Telenovelas and Attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ Community in Latin America

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- What part of these beliefs could be attributed to media representation?

How does exposure to novelas with LGBTIQ+ characters affects attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ Community?

- In the short term, exposure to more novelas lowers tolerances.

- Effect is driven mainly by comedies.

- Effect is larger for traditionally more conservative individuals.

Data

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- 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribean

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- Latin America Public Opinion Project - LAPOP
    1. Acceptance of a homosexual running for public office.
- Latino Barómetro and World Value Survey (WVS)
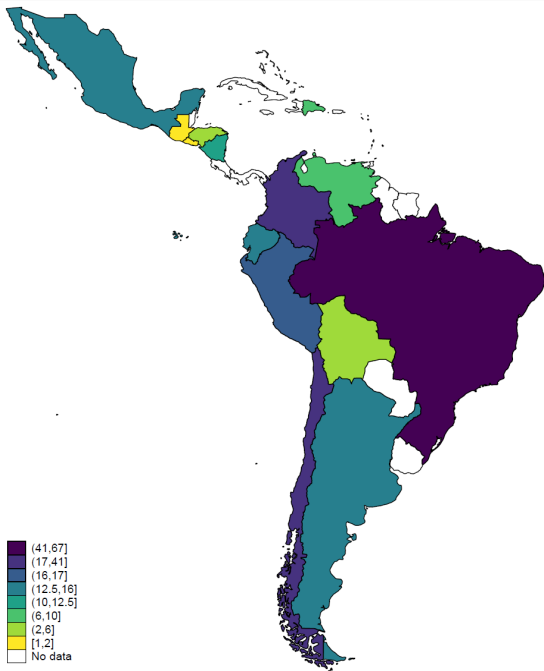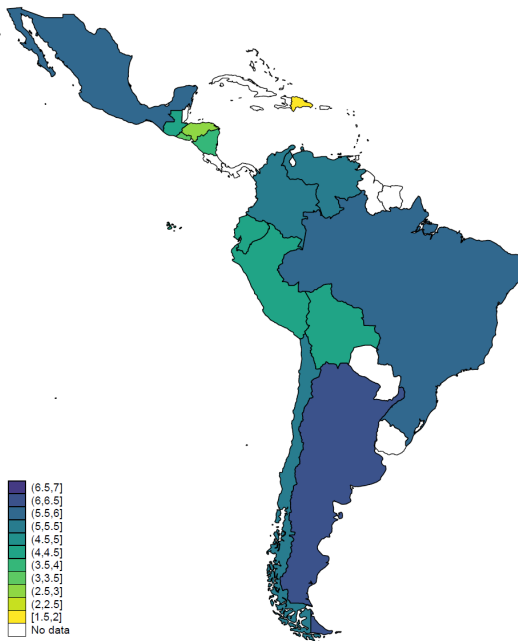   1. Can homossexuality be justified?

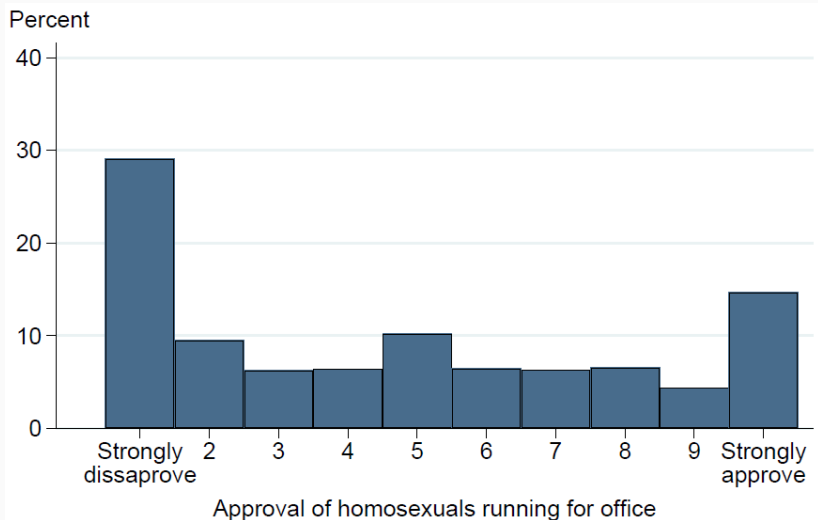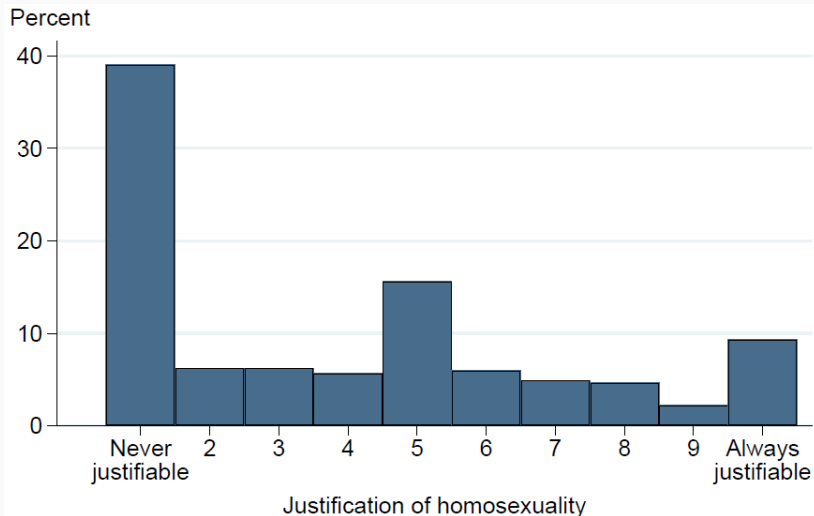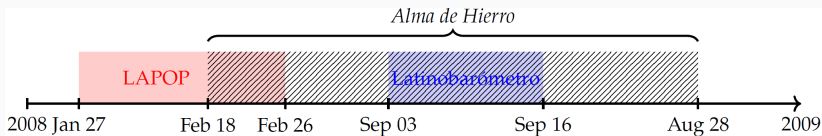Figure 5: Average Acceptance of Homosexuals Running for Office (First Survey Wave)

