HOW POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS SHAPE PROTESTERS: COMPARING LGTBI PRIDE MARCHES IN ARGENTINA AND CHILE

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INTRODUCTION

Early formulations of social movement theory, anchored in the structural-functionalist paradigm, conceived the rise of social mobilization as a side-effect of the high speed of social transformation (Smelser 1962). From this perspective, emblematic movements such as the African-American Civil Rights movement, the national liberation and decolonization movements, the student movements and the peace movement, among others, were seen as a spontaneous reaction to structural strains that resulted from modernization processes (Mayer 1991:461). In other words, a mechanistic relationship between strains at the macro level and micro level behavior was presumed without unpacking the interplay between these dimensions (Buechler 2004:51).

In the late 1970s, the political process model (henceforth PPM), pioneered by authors such as Charles Tilly (1978), Doug McAdam (1999), and Sidney Tarrow (1989), evolved as a reaction to a view in which societies normally are free of strain and only occasionally disrupted by social insurgency. Instead, it argued that societies are constantly changing and that, in consequence, “the forces which have the potential of producing social change are always present in some degree” (quoted in McAdam 1999:11). Rather than assuming the existence of a one-to-one correspondence between strain at the macro level and the rise of collective protest, the PPM stresses the importance of changes in the institutional structure or informal power relations of the political system. The weight given to the analysis of political institutions to explain the emergence and decline of social movements marked a departure from earlier scholarship. Ever since, this relationship has been a classic topic in the social movement literature.

While existing scholarship has centered on how institutional variables define the rise, timing, and fall of protests, there is a dearth of scholarly attention on how the institutional and political setting shape the type of protester that is prevalent in a specific society (for an exception, see Norris et al. 2014). Recent literature has addressed this void by conducting surveys to demonstrators and have begun to unravel the different political profiles of demonstrators. The work of (Klandermans 2014; Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and Dijk 2009), for example, has dealt with how different mobilizing contexts produce different motivational dynamics to participate. Protest surveys following the same methodology have also allowed for comparative research that helps us to understand how country contexts shape the nature of protest participants (e.g. Stekelenburg, Klandermans,

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and Dijk 2009) and the class composition of the equivalent movements across nations (Eggert and Giugni 2012).

Expanding on this work, in this this paper we focus on activists’ attachment with institutional politics, which we define as the emotional and attitudinal connection of activists with objects of the institutional political system such as political parties, politicians, and representative institutions. We address two questions. First, to what extent do activists who participate in street demonstrations express positive feelings of trust, identification and legitimacy towards institutional politics, including political parties, representative institutions, and the political elites? In short, how attached or detached are they from institutional politics? Second, how can we explain existing variations in this regard among people participating in comparable demonstrations in different countries? Addressing these questions, we hope to shed light on the ways in which the political and institutional context “produce” different types of protesters.

To answer our research questions, we compare the levels of institutional political attachment (or simply institutional attachment), drawing on a unique dataset of surveys of participants in the LGTBI Pride marches in Argentina (November 2015) and Chile (June 2016), general population surveys from the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP)², and qualitative visual data collected (pictures and flyers) in situ during the marches. As we detail below, our survey follows an adapted version of the methodology applied in the “Caught in the Act of Protest” project (van Stekelenburg, Jacquelien, Walgrave, Stefaan, Klandermans 2012), a collaborative research venture that surveys people at marches through a standardized sampling procedure (see data and methods section).³

Studying demonstrators’ institutional attachment matters for various reasons. First, it helps unraveling the heterogeneity of demonstrators’ profiles. This is welcomed given the growing body of research that, by comparing those who protest and those who do not using general population surveys, commonly provides a monolithic view on the former (e.g. Dalton et al. 2009; Norris 1999). Second, the institutional attachment of activists defines the extent into which a movement’s frame coincide with broader societal preferences (on policy issues and on attitudes towards protest behavior, for example). It is thus important to know the specific features of protesters to assess their prospects of influencing public opinion and political authorities. Finally, it allows us to understand how activists perceive their imbrication in the institutional political system and their strategies to influence it. This information can contribute to assess the capacity of political institutions to channel social demands.

Focusing on protesters in LGTBI marches, in turn, is a fruitful venue to explore whether the responsiveness of the political system influences the characteristics of protesters. Although public support for LGTB rights in Latin America has increased during the last two decades (see World Value Survey, various years), progress in sexual minority rights has been uneven across the region. Countries such as Argentina, Brazil⁴, and Uruguay, and also a few local governments in Mexico (amongst others, Mexico City) allow same-sex marriage, and in Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador, same-sex unions have been

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² The 2014-2015 round of the LAPOP survey included 28 countries and over 50,000 respondents.
³ See www.protestsurvey.eu for more details on this project.
⁴ In the case of Brazil, it was the high court that ruled that same-sex couples had the same rights as traditional marriages (Diez 2015:3).
legalized. By contrast, sex-same marriage is banned by the constitutions of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Honduras (Diez 2015:3). As the literature on the impact of social movements has shown, social protests constitute one important driver of policy reform (e.g. Gamson 1990; Burstein and Linton 2002; Burnstein and Sausner 2005; Agnone 2007; Brayden 2007). Characterizing the composition, attitudes, and demands of LGTBI activists can thus help us to understand the prospects of advancing reforms in this field in Latin America.

The paper is structured as followed. After this introduction, we review the literature on the relationship between social movements and the institutional terrain. We then offer an overview of the development of the LGTBI movements in Argentina and Chile to account for the level of progress of the sexual diversity agenda in each country. This is followed by a methodological section before presenting the results and discussion of the findings.

Focusing on protesters’ institutional attachment, we show that Argentinean demonstrators are on average more attached to institutional politics than Chilean ones. Based on general population surveys, we argue that this cannot be explained by the argument that Argentineans, in general, are more attached to politics than Chileans. Instead, the answer is rooted in the specific LGTBI field. We argue that the achievement of a substantial proportion of the LGTBI main agenda in Argentina, and the almost lack of any crucial success with the same issues in Chile, have produced that in Argentina LGTBI activists perceive themselves as less distanced from the party system and the political elites than the Chilean ones, who show more frustration with their representatives.

THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Existing literature does not provide a single answer to the question of when, and under what conditions, activists are attached to institutional politics, nor to what explains existing variations in this respect. Up to the 1960s, scholars believed that demonstrators – and activists in general – were alienated from the political system and mainstream society (Smelser 1962). In a context shaped by two recent world wars, left-wing and right-wing totalitarianisms, and the beginnings of the Cold War, in the USA activism was equated with anomie, and even psychological pathologies, considering radical subversion as negative (Rule 1988, quoted in Buechler 2004:49). Activists were opposed to voters, who were seen as democratic, pacific, and rational (Downs 1957).

The paradigmatic shift of the 1970s and 1980s, driven by the emergence of resource mobilization and political opportunity theories in the USA, brought a new, more benign view of activists. They began to be seen as rational individuals employing a variegated tactical repertoire to reach political goals, with activism being just one mean among other legitimate ones like voting or lobbying (McCarthy and Zald 1970; Tilly 1978). By the same time, new research in the political behavior field carried out in advanced democracies of the North (Barnes and Kaase 1979) discovered that protesters used to vote and trust in political institutions as much or even more than non-protesters. The picture of the alienated activist began to fade.

The political process model (henceforth PPM), which became influential in the late 1970s, introduced the concept of political opportunity structure to emphasize the signals of the political system to social or political actors, and how this shapes the broader set of
constraints and opportunities of social movements and affects the chances of mobilization. In specific terms, the PPM argues that the more open the political system was to participation, the more likely it was that people mobilized. This openness is defined by the capacity and willingness of the state to repress social dissidence, among other variables. Of central importance to assess the chances of social mobilization to result in substantive change is the evidence of political alignment within the polity, and the existence of divisions within the elite, which facilitates the creation of alliances in the pursuit of reforms (Tarrow 1994:77-80). According to this line of argumentation, activists in a political system that is closed to social movements’ demands are likely to distrust the willingness of political authorities to meet their demands, and vice versa. While the PPM has advanced our understanding of the rise, timing, and fall of protests (Tarrow 1998; McAdam et al. 2001), it has remained silent regarding how the institutional and political setting shape the type of protester that is prevalent in a specific society during a historical period.

In Europe, the discussion of social movements’ relationship with the institutional terrain had a different starting point. For one, it stemmed from a debate that was starkly influenced by Marxism and the central role given to the labor movement as the revolutionary actor that rebelled against institutional politics. Furthermore, the post-Marxist debate addressed the latter’s lack of attention on issues of identity, culture, and post-materialistic demands in the construction of social movements (Cook 1996:6; Hellman 1992). Secondly, in the context of the European state – a highly centralized and redistributive welfare state – and citizens’ experience of state regulations and institutions in their everyday lives, New Social Movement Theory (henceforth NSMT) emerged as an effort to conceptualize those movements that called for more “autonomy from the state” (Davis 1999:611). From the perspective of NSMT scholars, broader processes of social change such as the increase in access to higher education, and women’s growing participation in the labor market, created new stratification criteria, which, in turn, produced new sources of social conflict (Della Porta and Diani 1999:11). These were not necessarily class-based. Claims related to the environment, peace, and women’s and gay liberation were conceived of as a criticism to the institutional reproduction of modern societies, and demands related to the quality of life (Touraine 1971).

Latin American scholarship, in turn, was deeply influenced by NSMT. In the 1980s and the struggles to regain democracy, NSMT-inspired research examined the ways in which “new” social movements were contributing to the definition of democracy by bringing issues of identity, culture, ethnicity, citizenship and the environment onto the political agenda (e.g. Escobar and Alvarez 1992b; Jelin 1985). The understanding of this struggle was analyzed in the domain of everyday life practices and based on a broad understanding of the political (Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998). Social movements, it was argued, ‘extended’ the political space available to citizens by ‘bringing into the public realm the concerns of “everyday life” and of the “personal”’ (Hellman 1992:53).

Yet, focusing on issues of identity, the literature on Latin American social movements often overlooked social movements’ relationship with the institutional sphere. In part, this is explained by the underlying aversion of this approach to formal institutions of the state and political parties as spaces that can enable social change (Rice 2012:26). As Silva (2009:10) states, this emphasis and the insistence on identity and subjectivity obscured to a great degree NSMT’s ability to analyze the links between disparate movements and the mass mobilization against neoliberalism that the region has experienced.
during the last decade. By overplaying the extent to which identity politics replaced material concerns, and by failing to consider the central role of the state, NSMT overlooked the larger significance of mass mobilization and how it relates to formal politics (Silva 2009:10).

Furthermore, in the case of Latin America, rather than distance taking distance from the institutions and practices of the state, social movements frequently aim to gain access and proximity to the formal institutions of governance (Davis 1999:612). As Davis (1999:611) notes, “[b]y actively engaging the government about these issues […] they are bridging citizens’ institutional distance from the state”.

In this way, there is no universal answer to the question of when activists are detached from political institutions. In some contexts, depending on the nature of the state and other political institutions, activists might seek to distance themselves from the institutional terrain, and in others, engaging with it as much as possible. Neither are existing variations – for example at the country-level – explained by a single variable. Instead, drawing on political process theory, the examination of the nature of political institutions, and the role of political parties in mediating citizen demands, becomes a starting point of the analysis.

In addition, recent research drawing on surveys to demonstrators similar to the ones we use in our paper, have begun to unravel the different political profiles of demonstrators. In particular, this scholarship has sought to answer who are the people that take part in protest demonstrations, why do they participate, how they are mobilized, and how these questions are influenced by contextual variation (e.g. Ketelaars, Walgrave, and Wouters 2017; Norris et al. 2014).

