

Lund University  
Department of Political Science

STVK12  
Supervisor: Agustín Goenaga

# Media Framing of Female Politicians

From Hero to Zero: An Analysis of the Case of Francia  
Márquez in Colombia



Isabella Silva Ortiz  
Jennifer Salvo Troncoso

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# Abstract

The dominance of men in politics has been a long standing trend, with women historically underrepresented in this sphere. Efforts toward women's inclusion in politics seek to address and rectify this gender imbalance, advocating for greater representation, equal opportunities, and the dismantling of barriers that have hindered women's active participation in political decision-making processes. The unconventional circumstances of the current Vice President of Colombia, Francia Márquez, have captivated the attention of media outlets in Colombia that have heavily focused on her. This research aims to explore how she has been portrayed in the media as a woman. The data is set within the dates of April 2018 to April 2023, and consists of 30 news articles. The research employed content analysis and critical discourse analysis methodologies as they were found to be effective in identifying and understanding patterns in written materials. Four main narratives stood out, unveiling the framing media employed to report on Márquez.

The results from both analyses indicate a consistent portrayal of Francia Márquez by the Colombian media as an outsider. Emphasis is repeatedly placed on her gender and ethnicity in the coverage of her activity. The media consistently positions Francia Márquez on the side of minorities, portraying her not only as their advocate but also as one of them. Despite holding a high-ranking position, the media appears to continually underscore the notion that she is an outsider in that role.

*Keywords:* Colombia, Francia Márquez, media representation, narratives, female politicians.

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“One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one”

—Simone de Beauvoir

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Relevance of the study

Throughout history, women have faced discrimination and marginalization due to their gender, being considered “the inferior sex”. They have been typically confined to domestic roles, with variation across regions and time periods. These traditional ideas continue to constrain women, resulting in gender inequalities. To such an extent that, despite their significant contributions to the workforce and agriculture output, women and girls receive only 10% of the world's income and possess just 1% of assets (Garcia Beaudoux, 2017, p.38).

This study demonstrates its significance in the field of development studies due to its examination of various topics including gender inequality, women’s leadership, and the representation of women in crucial decision-making entities like the government. The participation of women in politics fosters diversity and representation. Observing individuals with similar traits in esteemed positions can promote inclusivity and motivate active engagement from marginalized groups. In addition, female representation can lead to relevant developments such as the reduction of corruption and increased investment in education and healthcare (Hessami and Lopes da Fonseca, 2020). To increase women's presence in politics, active involvement and ample opportunities are crucial. While quota laws can help promote female participation, progress might be hindered by discrimination and unfavorable portrayal in the media. Moreover, the negative effects of gendered stereotypes in the media can significantly impact public perception and discourage women from pursuing politics (Johnson-Myers, 2019).

Media plays a crucial role in shaping people’s opinions and perspectives of individuals. In this way, the portrayal of female leaders by the media holds significant importance as it constructs a narrative of gendered stories that influence our preconceptions and assumptions regarding political authority (Medina, 2020, p. 206). Consequently, the issue of representation of female leadership, especially in the case of a person belonging to a minority in a developing country, is especially relevant and deserves further attention and investigation.

Moreover, the reason behind studying the case of Francia Márquez in Colombia was due to the already abundant studies on cases from female politicians in developed countries. Therefore, studying the case of a female politician belonging to a minority group from the developing world could shorten the knowledge gap on the present topic. In addition, the media representation on the case of Francia Márquez has been understudied.

## 1.2 Research aim and research question

The study proposes an exploratory analysis of the media representation of female politician Francia Márquez in four Colombian newspapers. The aim is to investigate the manner in which the media portrays Francia Márquez and the various representations that are conveyed through the media. The dissemination of information is a crucial function of the media in today's society. The media's perspective is evident in the way news is presented, particularly when it comes to portraying politicians. Hence, the aim of this study is twofold. Primarily, it seeks to highlight the significance of female politicians' gender portrayal in media coverage. Secondly, it strives to emphasize the significance of ethnicity as a factor that influences the formation of identity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to contribute with further research on the analysis of media representations of minority group female politicians in developing countries, such as Colombia.

In order to follow the purpose of the present research and fulfill the aims described above, the following research question and sub research question have been formulated:

RQ: How does the media portray female politicians?

SubRQ: How is Francia Márquez, a female politician of Afro-Colombian ethnicity, described by the press media?

## 1.3 Limitations

Due to time constraints, the current study analyzes one specific politician and certain newspapers. Moreover, some important news articles about Francia Márquez may have been

excluded. In addition, the analysis of ethnicity is broad and should be studied separately. In the future, it would be beneficial to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the media portrayal of Afro-Latin American politicians.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The vice president of Colombia: Francia Márquez

a which has been responsible for the displacement of indigenous, Afro-Colombian and impoverished communities. Her involvement in such causes led to worldwide recognition. Francia Elena Márquez Mina is the second woman to hold office as vice president of Colombia but she is also the second person of African descent to occupy such a high position in the country. In addition, Francia Márquez is the second Afro-Latin American vice president after Epsy Campbell Barr during 2018-2022 in Costa Rica.

An important feature of Francia Márquez, is that her political career has been unusual, skyrocketing even. Her public role was from the beginning as an activist, first, as young as age thirteen, as an environmental advocate and eventually as a human rights defender. She worked in organizations that have mobilized against the advances of the extraction industry in Colombia which resulted in awards from international human rights and environmental organizations (Biografía, 2022; Zamora, 2022).

Her first approach to formal politics was when she took part as president of one of the National Committees of the "Peace Agreements" dialogues, meetings organized between the government and the FARC as an effort to reestablish peace and reconciliation in the country (Biografía, 2022; Zamora, 2022). In 2022 she announced her presidential candidacy for the upcoming elections where she obtained the third highest vote among all candidates in the pre-presidential cross-party elections (MOE, 2022). She was extended an invitation to serve as a co-runner alongside Gustavo Petro, the victorious candidate from the Pacto Histórico coalition. Consequently, their joint efforts proved triumphant, resulting in their formula emerging victorious in the presidential election (MOE, 2022).

The first time she was mentioned in the press was when she was an activist against illegal and corporative mining back in 2018. Not long after, news about assassination attempts on her and other activists became a regular feature in the news. These threats turned out to be a constant before and during her early time in office. In contrast, news reporting claims from Francia Márquez against the racist comments from other public people and within the government started to emerge when she was running for vice president and during her incumbency. In opposition to reports and news about her activism, which were always positive, criticisms toward her performance, appearance and actions began to surface when she became vice president. The latest news report this research attempt to set focus is about the use of an air force helicopter to transport Márquez back and forth from her residency as a security measure given the constant threats against her life. This situation was treated in the media as a highly controversial topic.

Finding the representation behind the news media outlets' of Francia Marquez guided the current research. For instance, media studies has unveiled the way in which media outlets exploit certain techniques to captivate the attention of targeted audiences by conducting user and audience research (Kitzinger, 2004). The results of this research allow publishers and editors to know with some level of certainty which key words, topics and perspectives trigger the interest of the masses. Eventually, because of the process of analysis it was possible to recognise these patterns and even detect some intentionality behind the repeated narratives.

### 3. Literature review

#### 3.1 Common representations of female politicians

Scholarship of representation of women politicians in the media started in the 1990s. The studies since then hold the thesis that media both reflects and reinforces gender stereotypes (Lachover, 2016). At this point research was solely focused on the quantity of coverage between both genders. Although some recent studies keep producing research for this dimension, the focus now has shifted towards studying the kinds of representation that are being reproduced. Studies have shown that there are diverse discourses answering how women politicians are represented in the media. In fact, some narratives coexist together even when they contradict each other.

Society is a space where different discourses compete with one another; at the same time, some discourses are more prevalent than others depending on the context.

While engaging with literature review on the topic of representations of female politicians in the media, the universal findings of all research is that the media reinforces gender stereotypes. Not only does the media reflect the norms of society, it also reproduces and perpetuates them (Galy-Badenas and Gray, 2020). The media constructs depictions of women by utilizing stereotypes and conforming to societal expectations of femininity (Quevedo Redondo and Berrocal Gonzalo, 2018). Hence, media portrayals have the ability to convey the constraints imposed on female politicians and what these representations mean.

A relevant characteristic of media focuses on the repeated mentioning of female officials' appearance and personal issues reported in the press. Giving relevance to these topics diminishes women's place and their importance in politics. A number of studies show that this is a common occurrence in the media, and that often trivial and personal matters such as marital status, age, family, temperament, personality, and physical appearance are highlighted over serious issues like their policy and political stands (Campus, 2013; Fowler and Lawless, 2009; Medina, 2020). In contrast, a study by Fernandez-Garcia (2016) shows that, over the three analyzed Spanish cabinets, both male and female ministers in high-prestige portfolios had less mentions of their personal life compared to those nominated to portfolios of medium and low prestige. While media's focus on personal issues and physical appearance is a common trend for female politicians, results can change depending on the subject under comparison: for example, women with high regarded ministries or women with low prestige departments.

