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Mending the Divide: Lessons from LGBTQ+ Movements for Latin American Studies

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Latin American has made remarkable progress in the last twenty years regarding LGBTQ+ rights. More recently, LGBTQ-related issues have had major impacts on national and regional politics. However, most of the literature about Latin American social movements still largely ignores LGBTQ+ movements. This article argues that including LGBTQ+ movements in social movements research is essential to further our understanding of LGBTQ+ politics in the region and of Latin American politics and social movements more broadly, as well as to address the enduring lack of academic engagement with gender and sexuality as political topics.

Keywords: anti-'gender ideology', Latin America, LGBTQ+ movements, LGBTQ+ rights, Pink Tide, social movements.

Introduction

During the last twenty years, Latin America has received international attention for its remarkable progress in terms of LGBTQ+ rights. This progress has been rather uneven with some countries (e.g. Argentina and Uruguay) passing the most progressive legislation and others (e.g. Paraguay and Venezuela) hardly moving forward (Corrales, 2020; Serrano-Amaya et al., 2020). LGBTQ+ movements nonetheless remain largely absent from most of the literature about Latin American social movements and are confined to the specific fields of gender and sexuality studies. *Latin American Perspectives* (Munck and Sankey, 2020), a leading Latin American studies journal, published in 2020 a two-part special edition about social movements that does not include any research on LGBTQ+ movements. Ronaldo Munck's recent book, *Social Movements in Latin America: Mapping the Mosaic*, which aims to be 'a preliminary political mapping of the wide range of social movements that have impacted on Latin American society' (Munck, 2020: xiii), does not mention LGBTQ+ movements at any point. Fernando Calderón's and Manuel Castells' (2020) *The New Latin America* makes a few references to sexuality, but only in relation to women's movements and challenges to the patriarchy. Inclán's (2018) wide-ranging literature review of studies on the most salient social movements in Latin America mentions only two studies about LGBTQ+ movements, both by Rafael de la Dehesa.

This neglect is not for lack of evidence. Latin America houses some of the biggest and most vibrant LGBTQ+ communities in the world, with São Paulo's Pride Parade, the world's largest, attracting more than 3 million people each year. Furthermore, nine of the 33 worldwide travel guides provided by the International Lesbian, Gay, Trans and Intersex Association website (https://www.iglta.org/lgbtq-travel-guides) are from Latin American countries. Latin American states have been at the forefront of the institutionalisation of LGBTQ+ rights in the United Nations (Aylward, 2020) and at the national level (Corrales, 2020).

The success of Latin American LGBTQ+ movements has been acknowledged by researchers in the field of gender and sexuality but has not been taken up in the general literature about social movements

and politics in the region. I argue that this lack of engagement with LGBTQ+ movements and politics reflects an enduring overall construction of gender and sexuality as apolitical, private, and secondary to more clearly material struggles. Since their inception, LGBTQ+ movements in Latin America have been accused by other progressive movements of being bourgeois, distracting from the 'bigger issue' of class struggle and, at times, from opposition to dictatorships (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010; Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011). Still today, government engagement with gender and sexual diversity is often seen as a 'smokescreen' to divert attention from supposedly more important issues (Melo, 2020: 4).

Countering this still prevalent (if often implicit) position, the claims of LGBTQ+ movements address civil rights, citizenship, political participation, public policy, and access to basic needs, with often material consequences. These topics have been widely studied in Latin America, but rarely from the perspective of the distinctive features of LGBTQ+ movements. For decades, similar concerns have been expressed by feminist scholars and activists regarding the marginalisation of women's and gender studies. Indeed, both fields and movements are often disregarded in the non-specialist literature and when they are discussed, they tend to be conflated at the cost of erasing their particularities. While they do share similarities, their demands, discourses, histories, positionalities, and practices also diverge (Hiner and Troncoso, 2021). Alliances are welcomed and necessary, but feminist studies are not a substitute for LGBTQ+ studies or vice versa.

Whereas gender and sexuality studies have gained growing recognition, albeit unevenly, the implications of these themes and approaches for other disciplines have been persistently overlooked (Jiménez Bolaños, 2014; Arévalo, 2017; Blanco, 2018; Rosales Mendoza & Flores Soriano, 2013). This is particularly damaging as the region (and the world) deals with authoritarian governments and movements that mobilise moral panic in relation to gender and sexual dissidence and as queer people worldwide remain excluded from full citizenship. Further, this neglect reflects queer people's marginalisation in academia and education in general (Martínez and Vidal-Ortiz, 2021).

