust to and participate in Western development efforts without threatening the market economy, or this fact is ignored.

4.1.3 Silences in the representation

Similar to the assumptions underpinning the problem representation, what is left unproblematic is how participation of indigenous knowledges is possible without challenging
the entire Western view of what development. This is problematic in the lens of postcolonial theory since it reproduces the image of indigeneity as adjustable to the Western system where in reality, indigenous peoples’ voices are compromised (Briggs, 2013; Mignolo, 2005). The World Bank report writes:

“Law and public policy have moved from a clearly assimilationist paradigm—intended to integrate indigenous peoples into mainstream society—to a multiculturalist agenda, aimed at preserving cultural differences and safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples to reproduce their cultures and languages, manage their lands and natural resources, and govern themselves according to their political systems and customary laws.” (World Bank, 2015:46)

This also demonstrate how indigenous knowledges concerning how to manage economy is largely ignored. Instead ‘softer’ issues are underlined, such as the lacking implementation of their languages and cultures. Thereby one could argue that there are different views of different indigenous knowledges. In the ECLAC report, the economic aspect is brought forth:

“There is a need for the State to promote and enhance indigenous economies as a new strategy for the development of indigenous communities and peoples within the framework of good living.” (ECLAC, 2014:32)

However, ECLAC leave unproblematic that this largely goes against the Western development that they are promoting. This is something that can also be noticed when analysing the other chapters of the report, where the adjustment of indigenous peoples and their knowledges is promoted. For instance, ECLAC point out the importance of indigenous local markets, claiming that “the experience of indigenous economies is an expression of good living and a development approach based on practice.”. Although the promotion of local markets can be positive in various ways, ECLAC remain silent in how the indigenous peoples have since long been forced into the already existing market system. As Mignolo suggests in his theory of locus of enunciation (2005), this critical point of view need to be taken into account in order to not reproduce the same structural oppression.

4.1.4 Effects of the representation

Some improvements have been made concerning how indigenous knowledges are discussed, since neither one of the documents discuss indigenous knowledges as being primitive and less valuable than knowledges of the West. Instead the issue is seen in how Western
development have failed to integrate indigenous knowledges. An example of this is when ECLAC write that development measures “falls short in areas that indigenous peoples themselves regard as essential, such as the relationship with nature.” (2014:29). Although this is a positive development in comparison to the representation of indigeneity some decades ago, one could argue that indigenous knowledges are still not allowed to challenge Western values. Instead, the main effect of the problem representation in the reports are to focus on strengthening indigenous peoples’ participation and rights to self-determination, since this is believed to be the main issue to why indigenous knowledges are not given enough space in society today.

The solutions that are brought forth demonstrate that implicit views of the subalternity of indigenous knowledges still exist within these reports. For instance, the World Bank report promote indigenous right to have their own institutions based on their knowledges, but conclude the chapter this way:

“It is by taking the combined efforts of administrators, legislatures, the courts, indigenous peoples, industry, and even NGOs and outside stakeholders such as international financial institutions and international industry organizations that it is possible to slowly turn the ship around.” (World Bank, 2015:55)

From the lens of postcolonial theory, these are simplified, technical solutions to complex issues where indigenous peoples continue to be treated as objects until they are moved to Western framework (Spivak, 1988). The effects of the problem representation are ultimately that participatory development is used as a buzzword (Cornwall, 2008), since indigenous knowledges must combine their efforts with multiple Western actors which arguably have values that are not compatible with indigenous peoples. The discussion in the ECLAC report have similar effects, since they argue that “states need a new approach to development that adopts […] good living not only as a discourse but also in practice.” but as previously argued, they are not clear in how the strengthening of rights will provide this.
4.2 The poverty of indigenous peoples

4.2.1 What is the problem represented to be?

The discourses concerning indigenous peoples’ issues of poverty is where the two reports differentiate the most from one another. While the report from World Bank often refer to material poverty as the issue instead of providing a more multidimensional view on poverty, the report from ECLAC enhances the right to well-being of indigenous peoples in relation to poverty, highlighting different dimensions of deprivations. According to ECLAC, factors such as violence, environmental pollution and economic exploitation are all issues of poverty:

“The structural discrimination that affects indigenous peoples, along with the impoverishment resulting from the systematic plunder of their territories and the loss of traditional ways of life, obstacles to political participation and institutionalized racism, have a strong adverse impact on the health of indigenous individuals and communities.” (ECLAC, 2014: 70)

The issues of indigenous peoples’ limited well-being are brought forth by the ECLAC report as being connected to the structural discrimination of the West and thereby they acknowledge the unequal power relations and the role of the Western system as problematic for the well-being of indigenous peoples. For instance, the report discusses that many indigenous peoples continue to experience violence due to “the imposition of development projects, forced displacement and expropriation of their lands, armed conflict and economic exploitation” (2014:71). A large part of the issue according the ECLAC is therefore that a holistic approach to health and well-being is not implemented enough, such as the indigenous peoples right to develop and maintain their own institutions.