Another frequently observed characteristic is that women are highlighted as pioneers and novelties. It is a regular incident that news center around on the novelty aspect of a woman in politics. Ross (2014) claimed that, even though women have a higher presence in politics compared to the past, they are still portrayed as novelties and anomalies. The categorization of women in this frame of "the first" is so frequent that it is repeated even in situations where this is not the case. As a matter of fact, Falk (2010, p.61) describes that many depictions of women introduced as first runners for a position were verifiably wrong. By the repeated action of

characterizing women as firsts, they are then regarded as outsiders and odd occurrences. Campus (2013) analyzes that, through the practice of alienating women as outsiders, the media is reinforcing the idea that women cannot secure a conventional career path like men but that they can only attain such positions through unpredictable and outstanding circumstances.

This portrayal extends to the leadership role women play in politics. Studies analyze that the latter is often associated with that of a supportive role beside men, with women being described through their relationship with them (Harp et al, 2010). (Baider, 2008; as cited in Fernandez-Garcia, 2016) shows that this was the case for politicians with high-positions such as the previous president of Chile, Michelle Bachelet, and the previous German chancellor, Angela Merkel. She finds Bachelet was often described as the daughter of Alberto Bachelet, and Merkel was acknowledged as the spiritual daughter of Helmut Kohl. The mention of masculine figures is a common feature that comes along in the presentation of Spanish female ministers, as presented by Fernandez-Garcia (2016). Hence, media framing showcases that women in politics are defined by their relationship with a man, and that they are able to hold a position not by their own means, but thanks to a mentor.

Several studies show as well that when women are in power it is usual that their ability to govern often is questioned by the public and the media. A study by Van Dembroucke (2014) exemplifies this practice in Argentinian journalism having as example the case of the previous Argentinian president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. Other works in academia support the premise that the governing ability of women is discredited (for example, Banwart et al., 2003; Campus, 2013).

On the other hand, women might also encounter themselves in advantageous situations when they are regarded as morally superior. During politically challenging times, women who show inclination towards participating in politics might be perceived as catalysts for change and potential contenders for significant governmental positions, primarily because they are recognized as political outsiders (Carrol and Schreiber, 1997). The idea of women as morally superior comes from Marianismo, an ideology that holds that women are semi-divine, pure and spiritually outstanding.

In contrast, the portrayal of over-emotional creatures labeled to female politicians when they are in office is another common representation that both the media and society reproduce (Garcia Beaudoux, 2017). For female politicians, this belief supports the conviction that women do not belong in the political sphere because they can be irrational and highly unstable due to their apparent inability to cope with emotions. Moreover, studies show that women with a strong character are often defamed through descriptions of aggressiveness and combative behavior, in consequence creating a feeling of fear and unattractiveness to women in power (Ibroscheva and Raicheva-Stover, 2009; Gidengil & Everitt, 1999, 2003a, 2003b, as cited in Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020). In the same way they are depicted as dangerous and aggressive, other labels are given to them such as stupid, incapable or crazy when for example an inferior image of them wants to be distributed in order to justify their oppression (Halberstam 2011, 55–59, as cited in Pérez, 2022). Likewise, even when women are reserved and do not show any specific emotion, they are criticized for lack of emotions, usually described as cold and distant (Garcia Beaudoux, 2017). This kind of dismissive representation legitimizes the argument of excluding women in representative politics due to their “over-emotional nature”.

It has been discussed in many studies that women are subjected to a phenomenon called double bind. It can be defined as a phenomenon that affects women of all kinds of life where they need to perform in accordance with a certain set of gendered rules. In politics, that means that women need to balance how masculine and feminine they appear to be. Lee (2004, p. 2016) argues that, to be successful, female officials must be competent in how they navigate the field of gender, that entails they need to play by the rules instead of challenging them. Additionally, a study by van Acker (2003) shows that at the beginning of women’s careers the media embraces them rapidly and fully; in the same manner, it also attacks them quickly and fiercely when they are not up to the media's standards.

When portrayals of minority women in media are analyzed there are a variety of factors that are encountered. Firstly, minority female politicians usually go through the processes of otherization. They are deemed as outsiders of formal politics: their gender is different to the normative male one, and their ethnicity, class, sexuality or religion can become additional layers of differentiation. The study of Galy-Badenas and Gray (2020) analyzes the representation of

minority women politicians in the French media with the cases of Rachida Dati and Najat Vallaud-Belkacem. The findings indicate that common narratives through the analyzed media were presumed based on their perceived incompetence, inadequacy, and lack of credibility. Galy-Badenas and Gray (2020) argue that this kind of representation that deemed them as illegitimate to their positions was due to their differential social identities. In addition, a study by Ward (2016b) indicates that minority women receive more negative and less positive coverage than all the remaining gendered groups. Furthermore, (Gershon, 2012, Tolley, 2015; as cited in Ward, 2016a) argue that there is growing evidence that minority female politicians in the aggregate may face disadvantages that are not country specific, but are perhaps a widespread phenomenon.

Despite the previously mentioned, it should not be assumed that female politicians that are part of a minority group have experienced the same situations; as it is not possible to assume that the case of a racialized woman that has access to power in the developed countries has faced similar circumstances as women of color in Latin America. Furthermore, the literature review demonstrates that there are gaps of knowledge in the studies of women in developing countries, as most research has been done in the global north. Hence, the current study will try to fill these knowledge gaps.

### 3.2 Colombian female politicians' media representation

Limited studies and information are found about how Colombian women politicians are represented in the national media. Nonetheless, a study by Ruiz and Boguslavskaya (2022) finds various remarkable aspects. First, the media frame women politicians as a subject that does not belong in politics. Second, they lower the status of women politicians, their role and significance of their activities. Third, women are systematically marginalized and rendered invisible by the media through the perpetuation of the notion that any power they possess is merely granted to them by men. Lastly, the media often resorts to the "first trope" when portraying women politicians, emphasizing their gender as a means to highlight their historic achievement as the first woman to occupy a particular political role.

In addition, a master's dissertation by Cárdenas Arias (2022) focused on the media representation of Claudia López, mayor of Bogotá D.C. during 2020-2024. Cárdenas Arias found that, as the previously mentioned study suggested, the media uses gendered frames and she is regarded as a political outsider. This study finds that media framing changes for women when they are candidates versus when they are in office. For example, Claudia López underwent a transformation in terms of how she was addressed, transitioning from her given name to being referred to by her full name. However, despite this change, her personal life still garnered significant attention. In addition, the media highlighted both stereotypically feminine and masculine topics, resulting in an uncommon approach for framing a woman politician. Notably, her clothing and appearance were not focal points. Lastly, Claudia López faced criticism for her strong character and assertiveness, traits traditionally associated with men and leadership; the media suggested that her public disapproval increased due to these traits, recommending a more benevolent and amiable demeanor.

As shown above, these representations are not unique to the Colombian context, but they make part of the common representations of female politicians across the globe. Consequently, the representation of Colombian female politicians, according to the existing studies, follows typical global trends.

### 3.3 Afro-Colombians' media representation

When it comes to how this group is represented in the national media, there is little information on the topic. Nonetheless, an investigation article by Tamayo et al. (2010) shows that Afro-Colombians are invisibilized, exoticized, referred as excluded communities, associated with poverty, corruption and beneficiaries of subsidies, and often described as victims but never actors capable of creating conflicts.

## 4. Theoretical framework

In order to analyze how the media portrays female politicians and what narratives are used by the media to describe Francia Márquez, the following theories will be used: i) The hero and peacemaker narrative presented by Campus (2013), ii) the entertainer narrative (Stanyer, 2013, Fowler and Lawless, 2009, Ibroscheva and Raicheva-Stover, 2009), iii) the outsider narrative (O'Neill et al, 2016, van Zoonen, 2006, Lachover, 2016, Galy-Badenas and Gray, 2020) , and the iv) the double bind narrative first proposed by Jamieson (1995). The present theories are used as a tool to effectively classify and understand the meaning of the results. Moreover, they also aid in situating the findings within established narratives.

### 4.1 The hero and peacemaker narrative

The hero and peace bringer narrative presents women with traditional characteristics such as nurturing, empathic, devoted, helpful and morally correct. According to Campus (2013), this narrative is used after periods of war, authoritarianism, corruption and political instability. Therefore, the population is looking for a complete change, for a political leader that embodies the opposite of the past politicians. Thus, the aim of emphasizing traditional female features such as motherly, nurturing and protective; comes with the objective of creating an image for the female politicians to be portrayed as saviors, conciliators and peace bringers of the country. Historical examples of female politicians that are covered under this narrative are, former president Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia who was elected president right after many years of internal war (Cantrell and Bachmann, 2008) and Corazon Aquino in the Philippines, also elected president after the dictatorship and corrupt government of Ferdinand Marcos (Col, 1993).