The lack of attention to LGBTQ+ social movements is particularly unfortunate as Latin America has great potential as a basis for research on social movements, with global implications (Munck, 2020). Analysing Latin American LGBTQ+ movements can reveal what led to different strategic choices and uneven outcomes in similar contexts. Conceptualisation of such movements within social movement theory can further our knowledge of the expansion of LGBTQ+ rights in political settings that pose a challenge to current theorising from the Global North and of the dynamics of marginalised movements worldwide that thrive despite the lack of political opportunities and resources. Moreover, the persistence of violence and intolerance in contexts where LGBTQ+ rights are present has shown that, while rights can be an important measure of progress, they do not represent the totality of LGBTQ+ politics or of the work done by the movements in question. Latin America offers a key space to study these dynamics, if they are understood as political, and as long as the role of LGBTQ+ social movements is taken seriously.

This article argues that LGBTQ+ movements and politics are essential elements of broader discussions about citizenship, democracy, and neoliberalism in Latin America. That LGBTQ+ issues are still neglected in the general fields of social movements and politics, despite long-standing claims about their political nature and organisational dynamics, weakens analytical perspectives and represents a persistent marginalisation of gender and sexuality studies within academia. The article seeks to counter this neglect primarily through an analysis of the literature covering general research on Latin American social movements and politics and of the literature with a special emphasis on LGBTQ+ studies. It is also informed by, but not directly based on, two years of fieldwork and archival research with Brazilian LGBTQ+ movements.

The article is structured as follows. The following section offers an overview of research on Latin American social movements with a focus on how their relationship with the state has shaped them. It includes key scholarship produced to date on LGBTQ+ movements. The next section presents five salient topics from LGBTQ+ research and evaluates their contributions in responding to current social and political necessities: intra-movement power relations, identity politics and the Left, the effects of neoliberalism in activism, alternative repertoires of contention, and the anti-'gender ideology' movement in Latin America. The conclusion offers final thoughts on mainstream academia's refusal to engage with LGBTQ+ issues as political and as social movements.

The Literature on Latin American LGBTQ+ Movements

Latin America's contemporary LGBTQ+ movements emerged in the 1980s, alongside struggles for democratisation and citizenship. Queer subcultures have, however, been present for much longer. Many indigenous communities have long had a fluid understanding of gender and sexuality (Picq, 2020). While evidence points for the existence of binary gender systems before colonialism (Segato, 2022), colonisers introduced legal and power systems imposing a cisheteronormative understanding of gender and sexuality still present in contemporary Latin America (Green, 1999; Campuzano, 2006; Picq, 2020). This colonial legacy most clearly persists in some countries that still criminalise consensual same-sex sexual relations (ILGA World, 2020).

Efforts to trace the history of (what are now called) LGBTQ+ communities in the region are still sparse but what has been undertaken reveals a history of resilience. While retracing the history of LGBTQ+ politics in such a vast region is too big a task to tackle here, some examples can help illustrate the vibrancy and longevity of these communities. Green (1999) recounts that in the 1950s Rio de Janeiro already had 'liberated zones' where homosexual men from over the country socialised. By the 1960s, the first independent gay publications had started circulating in Brazil. Around the same time, in 1967, the first Argentine homosexual political group, Nuestro Mundo (Our World), was created, followed in 1971 by the founding of Frente de Liberación Homosexual (Homosexual Liberation Front) (Brown, 2002; Bazán, 2004). Mogrovejo (2000) notes that in Mexico's 1982 elections seven gay activists ran as federal deputies. While they were not elected, their campaign helped demonstrate their activism to the general public.