THE LGTBI MOVEMENTS IN ARGENTINA AND CHILE AND THE UNEVEN PROGRESS OF THE SEXUAL DIVERSITY AGENDA

Argentina: A movement with a long history

In 2010 Argentina became the first Latin American country, and one among less than a dozen countries, that legalized homosexual marriage, including full rights for adoption, inheritance, health access, etc. Two key factors explain this achievement. One is related to the characteristics of the issue of the protest and the actor behind this claim, and the other is the configuration of the national political context, and the strength of allies and antagonists to the LGTB agenda of claims.

The history of LGBT quest for recognition in Argentina is longer than in most other countries in Latin America, including Chile. Argentina has the region’s oldest homosexual movement, which can be traced back to 1967 and the Nuestro Mundo. Nuestro Mundo was founded by Communist Party youth members expelled from the party due to their homosexuality (Díez, 2015: 76-77).

There have been two waves in the history of the LGBT movement in Argentina (Encarnación, 2011). In these two waves the LGBT movement was transformed from a revolutionary liberation movement to a more moderate actor, looking like an advocacy group. The first wave was in the 1960s-1970s, associated to Marxist revolutionary ideas that “…questioned the nature of sexuality and the value of assimilating into mainstream society” (Encarnación, 2011: 106). The main gay-liberation organization of this period was the Frente
de Liberación Homosexual (FLH) in Argentina, with some other equivalent organizations in Brazil too (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010: 10). The FLH was intensively persecuted since Isabel Perón’s government in 1975 and hundreds of FLH members disappeared during the 1976-1983 military authoritarian regime (Díez, 2015: 78-79).

The second wave started after re-democratization in the 1980s and was associated to the many transformations that the left went through to adapt to the new context. The second wave that continues until the present, “…advocates the integration of gays into the community by presenting gays and lesbians as equal to everyone else” (Encarnación, 2011: 106). In 1984 was founded the main contemporary organization of the Argentine LGBT movement, the Comunidad Homosexual Argentina (CHA), influenced by Foucault’s ideas and the human rights movement. In the 1990s the CHA received growing international finance due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, moving gay street activism into a NGO and advocacy style (Díez, 2013: 218). As Díez (2015) argues: “The growth in strength and visibility of the gay and lesbian movement in Argentina was, by the early 1990s, clearly shaped by a process of democratic transition that saw the placement of human rights atop the agenda, a process characterized by a ‘new politics of accountability’ in a country with a long history of intense social mobilization”. Legal advocacy and activism framed as a human rights issue was the strategy adopted since the 1980s, with the idea that heteronormativity needs to be questioned through the achievement of the same human rights as heterosexuals (Díez, 2013: 222, 2015: 80).

In 1992 the first LGTB Pride Parade was organized following the model from the USA (Encarnación, 2011: 109). Since then, it has become a national annual activity that was moved from the global date in June to a domestic date in November that commemorates the date when Nuestro Mundo was created.

**Democratization and the human rights agenda for all**

The success of the LGBT quest for equal rights in Argentina was a result of the great timing of a well-organized LGBT movement. It was crucial the relationship the movement built with the party system and with allies inside the state. The LGBT achievements were a result of a combination of successful struggles of the movement that could profit from some favorable junctures since the re-democratization of Argentina and the capacity to frame their claims as a human rights issue.

Democratization in Argentina was radically different from the Chilean experience. Argentina democratized almost a decade earlier than Chile and as a result of the economic and political failure of the military repressive project. This situation altered the power relations in favor of the actors that resisted against the military. In this context, a strong and well organized human rights movement emerged in the late-1970s that was successful on installing a human rights agenda during the transition process. This was crucial for the LGTB movement in Argentina. Since the 1980s it has been well connected to the human rights movement, as well as the women’s movement and some small left-wing parties (Partido Obrero, Movimiento al Socialismo, Partido Humanista, Partido Socialista, mainly) (Díez, 2015: 82-83). Even though previously left-wing parties were only concerned with class struggle and had a less sympathetic view for LGTB claims, in the post-transition period there was an increased dialogue with the LGTB movement built through the women’s movement and the Socialists (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010: 23-24).
In brief, the transition to democracy in Argentina produced a party system that was not detached from social movements, and in particular human rights claims. Since the very beginning of the transition to democracy coordination among state and social actors was crucial and a common practice in Argentina. In the case of LGTB struggles there has been a series of crucial allies inside the national state and in the city governments of Buenos Aires and Rosario that have their origins in the human rights movement (Díez, 2015: 81-84).

**Responsiveness of the party system**

However, the responsiveness of the political system was also a result of the capacity of the LGTB movement to tactically use certain junctures not created by the movement. The 1994 terrorist attack to the Jewish association headquarters in Buenos Aires, in particular, opened a strong debate against discrimination of any kind. This was translated into the first Constitution of the city of Buenos Aires, drafted in 1996. The LGTB movement profited from this favorable political opportunities to introduce the first Constitutional clause on anti-sexual orientation discrimination of Latin America (Díez, 2015: 114). The achievement of civil union in 2001 in the city of Buenos Aires was the result of the combination of two key conditions. First, a well-crafted alliance with the leftist government of Aníbal Ibarra (a former member of the youth Communists). Second, the impact on the political elites of the 2001 crisis (the major regime crisis of Argentina since the return to democracy), that forced parties to be more responsive to societal claims to avoid suffering massive protests (Díez, 2015: 122).

This situation repeated once more during the achievement of homosexual marriage at the national level in 2010. The successful advocacy campaign was commanded from the Socialists office inside Congress, and received the strong support of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (Díez, 2015: 147-148). The support of strong institutional allies from inside the state was crucial for the achievement of homosexual marriage in Argentina against strong veto players (Díez, 2015: 6).

Religious groups are the main veto players to the expansion of LGTB rights in Latin America. Their capacity to impact the agenda of LGBT rights will mainly depend upon the links the Catholic Church and other religious groups have with the party system (Corrales, 2015: 54). While in Chile there is a strong confessional party, the Christian Democrats, in Argentina there is no equivalent party. Moreover, there are no confessional parties of any religious groups with parliamentarian representation in Argentina. This does not mean that there are no links between religious groups and the party system, but this is individually-based. This circumstances were crucial for taking the Catholic Church by surprise and explains the slow and late reaction of Jorge Bergoglio (nowadays Pope Francis) in coordinating the resistance to LGTB marriage in Argentina. In brief, the conservative bloc was caught by surprise and not equally organized as in Chile, favoring the achievement of homosexual marriage in Argentina (Díez, 2015: 147).

