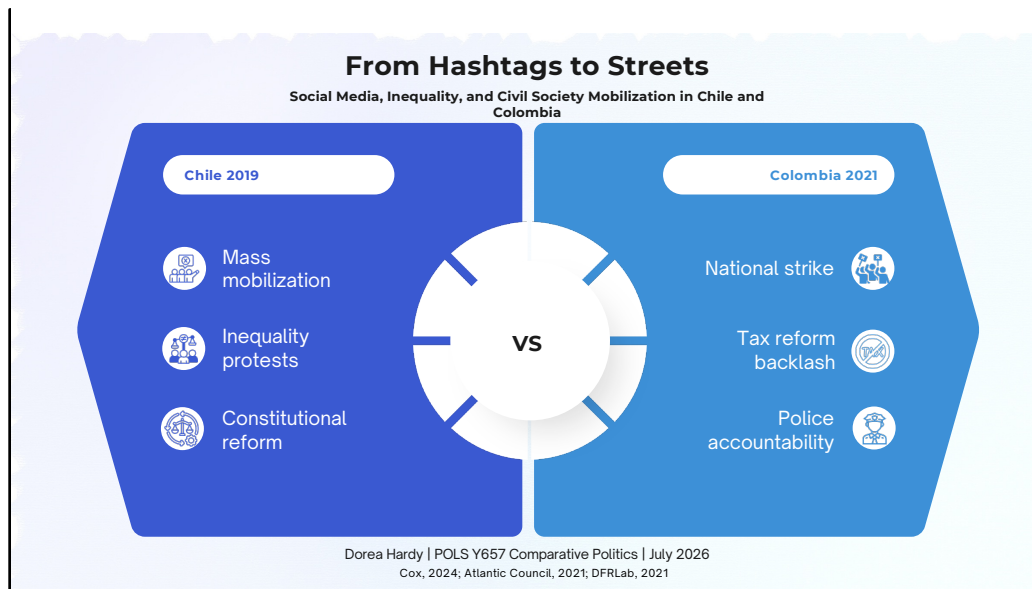




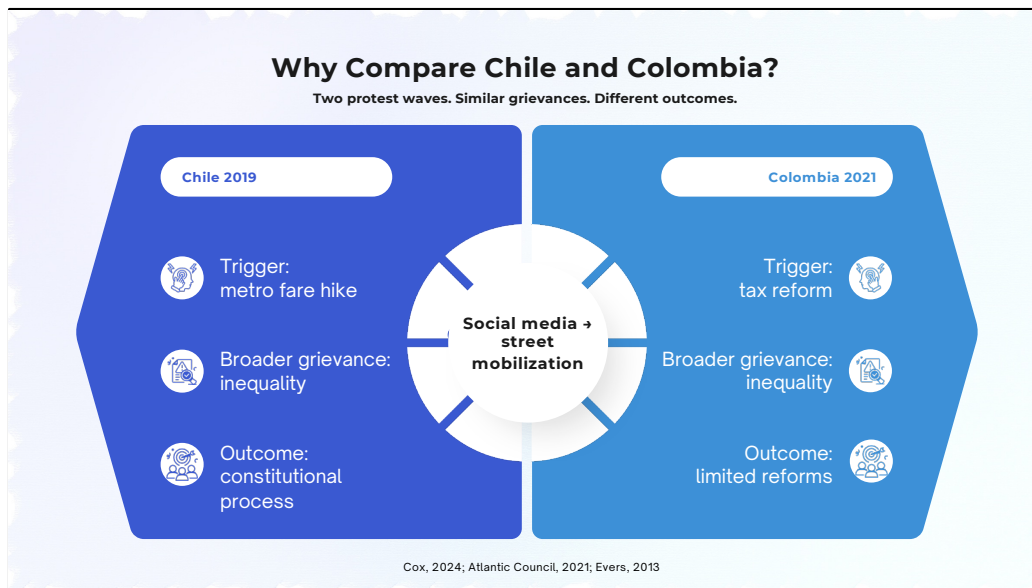
This presentation compares the 2019 social uprising in Chile with the 2021 national strike in Colombia. Both movements began with specific policy triggers, but quickly expanded into broader civil society protests over inequality, representation, and state accountability. In Chile, student-led resistance to a metro fare increase grew into a nationwide challenge to economic inequality and eventually helped open a constitutional reform process. In Colombia, protests began in response to a proposed tax reform, but expanded into a wider national strike over inequality, poverty, police violence, and distrust in government. The comparison focuses on how social media helped move grievances from digital spaces into street-level mobilization, and why the outcomes differed between the two cases.