A variety of frameworks have sought to explain how social movements emerge, organise, and pursue results. Scholars argue, however, that the main Global North theories, concerning political opportunities, resource mobilisation, and new social movements, are inappropriate for the Latin American context (Hochstetler, 2012; Munck, 2020). Perhaps the most striking difference between movements in Latin America and the Global North is their relationship with the state. The region has a few, but strong, autonomist movements (most famously the Zapatistas) that combine indigenous and rural epistemologies breaking away from normative notions and sites of power and politics (Munck, 2020). However, decades of authoritarian regimes combined with weakened public services have made the state, political participation, and citizenship central to the demands of most movements in Latin America, even critical ones (Foweraker, 2001; Hochstetler, 2012; Munck, 2020). After democratic transitions in the 1980s and 1990s, there were few resources available to social movements, with most still controlled by the state, and thus political action was primarily directed towards the state (Foweraker, 2001).

Political parties generally tried to secure social movements' support, but specific collective demands were lost amidst efforts to form broader political coalitions (Foweraker, 2001). Further, new democratic governments sought to construct the image of every person as a citizen with rights and obligations; while this responded to social movements' general claims for citizenship, it simultaneously ignored identity-based claims over differences that limited certain groups' capacity to exercise that citizenship (Foweraker, 1995). In this vein, while new democratic regimes were in many respects not transformative, they did open opportunities for cooperation between state and civil society (Hochstetler, 2012). These opportunities were, however, embedded in the neoliberal political economy of the time, which favoured the creation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and public-private partnerships as a response to social needs (Foweraker, 2001; Hochstetler, 2012).

In a process dubbed the Pink Tide, the early 2000s saw the rise to power of left-leaning political parties in Latin America and the implementation of neo-developmentalist policies (Calderón and Castells, 2020). While many social justice demands were successfully pursued at this time, these governments represented a variation on, rather than a clean break from, neoliberal policies (Loureiro, 2018). During this time, NGOs and activists were incorporated into the state and institutional spaces, promoting some important achievements but also demobilising strategies of resistance (Facchini and França, 2009; Loureiro, 2018).

In this context, Almeida and Johnston (2006) have examined Latin American social movements through their interaction with neoliberal economic globalisation, democratisation, and transnational networks. Again with a focus on neoliberalism, Maristella Svampa (2008: 35–36) has categorised

Latin American movements from the 2000s into two groups: popular mobilisations around the precarity of specific state provisions (e.g. education and health), and territorial urban and rural mobilisations around exclusion, aimed against both the state and the private sector. Both groups are similar in their critique of the commodification of public and social resources. In a more recent contribution to the field, Ronaldo Munck (2020) has argued for a cultural political economy approach to Latin American social movements, encompassing their political engagement with the state and neoliberal capitalism alongside the cultural production of meaning. While no researcher can claim to present a comprehensive overview of all Latin American social movements, it is striking that LGBTQ+ movements are missing from such accounts, despite their political salience and connection to the topics covered.

In general, LGBTQ+ movements and politics in Latin America only feature in research within that specific field, where important scholarship on the evolution of LGBTQ+ issues and movements has been produced. De la Dehesa's (2010) comparative research on Mexico and Brazil offers a nuanced analysis of LGBTQ+ movements' strategies to approach the state and their outcomes. Corrales and Pecheny (2010) have edited an impressive volume that seeks to fill gaps in the study of the politics of gender and sexuality by addressing different moments, strategies, and segments of LGBTQ+ movements. Díez's (2015) comparative study of same-sex marriage in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico focuses on activists' creation and maintenance of networks as a central factor for the expansion of rights in these countries. Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso (2016) developed a framework to track 'axes of fundamental disputes' in the development of lesbian movements in Latin American. She highlights their interaction with feminist movements and politics and the disputes around the category 'woman' and autonomy-institutionalisation as defining features of lesbian activism and its dynamics. Omar Encarnación (2016) demonstrates that strategy may be more important than resources in explaining the uneven results achieved across the region. Despite focusing mostly on the Argentine case (arguably the most successful one), his research employs a comparative analysis of social movements' use of framing to advance rights. Corrales's (2017) analysis of varying outcomes of LGBTQ+ activism in Latin America expands on conventional explanations for the achievement of rights, concluding that social movements' success depends mostly on political context and ability to forge alliances. Finally, José Fernando Serrano-Amaya et al. (2020) provide an analysis of LGBTQ+ social policy in ten Latin American countries to uncover how legal discourse has been translated into state action.