The report from World Bank instead discusses the main issue of indigenous peoples’ poverty as being material inequality and that this is an issue mainly because it results in market exclusion. Several times the report mentions that Latin America has been a success story the last decade in terms of economic growth and reducing poverty, however the issue is that this growth has been unevenly distributed resulting in increased inequalities (World Bank, 2015:58-62). The report also briefly mention structural economic issues related to indigenous peoples’ poverty:
“... the benefits of the last decade have been unevenly distributed, a trend aggravated by the enduring effects of economic globalization, rising demand for natural resources, and insufficient protection of indigenous peoples’ rights.” (World Bank, 2015:58)

However, the Western economic system is still not discussed as being a problem but rather the issue is that indigenous peoples are not included enough into the market economy. Part of the problem is the way in which indigenous peoples are incorporated into the market, suggesting that this is related to the lack of education and other dimensions, such as gender and prevailing rural-urban gaps (World Bank, 2015:58-78).

Analysing from the lens of postcolonial theory, the World Bank report reproduces postcolonial ideas of indigenous peoples’ issues in this aspect to a greater extent than the ECLAC report. While the ECLAC report highlights the interrelation between different deprivations and criticizes the role of the West concerning these issues, the World Bank report focus on material poverty and thereby detach the issue from the Western economic system. Postcolonial and decolonial theory would suggest that the World Bank report use the power of ‘locus of enunciation’ by assigning themselves the right to classify the deprivations of indigenous peoples from the perspective of Western materialism (Mignolo, 2005). They are framing the issue in a marketized way since they believe that the main issue is market exclusion and that the solution lies in making the market more inclusive (Schwittay, 2011; Merritt & Chappell, 2014). Furthermore, both the report by ECLAC and World Bank choose to focus on the lack of education or provision of health as part of the issue, which suggest that the actors connects the issue to lack of implementing rights, as they do with indigenous knowledges. Again, the focus of the issue is rather to increase access to Western institutions and law, rather than enhancing the structural discrimination that may be embedded in these institutions.

4.2.2 Assumptions in the representation

Many of the assumptions in the reports arguably shows implicit views of the issue for indigenous peoples as a lack of integration into the Western system, rather than problematizing the hard issues that lay within the system, such as economic exploitation and environmental pollution of indigenous peoples territories. First off, the report of the World Bank assume that the material poverty of indigenous peoples is mainly due to lack of
education and how they are included into the market, which result in that the actual market apparatus is never questioned:

“Several studies have shown that one consequence of persistent patterns of [market]exclusion like those experienced by indigenous Latin Americans is reduced agency or the “capacity” to find ways out of poverty.” (World Bank, 2015:73)

As postcolonial theory suggests, and specifically Spivak, this assumption implies that the voices of indigenous peoples can and should only be heard when it is moved to the sphere of the West. Although the ECLAC report underline issues of structural economic discrimination and that indigenous peoples should have the right to develop and maintain their own institutions, including economic ones, both reports ultimately assume that inclusion in market economy is something indigenous peoples desire (ECLAC, 2014:84-87). As a large part of the previous research has discussed (Cornwall, 2008; Enns, Bersaglio and Kepe, 2014), this suggests that participatory development of indigenous peoples is packaged into suiting the Western institutional demands.

4.2.3 Silences in the representation

When analysing the reports of World Bank and ECLAC from the lens of postcolonial theory, silences and factors which are left unproblematized can be noticed in both reports concerning not solely ‘hard’ economic issues but also in implicitly contrasting ‘them’ the indigenous peoples, against ‘us’, the modern.

The World Bank report leaves unproblematic that indigenous peoples’ poverty may not be solved through market inclusion and that poverty could instead be a societal and institutionalized consequence of neoliberal governance structures.

