# When do political parties move to the streets? Party protest in Chile

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*Scholars agree that institutional and non-institutional (i. e. protest) politics are increasingly interrelated. One expression of this phenomenon is party protest – when leaders, activists, or sympathizers of political parties participate in protest events and identify themselves as such. Yet we know little about how often parties partake in protests, which ones do so, and under which conditions. Using data on more than 2,300 protest events in Chile between 2000 and 2012, I show that party protest takes place in only 6% of all protest events, and that it is essentially monopolized by leftist parties. Additionally, by combining several strands of the literature on political parties and collective action, I derive hypotheses about the impact of the features of protest events and the broader national context on the chances of party protest. Multivariate regression models show that party protest is more likely in events which take place in highly visible locations and are coordinated by other civil society organizations. Additionally, party protest occurs when the center-left coalition is in power and when collective protest at the national level is less intense and less transgressive.*

Keywords: protest; political parties; social movements; mobilization; Chile.

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This article is about political parties partaking in collective protests. Specifically, it develops hypotheses for predicting the conditions under which parties will engage in collective protest in public places, and it tests those using data on protest events in Chile between 2000 and 2012.

The topic of party protest has been barely studied (Heaney and Rojas 2015, and Hutter 2013 are exceptions). Traditional accounts of political parties – from Duverger (1959) and Sartori (2005) onwards – remain silent about whether, when, and why parties may decide to join efforts with social movement organizations and participate in street marches, demonstrations, and other types of contentious tactics. In modern democracies political parties compete in elections and remain close to the institutional sources of political power. Party leaders seat in Congress, hold ministries, and manage important bureaucratic offices. Some of their top members may even become country presidents. Why would they want to risk police repression in the streets? Not only do the venerable classics in the parties literature hold this view. For instance, Tilly's influential 'polity model' (1978) assumes a tactical division of labor, according to which parties, as polity members, carry most if not all of their activities in institutional arenas. Excluded groups (or 'challengers') are the ones that protest (Gamson 1975).

Recent research, however, argues that the boundaries between institutional and non-institutional politics are blurring, suggesting that parties may eventually move to the streets and partake in protest activities. Goldstone claims that in contemporary advanced democracies "parties are interpenetrated by social movements, often developing out of movements, in

response to movements, or in close association with movements … the same individuals have often been both social movement activists and political candidates" (Goldstone 2003, 2-3). While movements may support candidates in elections to public positions and resort to other institutional channels, political parties may sometimes engage in protest politics. Then, "[t]he notion that there are in-group and out-groups, and that the latter engage in protests while the former engage in politics, is a caricature with little relation to reality" (Goldstone 2003:9; Kriesi 2015).

The "social movement society" perspective (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Soule and Earl 2005) has contributed to this debate by suggesting that protest tactics can be adopted by organizations which were not used to protest – such as political parties. According to McAdam and Tarrow, "public officials increasingly appear in traditional venues for protest demonstrations, like the steps of the US Capitol" (McAdam and Tarrow 2010, 535; also McAdam and Tarrow 2013). Recently, Heaney and Rojas (2015) explored the ties between the American post 9/11 anti-war movement and the Democratic Party. They show that the demise of the movement resulted from anti-war activists with partisan attachments redirecting their energies to the Democratic Party after Obama became president. They implicitly speak to the notion of party protest when noting that many Democratic officials participated in mobilizations coordinated by anti-war movement organizations.

Beyond the United States, historical-comparative studies on European green parties (Kitschelt 1988) and Latin American indigenous (Rice 2012, Madrid 2012, Van Cott 2005) and leftist parties (Valenzuela 1989) have also suggested the existence of party protest. For instance, in his explanation of the recent emergence and success of some indigenous parties in Latin America, Madrid shows that political parties such as the MAS in Bolivia and the Pachakutik in

Ecuador sometimes joined protests against the government (Madrid 2012:65 and 178-79). For indigenous parties, supporting mass mobilizations has been a central way of challenging historically closed and "white" political systems (Rice 2012). In sum, currently there is a consensus not only that parties and protest movements are more intertwined than assumed half a century ago, but also that parties may sometimes engage in protest activities.

Yet beyond recent exceptions such as Hutter (2013) and Heaney and Rojas (2015), there is little empirical research about when, why, and to what extent do parties (as represented by their leaders, activists, and sympathizers) participate in collective protest. As a result, basic questions remain unanswered. For instance, how often do parties protest? Do they show up in all protest events, in half of them, or in one in ten? Which parties do protest - leftist, centrist, green, rightist parties? As there is little research for answering these basic, descriptive questions, other more complex ones are even harder to address. For instance, why do parties participate in some protest events but not in other ones? Does it depend on attributes of the event itself, such as its size (in participants) or the presence of certain organizations? Or does it depend on features of the broader national context, such as the ideology of the incumbent party or the preceding levels of collective protest?

Below I develop a framework for understanding why some protests have parties on board and other ones do not. While I present the framework using theoretical categories, it is strongly inspired in the Chilean case - which means it may not apply to other cases. The more a given democracy resembles Chile between the period under study (2000-2012) – characterized by stable and centripetal competition among several parties and coalitions, and by a lack of anti-system parties - the more useful the framework should be. By shedding light on party protest, the

article contributes to a better understanding of the relationships between political parties and social movements, and between institutional and non-institutional politics more broadly.

In the remainder of the article, I use the expression ‘party protest’ for referring to the participation of political parties in collective protest events taking place in public settings (Hutter 2013, Kriesi 2015). Party protest happens when leaders, activists, or sympathizers of political parties participate in protest events and identify themselves as such. Typically, they show their party affiliation by making statements to the media that attend the event, chanting party songs, or carrying out flags, banners, posters, or other visible signs related to their party. Party protest does *not* happen when there are no such visible indications in a protest event, even though obviously some of the protesters may identify with or militate in political parties. Party protest is not the same as Heaney and Rojas’ (2015) notion of “party in the street” - which refers to informal networks of movement activists also tied to a political party – yet both perspectives are complementary.