This history of cooperation with institutional allies, parties and other movements explains the positive evaluation of participation, voting and parties that our data show in the LGTB Pride Parade of Buenos Aires in 2015. The achievement of the movement agenda was not against the institutional system, but rather through a strategy of protracted colonization of the state to advocate for LGTB rights with strong intra-state members. The very high percentages of party-affiliates in the LGTB Pride Parade of 2015 is also an example of how embedded the movement is in the party system. The achievement of the LGTB agenda of
claims, and mainly how it was achieved, explains the perception among LGTB activists in Argentina of a small distance to the party system.

**Chile: The long road to incomplete achievements**

*Chile’s unimpressive record of homosexual legislation*

Exploring the interaction between institutional politics and the LGBTI social movement in Chile, we argue that the comparatively lower institutional attachment of Chilean LGBT activists results from the lower capacity of Chilean political institutions to implement policies that grant homosexuals effective civil rights. Compared to Argentina, Chilean policies were also unable to protect homosexuals from cultural discrimination, police repression, and a hostile social environment.

To begin with, the Chilean legislative record regarding same-sex rights has been late and weak compared to Argentina. First, homosexual relationships were illegal in Chile until as late as 1998, when an article of a law dating from 1874 was derogated. This development had happened in Argentina way before – in 19xx. Secondly, while Argentina passed its first law protecting sexual minorities in 19xx, in Chile it was approved in 2012. Its passage required a gay teen to be brutally murdered by neo-Nazi groups – otherwise it may have taken even more time. The law established specific penalties for discriminating against on the basis of sexual orientation. Thirdly, while Argentina approved a civil union bill in xxx, in Chile it only happened in 2015. The so-called Civil Union Agreement (*Acuerdo de Unión Civil*) imposed legal rights and obligations regarding inheritance and social security to cohabitating unmarried couples of any sexual orientation.

Chilean legislative advances not only came late but are also incomplete. By February 2017, gay marriage and the adoption of children by homosexual couples – both of which exist in Argentina since 2010 - have not been approved in Chile and will unlikely happen in the near future. With such legislative contrast, it is no wonder that Chilean LGBT activists feel that institutional politics do not deliver the protection and enhancement their Argentineans counterparts have been enjoying in the last few years.

*Traditional hostility to homosexuals*

Chilean society and its political system have traditionally been very hostile to homosexuals. Nineteenth century snippets include the penal code of 1874, which established “sodomy” as a crime leading to up to three years of prison; judges calling for burning homosexuals in the stake; and homosexuals being imprisoned, beaten and murdered (Díez 2015). Open repression continued well into the twentieth century, especially during Carlos Ibáñez del...
Campo’s government in the 1950s. The first gay demonstration in Chile took place in 1973 under the socialist government of Salvador Allende. In Santiago’s main square, about 25 demonstrators demanded an end to police repression to gays. The press covered the demonstration sarcastically, depicting gays in offensive and burlesque terms (Robles 2008). While in the early 1970s Argentinean homosexuals were already articulating demands in alliance with intellectuals and academics, in 1973 Chilean demonstrators asked for mercy under the argument that homosexuality was not a crime but a disease – an indicator of their low self-esteem as a collective.

Political allies were inexistent at that time. The left’s idealized model of the virile manual worker did not go well with the stereotype of the effeminate gay. The right despised homosexuality perhaps even more. During Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship (1973-1990) police harassment continued, and some travesties were tortured and murdered in popular neighborhoods. Testimonies of gays and travesties presented by Robles (2008) depict it as a period of extreme fear and repression.

Hostility toward gays persisted in the 1990s after democratic restoration. As homosexuality was still illegal, gay activists marching in a 1992 human rights demonstration wore masks to grant anonymity (Robles 2008). On a different terrain, a study found that most gays surveyed believed that revealing their sexual orientation in their workplaces would cause trouble to them. In the 1990s a few gays started to appear in the mass media and the topic of homosexuality became subject of national debates. Yet those giving media interviews used to change their names to avoid discrimination, and those who dared appearing in TV programs feared being attacked in the street (Robles 2008). About that time, the Chilean Corporation for AIDS Prevention received threatening anonymous calls by members of an “anti-homosexual command”, and a few years later a radio program devoted to homosexuality received a false bomb alarm. Police raids to homosexual bars and discos were common, with gays being beaten, insulted, and arrested (Robles 2008).

In a context of generalized hostility toward homosexuals, institutional politics contrived against a swift passage of legislation promoting their rights - as happened in Argentina. It is important to anticipate that in Chile, since democratic restoration, several legislators from leftist parties attempted to promote such legislation. However, for a long time the political forces opposing it were more powerful. We look at them below.

A powerful conservative bloc

Three political parties comprised the powerful conservative bloc that opposed LGBT legislation - the Christian Democracy (DC), National Renewal (RN), and the Democratic Independent Union (UDI). A Concertación member, the DC is a centrist party which shares views with the left regarding the role of the state and the power of unions. Yet it has a more conservative approach regarding homosexual rights. The DC is linked to the Catholic Church – even by family ties in some cases - and its positions on many issues are influenced by the latter. Since democratic restoration the Chilean Catholic Church moved from a progressive force opposed to Pinochet to a more conservative line, as groups such as the Opus Dei and the Legionarios de Cristo strengthened due to an expanding network of educational institutions, foundations, and informal networks at the elite level.