Chile protests began around a metro fare increase and expanded into broader demands over inequality and political reform. Colombia's 2021 protests began on April 28, 2021, in response to a tax reform proposal and later expanded into broader demands, including police accountability and socioeconomic concerns.

Cox, L. (2024). The 2019 Chilean Social Upheaval: A Descriptive Approach. Latin American Perspectives. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X231203747>

Atlantic Council. (2021, June 18). Colombia's national strike: Overview of the situation and strategies moving forward. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/spotlight/colombias-national-strike-overview-of-the-situation-and-strategies-moving-forward/>

DFRLab. (2021, May 5). Misinformation about Colombia's national strike spreads online and on air. Medium. <https://medium.com/dfrlab/misinformation-about-colombias-national-strike-spreads-online-and-on-air-9c754666c06>



This slide introduces the comparison between Chile’s 2019 social uprising and Colombia’s 2021 national strike. Both movements began with specific policy triggers. In Chile, protests started after a subway fare increase, especially through student fare-evasion actions, but quickly expanded into a broader movement over inequality, public services, pensions, education, and constitutional reform. In Colombia, protests began in response to President Iván Duque’s proposed tax reform, but expanded into broader demands related to poverty, inequality, police violence, and government accountability. The key comparison is not simply that both countries experienced protests. Rather, the presentation asks how social media helped civil society actors move grievances into public space and why the institutional outcomes differed.

Cox supports the Chile background, including student protests over the subway fare increase and the wider social upheaval. Atlantic Council supports the Colombia background, including the tax reform trigger and the broader protest context. Evers helps frame the civil society angle because he argues civil society should not be reduced to the third sector alone, but should also be understood through the public domain, democratic participation, and civic action.

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Evers, A. (2013). The concept of “civil society”: Different understandings and their implications for third-sector policies. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 4(2), 149–164.



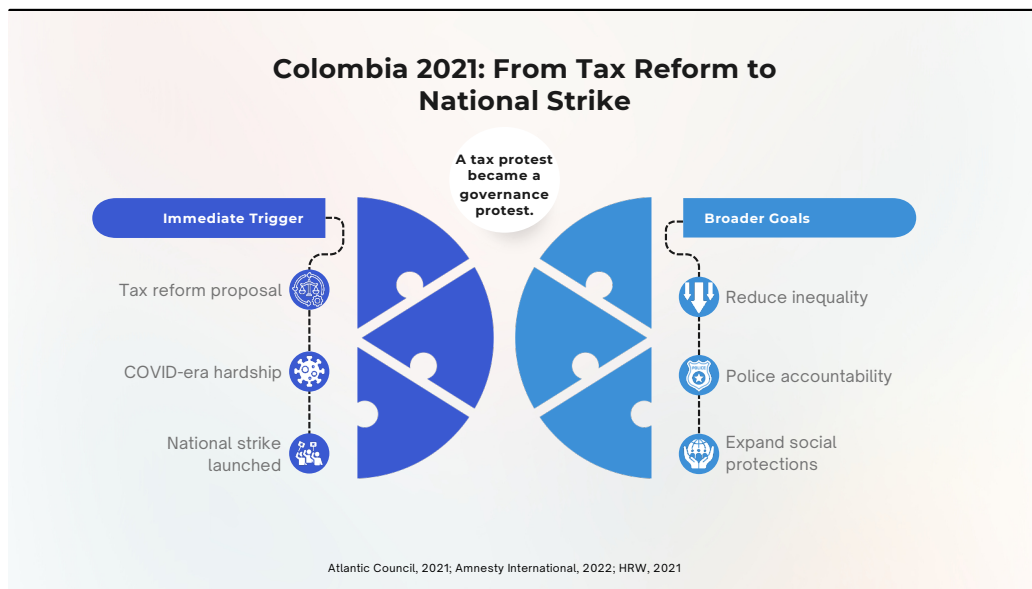
Chile's 2019 protests began after an increase in Santiago's subway fares, with high school and college students playing a visible early role through fare-evasion protests. The fare increase became a trigger for wider frustration over inequality, cost of living, pensions, education, health care, and the political system. The slogan "It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years" captured the idea that the protests were not simply about transportation costs, but about unresolved grievances since Chile's return to democracy. These grievances eventually connected to demands for constitutional change, since many protesters viewed the 1980 constitution, adopted during the Pinochet dictatorship, as part of the institutional structure that limited social rights and reinforced inequality.

