The Politics of Gay Marriage in Latin America

Addressing one of the defining social issues of our time, The Politics of Gay Marriage in Latin America explores how and why Latin America, a culturally Catholic and historically conservative region, has become a leader among nations of the Global South, and even the Global North, in the passage of gay marriage legislation. In the first comparative study of its kind, Jordi Díez explains cross-national variation in the enactment of gay marriage in three countries: Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. Based on extensive interviews in the three countries, Díez argues that three main key factors explain variation in policy outcomes across these cases: the strength of social movement networks forged by activists in favor of gay marriage; the access to policy making afforded by particular national political institutions; and the resonance of the frames used to demand the expansion of marriage rights to same-sex couples.

Jordi Díez is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Guelph. The author or editor of four previous books, he has also published numerous journal articles on social movements and public policy. A recipient of several research awards from organizations including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the International Development Research Council (IDRC), both of Canada, he has taught at several universities in the Americas and Europe. He held the 2014–15 Peggy Rockefeller Visiting Scholarship at Harvard University.
To my mother
The Politics of Gay Marriage in Latin America

Argentina, Chile, and Mexico

JORDI DÍEZ
University of Guelph, Ontario
# Contents

*Acknowledgments*  
*Introduction*  

**PART I**  
1 Citizenship, Sexuality, and Gay Marriage  
2 State-Society Relations in the Twentieth Century  
3 Early Mobilization: The Long Road to Gay Marriage  

**PART II**  
4 Argentina: The Precursor in Policy Reform  
5 Mexico: A Case of Fragmented Reform  
6 Chile: A Case of Policy Stasis  

Conclusion: Gay Marriage in Latin America and Beyond  

*Bibliography*  
*Index*  

© in this web service Cambridge University Press  
www.cambridge.org
Acknowledgments

Undertaking, and completing, a project of this magnitude is a collective enterprise, and I wish to thank the numerous institutions and individuals that have been part of this great journey.

First and foremost, I thank Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for its generous multiyear financial support. This book would quite simply not exist without it. The council’s continued commitment to funding open research in the social sciences at a time of shrinking budgets is to be applauded. I am most grateful to friends and colleagues who helped at various stages of the process, from original brainstorming to its final stages. I extend a very special recognition to Janine Clark and Susan Franceschet for their indefatigable warm support throughout the entire process. I thank Javier Corrales, James Green, David Rayside, Miriam Smith, and Lavinia Stan for the generosity with which they always, and so very promptly, extended advice over the years. Julie Simmons’s insights were most useful in the original stages. A note of thanks is due to Byron Sheldrick, Chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Guelph, for having been willing to rearrange my teaching schedule so that I could get away from the classroom to carry out field research. I thank the numerous people who read parts of the manuscript and who provided me with invaluable feedback: Merike Blofield, Carlos Figari, Susan Franceschet, Josh Fullan, Macarena Gómez-Barris, Katherine Isbester, Candace Johnson, Juan Pereira Marsiaj, David Paternotte, and Tony Smith. I hope that I have done fairness to their suggestions as I revised the manuscript. Several colleagues shared insight into specific aspects of sexual politics in Latin America: Pablo Ben, Guillermo de los Reyes, Joaquín Insuasti,
Acknowledgments

Daniel Jones, and Rodrigo Parrini. Three anonymous referees gave me the most thorough external reviews I have received on my work. Pamela Starr, at the University of Southern California, and Sergio Rivera Ayala, at the University of Waterloo, provided me opportunities to present my arguments at public talks at their institutions. I benefited greatly from the truly fantastic work of several research assistants during my fieldwork: Javier Marmolejo and Andrea Meraz in Mexico City, Martín Boy in Buenos Aires, and Ricardo Lifschitz in Santiago. Working with them has led to prized friendships. Talented students in Guelph include: Jody Brown, Olenka Iwanicki, and Martín Waldman, for their committed assistance. My fieldwork was made much easier by the institutional support I received: Ana María Tepichin at the El Colegio de México’s Programa Interdisciplinario de Estudios de la Mujer, and Rossana Castiglioni at the Universidad Diego Portales’s Escuela de Estudios Políticos invited me as visiting scholar during my time in Mexico City and Santiago, which gave me much-needed infrastructural, administrative, and personal support. I am eternally grateful to the numerous activists and government officials who generously shared with me their time to help me make sense of the rather complex world of policy making.

I have benefitted enormously from the conversations I have had over the years on Latin American politics and society, often in situ, with many great friends: David Altman, Rachel Brickner, Ernesto Calvo, Rossana Castiglioni, Susan Franceschet, Chile’s funkiest, Robert Funk, Mario González, Beatriz Hernández, Mala Htun, Mary Rose Kubal, James Loxton, Alejandro Modarelli, Mario Pecheny, Jennifer Piscopo, Paulo Ravecca, Reyes Rodríguez, Horacio Sívori, Catalina Smulovitz, Vicente Ugalde, and Jill Wigle.

Very warm thanks must go to David Mares at the Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies (University of California, San Diego) and Don Ainslie at University College (University of Toronto) for the office space to write. The Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto, where I am a Fellow, has offered me a space rich in support and constant intellectual stimulation over the years. At Cambridge University Press I thank Eric Crahan for his initial interest in the project as well as my most esteemed editor, Deborah Gershenowitz, for her professionalism, genuineness, personal warmth, and keen interest in this project. It is a true delight to work with her.

My family and friends have been indispensable on numerous levels. The support of the Diez families in Canada and the United States and of my dear friends Ben Barkworth, Jeffrey Buttle, Janine Clark, Susan
Acknowledgments

Franceschet, Josh Fullan, Anthony Iacolucci, Delphine Lacombe, Kerry Preibisch, and Adam Sloboda, has been essential. Francisco Cos-Montiel and Antonio Torres-Ruiz encouraged me, by example, to devote energies to topics with real-life implications. Scott Rayter has constantly reminded me, rather inimitably, that the personal is political and to act accordingly.

Finally, I thank my husband, soul mate, and best friend Mathieu Maslard. This book is as much his as it is mine. He unfailingly supported me while I was away for months-on-end conducting research (at times during some very trying moments), discussed with me endless theoretical and practical issues related to the project, and read tirelessly every revised version of every chapter. Your love is what makes it possible for me to aim higher all the time.

I dedicate this book to my mother, Rosa María Méndez, for if every Latin American parent were like her, the struggles for sexual justice that I analyze in this book would likely not be necessary.