### 4.2 The entertainer narrative

Another common theme that is spread in the media is the importance given to the private personal life of female politicians. Meddling into the private lives of public people such as politicians is a common occurrence in the media across the world (Stanyer, 2013). Despite this, what differs between the coverage of male to female politicians in regards to their personal life

and political events, is the quantity of content produced between those topics. There is a strong contrast between the quantity of coverage on personal traits and private life, versus the quantity of news produced on serious political matters, the first posing more relevance than the later. In fact, a substantial amount of evidence proves the common belief that gender, civil or family status, and physical appearance are more valued in the production of news than generating news focused on serious and relevant topics such as political affairs and policies (Fowler and Lawless, 2009; Ibroscheva and Raicheva-Stover, 2009).

### 4.3 The outsider narrative

Although women in politics are no longer abnormal exceptions, they continue to be regarded as “the other” (Lachover, 2016). This frame provides a common characteristic to women in politics, that of the outsider. O’Neill et al (2016), and van Zoonen (2006), contend that the focus on highlighting the distinctive “otherness” of women stems from the fact that the normative framework is rooted in masculinity. Therefore, anything that deviates the socially constructed masculine essence of politics is seen as an abnormality, an intrusion.

This notion of otherness becomes evident when discussions center around the gender of female politicians, in contrast to the attention given in the same topic to their male counterparts (Fernandez-Garcia, 2016), and when media coverage is characterized by gender stereotypical narratives (Lünenborg, and Maier, 2014). When it comes to women holding political positions, the current societal judgment is that this is not the norm. As a result, when women do manage to overcome this barrier and take on positions of power, especially as stateswomen, the media often feels the need to justify this atypical event. Campus (2013) argues that these justifications usually attribute their political success to luck or imply that they were merely acting as puppets.

The outsider narrative regarding women politicians usually focuses on their gender. Nonetheless, a broader differential gap is put on women when it is not only the gender that is different from their counterparts of the opposite gender. The standard figure in politics is typically thought as a heterosexual, white, male individual who adheres to a specific religious belief system, which varies depending on the dominant religion of a particular region. Therefore, individuals who possess a greater number of distinct characteristics compared to the established norm are more

likely to experience targeted discrimination. Although it is not common practice in news media to openly discriminate against a politician based on their minority status, the distinguishing features of minorities are consistently emphasized and reiterated as a significant matter in the way news are presented. Hence, through highlighting specific traits, media contributes to the creation and strengthening of racialized, gendered, and “othering” discourses (Galy-Badenas and Gray, 2020).

#### 4.4 The double bind narrative

In contrast to the hero and peacemaker narrative, the double bind is a contradictory narrative where both characteristics of male and female are performed for an audience in order to be deemed as a good female politician. According to Jamieson (1995), the double bind phenomenon is a historical societal bind that has constrained women from assuming leadership roles in society, primarily due to the barriers it imposes on them. Women then find themselves in a complex situation where they are compelled to follow these meticulous rules in order to avoid mistakes, or even more distressing, they find themselves unable to do anything to change their reality.

A key concept in the double bind narrative in female politicians, is that of emotional expressions in public. In this narrative, women are subject to handle their emotions in a performative and controlled manner. Media scrutinizes their performance by expecting women to be feminine, that means to be sympathetic, kind-hearted, and benevolent; while at the same time holding limitations to the extent these emotions can be expressed, that means to avoid being over emotional, otherwise there is a potential risk of being perceived as unstable and unsuitable. Moreover, often it is the case that instances of emotional behavior are mocked and used as a basis to question governing capabilities. Cantor and Bernay (1992, p.217) describe this as, “a problem is learning not to respond emotionally to attacks because emotional responses by women are frequently ridiculed or used as examples of women’s inability to handle real pressure”.

It is relevant to note that expectations on how politicians manage emotions publicly constrains both female and male politicians. However, while men are judged based on masculine standards, women are judged both on their femininity and masculinity. For women, they need to carefully manage the extent to which they express their emotions, as crying would express weakness, and anger would express potential danger. In any case, it is revealed that women are imprisoned in a double bind where inability to adhere to expectations will lead to mockery and discreditation.

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1 Case justification

Francia Márquez's career is a phenomenon in itself. In addition to being the second female vice president in Colombia, she is also a person of color and a commoner. She belongs to a community that has suffered from poverty and marginalization for decades. This aspect is particularly intriguing for this research, as Márquez is not the exception in her own community or among other Colombian activists. Nevertheless, she stands out as one of the few minority female politicians who have achieved a high-ranking position in the government, and therefore, she has attracted considerable attention from the media both prior to and during her tenure as the vice president of Colombia. Hence, the main motivation of this study is to explore and analyze the media narratives that have shaped Francia Márquez's career.

### 5.2 Data collection

The collected material consisted of three Colombian newspapers and one magazine, all of national circulation: El Tiempo, El Espectador, La República, and Semana. Compilation of the material was conducted through the corresponding website of each media outlet search bar using the keywords: Francia Márquez, and selecting the time period between 2018 to late April 2023. With the aim of having a holistic approach at the time of answering the research question, the time range was delimited from having the first year where Francia Márquez was mentioned in any of the used newspapers (2018), to the last news article of interest to the research (2023).

According to Guttman (2023), a survey in May 2022 shows how El Tiempo, El Espectador, and Semana are some of the most popular news websites nationally by having more than eight million unique visitors individually. In contrast, La República has a different focus from the three previously mentioned press, as it mainly addresses economic and financial news. By adding articles of this newspaper to the research, it is possible to analyze the reach that certain topics involving Francia Márquez could have on a non-sensationalistic business oriented publication. Hence, these media outlets were chosen with the purpose of assembling a representative selection of what the average Colombian news reader consumes.

## 5.3 Data analysis

### 5.3.1 Content analysis

To answer the question of how Francia Márquez is portrayed in the news media, one of the most appropriate research methods for obtaining this information is content analysis, as it is suitable for discovering patterns in wide quantities of written material (Boréus and Bergström, 2017). In addition, content analysis has studied areas such as those of mass communications (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Therefore, it could serve useful for the objective of the current research. Not only is content analysis an effective tool for finding different patterns, it is also used for studying variations over time, to examine attention to a particular topic, and the frequency of occurrence of a phenomenon (Boréus and Bergström, 2017).

For the purpose of developing a comprehensive coding system of the data, a table was created with different categories which would help dissect the information found in each newspaper (see Appendix I - Content analysis table). The process of choosing the news articles began by getting acquainted with an initial small set of news from different newspapers. Then, a wider selection of news articles were categorized in three, by newspaper, respective year, and theme/event. After having a wide set of articles, few selected articles were picked for each theme as “if one intends to study newspaper content over a long period of time, one might need to reduce the material further by taking samples” (Boréus and Bergström, 2017, 2.2.1 Analytical steps and key concepts section).

The articles selected for the sample fulfilled the following criteria. First, the article needed to be part of one of the categorized topics. Then, this article had to be from one of the delimited media outlets. Second, it needed to fit into the timeline of the specific topic. Third, Francia Márquez had to be a subject in either the title and/or in the content of the article. Finally, it needed to have a differential perspective from other articles chosen for the same topic. The last was done in order to have a broader and holistic view of the diverse perspectives that were found in the media outlets. Moreover, this point of the criteria was key to the methodology of the discourse analysis as, what is relevant is not only the substance of what has been said, but also how these things have been said (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Therefore, by having diverse perspectives and content in the articles per topic, the analysis can collect individual pieces of information that paint a broader picture.

The final 30 selected articles were analyzed in the contents table with the respective categories. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), making use of exhaustive categories will ensure everything pertinent to the study can be classified even when some data is difficult to define. Hence, the data was divided into ten categories. Each category measures the following,

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**Table 1. List of categories in Content analysis table**

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<b>n</b>	<b>Categories</b>
1	<b>N</b> (number of article)
2	<b>Topics</b> (the cluster topic where the news belongs to)
3	<b>Date</b> (date of publication)
4	<b>Name of newspapers/magazine</b> (explanatory)
5	<b>Title of article</b> ( <i>Spanish</i> ) ( <i>explanatory</i> )
6	<b>Length of article</b> (measured in amount of words)
7	<b>Honorifics</b> ( <i>Spanish</i> ) (what title was used when referring to Francia Márquez)
8	<b>Adjectives</b> ( <i>Spanish</i> ) (the adjectives used to describe her)

9	<b>Repeated words/sentences</b> (quantified with amount of repeated times)
10	<b>Other mentioned people</b> ( <i>explanatory</i> )

According to Macnamara (2005) common elements found in text such as adjectives, metaphors, and binaries are studied in qualitative content analysis. He states analyzing elements such as adjectives gives indicators of the writer's attitudes or intentions connected to what the topic or subject of discussion. An additional element for understanding what is considered relevant and what are the writer's intentions is the frequency of words and sentences. Therefore, these categories will help find and bring together media's constructed images of Francia Márquez.