Chile is an interesting case for exploring party protest for two reasons. The first one is the empirical novelty of the case. There is considerable research on protest dynamics using protest events datasets - like the one I use here - for Europe (e. g. Kriesi 1995) and the United States (e. g. Soule and Earl 2005). Such research, however, is uncommon beyond the Northern advanced countries. Moving to other contexts should increase our knowledge about protest dynamics. But of course, this makes Chile as interesting as many other Southern countries. So why Chile? One answer is data availability. For testing the hypotheses presented above one needs a dataset with information about the presence or absence of political parties in protest events. This is required for building the dependent variable of the analysis. My dataset has such information. I am not aware of datasets with such specific information for other Latin American countries.

The next two sections describe the dynamics of party competition and the extent and characteristics of party protest in Chile. Then I present the theory and derive four empirical hypotheses, describe the data, analytic methods and variables, present the results, and consider the issue of endogeneity. In the conclusions I present the limitations, future steps and broader implications of the results.

**Party competition in Chile: centripetal and stable**

For understanding party protest in Chile we must first consider some features of its political context. Chile is a middle-income Latin American country with a historical record of democratic stability and a continental-style party system during the twentieth century (Scully 1992). In 1973 General Augusto Pinochet staged a coup and imposed a harsh dictatorship until democratic restoration in 1990. Since then, and until 2017 with the eruption of a third leftist force (the *Frente Amplio*), political competition revolved around two major coalitions which obtained about 90% of the popular vote and almost all congressional seats: the center-right Alliance for Chile (or *Alianza*), which grouped the rightist Democratic Independent Union (UDI in its Spanish acronym) and the center-right National Renewal (RN); and the center-left Concertation for Democracy (or *Concertación*), which included the Socialist Party (PS), the Party for Democracy (PPD), the Social Democrat Radical Party (PRSD), and the Christian Democracy (DC). The *Concertación* governed between 1990 and 2010 and from 2014 onwards to this day, while the *Alianza* did so between 2010 and 2014.

To the two major coalitions we should add the so-called "extra-parliamentary left" (EPL onwards), a group of small leftist parties not belonging to the *Concertación* with scarce or null

presence in congress (as noted, this changed with the 2017 elections due to the emergence of the *Frente Amplio*, a leftist coalition of parties and movement organizations that may reconfigure Chile's future party system). The EPL includes the Communist Party, the Humanist Party, the Christian Left, and the Broad Social Movement (MAS) among others. They have maintained a critical discourse towards both coalitions but undoubtedly have more affinities with the *Concertación* – to the point that in 2013 the Communist Party allied with the *Concertación* to form the New Majority, which until 2018 governs Chile.

During the period under study, political competition in Chile has been centripetal and integrative (Roberts 1998:83), with low electoral volatility (Luna and Altman 2011), and ideologically convergent (Gamboa et al. 2013). All the parties mentioned above – as well as newer, small ones like the PRO, *Evopoli* and *Amplitud* - consider liberal democracy the only game in town. The *Concertación* parties and the EPL had obvious reasons to do so since they were repressed during the dictatorship and struggled for democratic restoration since the 1980s. And while many UDI and some RN leaders still praise Pinochet's market reforms, they condemn his regime's authoritarian and repressive nature.

Accordingly, Chile nowadays does not have anti-system political parties – characterized by engaging in propaganda against the democratic regime, having goals incompatible with democracy, and refusing to enter in coalitions with other parties (Cappocia 2002). While forces openly rejecting the political status quo do exist, they do not coalesce into political parties. This explains why, as will be shown in the next section, party protest is not oriented toward destabilizing the political regime or displaying disruptive tactics or demands. In this respect, Chile differs from other Latin American countries - such as perhaps Venezuela, Ecuador and

Bolivia – which in recent times went through considerable party polarization and the development of anti-system political movements.

Against this backdrop of stable competition, since the 1990s the Chilean adult population has been showing declining levels of trust and identification with political parties. According to Bargsted and Somma (forthcoming), the percentage trusting political parties "a lot" or "somewhat" has decreased from about 30% in the mid-1990s to about 15% since 2010 onwards. The percentage reporting an identification with a political party has dropped even more starkly during the same period, from over 60% to less than 30%. Not surprisingly, this has been accompanied by decreasing rates of turnout in national and local elections, which in the last municipal elections (2016) reached a record low of less than 40%.

## Describing party protest

If this is the case for the "institutional" side of politics, what happened in the other side? Chile developed during the 2000s an increasingly vibrant and complex array of social movements which flooded the streets as the decade advanced. While the 1990s has been characterized as a decade of de-mobilization and apathy in terms of collective action, by the 2000s diverse movements voicing the demands of students, indigenous communities, environmentalists, housing debtors, NIMBY communities, and public and private workers among others, erupted and staged large collective protests (Donoso 2013, 2016; Silva 2009). Indeed, the estimated number of protest events and participants grew sharply across several protest issues from approximately 2004-5 onwards (Somma and Medel 2017). Major campaigns

include those staged by high school students in 2006, copper workers in 2007, and university students and regionalist movements in 2011 and 2012.

Yet parties did not join indiscriminately such enriched supply of collective protests – they were rather selective. My dataset covering more than 2,300 collective protests of all kinds across Chile between 2000 and 2012 (detailed below) shows that party protest is not very common: parties show up in only 6% of protest events (see table 2). This is consistent with the traditional characterization of parties as spending more time in offices than streets. It also makes sense given the low rates of party identification, trust, and turnout noted in the previous section. Still, and quite surprisingly, the 6% for Chile is very similar to the figures for Western European countries such as Germany (9%), France (9%), the Netherlands (4%), and Britain (6%) (Hutter 2013; Rucht 1998:41 shows higher figures for Germany though).