The DC is a central political player and the Concertación could never ignore its views. While the political strength of the DC has declined lately, since democratic
restoration it has controlled between 15% and 30% of congress\(^8\). The 1990s were dominated by two DC presidents (Aylwin and Frei). Sometimes, negotiations with the DC discouraged the more progressive Concertación partners to push forward LGBT legislation. At other times, the DC openly opposed their legislative attempts. When in a 1993 press conference President Patricio Aylwin – a DC member - was asked about an antidiscrimination law for Chile, he claimed that “Chilean society does not react with sympathy vis a vis homosexuality” (Díez 2015:198), and accordingly did not promote its decriminalization.

Additionally, RN and especially the UDI – the two partners of the center-right Alianza coalition which roughly controlled half of congress since 1990 – have a conservative ideology, are linked to conservative interest groups, and their electoral basis are also conservative. Thus, DC, RN, and UDI legislators had little electoral or ideological motivations to support progressive LGBT legislation. In the mid-1990s the radio program Open Triangle (Triángulo Abierto) asked several members of these parties about their views on homosexuality. Answers were diverse but always casted in negative terms. Homosexuality was depicted as an abnormal disease in need of treatment, a threat to family values, or a temptation to heterosexuals, which justified forbidding homosexuals to self-organize (Robles 2008:27ff.). Given their predominance in congress, this powerful bloc acted in different ways across time to routinely delay or obstruct progressive LGBT legislation – as seen below.

Beyond seizing a large chunk of congressional seats, the conservative bloc was helped by Chile’s institutional rules. According to the 1980 constitution - crafted during the dictatorship – almost one fifth of the senators of the restored democracy were designated by the salient president, the Supreme Court, and the National Security Council. Until this constitutional figure was removed in 2005, these senators had a conservative ideology, which granted their systematic opposition to the approval of progressive LGBT legislation (Díez 2015:68). Additionally, Chile’s peculiar binominal electoral system (reformed in 2015) encouraged the creation of two large coalitions with a virtual parity in congress. Both conditions made it extremely unlikely for progressive politicians to gather the votes needed for passing legislation advancing homosexual rights.

All this explains, for instance, why Chile had to wait until 1999 to legalize homosexuality. The congressional debate started in 1995 after the initiative of leftist legislators of the PS and PPD. Yet RN, UDI, and DC deputies successfully opposed it. They argued that homosexuality was immoral and unnatural and that it could be the first move in a path leading to gay marriage (Díez 2015:200). Moreover, the legalization of homosexuality in 1999 did not result from the ideological liberalization of conservative politicians, but from Chile’s attempt to secure a free trade agreement with the European Union, which required showing itself to the world as a tolerant country (Díez 2015:202).

Yet resistance also went beyond congress. The depenalization of homosexuality in 1999, and the launching in 2000 of a “Tolerance and non-discrimination” governmental plan which included a discussion table with homosexuals as well as other vulnerable minorities, aroused energetic criticism by some bishops which claimed that homosexuals were immoral and sick people (Robles 2008:62). Shortly after that, the director of an ultraconservative organization (Acción Familia) declared that homosexuals should not have

\(^8\) https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partido_Dem%C3%B3crata_Cristiano_(Chile)#Elecciones_parlamentarias_2
rights because they were vicious, and that the legalization of homosexuality had been a mistake (Robles 2008:74).

The power of this conservative bloc – including political parties and social organizations - also explains to a large extent why Chile had to wait until 2012 to have its first anti-discrimination law. The government of Ricardo Lagos started pushing for an antidiscrimination bill in 2004 through the Secretary of Government (SEEGOB). The bill included protection to homosexuals among other social categories. DC and UDI legislators, as well as conservative civil society organizations and Evangelical organizations, launched a campaign to exclude homosexuals from the proposal. During the following years, homosexuals were included and excluded several times from it. The discussion froze after 2007 given the lack of support from DC senators – which noted that religious groups pressed them hard in that direction. Only in 2011, during Sebastián Piñera’s government and for reasons presented below, the discussion about the antidiscrimination bill came again to the fore (Díez 2015:xx).

Likewise, the conservative bloc delayed the approval of a civil union bill. PPD deputy Saa took the lead in 2003, taking advantage of its recent approval in Buenos Aires. Yet president Lagos did not support her. Lagos had already prioritized the passage of a divorce law and did not want to strain too much his relations with Christian Democrats and religious organizations (Díez 2015:210-14). To anticipate future attempts like Saa’s, in 2005 deputies from UDI, RN and DC pushed (without success) for a constitutional reform to prohibit explicitly gay marriage (Díez 2015:219).

The discussion about gay marriage emerged again at the beginning of Michelle Bachelet’s first mandate (2006-2010) but other issues – such as student and workers protests – took the day. Once these issues receded, PPD legislators and Bachelet’s spokesperson (Carolina Tohá) took again the initiative yet the DC did not support it (Díez 2015:221-223). In 2009, by the end of Bachelet’s first term, the executive launched a civil union bill but again DC deputies did not support it in congress. They also asked her to withdraw its urgent character given the negative reactions of religious organizations in their circumscriptions.

Homosexual rights gained prominence in the 2009-2010 electoral campaign. All presidential candidates – including Alianza candidate Sebastián Piñera and Concertación’s candidate Eduardo Frei – agreed about the relevance of the issue. After becoming president, Piñera proposed a common law agreement (the Acuerdo de Vida en Pareja). While it received the support of some RN liberals such as Andrés Allamand, it created rifts with the more conservative UDI – for instance, UDI deputy José Antonio Kast argued that Piñera’s proposal was a direct path to gay marriage. Yet Piñera’s project was stuck in congress by mid-2011. And after receiving pressure from some UDI and RN legislators, he abandoned the project (Díez 2015:226-8).