### 5.3.2 Critical discourse analysis

In order to deepen the analysis and answer the question “How does the media portray female politicians?” Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a useful tool. With Content Analysis we are able to recognise patterns, key words, and trends when, in this case, the media addresses a political figure like Francia Márquez. CDA allows for a deeper analysis of the patterns and trends found during content analysis. The main idea was to discover the narratives employed by media outlets used to portray Francia Márquez in different contexts and periods throughout her public life. Discourse, as most concepts within social sciences, has been defined and conceptualized in various ways. For the purpose of this research the following definition of discourse, from Boréus and Bergström, 2017, was taken as guide:

*“... ‘discourse’ refers to the patterns for how a certain phenomenon tends to be talked and written about at a particular time in a particular context or institution... a particular discourse might harbor internal contradictions and tensions.”*

Since CDA is not intended to analyze a particular actor but instead the construction of identities, this research focused on Francia Márquez as a subject portrayed by the media. Consequently, this approach facilitated the observation of the changes in the narrative employed to portray Francia Márquez over time, starting from her initial encounters with the media until her first months of

incumbency as vice president of Colombia. In addition, the use of CDA is not intended for explaining the phenomenon or finding the cause-effect process but as a tool to identify and expose hidden power dynamics (Boréus and Bergström, 2017).

The analysis was conducted based on Fairclough's model for CDA as summarized and explained by Janks (1997). With this method it was possible to identify some of the narratives employed by the media when they report on or about Francia Márquez. Texts analyzed are from traditional newspapers on their electronic versions which allowed for remote access and convenient filing. As stated previously, these publications are of national circulation which means they reach most of the population in Colombia in all its territory.

## 6. Analysis and Results

### 6.1 Content analysis

To see the comprehensive findings of the content analysis, refer to Appendix I - Content analysis table.

#### 6.1.1 Francia as an activist

Francia Márquez's activism has been in place for many years. In 2001 she proposed an “*acción de tutela* (guardianship action)” which demanded that the Colombian government protect the fundamental rights of communities affected by the mining industries. After this legal petition was rejected, Márquez kept looking for ways to fight for her community's rights. Consequently, she was awarded with the Goldman Environmental prize in 2018. It was then that Colombian media outlets started addressing her prolonged activism in the country.

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**Table 3. Summary of Activism and Awards section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

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Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
22	December 2022	La República	Mujer afrocolombiana	Influyentes (prominent) (5), Pueblo (the people) (2),

			(Afro-Colombian woman)	Defensa (safeguarding) (2)
23	April 2022	El Espectador	Negra (Black)	Violencia (violence) (18), Paz (peace) (6), Racismo/racista (racism) (5), Territorio (territory) (7), Amenaza (threat) (9), Defensa/defender (6)
24	September 2022	El Tiempo	Desplazada (displaced), Afrodescendiente (Afro-descendant), Defensora (defender)	Atentado (attack) (2), Minería/minera (mining) (3)
25	April 2018	Semana	Buena líder (great leader), Afrodescendiente (Afro-descendant), Ambientalista (environmentalist)	Minería (mining) (12), Ilegal (22), Ambiental (environmental) (22), Lucha (struggle/fight) (17), Territorio (territory) (17), Defensa (defense) (6), Violencia (violence) (5), Contaminación/contaminar (contamination) (4)

The results from the content analysis consist of the following. For the topic of this section, *Activism and Awards*, we were able to analyze and discern four sampled news articles for the topic *Activism and Awards* (see Appendix I - Content analysis table). The articles displayed in *Table 3*, describe the activist career of Márquez, which also highlight the recognition and awards she has received for her achievements. All these articles mention ethnicity attributes when referring to Márquez; associating and describing her with words such as afrocolombiana (Afro-Colombian), negra (Black), afrodescendiente (Afro-descendant). Parallely, repeated words throughout the news articles such as atentado (attack), minería (mining), contaminación (contamination), violencia (violence), paz (peace), lucha (struggle/fight), ilegal, ambiental (environmental), pueblo (the people), and territorio (territory) create an imagery of what Márquez work as an activist involves. Moreover, adjectives such as ambientalista

(environmentalist), defensora (defender), buena líder (great leader), describe Márquez with a favorable connotation and emphasize on her role of activist. Additionally, the adjective desplazada (displaced) describes Márquez as someone that has been negatively affected.

## 6.1.2 Francia as Vice President

### 6.1.2.1 Threats: pre-incumbency and incumbency periods

Márquez has faced life-threatening incidents mostly in forms of attacks and death threats, both during her time as an activist and now as the vice president. We defined two periods for the analysis of the topic *Threats* and sub topics *pre-incumbency period* and *incumbency period*. The pre-incumbency period features the activist roles of Francia Márquez, and her political career before becoming vice president, which entails her pre-candidacy for presidency and her campaign for becoming vice president. Conversely, the incumbency period starts when she is elected as vice president.

**Table 4. Summary of Threats: pre-incumbency period section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
8	May 2019	El Espectador	Intranquila (restless), Desprotegida (unprotected)	Líderes (leaders) (16), Protección (protection) (8), Seguridad (security) (4), Escoltas (bodyguards) (4), UNP (4), Cauca (10), Masacre (massacre) (3), Premio Goldman (Goldman prize) (2), Atentado (attack) (5)

9	May 2019	El Tiempo	Víctima (victim)	Atentado (attack) (8), Encuentro (meeting) (3), Líderes (leaders) (11), Heridos (wounded) (7), Cauca (10), Protección (protection) (5), Terrorista (terrorist) (2), Ataque (attack) (7)
10	May 2022	El Espectador	-	Candidata (candidate) (7), Apuntada (targeted) (3), Policía (police) (7), Láser (laser beam) (6), Seguridad (security) (5)

In the Content table (see Appendix I - Content analysis table), 3 articles were selected per each subtopic. In the pre-incumbency period subtopic, the articles in *Table 4*, describe Márquez with the adjectives víctima (victim), intranquila (restless), and desprotegida (unprotected). Some of the repeated words in the three articles are líderes (leaders), atentado (attack), protección (protection), seguridad (security). These words focus on the attempted attacks and link them with the persecution of activists in Colombia, and consequently of Márquez.

**Table 5. Summary of Threats: incumbency period section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
11	March 2023	Semana	-	Supuesto (supposed) (2), Artefacto explosivo (explosive artifact) (2), Aseguró que (assured that) (2), Amenazas (threats) (2)
12	March 2023	Semana	-	País (country) (6), Sufre de un excesivo delirio de persecución (suffers from an excessive persecution delusion) (4), Fuerzas militares (military

				forces) (3), Amenazas (threats) (4)
13	January 2023	El Espectador	-	Intento de atentado (attempted attack) (5), Artefacto (artifact) (4)

For the incumbency period subtopic, the articles in the *Table 5*, have repeated words such as amenazas (threats) and intento de atentado (attempted attack), which place the context on the threats faced by Márquez. In addition, the repeated word such as supuesto (supposed), and the sentence *sufre de un excesivo delirio de persecución* (suffers from an excessive persecution delusion) characterize the threats as non-existent and labels them as potentially being fabricated by Francia Márquez.

### 6.1.2.3 Sensationalist news

Sensationalism is a term associated with tabloids, entertainment-styled news and yellow journalism. Udeze and Uzuegbunam (2023) state that these kinds of news report trivial and insignificant events alongside biased perspectives of actual news topics through a sensationalist, frivolous or in a manner resembling tabloids. Celebrities, and prominent public figures can become objects of sensational news. Therefore, it is expected that an individual in a high-profile position, like the vice president of a country, will attract this kind of news.

**Table 6. Summary of Sensationalism news section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
26	August 2022	Semana	Ambientalista (environmentalist), Ganadora (winner).	Coloridas (colorful) (2), Volumetricas (volumetric) (3), Llamativas (eye-catching)(2), Prestigiosa (prestigious) (2), Afro (4), Vestido (dress) (6), Atuendo (outfit) (2), Diseñador (designer) (5),

				Territorio (territory) (5)
27	August 2022	Semana	Formidable, Negra (Black), Preparada (prepared), Joven (young)	Posesión (inauguration) (6), Comunidad (community) (5), Casa (house) (5), Me estoy enamorando (I am falling in love) (4)
28	November 2022	El Tiempo	Nuestro (ours)	Gobierno (government) (6), Intervencion (intervention) (5), Justicia (justice) (5), Vicepresidenta (vice president) (4)
29	August 2022	El Tiempo	Orgullosa (proud)	Mujer (woman) (4), lideresa (leader) (3), ancestros (ancestors) (2)
30	March 2023	El Tiempo	-	Accidente (accident) (2).