Which parties do protest in Chile (and which ones do not)? My dataset cannot always identify which specific political party was present in the protest. In some cases, however, that was possible, and the coders wrote their names. Table 1 shows such information. Interestingly, the vast majority of party protest is carried out by leftist parties. The Communist Party accounts for half of it - not surprisingly given its linkages with social movements since the 1980s (Roberts 1998). The Humanist Party, the Socialist Party, and the Party for Democracy also engage in party protest. The centrist Christian Democracy protests comparatively very little. And the two rightist parties (UDI and RN) do not protest. This is not surprising too given their weak ties to social movements.

TABLE 1 HERE

How radical or moderate is party protest in terms of demands and tactics? Party protest is more likely in events with moderate demands and tactics. I created a variable indicating whether the protest event voices “radical demands” or not. Demands are radical when they push for *structural* reforms in the education, the situation of indigenous peoples, health, housing, or the political system, as well as when they blame capitalism, neo-liberalism, globalization, or promote anarchism (see Medel and Somma 2016). When radical demands are present, party protest is rare (3.6%). But it almost doubles (6.4%) when radical demands are absent. Regarding tactics, I created a dummy variable that indicates whether protestors resorted (1) or not (0) to deliberately disruptive and/or violent tactics such as wildcat strikes, seizures of buildings, roadblocks, and attacks to third parties and private or public property. When transgressive tactics are present, party protest is again rare (3.5%). Yet it grows to 10% when they are absent. Thus, parties tend to restrain from protests with radical tactics or demands - they prefer more moderate ones. In a context shaped by stable and centripetal competition, parties understandably do not use protest as a vehicle for political destabilization.

Finally, which claims or demands motivate party protest? My dataset shows that party protest appears across a wide array of demands yet not evenly. For instance, parties appear in only 3% of the events displaying worker demands, yet this rises to 7% in protests without them. Similarly, parties participate in only 2% of the events with educational demands, but in 7% of those without them. The underrepresentation of leftist (and centrist) parties in student and worker protests seems surprising given the traditional alliances between these groups. Yet it makes sense if we consider that, with the partial exception of the Communist Party, leftist parties weakened their ties to workers and specially students after democratic restoration (Roberts 1998). In a

society with decreasing trust in and identification with parties, even leftist parties may be unwelcomed if showing up in labor and student protests.

Conversely, parties are over-represented in protests related to human rights violations during the dictatorship. There is party protest in only 4% of protests *without* such demands, yet the figure goes up to 51% for protests with them. In other words, about one quarter of all party protest takes place in events with such demands. This affinity is not surprising since many leftist militants suffered themselves Pinochet's repression.

I use the information about tactics and claims descriptively but do not include it below in the regression models due to endogeneity. Some claims may attract parties, but that parties join a protest in the first place may make some claims more (or less) likely. The same happens with tactics.

**Explaining party protest**

What do such 6% of protest events with parties on board have in common beyond the features just noted? What does differentiate them from the remaining majority of protests in which parties do not show up? The literature does not provide clear answers. Combining insights from Chile with literature on collective protest and political parties, below I propose a theoretical framework and four hypotheses to be tested in the next section. The hypotheses are pitched at the event level – they address the question of why do some protest *events* have parties while others do not. A complete theory on party protest should also address the question of why some parties protest while others do not, as well as how party features and event features interact. For space reasons and data limitations I cannot do so here. It remains as a pending task.

Parties may be motivated to join collective protests for at least three general reasons. First, protesting in some kinds of events may help them increase their votes and popular support (Hutter 2013). This is a key drive for most parties (Downs 1957). This is especially the case for the small leftist parties that we saw protest heavily - parties obtaining less than 5% of the congressional vote lose their legal status in Chile. Second, joining certain protests may increase parties' influence on the political agenda and the policy-making process – as they show their power among the masses. Finally, parties may decide *not* to protest for contributing to the provision of public goods - such as political stability - that benefit the whole party system. Hypotheses 1 and 2 emphasize votes and popular support. Hypothesis 3 emphasizes political influence. Hypothesis 4 emphasizes public goods.

*Visibility of the protest event*

I first consider the visibility of the protest event. Some protests are highly visible for the public at large, the authorities, and the mass media - e. g. Martin Luther King's March on Washington in 1963; the 2013 protests in Sao Paulo, Brazil, against increases in transportation fares and political corruption; or the multi-country demonstrations against United States' invasion on Iraq in 2003. Events of this kind – as well as a myriad of less renowned ones – typically take place in densely populated cities that are country or region capitals. They gather large numbers of activists and are extensively covered by the mass media, allowing bystanders to become aware of them (Amenta et al. 2009). They exert more influence than smaller, less noticeable events taking place in less central locations.

I argue that political parties are more motivated to join visible, massive protests, since this could increase their popularity and voting share. Due to their massiveness, these events typically gather people from all walks of life, allowing parties to gain adherents from across the social structure. Also, by showing up in them, parties can present themselves as "tribunes of the people" (Tarrow 1998) that support truly popular causes, conjuring up any potential trace of elitism - a major problem for Chilean parties nowadays. Finally, visible events usually take place in central locations closer to party headquarters (such as country capitals), diminishing the costs of mobilization. This is particularly the case for a centralized country like Chile.

Joining less visible events might also increase the popularity of parties, but the payoff is lower. Organizing and mobilizing people and setting up communication networks require resources which, as always, are scarce (Marwell and Oliver 1993). To this we should add opportunity costs – the time and energy for protesting could be invested in something else, and party members usually have busy schedules (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010). Also, protest is risky: even a peaceful demonstration may turn violent and result in physical injuries or arrests (Opp and Roehl 1990). As any kind of organizations, parties have finite resources and want to use them efficiently. More visible protests promise to yield more popularity gains than less visible ones. Thus, ceteris paribus:

> *Hypothesis 1: Party protest will be more likely in highly visible protest events (e. g. those with more participants and which take place in central and populated locations).*

*Presence of formal organizations*

The second feature of protest events that may shape party protest is the extent to which other formal organizations are involved in the previous mobilization process. In Chile and the world, some protest events – like Labor Day marches or Pride Parades - involve considerable planning and cooperation by many formal civil society organizations at different stages. Conversely, other protests result from spontaneous gatherings in public places with weak organizational presence and little coordination among organizations – in Chile, recent examples are NIMBY-style protests in the localities of Freirina and Caimanes.