Far from constituting an exhaustive list, the examples cited above demonstrate the important contributions of LBGTQ+ movements and offer frameworks for research in this field in Latin America – a field that still has key gaps to be filled. Geographically, Central America and the Caribbean have not received the same attention as South America and Mexico. Mainstream research has focused mostly on a specific set of rights, but other aspects of policymaking and social movements' activities have been neglected. Further attention to LGBTQ+ political dynamics is also needed to assess the transformative possibilities and the durability of the rights that have been achieved. The main point, however, is that broad analyses of Latin American politics have tended to disregard LGBTQ+ movements as important collective actors, despite evidence pointing to their relevance.

What Is Being Missed?

In what follows, five topics in which LGBTQ+ movements can offer important contributions to analyses of Latin American social movements and politics are highlighted: (a) intra-movement power relations, (b) identity politics and the Left, (c) neoliberal activism, (d) alternative repertoires, (e) anti-'gender ideology' crusades. Throughout, specific avenues of inquiry are presented, and their possible contributions discussed.

Intra-Movement Power Relations

All social movements deal with internal differences, but LGBTQ+ movements are unique in that they are of necessity internally diverse movements bringing together a community with different sexual and gender identities, united by a shared experience of cisheteronormative oppression. The specific

hardships their members face are not the same and while their concerns and demands sometimes overlap, they can also be contradictory (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010; Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011). Considering unbalanced, intra-movement power relations is key to enhancing our knowledge of how subgroups within a community engage with activism, experience backlash, and access rights and resources.

Tensions between different identities have been present since the emergence of organised LGBTQ+ movements. Lesbians, *travestis*, trans people, and people of colour in different countries, have long denounced classism, racism, sexism, and transphobia within umbrella movements and created their own groups (Green, 1999; Brown, 2002; Moreno, 2010; Núñez González, 2010; Thayer, 2010; Machuca Rose, 2019). However, LGBTQ+ movements are still presented as monolithic in most of the general literature about the region when they are mentioned at all.

In addition, research on the consequences of diversity for movement strategies is still in its early days (Pandolfi, 2018). Understanding the frames used by social movements – that is, the way they interpret and translate their grievances and ideologies – helps us to evaluate the impact of different strategies in the struggle for rights (Encarnación, 2016). This understanding is limited, however, by focusing on the frames themselves and short-circuiting attention to what happens behind the scenes: namely, the internal struggles that led to the use of certain frames instead of others, the creation of hierarchies of demands, and, eventually, uneven access to the results achieved.

Valuable insights into these questions can be found in the few works that have addressed the organisational aspect of LGBTQ movements. For example, Colling's (2015) analysis of movements in Argentina, Chile, Spain, and Portugal has shown important differences between how mainstream movements (defined as those who work mostly through institutionalised channels towards legal equality) and queer/*cuier* collectives (defined as dissident groups who seek cultural changes and reject any normativity) interacted with same-sex marriage legalisation. Whereas queer activists were not necessarily against marriage equality, they criticised its pre-eminence in the mainstream agenda, the reinforcement of respectability standards, and its legitimisation of state institutions and of their intervention in private issues. As Espinosa Miñoso (2017) notes, most campaigns by those mainstream movements have been based on narratives of sameness and assimilation rather than challenging existing moral hierarchies. Despite their success, these campaigns carried the unintended consequence of further marginalising relationships that differ from the norm in question and promoting the idea of a correct way to exercise gender and sexuality, which ultimately works against broader goals of queer liberation. To understand how this 'normalising' and contested framing became central to LGBTQ politics, internal dynamics need to be foregrounded.

A similar issue regards the promotion of visibility (i.e. coming out) as necessarily positive. Whereas this has been an important strategy to promote LGBTQ+ politics (e.g. through pride parades), visibility has also been linked to increases in regulation and vulnerability (Moreno, 2008). This is not a binary question of whether visibility is good or bad, but rather of developing tools to assess when and for whom it can be beneficial. Crucially, it prompts the question of who is excluded by visibility-oriented strategies, given its high costs or even impossibility for certain groups. Moreno's (2008) research on (in)visibility in Argentine LGBTQ+ movements, shows that for many queer activists, physical visibility is not always accompanied by political visibility. For instance, one could highlight the case of *travestis* and trans people (particularly those of colour) who are widely recognised as the most vulnerable group within the community. Usually, their bodies are automatically read as queer and thus subjected to high rates of policing, criminalisation, and violence (ILGA World, 2020). If their physical visibility is a given, their political visibility has been won only through decades of struggle and their position is still precarious. Analysing visibility as a social movement strategy designed in the context of intra-movement power dynamics is crucial if we wish to understand why the most visible and vulnerable subgroups are still not protected and prioritised by mainstream strategies.