For the content analysis table (see Appendix I - Content analysis table), 5 news articles on this topic were selected. In *Table 6*, the articles touched upon different topics. For example, the article 27 contained the repeated phrase me estoy enamorando (I am falling in love), which delves into the private life of Márquez. Nonetheless, the previously mentioned article and two additional articles (26 and 29), mention words such as lideresa (leader), ancestros (ancestors), afro, territorio (territory), and the adjective ambientalista (environmentalist); words which are present in news articles related to the activism of Márquez. Furthermore, the previously mentioned words and the additional word and adjective mujer (woman), negra (black), focus once again in highlighting the identity of Márquez through her gender and ethnicity. Finally, the article 30, covers the minor accident the vice president had in her leg. Here, the repeated word was accidente (accident), and the article serves as demonstration of the involvement of the media in Márquez personal life.

### 6.1.2.3 Comments: racist remarks and performance critiques

After becoming vice president, Francia Márquez started to receive several racist remarks from people and public figures. Although those comments were openly racist and condemned, more subtle racist comments from other figures were not publicly discussed or objected by the media. These are not the only kind of prejudices against the vice president, comments on her capabilities and competence have been more common since she was positioned in office. The following results therefore will be categorized in the topic of *Comments*, and classified in two sub categories *racist remarks* and *performance critiques*.

**Table 7. Summary of Comments: Racist remarks section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
14	March 2023	El Espectador	Mujer racializada (racialized woman), Incoherente (incoherent)	La ley antidiscriminación (the anti-discriminatory law) (5), Marbelle (11), Comentarios racistas/discriminatorios (racist/discriminatory comments) (7), Denuncias (complaints) (11)
15	December 2022	Semana	Influyente (influential), Vergonzosa (shameful), Da lástima (it's pitiful), Grande mujer (great woman)	Los negros (the Blacks) (7), Pelo hediondo (foul-smelling hair) (5), La izquierda (the left) (5), Estereotipo (stereotype) (4), Representante (representative) (7), Población afro/negra (Afro/Black population) (3)
16	February 2023	Semana	Importante (important), Humilde (humble)	Helicóptero (helicopter) (14), Familia (family) (11), Dapa (14), Millones (millions) (5),

				Lujosa (luxurious) (10), Color de piel (skin color) (4)
17	November 2022	El Tiempo	Mujer negra (Black woman)	El gobierno (the government) (5), Racismo (racism) (5), Mujer (woman) (4)

For the first sub topic of *racist remarks*, the Content table consisted of 5 sampled articles (see Appendix I - Content analysis table). *Table 7* displays 4 articles (14, 15, 16, 17 respectively) which touch on the gender and ethnicity of Márquez. Some of the respective repeated words are *mujer* (woman), *color de piel* (skin color), *población afro/negra* (Afro/Black population). Adjectives describing the same phenomena are *mujer negra* (Black woman), and *mujer racializada* (racialized woman). In addition, some adjectives used by the media to describe Márquez with negative connotations are *vergonzosa* (shameful), *da lástima* (it's pitiful), and *incoherente* (incoherent). In contrast, adjectives with positive connotation are *grande mujer* (great woman), *influyente* (influential), and *importante* (important). Other adjectives are more ambiguous such as *humilde* (humble).

Moving forward are presented the results of the subtopic *performance critiques*. It is fairly common for the media to report on the work of governmental figures. Despite this, women in positions of power with highly regarded jobs are more likely to be criticized and questioned on their abilities than male politicians. Therefore, the research of these kinds of news are valuable for the study.

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**Table 8. Summary of Comments: Performance critiques section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

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Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
18	April 2023	Semana	Apagada (inactive/faded)	Reforma (reform) (40), Presidente (president) (50)

19	November 2022	Semana	Líder formidable (formidable leader), Mujer (woman), Afrodescendiente (afrodescendant), Activista de derechos humanos (human rights activist), Ambientalista (environmentalist), Abogada (lawyer), Humilde (humble), Sin protagonismo (without prominence), Reconocida (renowned)	El gobierno (the government) (7), Politica de igualdad (equality policy) (2), Comunidades (communities) (4), Paz (peace) (3), Protagónico/protagonismo (protagonistic/protagonism) (4), Presupuesto (budget) (6)
20	October 2022	Semana	Marginada (marginalized)	Líderes sociales (social leaders) (5), Cauca (5), El presidente (the president) (4), Región del país (country's region) (4)
21	September 2022	El Espectador	-	Funciones (roles) (7), Ministra (minister) (4), Constitucion (Constitution) (4), Encargada (in charge) (2)

The results of the Content table analysis for the subtopic *performance critiques* are shown next (see Appendix I - Content analysis table). The articles in *Table 8*, tackle the issue of the comments that questioned the abilities of Márquez in her role of vice president. She was described with the adjectives: marginada (marginalized), sin protagonismo (without prominence), and apagada (inactive/faded). Some of the repeated words were funciones (roles),

encargada (in charge), protagónico/protagonismo (protagonistic/protagonism), and presupuesto (budget). These previous repeated words put the reader in the context of governmental roles and leadership. Moreover, when the adjectives that were previously mentioned are in the picture within this context, the media makes a connection between Márquez's abilities and her government position. In this context, the previously mentioned adjectives used to describe her assume that Márquez is an outsider and might not be doing her job properly. In addition, the article 18 in *Table 8*, has the repeated words reforma (reform), and presidente (president). This article narrates an extensive interview of former president César Gaviria. Márquez is mentioned rarely within the article and mainly in the article's title (see Appendix I - Content analysis table).

#### 6.1.2.4 Controversies: use of helicopter

The use of presidential and governmental aircrafts has been allowed for many years due to various reasons. Throughout last presidencies there have been controversies of the incorrect use of the presidential helicopter. For the current government, critics about the use of the helicopter have appeared since February 2023 when María Fernanda Cabal posted a video about Francia Márquez using the presidential helicopter arriving at her house. Cabal culprit Francia Márquez of the death of a soldier due to the prioritization of her ride instead of the soldier's. After the allegations, Francia Márquez argued that due to the bomb-threat in January she has been making use of the helicopter for her safety. This event has led to diverse comments from the public and different politicians in mass media.

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**Table 9. Summary of Controversies: Use of army helicopter section in Content analysis table (Appendix I)**

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Article n	Date	News outlet	Adjectives	Repeated words (frequency)
1	April 2023	La República	-	Vuelos (flights) (6), Black Hawk (6), 130 vuelos (vuelos) (2), Costo (cost) (4)

2	March 2023	El Tiempo	Mujer pobre (poor woman)	Senador (senator) (4), Cuestionamientos (questionings) (3), Racista (racist) (3), Cuestiones de seguridad (security concerns) (2), Clasista (classist) (4), Patriarcal (patriarchal) (3)
3	February 2023	El Tiempo	Súper protegida (very protected)	Helicóptero (helicopter) (6), Casa (house) (7)
4	April 2023	El Tiempo	Firme (steady)	Fuerza aérea (air force) (4), Aviones (airplanes) (8), Costo (cost) (5), Emisiones de dióxido de carbono (carbon dioxide emissions) (2)
5	March 2023	El Espectador	Arrogante (arrogant)	Pacto histórico (4), De malas (back luck) (6), Helicóptero (helicopter) (13), Seguridad (security) (5), Casa (house) (5), Defensa (defense) (3),
6	April 2023	Semana	Sin méritos (without merits), Privilegiada (privileged), Campeona (champion), No está preparada ((she) is not prepared), Resentida (resentful)	Contaminación (contamination) (4), Helicóptero (helicopter) (5), Color de piel (skin color) (4)

7	April 2023	Semana	-	Helicóptero (helicopter) (6), Aerovane (6), De malas (back luck) (3), Millones de pesos (millions of pesos) (3), La derecha (the right) (3), Viaje (travel) (3), Vuelos (flights) (5)
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The content analysis table results are as follows (see Appendix I - Content analysis table). In *Table 9*, most articles employ words related to the use of the helicopter such as helicóptero (helicopter), aviones (airplanes), and vuelos (flights). Similarly, some articles draw attention to words related to economic expenses such as millones de pesos (millions of pesos), and costo (cost). On the other hand, some articles draw attention to words related to security: cuestiones de seguridad (security concerns), and defensa (defense). Other mentioned words in different articles correlated with ethnicity and discrimination are racista (racist), clasista (classist), patriarcal (patriarchal), and color de piel (skin color). In this amalgamation of results, it can be assumed that the issue of Márquez using the helicopter could be correlated to topics such as governmental expenditures, safety concerns, and discrimination.

Positive adjectives were firme (steady), and campeona (champion). Some of the negative adjectives portray the image that Francia Márquez does not have the ability to perform in her position as vice president, such adjectives are sin méritos (without merits), and no está preparada ((she is) not prepared). As a contrast, the other negative adjectives describe Márquez within the personal traits of resentida (resentful), privilegiada (privileged), and arrogante (arrogant). Lastly, the adjective mujer pobre (poor woman) highlights stereotypical characteristics that may be associated with marginalized groups such as Afro-Colombians.

Lastly, the articles 5 and 7 contained the phrase and idiom de malas (back luck). This phrase was said by Márquez as a response to the critiques of the use of the helicopter. The idiom “de malas” might be perceived as dismissive and hostile. Hence, the association of this phrase with Márquez could lead to further judgment in her capacity to govern.