A fragmented movement with few allies

Beyond a powerful conservative bloc, the weakness of the Chilean LGBT movement is also key for understanding policy delay and lower institutional attachment among activists. A powerful movement could have generated enough pressure in the streets and lobbying arenas to overcome the conservative bloc and promote policy change. This did not happen for reasons presented below.
Since its beginnings in the early 1990s, a deep division weakened the Chilean LGBT movement. One side of the divide was represented by Rolando Jiménez - a former Communist militant, then prominent gay activist, and founder of the MOVILH (Movimiento de Liberación Homosexual), the first LGBT organization in Chile dating from 1991. Jiménez adopted a confrontational style and focused on the fight of male homosexuals for civil rights. He believed that the struggle of lesbians, travesties, effeminate gays, and people with AIDS, was different from the struggle of male homosexuals. For instance, he opposed the MOVILH to collaborate with public policies for preventing AIDS arguing that this could stigmatize the movement. He also opposed the public appearances of drag queens as he thought this could weaken its public image. Jiménez was often accused of male chauvinist and being discriminatory by lesbians, travesties, effeminate men, and people with AIDS (Robles 2008, Díez 2015). He was finally expelled from the MOVILH and in 1999 created another organization also named MOVILH but with the acronym representing a slightly different expression (Movimiento de Liberación e Integración Homosexual) (Robles 2008).

The other divide of the movement was composed by a host of groups representing lesbians, transgendered people, and travesties - which coalesced in 1998 in the MUMS (Movimiento Unificado de Minorías Sexuales). It focused on implementing public policies regarding AIDS rather than on policy change and challenging the state. During the 1990s, MUMS members helped in the design and administration of HIV/AIDS prevention programs, received international funding, and gave input for the first AIDS law in 2001 (Robles 2008).

In a hostile environment and with homosexuality being illegal until 1999, such fragmentation conspired against the movement’s capacity to gain stable allies and create strong and heterogeneous networks pressing for policy change. The MOVILH did not have ties to women and lesbian groups, academics or intellectuals, did not engage in theoretical discussions about homosexuality, nor had contacts with international movements. And while MUMS sporadically allied with migrants and disabled organizations, strong personal relationships were absent (Díez 2015).

Movement ties to allied politicians also proved weak and unstable. The links forged with leftist legislators which lead to the legalization of homosexuality in 1999 were not cultivated after that achievement (Díez 2015:203). The network of organizations that in 2008 supported Socialist deputy Marco Enríquez-Ominami when he introduced a same-sex marriage bill in congress was small. And while in 2010 leftist politicians introduced several same-sex bills to the lower house, they barely consulted movement organizations.

Some politicians akin to the MOVILH’s cause were probably alienated due to its confrontational approach – as reflected for instance in the burning of a Vatican flag during a march against a Catholic Church’s declaration regarding divorce (Díez 2015:207-230). The left, which after democratic transition showed greater openness to the movement than the right, could not fully endorse it since its old guard remained homophobic. For instance, when in 1997 a gay activist gave to the Communist presidential candidate Gladys Marín a presidential band, Communist militant Tomás Moulián claimed that Sodom and Gomorrah had arrived at his party (Robles 2008:54).

The 2011-12 breakthrough
Nevertheless, the LGBT movement was boosted in 2011 after the creation of the Equals Foundation (*Fundación Iguales*), an organization advancing homosexual rights from a different standpoint than its previous counterparts. *Iguales* was led by members of the Chilean social elite – such as writer Pablo Simonetti and engineer Luis Larraín Stieb - and adopted a less confrontational approach than the MOVILH. *Iguales* declared its intention to push for an antidiscrimination law and civil unions rather than for the more resisted goal of same-sex marriage. Given its more resonant approach, *Iguales* quickly received the support of a host of leftist and centrist politicians (including some of the most liberal DC legislators), as well as artists, intellectuals, and journalists. Prominent figures publicly stated their desire to contribute to *Iguales*, showed up in homosexual marches, and sat in its directory. Different from MOVILH, *Iguales* also created ties to women’s organizations (Díez 2015:232-33).

The emergence of *Iguales* in 2011, and the horrendous murder of the gay teenager Daniel Zamudio in 2012 by a neo-Nazi group in a Santiago park - presumably due to its sexual orientation - were sufficient for overcoming conservative resistance in congress to the anti-discrimination bill. Zamudio’s death shocked the public opinion to a point that few legislators could oppose the bill without risking losing support from their constituents. After seven years of debate in congress, the bill was finally approved by mid-2012 (Díez 2015:232-33).

The Civil Union bill (*Acuerdo de Unión Civil*), passed in 2015 during Bachelet’s second term but introduced by Piñera in 2011 under a different name, also benefited from the lobby carried out by *Iguales* during Piñera’s previous term, with Larraín Stieb playing a crucial role (Díez 2015:235). The bill also received the opposition of religious organizations and the UDI⁹, which were unable this time to impede it.

**DATA AND METHODS**

Drawing on an accumulation of surveys of protesters in various developed countries, the “Caught in the Act of Protest” project developed a specific methodology for conducting surveys of participants in collective protests in public spaces.¹⁰ The main idea is to survey a given number of activists (usually between 200 and 300 per event) following a selection procedure whereby all activists have a similar probability of being approached by the survey team.

Each protest has a team of supervisors called “pointers”, each of whom is in charge of a team of pollsters. Most commonly, between 3 and 4 pointers are used for a protest, each of which has a team of 4-6 pollsters, depending on the anticipated size of the protest and the number of surveys that are to be applied). Upon arriving at the protest event, the survey team makes a rough estimate of the protest participants and defines a criterion for selecting “rows” and individuals within each row so as to ensure similar chances of contact for all (e. g. choose

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⁹ [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acuerdo_de_Uni%C3%B3n_Civil_(Chile)#cite_note-9](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acuerdo_de_Uni%C3%B3n_Civil_(Chile)#cite_note-9)

¹⁰ This project, which was funded by the European Collaborative Research Project in the Social Sciences and the European Science Foundation, has been developed in the following countries: Belgium, Check Republic, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The Latin American teams have been spearheaded by Paul Almeida from the University of California, Merced (USA) and María Inclán, based at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in México.
one row out of five, and address individual number X of each row). They then communicate that criterion to the pointers, who use it to select potential respondents and inform their pollsters about which protester they should address. The questionnaire includes information on various topics related to the protest, among other, how they were informed and recruited, whether they came together with other people (and who), what motivated them to protest, knowledge and perception of the convening organizations, political and ideological attitudes, previous history of activism and sociodemographic information.