As new gender and sexual identities emerge, there have been several attempts to create more inclusive movements (Altman, 2020), as well as exclusionary backlashes. As movements become increasingly accepted by the general population, the struggle of marginalised groups to have their demands recognised by the general LGBTQ+ community needs to receive further attention. In order to understand strategic decisions over resource allocation, framing, and agenda setting, social movements themselves need to be analysed as arenas where power relations between conflicting identities and

interests take place. This is especially true for LGBTQ+ movements, which are inherently an assembly and mobilisation of various identities and (sub)movements. However, research on other movements within the region could equally benefit from similar intersectional analysis of internal dynamics.

Identity Politics and the Left

Those researching gender and sexuality have already critically assessed the connection between the Pink Tide and progress in achieving LGBTQ+ rights in Latin America and shown that leftist governments do not necessarily lead to major advances (Friedman, 2009; Friedman and Tabbush, 2019). Venezuela is a case in point (see Corrales, 2020). A closer look at the countries where advances were made during this period has shown that the rights gained were usually those less strongly opposed to cisheteronormativity, which continued to inform government practices (Tabbush et al., 2018). For instance, while the support for marriage equality grew throughout the region, the rights of intersex people to bodily autonomy are still mostly disregarded (Serrano-Amaya et al., 2020).

Historically, most leftist groups have rejected LGBTQ+ people, just as their right-wing counterparts have done. However, whereas right-wing discourse has charged queer people with destroying the traditional family (Cowan, 2014), the Left has historically considered gender identity and sexuality to be bourgeois concerns which distract from the supposedly more important issue of class struggle (Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011: 15). Even in recent years, identity-based movements (LGBTQ+ or otherwise) have experienced a tense relationship with the Left: they are criticised for factionalism and a failure to prioritise the material reality of class struggle (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010). While a narrow focus on identity can indeed be unhelpful, this criticism – and the exclusionary consequences – deems cultural struggles of secondary importance. Not only does this exclude groups of marginalised people from social justice movements: it also presents a restricted view of economic, social, and political inequalities, their origins, and future possibilities. Crucially, it ignores the interpenetration of these dimensions, in contradistinction both to certain LGBTQ+ movements which have foregrounded the links between cultural and material struggles in their action and to political opponents of the Left who have used cultural issues electorally, often successfully.

Nonetheless, many LGBTQ+ activists started their activism in leftist organisations and pushed for recognition from within these groups, with varying results (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010; Green, 2014). However, simplistic explanations of the Pink Tide as catalyst for LGBTQ+ rights underplay the important work done by activists for acceptance within the Left and the continuity of their efforts towards liberation, even after rights have been achieved. Large Latin American leftist parties are often pressured to appeal to wider audiences and shy away from controversial issues that could cost votes (Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011; Friedman and Tabbush, 2019). Such attempts to appeal to different groups have made inclusivity more challenging and gender and sexuality issues (in all their intersectionality) have often been pushed aside to facilitate alliances.

In many cases, the rise of the Left has involved alliances with religious groups that oppose LGBTQ+ rights, something that is often ignored in general analyses of the Pink Tide (Friedman and Tabbush, 2019). One example is the case of the so-called 'kit gay' in Brazil. In 2011, the federal government (Partido dos Trabalhadores, Workers' Party, PT) attempted to launch a nationwide programme called School without Homophobia (Leite, 2019). The programme was met with an immediate backlash from conservatives, who accused it of peddling 'gender ideology', paedophilia, and pornography to children. One of its most vocal opponents was Jair Bolsonaro, then a federal deputy, who popularised the term 'kit gay' to refer to the programme. Under such criticism and pressure from religious leaders allied to the PT government, President Dilma Rousseff swiftly suspended the programme before it could be implemented. In the 2018 presidential elections, Jair Bolsonaro successfully used the episode to discredit his PT opponent Fernando Haddad, who had been the Minister of Education at the time of the controversy (Leite 2019). In effect, the PT disavowed the LGBTQ+ community, but still could not attract enough votes from more conservative circles. This means that LGBTQ+ issues and how the PT addressed them were some of the most important political questions in the country, but they rarely figure in political analyses of the party's fall from power.