### 6.3 Critical discourse analysis

The approach used in the data analysis process led to the discovery of the following narratives: i) The hero and peacemaker, ii) The entertainer, iii) The outsider, and finally, iv) The double bind. The theories supporting these narratives were introduced in the theoretical framework, the process of analysis in CDA is not linear nor literal, social and historical contexts need to be taken into account. Thus, the narratives are part of the discovery as much as they are part of the theoretical framework. They are also interrelated therefore in some articles these narratives overlap, in other cases there is one that stands out.

Common narratives found at first glance reflect on the patriarchal and social class division rhetorical hegemony that seems to persist today in the context of Colombian modern society. In addition, by highlighting her gender, social status and ethnicity when praising and celebrating her work and achievements as environmental activist it is possible to identify as well the racialised views of the media and how they imagine people who differ from the hegemonic ideal. For example, in the beginning of her public life, all publications presented Francia Márquez to the audiences in a positive light, stressing her firm character, convictions and eloquence as if they were unusual in a person of her background.

There are also nuances that do not seem evident at first glance but are constantly repeated and place the reader in a certain reality where Francia Márquez could be considered an exception. Beyond the narratives, that might be consider “mainstream” and “typical”, and after a deeper analysis, more specific narratives emerged, narratives applicable to Francia Márquez particular case but nonetheless still generalizable in the context of the emergent body of “common citizens” in Latin America that have slowly, entered the political arena throughout the region.

As seen on the Content Analysis, key words such as “lideresa” (women leader), “preparada” (as in “competent”), “afro-descendiente” (afro-descendant), and other related to her cause such as “mineria” (mining), “ambiental” (environmental), “lucha” (struggle) to name a few, started to fill the headlines and notes inside these publications, creating an image of a righteous persona

which later on the media itself would be used against her once she got elected to a position of political power.

“The hero and peacemaker narrative” was the most notable narrative employed on the reports during her time as an environmental and social activist. This narrative tends to appear in times of conflict and or societies with high levels of corruption or political instability (Campus, 2013). The reality of Colombian society since the late twentieth century and to the present day has been hit by the struggle against armed forces, drug cartels, poverty and underdevelopment that has dragged Colombia for decades, and more recently by political turmoil. Francia Márquez, one might say, has lived on the struggle of all these and a few others directly related to her identity. Thus, this narrative only highlights that side of her, turning her into a “heroine” for the people. As an example, on the note published in La Republica about Márquez being mentioned among the 25 most influential women of the year 2022. Marina Silva, former Brazilian member of the government, said:

“Ella [Francia Márquez] vio, en su viaje, que en realidad estaba defendiendo a toda la humanidad, a otras formas de vida y al planeta Tierra. Grande es la fuerza de quien conoce y valora su origen”

(She realized on her journey that she was defending the entire humanity, also other forms of life and the planet Earth, Great is the strength of whom knows and values her own origin)

(La República, December 2nd, 2022)

The fact that she was granted a few international awards for her work as environmental and social activist and recognition around the world certainly fuelled this narrative. Furthermore, every side has an opposite and this narrative is not exception, according to Van Acker (2003) study, in the case of women in public spheres, the media tends to acknowledge and praise them promptly in the beginning of their careers to eventually quickly criticizes them if they fail to meet the expectations created for them.

The next mentions of her in the media were about the threats against her life, facts denounced by herself and by other activists. The specific threat happened to a group of people and got attention because two security agents posted by the government for hers and other activists' safety. Here the headline implied that the threat was serious according to Francia Márquez and her allies, however the introduction of opinions of government officials and even the president once again put a shadow of doubt over Márquez state of mind. Some called her “resolved and firm” others said she tended to overreact and qualify her complaints as a character flaw.

We can identify the double bind narrative on these reports, for instance, a laser beam that was pointing at her during an official campaigning public appearance which led to the cancellation of the event. However the Police Chief downplayed the situation by saying that her life was never at risk. Here the narrative started to split up into the publications supporting her, explaining the situation and presenting arguments about her safety concerns, adding the idea of her as a victim, once again exploiting her popularity. On the other hand, publications on the opposite ideological spectrum started using inflammatory headlines and giving more space to political adversaries whose comments were more in-line with the authorities that deemed these threats as “paranoid delusions”, feeding the public with antagonistic views in the same article but prioritizing the one narrative that discredited Francia Márquez, hence the heroine portrait began to blur.

By the time she got elected one threat was reported, this time the attempt was an explosive artifact placed on her way home. From this threat two opposing narratives consolidated: the helpless victim and the evil opportunist. Politicians on her side made front page stating their concerns while reproducing the victim narrative. The media outlets that amplified the voice of the opposition, implied that the threat was fabricated. For instance, a 50 word length report with inconclusive information that could mislead the audience into believing the claims of the opposition was published promising further clarification which never came (See article 12 in appendix I - Content analysis table)

The entertainer narrative somehow touches on all the reports, considering that her name attracts the audiences. However, we could find this narrative in full display on the news reports regarding her personal life, dresses she wore and or her demeanor on official activities. For example,

Semana published an extensive interview with the recently elected vice president in August 2022, where several topics were touched. However the headline was about her “love-life”, ““Me estoy enamorando, pero con mucho cuidado”: Francia Márquez abre su corazón” (“I am falling in love but carefully” Francia Marquez opens her heart)  
(Semana, August 8th, 2022)

The interview consists of 1445 words, and while only about 20 were on this particular issue, it still was used as the headline. As mentioned before, the “entertainer” narrative is present in almost every article. It seems that her name is being used to attract attention online, such as in the following example, extracted from an interview to the former Colombian President Gaviria (Semana, April 23rd, 2023), 7880 words, plenty of topics concerning local and international politics, his life after he left office but the headline is about his opinion about Francia Marquez’s duties, or the lack of them apparently, in the government so far. Only two lines about her and it is the headline for the whole interview. He did not candidly mention her at all before or after those lines.

Some narratives follow the rules of the hegemonic power, to perpetuate stereotypes and to keep the status quo. In that sense, sensationalist news and tabloids are the most representative type of text in the media for that function by changing the focus of important issues. Francia Márquez's case involves various instances of banal information, such as the deceptive headlines, articles focusing on her attire, and a concise 125-word report that fails to provide any clarification regarding an injury, despite the headline's claims. For instance, the news articles focused on her fashion sense and clothing, tried to disguise the critique towards Francia Márquez appearance and the way she usually dressed. However, shortly after receiving praise of her fashion style, publications began to assert that she was not taking her position seriously. Furthermore, the media criticized her attire, deeming it inappropriate, and echoing similar remarks made by political adversaries.

The double bind narrative appears often when her role as a Afro-descendant woman in power is highlighted. It appears both as implications of how a woman and moreover a ethnic woman like Márquez should behave and be like. For instance, the whole controversy regarding the use of the helicopter has many dimensions. Beyond the use of it, lies her responses mostly to the reactions

of her political adversaries. The use of the phrase “ de malas” unleashed a whole new set of criticism, this time regarding her “poorly chosen” words. She was reminded of her current position and her gender, vilified. Her previously praised genuinity and assertiveness was no longer viewed as such, now she was called vulgar, rude and even aggressive.

Furthermore, the racists remarks identified in the texts point out more than just her skin color. There is a whole idea attached to people of afro-ascendancy that she promotes, according to her political adversaries, this is evident in an report on a male congressist, also afro-descendent who claims that the left has imposed an stereotype of how people of african ascendance must look. He stated that the recognition of Francia Márquez as one of the 25 most influential women of 2022 is a shame considering she is part of the left therefore part of the problem. She is no longer considered by him a representative of their people (Semana, 2022). When those voices are amplified by the media, the sight of the reader is directed to her ethnicity and in some cases to her social origins and class.

Following this point, the other narrative that is present mostly in every other article is the outsider; this is apparent on the reports of her activism, on which the reporters seemed astonished by her “eloquence” and “expertise” on the different causes she supported.

The outsider narrative was present in the reports about her using a government-owned helicopter to go back and forth from her home after being targeted, again, by death threats and assassination attempts. In addition, her new residence was also part of the controversy, not only was she criticized for the use of the helicopter as a security measure, but also because her new residency is situated in a very exclusive area, home to prominent politicians and economic elites. Some of the critiques published were concerned about state expenditure, pollution, or the exploitation of public resources. However, after a closer look, it can be assumed that the main problem was that she is an outsider. According to her accusers, and even her supporters and fellow partisan, she does not belong in the vice president role.

Francia Márquez seems to be useful to address irrelevant topics, where she is at the center as an object more than a subject. When it comes to dealing with information in the media, what is not mentioned or talked about regarding a subject has also a meaning. In most of the reports selected

for this research and on those left behind, not only the classic narratives are present but also these subtle ones, almost invisible to the naked eye but that create nonetheless a reality, a parallel one, is possible to argue, with respect to the real Francia Marquez.