“Chronic poverty affects individuals in rural and urban settings, and it is difficult to overcome even in a context of accelerated economic growth and healthy labor markets” (World Bank, 2015:59)

As postcolonial theory argues, these silences are problematic since it leads to indigenous peoples’ being approached as objects in the representation of their issues in poverty and treated as they have no agency and no desire of a way of living that is outside the sphere of the market economy (Spivak, 1988).
The ECLAC report sheds light on issues that are often ignored, such as structural discrimination of indigenous peoples through economic exploitation. Even though the ECLAC report discusses poverty in terms of different types of deprivations is positive, they remain silent about how this structural discrimination of economic exploitation is to be solved. The report chooses to instead highlight other dimensions of deprivations such as violence and gender which does not necessarily require a change in the ‘standard’ view of development. In both reports, there is a lack of problematizing that changes might need to take place within the standard development agenda instead of trying to integrate indigenous peoples into the framework that are arguably discriminating their way of living. Furthermore, ECLAC contrasts indigenous peoples against modernity several times in the report without problematizing what power effects this image reproduces.

“This is largely explained by the conditions that have shaped the entry of Latin America’s indigenous peoples into modernity and globalization, which have contributed to a gradual loss of their languages and dialects…” (ECLAC, 2014:90)

As Mignolo argue in his theory of locus of enunciation, the reproduction of discourses that contrast between ‘us’ the modern, progressive actor against you who are not modern but instead underdeveloped, allow the West to maintain their status as a model of social, economic and political life (Mignolo, 2005).

4.2.4 Effects of the representation

Since both reports represent the problem from two quite different perspectives, the solutions they bring forth also differ from one another in most aspects. However, from the perspective of postcolonial theory, both the reports have problematic effects in how they have represented the problem of indigenous peoples’ poverty.

In the World Bank report, the problem is represented to be inequality and lack of education, since it results in market exclusion. One of the effects of this representation is that the solution for the issue of indigenous peoples’ poverty is making the market more inclusive. Since the World Bank view the market as something that will decrease vulnerability and poverty, instead of something that increases it, they highlight in the report that “the creation of fair conditions for market inclusion is increasingly important” (2015:58). The report
underline that decreasing inequalities is highly important for both indigenous peoples and the overall society and that the market plays an important part in this:

“Given the economic relevance of the indigenous population in these countries, and their disproportionate representation among the poor, closing these gaps is not only important in itself, as a way to build a more prosperous and just society, but it is also important because not doing so severely limits the chances of achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty.” (World Bank, 2015:60)

When analysing the report, it becomes clear that other solutions are brought forth because it is believed to facilitate for indigenous peoples to include themselves into the market. For instance, computers and the internet is discussed as a solution since it “offer new ways of connecting to markets, services, and the public sphere.” (2015:72). Part of the issue in the World Bank report is also represented to be the lack of education of indigenous peoples, which result in the report enhancing the importance of providing better access to education and that the education should be participatory. However, this too is underlined as important because it eventually result in enabling indigenous peoples to take part of the market economy (World Bank, 2015:61).

The effects of the problem representation in the ECLAC report is instead that solutions which do not necessarily challenge the Western development agenda is highlighted, such as culturally sensitive education, empowerment of indigenous women and promoting sexual and reproductive rights. ECLAC is very clear in how these issues should be handled, writing that “... a good education requires the participation of the local communities, not only in teaching classes but also in developing curricula and teaching materials and in training teachers.” (2014:93). This sheds light on the many dimensions that exist concerning indigenous peoples’ deprivations. However, the effect of this representation is in this case that solutions to the issue of structural discrimination of the Western economic system is ignored.

The overall effects of the representation of indigenous peoples’ poverty is that ‘soft’ issues which do not oppose to the Western system are problematized more than ‘hard’ issues of economic exploitation and environmental pollution. The World Bank does not problematize the market system at all, which has the effect of using the locus of enunciation, in classifying and treating the indigenous peoples as objects that can only speak if they move to the
Western sphere. While ECLAC tries to provide more space for the indigenous peoples to speak by discussing issues of structural discrimination and promoting their rights, it is problematic that these issues does not have an effect in the solutions whatsoever. In conclusion, the representation of the issue of indigenous peoples’ poverty is either highly marketized or the market system is viewed from a critical point of view, but not further discussed what can be done about. Furthermore, the issue is here too represented to be connected to the solution of promoting indigenous peoples’ rights in different areas such as education and territory (ECLAC, 2014; World Bank, 2015) which has the effect of using a rights-based approach to improve the wellbeing of indigenous peoples in this issue as well.