Analyses of the Pink Tide would gain from examining the relationships between movements and the Left and within the Left itself that led to support for LGBTQ+ issues at some moments but not others,

as well as the limits of such support. This has been demonstrated by Garriga López's (2016) analysis of leftist Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa's (2007–2017) support for the reform of gender identity legislation in the country. In her account, Garriga López (2016) describes how activists managed to move Rafael Correa from a conservative position of denouncing the 'extremes' of 'gender ideology' to publicly defending gender identity reform. This support nonetheless came with important limitations, as the president still dismissed other LGBTQ+ issues and his party presented a bill on national identity reform that only partially responded to the demands presented by activists in relation to the use of gender and sex markers.

As shown, LGBTQ+ issues can have strong implications for politics more generally. Similar claims have been made before – for example, in relation to the feminist affirmation that 'the personal is political', meaning that so-called personal issues (e.g. gender, race, and class) have political implications (Combahee River Collective, 1977). The current salience of LGBTQ+-related issues is clear to political parties of all stripes, even if they have been more successfully mobilised by the Right. Nevertheless, the broader literature about social movements and politics in Latin America continues to distance itself from LGBTQ+ issues. A focus on the engagement of LGBTQ+ movements with leftist politics provides an insight into how the strategies of both sectors have evolved and the dynamics behind most of the current LGBTQ+ legislation, as well as new perspectives from which to analyse leftist politics in general.

Neoliberal Activism

Most of the contemporary LGBTQ+ movements emerged around in the 1980s and 1990s, when Latin America was undergoing both democratisation and neoliberal economic reforms that led to austerity and a reduced state presence in the economy and social services (Foweraker, 2001). In this environment, government provision of public services declined, leaving a gap that was filled by civil society, mostly NGOs (Foweraker, 2001). Many Latin American NGOs began as social movements and still engage in advocacy, community work, and mobilisation.

LGBTQ+ movements were especially affected by the changing role of civil society due to their emergence at the time of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Confronted with government inaction, immense loss of life, and a public discourse pointing the finger at homosexuality, many LGBTQ+ activists soon became sexual health activists and policy-implementers. NGOs became providers of health services in partnership with, or in place of, the state. In this process, activists incorporated a neoliberal language of rights and empowerment used by international funders (e.g. the World Bank) into their own repertoire (Altman, 2020). In addition, social movements were allied into governments and development agencies, becoming conduits for social policy, which gave them opportunities to influence public policy but also limited their ability to contest government action (Foweraker, 2001). The role of NGOs as intermediaries between state and civil society was strengthened in the Pink Tide governments and the general trend has continued (Alvarez, 2009).

However, the focus on HIV/AIDS pushed lesbian groups into a secondary position, and the use of health to promote sexual rights depoliticised the struggle and sanitised the practice of sexuality (Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011). Also, this turned civil society, and in particular LGBTQ+ communities, into the 'target group' of the different projects deployed rather than confirming their role as an active part of social movements (Trevisan, 2004).

A second neoliberal aspect of LGBTQ+ groups' strategy has been the alliance with business, leading to the creation of a profitable market segment selling a lifestyle associated with the international LGBTQ+ community (Facchini and França, 2009; Encarnación, 2016; Corrales, 2017). This move towards the market includes promoting LGBTQ+ tourism, corporate sponsorship of pride parades, and boycotting as a form of protest. Market-based approaches have led to a greater recognition of LGBTQ+ people and issues and helped promote anti-discrimination legislation (Encarnación, 2016; Corrales, 2017). It is not uncontroversial, however, as utilising the capitalist market to validate LGBTQ+ identities may increase inequalities within the community (Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011). First, it may do so by leading to a commodification of gender and sexual identities and the selling of a gay 'lifestyle' informed mostly by the US white middle-class experience. Second, it can promote a neoliberal (sexual) citizenship that conflates people's rights as consumers with their

recognition as citizens. Third, access to the market (and the citizenship attached) is limited to one's ability to consume, excluding many and rendering invisible the struggles of those who live in poverty due to workplace, housing, and family discrimination.