## 7. Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to explore the media portrayal of female politicians, focusing on the media representations of the case of Francia Márquez, a female politician of Afro-Colombian descent. Through a qualitative content and critical discourse analysis, 30 news articles from 3 newspapers and 1 magazine were correlated in relation to existing literature and to the existing theories of the hero and peacemaker, the entertainer, the outsider, and the double bind narratives. However, certain narratives and representations appeared to hold more significance compared to others. As a result, the subsequent discoveries will strive to address the research questions presented at the beginning of the study: “How does the media portray female politicians?” and “How is Francia Márquez, a female politician of Afro-Colombian ethnicity, described by the press media?”.

In the description and representation of Francia Márquez in the media, the outsider is the most frequently observed narrative. Francia Márquez gender and ethnic identity is repeatedly highlighted through most news articles. Thus, the media constantly describes and portrays Márquez as an outsider of politics. Other examples of the media portrayal of Márquez as an outsider are the following. First, by emphasizing apparent outstanding characteristics when compared to stereotypical images of Afro-Colombians. Second, through the insinuation that her current position in the government is the result of her popularity and not of her achievements. Therefore, by consistently highlighting her differences from societal norms in every situation she engages in, the media consistently emphasizes her distinctiveness. “The hero and peacemaker” is also one of the most presented narratives in the media. The media positions Francia Márquez as a hero by highlighting her achievements during her time as activist. In addition, a found pattern is that the media uses this representation of Márquez specially before her time in office.

“The double bind” was a frequent narrative through the media portrayal of Francia Márquez. The media emphasizes her feminine aspects such as her tenderness and empathy while simultaneously praising her strong minded and assertive features which are commonly associated with masculinity. Nonetheless, Márquez is criticized when she is not capable of balancing feminine and masculine behavior. In addition, similarly to other female politicians (van Acker, 2003), the media was more supportive of Márquez at the beginning of her political career than compared to the support shown at the time of office. It can be hypothesized and assumed that the decreasing media support was due to inability to withhold media standards.

Finally, “the entertainer” narrative was not able to show concrete media representations of Francia Márquez. Nonetheless, it can be inferred that the media uses her popularity to attract readers with topics not relevant to her political work. After being elected vice president, the media reports on topics unrelated to her political role, giving a focus to her image and personal life instead. Her popularity is used also to attract the attention of the audience towards certain reports. The previous strategy made use of her name in headlines on news articles where she is not the subject nor the main discussion topic.

On a side note, Francia Márquez has been portrayed within media stereotypes of Afro-Colombians (Tamayo et al, 2010). This deduction can be made as she has been described with words such as poor, and victim throughout some of the analyzed news articles. Additionally, it can be presumed that she could potentially be viewed as corrupt and opportunistic due to the media connection with the news articles issued about the theme of the helicopter use.

For further research is recommended to study women politicians within the spectrum of ethnicity, and other minorities in the context of Colombia, the Latin American political sphere, and in developing countries. This recommendation is motivated by the challenge of finding studies about women of diversities in public life or in power positions related to media framing. More access to that type of knowledge can contribute to better understanding of the narratives that shape our perceptions and reality.

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## 9. Appendices

### 9.1 Appendix I - Content analysis table

n	Topics	Date	Name of Newspaper /Magazines	Title of article (Spanish)	Article length in words	Honorifics/Title (Spanish)	Adjectives (Spanish)	Repeated words/sentences (Spanish)	Other mentioned people
1	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	23/April/2023	La República	<i>Francia Márquez ha realizado 130 vuelos en helicóptero, esto es lo que han costado</i>	345	Francia Márquez, Vicepresidenta	-	Vuelos (6), Black Hawk (6), 130 vuelos (2), Costo (4)	Maria Fernanda Cabal
2	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	14/March/2023	El Tiempo	<i>Escarnio contra vicepresidenta muestra crisis racista y clasista: Iván Cepeda</i>	300	Vicepresidente, La Vicepresidenta Francia Márquez, Vicepresidente, Márquez	mujer pobre	Senador (4), Cuestionamientos (3), Racista (3), Cuestiones de seguridad (2), Clasista (4), Patriarcal (3)	Iván Cepeda
3	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	21/February/2023	El Tiempo	<i>Nuevo choque entre Francia Márquez y María Fernanda Cabal por uso de helicóptero</i>	220	Francia Márquez, Vicepresidenta	súper protegida, no cuerda (implicito)	Helicóptero (6), Casa (7)	Maria Fernanda Cabal
4	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	24/April/2023	El Tiempo	<i>Francia Márquez: ¿cuánto valen sus viajes en aeronave? Esto reveló Cabal</i>	750	Francia Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, Márquez, la señora Vicepresidente	firme	Fuerza aérea (4), Aviones (8), Costo (5), Emisiones de dióxido de carbono (2)	Maria Fernanda Cabal. Gustavo Petro
5	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	15/March/2023	El Espectador	<i>Pacto Histórico defiende a Francia Márquez ante críticas por expresión “de malas”</i>	690	Francia Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, Márquez, mandataria, la señora Vicepresidenta, la vice	arrogante	Pacto histórico (4), De malas (6), Helicóptero (13), Seguridad (5), Casa (5), Defensa (3),	Maria Fernanda Cabal, David Luna, Hernán Cadavid, Gloria Flórez, Gustavo Bolívar, María José Pizarro, Iván Cepeda, Iván Duque, "Ñeñe" Hernández, Guaidó

6	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	28/April/2023	Semana	<i>Francia Márquez es una “resentida social peligrosa”:</i> <i>Agustín Laje habla de su “incoherencia” y dice que entrevista de la vice a SEMANA fue como hip hop</i>	1185	Francia Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, Márquez	sin méritos, privilegiada (implicito), racista, campeona, no está preparada, resentida	Contaminación (4), Helicóptero (5), Color de piel (4)	Agustín Laje, Gustavo Petro, Nicolás Maduro, Guaidó, María Corina Machado, Hugo Chávez, Nayib Bukele
7	Controversies / Use of army helicopter	24/April/2023	Semana	<i>Piedad Córdoba justifica las horas de viaje en helicóptero de Francia Márquez: “Ahora resulta que es pecado; de malas”</i>	590	Francia Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, Márquez, ex-Vicepresidenta, la caucana	-	Helicóptero (6), Aerovane (6), De malas (3), Millones de pesos (3), La derecha (3), Viaje (3), Vuelos (5)	Piedad Córdoba, María Fernanda Cabal, Carolina Corcho, Gloria Ínes Ramírez, Vicky Dávila, Iván Duque
8	Threats/ Pre-incumbency period	6/May/2019	El Espectador	<i>“Pudo haber sido una masacre”:</i> Francia Márquez	1115	Francia Márquez, Francia Márquez Mina, Márquez, lideresa caucana, la lideresa	intranquila, desprotegida	Lideres (16), Protección (8), Seguridad (4), Escoltas (4), UNP (4), Cauca (10), Masacre (3), Premio Goldman (2), Atentado (5)	Víctor Hugo Moreno, Clemencia Carabalí, Luis Alexander Becerra Asprilla, Giraldo Ramírez, Nancy Patricia Gutierrez, Iván Duque, Guillermo Botero
9	Threats/ Pre-incumbency period	6/May/2019	El Tiempo	<i>El presidente Iván Duque condenó atentado contra Francia Márquez</i>	560	Francia Márquez, Márquez, la líder social y ambiental, activista colombiana	victima	Atentado (8), Encuentro (3), Líderes (11), Heridos (7), Cauca (10), Protección (5), Terrorista (2), Ataque (7)	Iván Duque, ONU Derechos Humanos, Defensoría del pueblo
10	Threats/ Pre-incumbency period	22/May/2022	El Espectador	<i>“La vida de Francia Márquez no estuvo en riesgo en ningún momento”:</i> Policía	350	Francia Márquez, Márquez, candidata vicepresidencial, la candidata vicepresidencial de Gustavo Petro	-	Candidata (7), Apuntada (3), Policía (7), Láser (6), Seguridad (5)	Dirección de Protección y Servicios Especiales de la Policía, Unidad Nacional de Protección (UNP), Gustavo Petro
11	Threats/ Incumbency period	30/March/2023	Semana	<i>En supuesto atentado contra la vicepresidenta Francia Márquez no se encontró artefacto explosivo, confirmó la Fiscalía</i>	50	Francia Márquez, Vicepresidenta, funcionaria	-	Supuesto (2), Artefacto explosivo (2), Aseguró que (2), Amenazas (2)	Fiscalía