The presence of other organizations involved in the mobilization process motivates parties to join the enterprise. By entering in contact with members of these organizations, parties have the opportunity to increase their popularity and support (Oberschall 1973). Despite the undeniable role of the modern mass media in shaping electoral behavior (Norris 2000), parties of all kinds still rely and have relied on civil society organizations, especially for obtaining their most committed and loyal members (Duverger 1959). Historically, religious organizations provided supporters to Christian Democrats, the same as business organizations did to conservative parties, labor unions to socialist and/or populist parties, indigenous organizations to ethnic parties, student organizations to leftist parties, and nationalist organizations to rightist parties (Gunther and Diamond 2003, Wolinetz 2002). Chilean parties are no exception in this respect, and their weakening ties to organized civil society (Luna and Altman 2011) makes this need even more pressing. Yet these potential gains are less clear in protests lacking such organizational infrastructure. Thus:

*H2: Party protest will be more likely in protest events coordinated by other identifiable organizations (compared to events without organizational presence).*

*Governmental ideology*

The next two hypothesis suggest that, beyond the characteristics of protest events, some features of the political context may also shape party protest. Beyond popularity and votes, parties also want to exert power and influence on *present* political decisions (Wolinetz 2002, Strom 1990). They want the current government to promote certain laws, nominate certain people for public positions, or make certain public declarations. Normally, parties will rely on conventional negotiations and agreements with the government and other political forces. But at times they may also consider showing up in protest events to increase their leverage. Specifically, the ideological closeness between protesting parties and the national government may play a role here.

My general argument is that parties will be more likely to take the streets when the party or coalition in the national government is ideologically closer to them. I build upon political opportunity theory, which posits that collective action arises when groups perceive that the political context render protest more influential (McAdam 1982, Tilly 1978). Specifically, people is more likely to protest when they feel ideologically closer to the current government. This will increase the chances that the government considers their demands. This helps explaining, for instance, why in the United States the New Left protest cycle aroused during Democratic administrations, or why the conservative Christian right and pro-life movements emerged during Reagan's term (McAdam and Tarrow 2013:332).

As seen above, in Chile between 2000 and 2012 only centrist and particularly leftist parties protested. This means that, ceteris paribus, party protest should be more likely when the

center-left *Concertación* coalition was in power than when the center-right *Alianza* coalition did so. Thus:

*H3: Party protest will be more likely when the center-left is in power.*

To be fair, one could reasonably expect the opposite. Center and left parties might be more motivated to join protests when the right is in power since this would weaken the adversary. Also, protesting when the *Concertación* is in power seems self-defeating – why trying to hurt a government sympathetic to oneself? While these arguments cannot be ignored, the specificities of Chilean politics are more akin to H3.

First, as seen above, party protest is mostly moderate both in claims and tactics, and is carried out by parties which do not have an anti-system orientation – therefore, by itself, it should not be self-defeating. Second, center and left parties in the streets are more likely to have their demands considered when the government is a sympathetic one. For instance, party protest is often linked to human rights violations during the dictatorship. A socialist president like Ricardo Lagos (2000-2006) or Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010) should be more responsive to this issue than center-right president Sebastián Piñera (2010-2014), who was allied with the rightist UDI during his term.

Does this hold for the extra-parliamentary left (EPL) and especially its largest member and heaviest protester, the Communist Party (PC)? During the 1990s the PC had a rigid ideological outlook and bitterly criticized the *Concertación* for not reforming neoliberalism and not pushing enough the human rights agenda (Roberts 1998). Yet the distance narrowed since the 2000s, as the *Concertación*'s center of gravity shifted from Christian Democrats to the Socialists

(Varas et al. 2010). Several examples illustrate this rapprochement. For instance, the PC asked their followers to vote for *Concertación* presidential candidates Lagos and Bachelet in the second round of the 1999-2000 and 2005-2006 elections respectively (Gamboa et al. 2013), granting essential votes for defeating the *Alianza* in both opportunities. This may have encouraged PC protest during this period since "those to whom the party in power owe electoral debts can be expected to enjoy more institutional access and responsiveness than opposition groups, encouraging them to mobilize" (McAdam and Tarrow 2013:332).

Likewise, in 2009 the *Concertación* and "Together We Can" (*Juntos Podemos*) – a leftist coalition whose main member was the PC, and whose presidential candidate was former *Concertación* member and decades-long socialist militant Jorge Arrate - presented a common list of candidates to congress. Also, in the 2012 municipal elections, the pact "For a Just Chile" (*Por un Chile Justo*) reunited the PC with two *Concertación* parties (PRSD and PPD), and engaged in "omission pacts" with other *Concertación* lists - as had happened similarly for the 2008 municipal elections (Varas et al. 2010). Moreover, in 2013 the PC joined the *Concertación* to form the New Majority coalition, which took Michel Bachelet to power in 2014 and gave two ministries to communist leaders.

This affinity should not surprise, as the PC has common ideological and historical roots with the leftist parties belonging to the *Concertación*. Since the 1930s it frequently allied with socialists, radicals, and leftist Catholics, and supported socialist candidates – such as Salvador Allende in several occasions (Roberts 1998:87; Varas et al. 2010). The current (January 2017) declaration of principles of the PC (see www.pcchile.cl/documentos/principios.pdf) does not oppose to representative democracy or capitalism nor make references to Marx or Lenin.