Much of the literature about Latin American social movements points to opposition to the market, but LGBTQ+ movements have demonstrated the possibilities of fruitful alliances, despite important shortcomings. Addressing the ways in which neoliberalism has shaped movements or been shaped by its appropriation of social justice ideas is necessary to further our understanding of social movements' trajectory and strategies beyond a framework of co-optation. Equally, one must consider how LGBTQ+ movements' adherence to neoliberal frameworks may have been influenced by the perception of LGBTQ+ movements as interest groups rather than social movements or their exclusion from progressive leftist politics. Finally, understanding the NGOisation of LGBTQ+ movements can help address this trend in the broader field of social movements.

Alternative Repertoires

The language of rights is currently the norm for many working towards social justice, including LGBTQ+ movements, to the point that, as previously mentioned, same-sex marriage has become a central issue in analyses of these movements (Altman, 2020). But this emphasis does not reflect a consensus. Criticism of the current use of the language of rights, especially as it concerns LGBTQ+ people, points in two similar directions: first, rights-based approaches promote fixed and universal identities, and second, they do not challenge underlying structures of discrimination and normativity (Sharma, 2006).

LGBTQ+ identities comprise an array of intersectional experiences. Whereas the LGBTQ+ acronym can assist in creating a collective identity and generating political strength, it cannot homogenise the demands and interests of those involved (Altman, 2020). When legislation and public policy are produced with a limited understanding of gender and sexuality, they further marginalise those who fall outside such understandings (Osella and Rubio-Marin, 2021). Further, it is well known that even in countries where LGBTQ+ rights were achieved, LGBTQ-phobic violence is still commonplace (Corrales, 2020).

The framework of rights is particularly unsuitable to address everyday microaggressions and the deeply rooted cisheteronormativity that contributes, for example, to workplace and housing discrimination (Sharma, 2006). Often, those are not as clear-cut as instances of physical violence and thus not understood as rights violations. Furthermore, rights are ultimately controlled and regulated by the same state that is largely responsible for marginalising, oppressing, and depriving minorities of essential resources (De la Dehesa, 2010). A framework that does not address the contradictions of a rights-based approach may ostracise those in marginalised positions and the experience of LGBTQ+ movements is particularly relevant in such circumstances.

Moreover, focusing solely on rights-based strategies limits the definition of social movements and renders radical and community-based initiatives invisible. Alternative forms of protest are common in Latin American LGBTQ+ activism. One interesting example is the Museo Travesti de Peru, an itinerant museum created by philosopher and *travesti* activist Giuseppe Campuzano to reclaim *travestis*' past and traditions and link them to the present (Campuzano, 2009). During the 2006 presidential election, they organised their first street intervention, when a group of *travestis* affixed prints of local press articles about problems faced by *travestis* on a wall that usually displayed photographs of female socialites (Campuzano, 2009). The intervention sought to affirm the contrasting array of women's experiences in the country and to take control, however momentarily, of a place usually dominated by cisheteronormative narratives.

Less publicised work has also been done by movements that combine political action with care in the absence of public services and family support. This has included initiatives to provide housing, food, health services, legal aid, work and study opportunities, shelter from violence, or a sense of community/family (Drucker, 2009; Machuca Rose, 2019; Santos Barreto, 2020). Such initiatives have been especially prevalent amongst *travestis* and trans people.

Alejandro Natal and Carlos Martínez Carmona and Natal (2021) suggest a framework for analysing the LGBTQ+ movement in Mexico that prioritises evolving repertoires of action as a

reflection of changes both in the external context and in the configuration of the movement itself. They pay particular attention to the role of the arts, parades, and specialised publications in activism. The diversity of legal, political, social, and cultural initiatives also suggests a need to adopt not only a broader view of repertoires of contention but also a different typology of demands that would embrace, for instance, the recognition of 'new' identities as legitimate, as well as protection from microaggressions.

Anti-'Gender Ideology' Crusades in Latin America

Lastly, there is a tendency in social movement research to include only progressive movements (Munck, 2020). However, it is not possible to discuss LGBTQ+ movements and politics without considering the impact and reach of antagonistic forces, which at present can mainly be found in organised efforts against so-called 'gender ideology'.