4.3 Indigenous peoples’ rights

The representation of indigenous peoples and their issues entail many factors and dimensions, and to include all of these in one report is difficult. However, what each organisation has chosen to highlight in their reports speak for their view in what the most important issues of indigenous peoples are and what should be prioritized in development efforts. Both development actors underline the promotion of rights, in all aspects of the problems, since they believe that the main issues concerning indigeneity has to do with lack of participation in all areas due to failure in implementing laws and rights. Therefore, this section ties together what the issues of indigenous peoples is represented to be in the reports.

4.3.1 What is the problem represented to be?

When analysing the two reports, it becomes clear that both development actors use a rights-based approach, since they believe that most issues of indigenous peoples is related to the weaknesses in the implementation of their rights. In the report by ECLAC, the dimensions of ‘indigeneity’ that are highlighted are their right to territory, self-determination, education and information. Similarly, the World Bank report enhances indigenous peoples’ territorial rights, the right to develop with identity and the right to education. The issues of indigenous peoples’ poverty, knowledges, territory, education etc. overlap and are connected to the provision of rights, according to the reports. Thereby, the overall problem of indigenous peoples is represented to be discrimination due to the lack of implementing their rights.
One example of how the issues of indigeneity are represented in a rights-based way is the issue concerning indigenous peoples’ territory and mobility. In both reports it is stated that the promotion of indigenous peoples’ rights to territory and mobility is important since indigenous peoples’ territories is closely linked to their identities, but also because of the growing urbanization of indigenous peoples. The main issue concerning indigenous peoples’ right to territory is according to both actors that the legislative implementation fails. Concerning the urbanization of indigenous peoples, the issue is represented to be that rural areas have poor access to health services and other forms of exclusion from state benefits, which forces them to move (2014:56, 2015:30). However, the report from ECLAC goes one step further in their analysis, stating that a large part of the issue is that indigenous peoples are being forcibly displaced by large industries:

“... the boom in mining and hydrocarbon exploitation that the countries of the region have seen in recent years has become a vector of conflict concerning the rights of indigenous peoples over their historical territories.” (ECLAC, 2014:48)

Throughout this chapter of the report, ECLAC demonstrates awareness about unequal power relations between indigenous peoples and actors within the Western economic system by discussing issues such as forced displacement due to large-scale economic projects (2014:48). Although this is shortly mentioned in the World Bank report as well, stating that “another important factor associated with rural-urban migration is the great deal of pressure indigenous territories have been subjected to over the past decades” (2015:37), the issue is not linked to problems in the Western economic system. Furthermore, the issues concerning indigenous peoples living in urban areas is mainly discussed by both reports as indigenous peoples becoming politically invisible and loss of their languages, while ECLAC also brings forth the issue of indigenous peoples becoming economically marginalized in urban areas (2014:60). Despite that different issues concerning territory and mobility are being discussed in both reports, these issues are ultimately represented to be related to the problems of legislation of rights. Again, it is important to note that ‘indigeneity’ and their issues are represented to be related to a lack of rights, rather than issues within the existing legal framework.

The issue of indigenous peoples as being lack of participation in policies due to implementation fails in legislation is a recurrent theme throughout both reports, and is problematic from the lens of postcolonial theory in various aspects. One could argue that this
representation of indigenous peoples’ issues simplifies it as if it concerns solely technical, political and cultural issues which does not necessarily need to oppose the Western development system. For instance, when discussing the issue of territory and mobility, the reports highlight the importance of identity and language. The issues of language loss and identity is highly important, and regarding these issues the reports show a greater understanding and few traces of viewing themselves as superior. However, issues of opposing values between indigenous peoples and other actors are not discussed. Moreover, the representation can be argued to portray indigeneity and their issues as being adjustable to Western framework and its demands, continuing to compromise the voices of indigenous peoples (Kapoor, 2005; Lindroth, 2014).

4.3.2 Assumptions in the representation

The overall assumption of the problem representation as a lack of rights and participation, is that indigenous peoples want and can participate freely in Western frameworks. The promotion of rights can be argued as the framework that actually allows indigenous peoples to express their voices. However, the postcolonial perspective mean that the lack of criticizing the structure in which the legal framework consists results in the risk of continuing to adjust indigenous peoples to a certain set of views. Furthermore, it is assumed that the strengthening of rights is the solution to nearly all of indigenous peoples’ issues, since their issues are interlinked.