Cox supports the claim that student protests over the subway fare increase escalated into a nationwide social upheaval. Méndez et al. support the broader grievance claims around pensions, education, health, state response, and social protection. The Guardian supports the constitutional reform connection following the protests.

Cox, L. (2024). The 2019 Chilean Social Upheaval: A Descriptive Approach. *Latin American Perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X231203747>

Méndez, C. A., et al. (2020). The 2019 crisis in Chile: Fundamental change needed, not just technical fixes to the health system. *BMJ Global Health*, 5(8), e002826. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-002826>

The Guardian. (2019, November 15). 'The constitution of the dictatorship has died': Chile agrees deal on reform vote. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/15/chile-referendum-new-constitution-protests>



Colombia's 2021 national strike began on April 28, 2021, in response to a tax reform bill proposed by President Iván Duque's government. The proposal was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many Colombians were already dealing with poverty, unemployment, and economic insecurity. Although the government withdrew the tax bill on May 2, the protests continued and expanded into broader demands over inequality, social protections, police violence, and government accountability. The movement, therefore, shifted from opposition to a specific fiscal policy into a wider civil society challenge to the state's handling of social and economic grievances. Human rights organizations also documented serious police abuses against protesters, which made police accountability one of the movement's central concerns.

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Amnesty International. (2022, February 25). Colombia: Repression in the spotlight. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/repression-in-the-spotlight/>

Human Rights Watch. (2021, June 9). Colombia: Egregious police abuses against protesters. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/09/colombia-egregious-police-abuses-against-protesters>



Chile's 2019 movement combined digital communication with visible street-level disruption. Online platforms helped spread protest calls through campaigns such as **#ChileDespertó**, allowing local grievances to gain national visibility. However, the movement did not remain only online. Student fare-evasion actions in Santiago's metro system helped turn the fare hike into a visible act of resistance, while mass demonstrations, cacerolazo pot-banging protests, and occupations of symbolic public spaces kept pressure on the government.

This pattern reflects Andretta's argument that social movements expand political participation beyond voting and formal institutional channels. It also aligns with Gleditsch and Rivera Celestino's argument that nonviolent campaigns can spread through learning, emulation, and information about protest feasibility.

Cox describes how student protests over a subway fare increase escalated into a leaderless nationwide upheaval. Sasse discusses how social media can support affinity groups and mobilization for short-term campaigns. Schwab provides evidence about the specific role of social media activism in the Chilean movement.

Andretta, M. (2013). Political science and the study of social movements. In D. A. Snow, D. della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Cox, L. (2024). The 2019 Chilean social upheaval: A descriptive approach. *Latin American Perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X231203747>

Gleditsch, K. S., & Rivera Celestino, M. (2016). The diffusion of nonviolent campaigns. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Sasse, L. (2020). The reasons for the mass protests in Chile 2019/2020. Institute for International Political Economy Berlin. https://www.ipe-berlin.org/fileadmin/institut-ipe/Dokumente/Working_Papers/ipe_working_paper_166.pdf

Schwab, J. (2020). Social media and activism in the 2019/2020 Chilean social movement. Seattle University. <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=intl-std-theses>



Colombia's 2021 national strike began in response to President Iván Duque's proposed tax reform, but the protests quickly expanded beyond that original issue. Demonstrators connected the tax proposal to broader concerns about inequality, poverty, youth unemployment, police violence, and government accountability.

Social media helped protesters coordinate action, circulate hashtags, livestream demonstrations, and share citizen-recorded evidence of police response. These digital tactics increased visibility, helped sustain coordination across dispersed demonstrations, and drew national and international attention to the movement.

At the street level, protesters used national strike actions, mass demonstrations, road blockades, and local organizing. Compared with Chile, Colombia's movement generated major public pressure, but its goals and outcomes remained more fragmented. Social media helped move grievances into public space, but it did not produce one clear institutional outcome comparable to Chile's constitutional process.