This information allows to going beyond the characterization of the protest as it is usually done with surveys to the general public (such as the World Value Survey or the Latinobarómetro), which asks, for example, if the respondent protested in the last year, the last five years, or sometime in your life. The Caught in the Act of Protest surveys identify what specific protest the activist participated in, which is lost through general surveys. Hence, general surveys do neither allow to identify the specific protest event the protester is participating in, nor the event’s specific contextual features. Secondly, applying the survey at the time of the protest, more reliable information is obtained given that it is less affected by memory bias. Thirdly, when asking questions about behaviors and attitudes regarding protests, we can study in detail central aspects of the mobilization process that simply are not recorded in the general public surveys.

In order to adapt this methodology to the Chilean and Argentine context, and based on the recommendations given by the team that implemented the surveys in Mexico and Central America, we deviated from the original Caught in the Act of Protest project in two respects. First, we collect all the information from a face-to-face survey in contrast to the application of the survey in Europe, where the respondent was also asked to fill out a longer questionnaire and send it back by post. This change was made due to the low response rate that the Latin American survey teams anticipated would be obtained if following the European procedure. Second, unlike the original project, we did not collect information about the police and organizers before and after the protest given the difficulties in obtaining it, particularly with the police.

However, following the methodology of the “Caught in the Act of Protest” project to ensure comparability between the data collected in the countries participating in the project, we selected protests that are “functional equivalents”. For this we picked protests taking place in the capital cities of Buenos Aires and Santiago and that referred to the same issue: LGTBI rights. The following table summarizes the main features of the Argentine and Chilean Gay Pride marches that we surveyed.

Table 1. Description of LGTBI in Chile and Argentina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Chile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>November 7, 2015</td>
<td>June 25, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>Santiago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Gay Pride Parade</td>
<td>Gay Pride Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>N = 149</td>
<td>N = 216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Our survey shows a clear tendency: participants in the Argentinean LGBTI demonstration are systematically more attached to institutional politics than their Chilean counterparts. As figure 1 shows, this happens across several indicators of institutional attachment. For instance, on a 1 to 5 scale, on average Chilean demonstrators agree more than their Argentinean counterparts that “many politicians make promises but then do nothing about them” (4.55 vs 3.57 respectively) and that “voting is useless; parties always do what they want” (3.51 vs. 2.66), with both differences being significant at the .001 level. Likewise, Argentinean demonstrators trust way more than Chileans in the national government (2.95 vs 2.03 respectively) and political parties (2.67 vs 1.56, both significant at the .001 level).

**Figure 1. Institutional political attachment among Argentinean and Chilean participants in LGTBI demonstrations**
About 26% of Argentinean demonstrators are members of political parties while only 6% of Chilean demonstrators are so. And while 63% of Argentineans feel “somewhat close” or “very close” to a given political party, only 28% of Chileans report so (chi-square significant at the .001 level in both cases). Additionally, on a 0 to 10 point scale of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country, Argentinean demonstrators score 6.07 on average while Chilean demonstrators only score 3.14 (significant at the .001 level). This is interesting since international rankings consider Chilean democracy to be of a better quality than the Argentinean one (Latinobarómetro, various years). Finally, while 78% of Argentinean demonstrators declared having voted in the last national election, only 48% of Chilean demonstrators reported so – although these figures are partially comparable because turnout is mandatory in Argentina (though not punished if not fulfilled) but not in Chile (this is not shown in figure 1). Only regarding trust in the local government average differences are not significant. In sum, across several indicators tapping feelings and attitudes towards the main objects of the institutional political system – politicians, parties, the national government, the representative democratic regime, and the vote – Argentinean demonstrators look clearly more attached than Chilean demonstrators. Such differences are not only statistically but also substantively significant.

These differences might be explained by national-level factors, as we will argue below. But they may also be explained by “compositional differences” – differences in average individual characteristics in the country samples. For instance, Argentineans may score higher than Chileans on individual attributes that are associated with higher political attachment, and this may account for the observed differences. For considering this possibility, we carried out multivariate regression models having each indicator of political attachment as the dependent variable. Independent variables were age, educational level, and gender (male, female, and no answer), as well as a country dummy variable in which Argentina has a value of 1 and Chile equals 0. We chose age, education and gender since previous research has found that these three factors shape political attachment. If after controlling for them the country variable remains significant, then country differences in political attachment cannot be attributed to compositional differences – at least linked to these three factors. That is, even if Chileans and Argentineans were on average equal in them, there would persist differences that might be attributed to other factors.

Table 2 presents the results of this exercise. It shows the coefficient, standard error, and significance level of the country dummy variable in models having different political attachment indicators as dependent variables and controlling by gender, age and education. Results mirror the bivariate ones presented in figure 1: excepting trust in the local government, in every case Argentineans show significantly higher levels of political attachment than Chileans. Thus, the puzzle cannot be attributed to compositional differences.
Table 2. Regression coefficients of country (Argentina=1, Chile=0) in institutional attachment indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of model</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Country coefficient</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal logistic</td>
<td>Many politicians make promises but then do nothing about them</td>
<td>-2.085</td>
<td>.234</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal logistic</td>
<td>Voting is useless; parties always do what they want</td>
<td>-1.346</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal logistic</td>
<td>Trust in national government</td>
<td>1.518</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal logistic</td>
<td>Trust in local government</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal logistic</td>
<td>Trust in political parties</td>
<td>2.008</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binary logistic</td>
<td>Party membership</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinal logistic</td>
<td>Closeness with political party</td>
<td>1.594</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLS</td>
<td>Satisfaction with democracy</td>
<td>2.992</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 All models control for age, gender, and educational level. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

So, why are Argentinean LGTBI demonstrators more attached to institutional politics than Chilean demonstrators? Our answer emphasizes the role of national institutional and political factors – some of them operating at the level of the sexual diversity policy field. However, a simpler, alternative answer could be that this happens because Argentines in general are more attached than Chileans in general (for whatever reason). Thus, if the general adult populations in both countries differ in such respect, the differences we found among demonstrators might merely reflect this fact. If this were the case, when comparing the adult populations in both countries we should find that Argentines are more attached than Chileans, and that the magnitude of the difference is similar to that found between demonstrators.