For instance, concerning the issues of urban-rural gaps that are brought forth by the World Bank, they assume that urbanization is good for indigenous peoples due to increased market opportunities and moreover, that “for women, migrating to cities can also be an opportunity to break away from gendered roles and enjoy greater independence…” (2015:30). Thereby the World Bank report arguably classifies what indigeneity is from their Western perspective, connecting indigenous issues to market exclusion. As previous research suggests, this can be argued as packaging participatory development of indigenous peoples to suit Western institutions and culture. Further, the World Bank report arguably assume that urban spaces have less gendered roles toward indigenous women than rural areas. Postcolonial theory could argue that this is to paint the Western society as superior and as the only space where
indigenous women can ‘be saved’, while ignoring that structural discrimination concerns not only gender, but race and class as well (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1980; Burton, 1990).

Another example of similar assumptions can be found in the ECLAC report, where the right to information is promoted since ECLAC assume that new information technologies is good for indigenous peoples, as it enables participation and to spread their own word (2014:97-109). Even though the provision of technical assistance is not necessarily negative in all aspects, this assumption can be criticized from postcolonial theory as portraying indigeneity as being primitive and not ‘developed’ enough without the help of the West (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1980; Burton, 1990). For instance, ECLAC writes that access to the Internet is “essential for a truly democratic society, both to facilitate enjoyment of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as other rights, such as education, freedom of association and assembly, citizen participation and social and economic development.” (2014:102, 103). This is arguably to classify the necessities of indigenous peoples from a purely Western perspective (Mignolo, 2005), meaning that if indigenous peoples do not have access to the Internet they cannot take part of and develop through (Western) democratic societies.

4.3.3 Silences in the representation

The biggest silence in the representation, which can be seen in both reports, is the possible contradictions in the rights-based approach since indigenous peoples’ values might be in opposition of Western values. In relation to this, the reports show lack of self-reflection since they leave unproblematic the possible negative role that the Western system have on indigenous peoples way of living. This, according to postcolonial theory, cannot be simply solved by strengthening their rights or participation but instead of allowing ‘alternative’ voices to challenge the system (Mignolo, 2005: Kapoor, 2005). For instance, ECLAC makes the following statement concerning the right to information:

“A review of census data from nine countries confirms that there is a large digital divide for indigenous peoples, which is a new contemporary manifestation of the historical exclusion that such groups have faced.” (ECLAC, 2014:104)

This is one of several examples of when ECLAC focus on the issue of indigeneity as being lack of participation, leaving unproblematic the point of view that indigenous peoples have
been structurally discriminated and forced into Western frameworks since the continent was conquered, although it has rarely been in line with indigeneity or indigenous peoples’ needs (Mignolo, 2005). The problem could instead be thought of from that perspective, examining what must to be regulated in Western frameworks in order to allow the space for indigenous peoples to live how they desire.

One could argue that these contradictions are ignored to an even larger extent by the World Bank report. When promoting the right to territory, the report underlines the negative effects of extractive industries saying that “land titles alone seem to provide indigenous people with little protection” (2015:39) but does not problematize how this could be solved and instead write:

“...there are many cases that prove that the interests of extractive industries and those of indigenous peoples do not have to be at odds with each other.” (World Bank, 2015:39)

The report then provide one example in Bolivia where extractive industries were a “pull factor” for indigenous peoples (2015: 39). As postcolonial theory would argue, this is once again to adjust indigeneity to fit the frame of the Western economic system and to ignore the unequal power relations that still exist after long periods of structural discrimination towards indigenous peoples (Mignolo, 2005).

4.3.4 Effects of the representation

The main effect of the representation of the problem is that the strengthening of rights and participation of indigenous peoples is given as a solution to most of their issues. For example, the ECLAC report states that “the right to information is so fundamental to the exercise of other rights that it has become, along with access to participation, justice and equality, a crosscutting indicator of progress towards State enforcement of social, economic and cultural rights.” (2014:99). While the promotion of rights is important in many aspects, the choice of ECLAC to only focus on indigenous peoples’ rights in their report and portraying it as a solution to most of the issues of indigeneity, is arguably to simplify the issues. The World Bank end the chapter of territory and mobility by writing “if we are to end poverty within a generation, while respecting the right of indigenous peoples to develop with identity and dignity, evidence suggests we can no longer postpone asking them.” (2015:43). However, in
the rest of the chapter, the report does not offer solutions that give indigenous peoples space to speak.