Nearly 3 million tweets from about 450,000 accounts used **#ParoNacional28A** and **#ParoNacional1M** by May 4, 2021.

Atlantic Council. (2021, June 18). Colombia's national strike: Overview of the situation and strategies moving forward. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/spotlight/colombias-national-strike-overview-of-the-situation-and-strategies-moving-forward/>

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Amnesty International. (2022, February 25). Colombia: Repression in the spotlight. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/repression-in-the-spotlight/>



Chile's protest wave escalated quickly in October 2019. A metro fare increase became the immediate trigger, but student fare-evasion actions and mass demonstrations turned the issue into a broader national protest over inequality, public services, and political representation. The government declared a state of emergency in Santiago as unrest spread, but the movement continued to grow. By late October, large demonstrations showed that the protests had moved beyond the fare increase and into wider demands for change.

One of the most important outcomes was the move toward constitutional reform. In November 2019, Chilean political parties agreed to hold a referendum on replacing the 1980 constitution, which had been written during the Pinochet dictatorship. The constitutional path became the clearest institutional response to the protest wave, even though the reform process itself later remained politically contested.

Cox supports the October 18 protest eruption and the student subway-fare trigger. The Guardian reports that more than 1.2 million people participated in the October 25 march in Santiago and supports the November 2019 agreement to hold a referendum on replacing the 1980 constitution. CFR supports the connection between the metro fare protests, the mass movement, and the constitutional reform process.

Cox, L. (2024). The 2019 Chilean Social Upheaval: A Descriptive Approach. Latin American Perspectives. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X231203747>

Council on Foreign Relations. (2021, May 6). Chile's constitutional rewrite: A difficult path ahead, but a recipe for inclusion. <https://www.cfr.org/articles/chiles-constitutional-rewrite-difficult-path-ahead-recipe-inclusion>

The Guardian. (2019, November 15). 'The constitution of the dictatorship has died': Chile agrees deal on reform vote. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/15/chile-referendum-new-constitution-protests>



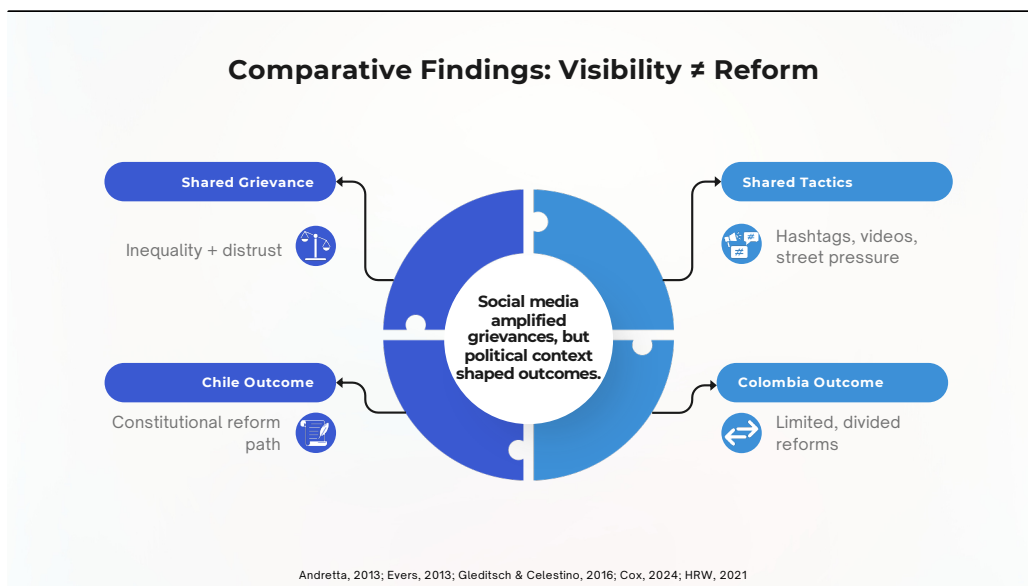
Colombia's 2021 national strike began on April 28 in response to President Iván Duque's proposed tax reform. Although the government withdrew the tax proposal within days, the protests continued because the movement had expanded into broader grievances over inequality, poverty, police violence, and distrust in government. Demonstrations, road blockades, and local organizing kept pressure on the state beyond the original policy dispute.