Going back to H3's expectation, for the PC - and the same applies to other members of the EPL - voicing their demands in the streets when the *Concertación* was in power made more sense than doing so when the *Alianza* was in power. Indeed, the EPL and the *Alianza* have little substantive grounds in common. The largest partner in the *Alianza* – the UDI – was at odds with the left, as many of its older members supported the Pinochet regime. The EPL would have rarely expected the *Alianza* government to seriously consider its demands. This depressed their involvement in protests, since having an unsympathetic party in power "tends to demoralize and eventually encourage demobilization" (McAdam and Tarrow 2013:332).

*Aggregate protest and public goods*

The last hypothesis focuses on the impact on party protest of another feature of the national context – namely, the preexisting intensity and transgressiveness of collective protest. Parties in democratic settings not only want to increase their own popularity and political influence. They also value some basic public goods (Olson 1965) - understood in this context as something valued and enjoyed by all parties, with no party being excluded from its consumption if the good is provided to the party system as a whole. I consider two public goods.

The first one is political stability. Many aspects of democratic competition – from building a mass of followers or crafting political coalitions to implementing complex public policies – are enduring tasks that require parties to have stable, long-term horizons (Schmitter and Santiso 1998). Likewise, opposition parties can tolerate governments of different ideologies as long as they believe to have a chance to achieve power through future elections (Pzeworski 1991). Another public good is party system control over political decisions. Liberal democracy is

about casting votes in elections and parties are, by default, the main players in that process. Parties place a high premium on controlling the major political decisions – rather than leaving this prize to other actors like social movements, the military, or the capitalist class. This is more the case in contemporary Chile, where parties play a central role in shaping public decisions (Siavelis 2013).

Because parties value these public goods, they feel threatened when protest movements break into the political process, create instability, and dispute party control over political decisions. While parties may be more motivated to participate in protests under the conditions specified in H1 to H3, they do not favor high and sustained levels of collective protest in the country. This may confer too much power to movements and other non-party actors (Amenta et al. 2010). Parties do not want to contribute to this outcome, and they do not want to be perceived by other parties as endangering these public goods either. Therefore, party protest should be less likely when general protest levels in the country are higher.

Higher protest levels should be especially threatening to parties' public goods when movements resort more to transgressive tactics – which include from disruptive actions such as erecting barricades or seizing buildings, to violent ones such as damaging public or private property or fighting against the police (Taylor and Van Dyke 2004). Transgressive tactics provide even more leverage to social movements (Gamson 1975, Amenta et al. 2010) and, if massive, can destabilize the national government. Parties will be more reluctant to join protest events not only when levels of collective protest are higher, but also when transgressive tactics are on the rise. Therefore:

H4: *Party protest will be less likely when recent protest activity in the country is intense and transgressive.*

This general hypothesis is consistent with Chilean politics during the period under study. Chilean parties value democratic stability and party control of political decisions. This results from the kind of political competition that unfolded after the transition. While programmatic differences do exist, the competition among both coalitions has been centripetal and extremism has been eschewed. The *Concertación* moved to the center between 1989 and 2005 – as shown by Gamboa et al.'s (2013) analysis of party manifestos – and the *Alianza* became more democratic due to generational replacement and the realization that they could gain votes by moderating its discourse (Navia and Godoy 2013). Both coalitions have essentially agreed on the maintenance of the market society inherited from Pinochet, and during electoral campaigns candidates of both coalitions claim to vaguely represent "the middle classes" or "the most vulnerable ones" (Roberts 1998:157). And as noted above, the Communist Party has definitely left aside the insurrectional orientation it developed during Pinochet's dictatorship (Roberts 1998).

The consensual style of political competition among both coalitions (called *política de los acuerdos*) also fostered a reluctance to heightened mobilization climates. The most important reforms since 1990 only happened after both coalitions engaged in intensive consultations and negotiations (Navia and Godoy 2013, Siavelis 2013). Additionally, when in government, both the *Concertación* and the *Alianza* tried to keep an internal equilibrium, allocating ministries and other public positions among party members so that they roughly reflect each party's electoral strength. While rifts among coalition partners are constant, no coalition could risk alienating any

of its members since this could lead to electoral losses - as the *Concertación* bitterly learned in the 2009-2010 elections. Parties may thus join protests under the conditions specified in H1 to H3, but they will be less likely to do so when contention grows and hints at threatening the routine-style of doing politics from which they benefit.

It is important to keep in mind that this hypothesis is tailored to Chile between 2000 and 2012 but may not apply to other Latin American countries. In Venezuela since 2002 at least, first anti-Chávez and then anti-Maduro political forces were definitely engaged in collective protests aimed at overthrowing the government. Bolivia, Argentina, and perhaps Brazil experienced comparable situations in recent years – though not as extreme as Venezuela's. This does not mean that all party protest in these countries always seeks overthrowing the government. Yet it suggests that, under certain periods of high political stress (which did not occur in Chile between 2000 and 2012), heightened general mobilization may rather *increase* protest by some parties.

## Data and methods

*Dataset.* For studying party protest I resort to protest event analysis. It consists of quantifying the attributes of protest events on the basis of qualitative descriptions, resulting in a dataset of events which can be analyzed statistically. In designing my study I paid special attention to the Dynamics of Collective Action Project (2015) of McAdam, McCarthy, Olzak and Soule - with the necessary adaptations to the Chilean context. Although protest event analysis is increasingly used for understanding protest dynamics in general, to the best of my knowledge it has not been used for studying party protest in particular (Hutter 2013 and Rucht 1998 are the only two exceptions I am aware of).