12	Threats/ Incumbency period	22/March/ 2023	Semana	<i>“Francia Márquez sufre de un excesivo delirio de persecución”: Juan Espinal tras constantes amenazas que denuncia la vicepresidenta</i>	610	Francia Márquez, Vicepresidenta, Márquez, Vicepresidenta Francia, la vice, la afrocolombiana	-	País (6), Sufre de un excesivo delirio de persecución (4), Fuerzas militares (3), Amenazas (4)	Juan Espinal, Francisco Barbosa, La Policía, Unidad Nacional de Protección (UNP), Helder Giraldo
13	Threats/ Incumbency period	10/January /2023	El Espectador	<i>Vicepresidenta Francia Márquez denunció un nuevo intento de atentado en su contra</i>	280	Francia Márquez, Vicepresidenta, Márquez, Vicepresidenta Francia, nuestra Vicepresidenta	-	Intento de atentado (5), Artefacto (4)	Mauricio Lizcano, Alfonso Prada
14	Comments/ Racist remarks	30/March/ 2023	El Espectador	<i>Ley antidiscriminación: clave en las denuncias por racismo contra Francia Márquez</i>	1570	Francia Márquez, Márquez, Francia Márquez Mina, fórmula vicepresidencial, Márquez Mina	mujer racializada, incoherente	La ley antidiscriminación (5), Marbelle (11), Comentarios racistas/discriminatorios (7), Denuncias (11)	Marbelle, Roy Barreras, Alí Bantú Ashanti, Gustav Petro, Francisco Barbosa, María Fernanda Cabal, Gustavo Bolívar, Amanda Hurtado, Fiscalía
15	Comments/ Racist remarks	17/Decem ber/2022	Semana	<i>La despachada de Miguel Polo Polo: “Los negros no tenemos que andar harapientos o con el pelo hediondo”</i>	615	Francia Márquez, Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, La Vicepresidenta colombiana Francia Márquez	influyente, vergonzosa, da lástima, grande mujer	Los negros (7), Pelo hediondo (5), La izquierda (5), Estereotipo (4), Representante (7), Población afro/negra (3)	Miguel Polo Polo, Sanna Marin, Meghan Markle, Serena Williams, Michelle Yeoh, Oleksandra Matviichuk, Annie Ernaux, Karen Lynch, Sherry Rehman, Rebecca Gomperts, MacKenzie Scott, Ney Gregorio Navarro Jaramillo
16	Comments/ Racist remarks	23/Februar y/2023	Semana	<i>Presidente Gustavo Petro rompe su silencio por ‘lujosa vida’ de Francia Márquez. La defendió y atacó a sus críticos</i>	1550	Francia Márquez, Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, la alta funcionaria, mujer afrodescendiente, activista de derechos humanos, ambientalista, abogada	importante, humilde	Helicoptero (14), Familia (11), Dapa (14), Millones (5), Lujosa (10), Color de piel (4)	María Fernanda Cabal, Gustavo Petro, Dilian Francisca Toro
17	Comments/ Racist remarks	24/Novem ber/2022	El Tiempo	<i>Francia Márquez habló del racismo que encontró al llegar al Gobierno</i>	330	Francia Márquez, Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, la Vicepresidenta de	mujer negra	El gobierno (5), Racismo (5), Mujer (4)	Pepa Bueno, Luz Fabiola Rubiano

						Colombia, mujer negra			
18	Comments/ Performance critiques	23/April/2023	Semana	<i>“A doña Francia la tienen apagada”</i> : Expresidente Gaviria habló sobre la vicepresidenta	7880	Doña Francia, Vicepresidenta Francia Márquez	apagada	Reforma (40), Presidente (50)	César Gaviria, Vicky Dávila, Marco Rubio, Carolina Corcho, Alejandro Gaviria, Germán Vargas Lleras, Claudia López, Verónica Alcocer, Francisco Barbosa, Iván Velásquez, Henry Sanabria, Biden, Maduro, Armando Benedetti, Nayib Bukele, Alejandro Giammattei, Lula, Hugo Chávez, Iván Márquez, Antonio García, alias John Mechas, Irene Vélez, Ingrid Betancourt
19	Comments/ Performance critiques	14/November/2022	Semana	<i>Francia Márquez: sin presupuesto ni protagonismo en los primeros 100 días del gobierno Petro</i>	1315	Francia Márquez, la Vicepresidenta	líder formidable, mujer, afrodescendiente, activista de derechos humanos, ambientalista, abogada, humilde, sin protagonismo, reconocida	El gobierno (7), Política de igualdad (2), Comunidades (4), Paz (3), Protagonismo/protagonismo (4), Presupuesto (6)	Gustavo Petro, Cielo Rusinque, Gustavo Bolívar, Roy Barreras, Irene Vélez, Aurora Vergara, Mauricio Lizcano
20	Comments/ Performance critiques	12/October/2022	Semana	<i>“Se va evaporando su liderazgo”, presidente Gustavo Petro explicó por qué Francia Márquez no pudo ir al Cauca</i>	575	Francia Márquez, la Vicepresidenta, Francia, Márquez	marginada	Líderes sociales (5), Cauca (5), El presidente (4), Región del país (4)	Gustavo Petro, Alfonso Prada, Edinson Murillo Arata
21	Comments/ Performance critiques	18/September/2022	El Espectador	<i>¿Por qué Francia Márquez no fue dejada como encargada ante viaje de Petro?</i>	470	vicepresidenta, Francia Márquez, Márquez	-	Funciones (7), Ministra (4), Constitución (4), encargada (2)	Gloria Ines Ramirez (ministra del trabajo)/ Gustavo Petro

22	Activism and Awards	2/December/2022	La República	<i>Vicepresidenta Francia Márquez es una de las 25 mujeres más influyentes del mundo</i>	395	Mandataria, vicepresidenta Francia Márquez Mina, Francia Elena Márquez Mina, Márquez	mujer afrocolombiana	influyentes(5), pueblo (2), Defensa (2)	Marina Silva (ex Ministra Brasileña), Financial Times
23	Activism and Awards	9/April/2022	El Espectador	<i>Francia Márquez no conoce la paz ni la tranquilidad hace veinte años</i>	900	Francia Márquez (Mina), lideresa social, mujer, candidata	negra	violencia (18), paz (6), racismo-racista (5), Territorio (7), amenaza (9), defensa-defender (6)	Cynthia Cockburn, Somos Defensores, Defensoría del pueblo, Gobierno, Fiscalía, Guerrillas paramilitares, Farc
24	Activism and Awards	14/September/2022	El Tiempo	<i>Quién es Francia Márquez, la lideresa social que es aspirante presidencial</i>	450	lideresa social, ambiental, Francia Márquez, aspirante presidencial	desplazada de la violencia, afrodescendiente y defensora del medio ambiente.	atentado(2), Minera-minería (3)	Goldman Prize. ONU alto comisionado, Ángela María Robledo
25	Activism and Awards	23/April/2018	Semana	<i>El "nobel ambiental" que ganó Francia Márquez por su lucha contra la minería ilegal</i>	3040	Francia Márquez, vicepresidenta, Márquez, Francia Márquez Mina, Francia	Afrodescendiente, ambientalista, buena líder	minería(12), ilegal (22), ambiental (22), lucha (17), territorio (17), defensa (6), violencia (5), contaminación-contaminar (4)	Goldman Prize, Ecopetrol
26	Sensational news	11/August/2022	Semana	<i>Francia Márquez y el poderoso 'look' que llena de elogios la prestigiosa revista 'Vogue'</i>	670	Francia Márquez, vicepresidenta, Márquez, Francia Márquez Mina, Francia	Ambientalista, ganadora	coloridas(2), Volumétricas (3), Llamativas(2), Prestigiosa(2), Afro(4), Vestido(6), atuendo(2), diseñador(5), territorio(5)	Esteban Sinesterra, Revista Vogue
27	Sensational news	8/August/2022	Semana	<i>"Me estoy enamorando, pero con mucho cuidado": Francia Márquez abre su corazón</i>	1445	Francia Márquez, vicepresidenta, Márquez, Francia Márquez Mina, Francia	Formidable, negra, preparada, Joven	Posesión(6), comunidad(5), casa(5), me estoy enamorando(4)	Gustavo Petro, BBC, Camilo Romero, exgobernador de Nariño, Alfredo Saade, Arelis Uriana

28	Sensational news	15/November/2022	El Tiempo	<i>Francia Márquez: el curioso momento cuando llama vicepresidente a Gustavo Petro</i>	520	Francia Márquez, vicepresidenta, Márquez	Nuestro	gobierno(6), intervención (5), Justicia (5), Vicepresidenta (4)	Gustavo Petro, Alfonso Prada
29	Sensational news	05/August/2022	El Tiempo	<i>¿Cómo será el vestido que usará Francia Márquez en la posesión presidencial?</i>	375	Vicepresidenta electa, Francia Márquez, lideresa, Mujer de Suárez, Cauca, mujer afrodescendiente, Francia	orgullosa	mujer(4), lideresa (3), ancestros (2)	Gustavo Petro, Esteban Sinesterra Paz aka Esteban Africa
30	Sensational news	8/March/2023	El Tiempo	<i>Vicepresidenta Francia Márquez tuvo un accidente: esto se sabe</i>	125	Vicepresidenta Francia Márquez, Mandataria	-	Accidente (2).	-