Approval of homosexuals running for office

General Acceptance

$$Y_{idct} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NumTelenovelasLGBTIQ_{dc} + \gamma_{ct} + \delta X_i + u_{idct} \quad (1)$$

Table 3: Impact of Exposure to *Telenovelas* with LGBTIQ+ Characters on Attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ Community

	Approval of homosexuals running for office			Justifiability of homosexuality		
	Approval > 5	Strongly approve	Strongly disapprove	Justifiability > 5	Always	Never
Number of soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters	-0.036***	-0.036**	-0.013	-0.040**	-0.008	0.068***
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.010)	(0.022)
Observations	134,540	134,540	134,540	71,195	71,195	71,195
R^2	0.102	0.074	0.081	0.087	0.052	0.179
Dependent variable mean	0.385	0.147	0.291	0.272	0.093	0.390
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 4: Impact of Exposure to *Telenovelas* with LGBTIQ+ Characters on Attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ Community, by Show Characteristics

	Approval of homosexuals running for office			Justification of homosexuality		
	Approval > 5	Strongly approve	Strongly disapprove	Justification > 5	Always	Never
Panel A: Type of soap opera						
Number of comedies with LGBTIQ+ characters	-0.078***	-0.083***	-0.006	-0.053**	-0.008	0.027
	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.016)	(0.029)
Number of dramas with LGBTIQ+ characters	-0.015	-0.012	-0.017	-0.033	-0.007	0.092***
	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.013)	(0.029)
Observations	134,540	134,540	134,540	71,195	71,195	71,195
Dependent variable mean	0.385	0.147	0.291	0.272	0.093	0.390
P-value (comedy=drama)	0.021	0.039	0.634	0.578	0.960	0.114
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Exposure Effect

	Approval of homosexuals running for office			Justification of homosexuality		
	Approval > 5	Strongly approve	Strongly disapprove	Justification > 5	Always	Never
Panel B: Sexual and gender orientations of LGBTIQ+ characters						
Number of soaps with homosexual character	-0.048***	-0.041**	-0.010	-0.122***	-0.043***	0.141***
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.013)	(0.028)	(0.013)	(0.031)
Number of soaps with bisexual character	0.091***	0.039	-0.022	0.084**	0.042***	-0.062*
	(0.027)	(0.037)	(0.021)	(0.038)	(0.016)	(0.035)
Number of soaps with trans character				-0.033	-0.018	0.043
				(0.035)	(0.011)	(0.057)
Observations	134,540	134,540	134,540	71,195	71,195	71,195
Dependent variable mean	0.385	0.147	0.291	0.272	0.093	0.390
P-value (homosexual=bisexuall)	0.000	0.089	0.708	0.001	0.001	0.001
P-value (bisexual = trans)				0.025	0.002	0.117
P-value (homosexual = trans)				0.048	0.151	0.135
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5: Impact of Exposure to *Telenovelas* with LGBTIQ+ Characters on Attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ community, Heterogeneous Effects

	Approval of Homosexuals Running for Office				
	Approval > 5				
Number of soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters	-0.036***	-0.036***	-0.037***	-0.033**	-0.029*
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)
Num. soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters × Female	0.001***				
	(0.000)				
Num. soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters × Age ≥ 40		-0.002***			
		(0.000)			
Num. soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters × Urban			0.001**		
			(0.000)		
Num. soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters × Attends religious services often				-0.002***	
				(0.000)	
Num. soaps with LGBTIQ+ characters × Right wing					-0.000
					(0.000)
Female	0.021***				
	(0.003)				
Age ≥ 40		-0.053***			
		(0.003)			
Urban			0.062***		
			(0.004)		
Attends religious services often				-0.037***	
				(0.004)	
Right-wing					-0.007*
					(0.004)
Observations	134,527	134,282	134,540	129,416	108,917
R^2	0.102	0.100	0.102	0.088	0.085
Dependent variable mean	0.385	0.385	0.385	0.398	0.402
P-value (sum of treatment coefficients)	0.012	0.006	0.009	0.011	0.050
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country-Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Conclusion

- This paper examined how increases in exposure affects attitudes toward the LGBTIQ+ commnunity.
- In the short run, exposure to more novelas lowers tolerances.
- Effect is driven mainly by comedies.
- Effect is larger for traditionally more conservative individuals.