I supervised a team of four coders (all Chilean social sciences students), which built a dataset of 2,342 protest events taking place in Chile between January 1st, 2000, and August 31st, 2012. We used the descriptions available in the Chronologies of Protest produced by the Latin American Center of Social Sciences (CLACSO 2015). They are based on a wide array of information sources, ranging from national newspapers (such as *La Tercera*, *El Mercurio* and *La Nación*) to radios (such as *Radio Cooperativa* and *Radio Bío Bío*) and activist websites (such as *Indymedia Chile*). The coding process consisted of filling out, for each event, a questionnaire mostly composed of closed-ended questions. It took approximately six months, requiring periodic group meetings as well as email and face-to-face exchanges for discussing coding issues. Inter-rater agreement was close to 90%.

Selection bias is endemic to protest event analysis - it is unlikely that all protests occurring in a time and space are covered (Ortiz et al. 2005). However, CLACSO's Chronologies of Protest seem to provide a relatively complete picture of this universe. The comparison between the Dynamics of Collective Action Project (DCAP) and my dataset is illustrative in this respect. The DCAP recorded 23,615 events during 35 years (1960-1995) for a country (the United States) whose population during this period averaged about 220 million people. This yields about 674 events per year, or 3.1 events per million people. My dataset recorded 2,342 events for Chile during less than 12 years (January 2000-August 2012). This yields an average of 195 events per year and, for an average population of 16.5 million people during this period, about 11.8 events per million people. It is unlikely that Chile has a real rate of protest events almost four times higher than that of the United States (11.8 vs. 3.1 respectively). Having the DCAP as a yardstick, these figures suggest that the CLACSO team did a good job at covering protest events in Chile. One reaches a similar conclusion when comparing the Chilean

dataset with Kriesi's protest dataset covering four Western European countries across three decades (see Hutter 2013).

Still, an important drawback of the Chronologies of Protest is that the range of sources used – and therefore any existing bias among them - varies across time. Most of the time two or three national newspapers were used, but at times only one was considered. The number of complementary sources also vary (details available upon request). For minimizing this problem, all models in table 4 include two control variables indicating the number of main sources used by the Chronologies in the corresponding month, and the number of secondary sources. By doing this, it is unlikely that a given event has more or fewer chances of reporting party protest simply because it was based on more (or fewer) sources. This allows a more valid assessment of the relationships between the theoretical variables and party protest.

*Dependent variable*. The dependent variable – party protest - is dichotomous. It has a value of '1' for those events that explicitly report the presence of political parties and a value of '0' for those which do not. Party presence takes many forms in the descriptions of protest events. It may include mentions of notable party leaders (e. g. congressmen or party presidents) participating in protests and speaking to the media, anonymous sympathizers with party flags or party symbols in their clothes, or references to specific parties supporting a protest. Diverse as they are, all these situations denote a motivation of party members for being part of a protest and making it noticeable to the public and the mass media.

Because my variable is dichotomous, I use binary logistic regression (Long 1997) when models only include independent variables at the event level (visibility and presence of organizations; model 1 in table 4). For adding independent variables about the political context I use multilevel models for binary dependent variables, with events being nested in months

(models 2 and 3). This takes into account that events belonging to the same month may be affected by common circumstances, therefore not being independent from each other. Ignoring this nested structure would lead to an underestimation of the standard errors of regression coefficients (Hox 2010). The intraclass correlation coefficient is .30, suggesting that a sizable variation of party protest occurs due to factors varying monthly.

Additionally, all models include a continuous variable indicating the year of the event. This keeps constant any structural trend changing linearly across time - such as economic or demographic trends - that might affect party protest. As noted above, all models also include two variables about the number of news sources. Finally, maximum likelihood estimation - used in logistic regression – suffers from small-sample bias (Allison 2012), and party protest happened in only 138 of all recorded protest events in my dataset. In preliminary analyses I used Firth logistic regression, which employs penalized likelihood for reducing potential biases. The results were substantively identical under both specifications.

*Independent variables.* The independent variables measure attributes of the protest events and the broader national context. For testing hypothesis 1, which refers to the visibility of protest events, I use two variables. One indicates the estimated number of participants in the event (logged and with imputed values for about 20% of the events, which did not provide information about attendance). The other indicator of visibility refers to whether the event took place (1) or not (0) in the province of Santiago. Santiago corresponds to the country's capital, concentrates most media attention, and is the most populated province of Chile (it comprises 40% of its population). For testing H2 I use a dummy variable that indicates whether there were civil society organizations other than parties in the protest event (1) or not (0). I consider a wide array

of organizations (such as indigenous, workers, students, environmental, human, and civil rights organizations among others).

For testing H3 I use a variable with a value of '1' for those events taking place during the center-left *Concertación* administrations and '0' otherwise (which corresponds to the center-right *Alianza* administration). For testing H4, which refers to the intensity and transgressiveness of recent collective protest in the country, I use two variables. One indicates the estimated number of participants (logged) in collective protests of all kinds in the prior two months. The other one indicates the percentage of protest events in the two prior months which exhibited disruptive, violent, and/or self-destructive tactics. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics.

TABLE 2 HERE

**Results**

Let us move now to the bivariate relationships between party protest and the independent variables. Table 3 presents, for the dichotomous independent variables, the proportion of protest events with party protest, as well as the statistical significance of the difference between means. For the continuous independent variables, it shows the proportion of events with party protest for each quartile, as well as the point biserial correlation between each variable and party protest.

All the relationships at the bivariate level are consistent with the hypotheses, and statistically significant at the .05 level or less. Regarding H1, party protest is more likely in larger events, especially those belonging to the third and fourth quartiles of attendance. The point biserial correlation, though modest, is positive and significant. Also, party protest is about five

times more likely in events taking place in the province of Santiago (vs. other provinces of Chile). Party protest is almost nine times more likely in events in which other organizations are present (H2), and more than twice more likely in events taking place when the *Concertation* is in power (H3). Also, consistent with H4, party protest is *less* common at times of heightened collective protest, and especially when such protest is transgressive (with both point biserial correlations being negative and significant). Interestingly, party protest decreases more markedly in quartiles 3 and 4 of both variables, suggesting that there might be a threshold after which parties become especially reluctant to join protests.