For considering this possibility we use LAPOP surveys of both countries, which are representative of the adult population. We combine the 2010, 2012 and 2014 waves to obtain a robust picture less affected by contingent factors. We consider trust in political institutions, party membership and identification, and satisfaction with democracy (LAPOP does not have indicators of political efficacy comparable to those of the Caught in the Act of Protest survey).

Additionally, it might be that the differences among demonstrators are not due to specific developments in the sexual diversity field (as we argue below is partially the case), but due to general factors that affect the social movement sector as a whole. If this were the case, the differences in political attachment among LGTBI demonstrators should also appear when comparing demonstrators in general in both countries. For testing this possibility we also use LAPOP. Specifically, we compare all those who reported having
participated in a demonstration or public protest in the last 12 months, disregarding the issue.

Table 3 summarizes the ensuing results. It compares the level of institutional attachment in both countries among the general population, the population of demonstrators (on any issue), and the LGTBI demonstrators. For each indicator of attachment (presented in the rows), the table shows the ratio that results from dividing the Argentinean figure into the Chilean figure. Thus, ratios over 1 indicate that Argentineans are comparatively more attached, while ratios below 1 indicate the opposite.

Table 3. Country ratios of institutional attachment in three different populations (higher ratios denote higher attachment of Argentineans relative to Chileans)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>General population¹</th>
<th>Demonstrators last year (any issue)¹</th>
<th>LGTBI demonstrat.²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in congress/nat. govt.³</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in local government⁴</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in political parties⁴</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party membership⁵</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party identification⁶</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with democracy⁷</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Source: LAPOP.
² Source: Caught in the Act of Protest survey.
³ \( \bar{X} \) Argentina / \( \bar{X} \) Chile. LAPOP: question refers to congress; Caught in the Act of Protest: question refers to national government.
⁴ \( \bar{X} \) Argentina / \( \bar{X} \) Chile.
⁵ % Argentina / % Chile. LAPOP asks about attendance to meetings of political parties and political movements. Caught in the Act of Protest asks about membership in political parties.
⁶ % Argentina / % Chile. LAPOP asks about sympathy towards a political party (yes/no). In Caught in the Act of Protest, we consider in each country the percentage who feel “somewhat” or “very close” to a political party.
⁷ Argentina / Chile. LAPOP: ratio of % satisfied + % very satisfied with the way democracy works in (country). Caught in the Act of Protest: ratio of means in 0-10 satisfaction scale.

The column more to the right in table 2 shows what we already know: Argentinean LGTBI demonstrators are way more attached than Chilean ones, and accordingly all ratios are over 1. But this is not the case when comparing the general country populations: four ratios are below 1 and only two are over 1. Indeed, Chileans in general seem to trust more in the three institutions considered, and be more satisfied about democracy, than Argentineans in general. Thus, the differences among LGTBI demonstrators do not simply mirror general population differences.

Additionally, the central column shows that Argentinean demonstrators in general tend to be more attached than their Chilean counterparts (all ratios are above 1 except for trust in local governments). But the ratios of LGTBI demonstrators are always higher (and often considerably higher) than those of general demonstrators. Alternatively, if we read the
table at the row level from left to right, we find that with just one exception, the ratios increase sequentially – the attachment gap is larger for demonstrators in general than for the population at large, and for LGTBI demonstrators than for demonstrators in general. This suggests that there is something specific to the sexual diversity field that deepens the attachment gaps. As showed in the section about the evolvement of the LGTBI movements in Argentina and Chile, the responsiveness of the political system to their respective agendas has been different in each case. This might, in turn, be explaining the different attachment found in the Argentine and Chilean activists. Finally, the greater development of the LGTBI in Argentina allows making sense of interesting differences we found in the emotions that demonstrators report in each country. Figure 2 shows the answers to the question “When you think about the rights of sexual minorities you feel …” This was followed by different emotions, with an answer scale ranging from 1=not at all to 5=a lot. As the figure shows, Chileans feel angrier than Argentineans (3.27 vs. 2.73) and more frustrated (2.99 vs. 2.27) regarding the rights of sexual minorities (differences significant at the .01 and .001 respectively).

Figure 2. Anger and frustration among Argentinean and Chilean participants in LGTBI demonstrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chile</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own survey
CONCLUSION

Both Argentina and Chile have experienced large protest waves in recent years. These have spurred important debates about their emergence and impact, and about the specific motivations that drive people to take to the streets. Besides this commonality, there are key differences in the development of Argentine and Chilean social movements’ relationship with the political terrain. While Chile experienced a marked process of demobilization before the more recent protest waves, in Argentina, social movements have never stopped mobilizing.

Clearly, people take to the streets to express their discontent. Yet, besides pushing for a particular demand, activists might have distinct motivations and levels of trust in political institutions and in their political efficacy. These differences are most commonly overlooked in general population surveys. We have – until the application of surveys in the very act of protests – known little about the people who decide to express their dissatisfaction in the streets.

Seeking to bridge this research gap, this paper focused on how features of the political and institutional context shape activists’ attachment to politics. A key finding in this regard is that although the general population in Chile is less detached to politics in comparison to the one in Argentina, when it comes to LGTBI activists, this relationship is inverse. We argue that this is partly due to the uneven progress of the LGTBI agenda in both countries: while it has made significant progress in Argentina, in Chile activists are still mobilizing for historical demands such as gay marriage. The mediating role of political parties, in turn, has been much more present in the case of Argentina when compared to Chile. It is thus not surprising that Chilean activists feel more detached to institutional politics than their Argentine counterparts.

Finally, this paper shows that the consequences of the degree of attachment to institutional politics are not unidirectional. While LGTBI activists in Argentina and Chile have contrasting attitudes and perceptions towards institutional politics, both movements mobilize yearly to advance their agendas.
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