Unlike Chile, Colombia did not move into one clear institutional reform path. Human rights organizations criticized the police response and documented serious concerns about abuses against protesters. The movement generated public pressure and international attention, but its demands remained more divided across economic, social, and security issues. This helps explain why the outcome was more limited and fragmented than Chile's constitutional process.

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Amnesty International. (2022, February 25). Colombia: Repression in the spotlight. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/repression-in-the-spotlight/>



Chile and Colombia show that social media can expand visibility, coordinate participation, and move grievances into public space. In both cases, digital tools supported protest calls, hashtag circulation, citizen-recorded evidence, and broader public attention. In both cases, civil society operated through networks of students, labor groups, neighborhood organizations, human rights advocates, and local assemblies rather than through one unified organization.

The key difference is outcome. Chile's protest wave moved into a clearer institutional reform path through the constitutional process. Colombia's national strike created major pressure and drew attention to inequality and police violence, but its demands remained more divided and its policy outcomes were more limited.

This comparison supports the larger point that social media can amplify protest, but political opportunities, institutional response, movement cohesion, and reform pathways shape whether visibility becomes durable institutional change.

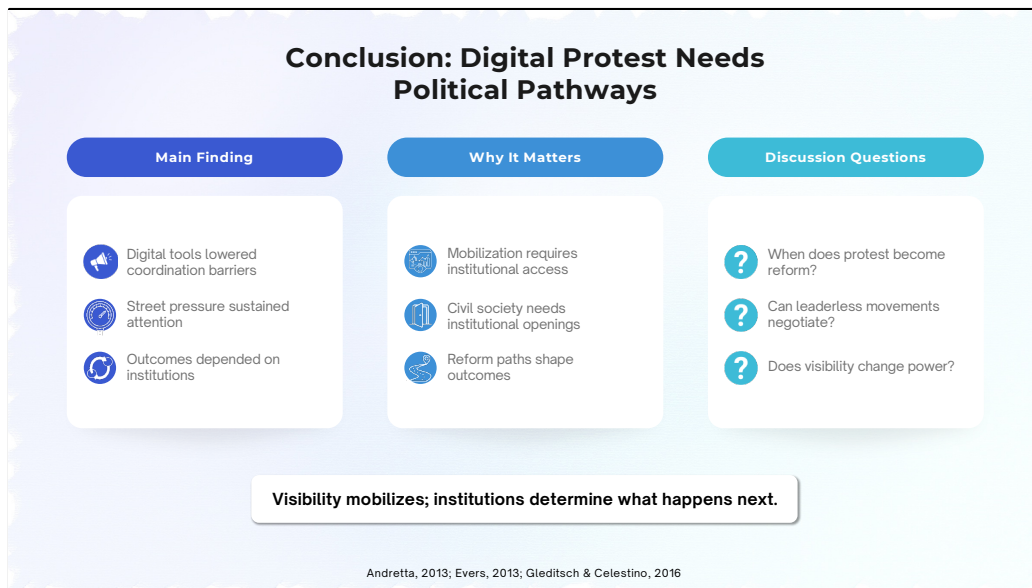
Andretta, M. (2013). Political science and the study of social movements. The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements.

Evers, A. (2013). The concept of "civil society": Different understandings and their implications for third-sector policies. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 4(2), 149–164.

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Human Rights Watch. (2021). Colombia: Egregious police abuses against protesters.



The comparison of Chile and Colombia shows that social media can help civil society movements expand participation, document state response, and move grievances into public view. In both cases, online visibility and street protest reinforced one another.

The difference was not simply whether people mobilized. Both movements mobilized at large scale. The difference was whether protest pressure connected to a clear institutional pathway. Chile's protests moved into a constitutional reform process, while Colombia's national strike produced pressure and visibility but more limited and divided reform outcomes.

This suggests that social media is best understood as an amplifier, not a substitute for organization, political opportunity, or institutional response. Digital tools can help people gather, frame grievances, and sustain attention. Reform depends on whether political institutions create pathways that convert mobilization into policy change.

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Evers, A. (2013). The concept of "civil society": Different understandings and their implications for third-sector policies. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 4(2), 149–164.

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