TABLE 3 HERE

Because party protest may be simultaneously shaped by many variables, it is important to move to multivariate regression models that control for potential confounders. Table 4 presents three regression models in which the dependent variable is party protest (yes=1, no=0). None of the models has collinearity problems, as the Variance Inflation Factor for the theoretical variables is always below 2.48 (Allison 1999). Model 1 (binary logistic model) includes the indicators of visibility and organizational presence. Model 2 adds the dummy variable indicating the coalition in power. Model 3 adds the aggregate measures of protest (intensity and transgressiveness). All results are statistically significant and consistent with the bivariate relationships of table 3 – there is no point in reiterating them. The only exception is the number of participants, which is not significant anymore.

TABLE 4 HERE

The final model (model 3) illustrates the main empirical conclusion of the article. Party protest is significantly more likely in events that: 1) take place in the densely populated and highly visible province of Santiago; 2) involve other organizations; 3) take place when the center-left coalition is in power; and 4) occur when aggregate levels of protest are lower, and when such protest is less transgressive. The final model is fully consistent with hypotheses 2, 3 and 4, and partially consistent with hypothesis 1.

**Is endogeneity a problem?**

Hypotheses 1 and 2 suggest that some features of protest events such as their size, location, and the presence of other organizations could affect the chances of party protest. But the relationship could go in the opposite direction. Parties could be a major force in moving masses of people to the protest, therefore significantly increasing its size. Parties could influence the decision regarding the location of the protest. And parties, if having a central role in the organization of protests, could persuade other organizations to join them in the streets. Are these mechanisms more likely to explain the observed statistical associations than those mechanisms implied by hypotheses 1 and 2?

Although I cannot provide a definitive answer, there are good reasons to suspect this is not the case. These alternative explanations imply that parties play a central role in launching and organizing protests from the scratch. But an analysis of thirty-six interviews to leaders of three major movements in Chile – such as the student, environmental, and indigenous movements – suggest this is not the case. In these interviews - which are part of a broader research project

within which this article is located – movement leaders were asked a series of questions about collective protests – who and how it is decided the date and place of protests, who takes the initiative and calls for mobilization, and how organizations coordinate themselves when it comes to protest.

The most relevant finding regarding endogeneity is that political parties rarely appear in the answers to these questions. According to the interviews, students decide these issues on the basis of innumerable assemblies at different levels – from class meetings to national-level confederations. Viewpoints go up and down across this organizational ladder and decisions are made in the process. With the exception of the Communist Party in specific periods – e. g. the year 2008 – there are no mentions to parties affecting this process directly or indirectly.

The environmental movement lacks a clear formal structure of national scope as students do, but parties are absent too. Environmental conflicts are heavily shaped by local features, with variegated citizen groups organizing collective protests in quite autonomous ways. Some leaders mention the supportive role of mayors and local councilors, but they do so as community members rather than as party members. Finally, indigenous *Mapuche* protests are often embedded in ancestral rituals and practices in which religious and community leaders play a major role – but again, there are no indications of parties enjoying any kind of initiative. In sum, political parties do not have the prominent role required by alternative interpretations. Rather, parties seem to jump on the bandwagon of preexisting initiatives. This is consistent with the logic behind hypotheses 1 and 2.

Endogeneity is hardly a problem in hypotheses 3 and 4, whose independent variables refer to national contextual features. Otherwise one should accept an implausible claim - that party protest in time 1 could affect national-level outcomes in previous periods.

## Conclusion

Scholars have recently begun to note that the separation between institutional and non-institutional politics is too rigid for studying contemporary political life (Goldstone 2003; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Kriesi 2015; McAdam and Tarrow 2013, 2015). Not only do movements eventually adopt party-like features, but also parties may occasionally participate in collective protests. The latter phenomenon, termed here as “party protest”, is the focus of this article. Its motivation is the virtual absence of studies about the extent to which parties protest, the identity of these parties, and the determinants of party protest (but see Hutter 2013, and Heaney and Rojas 2015).

Using a dataset of 2,342 protest events taking place throughout Chile between 2000 and 2012, I emphasized three sets of findings: 1) party protest is relatively rare within the universe of protest events (it only happens in 6% of them); 2) it is confined to leftist and to a lesser extent centrist parties, and it is unlikely in protests with radical demands and tactics; 3) several attributes of protest events and the political context affect party protest. Regarding events, party protest is more likely in events that take place in densely populated and highly visible settings, and in those coordinated by civil society organizations. Political opportunities also matter. Party protest is more likely when the center-left coalition is in power, as protesting parties are aware that the *Concertación* will be more receptive to their claims than the *Alianza*. Finally, parties are more reluctant to join protests at times of heightened and transgressive collective protest. Doing so may threaten two public goods that Chilean parties value much: political stability, and their monopoly over major political decisions.

These results have broader implications for the relations between institutional and non-institutional politics. The first implication is about the extent of the overlap between both arenas.

Although we focused on a single indicator of this overlap, the fact that only 6% of protest events in Chile are joined by political parties suggests that the blurring of boundaries may not have advanced as much as one could expect. Moreover, Hutter's (2013) similar figures for Western Europe suggest that Chile may not be unique in this respect. Is it the case that the intertwining between both arenas is not as considerable as we supposed? It is important to find other indicators of this overlap to have a more complete picture and allow cross-country comparisons.

Second, the absence of rightist parties in Chilean collective protests between 2000 and 2012 stands in contrast with advanced Western nations, where rightist parties and politicians often vehemently protest against abortion, immigration, and tax increases. There are two possible explanations of this difference. First, these issues did not achieve salience in Chile during the 2000-2012 period – and consistent with this argument, the recent governmental initiative to legalize abortion under some conditions have spurred in Chile street protests in which rightist politicians did participate. Second, the hyper-mobilization of the left under the Allende government (1970-73) and the final years of Pinochet's dictatorship (two phenomena with perhaps no functional equivalents in advanced Western democracies) may have created in the political right an instinctive aversion towards collective protest. A more systematic comparison of rightist forces across countries and regions may shed light on this issue.