To portray indigenous issues as being regulatory issues and lacking participation is problematic according to postcolonial theory since the solutions that are brought forth are largely in line with Western development standards. Participatory development is arguably used as a buzzword, which does not in practice criticize the institutionalised demands of the West onto indigenous peoples. Connected to this and as Lindroth suggest in the ‘previous research’ section, both these actors use the language of ‘indigenous rights’ in a depoliticised manner which end up covering the power practices that are embedded in it (2014:342). Even though ECLAC generally reflect upon unequal power relations and structural oppression more than the World Bank in their representation of the problems, the effects of the representation are largely the same since the solutions brought forth by both reports almost always concern promoting indigenous peoples’ rights. This results in ‘indigeneity’ being portrayed as largely compatible with Western standards and that the most important issues concern loss of culture, territory and language.

5. Conclusion

What this study sets out to answer is how international donors portray ‘indigeneity’ and indigenous peoples’ issues in their policies. This is examined on the basis of postcolonial theory, which argues that coloniality still exists today and that the reproduction of the West as superior continues. Thereby, the purpose of the study is to critically investigate whether international donors reinforce postcolonial attitudes towards indigenous peoples and how indigenous peoples in Latin America and their issues are represented and allowed to participate in the development agenda. This is important to analyse since the discrimination of indigenous peoples continues today and in relation to that, international development actors have often been criticized of reproducing a shallow representation of indigeneity and not fully integrating them in development efforts. The method used in the study is discourse analysis, which view knowledge as constructed by social practices. The overall results of the study is that there is an understanding of indigeneity as them having different values and needs in contrast to the West. However, indigenous peoples are still not given space to
challenge the standard development agenda, and instead, their needs are promoted solely by strengthening their rights.

The portraying of ‘indigeneity’ and indigenous peoples’ issues is ultimately that they have different needs and values in comparison to the Western society. What exactly these needs are is not clearly discussed in the reports, which from a postcolonial perspective is positive, since Western development actors cannot speak for what the needs and wants of indigenous peoples are. Instead, the issue of indigenous peoples concern that their rights to live the life they want to live have been compromised and discriminated by non-indigenous societies. The solution to this is emphasized by both reports as being the strengthening of indigenous peoples’ rights, in order for indigenous peoples to participate in development and express their different needs. The overarching assumption that underpin the represented problem is then that the voices of indigenous peoples will be heard in the legal framework of rights provided by Western actors, and the constraints that may be imbedded in it. Thereby, the representation leave unproblematic that changes in the framework might be necessary in order for indigenous peoples to be heard, since the rights-based approach is promoted within the very system that has discriminated indigenous peoples for centuries. Due to this lack of self-reflection in the reports, postcolonial attitudes towards indigenous peoples are inevitably reinforced to some extent. This can be seen in the effects of the representation of the problem, which is that indigenous peoples and their issues are highly connected to their rights, and disconnected to embedded discriminatory practices from where these rights are provided to them. In other words, indigenous peoples are allowed to participate in the development agenda but only by somehow adjusting to the Western framework of rights. Perhaps the most interesting finding of this study is how the representation of indigenous peoples issues is focused on the legal aspect of rights, failing to recognize that the legal framework might be flawed in itself.

It is important to emphasize that this study is conducted through a certain theoretical stance, which is not politically neutral and that should therefore not be understood in an objectivistic manner. Because of this, it is important to engage in self-analysis through reflexivity. I as a researcher have myself contributed to creating a research problem and sought to understand it through the chosen theories. My own interest for indigenous peoples’ issues have brought forth this analysis, and I therefore acknowledge that I am subjective in the sense that I do not
claim to have uncovered an objective truth. Instead, this thesis represent one way of understanding, that could be challenged by other views.

This study has contributed to the investigation of how indigenous peoples represented by international donors and in that, it has uncovered some postcolonial attitudes by the World Bank and ECLAC of indigenous peoples in Latin America. However, due to the limited scope of this study, more research is needed in order to further examine how indigeneity is represented by international donors. The low amount of donors as well as reports included in this study increases the uncertainty of the results, and whether they represent the reality of most international donors. Therefore, more studies which analyse several reports of ECLAC and World Bank is needed as well as the analysis of a larger amount of international actors. Furthermore, this study encourages future research to investigate how international donors can improve in their development efforts toward indigenous peoples.
6. List of references


Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. ""Under Western Eyes" revisited: feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles", *Signs*, vol. 28, no. 2.


*Material:*