The concept of 'gender ideology' emerged in the 1990s when conservative groups led by the Holy See objected to the use of the term 'gender' in the United Nations (e.g. replacing 'violence against women' with 'gender-based violence') (Careaga-Pérez, 2016; Corrêa and Parker, 2020). 'Gender ideology' is a loose concept deployed to create moral panic around a range of issues related to gender and sexuality (e.g. sexual education, abortion, non-'traditional' families) by connecting them to a group's pre-existing moral concerns (Côrrea, 2017). It usually invents supposed links between feminism, queer theory, Marxism, and other social anxieties, such as children being put at risk by the 'kit gay' (Côrrea, 2017; Corrales, 2020). 'Gender ideology' has elicited a strong response in Latin America and has been deployed by various religious and secular groups, including Catholics, Evangelicals, the far-right, and even (trans-exclusionary) radical feminists (Corrales, 2020; Corrêa and Parker, 2020; Pearce et al., 2020).

The strength of the anti-'gender ideology' response lies in mobilising outrage and fear rather than in providing a coherent collective goal. It has mobilised people against all kinds of social movements and issues, sometimes unrelated to one another. In 2016, the Mexican National Front for the Family used 'gender ideology' to argue against same-sex marriage, same-sex couples raising children and sexual education in schools (Careaga-Pérez, 2016). In the run-up to the 2016 Peace Agreements Referendum in Colombia, religious and political leaders argued that the peace agreement was pushing a 'gender ideology' agenda, and their argument contributed to its defeat (Gil Hernández, 2020). The Agreement was later rewritten toning down the 'gendered' language, restricting gender-based violence to 'violence against women' and excluding reparations for violations of the human rights of LGBTQ+ people (Gil Hernández, 2020).

Whereas some have started investigating anti-'gender ideology' groups as globalised movements no longer limited to the political fringe, there is still a general tendency to consider them as contingent responses or smokescreens (Corredor, 2019; Melo, 2020). This makes it harder to uncover their tactics and influence in broader political issues, and to consider how they can be overcome by progressive movements. Furthermore, the effects of the anti-'gender ideology' crusade on academia and politics need to be studied and challenged to protect academic and political freedom (Careaga-Pérez, 2016; Corrêa and Parker, 2020).

Conclusion

This article has discussed the continuous marginalisation of LGBTQ+ issues in the general literature on social movements in Latin America and its academic and political consequences. Far from reflecting a lack of LGBTQ+ mobilisation and political relevance in the region, this marginalisation demonstrates an enduring tendency to treat gender and sexuality issues as apolitical and irrelevant to material inequalities and struggles. As shown, it occurs despite a growing output of research that engages with gender and sexual dissidence and their intersections with broader politics. That these topics are ignored by mainstream research on social movements and politics demonstrates the persistence of unequal power relations in academia, to the detriment of the quality of the research being produced.

Incorporating LGBTQ+ movements into social movement theory could provide crucial insights into how rights have been obtained in the region and the backlash against these advances, as well as new avenues of enquiry within the larger field of social movements. For instance, as inherently diverse movements, LGBTQ+ movements provide unique insights into intra-movement power dynamics and their consequences for outcomes. In addition, these movements' use of alternative methods of political mobilisation extends traditional understandings of repertoires of contention and demonstrates a need to review how we classify social movement demands.

Moreover, LGBTQ+ movements can enrich our analysis of other aspects of the region such as neoliberalism and its effects on activism, and the Pink Tide and its decline. As demonstrated by the Brazilian controversy around the 'kit gay', a half-hearted engagement with inclusive policies left LGBTQ+ movements vulnerable to hostility and gave the far right a political leverage that went unchallenged by the mainstream left. Further, the upsurge of broad antipathy to 'gender ideology' in Latin America demonstrates the need to engage with gender and sexuality as fundamentally political topics with material consequences.

Far from an exhaustive list, these are just some examples of areas where mainstream academia ought to include divergent perspectives and look beyond 'traditional' movements and politics. Failing to recognise LGBTQ+ issues as political and LGBTQ+ collectives as social movements shows that academia is another arena where the LGBTQ+ struggle still has a lot to achieve. Such bias will continue to limit our ability to understand Latin American politics.

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