Third, the findings suggesting that party protest in Chile during 2000-2012 eschews radicalism, and that it is less likely when aggregate protest grows, are also noteworthy. They are consistent with the thesis that protest is just one of a wide array of tactics that may be employed in the democratic struggle (Meyer and Tarrow 1998). However, social movements in Chile often display more radical demands and transgressive tactics – it is just that parties are not joining

them in such endeavors. This points to a growing detachment between parties and movements in Chile (Somma and Medel 2017) that might be taking place in other countries as well.

Beyond these broader issues, future research should address many limitations of this article. First, while the hypotheses are formulated in general terms, they were developed having Chile in mind. It is important to explore how much they travel to other contexts. Hutter's (2013) finding that, in Western Europe, party protest is more likely in moderate and large protests with participation of other organizations, suggests that the patterns uncovered for Chile may apply to other countries too. Second, we could gain much from qualitative, in-depth studies of party protest in specific campaigns. These should focus on the motivations and calculations of party leaders, the dynamic interactions and negotiations between parties and movements, and the role played by the public opinion. Such studies will allow a more precise interpretation of the statistical results presented here. Third, because the number of events with party protest is unfortunately very small (only 138 events), and because the dataset does not always record which specific party or parties protested, I cannot explore whether the dynamics of party protest differ across protesting parties. A dataset with more events with party protest, and with complete information about party identity, would allow comparing events in which different parties protest, as well as incorporating party features as an additional component of the theory. Finally, following Hutter's (2013) lead for Europe, we should study party protest in its absolute numbers. That is, how does the number of protest events with party participation vary across time, and why?

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## Tables

Table 1. Party organizations participating in collective protests, Chile 2000-2012

| Party organization | % in all mentions |
|---|---|
| Communist Party | 50.6 |
| Communist Party Youth Wing | 9.2 |
| Socialist Party | 9.2 |
| Humanist Party | 6.9 |
| Party for Democracy | 4.6 |
| Socialist Party Youth Wing | 3.4 |
| Christian Democracy Party Youth Wing | 2.3 |
| Communist Party of Proletarian Action | 2.3 |
| Party for Democracy Youth Wing | 2.3 |
| Radical Social Democratic Party Youth Wing | 2.3 |
| Equality Party | 1.1 |
| Concertación | 1.1 |
| Christian Democracy Party | 1.1 |
| Broad Social Movement (MAS) | 1.1 |
| Radical Social Democratic Party | 1.1 |
| Together We Can (*Juntos Podemos*) | 1.1 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

| Variable (and corresponding hypothesis) | Observations | Mean | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Party protest (dependent variable) | 2342 | 0.06 | 0 | 1 |
| Estimated number of participants (logged) (H1) | 2342 | 5.28 | 0 | 13.8 |
| Event in Santiago (H1) | 2304 | 0.47 | 0 | 1 |
| Civil society organizations present (H2) | 2308 | 0.11 | 0 | 1 |
| Center-left in government (H3) | 2342 | 0.65 | 0 | 1 |
| Aggregate protest, last 2 months (logged) (H4) | 2340 | 223.3 | 3.9 | 548.9 |
| % transgressive protest, last 2 months (H4) | 2340 | 60.0 | 0 | 100 |

Table 3. Bivariate relationships between party protest and independent variables

| Independent variable | Category | Proportion of events with party protest |
|---|---|---|
| Number of participants (log) *(Point biserial correlation=.09***)* | Quartile 1 | .05 |
| | Quartile 2 | .03 |
| | Quartile 3 | .07 |
| | Quartile 4 | .09 |
| Event in Santiago | No | .02 |
| | Yes | .10*** |
| Civil society organizations present | No | .03 |
| | Yes | .26*** |
| Center-left in government | No | .03 |
| | Yes | .08*** |
| Aggregate protest, last 2 months (logged) *(Point biserial correlation=-.12***)* | Quartile 1 | .08 |
| | Quartile 2 | .09 |
| | Quartile 3 | .04 |
| | Quartile 4 | .02 |
| % transgressive protest, last 2 months *(Point biserial correlation=-.12***)* | Quartile 1 | .09 |
| | Quartile 2 | .07 |
| | Quartile 3 | .04 |
| | Quartile 4 | .03 |

$^{*}$ $p < .05$, $^{**}$ $p < .01$, $^{***}$ $p < .001$.

Table 4. Regression models predicting party protest

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Level 1 (event)* | | | |
| Number of particip. (log) | .007 | .010 | .0001 |
| | (.045) | (.049) | (.048) |
| Event in Santiago | 1.876$^{***}$ | 1.981$^{***}$ | 1.980$^{***}$ |
| | (.251) | (.267) | (.264) |
| Civil society orgs. present | 2.247$^{***}$ | 2.361$^{***}$ | 2.351$^{***}$ |
| | (.211) | (.234) | (.230) |
| *Level 2 (months)* | | | |
| Center-left in government | | 1.095* | .865$^{*}$ |
| | | (.479) | (.428) |
| Aggregate protest (last 2 months) | | | -.004$^{**}$ |
| | | | (.001) |
| Transgressive protest (last 2 months) | | | -.029$^{**}$ |
| | | | (.009) |
| N | 2273 | 2273 | 2271 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | .231 | | |

All models control for a continuous variable indicating the year of the event and two variables indicating the number of main and secondary sources used by the Chronologies of Protest for the corresponding month. Model 1 is a binary logistic model. Models 2 and 3 are multilevel binary logistic models with protest events nested in months. Standard errors appear in parentheses.

$^{*}$ $p < .05$, $^{**}$ $p < .01$, $^{***}$ $p < .001$